

Hearth to Hearth

Woman to Woman

Vol. 4, No. 6

“And ye are complete in him.” Colossians 2:10

Nov./Dec. 2001

Sitting at the Feet of Jesus

An Attitude of Gratitude



Psalm 40:5: “Many, O Lord my God, are the wonders You have done” (NIV) James 1:17: “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.” (NIV) We have so much to be thankful for! Thanksgiving Day is a day set apart to reflect on our many blessings. But how many of us actually do this daily? We don’t really need a special day to express our thanks, but rather we need to develop an attitude of gratitude wherein we are always expressing our gratitude to God for all the blessings He has bestowed upon us. All that we have is a gift from God. May our lives be an expression of God’s love for us.

Count Your Blessings

Count your blessings every day
Be they great or small.

Bow your head and humbly pray
To our Saviour, Lord of all.

For life and health, and all good things,
For love and friendship, too.
For all the joy each new day brings
We give our heartfelt thanks to You.

The colors of a rainbow,
A sunset in the sky,
The sun, the moon and stars which glow
Are things we cannot buy.

The laughter of a child at play,
The miracle of birth,
A friendly smile along the way,
What are these blessings worth?

We see the flowers bloom in spring,
The colored leaves of fall.
We hear the birds so sweetly sing,
And thank God for them all.

Be thankful for each blessing,
And when you kneel and pray,
Give thanks at the beginning
And the end of every day.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for Your great love for us and for the many blessings that we enjoy each day. Forgive our lack of gratitude and help us to develop an attitude of gratitude for all that You have done for us, and especially for the gift of Your Son, Jesus Christ, who gave His very life for us. Father we thank You. Amen.



[(c)1993, Dee Renaud. From Daily Devotionals at <http://www.presbyterian.ca/daily/>. Dee Renaud writes from Guelph, Ontario, Canada. Used with permission of the author.]

Our Mission Statement: Believing that we can find completeness in all areas of our lives only “in him, who is the head of all principality and power” (Colossians 2:10), it is the mission of *Hearth to Hearth* to provide a forum for Christian women to reach out to each other in friendship, with joy and hope; and to encourage each other to find our completeness in Christ as we sojourn here on our way to the kingdom.

Holidays or Holy Days?

Holiday; the word conjures up varying images in different minds. The first definition of the word in the fourth edition of *Webster's New World College Dictionary* is: HOLY DAY (in capital letters!). Yet the way most holidays are celebrated by the majority of people today seems anything but "holy" to me. In recent years, many people have begun questioning the observance of holidays, citing the pagan origin of the dates themselves as well as the various traditions. Yet the holidays remain and, like it or not, we are all touched by them to one degree or another.

Most of us are still dazed over what has been taking place in the last few months, yet tragedy and war are not foreign to many parts of the world. Through the news media, we see and hear so much of violence that we've become largely desensitized to the pain and suffering that are in this world—until it hits home. If the Bible is to be trusted, and I believe it is, things are going to get worse before they get better. According to the prophet Daniel, "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." (Daniel 12:1)

As I've been contemplating these two vastly different topics and thinking about this issue of *Hearth to Hearth*, I've come to the conclusion that, yes, we need to celebrate our Saviour's birth, as did Anna of old (see page 11), but I think perhaps it's "Crisis Christians" (pages 12-15) who need a specific day set aside for the purpose. I tend to agree with Dee Renaud (page 1) when she says, "We don't really need a special day to express our thanks, but rather we need to develop an attitude of gratitude wherein we are always expressing our gratitude to God for all the blessings He has bestowed upon us."

With our world becoming increasingly chaotic, we need to "Pay Attention." (See page 10.) One thing it would do well to pay attention to is the cry of the needy, both near and far. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James 1:27)

As we enter this holiday season, let us not forget the homeless—especially the orphans—on the streets of so many cities. (See Villy's story, pages 8 and 9 and the plight of orphans in Homa Bay, page 3.) Perhaps we can help them understand that they *do* have a Father who loves them.

While we're cultivating "An Attitude of Gratitude," (page 1) let's be "honeycomb givers" (page 16) because "Don't We All" have needs? (See page 5.) Both now and in the year to come, let's make *every* day a Holy Day.

Esther McDaniel

PRAYER CALL:

1) It seems just like yesterday I called you, broken hearted and feeling alone, requesting your prayers for my son. Now, I have a most wonderful praise report to share with you and *Hearth to Hearth* readers! Please shout it from the rooftops! My "little lost lamb" has come home to God. The devil lost! My son has given his heart and life to the Lord!

Our God is a Mighty God, and He is faithful to His promises. A co-worker led my son to the Lord in her office last week. He has already found a church and is seeking counsel with the Pastor. He is now making changes in his life that have cost him his home and closest friends. He

understands that it will not be easy but it will be worth it. But Satan won't just roll over and play dead. My son will need a strong hedge about him to stand against the attacks to come. He needs our prayers now as much as ever. I wanted to ask you and your prayer partners to pray for him.

Thank you so much for your love and compassion, but most of all thank you for your commitment and devotion to our Lord and Savior and His work. Your prayers and kindness have been a source of joy for me in the past, and I covet them now.

[Isn't God good? We can be so thankful that we serve a prayer hearing and prayer answering God! We must never stop praying for our children. Editor]

2) Please pray for a friend who was recently diagnosed with stage two melanoma. May God bless and heal in accordance with His will.

EDITOR'S NOTES:

» **Moving?** Please don't forget to notify us of your new address so you won't miss any issues.

» **Our heartfelt appreciation** goes out to each one who has contributed of their means to help with the costs of *Hearth to Hearth*. We might mention here that no salary is paid to anyone; each dollar received is applied to the costs of printing and mailing the paper. We are thankful for all the prayers and letters, as well as the financial support of those who believe in the ministry of encouragement that *Hearth to Hearth* provides.

Without your prayers, our courage might fail; without your letters, we might believe that no one was reading; without your voluntary financial support, we would be unable to continue to offer the paper free of charge to all who wish to receive it.

» **Children say** the cutest things, and sometimes the wisest! Send us your, or another, child's "wit and wisdom" for a future "Wee Wit & Wisdom" mini-story!

» **Our Father and Daughter** team looks forward to your questions regarding parent/teen relationships. You may write to *Hearth to Hearth*, or directly to: Father and Daughter, PO Box 500, Keene, TX 76059.

» **Much of the layout** on this issue of *Hearth to Hearth* has been done by Jennifer Priddy of Welch, West Virginia. Thank you, Jennifer!

» **After you have read** and digested the articles in this issue, please take a few minutes and write us your comments, either pro or con, regarding what has impressed you. Has a particular article, or a particular idea touched you, or even hit a sore spot? Tell us! What do you think about the new mission we've taken on as described on the next page? We look forward to hearing from you.

» **Without the help** of my dear friend, Grace Cox, sticking by us this year through "thick and thin," (in spite of wanting to be out of it), *Hearth to Hearth* would not have been able to continue. Thank you, Grace! You are a one-of-a-kind friend.

» **Watch for** the announcement of our new staff members in our next issue.

LET OUR MISSION BE THE ORPHANS

[Please note that we have left the letters section out of this issue to make room for this important report. Editor]

"This is Pastor Lawrence Allosso Kojwang from Kenya," the voice on the other end of the line was saying. "I am coming to you."

We have heard much in recent months about a small, yet powerful, prayer tucked away in a seldom-read portion of the Old Testament, called "the Prayer of Jabez." I had purchased a "Prayer of Jabez Devotional" book and had been faithfully studying each daily portion and answering the posed questions in my journal. On September 25, the question posed by the book was, "What is my territory? Open my eyes today Lord, to see the larger life You're calling me toward, what is my overlooked opportunity?" I wrote in my journal, "Father, could it be Africa? My sister and her husband spent most of their lives there. Could You use me to help save Africa for them and for You—without ever leaving home! Please show me how." With Joshua I prayed, "Now therefore give me this mountain." (Joshua 14:12)

Now here I was, on October 1, hearing the "voice of Africa" ringing in my ears. (How quickly God answers!) I have no doubt that this is God's doing; that He wants to shake me out of my comfortable rut and do great things through me if I will only allow Him to. He wants that for all of us, don't you think? It is His delight to make something out of nothing; to take the incapable and make them capable, the timid and make them bold, a small missionary effort and make it thrive.

Since that day we have learned much from Brother Lawrence. What faith it must take to sally forth on an expedition for God as did the disciples of old: "And commanded them that they should take nothing for their

journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place." (Mark 6:8-10)

But Brother Lawrence had a mission and he felt that God would direct him to His people, who would help him with his goal. The goal? Helping the orphans on the streets of Homa Bay where he lives. Lawrence, Sophie, and their four children began opening their home to the orphans (of which there are 35,000 in that one city alone) back in 1998. The number of children they are caring for has now swelled to 126. The Lord has helped them to build simple classrooms and hostels (dormitories) and to find teachers, but now their savings are exhausted, they have sold much of their household goods, three of their own children have been out of school for nearly a year, (they are advanced beyond primary school) and many times they have all gone hungry in an effort to keep from turning the orphans back out onto the street.

To put it simply, Brother Lawrence needs to find sponsors for 126 orphans. But his dream doesn't stop there! He dreams of proper classrooms and hostels, and similar orphanages in many cities. Since his arrival, he has been able to send some money home for much-needed food, four of the orphans have been "adopted" by sponsors, and someone has donated money to run water pipes back to the orphanage so the children can have clean water (a job which has already been accomplished!). They are still without electricity and living conditions are poor, but it is a start.

We have decided on a new direction for *Hearth to Hearth*. We have prayed about it and God has laid it on our hearts to broaden the scope of our ministry to take on the responsibility of collecting and funneling funds to the Kenya orphanage. This is not to detract from the needs of the orphanage in Romania (see pages 8 and 9) and orphans or needs elsewhere. God must show you *your* mission.

Edward and Reuben are two of the orphans who need sponsors. We will feature others in future issues. My "grandmother heart" is drawn out to these older ones who

have experienced so much pain and need hope for the future.

Edward's parents died of AIDS. (We have all heard of the heterosexual nature of the AIDS epidemic in Africa.) He was found by the center matron, in the care of an aunt, but was near death from lack of care. At 15, he is ready for high school, but needs \$300 by the end of November for the first term (beginning in January), then \$30 per month to keep him there.

Reuben's parents also died of AIDS, leaving him with five siblings to look after at the age of 13. Their uncles chased them away and they were living on the street, eating out of the "dustbin" (dumpster). He would steal to help his brothers and sisters eat. He was taken from the street when he was frail and about to die from injuries caused by a beating after snatching a lady's handbag for money. He is now rehabilitated, and because of his age (16) and lack of education, it seems best to enroll him in vocational training. He needs a sponsor who can send a one-time donation of \$240 for a driving course, which will enable him to drive trucks and buses to earn his livelihood and also to help out at the orphanage.

My husband and I, wanting to help, have "adopted" the one other young man who is ready for high school. There are about a dozen children aged 1 to 5, and the rest are between the ages of 6 and 19; all progressing through primary school. (In Kenya there is no such thing as skipping grades.) Each of these children can be sponsored for a gift of \$30 per month (though if you can only give \$20 per month you would still receive the picture and story of a child that you could write to and love). A gift of any amount would be very much appreciated.

"But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Matthew 19:14) Orphans, be they in Romania, Kenya, America or elsewhere, are every Christian's responsibility. We cannot do everything, but we can do something. We cannot help them all, but we can help some. God specializes in taking our small gifts and multiplying them many fold, to His glory. (See Matthew 14:15-21, Luke 21:2-4, Judges chapters 7 & 8 and many other passages.)

In our next issue we will share a news account of this orphanage. In the meantime, if you would like to send a gift for the orphanage, sponsor a child, invite Brother Lawrence to speak at a location near you, or just receive more information, please write or call using the address or phone number in the box at left.

Esther McDaniel



Edward



Reuben

Hearth to Hearth is published bi-monthly and sent free upon request. Voluntary donations are appreciated. All letters should be sent to *Hearth to Hearth*, P.O. Box 247, Pineville, WV 24874. Phone: 901-855-4805. E-mail: hearth@iswt.com. Publisher/Layout and Design Editor: Esther M. McDaniel. Printed by Smyrna Gospel Ministries.

Teens and Parents Ask **Father and Daughter Answer**

Dear Father and Daughter,

Will you accept a question from grandparents? We feel that our 15-year-old granddaughter's parents are far too permissive. They allow her to watch anything on TV that she wants to watch, and to talk on the phone with her boyfriend at any hour of the day or night. She chooses her own clothes, and many things she wears are either too tight, too short, too low-cut—well, you get the picture. As grandparents, should we voice our disapproval, or keep out of it?

Hurting and Worried

Dear H & W,

Your question could also come from the perspective of any family member or even a friend. It is a good question. I hope our response is just as good.

“Am I over-stepping my boundaries when I express my concerns about what is happening in another person's life?”

“If I do express those concerns what will it do to our relationship?”

These questions are similar to those I hear from family members and friends. It is evident to us that something is wrong. The parties involved cannot recognize the problem; therefore, it must be our duty to raise their awareness. This is especially difficult when a family member that we love so much is involved. Multiply that by one hundred when we realize that there are eternal consequences at stake.

I would not rush over to your daughter or granddaughter and point out what is wrong. Worse yet, don't attempt to drop “subtle hints” that are really not so subtle. It will only make them mad and you will be frustrated because “they are not getting it.”

I gave a talk a couple of Saturdays ago to a group that included parents, teachers and some grandparents. They wanted me to address the question, “What is going on with our youth?” I started my talk with a different question: “What is going on with the responsible adults?” That, to me, is a scary thought.

My suggestion would be that you be quiet; “bite your tongue.” (Someone has told me that “you can tell how much someone loves somebody by the number of teeth marks on their tongue.”) When I have interviewed teenagers who have “changed,” they have told me two things that brought about their change. One, there was someone that loved them unconditionally. Two, *that someone* was also praying for them.

There have been many times during the years that I have worked with the youth, that I wanted to point out to them how

ridiculous they looked and how harmful their behavior was to their development. However, I have kept quiet and stayed on my knees (in prayer). Sometimes they have come to me asking advice about the very thing that concerned me. To my amazement change took place!

Stop and think about how difficult it is for you to change yourself, and then remember that it will be even more difficult to change someone else. I must constantly remind myself, “They (the youth) haven't turned out, haven't finished growing up yet.”

Love still changes hearts.

Father

Dear Grandma,

I'm afraid that you have a very common problem. It's always easy to see the imperfections of other people and want to change them. It must be hard for you to just sit back and watch as your granddaughter goes down what you consider to be “the wrong path.” But, unfortunately, there's not too much that you can do.

If my grandmother, or anyone for that matter, approached my mother with her concerns for my behavior, I would be pretty upset. Most people, especially kids of your granddaughter's age, are going to feel resentment towards someone who would dare to pry and pass judgment where it's not wanted.

How well do you know your granddaughter? I mean really know her? Do you know what makes her excited? What her dreams are? If you're interested in her behavior you have to be truly interested in the rest of her as well. What makes her act that way? Can you see past her low-necked shirt and liberal behavior to find out what she's really like? You can't become her best friend over night, but once your granddaughter knows that you are sincerely interested in her life and what is best for her (get that? what's best for her, not what looks best to you), she will be much more open to discussion. Then an opportunity might arise in which you could kindly offer some of your advice. Until that day happens, and you have to realize that it might not, you should keep your opinions to yourself. Be nice and pray.

Daughter

Wee Wit & Wisdom

When my daughter was about four years old, she still had a hard time grasping the concept of marriage. I got out our wedding album, thinking visual images would help, and explained the entire service to her.

Once finished, I asked if she had any questions, and she replied, “Oh, I see, is that when Mommy came to work for us?”

From the Internet

Don't We All?

Author Unknown

I was parked in front of the mall wiping off my car. I had just come from the carwash and was waiting for my wife to get out of work. Coming my way from across the parking lot was what society would consider a bum. From the looks of him, he had no car, no home, no clean clothes, and no money.

There are times when you feel generous, but there are other times that you just don't want to be bothered. This was one of those "don't want to be bothered" times.

"I hope he doesn't ask me for any money," I thought.

He didn't. He came and sat on the curb in front of the bus stop but he didn't look like he could have enough money to even ride the bus. After a few minutes he spoke. "That's a very pretty car," he said.

He was ragged but he had an air of dignity around him. His scraggly blond beard kept more than his face warm.

I said, "Thanks," and continued wiping off my car. He sat there quietly as I worked. The expected plea for money never came. As the silence between us widened something inside said, "ask him if he needs any help." I was sure that he would say "yes" but I held true to the inner voice.

"Do you need any help?" I asked.

He answered in three simple but profound words that I shall never forget. We often look for wisdom in great men and women. We expect it from those of higher learning and ac-

complishments. I expected nothing but an outstretched grimy hand. He spoke the three words that shook me.

"Don't we all?" he said.

I was feeling high and mighty, successful and important, above a bum on the street, until those three words hit me like a twelve-gauge shotgun.

Don't we all?

I needed help. Maybe not for bus fare or a place to sleep, but I needed help. I reached in my wallet and gave him not only enough for bus fare, but enough to get a warm meal and shelter for the day.

Those three little words still ring true. No matter how much you have, no matter how much you have accomplished, you need help too. No matter how little you have, no matter how loaded you are with problems, even without money or a place to sleep, you can give help. Even if it's just a compliment, you can give that.

You never know when you may see someone that appears to have it all. They are waiting on you to give them what they don't have. A different perspective on life, a glimpse at something beautiful, a respite from daily chaos, that only you, through a torn world, can see.



Maybe the man was just a homeless stranger wandering the streets. Maybe he was more than that. Maybe he was sent by a Power that is great and wise, to minister to a soul too comfortable in himself. Maybe God looked down, called an angel, dressed him like a bum, then said, "Go minister to that man cleaning the car, that man needs help."

Don't we all?



[From: Inspirations <Join-Inspirations@simplelist.com>]

LOVE

I was hungry and you formed a humanities club and discussed my hunger. Thank you.

I was imprisoned and you crept off quietly to your chapel in the cellar and prayed for my release.

I was naked and in your mind you debated the morality of my appearance.

I was sick and you knelt and thanked God for your health.

I was homeless and you preached to me of the spiritual shelter of the love of God.

I was lonely and you left me alone to pray for me.

You seem so holy, so close to God; But I'm still very hungry, and lonely, and cold.

Selected

What Hinders Communication in Your Marriage?

Part II

Steve Carr

What helps build your ability to communicate?

Let's look at some of the most important ways to build your ability to communicate.

1. Establish intimacy with God and find His help for change. Here is where you get the power to change in the areas where you have been failing. When God is at work filling you with His love and teaching you His Word, you can't help but have something to talk about. Establishing this intimacy with God will inspire the most important communication between you, the sharing of spiritual things. When the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, they went everywhere sharing Christ. When they were commanded not to speak anymore in His name their response was, "We cannot but speak the things we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:20) God was at

When God is at work filling you with His love and teaching you His Word, you can't help but have something to talk about.

work in their lives and they had to share it with someone. David experienced the same drive to communicate what God was doing in his life. He said, "Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will declare what He has done for my soul." (Psalm 66:16) What is the Lord doing in your life? Are you sharing that with your mate? The kind of relationship you have with the Lord will naturally translate into your relationship with others and, especially, with your spouse. Your relationship and communion with Christ is where real communication with your mate begins.

If you are not walking with Christ at this time and have never made a personal commitment to Him, this is the primary reason why you are struggling in marriage and in your ability to communicate. He can dramatically change your entire life, but you will never experience it without a personal relationship with Him. You can start this relationship by simply acknowledging your sin to Him in prayer, asking Him to forgive you and come into your life. If you really want to change, He can help you do it. Take a moment right now to communicate with Him in prayer, and ask Him to come into your life. You won't be disappointed!

If you are a Christian, you can also be greatly hindered in your ability to effectively communicate by simply having sporadic devotions or no devotions at all. This is because

when you are spiritually dry, you will have no power or joy to communicate with others. Let me illustrate. Think of the times when you have struggled spiritually and you have seen another Christian in a store; what did you do? Did you run up to this individual with an overwhelming desire to fellowship, or did you turn and walk another way so you wouldn't have to talk to him? The answer is obvious. You don't want to talk to another person when you are discouraged or depressed; it's the last thing you want to do. When you aren't growing spiritually the same thing will happen at home. You won't have any desire to communicate with your spouse either. You will naturally retreat from communication with your partner.

Therefore, return to the Lord and ask Him for His help. Renew your relationship with Him, then the desire, power, and love you need to communicate with your spouse will begin to flow again.

2. Acknowledge your faults. This will take some brutal honesty in your own heart. Stop now and look back over your attitudes, words, and actions. Where have you been failing in your communication with your mate? You must first acknowledge your faults if you desire to see anything change.

Next, go and acknowledge these faults to your spouse, asking his or her forgiveness. Tell your mate that you truly want to change in these areas. Your spouse will probably be amazed that you would honestly confess to these things without being forced to do so. When you take this action, your ability to communicate will take a dramatic step forward. Acknowledging and reconciling your faults with your spouse is half the battle.

3. Spend time together. Once you have dealt with your failures in your attitudes, words, and actions, and have sought

Acknowledging and reconciling your faults with your spouse is half the battle.

God for His power and help, you need to take the opportunity to communicate. Do you set specific time aside to communicate? You did this before you were married. You talked on the phone every chance you could. You went out on dates and would talk about everything and anything for hours. Do you remember how romantic and how much fun it was to talk? This is what must happen again. How?

You need to start dating the one you love on a regular basis. Why not call your spouse and set something up today?

Then tomorrow, make a special effort to call your spouse again just to say, "I love you." Talk to your husband or wife about your upcoming date and your anticipation of being together. You may also try turning the T.V. off and sitting after dinner just to talk over your day. Take a bike ride or a walk together. You need to regularly set time aside to just be together because failure to do so is one of the fundamental reasons why many couples slowly drift apart. Other things soon take priority over being together, then slowly and imperceptibly the distance begins to grow. You can stop this drifting, but it takes constant vigilance to keep time together as a high priority.

Solomon and his wife had the right idea. The Shulamite requested of her husband, "Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away... let me see thy countenance, let me hear thy voice; for sweet is thy voice, and thy countenance is comely. (Song of Solomon 2:10,14)

Do you want the kind of romantic relationship Solomon and his wife had? Then, take the same action that they did, and you will afford yourself the best opportunity for real communication and romance. Is the voice of your spouse still sweet? It can be, if you will again make the same effort you did before you were married. Your spouse is worth the time and the effort!

4. Encouragement and praise. If you desire to build good communication with your spouse, try this strategy.

You need to regularly set time aside to just be together because failure to do so is one of the fundamental reasons why many couples slowly drift apart.

Each time you are together look for something that he or she has done well, and praise him or her for it. If you encourage the actions which are godly, loving, and responsible, you will build your mate up and build your overall communication.

This is what the Scripture teaches us to do. Paul says we must, "...Exhort one another daily..." (Hebrews 3:13) Speak the words that "...build others up..." (Ephesians. 4:29 NIV) Solomon declared that, "...A woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised." (Proverbs 31:30) This encouragement could again be equally given to women to praise their husbands. But, the question is, do you do this? One day Jesus Christ will say to you, "...Well done, good and faithful servant..." (Matthew 25:21) If Jesus considered these words important to say, shouldn't you do the same? Praise and encouragement are acknowledgments of your love and appreciation, which naturally build a person up.

How often do you say an encouraging word, or a "well done"? Your mate must do something right, responsible, or loving each day. Look for these things and then tell your spouse that you appreciate them. If harsh and critical words destroy your communication, think of what praise and appreciation will do. Take the time to talk and to spend time together. Be gracious with your words, and encourage instead of being harsh and critical; it will build your communication more than you could ever imagine.

Praise and encouragement are acknowledgments of your love and appreciation, which naturally build a person up.

Remember, "The words of a wise man's mouth are gracious..." (Ecclesiastes 10:12) Therefore be wise. Go and give a word of praise and encouragement to your loved one today.



[(c) 1996 by Covenant Keepers, a ministry of Pastor Steve Carr in Arroyo Grande, CA. E-mail: scarrck@lightspeed.net. Home Site: <http://www.covenantkeepers.org>]

Always

When your friends have trouble helping
And you can't see the road ahead,
Just turn your eyes above
And there you will always have a Friend.
When you can't see life's patterns,
Trials seem so rough,
And it seems that the mountain is too tough to climb up,
You think that you can't make it.
You just want to lie down and quit.
Then turn your eyes to Jesus and He will lift you up.
When you have a choice to make
And you need Someone to help out,
He will always be there to show you the right path.
He's your dearest Friend,
The One to always count on.
He won't turn away when you need Him to stay.
He will always be there to show you the right way.
Though pain may come, and death draw nigh,
He is the One that will carry you through
The trials of these days.
So when your friends have trouble helping,
And you can't see the road ahead,
Just turn your eyes above,
And there you will always have a Friend.

Mara Fuller (age 13 years)

Villy's Story:

Healing Love at "Day Break"

Cordella Brummett

Villmos was born April 7, 2000, at the hospital in Sighisoara, Romania. His mother was a Gypsy. As often happens in Romanian hospitals, after Villmos was born his mother slipped out of the hospital without the baby. She never returned. After a month or so, Villmos' parents were located. They made it clear that they did not want him. They already had all the children they wanted. Besides, Villmos was small and he had a large hernia.

At the hospital there are always many abandoned babies waiting for placement in the state orphanages, which are severely overcrowded and woefully understaffed. When food comes in to the orphanages, the workers often take it, as they do other goods. There is never enough food to go around, and it is common to have only one staff member for every 30 babies and children.

Because of the limited staff and other conditions, the children are tied to their beds. "That way they don't get in the way," said one of the workers. If a child cries too much, they are given drugs. "That makes them quiet," the worker said. The medication has the side effect of causing mental retardation. The cloth diapers are changed only twice a day. "It cuts down on having to wash so much," we were told. When there are not enough diapers, they are only changed once a day. The staff sometimes have to cut bed sheets into diapers. Bottles are placed in the babies' beds. If they can get to it, then they get fed. If they cannot reach it because of being too weak or being tied out of reach, they go hungry. In these conditions it is not uncommon for children up to 12 years old to still be tied in their beds, unable to walk, talk or feed themselves with a cup or spoon. It is so sad; the suffering of children in Romania.

Various organizations and individuals, especially from America, try to help with food, clothing and diapers, and conditions are improving bit by bit,

but donated materials seem to be used up as soon as they are received, and there is never enough.

In the town of Apold, a 26-year-old Christian Romanian lady, Ioana, operates Day Break, a private orphanage. By contrast, Day Break has one staff member for every four to six children. The babies are held while they are bottle fed by hand. All the children have age-appropriate toys. They have clothes. Their diapers are changed as often as needed. The school-aged children



Villy soon after he was brought to the orphanage.

attend school, where, this past year, they received high marks. They even take music lessons. At the good school in town, the children are divided into classes for the intelligent and for the simple. At first, certain people were not happy because children from the orphanage were attending classes alongside their children. Soon, though, it became apparent that Laura, in particular, was especially intelligent. She had already received education in math and English at the orphanage, and she was placed in the "intelligent class" along with children of prominent families. The teachers have expressed to Ioana

how happy they are to have Laura and other children from Day Break attending their school.

"It is a 30-minute drive to take the children to school," Ioana tells us, "and during this time we have our worship. I tell them a story with a spiritual application, and then we pray. The kids know songs, and they love to sing along with a tape we have. The director of the school," Ioana continues, "saw me saying goodbye to the children, and all of them running back to kiss me, and she was so emotional. She came to tell me that she had never seen such strong bonding between orphanage children and their 'adoptive' mother."

Now, to get back to Villy's story. Ioana already had a number of children at the orphanage when, in one crib at the hospital, she saw a small, dark-skinned Gypsy child. He had a large hernia. His skin hung loose over his bones. He was dehydrated and malnourished. At one-and-one-half months old, he was so very small, weighing only three pounds. His name was Villmos. When Ioana saw him she said, "I want to take that one."

Some asked, "Why him? He will be dead in two days! Why are you wasting your time on him? Take a child that will live."

"No," Ioana said, "this is the child I am supposed to take."

So Villmos went with Ioana. She worked with him day and night, getting him to take formula and drink fluids, and in a few days he seemed to be getting stronger. After Villmos had been at Day Break for two weeks he began having problems with the hernia. Ioana went back to the hospital and asked the doctor to sell her medications for Villmos. The doctor refused, saying, "Medicine should be used for the living children, not the ones who are going to die." Ioana came back to Apold and prayed for Villmos, whom she now called Villy, and continued to pray as she held him and coaxed him to take fluids.

Villy got well, and he began to grow! Then, like a flower seed in spring, Villy sprang up in height and put on weight. At Villy's first birthday he was nearly 20 pounds. He is now learning to walk. His mental and physical development are within normal range for his



age. He is a happy, active child who loves to play with the other children at the orphanage, and he loves Ioana, whom he calls Mommy.

The state orphanages in Romania are supported by tax money, while the orphanage in Apold receives funds from people like you and me. The current cost to operate Day Break Orphanage is approximately \$2000 per month for the 24 children currently there. Until the end of last year most of the funds came from "Day Break for Romania," an organization based in Holland. The founder and major contributor has since suffered a major personal financial setback, and most of the support for the orphanage now comes from individuals like you and me in Holland, Sweden, Belgium, Germany, America, and Romania. (Very few people in Romania can afford to donate money to help, as the average income is only \$75 per month.)

A mission trip is being planned for next summer for the purpose of spending about two weeks clearing land, tearing down an old building that is beyond repair, and painting and repairing an-

other building that is in need of maintenance. The goal is to have several small homes, each with "home parents," where orphaned children will be raised in a home environment rather than an institutional setting.

Ioana has dreams of starting a bakery and some other small industries to support the work of helping the children of Romania. My sister, Etha, who is now 17 years of age, has visited the orphanage, and she plans to go to Romania and



Above: Villy as a happy, healthy toddler.

help at the orphanage in the not-far-distant future. She works now on a farm here in America, and has learned much about growing food. She would like to help start greenhouses so the orphanage home parents could work outdoors in the fresh air and sunlight part of each day, and grow some of the food for themselves and the children. She would also like to help start a farm for the support of the orphanage.

Etha feels called to help God's children to the best of her ability.

I am planning a trip to Romania in November, and will take as many supplies as possible. In addition, I will be able to carry accumulated funds for the orphanage and thus avoid the costs of transferring monies by wire or mail. When anyone in our family makes a trip to Romania, we pack only one change of clothing for ourselves. We fill the rest of our luggage with things for the children, such as baby formula and other supplies that are needed. On the return trip, we bring back Romanian handcrafted items, such as hand knit sweaters and vests, beautifully hand carved wooden boxes and vases, as well as many other artifacts which are sold to raise money for the children's care.

We have received many requests for a catalog with pictures of the beautifully made Romanian handcrafts that we offer. As soon as we get such a catalog printed, it will be made available to *Hearth to Hearth* readers.

In addition to your prayers, the other major need of the orphanage is money for food for the children on a daily basis; in Romania, baby formula is very costly. Funds are also needed for the repairs and maintenance of the buildings.

Love and prayers saved Villy's life. Please pray for Villy and the other orphans in Romania.



[The fascinating story of Ioana's life and the events that led her to start Day Break will need to be told in a follow-up article. Please watch for it, and for a Day Break Orphanage update in a future issue of *Hearth to Hearth*. If you are able to help in a financial way, if you are interested in participating in the mission trip next summer, or if you would simply like to know more about the orphanage, its funding or its operation, please write to: Cordella Brummett, PO Box 14, Tappahannock, VA 22560, Phone: 804-443-3232, E-mail: cordellab@hotmail.com]

A Page from My Experience

Pay Attention!

Dorothy Manning

One day I discovered, to my surprise, that the joy in my life had been stolen. Once things had settled down and I had a little time on my hands, I was able to analyze what had taken place.

When my stepson, age 15, came to visit us several years ago, his father and I had been married only three months. (His visit is only incidental to the story; the reason I mention it is to illustrate the horrendous effect parents' actions sometimes have on their children.)

Our brief marriage was very stormy; we had been at odds with each other almost from the beginning. I was anxious that everything go well during my stepson's visit, and at the time he arrived, I thought we were getting along very well; in fact, it seemed that we even liked each other.

For the first week everything did go well, and peace reigned in our home. My heart was full of love and I fell asleep in the arms of my husband one night. The next morning we got up early and, once breakfast was out of the way, we went outside to work in the front yard.

An unfamiliar vehicle pulled into our driveway. A stranger stepped from the vehicle into the sunlight and came toward me calling my name. I walked forward to greet him and ask his business, and he told me that I was being sued. He handed some papers to me, returned to his vehicle, and left.

While this was happening my stepson, who did not know in advance what was to take place that morning, was standing over by the garage with my husband. Immediately he reacted with pain and began to cry. (I found out later that he tried to run away three different times within a few days of this incident.) I felt his pain, and I felt dazed.

What had just happened? It took a few minutes for me to gather myself together, and then I realized that I had just been served with divorce papers. Though I knew things were not going well in our marriage, divorce or separation had never been mentioned. The papers came as a complete surprise. It was a totally shocking, very nearly devastating experience.

Later, after things had settled down and I had a little time on my hands, I was able to analyze what had taken place. As I pondered my experience, trying to make some sense out of it, several thoughts came to my mind:

1. That must be what it will be like for those who are not expecting Him when Jesus comes.

The Bible says Christ's return will be as a thief in the night—unexpected. (See 1 Thessalonians 5:1; 2 Peter 3:10; Revelation 3:3 and 16:15.) We know He is coming, but we become too busy with our lives to recognize the signs and watch and be ready. If we are watching and waiting, that day will not overtake us as a total surprise. (1 Thessalonians 5:4-6).

What we need to do is PAY ATTENTION!

2. We must know whom we are following.

When someone is less than truthful, it is more difficult to discern his or her real character. Just because someone professes to be a Christian does not mean they are. This man I married had a Jekyll and Hyde personality. I should have been aware of it before we were married, but I quickly dismissed any suspicions that there might be problems. I should have heeded the warning; "Ye shall know them by their fruits." (Matthew 7:16)

John 10:4, 5 says: "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." Often we go about our busy lives and forget, put off, or lightly dismiss our own personal study and prayer time with God. Our eternal life depends on our knowing for a certainty whom we are following.

We must know our leader. PAY ATTENTION!

3. Why was I oblivious to the danger signals?

I have asked this question numerous times. Perhaps love really is blind. Perhaps I no longer wanted to be alone. Even now I am not certain. Whatever the reason, I believed a lie! I now know that communion with God and Jesus, through His Holy Word and through prayer, are the only ways I can regain the joy in my life.

Are we believing a lie of Satan? Are we deceived by his attractions? "...because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." (2 Thessalonians 2:10, 11) These lies can be so subtle, so very enticing. Do we have on the whole armor of God in order to withstand the enemy? (See Ephesians 6:11, 13-18.)

We must not believe a lie. PAY ATTENTION!

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear." (Isaiah 59:1) God can take this wretched experience of mine and turn it into a benefit for others. It could, perhaps, even be instrumental in salvation for my ex-husband and for myself.

Dear Lord, Thank you for showing your love and grace through all of earth's trials. Help me to submit my goals and my life to you daily, even moment by moment, and keep me in your arms of safety and love. Amen.

[Dorothy writes from Blue Lake, California. If anyone needs a friend, to speak with or to pray with, her number is 707-668-1777. If you prefer, you may write to: Friend in Need, 5978 Stover Road, Blue Lake, California 95525..]



There was One, Anna

Onycha Holt

Hers was an old love. A love that coalesced piece by piece into the sturdy tapestry it now was. Some might say their love had become a perfect match over the years, as a hand to a glove, but she knew His love had no match. To say that it did was to define it, to set limits and boundaries to it, and over the years she had learned that it could never be so. That was why she could only call their love a tapestry. Though unfinished, it was tightly woven and beautifully created. It was as a robe that had covered her, enveloped her, warmed her, and secured her for nearly eight decades. His love caused the stars to explode in brilliance, the grass to cool her tired feet, and music to flow from lilting melodies into unspeakable harmonies; but the great joy He experienced from these beauties was but a fragment of the exuberant joy He felt when she looked at Him in complete trust and peace. Their old love was always new and completely dependable.

At first she thought it all had died when her husband died. They had been married for only seven years. Just enough time to begin to understand each other's ways, to appreciate one another's strengths and to undergird each other's weaknesses. Theirs was a young love cut short. It was interrupted by devastating death, leaving her desperately alone. Or so she had thought.

True to His word (see Isaiah 54:5), God became her Husband, saw to her needs, and spoke with her time after time. Now, though she was bent and slow of stride, God and angels were her guides. And, though unseen, they were very close to her as she made her way through the temple that day.

Oh, who could have imagined a love so tender, so kind, so magnificent, as to give sight to her blind, old eyes! There before

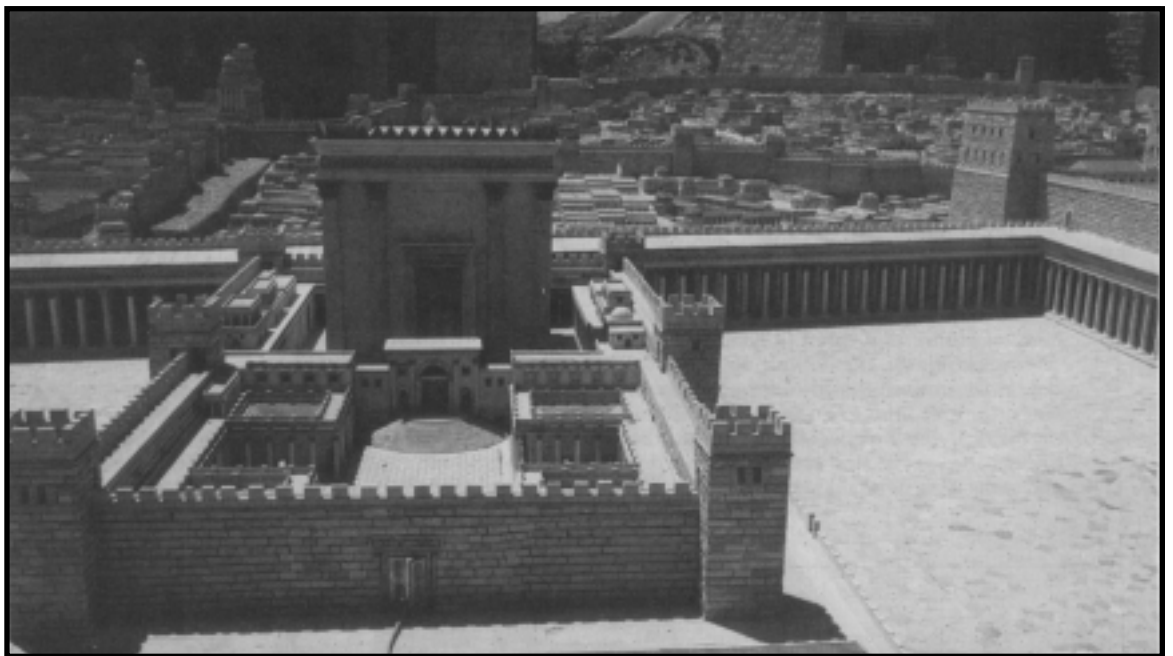
her was the promised Redeemer. To her it seemed the stars of heaven did dance in synchronous joy over this Child of heaven, this measureless Gift of God. Though frail of limb, her heart and voice did lift in praise to Him whose love was so great as to bend low to earth and grace every humble parent, every aged man and woman, and the poor unknowns of every generation with words of peace and goodwill to mankind.

Talking with Him later she wondered why He had so blessed and honored her. There had been many others in the temple that day, but none had stopped save Simeon. No one else had recognized the gift of heaven. Answering, He whispered to her in His still, small voice.

“This blessing was for you because of the great love we share, but it is not for you alone. It is to reach over to the very end of time to all those who too have an old, old love with Me, even to those who are stooped and frail. From you to them is this message sent—I love you. I love you just as much as Anna, and you too will see Jesus with your own eyes. Only this time you will see Him come as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. Be faithful, for it won't be long!”



[Onycha Holt writes from Camden on Gauley, WV. This “Encounter with Jesus” is based on Luke 2:36-38.]



Crisis Christians

Pat Kroeger

Many believers today have become what I call “crisis Christians.” These people live their Christian lives from one crisis to the next—not so much personal crises, but public, national and international crises—for in every crisis is the hope of the long-awaited “beginning of the end.” The “end” mentioned here is, of course, the end of this world when a victorious Christ will forever put an end to the power and rule of Satan. “Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power.” (1 Corinthians 15:24) For those faithful followers who endure to the time of the end for Christ’s sake, the promise is eternal life. “But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” (Matthew 24:13)

The “beginning of the end” is the sequence of prophesied events that will start the final process rolling and will culminate when this world and its inhabitants will meet its final destiny. Jesus Himself well documented for us the circumstances that will usher in His second coming, which we can read of in Matthew 24. Most Bible students are more than familiar with these events; a series of crises that include wars big and small, famines, pestilence, numerous earthquakes all over the world, murder in the name of God, hatred, deception, and betrayal. You can catch it all on the

evening news. (See Matthew 24:6-10.) As Christians anxiously await the promised return of their Savior we are commanded to be alert, and to be prepared, so that we are not taken unaware. “Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come... Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” (Matthew 24:42-44)

News and conspiracy rumors keep the heart and mind in a constant state of expectancy that something is going to break soon.

However, for crisis Christians the “watching” part seems nearly obsessive. s conspiracy rumors keep the heart and mind in a constant state of expectancy that something is going to break soon. In fact, clinging to a crisis helps to keep the spiritual hope alive that soon we will be going home to heaven. Soon we will see our heavenly Father, and it will finally be all over. For the crisis Christian, a crisis is all about motivation.

Well, “been there, done that, bought the tee shirt.” I understand what being a crisis Christian is all about because I’m also guilty of these same attitudes. I’ve also witnessed it in the lives of nearly every earnest Christian I know, though I suspect that most are unaware of it. Most of us are “trained” into this ideology as a consequence of our upbringing or our belief system. Unfortunately, when the “crisis du jour” passes without the signaled momentum to bring it all to a climax, the hope falters and the vision fades ever so slightly—until the next crisis comes to take its place. Yes, I think we crisis Christians have at one time or another all asked the question, “Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.” (2 Peter 3:4)

I believe the most anticipated crisis, the one most determined to start the world on its course to the end, was Y2K, the infamous Year 2000 Bug. Computers all over the world were to be rendered useless due to a confusion in the new millennial year date, programmed as “00.” Working for a computer software company, I knew first-hand the overwhelming problems associated with trying to prepare for the crossover. Scanning, analyzing, re-writing, and testing programs to correctly change the year date to a four digit format—and on time. We were just one small national company in a worldwide sea of computer businesses. The closer the deadline came, the more it was looking as if most wouldn’t become compliant (meet necessary requirements)



in time. Even for those seemingly few companies whose software was corrected, all was not well. A compliant computer still couldn't communicate with a non-compliant

Yes, I think we crisis Christians have at one time or another all asked the question, "Where is the promise of His coming?"

computer if it needed to do so. If this happened, it would cause the breakup of our computer-dependent society. For the crisis Christian, this was looking very promising!

Christians and non Christians alike began to look with uncertainty as their future loomed larger than life, and Y2K forecasters made their predictions. Researchers produced study after study that looked into every known angle, while degrees of severity were calculated under each possible scenario. Some preached "peace and safety." However, crisis Christians were not interested in peace and safety. They wanted to go home. They wanted the "beginning of the end." And, just maybe, if they wanted it badly enough, it would be true. Still, many more forecasters prophesied the coming of a crisis that would forever change life as we knew it. This is what we wanted to hear, and this is what we believed. It was really all we knew.

There were hard-core believers in the coming crisis and, of course, the scoffers. Though at first skeptical, as information came in, I fell among the "just in case" crowd. The prudent began making the needed preparations that

The biggest problem with Y2K was that it didn't happen.

would help ease the transition from life in the 1990's to life more like the 1890's. Naturally, our computer-driven society is not readily capable of returning to the harder conditions of the 1890's "cold-turkey"; we've forgotten far too much. This fact only ensured that the crisis would escalate. First, the government would demand intervention, then martial law would be imposed and, finally, the long-awaited "beginning of the end." The computer-doom was our ticket out. It was a crisis Christian's Utopia!

The biggest problem with Y2K was that it didn't happen. January 1, 2000, came and went without incident. Rumors immediately began to fly that insinuated a cover-up: Y2K problems were being kept from the public's knowledge. As time passed and there was still nothing, the truth began to slowly dawn. We weren't going home this time either.

With the lapse of time, life began to slip back into the old daily grind. Outwardly things looked much the same, but a closer look showed something had seriously changed. Somewhere in the shadows of the passing Y2K crisis, de-

feat had fallen over many believers. So it appears that, when Y2K died, the living hope of a coming Savior died with it. Y2K had bled off the last remaining drops of faith. It was the crisis that broke the believer's back. Oh, they may still cling loosely to the idea that the world will end *someday*, but there will be no more talk of another crisis, no more looking after those things that are coming on the earth. For the now ex-crisis Christian, the future is seldom contemplated in eternal consequences. Instead, the future now consists of starting a family, finding a better paying job, better



schooling for the children, saving for that new house, planning a college fund, investing for retirement...

So, with the dawn of a crisis-free conscience, many ex-crisis Christians began to fade into the woodwork of society, trying to recover from the open public shame and the deep personal disappointment that the absence of a Y2K failure brought them. Frankly, they had nowhere else to go. As I considered in my own understanding what happened—rather, didn't happen—with Y2K, and every other crisis before it, I've come to some very basic terms.

A little self-discovery helped me realize that the focus of life for a crisis Christian is more about just getting it over with and making it through the pearly gates of heaven. Of course, this includes that grand union with our loving heav-

A little self-discovery helped me realize that the focus of life for a crisis Christian is more about just getting it over with and making it through the pearly gates of heaven.

enly Father and our blessed Savior who purchased our redemption with His blood, but it's more a self-absorbing determination to be one of the privileged few who make it (Matthew 7:14), and especially the "elite" 144,000. In reality, it's earning that coveted ticket into the eternity.

Maybe it's a pride thing. The way this seems to be accomplished is by being more intellectual than the next guy, which is simply making sure *you* have *more* right doctrine. Of course, this requires a lot of deep study and analysis, and then trying to put all that doctrine into everyday practice—which is not totally a bad thing unless we believe that by so doing we will be saved.

If we think that *doing* something will save us, if we believe our salvation is in any way connected to our works, we are lost. Salvation is not something we can ever achieve. It is something we accept, just like the gift that it is; something that is done for us, and in us. Re-creation is to us just as the creation of this world was to Adam. When Adam woke up, the work was already done. He and his wife simply shared in the rest that the Creator enjoyed.

The bottom line is, if we think being a Christian is all about what is on the other side and what it is going to take to get us there, we have completely missed the boat. For those who woke up on January 2, 2000, so disappointed and disillusioned that they shrugged off their faith like a bad idea, the only thing they were really about was the crisis, not being a true Christian.

The truth of it is, if there was never the promise of heaven and eternal life the purpose of a true Christian should still be found in mirroring the life of Jesus by giving to and serving those around us. In fact, we should never



consider the prize of faithfulness as being material. The prize of the Christian life is the soul you can help rescue from the grip of Satan (including your own). It's delivering them from a life without peace and hope and purpose, and from a future of certain destruction. The blessing of the faithful is in knowing that our suffering Savior, whom we claim to love, did not die in vain.

Case in point: After the resurrection, Christ appeared to the disciples by the sea after their long, unsuccessful night of fishing. (See John 21) He filled the nets of the unsuspecting fishermen, then made them breakfast from the catch. Afterward Jesus had a serious talk with Peter. He

challenged Peter's love for Him by making a startling revelation. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not." This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken

The truth of it is, if there was never the promise of heaven and eternal life the purpose of a true Christian should still be found in mirroring the life of Jesus by giving to and serving those around us.

this, he saith unto him, 'Follow me.'" (John 21:18,19) Peter was just handed his death sentence on that sandy Mediterranean seashore. He now understood what his earthly walk held in store. Yet, he was still given the command, "Follow me." And that is precisely what Peter did. Knowing the outcome of his ultimate crisis, Peter continued to walk the walk. He followed in the footsteps of His Lord, devoting his life to service for the good of others and the church: the simple life of a Christian. For that, he is promised to receive the ultimate reward. We can be sure that Peter did not dwell on the crisis waiting at the end of his spiritual journey. His motivation was not found in "getting it right" before his name came up. His motivation was that he was in love with his Savior for all He had done for him. He simply shared with others the blessings he had received.

As Christians, we are all called to follow Christ. Over and over we find the command (see Matthew 4:19, Mark 8:34), "For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." (John 13:15) It is hard to accurately express in words and still do it justice, but the example of God's Son on this earth is not one of gloom and doom. His life did not focus on His own future crisis which was, indeed, larger than life itself. Neither was it focused on doing a good deed in order to win brownie points with God to save Himself. His soul actually delighted in relieving, physically, mentally, and spiritually, those among whom He

The example of God's Son on this earth is not one of gloom and doom. His life did not focus on His own future crisis.

lived. His compassion for even a single soul compelled Him to empty everything He had to offer—and what He had to offer was genuine love poured freely from His heart, the same genuine love He freely received from His Father. He fed the

hungry, led the lost, humbled the proud. He gave hope to the hopeless and love to the unlovely. (See Isaiah 61:1-3.) What He received, He gave freely in return. (Matthew 10:8) He constantly pointed their thoughts, not to their lost condition if they didn't shape up, or to the future seven last plagues, but to a loving and merciful heavenly Father.

While this concept is probably not new to us superficially, we still too often fail to see the depth of its meaning. What He *didn't* do was enter into intellectual doctrinal debates, splitting hairs over issues that were not essential to eternal life, then shunning those who didn't agree with Him. His was not a war with words, but a war fought and won by providing the most basic needs of the individual for their physical and spiritual well-being. In so doing He won many hearts for His Father's kingdom.

For the true follower of Jesus, it is never about making it to the destination, but about making a difference during the journey.

For the true follower of Jesus, it is never about making it to the destination, but about making a difference during the journey. It will always be about changing just a single life that may someday make up the treasury of the redeemed. It cannot be a lifetime of missed opportunities to help another because we are so wrapped up in our own lives to take notice. "Pure religion and undefiled before For the true follower of Jesus, it is never about making it to the destination, but about making a difference during the journey. It will always be about changing just a single life that may someday make up the treasury of the redeemed. It cannot be a lifetime of missed opportunities to help another because we are so wrapped up in our own lives to take notice. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." (James 1:27) "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8)

If we have failed to understand this and live by it, we have failed at our true calling as Christ-ians. Following the example of our Savior is about feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, leading the lost, giving hope to the hopeless, and love to the unlovely. (See Matthew 25:31-46) It's *not* about preaching to them about all the things they are doing wrong, or all the wrong things they believe. In a word, it is about loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, *and your neighbor as yourself*. (Mark 12:32-33) And this doesn't consist of sending a box of used clothing to the Goodwill, or dropping a few coins into the mission offering at church, or



giving those lovely tax dollars that support the welfare system. It's about being personally, lovingly involved on an ongoing basis. God has freely given us so much that we haven't deserved: love, forgiveness, hope, salvation through His own Son, and so much more that we don't even consider. We should freely offer the same, doing unto others as God has done unto us. Spiritual gifts are tricky that way. You only get to keep them if you give them away.

While allowing ourselves the luxury of remembering from time to time the promise that our faithfulness will consummate in life everlasting with God and His Son, we should be content in fulfilling our purpose on this earth by doing the very things that Jesus did. Doing these things, not in order to win points for heaven, but because our heart compels us to have compassion on those who are where we've been. This is where we will find our

God has freely given us so much that we haven't deserved... We should freely offer the same, doing unto others as God has done unto us.

greatest peace and happiness for our hearts are no longer focused on self. This *is* the effect of the Spirit of God living in us. And what more could a Christian desire? Heaven is merely the home of the faithful, not the reward of the determined.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I will come again**, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:1-3 emphasis supplied.)



[Pat Kroeger writes from Louisville, Kentucky]

Three Kinds of Givers . . .

Some witty person once said:

“There are three kinds of givers--the flint, the sponge, and the honeycomb.”

To get anything out of a flint you must hammer it, and then you get only chips and sparks.

To get water out of a sponge you must squeeze it, and the more you squeeze, the more you will get.

But the honeycomb just overflows with its own sweetness.

Some people are stingy and hard; they give nothing away if they can help it.

Others are good-natured; they yield to pressure, and the more they are pressed, the more they will give.

A few delight in giving, without being asked at all; and of these the Bible says: “The Lord loveth a cheerful giver.”

Selected

Hearth to Hearth Ministries

HC 64 Box 128-B

Welch, West Virginia 24801

U.S.A.

Address Service Requested

PRESRT STD
US Postage
PAID
Welch, WV
Permit # 35