

# Expository Files

Editors: Jon W. Quinn, Warren E. Berkley



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July 2009 ~ EF 16.7

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Front Page, Warren E. Berkley

## Parents & Priorities

Parents, what are your priorities in raising your children?

HOMework is a priority in most homes. Parents insist that their children do their homework every school night. Often, there is a requirement that the homework be done before any outdoor play, video games, TV or computer. Parents are thinking, not just about the immediate grades but the future academic success of their children. This is as it should be.

GETTING TO SCHOOL ON TIME is a priority. Most parents organize their morning around the goal of getting the children to school on time. Parents see the value of teaching their children to be punctual. And there is some fear that a tardy attendance record will reflect negatively on the children and their parents. I think this is wise. Teach children to be responsible and dependable.

MISSING SCHOOL ALTOGETHER without an “excused situation,” is also either discouraged or forbidden by most parents. If little Johnny gets up one morning and simply doesn’t want to go to school, his parents are probably not buying that. He is going to school. Skipping school is not an option in homes of caring parents.

**I have another question for parents: Do you maintain these same priorities about the spiritual education of your children?**

Do you require that your children read their Bible class lesson? When their Bible class teachers send assignments home or ask them to read passages – do you attend to that as you would math, grammar and science? Is there a rule, they must get their Bible lesson before playing, games, TV or computer?

Do you get your children to their Bible classes on time? Is that a priority? You want them to observe good punctuality at school. Does this apply to attending assemblies and classes at the local church?

Do you miss assemblies when you could be there? What does that say to your children? Could it say to them that *school is important, but church – not so much?*

**In 25 years, how do you think you will feel about how you raised your children?** Will you have highly motivated, successful business men and women who earn good money and have nice things, *but have no participation with God and His people?*

We are charged by God to “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord,” (Eph. 6:4). Now is the time to take all this seriously and act.

**The Judgment Of The Living & The Dead**

***1 Peter 4:1-8***

Warren E. Berkley

In our time, some very serious matters are commonly overlooked. In our culture there is a dominating influence of triviality and materialism. We have amazing tools of communication, but generally our tools are used in pursuit of trivial, worldly matters. One man observed – about our society – *Much of our time is used to listen to the buzz of the inconsequential. The buzz of the inconsequential is the media's essence.* Much of our time is invested in things that have no eternal value.

*“We are swamped by the inconsequential, bombarded by images and sounds that rob us of the opportunity for reflection and contemplation that are necessary to reacquaint ourselves with what is significant.” (T. David Gordan)*

**Part of this limited focus is we do not reflect on the dreadful seriousness of the coming judgment of God.** Here’s a passage that begs us to stop and consider, there is a Judge of the living and the dead, to whom we will give account. It is certain.

*<sup>1</sup>Therefore, since Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same mind, for he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, <sup>2</sup>that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. <sup>3</sup>For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. <sup>4</sup>In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you. <sup>5</sup>They will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. <sup>6</sup>For this reason the gospel was preached also to those who are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.*

*<sup>7</sup>But the end of all things is at hand; therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.*

*1 Pet. 4:1-7*

How many times last week did you think about the judgment day? Did you think about it during TV commercials, while browsing websites or waiting for the cell call to answer? If you thought of death, judgment and eternity on a serious level, what commitments came out of that devotion of thought?

One of our failings is we do not seriously reflect on the reality of the coming judgment of God. We are consumed with things present to the dangerous point; we ignore things eternal.

***Read About This***

**2 Cor. 5:10** – “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.”

**2 Tim. 4:1** – “I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom.”

**Heb. 9:27** – “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment...”

We need to face the reality of death, judgment and eternity. **And we can because of Christ.** The effective atonement of the cross means, we do not have to face death, judgment and eternity alone. As recipients of His forgiveness, we can be prepared to stand on the judgment day, John says, “with boldness.” “Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; because as He is, so are we in this world,” (1 Jno. 4:17).

**What Can I Do?** *Let's look back into the text, in 1 Peter 4.*

### **Cease From Sin**

Verse 1 teaches us to arm ourselves with a mind that is opposed to sin and quit it! I want to stress this is not just personal reform. This is something that can be done fully only by the individual who trusts in Christ. It can be done, because of the victorious work of Christ, in His death, resurrection and ascension to the right hand of God. You do not have to be a slave to sin.

The message of the gospel, based on the death of Christ is, **YOU CAN QUIT!** You can change. You can identify and expel from your mind – every wrong attitude and replace those with Christ-like attitudes. You can cleanse your use of your tongue, learning to say the right things at the right time and in the right way.

You can reject your obsession with material things and seek those things that are above. You can become a better giver, a better worshipper, a better friend, a better parent, wife and husband. You can become more involved as a team member in the local church. You can do all these things, if you will give your heart to the Savior.

You can face the giants in your life once you make certain of your commitment to Jesus Christ. He died for you so that you can give up sin and live right. If you believe that, you know you can cease from sin.

I tell you, there is something in the past, and something in the future that should become a powerful motivation. In the past – the death of Christ for you; in the future – your presence before God on the Judgment Day. Why is this important? We will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. To be ready for judgment and eternity . . .

### **Living For The Will of God**

*Verse 2: “that he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God.”*

Are you living your life “for the will of God.” Does your mind move in that direction? Do you think about this as your purpose? The, do you make choices, plans and changes in keeping with that? Is the will of God central to your life?

Jesus suffered for us in the flesh and His suffering lead to His death, so that we can live for the will of God.

That must be more than just a passing thought while listening to a preacher on Sunday morning, because we will give an account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead. “For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise,” (Heb. 10:36).

## There Are Things I Cannot Do

<sup>3</sup>For we have spent enough of our past lifetime in doing the will of the Gentiles—when we walked in lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. <sup>4</sup>In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.

This passage reads like a TV guide, a movie review, a list of websites or You Tube videos. Our society is absorbed and captivated by licentiousness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties, and abominable idolatries. This is what people laugh about . . . pay for . . . watch on TV . . . search the internet for . . .

And one of the real tragedies is this is the kind of conduct children see in many adults! This is spring break on South Padre Island. This is what's happening in stadiums, banquet halls and night clubs. This is what many people – who claim to be Christians – are doing on the week-ends.

Simon Peter is saying, **Enough of that.** Cease your sin, and live for the will of God, because you will give an account to “Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.”

Christ gave His life to save us from these degrading behaviors. If we know it is wrong and destructive let's make certain we oppose it and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. There is a dreadful seriousness about the coming judgment of God; we cannot take lightly.

## Be Serious & Watchful In Prayer

*Verse 7b – “...therefore be serious and watchful in your prayers.”*

What does it mean to be serious? To be serious means to be thoughtful, and to recognize what's important. It involves the ability to separate trivia from important matters. Not everything that

happens in your life and not everything that comes to your attention has the same significance.

A big part of maturity and an essential part of being a child of God is – being serious about matters which are important to God and eternal.

There is – as observed earlier – a dangerous absence of seriousness about the coming judgment of God. Whatever happens about the economy in this country or your personal economy, there are certainties to be reckoned with.

**We will die and there will be a judgment day.** You have to be serious about that. And what will help you with that spiritual discipline and maturity is prayer: speak to your Father, through Jesus Christ, about your state of mind, about where you need to be in heart and life – concerning death and eternity!

Thomas Kempis said:

You can be certain of this: when the Day of Judgment comes, we shall not be asked what we have read, but what we have done; not how well we have spoken, but how well we have lived.

## **Spiritual Correctness**

**Psa. 22:3**

**Brady Cook**

*“But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel”* (Psalm 22:3). Put that in your own computer and you will find a similar thing that I did: there are a lot of red lines under it. What does that mean? People just simply do not talk like that anymore. However, the message that David is expressing in this Messianic psalm is power packed with expressions that display grief, trust, and praise. His words shine forth as the very epitome of a body stricken with the harshest of persecutions but clinging to a faith that can not be shattered -- the same faith that we ourselves should also possess. And while we may harbor the same kind of things discussed in this psalm,

16th century language is usually not the mode in which we express them. So how do we talk about them?

In a world that is so jammed with spirituality and religion, it becomes easy for us sometimes to shy away from expressing things commonly associated with denominationalism -- phrases such as "prayer life," "trusting in God," and even "fellowship" become taboo subjects because of our fear of either misusing them or misrepresenting what they are. But God calls on us not to fear these things, but embrace them after we have a proper understanding of what they are. In 2 Timothy 1:6-8, Paul calls on the young evangelist to remember the gift (probably a spiritual gift) that he was given to use for the ministry, and Paul tells him two things. First, he reminds Timothy to "*kindle afresh*" the gift that was in him, signifying that he should stir it up and use it, making it the most effective that it can be in service to God. But secondly, Paul reminds him to "*not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord,*" a phrase that will bring to mind his other words in Romans 1:16-17. What Paul wants Timothy to understand is that belief and obedience to God is not something to shrink from, but to embrace it with both arms for the blessed salvation that it is.

You may be thinking, "Brady, what's the point?" Not too long ago I saw a young man that had recently started rekindling his own faith, and in response to something an older person said to him about his future, he said, "I'm really working on trusting God more with my life." Though the phrase was not unscriptural, it was uncommon, and caused the older person to react in a way so as to make the younger believe that he had said something wrong. But did he? Absolutely not, but rather responded in a way that should cause appreciation and love for his condition. In the epistles, Paul makes mention all the time about the graces, mercies, and lovingkindness that God has given him, his letters overflowing with such "unique" statements, showing that he truly is "not ashamed."

My first year at SFA, when I had just started to get to know everyone, one of the guys invited me and the rest of the college group to his house for a "prayer meeting." While this seemed weird at the beginning, I found it to be one of the highlights of the year, with all of us gathered together in spiritual fellowship and discussing the things



that we were praying to God about individually and as a group. Reading more into the book of Acts, you can find this kind of thing to be commonplace. In Acts 12, when Peter was freed from prison, the first place he went to was the house of Mary, where the disciples were gathered in prayer. In Acts 16, Paul finds a group of women that gathered by the riverside -- to pray. Later in that same chapter, when Paul and Silas were in prison, we find them -- you guessed it -- praying.

Brethren, this is not an article suggesting that we implement prayer more in our everyday lives, but rather a broader plea that we restore God to His rightful place: at the forefront of our everyday lives. While we may not be using 16th century language to discuss Him anymore, where have our mentions of Him as a real, living Being gone? Do we only talk about Him on Sunday in our hymns when we say that He is first in our lives, or do we think on Him daily? When someone has a problem, do we suggest self-help books first, or do we offer to pray with them? When we go through a time of trial, do we open up to others about our struggles with sin and ask for help, or do we cover it up, afraid to discuss it because it might be “hokey”? The Christian fellowship that we should enjoy as brothers and sisters is one where we express our struggles, our fears, our joys, and our hopes, all in a spiritual context, openly and freely with one another (Deuteronomy 6:8).

**I Will Go Down With You Into Egypt**  
**“I will also surely bring you up again”**  
**Genesis 46:1-4**

By Jon W. Quinn

I suppose it was a bit disconcerting for Jacob to pull up stakes and head from Canaan, the land of promise, on down to Egypt. Of course, he is looking forward to being reunited with his long lost, and thought to be dead, son Joseph. Even at this time, poor old Jacob is having a difficult time forcing himself to believe the good news that Joseph is alive after all these years.

Jacob is old, and he knows that this trip to Egypt will probably be his last earthly journey. There will be no return to Canaan during his lifetime. But Canaan is the land of promise. God had promised to give it to Jacob's grandfather, Abraham. The promise had been renewed by the Lord to Jacob's father Isaac. And, Jehovah had also made the promise to Jacob himself. But now they were leaving the land in which his family had prospered in times past but was presently suffering from great famine. They were heading for Egypt where there was food, thanks to God's providential care and plan through Joseph, now a mighty ruler.

### **Jacob's Final Worship In Canaan**

“Israel set out with all that he had, and came to Beersheba, and offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac.” (Genesis 46:1).

Jacob (Israel) worshiped God at Beersheba (in Canaan) for a final time. Think of this. Due to the terrible famine, Jacob is leaving the land of promise. But before leaving Canaan, Jacob worships God. What is on his mind?

I recall several occasions where, before moving our family to a distant place, I have gathered with brethren for perhaps the final time on this earth to worship our God together. Soon the familiar faces, voices and location would be a memory. It is a very emotional thing.

Now, it is true that Jacob's extended family (about seventy people) will be moving with him. But the land, the birthright and the blessing he had received from his father Isaac, and all the promises of God involved in those things, seem now to be growing even more remote. What do you suppose Jacob is pondering during his final worship time in Canaan?

### **God Knows and Answers**

God knows what Jacob is thinking about. God, in dealing with the patriarchs of old, occasionally communicated directly to them. In the New Testament, the Hebrew writer discusses how God once

communicated with man in this way, but does not any longer, instead communicating His will to us through the words of the covenant of His Son Jesus (Hebrews 1:1-3).

Jehovah God, knowing Jacob's concerns and thoughts, reassured him.

"God spoke to Israel in visions of the night and said, "Jacob, Jacob." And he said, "Here I am." He said, "I am God, the God of your father; do not be afraid to go down to Egypt, for I will make you a great nation there. I will go down with you to Egypt, and I will also surely bring you up again; and Joseph will close your eyes." (Genesis 46:2-4).

It is from the Lord's reassurances to Jacob that we are enlightened as to what Jacob was thinking. Jacob was afraid that leaving the land of promise might somehow render the promise null and void. The Lord assures Jacob that such is not the case and he need not be afraid to go down to Egypt. God will still be with Jacob, he will one day return to Canaan and it will be Joseph who will be present with Jacob when he dies.

God will fulfill a part of His promise while the family is in Egypt, They will enter Egypt as a family clan of seventy nomads (Genesis 46:5-7; 27). Their descendants will leave Egypt as a great nation (recall the original promise made to Abraham (Genesis 12:2)).

God also promises Jacob that He will bring them back to Canaan from Egypt. How God accomplishes this will be seen in future Biblical history, and seems to be left as a mystery to Jacob. The exodus will not occur for another 400 years, but it will occur.

## **Reunion**

At long last, Jacob arrives in Egypt and is reunited with his son, Joseph. The stories that Joseph yet lives, which Jacob would scarcely allow himself to believe lest they fail to be true and he be heart-broken again, were true after all.

Joseph prepared his chariot and went up to Goshen to meet his father Israel; as soon as he appeared before him, he fell on his neck and wept on his neck a long time. Then Israel said to Joseph, "Now let me die, since I have seen your face, that you are still alive." (Genesis 46:29-30).

### **To Canaan's Land**

Jacob's family take up residence in the land of Goshen, an area of Egypt. Jacob dies in old age, and his body is returned to Canaan by Joseph for burial.

God, of course, already foresees the exodus, though it is still 400 years in the future. What seems like a very long time to men is nothing to God. God works His plan in His own appointed way and time, and always fulfills His promises. There are going to be some dark days in Israel's future, when the promise of their own land in Canaan seems very remote. But that day will come!

And now, the Lord has appointed yet another day and has told us to watch for it, promising us a new, spiritual Canaan. This promise, too, will be fulfilled. We are looking for the heavenly Canaan, and we will reach it one day by faith, and though some of our days here between now and then may be dark as well, there is nothing that can be so dark so as to nullify the promises of God (Acts 17:31; 2 Peter 3:8-13; Hebrews 12:26-28; 11:22; 13-16). Again, that day will come when with new eyes we will behold the home God has prepared for us!

### **Subservient Truth? Matthew 16:1-11 By Allen Dvorak**

The scribes and Pharisees were apparently often scandalized by the behavior of Jesus and His disciples. On one occasion, the scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus, criticizing His disciples for not washing their hands according to the tradition of the elders (Matthew 15:1-11). Jesus

responded to their criticism by asking them why they transgressed the commandment of God by their tradition. The scribes and Pharisees taught that a person need not “honor his father or mother” as long as he devoted his possessions to God. In that way, he could set aside the commandment to honor his parents, thus making the commandment of no effect.

Jesus described the scribes and Pharisees as hypocrites for such behavior and told them that their worship of God was “in vain” as long as they continued to teach the doctrines of men as though they were the commandments of God (vs. 8-9).

The disciples came to Jesus later and said to him, “Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?” (vs. 12). Jesus, however, was apparently not interested in modifying His teaching to mollify the Pharisees. He responded, “Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch” (vs. 13-14).

Contrary to the attitude of our present “pc” culture, truth doesn’t bend to avoid offending anyone. Those who preach the divine truth are obligated to present it in its purity and entirety regardless of who likes it or doesn’t like it.

The pages of Scripture contain many examples of individuals who presented God’s truth to others even in the face of disapproval or possible persecution. Moses rebuked the people of God for their unbelief and idolatry (Exodus 16-17; 32). On more than one occasion the people complained against Moses as though he was responsible for their circumstances and even threatened to stone him and Aaron (e.g., Numbers 14:10). The courage of Moses is seen in his determination to speak to the people according the word of the Lord.

The prophet Jeremiah lived to see the end of the southern kingdom of Judah. In fact, after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar and the subsequent assassination of the governor appointed by the Babylonian king, those Jews left in the land came to Jeremiah and asked him to inquire of the Lord regarding the decision to flee to Egypt or remain in the land (Jeremiah 42). They claimed to be willing to allow the Lord to make the decision for them. They told Jeremiah, “Let the Lord be a true and faithful witness between us, if we do not do according to everything which the Lord your God sends us by you. Whether it is pleasing or displeasing, we will obey the voice of the Lord our God to whom we send you...” (42:5-6).

When Jeremiah brought back the word of the Lord (“stay in the land – don’t go to Egypt”), it didn’t fit the decision they desired and so they refused to follow the Lord’s word (42:20-43:4).

One example of the integrity of Jesus in confrontation with the scribes and Pharisees has already been cited in this article. Space will not permit a recitation of all the occasions on which Jesus spoke uncomfortable truth to His detractors, the very ones in Israel who claimed to have such a love for God’s truth. Even among the multitudes who followed Jesus, there were many who complained about His teaching (John 6:60-61). Their displeasure with some of the things that Jesus said was such that they “went back and walked with Him no more” (vs. 66). There is no indication that Jesus changed His message to make sure that such an “exodus” never occurred again!

The apostle Paul wrote some blunt things to the Galatians who were turning away from the gospel of Christ to another gospel (1:6-7). Paul asked his Galatian readers, “For do I now persuade men, or God? Or do I seek to please men? For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ” (1:10). As he wrote to them about the foolishness of turning back to the Mosaic Law, he asked them, “Have I therefore become your enemy because I tell you the truth?” (4:16).

Unfortunately, there apparently have always been those who will preach whatever others want to hear. The story of Micaiah is quite interesting. Ahab, king of Israel, was planning to go into battle with Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, against the Syrians. Four hundred prophets were consulted regarding the success of their joint venture and, to a man, they predicted victory (1 Kings 22:5-6, 12). One of the prophets, Zedekiah the son of Chenaanah, even emphasized the message with a “powerpoint” presentation; he made horns of iron and said, “With these you shall gore the Syrians until they are destroyed” (vs. 11). Jehoshaphat, however, wanted to hear from a prophet of the Lord and Micaiah, son of Imlah, was summoned. As he made his way to the kings, he was encouraged by the kings’ messenger to say what all of the other prophets had said. Micaiah’s response was that he would speak whatever the Lord spoke to him (vs. 14). At first, Micaiah said the same thing as the other prophets – “Go and prosper, for the Lord will deliver it [Ramoath-Gilead – asd] into the hand of the king” (vs. 15b). Ahab wasn’t accustomed to hearing anything good about himself from Micaiah and so he demanded “nothing but the truth in the name of the Lord” (vs. 16). Micaiah then told the two kings the truth - they were headed for defeat; Ahab would be killed in battle. Ahab asked for the truth, but didn’t like it much when it was presented to him. He made arrangements for Micaiah to be put into prison with a bread and water diet until he (Ahab) returned from battle (vs. 26-28). Presumably, Micaiah remained in prison...because Ahab died in battle even as the prophet had predicted. Micaiah must have known that the truth would not be appreciated by Ahab, but he was determined to “speak whatever the Lord says to me.”

In our day, the pressure for churches to grow in number is intense. Expanding the membership is seen as so important that many preachers will craft their messages in such a way as to avoid offending anyone, particularly prospective members. Don’t talk about divorce. Make discipleship sound like a casual weekend hobby. Be careful about being explicit concerning the sanctity of human life. Vagueness regarding individual responsibility for sin helps membership drives. Emphasize faith and say as little as possible about water baptism for the remission of sins. We need numbers!

The truth must be presented in love, but it must be presented in its purity. God uses His truth to weed out those who are not willing to be disciples of Jesus Christ. Genuine disciples love His truth and are determined to apply it to their lives regardless of the changes it demands.

Topic Page

**We Need A Generation**  
**by Joshua Welch**  
{From Our Good Fight, June '09}

Mighty Moses led Israel out of Egyptian bondage to the brink of Canaan's land. Yet, the conquest of Canaan took place under the leadership of Moses' successor, Joshua. The nation of Israel enjoyed great success through Joshua. Unfortunately, the fruits of their labor were short-lived. Judges 2:10 describes Joshua's generation and the one to follow saying, "*When all that generation had been gathered to their fathers, another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord nor the work which He had done for Israel.*" The consequences of these negligent heirs are seen throughout the book of Judges as the younger generation of Israelites endured a repetitious cycle of oppression due to their trademark faithlessness.

Can New Testament Christians today make parallels to post-Joshua's Israel? In order for Christianity to succeed, we must "commit" the teachings of Christ to "*faithful men who will be able to teach others also*" (2 Tim2:2). If this "next generation" fails to absorb these teachings, it will lead, as in the days of the judges, to spiritual devastation. Another generation will arise, but how can they avoid the stigma of the post-Joshua generation? Christians today can find helpful warnings by going back to the root problems of this evil generation. By doing so, let us affirm...

*We need a generation of separation!* Joshua's final speech commends Israel's diligent work in driving out the foreign nations from their



allotted territory (see Joshua 24:18). Yet, in the book of Judges, it is repetitiously observed that the next generation did not separate themselves from the influences of these pagan nations (see Judges 1:19, 21, 27, 29, 30-32, 34). Israel's refusal to separate themselves had consequences (Judges 2:2-3). Sadly, all of the sacrifice and work of the previous generation was ruined by the compromise of the upcoming generation. If the church today expects to enjoy the successful growth of yesteryear, Christians must part company with sinful influences. Many young Christians deceive themselves into thinking they may behave with loose morals, talk with untamed tongues and live by the ungodly standards of the world around us. We will never truly win the world to Christ by living the same way the world lives! With reference to the sinful world around us we must be non-conformists (Rom 12:1-2). The "*friendship of the world is enmity with God*" (Js 4:4). Paul bluntly demands, "*Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you*" (2 Cor 6:17). Christians must be different.

*We need a generation of Reflection!* We tend to think progress always means forging ahead and never looking back. Yet, when someone heads down the wrong path, the best idea may be to backtrack and find out where they took a wrong turn. Post-Joshua Israel would have been wise to have gone back and reflected upon the words of their aged leader. Joshua declared he would "*put away the gods*" Israel had compromisingly served "*on the other side of the River and in Egypt*" (Joshua 24:14). The choice for Joshua and his house was "*we will serve the Lord*" (24:15). It is easy to think of older Christians, aged elders and old-time preachers as outdated and out of touch. Yet, it may just be those aged souls are the very ones with wisdom to see the danger of current trends. Joshua, in his final speech, may have seen how Israel was tempted to go back to the pagan gods of their past. He was worried all of Israel's hard work would be ruined by an imperceptive generation. Likewise, older Christians who have sacrificed to establish and maintain local congregations do not want to see their work destroyed. Thus, their advice and their warnings should be heeded with serious introspection and reflection if we expect to build where they have left off. As individuals and churches, the key to moving forward is sometimes taking a step back!

*We need a generation of restoration!* Those in Joshua's day made a pledge and promise to completely devote themselves to the Lord (see Joshua 24:16-21). Their restoration of God's order was paramount to their success. If the next generation wanted to enjoy a similar success, they needed to renew their forefathers' promise. We could solve many ills if we would go back to God's Word and simply devote ourselves to it. Our nation is divided over many moral and ethical issues and many take their stand with the divergent views of political parties. Yet, if we would all restore ourselves to the truths of God's Word, we could find common ground on many of the key issues which divide our country. Churches are divided over doctrinal issues and many proclaim their creed or body as being greater than another. Yet, if we would commit ourselves to the law of Christ instead of the creeds of men, we could bring healing to the fractured religious scene of our day. Families are being wrecked by rampant immorality. Yet, how many family woes could be avoided if we would rededicate ourselves to the moral laws of Jesus Christ and His apostles? A nation, church, family and individual built on God's Word will resiliently endure the storms of life if completely built on the foundation of truth (see Mat 7:24-27)!

*We need a generation of proclamation!* In Joshua's day, he made a monument proclaiming the vow of the people (Jsh 24:25-27). This monument was to be a memorial of their contract with the Lord. Yet, building a memorial alone must not have been enough. After all, the next generation "*did not know the Lord*" (Jdg 2:10). Could it be the message behind the memorial was not being declared enough to the next generation? The beauty of a memorial is what it memorializes! The symbols of Christianity are everywhere for the world to see. Crosses hang from necks and are tattooed into people's skin. The Lord's Supper is taken every Lord's day by faithful Christians. Baptism is symbolic of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. Yet, the mere symbolic staples of Christianity are not enough to win the next generation. We must understand and proclaim "*the message of the cross*" (1 Cor 1:18-21). Christians must realize and proclaim the meaning of Christ's shed blood (Mat 26:28). The next generation needs to know the meaning of our own death, burial and resurrection

to “newness of life” in baptism (Rom 6:3-6). The failure to comprehend such meaningful symbols will lead to a generation of traditionalized Christians unable to proclaim the message of Christianity. It is easy to pinpoint the mistakes or gloat of the success of generations past. However, each generation must make its own mark. If the rising generation of Christians expects to look back upon its mark with a sense of joy, we must be a generation of separation, reflection, restoration and proclamation. It is wonderful to know another generation of young people is in place to follow the pilgrims of yesteryear. Yet, how much more wonderful will it be if the next generation embraces the spirit of their faithful service as it does the work God calls it to do? What kind of generation will we be?

See other good articles from this source at: <http://ourgoodfight.com/>

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

### Plan #1

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

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ -- this Jesus whom you crucified." Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said to them, "Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (Acts 2:36-38).

### Plan #2

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

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

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

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## **Moral Excellence** **By Jon W. Quinn**

Would you hesitate to declare your important beliefs if they were unpopular? If standing for your convictions meant you would have to suffer, would you be bold or silent? When it comes to faith in Christ, Christians ought to be willing to declare their faith. Christians ought not to be so afraid of the enemies of the cross that their faith remains undeclared.

Every day it seems I see or heard something that suggests to me that I really need alot of "arete".

The Greeks referred to this attitude of living by and declaring one's convictions, even if unpopular, as "arete". In the Bible, this word is translated into our English words "integrity", "virtue" and "moral excellence". It refers to strength of character; an active quality which requires courage and energy. The Lord tells us to grow in this characteristic, and it is listed right next to the word "faith (see 2 Pet. 1:5-11).

You see, God does not compromise when it comes to righteousness. He can be trusted absolutely because He never lies. Men and women may compromise their convictions under pressure or deny their faith under threat - but not the Lord! Remember the cross He faced! He would not compromise the truth.

Our nation is undergoing a sort of "culture war" and the result it seems is that worthy and honorable principles, ideals , attitudes and beliefs which were at one time more or less typical of most are now on the fringe. There is much in society today to pressure us to deny the Lord.

If we refuse, we will be in the minority. We should no longer maintain the illusion that what was once typical still is yet today.

We are not born with this “arete”, or integrity. We must develop it by choosing to live right before God and then following through on that decision. Like the apostles, for example. They had been arrested and stood before the judgment council. The crime? - they were teaching others about Jesus. The council forbade them to do so ever again, and they answered, “We must obey God rather than men!” (Acts 5:29). That is moral excellence.