

Expository Files 11.8

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Editors: Jon W. Quinn, Warren E. Berkley

Front Page –

"If You Did Not Vote To Defend the Sanctity of Marriage..."

By Jon W. Quinn

On March 31st of this year (2004), The Georgia State House of Representatives passed a state constitutional marriage amendment. This means that come this fall, it will go to the voters who will determine by popular vote whether it becomes law or not. Utah has already done the same, and more states may follow.

The amendment stipulates that marriage is between a man and a woman. Not everyone accepts this anymore. From the very beginning, God has defined marriage as being the joining of a man and a woman into a unique partnership. We read, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh." (Genesis 2:24). In teaching on this very thing, Jesus said, "And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, "for this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh?" (Matthew 19:4,5).

No court in the land, on whatever level from county to the Supreme Court, can really change what God has ordained. Abraham Lincoln once asked, "If you call a dog's tail a leg, then how many legs would a dog have?" His opponent answered, "Five". Lincoln said, "No, he would still only have four legs, because a tail is still a tail no matter what you call it."

And a union between two males or two females is still not a marriage no matter what we may call it. Both God the Father and God, the Son have already sanctioned and defined marriage, and therefore have taken its definition forever out of the realm of civil law. Oh, a judge can call a

homosexual union a marriage, but it isn't. A higher Judge has already spoken.

Back to Georgia. Liberals consider such an amendment which defines marriage the same way God does as a defeat. The House Legislative Black Caucus, one such liberal group, had tried and failed to defeat the bill. However, many black religious leaders, concerned about the nation's drift away from God, fully supported the bill. Some 30 of them had signed a letter to the legislators which stated in part, "If you will not vote to defend the sanctity of marriage, you have forfeited your right to serve in our state because you certainly do not represent the people who elected you." In the house vote, four black house members broke rank and their votes guaranteed passage of the bill.

The Lord Bless and Keep You
(Numbers 6:22-27)
By Jon W. Quinn

God had promised Israel during Moses' leadership that one day He would raise up another leader like Moses (Deuteronomy 18:15-18). This promise is announced as fulfilled in the New Testament with the coming of Jesus (Acts 3:18-26). Certainly Jesus is like Moses in many respects; for example, as Moses led people out of bondage in Egypt so also Christ Jesus frees us from bondage to sin. Also, Moses chose to leave the luxury of Pharaoh's palace and suffer hardship with his people, and Jesus chose to leave heaven and dwell on earth as a man.

But it is important to understand that while there are similarities, there are also great differences. The Book of Hebrews emphasizes some of these differences such as the fact that Moses was God's servant but Jesus is God's Son (Hebrews 3:1-6).

As our text we will consider an event in the life of Moses when the Lord spoke to him and told him to give Aaron, the high priest, some instructions. The text is found in Numbers 6:22-27:

"Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, 'Speak to Aaron and his sons, saying, "Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them:

The Lord bless you, and keep you;

The Lord make His face shine on you,

And be gracious to you;

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you,

And give you peace."

So they shall invoke My name on the sons of Israel, and I shall bless them."

According to Jewish writings, this benediction was quoted daily in the temple as well as in the synagogues. The words of this blessing, given through the mediator Moses, become even richer when we consider them in relationship to our new mediator and leader like Moses, that being Jesus Christ. In the light of the new covenant, which is a better covenant with better promises (Hebrews 8:6) we, as Christians, have much to rejoice about!

THE LORD'S BLESSING

"The Lord bless you..." (Numbers 6:24a). The blessings of God, spiritual and physical, ought never to be taken for granted. This benediction recognizes the source of all good things as being God (cf. James 1:17). No doubt the people under Moses' leadership thought of the blessings God had promised them if they would continue to obey Him faithfully. He had promised that "if you will diligently obey the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments..." that "... all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you." (Deuteronomy 28:1,2). Then the blessings are described. They would be blessed in city and country; in their offspring and the offspring of their flocks and crops and in protection from their enemies. The Lord would make them "abound in prosperity" (Deuteronomy 28:3-14).

Jesus' blessings for us today emphasize the spiritual rather than the physical. While He gives certain assurances in the physical realm, His sacrifice on the cross had to do with restoring us to spiritual life and giving us spiritual bread and water so we need never hunger or thirst again (John 6:27-35). Jesus makes a point that the world often overlooks. He could have made it His business to provide physical blessings the way Moses had (vs 31, 32) but Jesus was providing something better. This is because those who emphasize their physical needs and desires over their spiritual needs will only grow hungry again and ultimately perish whether they have something to eat or not. But those who partake of the bread of life will live forever.

THE LORD'S KEEPING

"...and keep you." (Numbers 6:24b). The idea of "keep you" is divine protection. In Moses' time, this would refer to protection from hostile invasions and drought and things chiefly of a physical nature. However, again the emphasis shifts in the New Testament and deals more with spiritual protection. One good example of this is the figure of speech that Jesus uses to describe His relationship with His disciples. He is the "Good Shepherd" and we are His sheep. He knows His own, and His own know Him. He lays down His life for his sheep so that they may be protected from the robber or the wolf. His sheep hear His voice and follow Him, and as long as they do, He keeps them safe promising them eternal life (John 10:1-16; 27,28).

THE LORD'S SHINING FACE

"The Lord make His face shine upon you..." (Numbers 6:25a). The Lord's face is depicted as shining in several places in the Bible. It shines with a tremendous radiant glory, instilling awe in His creatures. We recall how even Moses' face once shined after communicating with the Lord.

However, there is more to it than that. The blessing asks the Lord to make His face "shine upon you." This suggests a pleasure or warmth of association with the Lord. Awareness of God's presence brings comfort to the faithful.

We also recall how Jesus was transfigured in the New Testament. Peter, James and John were awe-struck when they beheld the Lord. The Bible says, "And He was transfigured before them; and His face shone like the sun, and His garments became as white as light." (Matthew 17:2). Paul, in encouraging faithful living on the part of Christians and a warning against being lulled back into the world, later wrote "Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." (Ephesians 5:14).

THE LORD'S GRACIOUSNESS

"...And be gracious to you;" (Numbers 6:25b). Certainly God favored the faithful of Moses' era with mercy and blessings. Our God is a God happy to give good things to His children. The nation of Israel never did better than during those times when it was loyal to God. Neither will our own nation, and the same thing applies to individuals.

The supreme example of God's graciousness is not found in the sun or rain or crops or physical prosperity. We thank God for these things; but as wonderful as they are they pale when compared to the favor God bestows upon us through His Son Jesus. It is this inner wealth that is most important; the blessings of spirit which God abundantly gives. "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32).

THE LORD'S COUNTENANCE

"The Lord lift up His countenance upon you..." (Numbers 6:26a). This phrase suggests the opposite of "hiding His face from you" which the Bible also uses (Isaiah 54:6). It suggests His interest as well as His readiness to help. It is a look of approval that the Lord gives to those who live by faith.

The Lord watches His people today as well. Again, it is a look of approval that the Lord gives His people. He knows what we endure for His namesake. He will not forget our work and love (Hebrews 6:10) and will one day welcome the faithful home with the words; "Well done!" It is a wonderful thing to know that the Lord approves of the way we are using our talents, opportunities and lives.

THE LORD'S PEACE

"...And give you peace." (Numbers 6:26b). This peace denotes stability and calmness. Isaiah wrote, "The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in perfect peace, because he trusts in Thee. Trust in the Lord forever, for in God, the Lord, we have an everlasting Rock." (Isaiah 26:3,4).

Jesus is our Rock, and gives peace as well. A solid foundation is needed for stability, and there is none sounder than that of the Living Word of God. Jesus promises peace, and since He is the Prince of Peace we can be sure of His promise. In this mad, crazy world, we are sorely in need of this calm assurance and peaceful confidence. Your friends, family and neighbors need it as well. "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:6,7).

Keeping The Love Alive (1 John 4:19)

By Zeke Flores

The American statesman and lawyer William Jennings Bryan was having his portrait painted when the artist asked why his subject wore his hair long over his ears. Bryan responded, "There is a romance connected with it. When I began courting Mrs. Bryan, she objected to the way my ears stood out. So, to please her, I let my hair grow to cover them." "But that was many years ago," said the artist. "Why don't you have your hair cut now?" "Because," Bryan winked, "the romance is still going on!"

It's obvious that the statesman thought of his love for his wife regularly and made his decisions to correspond to and affirm that love. What about your love for the Lord? Is the romance still going on?

When most people first come to Christ and are baptized for forgiveness of their sins, there is an exhilaration in knowing they are part of God's family and their sins are washed away. Their hearts overflow with love for Him and they long to please Him in the things they do.

As time passes, however, the zeal cools, the exhilaration wanes, and the flames of love smolder and die. It's the kind of thing that, though felt inside, is manifested externally. Prayers drop off because you can't think of anything to say to God, Bible reading is neglected because you don't think God has anything to say to you, and worship attendance lapses because you just don't feel like worshipping Him. As the Righteous Brothers used to croon, you've lost that lovin' feelin'! The question is, how do you get it back?

First, consider that love to God is a response to His love for us. John writes, "We love Him, because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19) But how does He love us? The psalmist writes all about God's love in Psalm 139 although the word "love" is not mentioned once. David writes that God knows us intimately (vss 1-6), He's with us everywhere (vss 7-12), He Himself has formed us (vss 13-16), and because He thinks of our well-being, He provides strength and courage to us in the face of adversity (vss 17-22).

Consider Psalm 139:1-6. That God knows you even better than you know yourself ought to be a comfort. Because of His knowledge of you He can best take care of you and that is personified in Jesus. Though we have been rebellious and sinful, "God demonstrates His own love for us in that while

we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom 5:8) Surely, realizing that God knows us, the good, bad, and ugly, ought to cause us to respond in love and gratitude for His willingness to take care of us in spite of us!

In Psalm 139:7-12, David writes that there is no place anywhere that he can escape the notice of God. The Hebrew writer reminds that "Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account." (Heb 4:13) To some, this may be a frightening thought but it needn't be. Again, John writes, "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love." (1 John 4:18) To know that there is no place we can go and no trouble we can face where God's love and support cannot reach us should not cause His children to dread but instead to reply in adoration and devotion.

"How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I should count them, they would outnumber the sand. When I awake, I am still with you." David seems amazed that God would take time to include him in His thoughts. Actually, to know that God thinks of us should knock our socks off as well! In spite of our propensity toward sin, God has given man a crowning place in His creation. (Psalm 8:3-8). But even more than that, His thoughts are always for our good. To ancient Israel God said, "'I know the plans I have for you,' declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. You will seek Me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you,' declares the LORD" (Jer 29:11-14a) Why would we think that His thoughts toward His children today are any different? When we consider that God includes us in His plan and it is for our ultimate good, it should instill in us courage against His (and our) enemies, and a stronger desire to stand for His cause. Truly, we do love Him because He first loved us!

As the sweet psalmist of Israel closes this amazing testimony to the love of God, he appeals to God to show him if there is anything in him that would interfere with the loving, provident relationship initiated by his Maker. Such should be our prayer. "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my anxious thoughts; and see if there be any hurtful way in me, and lead me in the everlasting way." (Ps 139:23_24) Keeping His love always

before us as David did will help us to respond in kind and regain that "lovin' feelin'" that expresses itself in gratitude, courage, and love for one another.

Consider Him
(Heb. 3:1)
Warren E. Berkley

In the first two chapters of Hebrews there is a very clear line of thought developed. Following this line of thought will not only open up the book of Hebrews to better study, but will provide great truth to change your life or keep your life changed. Here's the way this line of thought might be outlined:

- God has spoken in His Son (1:1,2).
- His Son, Jesus, is far above angels (1:3-14).
- Therefore, we should give more earnest heed to the gospel (2:1-4).
- Though above angels, Jesus was made lower than the angels; deity became flesh, but was exalted: "crowned with glory and honor," (2:5-8).
- The incarnation took place "so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone," to "bring many sons to glory," (2:9-13).
- He frees us from the lifelong fear of death and comes to our aid (2:14-18).

This leads us to Hebrews 3:1 – ***“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.”***

This word “consider” in this verse has no casual connotation. In modern use we may apply the word “consider” to matters of no great importance. Or we may use the word to indicate some passing notice or choice we might think a little about. “Consider” in this passage means much more. This has to do with perception far deeper than casual choices.

It means “to perceive clearly,” and “to understand fully, consider closely.” Jesus said to consider the beam in your own eye (Matt. 7:3) and consider the lilies of the field (Lk. 12:27). Later in Hebrews, Christians are admonished to consider one another, to provoke unto love and good works (Heb. 10:24). W.E. Vines says of the original term, “It is translated by the verbs ‘behold,’ Acts 7:31,32; Jas. 1:23,24; ‘perceive,’ Luke 20:23; ‘discover,’ Acts 27:39.”

In your Bible reading and study, little will be accomplished until you really get serious about considering Jesus Christ. Everything in the Old Testament points to Him. Everything in the New Testament informs us of His arrival, showing Him to be our Savior. The preaching of the apostles was the preaching of “Jesus Christ and Him crucified,” (1 Cor. 2:2). Baptism is “into Christ,” (Rom. 6:3), putting us into the Church of Christ (Acts 2:47). Those who have obeyed the gospel are Christians (of Christ), and they live under His authority (Matt. 28:18-20). There is salvation in no other name (Acts 4:12). If you neglect the truth about Jesus Christ, you have missed the point of the gospel. Consider Him. He must be the object of close and serious consideration.

The exhortation in Heb. 3:1 is directed to Christians: “holy brethren,” “partakers of a heavenly calling.” The Hebrew letter was originally written to Christians who came out of Judaism. They were being tempted to abandon Christ and drift back into Judaism. One step they needed to take away from this temptation was, to consider Jesus Christ; to seriously think about and discover the value of the truth about Him.

You cannot be faithful to a Master you do not know! You cannot effectively share a message you do not fully appreciate. You cannot relate to your brethren and serve their needs if you do not cherish your elder brother. Consider Him.

He is “the Apostle.” Jesus is the One sent by God (Jno. 3:34; 5:36-38; 20:21). God didn’t send an angel. He didn’t send Moses to be our Savior. Jesus is the One sent. Consider Him.

He is the “High Priest of our confession.” Think of access to God. Jesus is our access to God. He came “to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining

to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people,” (Heb. 2:17). “For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need,” (Heb. 4:15,16).

You can be a stronger, better person, as a result of every moment you spend in serious contemplation of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Consider Him. Who is He to you? The race God has set out before us cannot be finished without “fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God,” (Heb. 12:2).

“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.”

“This verse holds up Jesus as the Apostle, High Priest and Paragon of all religious pro-fession, the only infallible Exemplar, the universal Archetype of the Gospel dispensation, in contradistinction to Moses in bygone ages.” (W.B. Godbey)

The Rich Man and Lazarus

Luke 16:22-31

John Hagenbuch

“...So it was that the beggar [Lazarus] died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those

from there pass to us.’ Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.’ Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ But he said to him, ‘If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.’”

Many people spend a life time wondering what will please God, and yet, they ignore and reject His word. They are looking for a sign or a special feeling, something or someone that will tell them that they are okay. What is worse is that some feel they have received such a sign, but Jesus has made it clear there is no hope without hearing and obeying the word of God. (See: Matthew 4:4; John 6:45; 14:15; 20:31; Romans 10:13-17; 2John 9)

The “rich” man whom Jesus spoke of is in a place of torment. He was a man who did not obey the Lord, even though he had all kinds of opportunities to do so. But Jesus tells us that there is concern on the part of this one who has died without obeying God. There is concern, specifically for those whom he has left alive; those who continue not to do what God wants them to do. He loved his brothers that were left behind, and so he is begging Abraham, “Please, let Lazarus go back, and if this person will rise from the dead and warn them, they will be convinced and they will change their ways; they will repent!”

This "rich" man is in such grieving agony that he knows that he doesn't want his brothers to come there; he doesn't want his brothers to make the same mistake that he did by refusing to obey the Lord.

But in essence, Abraham said that the means by which God has determined that salvation is obtained is powerful enough. Abraham tells him that even if a man were raised from the dead and went back to warn them, they would not be persuaded... “they have Moses and the prophets.” In other words, what he is saying is that they have the word of the God! That’s what Moses and the prophets delivered; the word of God, and His word is powerful enough! James once gave the exhortation that we need to “receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. And be doers of the word, and not hearers only” (James 1:21).

For those who want to be right with God, who don't want to end up eternally separated from God, they must hear what God has said and obey it. There is no other solution. There is no sense in waiting for miracles or signs to happen, or for some sort of special feeling inside. Even if someone could convince themselves of such a thing happening today, the divine principle that Jesus spoke remains true: "if they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."

John Hagenbuch

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Right Around the Corner

By Jon Quinn

There is a spiritual song that asks, "How long?" It ponders the return of Jesus. "Oh Lord, how long 'til we shout the glad song? 'Christ Returneth! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen!'" One answer the Christian should never give is "Not today." Christians must never lack vigilance and preparedness. The Lord tells us to always be watching. Everyday. Always ready as we live by faith and focus on the goal. To us, His coming is always "right around the corner." At least it is if we are adopting the attitude as our own that the Bible says we are to have. The Lord actually puts it a number of different ways to make sure we understand it. Do this, knowing the time, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer to us than when we believed. (Romans 13:11).

The idea that we are constantly and steadily moving closer to our eternal hope with every heartbeat is both a comfort and a caution for faithful men and women of God. It is a comfort to know that eternal glory awaits us. It is a caution in that we do not allow ourselves to be lulled into a complacency that will rob us of our diligent watchful service unto the Lord.

Not as Far To Go As It Once Was

We do not know how much further we have to go until the summation of all things occurs and eternity begins. We do not know if the time will be measured in hours or days or years. Though we can look at our own lives and perhaps see various stages, we do not know when it will be over and we will stand before our Maker and give account for our lives.

We may be at the beginning moments of a life of faith. We may have, in our dedicated obedient response to the gospel of grace, begun well. One such good beginning is described this way: For they themselves report about us what kind of a reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, that is Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath to come. (1 Thessalonians 1:9,10).

Included in a good beginning is a turning from sin to God; a continuing faithful service to God, and a waiting for Jesus. But this is no guarantee that the end will not come before the beginning stage is left. But, again, no guarantee is needed for those who are "waiting" for Jesus, which simply means they are living prepared lives. Each breath leads us closer to eternity.

But perhaps we have left the beginning stage and are now mature in our faith. We've been around the block a few times and have met with both success and failure, and have grown as we made correction and applied diligence to obeying Jesus. This stage is described in Scripture this way: Not that I have already obtained it or have already become perfect, but I press on so that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, (Philippians 3:12,13).

Here, in this more advanced stage, we see a continued diligence with the focus still on the goal. There is one thing new; now there is a history of faith. There are accomplishments and battles under our belts about which we might be tempted to dwell upon and think these past victories relieve us of present responsibility. Instead, we are to forget what lies behind. Instead of "resting on our laurels" we keep pressing on with the same diligence as we did at the beginning. And we remember, every day brings us closer to our eternal destination.

And then, there is that final stage as we near our release into glory. To the end, we fight the fight, we run the course, we keep the faith. Even as his departure from this life was imminent, Paul continued to serve. He did not stop proclaiming the gospel of Jesus. He said, But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that through me the proclamation might be fully

accomplished, and that all the Gentiles might hear; and I was rescued out of the lion's mouth. The Lord will rescue me from every evil deed, and will bring me safely to His heavenly kingdom; to Him be the glory forever and ever. Amen. (2 Timothy 4:17,18; cf. vss. 6-8). Paul would live for Jesus unto the end, then die with Jesus, to live again with Him forever. He only had a little time left; just a few more steps, and he sensed that his victory and complete joy was near. But it had never been very far away; he had always been watching for it, ready and prepared. The Lord had always been with Him; at the door; near at hand.

Waiting Patiently for the Lord

James illustrates this active vigilance of faithful disciples by picturing us as farmers patiently waiting for harvest. Therefore be patient, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. The farmer waits for the precious produce of the soil, being patient about it, until it gets the early and late rains. You too be patient; strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord is near. Do not complain, brethren, against one another, so that you yourselves may not be judged; behold, the Judge is standing right at the door. (James 5:7-9). For the disciple, the Lord's coming is always "at hand". We do not live as though the final judgment is some sort of far off, unlikely event. Our relationship with the Son of God is not like a relationship with a distant stranger whom we may never see again.

His coming is a breath away, and our conduct, both spiritually and morally, must recognize that possibility. The end of all things is near; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer. (1 Peter 4:7).

Focusing on the Goal

So many people are looking for signs of Jesus' coming in world events today. There are even date setters that suggest they have discovered the secret equation and announce the date of His suspected return, only to have the date fail and the world laugh again. They search in current events for clues.

Even if I thought that there were clues to be found in current events, that would not be where I would set my focus; not on the events leading to the goal, but on the goal which is exactly where the Bible says the focus ought to be. While we watch our footsteps and avoid pitfalls, our focus is on the goal. The Scriptures say, Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of

witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1,2).

Victory in Jesus is at hand. He is near. Maranatha!

The Plan of Salvation

By Jon W. Quinn

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Plan #1

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

"Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (ACTS 2:38)

Plan #2

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

The Sinner's Prayer:

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

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

Final Page –

***Spending Time
Doing What?
Warren E. Berkley***

“Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time,” (Col. 4:5).

Do you spend any time seriously working to improve your attitude. First, it is necessarily to use the Word of God to examine your mental condition and attitude (Psa. 139:23,24). Are you impatient toward people? Do you hold grudges? Do you carry angry thoughts in your heart day after day (in violation of Eph. 4:26,27)? Once the Word of God convicts you of any sin of attitude, you have the responsibility to act on that conviction. How much time do you spend thinking, praying and consciously working on having a better attitude? It is a full-time job.

Do you spend any time visiting people? Jesus gave a sobering scene of the final judgment in Matthew 25. One good trait commended in that passage is, visiting disciples in need. One cause of judgment against the wicked is, “you did *not* visit Me” (Matt. 25:43). One of the steps Moses took toward his usefulness as a servant of God was, “it came into his heart to visit his brethren,” (Acts 7:23). In our modern fast-paced time, we easily neglect this simple duty. Or, we assume somebody else will do it (like “the preacher”). How much time do you spend visiting people?

Do you spend any time listening to people? One of the most important assets you have to give to others is, listening. Listening is not just being silent while someone talks. Good listening requires paying attention, being receptive, understanding and responsive. We can learn things about people, putting us in a better position to serve them and teach them. And, we can learn things we need to know about ourselves (see Prov. 19:20).

Do you spend any time reading the Bible? We certainly know, it is a great privilege to have the Word of God in written form in our language. The Scriptures are not held by a privileged class. You can own your own copy. But ownership or physical possession of the book doesn't change your life. You'll have to take the time to read it, study it, contemplate it, then apply it. Do you do that?

What are we doing with our time?