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*"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)*

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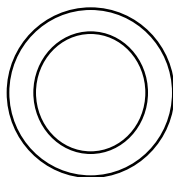
## PUTTING FORTH THE EFFORT

Have you ever felt disappointed with your religious life? It seemed "dull". Perhaps you didn't feel like you were receiving enough out of it. Or, have you ever been to a worship service and thought, "What a waste of time. I didn't get anything out of it!"? Sometimes the problem can be solved when we honestly ask ourselves, "How much effort did I put into the service?"

In the computer world there is a phrase: Garbage in, garbage out (GIGO). It means

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you will get out of the computer exactly what you put into it. If you enter "garbage" data, then you can expect to receive "garbage" results. Similarly, in the investment world, the more you invest, the more you can expect to receive in returns. It's a basic principle which makes a lot of sense. Religion is the same way. We get out of it exactly what we put into it!

The Parable of the Talents admirably illustrates this truth. In Matthew 25 Jesus tells the story of three servants who received various amounts of money (talents) according to their abilities. When the master returned from his trip, he commended the first two servants. They evidently put forth some effort and doubled their investments. The third servant in the story was scolded and punished. What was his crime? He put forth absolutely NO effort and thus, he had nothing to show for gain! It shouldn't have been a surprise because what else would anyone have expected from such a lack of labor.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 6:7, *"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."* There is no question that if a man sows, he will reap. But how often have we meditated on the word *"whatsoever"*? Whatsoever a person reaps is determined directly by whatsoever he sows! If he plants good seed, he will harvest a good crop. Yet, if he sows "nothing", he will undoubtedly reap "nothing." If he puts forth the feeblest of efforts, then he will receive the smallest of results.

We can look further into the life of Paul and see that he lived by the principle of "putting forth the effort." Here was a man who put a lot into his religion and he certainly got a lot back out of it. He gave to the Lord all his time, his money, his heart, his soul, and his mind. He suffered imprisonments, whippings, beatings, a stoning, shipwrecks, near-death situations and countless perils for the sake of Christ (2 Cor. 11:23-26). Now, what did he think of the results of all his efforts? *"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."* (2 Tim. 4:7-8)

How much of an effort do we really put into our religion? Christian faith? Spiritual development? Worship? Prayer? Bible study? Many instances we have stated that we "cannot understand the scriptures." We simply pick a verse, read it, and then close the Book. Well, what would we expect if we always used such a method of study? How often can we presume to understand the meaning if that is all the effort we give it? Naturally we will not understand much. The Bible is a Book which requires effort. It demands that we study it (2 Tim. 2:15), that we meditate on it (1 Tim. 4:12-16), and that we DO it (Jas. 1:22)! Sometimes it may require that we research the meaning of words. But the degree to which we understand the Bible is directly proportional to the degree of effort we put into trying to learn it!

THE HARVESTER is a monthly publication intended to encourage all men everywhere to become laborers into God's harvest (Luke 10:2). This paper is mailed free of charge to anyone who wishes to receive it. Please submit name, address and all correspondence to:

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How often have we complained about getting "nothing" out of the worship service? But have we examined our efforts lately? Many of us appear to be bench warmers. We come to the church building and look for a pew in the back. Sometimes we arrive late, so we miss the beginning of church service. When it is time to sing, our heart and mind and soul just isn't into it. We sing words that never reach our hearts. When the brother is leading the prayer, we are thinking of something else miles away. During the sermon, we are watching what other people are doing or maybe we are falling asleep or passing notes around or some other distracting game. God forbid but our mind also wanders during the Lord's Supper. We just aren't thinking about the One who died on the cross. Then when the collection plate is passed around we awkwardly throw in our leftovers. And we complain that we got "nothing" out of all that! Is it any wonder? However, if we could just put a little extra effort into it, then we could find the true blessing of worshiping God and proclaim with David, *"I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."* (Psa. 122:1)

The heroes listed in Hebrews 11 were people who put forth the effort: Abel, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses, to name a few. If we likewise have faith in God, we will put forth every effort into everything we do. We will obey his every command, looking forward to the promise of salvation to those who are righteous and obedient. We won't comment about how the Bible is impossible to understand. We won't complain about how boring the services are or that it is useless to us. We won't feel that our religion is a waste of time because we get nothing out of it. When we put forth our best effort, we will reap God's richest blessings.

RAY McMANUS

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who ultimately made the decision as to whether Rebekah would go to be Isaac's wife?
2. What was the occasion for Jesus turning the water to wine?
3. What type of bread were the loaves that fed the 5,000?
4. Zechariah foresees a day when the Lord will remove the idols and prophets. What will happen to anyone who still tries to prophesy?

5. What two instruments of war did the skilled men of King Uzziah's army invent?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. After the argument between Paul and Barnabas, with whom did Mark go?  
BARNABAS (Acts 15:39)

2. Of what country are the cedars often referred to in the Old Testament?  
LEBANON (Psa. 104:16)

3. When Christ offered the cup at the Last Supper, what did He say it was?  
HIS BLOOD (Mark 14:24)

4. The Lord promised the land of Canaan to Abram and who else? ABRAM'S  
DESCENDANTS (Gen. 12:7)

5. According to the book of Exodus, what was the punishment for anyone who cursed his father or mother? HE WAS TO BE PUT  
TO DEATH (Exo. 21:17)

## FORBID NOT TO SPEAK WITH TONGUES

1 Corinthians 14:39, *"Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues."* To prophecy is to teach. The authority to do so was given by God in two ways. One was by direct inspiration such as was evident in the teachings of Moses and Daniel in the Old Testament and of the apostles and

writers of the New Testament. This source of knowledge ceased with the age of miraculous powers as explained by Paul in 1 Cor. 13:8-10. We have no continuing revelation.

The other source was and continues to be the knowledge obtained by study of the writings of those who enjoyed inspiration. This is evident in Paul's instruction to Timothy that he "*give attendance to reading*" (1 Tim. 4:13) and in Luke's comment that the Bereans "*sought the scriptures daily*" (Acts 17:11). It is by this same source of knowledge that we today teach or prophecy.

Having discussed in previous verses several aspects of teaching, Paul in this verse exhorts those with ability to "*covet to prophesy.*" He had just stated in verses 1, 3, and 5 the preference of prophesying over speaking in tongues, explaining that prophesying (teaching) edifies, exhorts, and comforts those who understand.

In the second part of this verse Paul says, "*Forbid not to speak with tongues,*" but he had earlier shown (verses 2-5) that speaking in tongues was of little value unless it could be interpreted. If it was interpreted (verse 5), then it could be profitable and would be in order. In such a situation speaking in tongues should not be forbidden.

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# GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE &amp; TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
July 28 - - Aug. 2	Napoleon Church Woodland, AL (7:00 CST)	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
July 29 - - Aug. 3	Gathering at Torreon, NM	Various speakers
August 2 - 4	Fayetteville Rd Church Fairburn, GA	Allan Daniel (Woodland, AL)
August 2 - 4 (F-Su)	New Bethel Church Cullman, AL 7:00 evenings	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
August 2 - 4	Valley, AL	Mike Daniel (Douglasville, GA)
August 5 - 9	Owens Rd Church Prattville, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Aug. 29 - - Sep. 1	Antioch Church Livingston, TN	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)

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Your worst days are never so bad that  
you are beyond the reach of God's  
grace.

And your best days are never so good  
that you are beyond the need of God's  
grace.