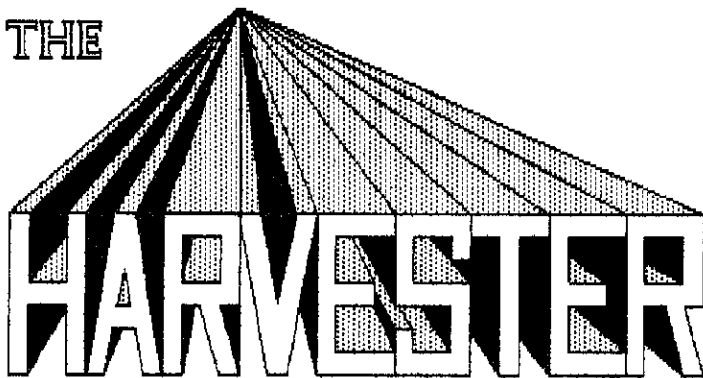


THE



*"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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## FREEDOM

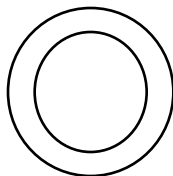
Any American could give a definition for freedom. It is one thing so cherished that great honor is granted to those who give their lives to protect it. We all want freedom for tomorrow. But for Christians everywhere, we must ask if we ourselves are truly free today.

Our society would tell us we are free, but there is a catch --

Oh, we hear of freedom often. Our founding fathers' principles of "Freedom of

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Speech" and "Freedom of Religion" are so familiar, but they have been twisted -- in the name of freedom -- into platforms by which prayer was removed from our schools. Political and social debates rage on about our freedom of choice when it comes to matters such as the lives of our unborn, or the rights of our lifestyle orientations. Many push their agendas for many evils in the name of freedom.

Society almost screams that we have the freedom to choose. But when the time comes to take responsibility for all of our choices, society passes the buck. "You were born that way." "My parents treated me this way when I was a child -- that is why I do these things!" "I grew up with people who overlooked small theft, and cheating on my income taxes didn't seem like such a big deal." "All of my friends were doing it. They made me do it!" Answers like these that are based on theories of human nature, environmental factors, psychological factors and social dynamics are given as reasons why we make the choices we make. And when the consequence of our choices are bad, these answers teach us to say, "It's not my fault!"

Society's freedom -- freedom without responsibility -- is not freedom at all. If the choices we make in the present are only the result of the thousands of psychological and environmental forces from our pasts that act upon us, then we are only puppets. Without responsibility for our actions there is no guilt. "It's not my fault." If we are not responsible for what we do now we will never be

able to change ourselves, or anyone else. Without responsibility there is no need for a Savior to have died for the sins of the world (John 1:29).

Of course, we are responsible for our thoughts, our feelings, our moods, our actions, and our personality, and when we fully embrace this responsibility we will have full freedom. But this does not happen passively. Sometimes we will gradually slide into patterns of thought that follow the above scenarios -- "I was born that way", "That's the way my parents taught me" -- it is the trend of our society.

Jesus Christ wants us to freely choose to serve Him. There are times the fog of our busy lives will make this a challenge. He taught that we should "*watch and pray*" because "*the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak*" (Matt. 26:41). But Jesus also said that with faith as a grain of mustard seed all things would be possible for us (Matt. 17:20).

It may be difficult to change our thinking patterns and some of our actions, and it may take some time to do so. A great ship is steered with a small rudder and it makes a long arc in turning. In the same way, even our personalities can be changed to reflect our true choices. An ever-deepening spiritual walk with God awaits us as we fully embrace our freedom and choose to serve Him every moment of our lives.

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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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## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

1. Who gave away the answer to Samson's riddle?
2. Where was Nebuchadnezzar walking when the vision of the tree began to be fulfilled?
3. Who was the first disciple to reach the empty tomb of Jesus?
4. According to James, what should one do if he wants wisdom?
5. What news made the Chaldeans temporarily withdraw from besieging Jerusalem?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH . . .

and remember last month's questions?

1. How many people from Ephraim were killed because they could not pronounce Shibboleth? 42,000 (Judges 12:6)
2. At what time of day was God going to bring on Egypt and the Pharaoh the very last plague? MIDNIGHT (Exo. 11:4)

3. According to Jesus, what have the experts of the law taken away? KEY OF KNOWLEDGE (Luke 11:52)

4. Why does the psalmist say not to be overawed when a man grows rich? HE WILL TAKE NOTHING WITH HIM WHEN HE DIES (Psa. 49:16,17)

5. What did Jeroboam make for the Israelites to worship instead of going to Jerusalem? TWO GOLDEN CALVES (1 Ki. 12:28)

## THE SON

A wealthy man and his son loved to collect rare works of art. They had everything in their collection, from Picasso to Raphael. They would often sit together and admire the great works of art.

When the Vietnam conflict broke out, the son went to war. He was very courageous and died in battle while rescuing another soldier. The father was notified and grieved deeply for his only son.

About a month later, just before Christmas, there was a knock at the door. A young man stood at the door with a large package in his hands. He said, "Sir, you don't know me, but I am the soldier for whom your son gave his life. He saved many lives that day, and he was carrying me to safety when a bullet struck him in the heart and died instantly. He often talked about you, and your love for art." The young man

held out his package. "I know this isn't much. I'm not really a great artist, but I think your son would have wanted you to have this."

The father opened the package. It was a portrait of his son, painted by the young man. He stared in awe at the way the soldier had captured the personality of his son in the painting. The father was so drawn to the eyes that his own eyes welled up with tears. He thanked the young man and offered to pay him for the picture. "Oh, no sir, I could never repay what your son did for me. It's a gift."

The father hung the portrait over his mantle. Every time visitors came to his home he took them to see the portrait of his son before he showed them any of the other great works he had collected.

The man died a few months later. There was to be a great auction of his paintings. Many influential people gathered, excited over seeing the great paintings and having an opportunity to purchase one for their collection. On the platform sat the painting of the son.

The auctioneer pounded his gavel. "We will start the bidding with this picture of the son. Who will bid for this picture?"

There was silence. Then a voice in the back of the room shouted. "We want to see the famous paintings. Skip this one." But the auctioneer persisted. "Will someone bid for this painting? Who will start the bidding? \$100, \$200?"

Another voice shouted angrily, "We didn't come to see this painting ... we came to see the Van Goghs, the Rembrandts. Get on with the real bids!"

But still the auctioneer continued. "The son! The son! Who'll take the son?"

Finally, a voice came from the very back of the room. It was the longtime gardener of the man and his son. "I'll give \$10 for the painting." Being a poor man, it was all he could afford. "We have \$10, who will bid \$20?"

"Give it to him for \$10. Let's see the masters."

"\$10 is the bid, won't someone bid \$20?" The crowd was becoming angry. They didn't want the picture of the son. They wanted the more worthy investments for their collections. The auctioneer pounded the gavel.

"Going once, twice, SOLD for \$10!"

A man sitting on the second row shouted. "Now let's get on with the collection!"

The auctioneer laid down his gavel. "I'm sorry, the auction is over."

"What about the paintings?"

"I am sorry. When I was called to conduct this auction, I was told of a secret stipulation in the will. I was not allowed to reveal that stipulation until this time. Only the painting of the son would be auctioned. Whoever

(continued next page)

# GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>DATES</u>	<u>PLACE &amp; TIME</u>	<u>SPEAKER</u>
March 30 - 31	Willow Oaks Church Russell Springs, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
March 31- - April 5	Noble Church of Christ LaFayette, GA	Harry Cobb (Wedowee, AL)
March 31- - April 5	West Broad Street Wedowee, AL 7:00pm	Sam Dick (Cave City, KY)
April 5 - 7	Pleasant Ridge Church Woodbury, TN	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
April 15 - 19	Mt. Zion Church Crab Orchard, KY	Wilbur Bass (Auburn, AL)
April 19 - 21	Valley, AL	Harry Cobb (Wedowee, AL)
April 26 - 28	Fayetteville Rd Church Atlanta, GA 7:00pm EST	Carley Conner (Allgood, TN)
April 29 - - May 3	Chestnut Grove Church near Danville, KY	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)



(continued from page 7)

bought that painting would inherit the entire estate, including the paintings. The man who took the son gets everything!"

God gave his Son 2000 years ago to die on a cruel cross. Much like the auctioneer, His message today is, "The son, the son, who'll take the son?" Because, you see, whoever takes the Son gets everything.