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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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## CONTROL

What keeps you up at night? Likely, you're thinking, or rather, worrying about the future or something that is completely out of your control. Unfortunately, we dedicate too much of our time and thought to things beyond our control, and ultimately, it's useless. *"Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?"* (Mat. 6:27). Despite all of the times we say we've "turned it over to God," our worries suggest we have not. How is it then, that we'll state God is in control, but at the same time we'll fret with worry and even be disgruntled when things don't turn out the way we think they should? Therein lies the problem: our way. We should have absolutely

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THE HARVESTER

141 County Road 474

Woodland, AL 36280

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no doubt that God's will *will* be done; our issue is we're concerned our will won't be. This is what worries us about things out of our control. The fundamental question is when can we and when shouldn't we "worry?"

It should come as no surprise that it is useless to worry about the future. When has worrying about tomorrow actually made tomorrow easier? How much of the future can we control? We can't control any of it. Some concerns about the future seem mild, such as dinner plans, a speech, or a test. Some seem genuinely major, such as finances, family woes, health and sickness. However, we have to admit that our worries of the future are all worldly. Jesus points out two big flaws we're making when we get ahead of ourselves and worry about this future outside of our control:

1) We're focusing our worry on the earthly body and earthly matters. *"...Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows."* (Luke 12:4-7)

2) We show a lack of faith. *"If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?"* (Luke 12:28)

God has given us free will to think as we please, but history is rife with times our ideas and desires have caused us to stray from serving God (Rom. 1:21-25). Despite centuries of evidence that as sinful humans, we may not always be right, we sure think we know what we "deserve," and we even pray and make requests of God with that mindset. We attempt to negotiate with God to get the answer we want. Then, we worry we

won't get our way. Solomon notes one of our human flaws in Proverbs 16:1-2:

*The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the LORD. All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the LORD weigheth the spirits.*

We tend to think of all of the good things and “yes’s” we deserve, because we’re clean in our own eyes. In doing so we neglect the other side: *“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Rom. 6:23). We get caught up on that word “deserve,” but what we really deserve is death for our sins. It was through grace and mercy that we have an opportunity to be free from that sin. That grace, mercy, and love is offered by God who has told us, *“I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”* (Exo. 33:19; Rom. 9:15, 18). He answers our prayers, He provides us a “yes,” “no,” or “yes, but not now,” because His will be done, not ours - not what we think is best. God gives as He sees fit and has willed, and that may not always be what we flawed, sinful humans believe is best. Let’s put it another way: who do you think knows better? Do you know better, or the almighty God who exists in eternity beyond our understanding of time, the creator of the universe, the Lord of hosts who fills the earth with His glory (Isa. 6:3)? This is why the answers to our prayers are out of our control; they are in God’s control.

Just as we waste time with worry over our own personal outcomes, we also spend far too much time concerning ourselves with the outcomes we see for other people. We hear people all around us question things such as “why do bad things happen to good people” or “how can a just God allow such evils in the world?” Such questions even cause people to doubt God exists. Again, let’s put this in perspective. By what definition are you using “good,” “bad,” and “just?” Or rather, *whose* definition are you using: ours or God’s? Being human and living in this world, we’re shortsighted. Notice how we use earthly criteria in

assuming “good” things are happening to “bad” people, or vice versa. As often as we think we know what we deserve, we believe we know what others do or don’t deserve. How dare we assign injustice to God?

*What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy. (Rom. 9:14-16)*

God grants not because anyone deserves it. God grants, because God is gracious, merciful, and certainly knows better than we do. The bottom line is that it is not our duty or right to determine who is “good,” who is “bad,” and who deserves what. Yet, nothing seems more frustrating than seeing something unfair.

What better example do we see in Job’s tribulations? Here’s a good person who is having very bad things happen to him, right? Job’s three “friends” and Job himself echo the same cries of injustice we hear around us today. Job’s friends claim that bad things don’t happen to good people without cause; he needs to admit he’s done wrong to deserve this. Job claims he’s done nothing wrong; he’s just received the short end of the stick he doesn’t deserve. The story of Job isn’t about Job’s patience or perseverance. Yes, Job is correct in not cursing God, but he was wrong in his stance on assuming injustice. The story of Job is summed up by Elihu, the fourth and youngest man sitting with Job and the other three. Elihu rebukes both sides of the discussion and succinctly squashes

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The Harvester

141 County Road 474 \* Woodland, AL 36280

Phone: (256) 449-9221 \* Email: [theharvesteronline@gmail.com](mailto:theharvesteronline@gmail.com)

Web Page: [www.churches-of-christ.org](http://www.churches-of-christ.org)

Job's claim of unfair treatment: "*Behold, in this thou art not just: I will answer thee, that God is greater than man*" (Job 33:12).

God is greater than man. Maybe forgetting this is our biggest fault. Maybe we get so caught up in ourselves, in our flawed minds we diminish the power, authority, and holiness of God - a mistake made throughout history.

*Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and they changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. (Rom. 1:21-25)*

Too often, these are the things that consume our thoughts and keep us awake at night. We're wasting our time. No amount of thought, worry, and effort will change the future we cannot see, the prayers we cannot answer, and dispense the judgment and mercy we cannot understand. Fortunately for us, we don't have to. God has all of that under His control. This should not give us worry and stress; this should give us comfort. One less thing to worry about, because the Creator is running this show. Let's put it in perspective; who would you rather have this "job": you, a friend or family member, any human you know, or the Creator, God Almighty?

In the division between things beyond our control and things within our control, we spend more time worrying about those out of our control. The things within our control are worth our thought. Next month, we'll examine those.

BEN

## SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES

Remember last month's questions?

1. Where did Moses first meet his future wife?  
BY A WELL IN THE LAND OF MIDIAN (Exo. 2:16-21)
  2. Which judge killed Eglon, King of Moab?  
EHUD (Jdg. 3:15-25)
  3. What service did Nehemiah perform for King Artaxerxes?  
CUPBEARER (Neh. 1:11)
  4. What is the "light of the body"? THE EYE (Mat. 6:22)
  5. When in prison at what time did Paul and Silas pray and sing to God? MIDNIGHT (Acts 16:25)
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### MAN OF GOD

Moses was called the man of God (Deu. 33:1). He was known for communicating with God, being close to God, and doing what God told him to do. Samuel was known as a man of God as well as the prophets Elijah and Elisha. God may not speak to you directly as He did to Moses or the prophets, but you can also be known as a man of God or woman of God. Every true follower of Jesus Christ should be known as a man or woman of God.

You can be considered a man or woman of God because you belong to God.

*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's. (1 Cor. 6:19-20)*

*For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. (Rom. 14:8)*

It is easy for you to think that you are your own person and you can do whatever you want. You can pursue whatever ca-

reer or occupation or position in life you desire. You can follow whatever pleasure you desire. But as a Christian, you belong to God. He bought you at the price of the blood of Jesus. You are therefore not your own and you are a man or woman of God because you are His. You are now living for Him.

You should be considered a man or woman of God because of how you live your life. In 1 Timothy 6, the apostle Paul was instructing Timothy that the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. He continues with the following exhortation in 1 Timothy 6:11, *“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.”*

I submit that if you truly pursue these things that you will be a true man or woman of God like Timothy. So let us briefly look at each of these.

As a man or woman of God, you pursue righteousness. God made you righteous when you believed in Jesus Christ, you were born again, and your sins were washed away in baptism. Now you are a slave of righteousness (Rom. 6:18-19).

How do you know the righteousness that you should pursue? The scriptures tell you.

*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. (2 Tim. 3:16-17)*

As a Christian you should use the inspired scriptures and apply them to your life to become the complete man or woman of God.

As a man or woman of God, you pursue godliness. Godliness means piety, which is reverence and devotion to God. It describes an attitude that is centered on God and does that which is well-pleasing to Him.

You pursue faith. You trust in God and His promises regardless of the trials that come your way; you walk by faith with anticipation of eternal life with Him.

## GOSPEL MEETINGS

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DATES	PLACE	SPEAKER
November 7 - 10	Ashlock Near Celina, TN	Joe Hill (Hagerhill, KY)

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You pursue love. You decide to love all those around you; you love your family, your brethren, your friends, your neighbors, and even your enemies.

You pursue patience. You are longsuffering with those around you that try your patience as well as being longsuffering in the trials in your life that would attempt to take your joy.

You pursue gentleness [meekness]. You decide to react with gentleness to all and make it easy for any to approach you whether it is to correct you, ask for your advice, or share what is happening in their life.

When Jesus was twelve years old, His parents took Him to Jerusalem. After several days they left to return home and discovered that Jesus was not with them. They found Him in the temple, discussing with the teachers of the law. His mother reprimanded Him. *“And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?”* (Luke 2:49)

In the same way, the man or woman of God is busy doing the Father’s business. You have a choice in life. You can seek to do what you want or what God wants. The man or woman of God chooses to do what God wants and follows wherever He leads.

*He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* (Mic. 6:8)

My encouragement to you is that you be a man or woman of God. Remember that you belong to God. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, and gentleness. Be about His business.

ED ANDERSON  
Sierra Vista, AZ