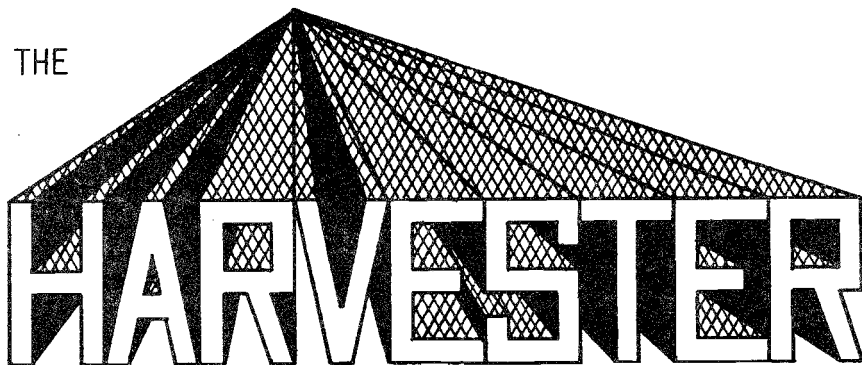


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"Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth laborers into his harvest." (Luke 10:2)

November 1989

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RICHES

The Constitution of the United States guarantees each citizen the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Our founding fathers fully realized each individual's right to do as he saw fit, without any outside interference from the government or any self serving groups, whether they be political or social.

As Christians we realize that this concept was designed by God, for as we read in the book of James, we are under that "*perfect law of liberty*." We today are free moral agents fully authorized to decide which course in life we will take. Basically we can narrow life down to two roads. The first and most desirable road is the one where we love, serve, and obey

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God, laying up treasures in heaven, striving for eternal life with our heavenly Father. The second road is the one where we allow worldliness, pride, humanism, and any other carnal influences that remove us from our God and deceive us and cause us to reject our Creator.

In today's society where mankind places all emphasis on wealth, social position, and class distinction, it is easy to get caught up in these worldly elements. Most people from their youth up are taught to always strive to excel in school or in sports so that they will be able to make large sums of money. It is not bad in itself to teach children to strive to be the best in whatever they do, but when you start putting the dollar sign before everything in your life, especially a child's, you automatically start a process of moral and ethical decay.

As boys and girls become men and women and enter the work force, the pursuit of money becomes an obsession and the road they take becomes a self-consuming fire of misery, discontentment, strife and disillusionment. Many families and many lives have been lost to this killer. Most often we think of lust in a sexual nature, but, as many things do, lust has many different masks. Sin, in general, has a way of sneaking up on us and knocking us cold before we know it. Oftentimes we pursue after our career goals in the name of our families, promising better lives and opportunities for our children.

There comes in life a day of reckoning, a time when we must face the music and decide if our career objectives are at odds with our spiritual objectives and, when I speak of spiritual objectives, I not only mean the common goal of a home in heaven but also a compliance to God's outline for a Christian family atmosphere. God

has given us examples and commandments concerning the family spiritual headship, parenting, finances, and the roles that God expects each father, mother, and child to fulfill.

Money has a way of taking us away from our families and worst of all from God. The delusion of self sufficiency that money gives us is a deadly, sweet savor straight from the devil, making the weak drunk with the wine of self indulgence. We must be on guard every minute, constantly analyzing ourselves, checking the condition of our hearts in not only these circumstances, but in any circumstance that endanger our souls. Paul wrote in the book of Romans, chapter 8, verses 6-7, *"For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God neither indeed can it be."*

So, when we are carnally minded, or worldly is a word we would more commonly use, we lose all contact with God. We become an enmity to God. Webster defines 'enmity' as a positive and active hatred or ill will which may be openly blatant or concealed. Do we allow ourselves to become so caught up in worldly things that we fall into this condition? Because others around us have fallen, we also are subject to temptation. We are constantly in a struggle between the carnal man and the spiritual man. Paul wrote in Romans, chapter 7, verse 15, *"For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do."* Even Paul had a problem with being carnal, but through Christ we can overcome.

Our ability to handle riches may be why we don't have them. Most often people who have money are constantly in search of ways to spend their money on things to bring them pleasure.

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I know you have seen bumper stickers and T-shirts with the following written upon them, "Whoever has the most toys when he dies wins." This is nothing but vain glorying in material possessions. This attitude is one of humanism and reflects a person's twisted view of what is important in life. Let's turn to the book of James, chapter 4 and read verses 2 & 3, "*Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.*" The condition of our heart, our attitude, God already knows and sometimes keeps things from us that would cause us to turn from him.

There are many rich men throughout the churches of Christ and to me, these men are examples of how every man should be, for they use their money to further the Lord's work here on earth, always ready to every good work. Maybe God had allowed these men to have that money because they know how to handle it. In the book of Matthew, chapter 6, verse 24 we read, "*No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.*" The answer we need is found in the 33rd verse of this chapter, "*But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*"

In Galatians, chapter 6, verse 8 we read, "*For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit shall of the spirit reap life everlasting.*" We all are striving toward that goal of everlasting life but until that time comes, we must maintain our spirituality and God will keep us up, not allowing us to go without. We must maintain a humble attitude, not taking credit for our accomplishments in life, but realizing that God has provided all things and all opportunity for us, his children, whether it be spiritual or material: all has been given to us by him. God has provided everything. In James, chapter 1, verse 17 we read, "*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.*"

We need to remember not to count riches by man's standard but by God's. We can read in the Bible about Abraham and we understand that he was very wealthy. But I often wonder if he was wealthy by his own works or because God had blessed him. From our examinations of his life we find that Abraham was a just man: one who had a great love and faith in God. Abraham chose to serve God even to the point where he would offer his only son for a sacrifice. Abraham's service was pure and God added unto him an abundance of material possessions but even greater than this, God chose Abraham to bless the whole world through his seed. In view of these things we understand from the Bible we must, like Abraham, have our priorities straight, that our service and devotion to God must be number one in our lives, that true riches and happiness and contentment can only be found through Christ Jesus. Being rich is no sin. Becoming rich is no sin; idolizing money and materialism is a sin. The Bible says, "*For the love of money is the root of all*

evil." We must remember that money is nothing more than a tool and like any tool, it needs to be used correctly. Let's all turn away from this worldliness and look toward those unsearchable riches in Christ.

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SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES!

1. Who was David and Bathsheba's second son?
2. According to Deuteronomy, where was Israel to worship God?
3. Why does God comfort us in our afflictions?
4. What happened to Paul that caused him to first preach to the churches of Galatia?
5. Did Hannah bear other children after Samuel?

ANSWERS NEXT MONTH ...

and remember last month's questions?

1. Which of Naomi's daughters-in-law remained in Moab? ORPAH (Ruth 1:14,15)
2. According to Exodus, how many times each year were the Israelite men supposed to appear before the Lord? THREE TIMES (Exo. 34:23)
3. Which apostle was guilty of hypocrisy? PETER (Gal. 2:11-13)
4. Where is the thought, "like mother like daughter" found? EZEKIEL (16:44)
5. What was Moses to do in order for the Israelites to win the battle against Amalek? HOLD HIS HANDS UP (Exo. 17:11)

TRUSTING WITHOUT KNOWING

Have you ever been in a position where you had to trust somebody although that person did not give you all the facts? Certainly this was the case with Job. His children and his possessions were taken from him but he did not know why. Later he was afflicted with bodily sores and still, he did not understand why. Yet, he trusted in God throughout the whole ordeal. *"Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him,"* declared Job in chapter 13 verse 15. As far as I can tell, it never was revealed to Job why he was allowed to suffer so much.

So many times in life we are placed in Job's shoes. We may not know why certain things occur to us: the death of a loved one, a physical disability, a major setback, financial difficulties, a hard road to travel, etc. Nevertheless, we must learn to trust in the Lord. Just because God's will has not been fully explained to us, our confidence in Him must not diminish.

Is it necessary for us to understand the reason for every single thing that happens in our lives? Isn't it comforting enough to know that *"the secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law"* (Deut. 29: 29)? When the time is right, God will give us the answers. Sometimes the solutions do not show up until years later. For example, when I was transferred to Birmingham and then to Mobile, I did not know why. However, now as I look back, I think I have a better understanding of what God's will was for me.

So, let us have the spirit that Isaiah had when he trusted God simply because the Lord is our
[continued next page]

GOSPEL MEETINGS

<u>Dates</u>	<u>Place & Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
Nov. 3-4	West Gadsden Church Gadsden, AL	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Nov. 10-12 (F-Su)	Pleasant Grove Church near Alex City, AL 7:00 each evening	Bill Prince (Oxford, AL)
Nov. 13-18	Ashlock Church near Celina, TN	James McDonald (Woodbury, TN)
Nov. 17-19	Godby Road Church Atlanta, GA	Bill Prince (Oxford, AL)
Dec. 1-3 (F-Su)	West Broad Street Wedowee, AL 7:00 pm	Jim Pritchard (Tecumseh, OK)

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[continued from page 7]

salvation. *"Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation."*(Isa. 12:2) If nothing else, that is the one thing we can and should know. The Lord is our Saviour and we should put our lives in His care. Trust in Him. *"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe."*(1 Tim. 4:10)

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Overheard one morning after services:

ANY GOOD SERMON WILL COMFORT THE DISTURBED
AND DISTURB THE COMFORTED!