

Gospel Power



"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16)

Volume VIII

October 14, 2001

No. 40

"Progressing Toward Spiritual Maturity"

Richie Thetford

We read in Isaiah 44:4 that God's people will "spring up among the grass like willows by the watercourses." Our Christian walk should be a walk that desires to be pleasing to God first and foremost. When this happens, then we will see growth and maturity take hold in our life here on earth. Every one of us should have a constant desire to progress toward spiritual maturity in all aspects of our life. There are several areas in our life that God wants to see us mature and develop in. These are:

1) **Fruitfulness:** "Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness" (2 Corinthians 9:10). God asks that we share his word with others. This is something that should be on all of our hearts. We should look for opportunities to share the good news to those we come in contact with.

2) **In Christ:** "But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head — Christ" (Ephesians 4:15). "That you may have a walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10). In order for us to mature in Christ we must learn what a good work is (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17). When we speak "the

truth in love," we are growing in Christ because we are speaking His truth and we are doing it in love, caring for the soul of another.

3) **In Love:** "And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you" (1 Thessalonians 3:12). "But concerning brotherly love you have no need that I should write to you, for you yourselves are taught by God to love one another; and indeed you do so toward all the brethren who are in all Macedonia. But we urge you, brethren, that you increase more and more" (1 Thessalonians 4:9-10). The true Christian test of life is whether one can show a genuine love for the brethren. For us to be able to mature in the sight of God, this is something that all of us must possess. As Paul stated, it is also an area in which we need to continue to increase. There is nothing that takes the place of loving and caring brethren who genuinely look forward to seeing and being with each other at every opportunity. May we all grow in our love for one another!

4) **Unto Perfection:** "Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God" (Hebrews 6:1). The word "perfection" means "completeness."

Once we have learned the truth of God's word and have been obedient to the gospel, we should then progress onward to maturity, not returning to the basic elements again. We need to learn to be teachers (Hebrews 5:12-14), and the only way to do this is through the word, having a desire for God's word in order to grow to completeness. Peter writes, "as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2). When we are "perfect" or "complete," then we will never stumble (2 Peter 1:10). In order to progress to this point we must strive to put all the characteristics mentioned by Peter to use in our life. We must add "...virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love" (2 Peter 1:5-7).

5) **Grace and Knowledge:** "But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 3:18). When we learn and understand the great gift that God gave us in His Son, then we should be motivated to grow in the knowledge of our Lord. The more we know, the better we can defend the gospel and

spread the gospel! Jesus wants us to know Him as He said, "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:28-29). We need to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord.

In conclusion, our spiritual maturity will be realized when we put away childish things from our life (1 Corinthians 13:11) and begin to cultivate an understanding of the word (1 Corinthians 14:20). If we will follow the example of Jesus (Ephesians 4:13, 15; Philippians 3:15), and partake of the deeper truths of the gospel (Hebrews 5:14), then we will be able to overcome any temptation that is cast our way (1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 John 2:14). When this happens, then it will be obvious that we are pressing toward maturity in our Christian life. It may then be said of us: "We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other" (2 Thessalonians 1:3).

~via *Clarksville Beacon*, Clarksville, Indiana.



What Will I Do When I Suffer?

W. Frank Walton

"The LORD said to Satan, 'Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.' Then Satan answered the Lord, 'Does Job fear God for nothing?'" (Job 1:8-9).

Terrorists have attacked America and thousands of innocent people were randomly killed. Many are perplexed. Many ask, "Why?" If God is loving, all knowing and all-powerful, why did He let this seemingly unfair tragedy happen?

The book of Job deals with the problem of human suffering. It doesn't deal as much with

"why" we suffer but with the question, "What should I do when I suffer?" Job was never told that Satan was the original cause behind his suffering.

God was very pleased with Job's godly life. Satan began a debate in heaven, with the central question being, "Does man serve God for nothing?" He made a wager with God that righteous Job would curse God, if he suffered the loss of all his wealth, family and health (Job 1:8-12, 2:3-7). Satan accused Job of only serving God for what he selfishly got out of it. God allowed this test of faith, confident that Job

“served God for nothing” – simply because man’s devotion to God is good and right. All evil and suffering has its ultimate origin with Satan, not God (cf. Genesis 3, Luke 13:16, 1 Peter 5:8)!

Job knew God is the Creator and we’re the creature made for God. “Job worshiped... ‘Blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:20-21, cf. 2:10). We exist for God’s glory (Isaiah 43:7, Romans 1:21). It’s true: “God without man is still God, but man without God, is nothing.” God made us to freely choose to love and serve Him, which is life’s highest good (Mark 12:30). This prepares us for eternal joy and fellowship with Him in heaven’s love.

Man’s freedom of choice means some may make the wrong choice. We often suffer due to the bad choices of sinful people (Job 1:15,17, 2:9). If God stopped everyone from making an evil choice, no one could have freewill to choose right from wrong. The purpose of life is our character development that fits us for eternal life. Satan tempts man away from God. Note, Satan used the freewill choices of the Sabean and Chaldean raiders to steal Job’s wealth (Job 1:15, 17). He can also sometimes use natural calamity to get us in our pain to renounce God (Job 1:16, 18, 2:7).

Job’s grief and pain was overwhelming. He had 10 children suddenly killed; all his wealth was stolen, and suffered painful boils all over his body. Yet, he said, “Though He slay me, I will hope in him...I know that my Redeemer lives” (Job 11:15, 19:25). Job grew “testy” in his pain, and accused God of being cruel and unjust to him, as well as being inept in running the universe, but Job repented of this (Job 42:3,6). Yet, Job’s spiritual reward for suffering was becoming closer to his Creator. He better knew His awesome power and glory (Job 42:5). In the end, this is the true purpose of our lives. God, in mercy and compassion, blessed him richly for hanging on through the ordeal (Ja 5:11).

Suffering can move many to seek God for help and salvation. God has proven He deeply loves us all by watching His innocent, sinless

Son murdered on the cross for our sins (Jn 3:16). This world’s pain helps us see we’re weak and limited. In our midnight of sadness, God alone “gives songs in the night” (Job 35:10). “In eternity, all suffering is of no ultimate negative consequence” (T.B. Warren). Paul, who unjustly suffered as an apostle, said, “I do not consider the suffering of this age worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed” (Rom 8:18). To trust the trustworthy God is not demanding an immediate explanation to our satisfaction for suffering.

Let’s pray that America’s suffering and sad will turn to God in obedient faith (Matt 11:28-30, Mark 16:16, Acts 2:38, Heb 5:8-9). In Christ, Americans and all mankind can find “peace passing understanding” (Phil 4:7).

~via *Biblical E-Sights*, Vol. 1 No. 49

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Angie McCrary* was sick and unable to be at services this past week... **Scottie Goode’s father, Hubert Goode**, continues his rehabilitation... **Angie McCrary’s sister, Peggy McGee**, is to begin chemo treatments in Birmingham this past week... **Kerry Cox’s grandfather, Coy Lowman**, is in the Burdick West hospital in Haleyville... **Arvel Newton’s nephew, Chester Newton**, continues at home with his battle with cancer... Remember **Millinea Word** as she continues her treatments/medication... **Mattie Blanche Word** continues at home and not able to be out... **Aldeen Noles** is in the SunBridge Nursing Home in Lawrenceburg... **Shelia Moore’s mother-in-law, Laurene Whitehead**, is in the Athens Convelesant Center... **Mary Best’s nephew, Shannon Johnson**, who is at home... **Millinea Word’s mother, Nola McCafferty, Tisha Thomas’ grandmother, Nellie Hunter**, who are both in the Meadow Brook Nursing

Home in Pulaski.

OUT OF TOWN: *The McIntyres:* Mark, Suzette and Sadie are in Tennessee visiting with friends...*The Rogers:* Mike, Tisha, Zackary and Jacob are in Mississippi this weekend.

GOSPEL MEETING: There is a gospel meeting this week through Wednesday at the **Beulah church** in Limestone county. *Larry Rouse* is the speaker. They will have a services Monday through Friday at 7:00 p.m....*The New Georgia church* is beginning a meeting today through Wednesday with services Sunday through Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. The speakers in this meeting will be: Sunday – *Steve Klein*; Monday–*Warren Glass, Jr.*; Tuesday – *Philip Owens*; Wednesday – *Ed Bragwell* ... *The Posey church* in Franklin county is beginning a meeting today and it will continue through Friday with services at 7:00p.m.. *Don Miller* will be the speaker in the meeting.

BAPTISMS: A couple of weeks ago we rejoiced when **Michael Word** expressed his desire to be baptized into Christ. Again, we rejoiced this past Sunday afternoon when **Willie Ridgeway** expressed his desire to put on the Lord in baptism. We are thankful for honest hearts like those of Michael and Willie. We wish the very best in their lives as children of God.

CONFESSIONS: This past Sunday **Wynell Ridgeway** asked for prayers on her behalf due to a period of unfaithfulness some years back. We are thankful for Wynell and her influence for good and her desire to please the Lord...On Wednesday night **Doris Arnold** came forward asking for prayers for a lack of commitment in her life. We are thankful for Doris and her good and tender heart.

COMMUNICATION GROUPS: Communication group two will meet tonight after the evening service. If you are in group two remember to meet with your group this evening.

SINGING: Next Sunday evening, October 21st, will be the time for our regular schedule song service. **Jerry Dickey** will be directing the service this month.

Gospel POWER

is published in interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Anderson church.

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:45 a.m.
Evening Worship 6:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Anderson church Home Page

Anderson-church.org

Elders

Michael Clemmons (256) 247-0836
Scottie Goode (931) 565-3391

Deacons

Phil Pressnell (256) 232-8509
Rocky Rose (256) 247-0011
Larry White (256) 247-0988

Evangelist & Editor

David A. Cox (256) 247-1049
Office-(256) 247-5539
E-mail address: dacox@hiwaay.net

U.S. Postage
Paid
Bulk Rate
Anderson, Alabama
Non-Profit
Permit #6

Anderson church of Christ
P.O. Box 66
Anderson, Alabama 35610

Return Service Requested