

Gospel Power



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

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The Loss of Innocence

Glen Young

Why is life difficult? Even those with great faith often ponder this question. The sorrow associated with life is well documented. Hardly a day goes by that we do not hear of someone suffering from a tragedy in his or her life. People become sick with virulent diseases. People have tragic accidents that kill or maim. Then, of course, there are the everyday annoyances that can make our lives miserable. So, we ask why?

When considering the events of Genesis chapter three, we find the answer. The answer is sin. Sin is not harmless. It has consequences.

Before committing sin, man was innocent. His innocence is explained in Genesis 2:25 (And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed). In his innocent state, God placed man in a prepared garden called Eden (Genesis 2:8).

"And out of the ground made Jehovah God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (Genesis 2:9). In this perfect state, man could have lived forever in harmony with his environment and God. In Paradise, man had a job and at least two commandments from God. His job was to dress and keep the garden (Genesis 2:15). The first

commandment given to man was "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Genesis 1:28). In the second commandment given, man was told, "but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis 2:17).

The temptation of mother Eve appealed to two things. First, that God had lied. "And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:" (Genesis 3:4). Secondly, that they would be like God. "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as God, knowing good and evil" (Genesis 3:5).

Just think, here was man in his innocence and ignorance (Acts 17:30), without sin, living in Paradise. Yet, the appeal to know good from evil, to be like God, was more than could be resisted. Add to that, the possibility God was not being straight about the dying thing and you have the formula for disaster. The disaster came in the form of God cursing the serpent, the woman, the man, and the earth (Genesis 3:14-19).

The price that came with knowing good from evil was the responsibility to make correct choices. Man was cursed to live an allotted number of days in a crucible called earth. A cursed earth became a seedbed of rebellion, corruption, and works of the flesh. Through the trials of this life, man would learn to make the correct choices. Upon learning this, he would then seek out salvation from God. The only source from whence it comes.

Why is life difficult? Because innocence was lost when man obtained the knowledge of good and evil. Man was driven from the Garden, thus losing access to the tree of life (Genesis 3:22-24). From that moment, death caught scent of man and relentlessly pursues him until it catches its' prey (Hebrews 9:27). The interim of man's life until death overtakes him is filled with all manner of difficulty. All of this, because sin entered the world.

~via *Road Creek Bulletin*, Elkhorn City, Kentucky.



Happiness

Randy Harshbarger

"Happy are the people whose God is the LORD!"
(Psalm 144:15 NKJV).

The quest for happiness seems to be the consuming, continuing, relentless pursuit of mankind. Especially is this true in our culture. Our blessings are so plentiful and our opportunities so unbounded that we have come to believe that "being happy" are our inherent right. After all, the Declaration of Independence says: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." Happiness is our birthright! Philosophers debate the meaning of happiness. Does happiness mean the same thing to you as it does to me? Is the

sometimes arduous task of finding happiness a real possibility? Can happiness be achieved in this life, or do we wait for the life to come?

Outward circumstances cannot produce true happiness. We find ourselves saying: "If I only had this or that, then I would be happy!" Those who make the acquisition of things the most important endeavor in this life will ultimately be disappointed; most of the time, you do not have to wait until death to realize what a poor trade you made (cf. Ecclesiastes 5:10). The successful farmer in Luke twelve realized too late that he did not "have it made." To pursue mammon is to fall into a snare (1 Timothy 5:6ff). The Apostle Paul, writing from a Roman prison, said: "Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" (Philippians 4:4). Did Paul enjoy the dark, dank living conditions of imprisonment? No! Was he content? Yes! Did he have to learn that hard lesson? Yes, and so must we. He found strength in the Lord. Was he happy? Yes!

Jesus, in His Sermon on the Mount, said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit...Blessed are those who mourn..." (Matthew 5:3-10). The word blessed is sometimes translated happy. The man that is blessed by the Lord is happy or fortunate; he seeks to shape his heart into the likenesses expressed in Christ's beatitudes. Right character produces true happiness, not outward circumstances. The Pharisees in Christ's time needed that lesson; so do we!

Happiness is the by-product of a right relationship with God. Yes, we can in this life, rejoice that we are His children. When we obey His will, we can "go on our way rejoicing." The merry heart provides a continual banquet (Proverbs 15:15). From the midst of our own prison cells, we can have peace and contentment. There are many good benefits to be derived from a happy outlook of life. It is the peace that passeth all understanding that sustains us for awhile in this life and enables us to look beyond to the joys of heaven. There will be no tears, no sin, nothing ugly at all in heaven. But happiness will be there! ~via *Biblical E-Sights*, Vol. 1 No. 53

Habits

Michael Thomas

Habits are who we are on a daily basis, without even thinking about it. Like the beaten paths of a frequently traveled trail, so our habits are what shape our person and mold our character over time. My wife's grandfather is an avid walker. At 76 he can still be found every morning making 20 laps around his sizable backyard. As a result of his diligence, he has formed a well-beaten path on the ground's covering. Similarly, our character (a term from the Greek word for "enduring marks") is the final product of the behavior we pursue from day to day. Who we are is the outgrowth of who we have taught ourselves to be through our habits. We may form our habits, but really our habits form us.

Those who are going to know God must be in the habit of looking for Him everyday. It must be a normal part of our daily routine. When God tells us to partake of His divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), through the knowledge of His will (vs. 3), He is essentially teaching us to take on the habit of being godly. The phrase "What Would Jesus Do" is more than a trendy statement to etch on our clothing, it is a pattern of thought that must be at the core of every faithful Christian's thinking. We are to think like Jesus because He was in the habit of seeking to please His Father, whether in daily prayer, meditation, teaching or even moral uprightness (cf. John 2:16,17). "My food," said Jesus, "is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work" (John 4:34). All who seek to partake of God's nature must have the same zeal, determination and focus (Philippians 2:5; 1 Peter 2:21). "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked" (1 John 2:6).

How we respond to temptation says a lot about the habits we have formed spiritually. A person who has been busy "here and there" in worldly pursuits, to the neglect of daily, spiri-

tual exercise, will not have the conviction to remain faithful to God in the hour of temptation. Because they have not renewed their minds through a continual feeding from His word, they will not remain loyal to His morality and doctrines. Their habits have taught them to conform to this world (Romans 12:1,2).

The new man in Christ must first take on the mind of Christ "in true righteousness and holiness." Jesus said it is like a branch trying to bear fruit apart from the vine. Unless you "abide in Me, and my words abide in you," there is no hope of reflecting a life of godliness. The branch must continually draw minerals from the vine to produce the vine's fruit. The Christian must do the same by hiding God's word in his heart that he might not sin against Him (Psalm 119:11). These minerals can only be drawn through a continual feeding from God's word. It must be a habit.

I once held a gospel meeting that afforded me the opportunity of having dinner with a Christian woman and her husband. After a delightful meal, the couple pulled out the word of God and read aloud a chapter from it, as part of their daily devotion. They had made it a habit to do so after every evening meal of their twenty-nine years of marriage. It had become so commonplace for them to turn to God's word daily that it even felt normal to include their guests in their spiritual routine. What a tremendous habit.

Our eternal destiny will ultimately be decided by the habits we form spiritually. Form them well and they could save us (1 Timothy 4:15,16). But form them apart from God, and they will cost us our soul (Ephesians 2:1-3). In either case, the habits we form will eventually form us.

~via *Bulletin*, Owensboro, Kentucky

News & Notes

THE SICK: *Wynell Ridgeway* had surgery on

Tuesday and is recovering at home ...**Brooke Phillips grandmother, Melba Maner**, had some tests done this past week...**Doris Arnold** has been in the hospital recently, but is home now... **Jerry Dickey's mother, Pat Dickey**, continues in the ECM hospital room 665 ...**Eddie Hammond** was sick and unable to be at Bible study Wednesday night... **Christopher Rose** was also sick and unable to be at Bible study Wednesday night..**Kerry Cox** was also sick and unable to be at Bible study Wednesday night...**Mark McCrary** was sick and unable to be at Bible study Wednesday night ..**Arvel Newton's nephew, Chester Newton**, continues at home with his battle with cancer... Remember **Kerry Cox's grandfather, Coy Lowman**, at home with good and bad days... **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 ..**Sheila Moore's mother-in-law, Laurene Whitehead**, is in the Athens Convalescent Center ..**Mary Best's nephew, Shannon Johnson**, who is at home ... **Millinea Word's mother, Nola McCafferty**, and **Tisha Thomas' grandmother, Nellie Hunter**, who are both in the Meadow Brook Nursing Home in Pulaski.

SINGING PRACTICE: This afternoon at 5:15 we will meet for a singing practice. Our young boys will be leading some songs and we will also sing some new or unfamiliar songs. I hope that all who can will be present at 5:15 to encourage our young men.

OUT OF TOWN: **The McConnells:** James and Freda are away on vacation this week in Florida...**The Rogers:** Mike, Tisha, Zachary and Jacob are in Birmingham this weekend..**Sheila Moore** is back home after being away this past weekend.

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

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

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

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