

Faith Networks

A Newsletter for Cooperation in the Churches of God

January, 2008

While You Were Sleeping

This is what the Kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. *All by itself* the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head.”
(Mark 4:26-28 NIV)

One of the secrets of life is learning the systems that make life work and then getting in harmony with them. How many years did man suffer plowing behind a mule before he understood how to apply internal combustion to motion? How many backs were broken before someone discovered the system of hydraulics? And who knows—maybe some tinkerer uncovered those secrets 1,000 years earlier and the world refused to believe!



But the systems were there all the time. And they would have worked as well in 1000 BC as they do in 2001 AD. They were just unnoticed.

Several years ago Donna and I flew to Jamaica to celebrate the Feast of Trumpets. It was an absolutely clear sky at 40,000 ft. when a colorful Air Jamaica plane approached our plane at the same altitude. From the ground we perceive planes as slow moving, but up close at an approach speed of over 1,000 miles an hour reality was clear. We were only two of 400 passengers in pressurized metal cylinders flying nearly 7 miles above the ocean at more than 500 miles an hour.

It's the stuff science fiction is made of. But it works. Passengers on 35,000 flights a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year are adequate testimony. The fact



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is you are safer flying across the ocean on a commercial jet than driving to the neighborhood supermarket because the right systems work.

The fascinating thing is that *many* systems work together in near perfection. Electrical, hydraulic, navigation, even an air conditioning system, all work together to enable a 200 ton behemoth to lumber down the runway and defy gravity by lifting off the ground. And that occurs thanks to another system of air flow called Bernoulli's principle.

Now I didn't see the fluid in the plane's hydraulic lines any more than I can see electricity flowing through the wires in my home. But that electricity keeps the refrigerator running day and night all by itself, without any help or thought from me. Jesus likened the Kingdom of God to the way plants grow whether man is awake or asleep. Initiate the system, and it is capable of working without any effort or intervention from man.

In his book *Wealth and Poverty* author George Gilder presents a compelling argument that Christian ethics is the basis for national wealth. He asserts that work, family, and faith have created wealth out of poverty in America. "It is this supply-side moral vision that underlies all the economic arguments of *Wealth and Poverty*," he wrote. By contrast, the chief cause of poverty in a free environment is the breakup of the nuclear family and the increase of demand-side economics.

According to Gilder, family is the system at the foundation of a nation's economy. It's the engine that makes it run. Love of family provides a huge incentive for a man to work. He is motivated to provide housing, buy food and clothing, and even pay taxes to build schools and support community services. Supplying needs causes the economy to flow.

Now all this is important to help understand how God works. Family was created by God, not man. We get a glimpse of God from observing the systems He created. "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made.... (Romans 1:20 NIV)

Surely God's interest in man is greater than His interest in plants. One of the focal points of the Bible is the time God spoke to man from Mt. Sinai. When did He ever gather trees and flowers together to teach them His way? When are trees and flowers commanded to gather for a Feast to worship God? That God even cares that man would gather as a group to worship Him is significant.

So when Jesus tells us to examine the "lilies of the field" to understand how God works, He may be telling us there is something man will typically overlook. A flower can be dissected to see what is beneath the surface. Men overlooked the genetic structure for centuries until Gregor Mendel was able to determine the genetics of a plant by studying the results of his experiments. Jesus is telling us to look for the systems that make life work. The dynamics at work in a congregation are just as powerful as those in a commercial jet. Examine the congregation, just as we are commanded to examine ourselves at Passover, to see what systems cause growth.

What are the systems of congregational success? A man named Christian Swartz identified eight. And they are quantifiable. A congregation in harmony with the systems develops a flow that results in growth. All by itself!

Next month we will describe some of those systems. [FX](#)

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A Woman Who Had Lived a Sinful Life



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Simon watched his guests. The hum of conversation was punctuated by laughter or an occasional raised voice. The crowd that followed Jesus everywhere had gathered to look at the noteworthy guests at his table. He recognized the woman who had somehow managed to find a place near Jesus' feet which extended beyond the couch where he reclined.

Simon's face showed his disgust that this prostitute dared show her face at his home. But what could he do? It was custom for such a meal to be eaten in a public area. She was even close enough that her flow of tears fell on Jesus' feet. She was using her long hair to dry his dusty, now wet, feet. She broke the small jar of perfume she wore around her neck. Then she poured it on his feet and cleaned off the dust of Galilee with her own hair. Jesus saw the Pharisee's expression and heard his thoughts as clear as if he had spoken them out loud:

If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is--that she is a sinner.

Jesus asked Simon if two people were released from a debt, one owing a day's wage, and the other only one-tenth of that amount, who would love the moneylender more?

Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."

Jesus acknowledged his correct answer; turned towards the woman, but continued to speak to Simon:

Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet.

Then Jesus made his point: “Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little.”

Jesus then spoke to the woman, “Your sins are forgiven... Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

The guests are all astonished, asking each other, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” (Luke 7:36-50)

Stories had been circulating about Jesus. He had raised a widow’s son to life on the way to his burial. He had given sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, and had healed diseases and old injuries. He was preaching good news to the common people who were calling him a prophet. But what prophet of God had the authority to forgive sins? (Luke 5: 22-26)

Jesus traveled through Galilee with this message: “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!” (Mark 1:15) Jesus stated his mission: “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” (Mark 2:17)

This woman who had lived a sinful life heard Jesus’ message, believed him, and experienced hope. She would never be accepted by the religiously righteous; but she now knew God had accepted her. She could now live a different kind of life.

Her sins were forgiven because “she loved much.” She was saved and given peace with God because she believed. (Luke 7: 47, 50) Her desire to be right with God revealed her love for God, and God’s forgiveness and acceptance through Jesus caused that love to overflow in worship.

Simon had substituted a religious life in place of love and faith toward God. He was trusting in himself to be righteous. (Luke 18:9-14) The woman knew that wasn’t possible for herself. Jesus had brought the promise of the Psalms to life:

Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits—

Who forgives all your sins

And heals all your diseases,

Who redeems your life from the pit

And crowns you with love and

compassion,

Who satisfies your desires with good things

So that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.

The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. (Psalm 103: 2-6)

Simon had forgotten the scriptures:

...How then can we be saved? All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.... (Isaiah 64:5-6)

And

“The Redeemer will come to Zion, to those in Jacob who repent of their sins,” declares the LORD.” (Isaiah 59:20)

The Redeemer sat with religious Simon in his home, unrecognized by him, but it was the sinner who believed and repented who was redeemed and received salvation that day. [FN](#)

Fitting In With God

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Born into the faith nearly 23 years ago, I could never really imagine what the future could possibly hold for me. I always struggled with fitting in with others, always feeling left out when around those of the same age range. After high school, when I joined the Marine Corps, I found not only that I didn't fit in, but there, no one did. Boot Camp, one of the toughest trials I've ever had to face, was also beneficial. There I was bonded together with a group of other women, ranging from 18 to 29 years of age, all going through the exact same trials as me.

Three weeks into the grueling training many were wishing they never signed the dotted line at the end of their contracts. Every night when the lights went out in the barracks, the sound of muffled crying filled the air. I still vividly see the faces of the girls after they were just scolded by the drill instructor, or after they were sent to the front of the squad bay to receive what punishment the drill instructor deemed necessary.

Every day new trials presented themselves. It was the worst three months of our lives. Boot Camp took us down to the breaking point, then from the near ashes of death rebuilt us as stronger, healthier, and more disciplined people.

In a way that is what God does with all of us. God wants us to leave the life we lived of sin and enter his kingdom with Him as our personal savior. Once we are stripped of our sins, God will bring us back as a new holier, wiser, and spiritual person. This is what happens when one is baptized. Acts 2:38 states, "Peter replied, 'Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'"

In Boot Camp God gave me the strength I needed to keep up on the run, the stamina to stay awake during our 24 hour night operations, and the heart to help those around me finish their tasks. Many people may not see the small things that God does for them every day, but they are still there. For those in the military, it may be helping them have the courage to low crawl under the sharp barbed wire during a training exercise. Or it may be His intervention, allowing you time to exit a building just before a mortar hits it. Not everyone experiences things like this in their everyday life, but He does protect you in other ways, such as guiding you safely down the road while driving to the store, or keeping you from getting scared during a thunderstorm.

God has shown me many times that he does function in my life. Looking back now I can clearly see how much God was there in everything I did. From that I can see that He will be there in everything I'm going to do in the future. It was as if he was preparing me for something greater, leading me to my baptism, which took place at the Feast of Tabernacles. From the moment after my baptism, I could feel that I had changed for the better. Through this baptism, I have achieved what I never had before, and always wanted, I feel like for the first time in my life, I finally fit in. 

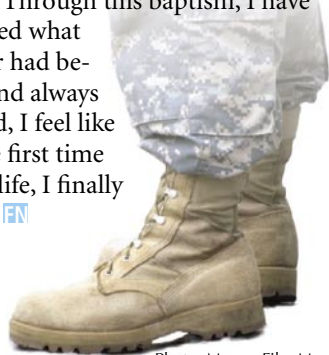


Photo: MorgueFile, Mary Vogt

Dogma vs. Understanding

Sometimes I wonder about the endless discussions of doctrinal issues among church people. And it isn't just us. Disagreement over this or that doctrine is ever present among Christian people. The reason, I think, is described in a word: dogmatism, "positiveness in assertion of opinion especially when unwarranted or arrogant: a viewpoint or system of ideas based on insufficiently examined premises."

We come from a church history in which doctrine was a defining characteristic of the church. A candidate for membership was required to agree with that doctrine as a condition of membership. Thus, doctrine became a definer of fellowship. Differences in dogma could create a breach in fellowship. Discussions of doctrine became so important that, in some cases, they were not even allowed. Some of us can recall a time when we weren't allowed to have Bible studies when there was no minister present. As a church, we were not merely looking for truth, we believed we had it, and therefore we had to defend it against all heresy.

Let me clarify one question here. A church has every right to define clearly what it teaches (the very meaning of the word, "doctrine"). What it does not have the right to demand is that one *believe* this or that doctrine. Freedom of conscience is a fundamental right of all men.

We really need to make more progress in our approach to issues that arise in the study of the Bible. Notice that I used the word "issues" instead of "doctrine." The latter is a much abused term in some traditions, and implies the dogma of this or that church. How can we make progress? It is simple to say and harder to

grasp: We need to be more concerned about understanding one another than trying to prove one another wrong.

I host a forum called *CEM and Friends*. Sometimes we have new members of our forum who come to argue doctrine. Commonly, there is more than a little hostility displayed as conversations begin. The reason is a kind of defensiveness that arises on all sides. Debate ensues, which, for the most part, is a waste of time. Neither side displays much interest in really understanding where the other side is. They are much more concerned with defending their own position. It is not easy to let go, but sometimes that is precisely where the solution lies. Just let it go.

Most people would agree that the central theme of the book of Proverbs is wisdom. The word occurs there some 54 times. But the word "understanding" also occurs 54 times and is almost a synonym. One of those verses speaks volumes about forum discussions: "A fool has no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart" (Proverbs 18:2 NKJV).

By far the best way to approach any difference of opinion is to begin by being absolutely certain you understand both sides of the issue. It is surprising how often people don't even understand their own side, much less the other. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding" (Proverbs 4:7 KJV).

The biggest problem we face in church unity is not merely a matter of being tolerant of differences. It is more



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a matter of *understanding* the differences. Tolerance doesn't mean much if you don't understand what it is you are tolerating. Unity is also a matter of not insisting on absolute agreement on all issues. That will never happen. What can

happen is for brothers to *understand* one another. That makes it possible to go forward together. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psa. 133:1 NKJV). [FN](#)

A Promise to Claim

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I had just typed the date at the top of the memo, February 9, 1981, when the silence was pierced by the attention signal from the Tri-Community Volunteer Department Scanner located in the outer office. Several members of my staff were Volunteer Firemen and Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT's). I had heard the scanner many times before but this time I listened to the next set of tones that alerted the on duty ambulance crew. "Pedestrian struck, Ooltewah High School. Be advised EMT required, time, 11:10 eastern standard time."

A cold chill engulfed me, as I left the memo, headed out of my office past my secretary. "I am taking an early lunch, I said, I may be late getting back."

I drove the three miles to my house, as fast as I could. When I pulled into the driveway, my wife was coming out the door.

The look on her face verified what I had suspected; it was one of our sons. "Lance has been run over by a school bus," she said. "They are taking him to the Hospital." Out of the drive we went, and down the narrow winding road, to the main highway as fast as we could.

How Bad Is It?

When we arrived we were greeted by a nurse who tried to comfort us by

saying, "Doctor Rowe is with him, he is the best surgeon on our staff." She appeared visibly shaken, as if she was in need of comforting herself. A series of blurry activities happened over the next several minutes, that neither my wife nor I can remember very well. We heard the doctor say, "He is injured very badly; we are going to take him to surgery and see what we can do. Those large rear tandem wheels ran over his mid section."

I heard someone ask, "Are his injuries so bad that he may not walk again?" The doctor was looking at me when he answered, so it must have been me that asked the question.

"I am not concerned about his walking," he stated directly. "I am concerned about keeping him alive."

"Well,"—it was me again—"what are the odds of him walking again?"

"There are no odds. Mr. Johnson," he replied. "I don't get to work on people who are hurt this badly."

"Well is there another doctor available who has worked on this type of injury?"

"Mr. Johnson, we don't usually work on people who are hurt this badly, because they are dead before they get here. But he is alive now—why, I don't know. But I am going to take him up and see what I can do."

The Terrible Wait

The surgery took six hours. Each hour a nurse would come out and tell us that the surgery was going well and that he was still alive. I have very little recollection of where the day went, but I noticed it was dark outside when a tearful, trembling man approached us, and announced that he was driving the bus when the accident occurred. Sharon and I hugged him, and we cried together.

Throughout the evening people came in to sit with us. Friends and church members came to pray and offer comfort. The word was out that it would take a miracle from God for Lance to survive.

Finally we were told that he was out of surgery and in intensive care. A team of elders prayed and anointed Lance. In the blur and murkiness we vaguely remember our friends and family escorting us out of the hospital and taking us home for the night.

The next morning we were at the hospital at 6:30. The first visiting hours were at 11:30, but the doctor phoned the ward and said we could see him for five minutes, since there was only one other person in the ward.

The sight of our son in those conditions was almost more than we could bear. We tried not to show our horror as we stood there. He was connected to hoses and monitors, with his legs hanging by straps from bed hangers. He opened his eyes and asked, "Who were the others?"

"Some elders from the college came by an anointed you." Sharon answered.

"I know about them, they left when you did, but who were the others?"

"There were two nurses on duty, but I don't know their names, shall I find out?"

"No. Who were the four that were here all night?"

"What four?"

"The two at the foot of my bed and the two at the head of my bed."

"The head of your bed is against a wall."

"Then I guess we know who they were then, don't we?" he said.

Small Comfort

The doctor was straightforward about the situation. "He could die at any minute," he announced solemnly. "If he lives, he will never get out of bed. He will never walk; he will always wear a catheter, and maybe a colostomy."

"Are you saying he may not be capable of getting married or having kids?"

"I wouldn't count on it."

I needed to be alone. I needed to talk to God about this. For the next several hours I wrestled with God. I began my petition on my knees. Later I paced for a while as I prayed, sometimes I bowed my head, I knelt, I stood and stared out the window. I begged, I pleaded, I threatened, I negotiated, and I shook my fist in God's face. Hot tears burned my cheeks, sweat soaked my clothing. I wanted to recall a promise from the Bible that I could claim. But no verse came to mind.

Here I was fighting with God, but oddly enough I have never felt so close to Him as I did when I was angry with Him. Finally I fell silent. I knelt next to my son's bed exhausted and despondent. I had not prevailed with God. He gave me no encouragement. Fear and anxiety blurred my thinking.

Out of the silence, Malachi 3:10 and 11 came to mind. Suddenly I was filled with horror. I thought out loud, "Will a man rob God?" NO! No Lord, if I have robbed you, take me; don't take my son. Is this from you? Is this a warning that my son will not live because I have robbed you?"

"Read it," said a still small voice.

I reached for Lance's Bible on the nightstand. I opened to the passage that came to my mind. Malachi 3:10. I read, "Bring ye all the tithes into the store house... and prove me here with, said the Lord of hosts, If I will not open up the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing that will be so great that you will not have room enough to receive it."

Wait! I thought. The warning about robbing God was verse 9.

"Father," I prayed, "I have returned the tithe since I was nine years old. Even in those economically depressed days, during my first few years of college, with a wife and two sons I returned the tithe." This is the promise I needed. In a million years, I would have never thought of Malachi 3:10 as a verse that I could claim to save someone's life.

"I claim the promise of Malachi 3: 10," I prayed. "Open up the windows of heaven and give me the life of my son. There is no greater blessing just now."

I felt a great relief. Lance was going to live! I knew it. I was weak, but I was sure that his life would be spared. No matter he may never get out of bed, he would live and that was enough for me.

Further Assurance

I had to tell Sharon. I was shaky, but I managed to get up and walk toward the door. But I could not go through the door. A strange pressure against my chest prevented me from moving forward. Then I remembered He said Malachi 3: 10 and 11. I picked up Lance's Bible and found verse 11: "And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, said the Lord of hosts. *You have my word on it!*"

Can there be a more definite promise

than this? He will rebuke the devourer, death, for our sakes. And our fruit shall not be destroyed before its time, and He ended by saying, "You have my word on it."

Later that night the phone rang. It was the doctor. "Our greatest fears have happened," he began. "We have a rupture and an infection. You must get here as fast as you can. I don't expect him to make it this time."

Well, what did I expect? Doctor Rowe and several other doctors told us he would not survive. Even if he did, what kind of life would it be? He would always wear a colostomy, a catheter, and would be fed through a tube. He will not be able to marry or have children or have any kind of life you would want for your children. Sharon and I were willing to settle for his life alone.

All's Well

On a sunny day in late July 1995 I thought about what the doctors had said at the time of the accident. I held Lance's daughter and watched with his wife and mother, as he received the trophy for the most stolen bases in his church softball league.

Lance's brother, Mark, was 11 years old at the time of the accident. He was so impressed with the series of events surrounding Lance's recovery that he decided to become a physician. While in medical school Mark worked with Doctor Rowe for several months, a man who had once said he did not believe in prayer. Mark witnessed this great physician offer prayer before all his surgeries. He said he saw first hand the power of prayer in Lance's case, and it changed his life.

It changed ours also. [FN](#)

Sandcastles in Our Lives

I stood on the Florida beach and looked admiringly at the sandcastles. These were very well done. One of them was a three-foot sized starfish that looked almost real. It was obvious that a great deal of effort had gone into constructing these sandcastles. The artist, who stood nearby, was a man of about thirty-five years of age. Not all sandcastles are made by children.

The unfortunate thing was that each morning of the next day the sandcastles were gone. Some were taken away by the waves during the night, some just fell apart because they dried out, and some were wrecked by a tractor which came by early each morning to smooth out the sand for people who would use the beach that day. I pondered about what we can learn from all of this.

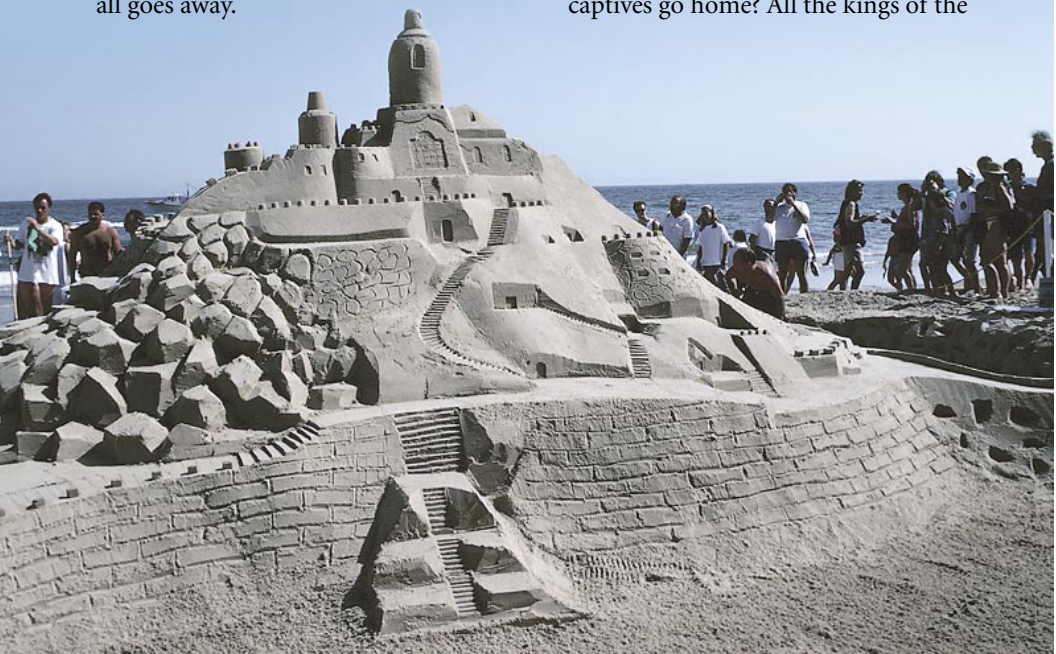
Putting effort into things that will perish is what this world is all about. The great of this world are people with money and power. And what happens to that money or power when they die? It all goes away.

Adolph Hitler was a man who had massive power. He terrorized the world—including the people of Germany. The whole world stood in fear of Hitler, and those nations which were successful in their fight against him were nearly bankrupted by the effort. Yet Hitler died as all people do. What good does that power do him now? He built one of the most impressive sandcastles of the twentieth century, but that empire was destroyed even before he died. He shook the world, but now he is dead.

It reminds me of a scripture in Isaiah 14:16-20. (I realize this scripture does not apply specifically to Hitler. But it fits so many of this world's tyrants!) "Those who see you stare at you, they ponder your fate. Is this the man who shook the earth and made kingdoms tremble, the man who made the world a desert, who overthrew its cities and would not let his captives go home? All the kings of the



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nations lie in state, each in his own tomb. But you are cast out of your tomb like a rejected branch; you are covered with the slain, with those pierced by the sword, those who descend to the stones of the pit. Like a corpse trampled underfoot you will not join them in burial for you have destroyed your land and killed your people.”

A few seek power as Hitler did, but the most common way of building sandcastles in our society is striving for money. We are very materialistic, and many readers of this article are in that trap and don't even know it. The comedian Jack Benny was told, “Jack you can't take it with you.” His reply was “Then I'm not going.” Of course this was all a comedy routine, but Jack Benny did die and took no money with him. What are we striving for? What fills our minds more than we'd care to admit to others?

In the parable of the rich fool in Luke 12:13-21 Jesus said “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. (Verse 15)” How many people do we know who agree with Jesus on this? How many people by their actions show they disagree? What about us? What do our actions show? Are we in massive credit card debt because there are things we “must have” whether we can afford them or not? How many fights occur in our homes over money? Who says we must always have more and we must strive and worry if we don't? Isn't this life just a temporary mist that appears then just vanishes (James 4:14)?

Always remember that it all goes away when we die, but God has promised to provide for us now and give us eternal life if we seek the Kingdom and his righteousness first.

Even the great of this world find what they strive for goes away, sometimes even while they still live. One of the great explorers of the world was Christopher Columbus. It took great daring on his part to sail into unknown territory. He found a world he didn't know was there. After his first voyage in 1492 he returned to Spain and was at the top of the world. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella proclaimed Columbus an admiral and made him viceroy of all the territory he discovered. Yet he was a poor administrator and was arrested and taken back to Spain in chains after his third voyage. Columbus finally was released and sailed one more time, but nobody cared about him any more. He died only fourteen

A man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

years after first landing in the new world. At his funeral no representative of the king followed his coffin. Ultimately, the new world was named America, not Columbia, after Amerigo Vespucci, another explorer who reached the new world after Columbus.

Surely trying to build anything lasting in this world is an illusion. We should not be distracted but instead look for a city whose builder and maker is God (Heb.11:10). [FN](#)

Some of the information in this article concerning Christopher Columbus was taken from *The Voyages of Columbus* by Rex and Thea Rienits and *Admiral of the Ocean Sea* by Samuel Eliot Morison.

Emotional Needs

As Christians we often struggle to put sin out of our lives. The Apostle Paul describes his struggles in Romans 7:15-8:18. He is talking about the flesh pulling in one direction and the spirit in another. Why do we still struggle with sin after conversion?

The pulls of the flesh are psychological. Yielding to them is a subconscious attempt to satisfy human emotional needs. The four basic emotional needs according to psychologists are:

- 1) Certainty (worrying about everything in life would be paralyzing)
- 2) Uncertainty (need for adventure, not being bored)
- 3) Love and Connection
- 4) Significance

Meeting those needs is essential to survive emotionally and to avoid becoming a mental health case. In addition to the basic needs for emotional survival, there are two needs humans need to have met in order to feel fulfilled:

- 1) It is a human desire to make a positive contribution to mankind. We are made to give. We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.
- 2) We have a need to grow. Anything or anybody who does not grow dies. If we do not produce, we will be cut off. (John 15)

Each person's needs vary depending on personality and gender. For example women tend to need more love and connection, while men tend to have a stronger need for significance. We are in pain because a need is not met. We may not even know why we are in pain. We may not even be aware what need is not met. When we analyze the works of the flesh, we find that they are the subconscious,

often very irrational, attempts to have our own emotional needs met in the short term without waiting on God to provide for the need.

The struggle of the Apostle Paul shows that the spirit (human spirit in combination with the Holy Spirit) is rational and realizes that sin is totally irrational, sometimes not even understandable. (Romans 7:14)

In Galatians 5 we read examples of works of the flesh we commit. Looking at some of them more closely, we can see that committing those sins can provide instant gratification of our emotional needs. Let's examine those sins to see how they involve the four basic emotional needs (certainty, uncertainty, love and connection, significance).

Adultery: We want certainty that we get what we want if we doubt our marriage. We feel our life is boring and get uncertainty by a romantic adventure. We crave love and connection. We feel like our spouse is not giving it to us so we look for it elsewhere. Men want to show to themselves and others that they are significant and can still win a woman's love.

Lewdness (inconsiderate, offensive behavior): People make certain they get attention from others. If they do not get it from their family or realize that our Heavenly Father cares for them, their subconscious rationalizes to preferring to have a bad connection rather than no connection at all. If someone feels insignificant, their tattoos, piercings, ridiculous hairdos and clothes will make sure that they will not be ignored.



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Hatred: We hate somebody because he stands in the way of meeting one of our four emotional needs. Joseph's brothers could not stand that he seemed more significant than they. We often sabotage one need by trying so hard to fulfill the other. We lose love and connection because we are trying the wrong way to be significant.

Contentions: We want to show how important and significant we are and that our opinion counts. We are trying to be certain by controlling the situation and enforcing our will. We are more connected to somebody we argue with than somebody we do not talk to at all.

Jealousies: The fear of being less significant than somebody else makes people jealous.

Outbursts of wrath: We are angry because we feel like we are out of control. The need for certainty is not met. People who do not feel loved and connected tend to be angry.

Dissensions: People leave a congregation because subconsciously they look to members of the congregation or the leadership to fulfill their emotional need for significance.

Drunkeness: We are in pain, we are worried, stressed (code word for fear), our emotional needs are not met, so we are numbing the pain.

I want to encourage you to analyze any of the works of the flesh you are struggling with and ask yourself which of your basic emotional needs are not being met. How can we avoid the pain of unfulfilled emotional needs without sinning? What should we do to have our emotional


needs met the right way? We need to go to the source of all that is good. "...how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" (Mat 7:11)

What about our need for certainty? Know that all things will work out for the best to those who are called according to his purpose (Rom 8:28). He will never leave us nor forsake us (Rom 8:38-39). He said he will look after our every need (Mat 6:30-34).

What about our need for uncertainty? Life with Him is never boring. God gives us challenges to grow in faith and character. He provides many surprises and allows for adventures within the framework of His law. Anthony Robbins once said, "The quality of our lives is in direct proportion to the amount of uncertainty we can comfortably live with." I believe he is right, as the amount of uncertainty we can comfortably live with is in direct proportion to our closeness to our Heavenly Father.


What about our need for love and connection? A very close relationship with Him is the best way to have that need fulfilled. Our expectation is in Him, not in people, not even the brethren. We do not need to bend to peer pressure to have a sense of love and connection.

What about our need for significance? What can be more significant than being a child of the Creator of the universe? Thus says the LORD: "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the



**The four basic
emotional needs are:**

Certainty
Uncertainty
Love & Connection
Significance



mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these I delight,” says the LORD. (Jer 9:23-24)

We are so significant to Him that He sacrificed His only begotten son. (John 3:16)

In addition to having our four basic emotional needs met, we will find fulfillment by following His admonitions to make a contribution through service; and to grow in grace and knowledge. (2 Pet 3:18) Having our emotional needs met by our Heavenly Father will weaken the pulls of the flesh. The pulls will be further weakened through much prayer and fasting. Fasting is physical. When we fast, our closeness to our Heavenly Father penetrates more into the psychological, subconscious level.

Satan also knows what our needs are. Remember when he tempted our Savior? He tempted Him with a physical need, as Jesus was hungry. He also tempted him with an emotional need to be significant. “You can have the Kingdom now. I can give it to you now. You do not need to wait on your Father.” Our Savior was spiritually strong, he had fasted. He knew that satanic influence must be fought with the word of God and also with much prayer and fasting. (Mat 17:21)


When we grew up, we did not always

have all our emotional needs met. That is why most of us have some scars and pains and are still trying to have our emotional needs met. We often do it the wrong way and produce the work of the flesh. We have an alternative. We can stop blaming our parents, our childhood, or other people in our lives today for not meeting our emotional needs. We can seek our Heavenly Father to heal our emotional wounds by fulfilling those needs.

If we have a sense of **certainty** that God will always look after our every need: if there is always an element of surprise and adventure in our lives because we have the faith that makes it possible to

“Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows Me, that I am the LORD, exercising loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these I delight,” says the LORD.

Jer 9:23-24

live with **uncertainty**: if we have a strong **connection** to our Heavenly Father and He is the source of all the **love** we need: if we know that we are truly **significant** to our Creator—then we will produce more of the fruit of the Spirit. If we are close to Him and eager to honor and please Him, we will **make our contributions** and we will **grow**. We will feel fulfilled. 

Defending Christ in Spite of Christianity

Dinesh D’Souza is an author and political pundit whose newest book is entitled *What’s So Great About Christianity*. Note that the title does not end in a question mark. Noted atheist Christopher Hitchens recently appeared on stage with D’Souza to debate the question of religion.

I was able to view an eight minute clip, and while I do not know how D’Souza fared in the entire debate, I do claim disappointment in how he dealt with one of Mr. Hitchens’ challenges.

Hitchens claims that the Church aided and abetted the rise of Fascism in the 20th Century. People such as Franco and Mussolini were practicing Catholics and had reached various agreements and accommodations with the Vatican regarding their policies and activities. By extension, Hitler himself, who was raised Catholic, never formally rejected that faith, the implication being that the Roman Catholic Church bears the responsibility for the carnage of World War II.

In response, D’Souza pointed out that atheists were responsible for more deaths and destruction in the 20th Century (Stalin, Mao, Pol Pott) than were non-atheists, and that Hitler is a poor example to use to prove the contrary because he hated Christianity and wanted to hijack it into a tool of the Nazi Party.

In other words, your homicidal maniacs are worse than our homicidal maniacs, which looks like an unsatisfactory rejoinder from where I sit.

If someone were to challenge me with Hitchens’ observations, I would have to grant him that the politics of Christianity has a sordid side, but that’s why Jesus made the pointed statement that his kingdom is not of this world. He did

not intend that there be an institutional church that would become a player in the power politics of the kingdoms of men. Hitchens seems to be saying that there can’t be a God because people are so bad, and surely a man of Hitchens acumen can see that it does not necessarily follow. One must not confuse institutions that claim the Christian label with Jesus Christ. They are not the same thing.



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Any organization or institution (or individual for that matter) that puts the name of Christ on its shingle needs to be careful about giving occasion for doubt. Jesus once warned his disciples about denying him before men, and that means more than disowning him. It means claiming the name of Christ while doing the works of the devil. Blasphemy is taking the Lord’s name in vain, and there is no greater blasphemy than doing evil in the name of good, or as Jesus might have put it, “the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service.” (John 16:2 NKJV)

In other words, don’t blame God for the sins of man.

We do that on our own. [FN](#)

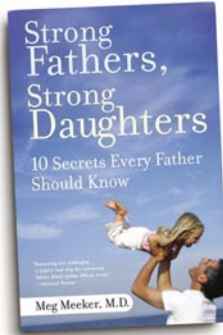
Book Review:
***Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters:
Ten Secrets Every Father Should Know***
By Meg Meeker, M.D.



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Girls today face a world with values and pressures that their parents didn't face. Sexuality, for example, is marketed to girls from a very young age on. It seems like every force in the world is pushing girls into empty and sick values. Indeed all girls are nudged in the direction of materialism, sexuality, and selfishness. Having a church connection does not change that pull. If you have a daughter you need what is in this book. It is a big mistake to think evil values and attacks won't come on your daughter. But there is one person who can keep his daughter from being destroyed. It is her father. He has more influence on her than anybody.

It is normal in this society to demean the role and value of fathers. Men are encouraged to abandon masculine traits and become something that they are not naturally. It is God who made men and women different, and your daughter needs what you have been given. Vivid examples are given in chapter six ("Pragmatism and Grit") of how a father can provide solutions to a problem a daughter has because his mind is solution-driven, whereas a mother dwells more on trying to understand the feelings and dilemmas of the daughter. We should be able to see from this how both the father and mother should work together.



Dr. Meg Meeker, a pediatrician, may indeed have written the best book available on how important a father is to his daughter, and on what kind of a father he should be. The author intersperses her writings with real life examples she has known during her decades of practice and counseling with young people. These examples make her book very lively and interesting.

She shows how much the values of the father influence his daughter. Living those values is more influential than what you say, but she also strongly recommends being open and verbal about what you believe. Your daughter's friends are being open about what they believe. TV, the internet, and teen magazines are pushing their beliefs on her. By standing up for what he believes, he can counteract the ways that will destroy her.

The attack on your daughter's values is especially ominous in the area of sex. The author very vividly describes what is being done to girls' minds and personalities as well as to their bodies. In fact she has seen so much teen depression due to sex sins of various kinds that she feels that teen depression could be considered a sexually transmitted disease. But a good father can "stand in the gap." Your daughter is worth protecting.

The chapters in the book include:

- You Are The Most Important Man in Her Life
- She Needs a Hero
- You Are Her First Love
- Teach Her Humility
- Protect Her, Defend Her (and use a shot gun if necessary)
- Pragmatism and Grit: Two of Your Greatest Assets
- Be the Man You Want Her to Marry
- Teach Her Who God Is
- Teach Her to Fight (For Values)
- Keep Her Connected

Dr. Meeker cites an example of what a father should not be in chapter two. "I met Leah when she was sixteen years old. ... 'Hello, Leah, I'm Dr. Meeker. It's nice to meet you.' She didn't look up. ... Her mother broke the awkward silence. 'I'm Leah's mother, Dr. Meeker. She really doesn't want to be here. I made her come because something's wrong. I'm really worried she's depressed.' ... 'You see, a couple of months ago Leah went to her friend's house. He was her best friend. They had known each other since the fourth grade. Anyway, they spent a lot of time together. You know, not dating or anything.' ... Over the next forty-five minutes, I learned from the tentative sixteen-year -old girl and her mother that Leah's trusted friend had suddenly turned on her and forced her to participate in many sexual acts. ... 'Leah, do you realize what this boy did to you was illegal? He should be in jail right now. What did your father do?' She delivered her father's response in a monotone voice. 'My dad said to me, Boys will be boys, and left to go golfing.'

... The assault was devastating to Leah, but the blow that had brought her down was the fact that her father didn't care and didn't defend her. He could have been Leah's hero. He could have stormed over to the young man's house and demanded an apology for his daughter; he could have demanded that the young man turn himself over to the police. But instead, he went golfing. ... If her dad had done anything to defend her - even a simple angry phone call to the young man - he could have spared his daughter months of agony. Instead, it took eighteen months of counseling to help her depression abate."

Every father and mother with a daughter should read this book. Dr. Meeker, writing mostly as a physician and counselor, says teens should avoid sex as long as possible. The bible, however, says sex is only for marriage. That is one thing I wish she had incorporated into the book.

Dr. Meeker also shows how you can still help a daughter after she is grown and gone. This book is not only excellent if you have a daughter at home, but it would be a good gift for families who still have daughters growing up. [FN](#)

*Strong Fathers, Strong Daughters:
Ten Secrets Every Father Should Know*

By Meg Meeker, M.D.

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2008 Events

East Texas Women's Conference

March 14-16

"Christian Woman's Journey: Growing Along The Way" The East Texas Women's Conference, will be hosted by the Church of God, Big Sandy. This is a unique experience for women to learn and bond together. Cost for this 3 day event is \$25 per woman. For more information about the conference, please contact us at Info@EastTexasWomensConference.com or call: Melodee Overton (903) 571-2322, Nancy White (903) 636-4756, or Kim Skelton (903) 759-9900.

YEA Summer Camp

June 22-29

More information will be available soon. Check for updates on the CEM website: www.borntowin.net/newsite/Announcement.

Feast of Tabernacles 2008 - GREECE

We are in the process of planning another international feast site! In 2008, we have our sights set on Greece. If you would like more information as it becomes available, please contact Linda Pratt; LindaP777@fuse.net or call (513) 779-2675.

Camp Outreach

Camp Outreach 2007 was a week long effort to repair homes in needy areas around the country, sponsored by local COG congregations in various locations. Camp Outreach is in need of volunteers and funds for this year's work efforts. Please go to <http://www.cogcincinnati.org/pages/networks.html> for more information.



CEM Memorial Day Weekend Family Retreat

May 23-26

Once again, CEM will be hosting the fourth annual Family Retreat annual Memorial Day Weekend Family Retreat May 23-26 at the beautiful Paris landing State Park in Buchanan, Tennessee. Each spring Christians experience a feast of spiritual growth, fun and fellowship with the whole family focused on Christ. Stimulating seminars, exciting YEA classes, worship services, cookouts, pie and ice cream social, and a family dance. Rooms are \$67. For more information, see the ad below, and check the CEM website: www.borntowin.net/newsite/Events.



Memorial Day Weekend Family Retreat 2008

May 23-26, 2008

Paris Landing State Park, Buchanan, Tennessee

For Reservations, Call: 1-800-250-8614

CEM Group Number 3355

Double Rooms discounted to \$67.50

Parlor Rooms \$50.00 (kitchenettes adjoining sleeping rooms)

(Preliminary Schedule)

Friday Night, May 23

Registration and refreshments in the Hospitality Room starting at 6:00 P.M.

Saturday, May 24

Seminars from 9:00-10:00 A.M. and 10:00-11:00 A.M.

YEA Classes from 10:00-11:00 A.M.

Worship Services 2:00 P.M.

Pie and Ice Cream Social begins at 7:30 P.M.

Sunday, May 25

Seminars from 9:00-10:00 A.M. and 10:00-11:00 A.M.

YEA Classes from 10:00-11:00 A.M.

Other activities to be announced

Cookout 5:00 P.M.

Family Dance 8:00 P.M.

Monday, May 26

Seminars from 9:00-10:00 A.M.

YEA and other seminars from 10:00-11:15 A.M.

Farewell by Ron Dart at 11:30 A.M.

2008 Events Calendar

Holy Days are in red. See page 18 for event details.

| | |
|---|-----------------|
| East Texas Women's Conference | March 14-16 |
| Passover | April 19 |
| Days of Unleavened Bread | April 20-26 |
| CEM Memorial Day Weekend Family Retreat | May 23-26 |
| Pentecost | June 8 |
| YEA Summer Camp | June 22-29 |
| Camp Outreach | TBA |
| Feast of Trumpets | September 30 |
| Day of Atonement | October 9 |
| Feast of Tabernacles | October 14 - 20 |
| Last Great Day | October 21 |

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