

# Seek Ye First...

“...the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matt. 6:33).

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## THE BIBLE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Tom Moore

According to Mark 5:1ff, Jesus and His disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee and entered the country of the Gerasenes. Here they encountered a man who was possessed of demons, who lived among the tombs of that region – day and night he roamed the area, crying out and injuring himself with sharp stones. The citizens of the country had tried to chain him, but with fierce strength he broke the shackles.

What a horror he must have been to those who were forced to travel near his stomping ground. When the Lord met him, He took control of the situation and cast out the man’s evil spirits. Strangely, one of the expelled demons asked that he and his companions be allowed to enter into a herd of swine feeding nearby. Jesus granted the request.

The pigs rushed headlong into the sea and this was reported to those in the city. The curiosity of the people motivated them to go see what had happened and see the man. Notably, the text says that he “*was clothed and in his right mind*” (Mark 5:15). But, instead of being overwhelmed by the power of such a miracle – the people insisted that Jesus leave. How many spiritual blessings did they rob themselves of due to their foolish action? And how many since then have deprived themselves of spiritual blessings by dismissing the Lord from their personal lives while suffering attacks from the enemies of the mind?

But here is a powerful lesson. When the poor demonic found Jesus – he reclaimed his sanity. He acquired rightness of mind, tranquility of soul. Of course, there was a miracle involved in this circumstance; but nevertheless, there is a timeless principle found here: “There is soundness of mind in being with the Son of God.”

Enemies of the mind (mental illness/struggles) is one of the major health problems in our world. It is estimated that at least one-half of those occupying beds in our hospitals are there because of emotional problems. It is estimated by some doctors that 60 to almost 100 percent of physical illnesses are a result of mental illness in one form or another. Our phone books are filled with listings for psychiatrists and psychologists. Apparently, many people are struggling with enemies of the mind.

What causes these enemies to battle against us—to wage war against us? Sometimes the root of these difficulties is organic, hormonal, or chemical. Genetic defects, degenerative changes accompanying advanced age, the use of alcohol and other drugs can bring on physical alterations in the brain that manifest themselves in emotional disturbance. Those affected in this manner obviously need medical attention.

I believe that most of our mental enemies are self induced; they are in fact, spiritual problems. Such folks do not need materialistic or a Humanistic psychologist who is educated at the feet of Freud, nor do they require being filled with a much of drugs (drug treatment seem to be the quick-fix for everything these days). Human sin builds up a terrible emotional toll on the person responsible for his sin. Consider the following factors: Sin separates one from God (Isa. 59:1-2). Sin saddens; the prodigal son was in a state of deep depression until he “*came to himself*” and re-established communion with his father (Luke 15:11ff). Sin sears. Sin left to go its ungodly way can harden the heart. Paul spoke of those who were “*past feeling*” (Eph. 4:19).

Spiritual problems have spiritual solutions. One of the problems with modern psychiatric theory is the notion that good psychology must be morally neutral. It is a must that we realize that there is only one solution to emotional problems that are spiritually caused. That solution is God’s word, Peter declared, “*According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue*” (2 Pet. 1:3). Absolutely no apology needs to be made for this recommendation. The Bible is the best textbook on psychology in the world. The Bible not only diagnoses the weakness of humanity, but has the prescription for the cure. If we will rely on Jesus, He can restore the soundness to our minds. “*I said, LORD, be merciful unto me: heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee*” (Psa. 41:4).

In this issue of *Seek Ye First* we will be discussing various enemies of the mind, mental adversaries such as: an unforgiving spirit, guilt, worry, envy, and pride. The Bible, as we will see, has the cure to these ills.

# Seek Ye First...

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## Our Purpose

The editors of *Seek Ye First* produce this biblical journal to provide scriptural material dealing with the issues that are currently affecting the church, our families, our nation and the world. Our intent is to challenge souls to return to the “old paths” (Jer. 6:16) for their sole source of authority in religious matters. Our policy is to speak as the oracles of God (1 Pet. 4:11), encouraging people to study to show themselves approved unto God, enabling them to rightly divide the word (2 Tim. 2:15). We make every effort to deal boldly with the issues that confront Christianity, with no apology, and strive to do so “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15).

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# AN UNFORGIVING SPIRIT

Michael Light

As we ponder different types of “Enemies of the Mind,” I’m not sure a lack of a forgiving spirit would make most lists compiled by men. However, from a biblical perspective it does truly fit well in this study.

While we should and do stand opposed to all manner of false doctrine – we must also realize we must consistently affirm what the Bible teaches relative to the “whole” man (our mind and psychological make up). For instance, note the following two passages:

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance; against such there is no law (Gal. 5:22-23).*

*And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 1:5-8)*

God has given us specific instructions that aim right at the heart of us all. We must endeavor to add these virtues and these spiritual traits to our character. Brethren, when we fail to do so we are in sin (1 Jn. 3:4). The above material is just as much a part of the Law of God as the doctrines of the church and the plan of salvation.

If we are to be a faithful Christians we must imitate the attitudes and actions of Jesus in the area of forgiveness. Let’s look at a few examples of forgiving others. Note first God the Father forgave us, *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you (Eph. 4:31,32).*

This passage alludes to the same point I was making earlier, that an unforgiving spirit spoils the heart of the unforgiving one. Look at the words the Holy Spirit used to describe the true nature of those who refuse to forgive. He mentions, bitterness – is there anything more pathetic than an embittered person? They alienate themselves from everyone in their lives and have no joy at all. Such a character is not Christian in any sense of the word. He continues with wrath, anger, evil speaking and malice- again these traits or totally opposite from what we are supposed to be. To possess an unforgiving spirit is to war against the peace of mind we should have in Christ.

Remember the examples that Jesus, Stephen, Joseph and others displayed (Luke 23:34; Acts 7:59-60; Gen. 50:19-21)? Each of these exemplified a wonderful ability to truly seek the ultimate good of the ones who had offended (and even killed them). Now the Bible certainly does teach

forgiveness cannot be granted to the impenitent (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30; Mat. 18:15-17). But when an individual does repent and ask for forgiveness we must grant it. And we should do so gladly for we have gained a brother (Mat. 18:15). Who in the world do we think we are to stand in judgment (refusing to forgive) one who asks for our forgiveness? Is there any better example of the attitude of the forgiving one that the father of the Prodigal son? He ran to him, hugged him, and totally restored him (Luke 15:11-32). This example seems seldom followed today

Lest we be swollen with pride remember the sobering word of Brother Paul, *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: ... For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;* (Rom. 3:10, 23). John adds, *If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is no in us... If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.* (1 John 1:8,10).

It shouldn't be as difficult as it seems to be for us to remember the dark days of sin in our own lives. When the prince of this world had our eyes blinded with the carnal temptations of the earth. We should be able to recount with great joy the day we were forgiven of all of our iniquity and born again unto the Lord (John 3:3-5). More than likely we can likewise remember sins committed after having become a child of God. Perhaps we looked in the mirror and asked ourselves how could we have possibly done what we did. Like the apostle Peter and the great king David, we may have betrayed and fallen deep into the clutches of sin. But their examples also lead us back through the avenue of repentance and prayer to live faithfully for God (Acts 8:22; Psa. 51; 1 John 1:7-10).

One of the great ironies of life is, that while the loving God of all the earth tries to provide the most abundant life we could possibly have, we often reject His counsel (John 10:10). The writer of Proverbs was certainly correct when he taught us that the way of the transgressor (sinner) is hard. The allure of sin is strong, but the price paid in the form of consequences is usually quite severe.

This is true of all sin – including the sin of being an unforgiving person. If we have an unforgiving spirit we will harm virtually everyone we know and we will consume ourselves in the process. We will begin to change in a negative way. Just as the sins of the flesh discussed in Romans 1 were self propagating and spiraled out of control – so do the sins that are enemies of the mind. We will find our selves in a very dark and lonely place if we possess an unforgiving spirit. God intended for us to have better than that. If you are struggling with an unforgiving spirit, repent of that and come in out of the shadows. Come bask in the light of the Christian walk as God truly designed it.

### *SPECIAL NOTE and REQUEST*

Because of the continual rise in cost of mailing, we are wanting to begin emailing Seek Ye First... to as many as possible instead of using regular mail. If you are willing and able to receive Seek Ye First... by email, please send your name, address, and email address to [dspoppy@yahoo.com](mailto:dspoppy@yahoo.com) and a note so explaining.

Thanks,  
The Editors

## This Issue's Theme:

# *Enemies of the Mind*

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## **Did you know...**

Abraham Lincoln said, "I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book."

George Washington admitted, "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."

Charles Dickens proclaimed, "The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or ever will be known in the world."

Robert E. Lee announced, "In all my perplexities and distresses, the Bible has never failed to give light and strength."

The Psalmist declared, "*O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day*" (Psa. 119:97). How much time are you spending with your Bible? The Bible will help you defeat the enemies of the mind!

# GUILT OVER SIN

David Harris

What is guilt? It is easy to acknowledge who is guilty, but not who has guilt. It is possible for man to be guilty and not know of it, but it is not possible for one to have guilt without acknowledgment. The Bible does not give us a definition of guilt, but gives us more of a description of what it is. Scripture will use "conviction," "sin," and "conscience" to describe guilt over sin. The Bible does however give us a good definition of sin and what it does to the sinner (1 Jn.3:4; Isa. 59:2). Sin is a transgression of God's law, and separation from God because of it. It would not be possible to experience remorse (the deep and painful regret for wrongdoing) if one did not know of sin and the results.

King David gives us an insight into the way guilt works in conjunction with conviction, conscience, and the transgression of God's Will (sin). After having committed adultery with Bathsheba, and having her husband put to death, the Lord sent the prophet Nathan to convict David of his sin (2 Sam. 12). After Nathan had told David the parable of the ewe lamb, David became his own judge, acknowledging the grievous wrong that had been committed. Then Nathan said; "Thou art the man" (v. 7). Then David said unto Nathan; "I have sinned against the Lord" (v. 13). David knew he stood guilty of the murder of Uriah (even though he did it through another), and the adultery with Bathsheba. All of the transgression has been acknowledged by David, his conscience convicted, and now we read of the guilt that overwhelmed him.

*"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned..."* (Psa.51:1-4).

David now sees that he has acted foolishly, is spiritually sick, separated from the presence of God, and without the joy of salvation. This feeling of guilt is apparent in David, and serves to illustrate "godly sorrow." *"For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death"* (2 Cor.7:10). Sorrow alone for sin would not have caused David to repent. Because he may have only been sorry he got caught. But since he was sorry for his sin and its offence to God, it moved him to get right with God.

David's prayer in Psalm 51 is a plea for restoration and reconciliation with God. David desires to be joyful again, and God is the only one who can remove and deliver

David from the guilt of sin. David acknowledges in his prayer that God will not be satisfied with mere sacrifices, or just going through the motions of giving. God desires a genuine, penitent heart.

*"Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation: and my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness. O Lord, open thou my lips; and my mouth shall shew forth thy praise. For thou desirest not sacrifice; else would I give it: thou delightest not in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise"* (Psa.51:14-17).

David knew that God could not be bought off. He had the monetary ability to offer multitudes of good "acceptable" animal sacrifices. Instead of offering animal sacrifices to atone for the immorality of which he was guilty, he named the sacrifices of which God would be desirous and accepting. It would be a *broken spirit* and a *contrite heart*. That would be the entire being of the guilty one, coming in bowed-down humility and reverence, unto the Creator, seeking His spiritual favor. *Then*, and only *then*, could he resume the proper sacrifices commanded under the Law.

The guilt of sin should afflict all of us the same today. David shows us that through sin, we remove ourselves from the covenant relationship that a Christian has with God. He shows us that guilt of sin cannot be experienced until it is acknowledged by the offender. When acknowledged, one becomes distraught and is filled with godly sorrow, causing repentance. How important that every Christian have a penitent soul, a soul that is aware of the guilt of sin and God's great forgiveness and mercy. How important that every Christian have a heart like that of David, yearning for forgiveness for sin against the Lord. How important it is for all souls to know that God will make no deals. He demands from every sinner, a *broken spirit*, and a *contrite heart*, then we will be able to approach His throne of grace through our obedience to His will.

Every soul wants to be happy, but that happiness can only truly come with the guilt of sin confessed and removed. Read Psalm 32:1-5.

David once again, through inspiration, shows us how to manage the guilt of sin, and be joyful again.

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# DON'T BE A WORRY WART

Tim Ayers

“Don’t worry, be happy!” Bobby McFerrin wrote this song and took it all the way to number one in 1988. In the first part of the song he wrote, “In every life we have some trouble, but when you worry you make it double. Don’t worry, be happy.” He may not have realized it (or maybe he did) that the basic premise of his song is entirely biblical. The message of scripture with regard to worry is, “Don’t do it.” Worry is usually defined as being concerned, troubled, anxious or uneasy about something. It is fretting over a matter. Anxiety is a good synonym for worry. In the King James Bible the word “careful” is found many times for the idea of worry. In the 1600s that word had that exact meaning but not so much today. Now let’s notice what some secular writers have observed about worry.

In an article by Denise Lammi and David Wojtowicz, they quoted the Dalai Lama who said, “If there is a solution to a problem, there is no need to worry. And if there is no solution, there is no need to worry.” That sounds like pretty good advice. They also wrote about a writer named Kepler who told of a woman who kept track of her worries. She found that forty percent of the things she worried about were about things that would never happen. Thirty percent of the things she worried about were about things that had already happened. Twelve percent of the things she worried about were about others’ opinions. Ten percent of the things she worried about were needless health concerns, which only made her health worse. And finally eight percent of the things she worried about were real concerns in her life. Another suggestion they had concerning worry was to ask yourself the question, “Will this matter a year from now?” This came from “Don’t Sweat The Small Stuff” by Dr. Richard Carlson. And again, I would agree that this is a fairly helpful idea. It certainly causes us to think of any long term effects of the situation that we might be worrying about.

Susanne Gaddis, PhD., in an article entitled “A Prescription for Worry Warts,” says that the statistics usually show over eighty-five percent of the things people worry about never happen. This would include “worries over our past which can never be changed, worries over which we have no control, irrational concerns or fears, and future worries.”

She suggests that one who is bothered by worrying write down all their worries on a piece of paper, and then categorize them into worries about family, work, etc. Then prioritize them and see which ones are really not valid. Dr. Gaddis suggests next to each worry decide if a course of action can be taken to solve it. If so, write it down so you

have a plan of action. That should alleviate at least some of the worry.

All the above includes some good proposals, but what does the scripture say? First we notice that Jesus teaches that worry accomplishes nothing. Our Savior taught,

*“Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?” (Mat. 6:25-27).*

Luke records these words: “*And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind*” (Luke 12:29). Speaking from experience, anytime I have worried about something I have realized later that my worrying did not solve anything. In fact, most of the time it just made things worse. The Bible also teaches that worrying is not good for our physical health. Solomon wrote, “*Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad*” (Pro. 12:25).

Further, we need to recognize that worry is an indicator that we are no longer trusting in our Heavenly Father. Jesus said, “*Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?*” (Mat. 6:30). The apostle Paul wrote, “*Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus*” (Phil. 4:6-7). All the time we waste in worrying and fretting over things would be so much better spent in praying to our God in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. As Christ commanded, “*But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you*” (Mat. 6:33). Finally, follow Peter’s advice when he tells us we should be “*casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you*” (1 Peter 5:7). Don’t worry. Trust God, and be happy!

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# ENVY AND HATRED

Casey Clement

Throughout the vicissitudes of life one may find himself looking through the eyes of envy and hatred. Truth be told, there are many throughout the world who feel pain caused by these two uncomplimentary and devilish traits. The truth is that envy and hatred cause much pain and sorrow for a number of people. Perhaps that is why the Scriptures teach us that we must put away hatred and envy. It was the Proverbs writer who said, "*Hatred stirreth up strifes; but love covereth all sins*" (Pro. 10:12). It was also he who wrote in Ecclesiastes 4:4 that that envy is "*vanity and vexation of spirit.*" Although, these are often found within the mind of an individual it is not always the case that envy and hatred co-exist. Therefore, they are not the same; however, they are very closely related. Both are such common sins in today's society. So how is it that we deal with hatred and envy? How do we overcome the problems caused by these sins? Let us take a closer look into these two evils.

There is no doubt that envy is a very prevalent sin in our society. We know that envy is something that should not be done, yet some of us do it daily and perhaps it is done because we are not exactly sure what envy is. Many feel that envy is nothing more than mere jealousy. However, notice what Wikipedia says regarding envy and jealousy.

"Envy and jealousy are often used interchangeably, but in correct usage, they stand for two different distinct emotions. In proper usage, jealousy is the fear of losing something that one possesses to another person, while envy is the pain or frustration caused by another person having something that one does not have oneself."

It is not wrong to desire things in this life or to see what others have and desire the same; the problem comes when envy overtakes us and we wish that their possessions were our possessions or wish that they did not possess them. This is what I call the "If I can't have it you can't have it mentality." We must be careful of envy. It was the wise Solomon who said "*A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones*" (Pro. 14:30).

Envy breeds hatred. Perhaps one can notice in Scripture examples of envy and the problems it ensues. You may remember in Genesis chapter 4 the first account of murder. It was envy that led to hatred and hatred toward murder. Fueled by envy and hatred Cain rose up and slew his brother Abel and all of this came about by Cain envying the respect that God had toward Abel and his offering. Here we have an example of envy leading to hatred and hatred leading to murder. Still not convinced? Notice Genesis 37 the account of Joseph and his coat of many

colors. Looking specifically at verses 1-11 one will notice it was the favoritism of their father that drove Joseph's brothers to envy. It was his brother's envy (v. 11) which led to their hatred (v. 4) and ultimately to their plot to slay him (v. 18). Nothing good comes from envy only hatred and that which is evil. When envy permeates the mind hatred is not far away.

Hatred, however, is not always brought on by envy. One may hate another because of something that he has done. For example it would be hard not to hate someone that murdered your family member; however, hatred brought on by means other than envy is still not justified. Hatred toward an individual is not condoned in the scriptures, rather it is highly condemned. It is not wrong to hate the action but wrong to hate the actor. Being one of the works of the flesh hatred (hate) is obviously an act that is not of God (Gal. 5:18-21). The apostle Paul says that those who do the works of the flesh will not inherit eternal life in heaven.

Having noticed that the Bible condemns hate and envy the question then arises, "how is it that we overcome?" Hatred and envy are wrong because they are not motivated by love. As Christians we should show forth the love of God in our conversation (manner of life). The character and nature of the Creator is the total opposite of hate. 1 John 4:16 shows us "*God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*" Therefore, if one chooses to abide in hate and envy then he is not in God. Although, change isn't instantaneous, the only way to overcome hate and envy is to prayerfully seek God and show forth loving obedience to Him.

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Aesop had a fable about two eagles, one envious of the other because the other could soar higher and more elegantly than he could. So the envious eagle would pluck his strongest feathers from his own body and shoot them as arrows, trying to wound or kill the other eagle. This was to his own undoing, however. He could not hit the highflying eagle, and he was eventually grounded by his lack of feathers. Envy destroyed the eagle.

Envy can do great damage in the life of a Christian as well. Solomon said, "A sound heart is the life of the flesh: but envy the rottenness of the bones" (Pro. 14:30). Envy can cause our physical health to deteriorate, but even more damaging is the hurt inflicted on our spiritual self. Envy is a deadly disease. It is the cancer that eats up man on the inside. What many do not realize is that the envious man hurts himself far more than the object of his ruinous jealousy.

# THE ENEMY OF PRIDE

Ryan Smithey

It should come as no surprise that pride is an enemy of the mind. It is a deceitful sin that promises to exalt the individual but accomplishes just the opposite. Warnings abound throughout the word of God to avoid such an attitude as we are plainly told, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Pro. 16:18). So, one can be assured that when pride swells in our minds, destruction is not far behind.

Maybe one of the most tragic examples of the destructiveness of pride is seen in the account of Saul, the first king of Israel. Saul was a man of great potential. He was the vision of a king, "a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people" (1 Sam. 9:2). Further, he displayed a humble attitude (at least early on). He would ask Samuel, "Am not I a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribe of Israel? And my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?" (1 Sam. 9:21). What a great start, a man of whom it could be said "there is none like him among all the people" (1 Sam. 10:24), a man willing to accept the charge given him by God, and a man of humility that did not exalt himself before the people. But sadly, Saul's great start was not a sign of things to come; instead the potential of this great king would be destroyed by pride. Both Saul's relationships with God and man would be forever altered by a haughty spirit.

First notice his **changed relationship with God**. When Saul was told that he would be king, Samuel told him, "God is with thee" (1 Sam. 10:7) and was assured He would be as long as Saul and the nation continued faithfully (1 Sam. 12:14-15). But within two years, Saul would begin to lift himself up against God. When trying times came, Saul became impatient in waiting on Samuel and "he offered the burnt offering" (1 Sam. 13:9). In doing so, Samuel rebuked him saying, "Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the Lord have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever" (1 Sam. 13:13). Saul exalted himself before God by following his own will instead of God's; now would God choose a new king, one after His own heart (1 Sam. 13:14). On another occasion, he was told by God to go and utterly destroy the Amalekites (1 Sam. 15:3) but he kept alive the king and the best of all that was good (1 Sam. 15:8-9). He then dared to lie before the prophet of God saying, "I have performed the commandment of the Lord" (1 Sam. 15:13). His destruction was now complete as Samuel rebukes him, "When thou wast little in thine own sight, was thou not made the head of the tribes of

Israel, and the Lord anointed thee king over Israel?... Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord? ...Because thou has rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (1 Sam. 15:17, 19, 23). In humility he was exalted, in pride he was debased. No longer could it be said that God was with him; in fact "the Lord repented that he had made Saul king over Israel" (1 Sam. 15:35). What a tragic end to a young man with such great potential, destroyed because pride set him against God. He, like Nebuchadnezzar, learned, "those that walk in pride [God] is able to abase" (Dan. 4:37). Sadly, many are still like Saul; their pride keeps them from following God and from pleasing Him. "The wicked, through the pride of his countenance, will not seek after God: God is not in all his thoughts" (Psa. 10:4).

Second, notice his **changed relationships with man**. Consider David, a man Saul loved greatly (1 Sam. 16:19), a man that saved Israel from Goliath and the Philistines (1 Sam. 17), and a man that became a great military leader for Saul. Yet, for all this Saul would allow pride to destroy this relationship. He became angry as he heard others chant "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (1 Sam. 18:7-8). Fearful David desired even the kingdom, "Saul eyed David from that day forward" (1 Sam. 18:9) and soon would be on a quest to take David's life from him even though David would prove his continued love and respect for Saul. As if that was not enough, Saul's pride would cause him to cast a javelin at his own son, Jonathan, when he tried to defend David (1 Sam. 20:32-34). If we are not careful, pride will do the same thing to our relationships as well. We should display the humble mind of Christ that would allow each to "esteem other better than themselves" and "look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others" (Phil. 2:3, 4). But pride would have us do just the opposite. Pride would have us promote ourselves, even to the harm of others, and in the end destroy both those we love and ourselves.

Indeed, pride is deceitful and destructive. It will destroy our relationships here and more importantly our relationship with God. Let us therefore guard our hearts that this enemy not defile us (cf. Mk. 7:20-23).

*"A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit." (Proverbs 29:23)*

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## Church Contributions

Bangs Church of Christ  
Bangs, TX  
Cold Springs Church of Christ  
Lancaster, TX  
Emerson St. Church of Christ  
Magnolia, AR  
Hillcrest Church of Christ  
Stephenville, TX  
McCloud Church of Christ  
McCloud, OK  
Portland Church of Christ  
Portland, TX  
Rising Star Church of Christ  
Rising Star, TX

## Individual Contributions

John Brown - Magnolia, AR  
Bill & Trevonne Davis - Early, TX  
Michael & Carrie Light - Bangs, TX  
Cynthia McIntyre - Magnolia, AR  
Mr./Mrs. James Meredith - Dixon, MO  
Tom & Carole Moore - Hamilton, TX  
Eddie & Oleta Pafford - Bangs, TX  
Cecil & Rena Robertson - May, TX

## *A Word of Encouragement from the editors of SYF..*

In his book, "Man's Search For Meaning," Austrian psychiatrist Dr. Viktor Frankl documents the profound power that a life purpose exerts over an individual under even the worst of circumstances. Frankl, who survived the Nazi concentration camps, described how prisoners who felt they had nothing to live for succumbed, while those who perceived themselves as having a mission to complete, struggled to survive.

Deprived of all external supports that might give life meaning, these survivors came to realize that, in Frankl's words, "It did not really matter what we expected of life, but rather what life expected from us." Their sense of an inner purpose pulled them through the most horrible physical and emotional experiences so that they might make their unique contribution to the world.

Friends, no matter what life throws our way, no matter what enemy raises his ugly head, if we will realize our true purpose in life, we can be victorious – we can have true meaning to life. A life of victory is within our grasp.

What is our true purpose in life? The inspired quill of Solomon gives us the answer:

*"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man"* (Eccl. 12:13).

Jesus said, *"But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you"* (Mat. 6:33).

With this sense of inner purpose there is no obstacle that we cannot overcome. There is no enemy we can't defeat! Remember the words of Paul, *"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me"* (Phil. 4:13).

## Seek Ye First...

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