

WINTER 2016 • VOLUME 103, No. 4

Megiddo Message

Majesty

*Great and marvelous
are Your works,
Lord God Almighty.*

—Revelation 15:3

by RUTH E. SISSON

"LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED"

—The Apostle Paul, 1 Corinthians 13:5

The word "provoke" means to exasperate, or stir up swiftly. Though it may be used in a good sense, it generally refers to the act of disturbing another so as to cause hurt. In 1 Cor. 13:5 it is translated from the Greek *paraxuno*, which draws from the meanings of "a point," "acid," "keen," and "swift" or "rapid" with "sharpen alongside, fig. to exasperate" (SHG). Combine these meanings and you have something like: *Love is not exasperated, sharp or cutting. Love is not sharpened to a keen point that swiftly stabs or hurts.*

Apply this meaning, and a provocation is an outburst of temper or ill feeling, when we let it be known that "It's not MY fault." Someone or something provoked me! What we overlook in this simple act of self-justification is that no provocation, however severe, can stir up what is not there. Someone misjudged us or accused us falsely? They only zeroed in on a feeling we already harbored.

A circumstance does not *change* our character; it only *reveals* it.

The mud must be at the bottom of the pool or it cannot be stirred up. You cannot roil pure water. Provoking circumstances do not *create* the moral muck; they only bring it to the surface.

To use another simile, a cup brimful of sweet water cannot spill anything but sweet water, no matter how hard it is jolted. The first time I recall hearing this saying it was applied to Joseph, whose stellar character could hold no bad feeling against the brothers who had treated him so harshly.

Now let us take a careful look inside our own hearts. What is hiding there that might be stirred up?

The King James Version of 1 Cor. 13:5 reads, "*Love is not easily provoked.*" Some translations have substituted the thought of "irritation" for the provoking, making it read, "*Love is not irritable.*" The thought is the same. Being provoked or

irritable are both incompatible with love, because perfect love cannot be stirred to any unloving word or act. Christ was tempted, but He could not be stirred to evil because there was no evil thought or intention in Him to stir. The tempter's efforts were wasted. Jesus' was pure love.

Do I find some cheap consolation when I have let myself go in a display of bad temper thinking I was provoked to it by someone else? Simple honesty should compel me to face the fact that the problem is mine, and no one else's. I have the bad disposition, and what I like to call a provocation was really a God-sent opportunity for me to practice self-control. If I failed, the fault is mine, not that of the person or circumstance that stirred me.

How does one get rid of the muck of bad feelings? Commit them to God, let Him repay, and concentrate on what is peaceable and praiseworthy, pure and lovely, following Brother Paul's advice (Phil. 4:8).

Let the muck go. ■

WE BELIEVE...

- ★ **in God, the Creator** and sustainer of the earth, the world, the universes, and all life, in whom we "*live, and move, and have our being.*"
- ★ **in the Bible** as our only source of true knowledge about God and His purposes and plans for His creation and for the salvation of humankind.
- ★ **in Jesus Christ**, the Son of God and our Perfect Example, who was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of a virgin; who ministered among His brethren, was crucified, resurrected, and taken to heaven and seated at the right hand of the Mother, crowned with immortal glory, and who shall shortly return to be King of the whole earth.
- ★ **in the Holy Spirit**, the openly manifest power of God, which God bestowed at various times and in various ways to reveal His knowledge to humankind, to support His spokesmen, to confirm His utterances, and to demonstrate His supreme power and authority.
- ★ **in life as the gift of God**, and in our sacred responsibility to use it for God and His coming Kingdom.
- ★ **in humankind** as providing the raw material from which shall be selected and developed a superior, God-honoring people upon whom God will bestow the blessings of immortal life in His soon-coming Kingdom.
- ★ **in ourselves** as capable, with the help of God, of applying to our own lives the precepts and principles taught in the Word of God, in this way perfecting that high quality of moral character which God has promised to recompense with life eternal in His heavenly Kingdom on earth.
- ★ **in the promise of God**, that Jesus Christ will soon return to rid the earth of all sin and suffering and inaugurate an eternal and worldwide Kingdom of peace and righteousness, until God's will is done here as it is now done in heaven.

The mud must be at the bottom of the pool or it cannot be stirred up

Megiddo Message

The **Megiddo Message** (USPS 338-120) (ISSN 0194-7826) is published quarterly by the Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619. Telephone: 585-436-1614. Periodicals postage paid at Rochester, New York and additional offices.

Publication Staff:

Ruth E. Sisson, Editor; Gerald R. Payne, Executive Editor. Art and design by Margaret A. Tremblay; Subscriptions Manager, Donna R. Mathias.

Subscription Rate and Renewals:

One year (four issues) \$12.00. Send to Megiddo Church, Inc. 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619-1697. Or e-mail megiddo@megiddo.com. Or call 585-436-1614.

Note: For the protection of our subscribers, we do not sell, rent, lease, publish or distribute our mailing list.

Address Changes?

Be sure to notify promptly of any change in your address. Please include your old mailing label and your new address. Mail or e-mail to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, New York 14619-1697. Postmaster: Send all changes of address to Megiddo Church, 481 Thurston Road, Rochester, NY 14619.

URL: www.megiddochurch.com

E-mail address: megiddo@megiddo.com

Manuscript Policy: Unsolicited manuscripts for publication are not accepted.

The **Megiddo Message** is the official organ of the Megiddo Church, Inc., founded in 1880 by L. T. Nichols. Publication was begun in 1915. Maud Hembree, Editor-in-Chief (1915-1935); Ella M. Skeels, Executive Editor (1935-1945); Percy J. Thatcher, Editor (1945-1958); Kenneth E. Flowerday, Editor (1958-1985); Newton H. Payne, Editor (1985-1997).

The **Megiddo Message** is available in microfilm from Bell & Howell Information and Learning, Serials Acquisitions, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106.

Publishing Frequency: The Megiddo Message published with the seasons—Spring (March), Summer (June), Fall (September), and Winter (December).

Bible Quotations: Unidentified quotations are from the King James Version or the New King James Version. Other versions are identified as used.

The following lexicons are abbreviated as:

BDAG—Arndt, W., Gingrich, F. W., Danker, F. W., & Bauer, W. (1996). A Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament and other early Christian literature; **DBL**—Swanson, J. (1997). Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains; **EDNT**—Balz, H. R., & Schneider, G. (1990-). Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament; **GES**—Gesenius, W., & Tregelles, S. P. (2003). Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures; **HAL**—Koehler, L., Baumgartner, W., Richardson, M., & Stamm, J. J. (1999). The Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon of the Old Testament; **LSJ**—Liddell, H. G., Scott, R., Jones, H. S., & McKenzie, R. (1996). A Greek-English lexicon; **LN**—Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament : Based on semantic domains; **SHG**—Strong, J. (1997). The new Strong's dictionary of Hebrew and Greek words. **THAYER**—A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (1889).

MEGIDDO MEANS...

"a place of troops" (Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon);
"a place of God" (Young's Analytical Concordance).
Megiddo was and is a town in Palestine, strategically located, and the scene of frequent warfare. In the spiritual parallel, it is a place where soldiers engaged in spiritual warfare gather to renew their strength and courage (2 Cor. 10:4-5).



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Morning sunlight on the Ten Peak Range in Banff National Park, Alberta, Canada



(right) Same mountain peaks as cover, tower above beautiful Lake Moraine in the Valley of Ten Peaks.

*A Lesson in Faith,
Courage and Endurance*

GO FOR IT!

The ENDURANCE

"By endurance we conquer"

—Shackleton family motto



*One who is captured by the
unseen will go for it in spite
of the costs.*

How many would-be heroes stop because no one says "Go!"?

How many would-be achievers lose out because they can't let go of what is holding them back?

How many would-be followers of Christ give up because they are not willing to risk the unseen; because they cannot let go of the present in order to gain the immeasurably greater value ahead?

There is an instinct to hold onto the visible, the comfortable, the known, and it affects all of us. How ready are we to make any sacrifice, expend any effort, suffer any loss for the great cause of our coming King? How willing are we to exchange present comforts, satisfactions, honors and rewards for that which is not yet within our reach but which we have faith God will give to every winner?

The very special quality of being willing to sacrifice for an unseen glory is one which the explorer and the Christian have in common. Both recognize that there is a risk, a price—perhaps a very high price—to be paid. But both have faith that the rewards are worth the risk; that there is something greater—immensely greater—for those who see it through.

History, especially that of the explorers, has many lessons from which we can benefit, lessons of extreme faith, courage and endurance.

For the explorer, the rewards were visioned in terms of a successful mission, honor and fame. For the Christian, the rewards are all of these—plus *eternal life*, along with heavenly glory and honor and a place in the new government which Christ Jesus will soon set up on planet Earth.

In present terms, the venture (for the Christian *and* the explorer) may look like a lot of discipline, sacrifice, privation, limitation. But what about the vision? What about the glory? The one who has the inner ability to envision, to be captured by the unseen, will go for it *in spite of the costs*.

Let's look back to the early days of the 20th century, to what has become known as the Epic of Shackleton. It is an account of an Antarctic exploration launched about the time that World War I broke out in Europe.

The Story of SHACKLETON'S ENDURANCE



Shackleton's heart's desire was to be an Antarctic "first."

It is one of the greatest survival stories in the annals of exploration. It is the story of the faith and indomitable courage of English explorer Sir Ernest Shackleton, and how he led his men to safety through a series of impossible journeys over land and sea.

In 1914, Shackleton determined to challenge the Antarctic, Earth's final frontier, by being the first to cross it on foot. At this point he was already a seasoned Antarctic explorer. In 1901, he had been part of an ill-prepared expedition under Captain Scott whose goal was to be the first to reach the South Pole. Six years later, Shackleton had set out for the Pole with his own expedition. But the party did not have the proper food, several became sick, and, with their food supply dwindling, Shackleton had made the heart-breaking decision to turn back when he was within 100 miles of his goal—closer than any had come before him. In 1911, another man, Roald Amundson of Norway, won the race to the Pole.

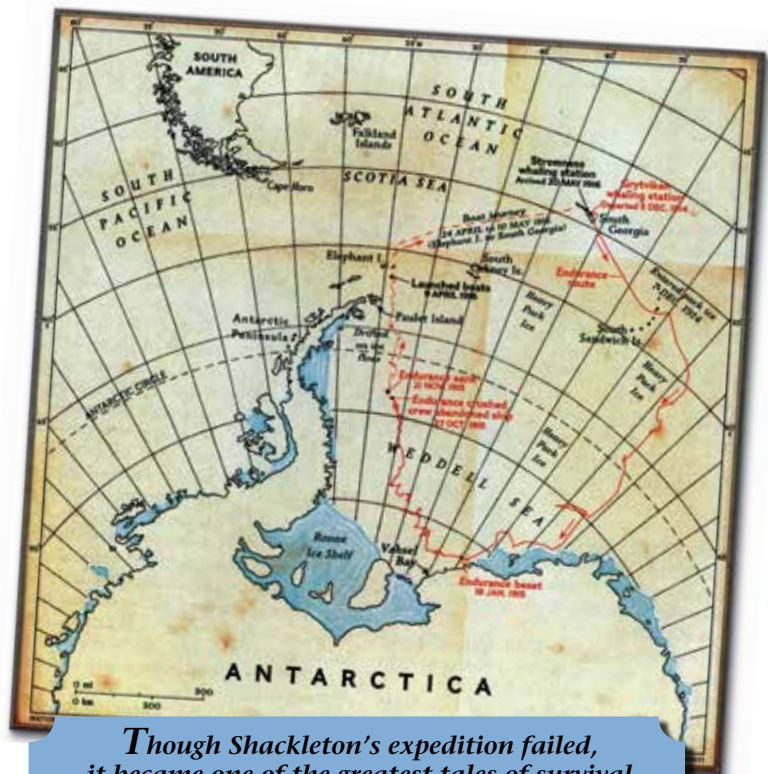
But Shackleton could not give up his heart's desire. Even though he had missed being the first to claim the Pole, there were still other honors to be won. Refusing failure and seemingly insurmountable hardships, he began the difficult task of preparing for another expedition. His party would be the first to cross the entire Antarctic continent on foot.

In December of 1914, Shackleton's party left the farthest British outpost of South Georgia Island in the South Atlantic and headed into the frozen unknown. The 300-ton ship, originally named "Polaris" he had renamed "Endurance" after his family motto, "By endurance we conquer." The ship's company included 28 men (which he had selected out of more than 5000 volunteers), 69 sledging dogs, and—they discovered the first day out of port—one young stowaway.

Dodging icebergs, the *Endurance* rammed

its way through a thousand miles of pack ice over a six-week period, and was within 100 miles of its destination when, on January 18, 1915, ice closed in around the ship. A drastic drop in temperature caused the seawater to freeze, and the *Endurance* was trapped, "frozen in," as the ship's cook wrote, "like an almond in a piece of toffee." The men chopped a path through the ice, until it was free to move again, but there was only more ice ahead and around.

For the next ten months the *Endurance* zig-zagged a thousand miles in drifting ice, and



Though Shackleton's expedition failed, it became one of the greatest tales of survival in expedition history.

For 281 days the ENDURANCE was solidly locked in sea ice.



The Christian's venture and the explorer's may look like a lot of sacrifice and discipline. But what about the vision? What about the glory?

Shackleton and his men knew that each day the Antarctic continent was falling farther and farther away. Then came the day when they could move no more. The increasing pressure from the ice held the little ship firm and began crushing her like an eggshell. There was no way to escape.

The project had failed, and Shackleton and his men became castaways in one of the most hostile environments on earth. Yet the saga of survival that followed made the failed *Endurance* expedition among the greatest human triumphs of history.

Their ship ruined and sinking, there was nothing to do but remove the lifeboats and what food supplies and other items they could salvage, and set up camp—"Ocean Camp" they called it—on the drifting ice.

It was now summer in the Antarctic, temperatures ranged between just above freezing and about 15 degrees F below zero. Winds were often fierce, and the men's sleeping bags and clothing were alternately soaked from melted snow and frozen as stiff as sheets of metal. Five tents which sheltered the men were made of linen so thin that the moon could be seen through them. And they were 350 miles from the nearest land.

Worst of all, they had no communication system. No one in the outside world knew where they were. How long could they hold out?

With the advance of summer, "Ocean Camp" was rapidly becoming unsafe due to softening ice. In December, Shackleton decided to abandon the floating camp and march westward over the ice toward land. The dogs hauled the sledges loaded with supplies, and the men pulled the lifeboats. Loaded, each boat weighed at least a ton, and it proved impossible to haul them over the colossal ice mounds. And they were too heavy to carry. Nor could the boats be left behind, as the ice

was unreliable and beneath a few feet of ice were countless fathoms of ocean.

Helplessly, the men watched to see if the drift of the pack of ice would carry them toward land. If it did not they would have to take to the boats at any moment. Meanwhile they could only wait. They set up their second encampment and named it "Patience Camp."

In March, the ice became so thin that the swell of the ocean beneath it made some of the men seasick. Fearfully they watched as one ice floe after another split directly beneath them. On April 9 they abandoned camp and piled into the three lifeboats with the barest essentials, leaving the rest behind. At the mercy of the winds, they set course for a tiny splinter of land called Elephant Island some 100 miles to the north. Seven days after leaving Patience Camp they arrived at Elephant Island.

It was land, and the men were excited. This was the first land they had stepped on in 16 months. But it was desolate, and it was winter. Shackleton knew that they could not survive long on a desolate island.

For the first two weeks after the landing a gale wind blew

Frozen fast for 10 months, the ENDURANCE was finally crushed by ice pressure.



God's riskers have a surety unknown to the explorers. Those who give their all for His cause WILL succeed.

Shackleton and 5 others leave Elephant Island on a perilous attempt to reach South Georgia Island seeking help. The 22 men that remained behind wave the tiny boat out of sight. It would be 3 months before they were rescued.



without ceasing, at times reaching speeds of over 100 miles per hour. The men's clothing was by now threadbare, and they had no shelter.

Shackleton could see only one way to get help: the whaling station back on South Georgia Island. Selecting his best navigator and four of his toughest sailors (and leaving the other 22 to survive on the tiny island), he set sail in the largest of the lifeboats. This meant traveling 800 miles across the most dangerous ocean on the planet, to an island that was barely a speck on the map. Could they, navigating by sextant under continuously stormy skies, hope to find it in the open sea? Even a one-degree error would mean there was no land for them short of crossing the 4000 miles that lay between them and Africa. It was a risk they had to take; it was their only hope for survival.

As the little boat was tossed like a twig on the high seas in waves as high as 50 feet, most of the time one or more of the crew had to keep diligently at the task of scraping ice from the sides of the boat. Meanwhile Shackleton and the team's navigator Worsley watched the sky. At any opportunity, Worsley, while being held upright by two of his companions, used his sextant when he could manage to sight the sun between thick clouds. Then, crouching in the bottom of the boat, he worked out the mathematics with the stub of a pencil, consulted his blurry, waterlogged tables and his Nautical Almanac. In the course of the 17-day, 800-mile journey, he was able to take only four sextant readings.

Almost by miracle, the boat beached on the small island. It was a journey that nautical experts have called one of the greatest feats of navigation, seamanship and endurance in history.

But more trouble lay ahead.

The explorers soon discovered that they had landed on the uninhabited west end of the island, and prevailing winds and currents prevented them from sailing around to the other side. They had no choice but to travel 22 miles over-

land across frozen mountains and glaciers which no one had ever crossed. Shackleton selected his two sturdiest men, and taking screws from the lifeboat to give traction to their worn shoes, along with a 90 foot rope, a compass and food for three days, the trio struck out on a non-stop trek across the mountains.

Why non-stop? Because if they had stopped they would have frozen to death! At one point they came to a snowy slope which disappeared into the darkness. Not knowing what to do, they sat down and slid off the icy precipice into the darkness. Fortunately, they landed softly in a snow bank, and were able to go on. At another point, in the middle of the night, two of the men sat down, exhausted, and instantly fell asleep. After five minutes, Shackleton awoke them and gave the command to go on because, he said, "sleep under these conditions merges into death."

At one point their only route lay *through* a 30 foot, icy waterfall—on either side were impassable ice-cliffs.

When they were still on the other side of the last mountain ridge, at 7 a.m. they heard the steam whistle sound at the whaling station. Never had they heard a sweeter sound!

After 36 torturous hours, the three exhausted men staggered into the whaling station. After a cheerful reunion, Shackleton immediately petitioned for help, and plans began to rescue the men left stranded 800 miles away. This was in May 1916.

Picking up the party that had been left on the other side of South Georgia Island, the group embarked on the treacherous 800-mile journey across water back to Elephant Island, but had to turn back because of threatening ice. Again they tried, and again, but every attempt was thwarted by ice or weather.

At last, using a ship borrowed from the Chilean government, they embarked on August 30th on their fourth attempt.

Shackleton feared the worst. Could it be possible that the men were still alive? It was another test of endurance.

As the rescue ship approached the beach of Elephant Island, one of the stranded seamen on the island spotted it and rushed into the shelter. "There's a ship," he said, "shall we light a fire?" Before there was time for a reply, there was a rush of members tumbling over one another, making a simultaneous dive for the door-hole and running out onto the beach.

At the same time, Shackleton on board the ship was straining through his binoculars and counting anxiously. "They are all there!" he shouted and burst into tears. Through all the long months of the terrible ordeal, not a man had been lost.

In Retrospect

Shackleton's men were proud of their effort, and their names have been etched in the annals of exploration fame. They had the satisfaction of attempting the nearly impossible. To quote Sir Ernest Shackleton, "In memories we are rich... we have groveled down yet grasped at glory, we have grown bigger in the bigness of the whole, we have seen God in His splendors, we have heard the text that nature renders."

Their survival was a saga of rugged endurance, wise deci-

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GOD'S RISKERS

How ready are we to make any sacrifice, suffer any loss for the great cause of our coming King?



Shackleton and five men set out for South Georgia, a small island, in search of rescue across 800 miles of dangerous waters.

It was by faith ...they trusted God and were tortured, preferring to die rather than turn from God and be free. They placed their hope in the resurrection to a better life. Some were mocked, and their backs were cut open with whips. Others were chained in dungeons. Some died by stoning, and some were sawed in half; others were killed with the sword. Some went about in skins of sheep and goats, hungry and oppressed and mistreated. They were too good for this world. They wandered over deserts and mountains, hiding in caves and holes in the ground... looking forward to a country they [could] call their own."

— Heb. 11:35-38, 14 NLT

Christ's followers are all "riskers," riskers for Christ's sake.

In Paul's letter to the Philippians, the apostle, then in prison, highly commended Epaphroditus to the Church at Philippi. "Welcome him in the Lord with great joy," he wrote, "and honor men like him, because he almost died for the work of Christ, risking his life to make up for the help you could not give me" (Phil. 2:29-30 NIV).

The literal meaning here is "exposing" one's life. The early Christians who gave their lives for Christ were called *parabolani*, or "the riskers." Epaphroditus was one of these. For the sake of Christ he was willing to risk his life by becoming associated with one who was being tried by the government. And there were others, people like Aquila and Priscilla who, wrote Paul, "risked their lives" for him and the Gospel (Rom. 16:4 NIV).

Suffering and conflict have been part of Christianity from the beginning. When the apostles first went out to preach the Gospel, after receiving the Holy Spirit power, they did not pray for deliverance from suffering but only for courage and boldness to witness. "And now, O Lord, hear their threats, and give your servants great boldness in their preaching" (Acts 4:29 NLT).

Persecution was rife during the early centuries, but it did not halt the forward march of the Church. Beaten, reprimanded, and shamed, they only "departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41).

Could we have done as well?

Yet we today are still called to be "riskers" for the cause of Christ, to venture all for Him. We may not be called to suffer physically for His sake, but we must still be riskers, be willing to make that all-out commitment, whatever the cost. Anything that we reserve to ourselves will only make a barrier between us and our loyalty to Christ, and keep us from the full measure of His blessing.

Someone has suggested that the real question is not whether we have the courage to face persecution, but whether we are worth persecuting. The early Christians rejoiced that they were "accounted worthy" to suffer.

Faith, Courage and Endurance

What lessons can we draw from the explorers that are parallel to our Christian effort?

The great glories of life are not scattered on well-paved streets. They lie beyond the horizon, and are waiting for those who have the *faith* to see them, and the *courage* and *endurance* to go after them.

The explorers had first of all a vision that they valued, a vision that had gripped them and that they could not let go. They had faith in their expedition. They knew before they started that the risks were high, but they had determined that the reward was worth the risk.

Then they had unbelievable courage and endurance to keep on—to do everything in their power to preserve their lives. They didn't know what lay ahead, but in their minds they were ready for it.

In the same way, God's heroes are not the pre-cut, made-to-order kind. They are not men and women whose only goal is to follow the crowd, and do the regular thing in the regular way. God's heroes are men and women who have caught sight of something more, something better, something greater than they see around them, and who are ready to go *for it* with faith, courage and endurance.

Comparing: Risk and Rewards

Most people look forward to a continuation of the past quarter century adventures, to the amassing of more knowledge, and more adventures into space, and more sensational entertainment and luxury. It is all tangible excitement.

For the opportunities it provides, the Shackleton venture looks like a very small thing beside the Christian's. As Christians we are looking forward to an explosion of knowledge and adventure far beyond the imagination of any explorer. We are looking forward to a new order, a time when righteousness, prosperity and happiness will reach into every corner of the globe; a time when space travel as we know it will be obsolete, and death and pain and sorrow a part of the eternal past. We look forward to a time when mortals will experience a splendor and joy beyond anything which today's most brilliant minds can conceive. Yes, all this and eternal life, too!

But as thinking men and women, we know that these things must have a price. There are tests to be passed, tests of endurance that will build and strengthen character.

Paul aptly compared it to an endurance race. We have just talked about a man who risked life and limb and endured extreme hardship for the distinction of being the first to cross the Antarctic continent and bring glory to the British Empire. He failed even when he had done his utmost.

What are our possibilities of success? Does the risk of failing threaten the Christian who makes an all-out effort? Is it possible that you and I may fail when we have done everything in our power?

Here is where God's riskers have a surety unknown to the explorers. All who set their sites on the right goal and give God their all will succeed. It is God's promise.

Go For It—With God

What can we do to make sure we will succeed?

Test 1: First, check yourself. Ask, "Is God helping me through this?" Visualize His angel at your side. Are you glad

to share your whole experience and all your thoughts with Him? Are your plans needful? Will they honor God and bring glory to Him? Does your service measure up to the high standards of doing all to the glory of God (1 Cor. 10:31)?

If we cannot take God with us in everything we do, we are doing the wrong things.

Test 2: If you passed the first test, there is yet another one: *Where is your heart?*

Are you willing to sacrifice everything, even your time, your energy, your interest for the rest of your life? Are you willing to push on when all odds seem against you?

Are you ready to stand for right even if it is to your own temporal detriment?

Will your trust in God sustain you though fiery trials come?

Are you willing to search the Scriptures, learn to separate truth from error, and put this knowledge to work in your life with all your might?

Test 3: If all your answers are still affirmative, then you will succeed—if you can pass one more test: the test of endurance.

Look again at the cost. The price is high. But look beyond the cost to the promises, the eternal life and blessings beyond

Don't Quit

*When things go wrong, as they sometimes will,
When the road you're trudging seems all uphill,
When the funds are low and the debts are high,
And you want to smile but you have to sigh,
When care is pressing you down a bit,
Rest if you must, but don't you quit.*

*Life is queer with its twists and turns,
As every one of us sometimes learns,
And many a failure has turned about,
When he might have won had he stuck it out.
Don't give up, though the pace seems slow—
You may succeed with another blow.*

*Often the goal is nearer than
It seems to a faint and faltering one;
Often the struggler has given up
When he might have captured the victor's cup,
And he learned too late, when the night slipped down,
How close he was to the golden crown.*

*Success is failure turned inside out—
The silver tint of the clouds of doubt,
And you never can tell how close you are,
It may be near when it seems afar;
So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit—
It's when things seem worst that you mustn't quit.*

all imagination. The price has *no comparison* to the prize!

Then is there any reason not to go for it?

Christ summed up our responsibility when He pointed us to the first two great commandments: *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. And... love your neighbor as you love yourself"* (Matt. 22:37, 39 NCV). As long as we follow His example, the Lord promises, *"I will never leave you or forsake you"* (Heb. 13:5 NRSV). He assures us, *"With God all things are possible"* (Matt. 19:26).

Why not be as dedicated as the apostle Paul was when

he wrote, *"For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Rom. 8:38–39 NRSV).

Set your heart on securing a place in the soon-coming, eternal Kingdom of Christ, and then *go for it!* And letting nothing discourage you.

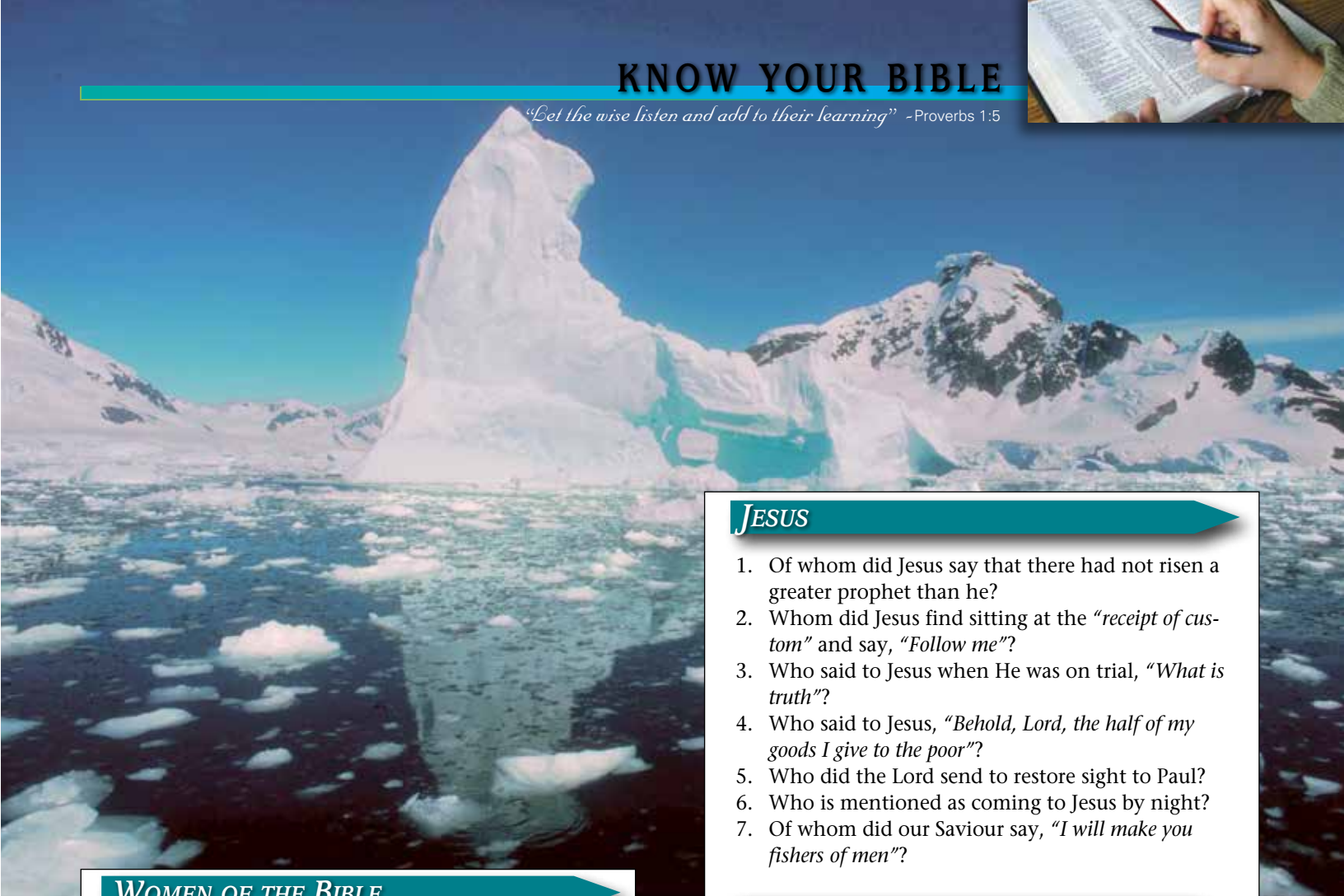
May God help us... all the way to that glorious end! ■

Thinking it through...

1. What Bible personality stands out in your mind as a hero of endurance?
Why? _____
2. What did Jesus say is the one qualification of all who will be saved? (Matt. 10:22; 24:13) _____
3. What do the explorer and the Christian have in common? _____
4. How did the apostle Paul compare the amount of "cost" he was paying with the reward ahead? (2 Cor. 4:17–18) _____
5. What convinces you that the reward is worth the price? _____
6. What did Paul say about God's ability to compensate faithful service? (Eph. 3:20) _____
7. What was the attitude of certain early Christian teachers (Peter and John—Acts 5:41) toward suffering for Christ's sake? _____
8. What "risks" have you taken for your Christian faith? _____
9. Suppose you are offered a promotion at work. You realize, however, that the new position will place you in a strongly anti-Christian environment. Your supervisor strongly advises you to take the new position. What would you do? _____
10. What can you do to increase your possibilities of succeeding in your Christian effort? _____

KNOW YOUR BIBLE

"Let the wise listen and add to their learning" - Proverbs 1:5



WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

1. Who was the son of that Mary at whose home the apostles went to meet for prayer at Jerusalem?
2. Who was a prophetess and noted leader among women in the time of Moses?
3. Who baptized an officer of Queen Candace?
4. What woman prepared a meal for three angels?
5. What was the name of the younger daughter of Laban?
6. What queen was deprived of her throne by her son because of her idolatry?
7. What woman continued in prayer day and night in the temple?
8. Who was the first recorded Christian convert in Europe?
9. Who was the daughter-in-law of Naomi?
10. Who watched the ark of bulrushes in which her infant brother had been laid?
11. Who threatened the life of Elijah so that he fled to Mt. Horeb?
12. Who requested that her two sons might sit one on the right and one on the left of Christ in His kingdom?
13. Who was Samuel's mother?

JESUS

1. Of whom did Jesus say that there had not risen a greater prophet than he?
2. Whom did Jesus find sitting at the "receipt of custom" and say, "Follow me"?
3. Who said to Jesus when He was on trial, "What is truth"?
4. Who said to Jesus, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor"?
5. Who did the Lord send to restore sight to Paul?
6. Who is mentioned as coming to Jesus by night?
7. Of whom did our Saviour say, "I will make you fishers of men"?

MOSES

1. To whose tribe did Moses give no inheritance except forty-eight cities including six cities of refuge?
2. Who of the tribe of Judah was sent by Moses as a spy to Canaan?
3. Who was the Mother-in-law of Moses?
4. Whose army was drowned in the Red Sea?
5. What old man felt none of the infirmities of age?

PAUL

1. Who accused Paul as being a "creator of dissensions among all the Jews"?
2. Who was captain of the guard while Paul was being taken as a prisoner to Rome?
3. Who being overcome with sleep during a sermon, fell out of a third story window and was taken up dead? Who restored him to life?
4. Who was the chief man in the island of Melita, where Paul was shipwrecked?
5. To whom did Paul write, "If he owes anything, put that on my account"? About whom?

ANSWERS ON PAGE 13



A long time ago, Robert Bruce, the king of Scotland, was forced to hide from his enemies. He found refuge in a cave, deep in the forest. He was downhearted and discouraged. He had tried to save Scotland from her enemies. But he had lost every battle. His soldiers had been killed or hurt or forced to hide.

"It is of no use to fight anymore," he said. "Our enemies are too strong for us."

Just then he saw a spider weaving a web. She was trying to spin the web between two rocks. She had fastened one end of her thread to a rock and was trying to swing herself across. But each time she failed to reach the rock.

King Robert sat watching her for a long time. He wondered how long she would keep on trying. The spider tried and failed seven times. "You are a brave and patient spider," thought the king. "If you try once more and succeed, I, too, will fight again."

The spider swung herself once more on her thin thread. This time she reached the other rock and fastened her thread.

"Thanks for the lesson you have taught me, little spider," said King Robert. "I will try once more to free Scotland from her enemies."

So, as legend has it, King Robert went forth again at the head of his army. They fought as they had never fought before, and won.

Are you ever tempted to give in and give up? The fact is that we all feel that way many times as we deal with problems at work, at home, wherever we go. That is why the Scriptures have a lot to say about keeping on.

The book of Hebrews was written in order to give Jewish Christians a word that would enable them to fight against the temptation to quit.

Because they had become Christians, because they were naming the name of Jesus Christ. Because they were undergoing persecution, and, therefore, were tempted to retreat from the Christian faith. The book of Hebrews was written in order to prevent that.

The writer of Hebrews wrote to that early community of faith just this: *"Recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings:...for you had compassion on me in my chains...Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: For yet a little while, and He who is coming will come and will not tarry"* (Heb. 10:32-37).

Consider Hebrews 12:1-2. It goes like this: *"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God"* (NRSV).

Now, what does this passage have to say to us as we are tempted to give in and give up? It says several things.

This passage says, first of all, that life is a demanding, costly, exacting race. The writer does not beat around the bush with his readers. They were probably wondering whether or not they ought to retreat into a safer, less dangerous position. What does the writer do to hearten these souls in the long ago? He tells them right off that life is like a race, a very exacting race. He likens the Christian to a spiritual athlete. "The Christian life," he says, "is a race to be run."

Then, the writer changes the figure: "It is a grim contest, like that of two gladiators contending for the mastery. You cannot hope to win except at the price of struggle."

Then he says it is a race that we must run with patience,—that is, patient endurance. The race of life is not a 100-yard dash. It is a cross-country run. The track stretches way into the sunset. For this reason we must guard against what is perhaps the greatest peril of all, the peril of fainting. In Galatians 6:9, St. Paul wrote: "*Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*"

Author Irving Stone has spent a lifetime studying greatness, writing novelized biographies of such men as Michelangelo, Vincent van Gogh, Sigmund Freud, and Charles Darwin. Stone was once asked if he had found a thread that runs through the lives of all these exceptional people.

He said, "I write about people who sometime in their life have a vision or dream of something

that should be accomplished and they go to work. They are beaten over the head, knocked down, vilified, and for years they get nowhere. But every time they're knocked down they stand up. You cannot destroy these people. And at the end of their lives they've accomplished some modest part of what they set out to do."

One who victoriously wins in the race of life is one who is doggedly persistent. After one has determined what the priorities are, the one who wins determines what particular thing to go after and then stays after that thing as long as there is breath in the body.

Now the question for us to ask is this: How shall we get patient, enduring persistence that spells victory? How can we do it?

The writer of Hebrews says we are to look to Jesus as the author, the captain, the example to be followed.

We are to look to Jesus not only as our example, but as our perfecter of faith,...our companion, our comforter, our helper, our friend. ■

The Story of *Shackleton's Endurance*

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

sions and good fortune. They were willing to sacrifice and suffer for their cause. But what was it worth to them in the long view? The men themselves received only moments of glory because when they returned home, their survival was dwarfed beside the thousands who were perishing in the war effort (World War I).

As Christians, we have embarked on a venture—the race to enter the Kingdom of God. And it is an all-out venture. But can we even begin to compare the eternal rewards God's faithful children will receive to what successful and brave heroes received?

Beside the opportunities open to the Christian, the glory of the most daring exploration looks small indeed. ■

Sources of information include:

www.south-pole.com, www.amnh.org/wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=6331172

Statue of Shackleton dressed in exploration clothes; dedicated to him for his exploration feats.



ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON PAGE 11

WOMEN OF THE BIBLE

1. John Mark (Acts 12:12)
2. Miriam (Ex. 15:20)
3. Philip (Acts 8:27-29, 38)
4. Sarah (Gen. 18:1-2, 6)
5. Rachel (Gen. 29:16)
6. Maachah (Mother of Asa) (1 Kings 15:11-13)
7. Anna (Luke 2:36-37)
8. Lydia (Acts 16:14-15)
9. Ruth (or Orpah) (Ruth 1:22)
10. Miriam (Ex. 2:3-4; Num. 26:59)

11. Jezebel (1 Kings 19:2-3, 8)
12. Wife of Zebedee (Matt. 20:20-21)
13. Hannah (1 Sam. 1:20)

JESUS

1. John the Baptist (Matt. 11:9,11)
2. Matthew (Matt. 9:9; Luke 5:27)
3. Pilate (John 18:38)
4. Zaccheus (Luke 19:8)
5. Ananias (Acts 9:17-18)
6. Nicodemus (John 3:1-2)
7. Simon and Andrew (Mark 1:16-17)

MOSES

1. Levi (Num. 35:2-7)
2. Caleb (Num. 13:2, 6)
3. Jethro (Ex. 3:1)
4. Pharaoh (Ex. 14:28)
5. Moses (Deut. 34:7)

PAUL

1. Tertullus (Acts 24:1-5)
2. Julius (Acts 27:1)
3. Eutychus, Paul healed him (Acts 20:9-10)
4. Publius (Acts 28:1,7)
5. Philemon, Onesimus (Phil. 1:18, 10)



How Can I Apply My Faith?

by GERALD R. PAYNE

"Dear Sir/Madam: I have visited your website and receive your monthly publication. I am beginning to understand your Biblical interpretation on some issues. However, I am confused about how you apply your beliefs to everyday life. What should one's everyday life be like, especially the life of a married woman? Do you have Church services? I am married with three children and I am curious as to how one would tailor one's life to be able to live within the constraints of your beliefs. Thank you for your patience." —NLS

There is no topic more important or more challenging—or more rewarding—than that of tailoring our lives to be within the constraints of Bible teaching.

Perhaps the first point to realize is that God does not expect anyone to suddenly start living the "perfect" life idealized in Scripture. It is a process that requires time and practice.

Bible study helps to acquaint us with people who served God in other ages. We learn what gave them courage, and are more ready to show courage in our lives.

Learn What God Has Revealed in His Word

The first step is to learn what God has revealed in His Word, including His plan, what He offers, and what He requires. The prophet Isaiah said, and Jesus repeated, *"They shall be all taught of God,"* (John 6: 45). Said Jesus, *"Come unto me... Take my yoke...and learn of me"* (Matt. 11:28–29).

To learn what God has revealed one must study. Paul advised Timothy, *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth"* (2 Tim. 2:15). One must study in order to be able to *"rightly divide the word of truth"* or, as translated

in some of the newer versions, *"teaching the message of truth accurately"* (NET); *"keeping strictly to the true gospel"* (REB); *"rightly explaining the word of truth"* (NRSV).

Only by studying the Bible can one acquire the faith on which to build a Christian life.

Count the Cost

The next step is to determine whether one is willing to make the sacrifices required, in view of what God offers. In plain words, Is it worth the price to you?

Jesus advised each would-be follower to make this determination. He said, *"Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish"* (Luke 14:28–30). He illustrated also by a king who would not go to war without first making sure that he had sufficient military strength to overpower his enemy (verses 31–32).

Jesus did not say that His way of life was effortless, or that it was easy. He called it "strait," "narrow," difficult (Matt. 7:13–14; Luke 13:24). He called it a way of cross bearing and sacrifice (Luke 14:27; Matt. 10:37–39). He compared one seeking the Kingdom to a man buying a field in which he was convinced lay hidden treasure. With great joy the man went and *"sold all that he had"* to buy that field (Matt. 13:44).

So each of us must decide whether the prospect of eternal life in Christ's kingdom is worth the sacrifice and the demands of Christian living.

Change Our Lives

Once we decide that we want what He is offering, we must determine how we need to change our

lives to correspond to the pattern given us in Scripture—and this takes time.

Following Christ doesn't change *many* things about our lives, it changes *everything*. Why? Because it changes our motives, our direction, our goal in everything we do, whether we are at work or at rest, with our family or with strangers. Everything becomes part of our offering and service to God.

The apostle Paul covered it when he said, *"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"* (1 Cor. 10:31).

How does this translate into reality? Let's look at a few common areas of our lives.

Our Obligation at Work

Our beliefs affect how we do our daily work, whether our work takes us to the factory, the school, the shop, or keeps us at home. One continually helpful question is, Would I want to be found doing this when Jesus comes? There are plenty of places we would not want Jesus to find us (in a barroom, an entertainment hall, a theater, a casino). We want a vocation in which we do not have to compromise our Christian standards to do our work, and where, if possible, we do not have to represent or be part of activities or interests which degrade the cause of Christ. Our goal is not wealth or station, but only to serve God acceptably, to spend our time in useful employment, and have sufficient for our needs. We want work which we can do *"as to the Lord"* (Col. 3:23–25).

Our Responsibility to Our Children

One of the prime requirements of serving God is to teach our children the principles, values, and ways of Christ-like living, to instill in them a reverence for their Creator, a love of life and an appreciation for good things. Part of the law to ancient Israel was that they *"teach these things diligently"* to their children. The command was: *"Talk about [these things] when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up"* (Deut. 6:5–7 NIV). Again they were commanded, *"Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them"* (Deut. 4:9 NIV). The apostle Paul confirmed this principle, that children should be brought up *"in the training and instruction of the Lord"* (Eph. 6:4 NIV).

How does this translate into everyday life? It means teaching our children respect for their elders and a love for virtue. It means being an example of honesty, integrity, upright conduct, and reverent regard for God and His Word at all times. It also means showing them the joy and benefits of upright living.

A significant part of this responsibility to our children is in their education. Since values are largely "caught" and not "taught," we want to select an environment which will give them the best moral and spiritual exposure, at the same time teaching them the skills that they will need for an upright, productive life in the service of God. Options vary with one's situation. Sometimes enrollment in public school may be an appropriate choice. More often private school is preferred, or home schooling if possible. If home schooling is not an

option, God-fearing parents must be diligent to talk to their children and correct their understanding without causing tension in the school system. In any case, we need to put a high value on the influence they receive and on what they are learning of morals and the disciplines of life. Could we imagine that God ever recommended that the Israelites turn their children over to the Canaanites to be taught—when He commanded them to live separate, and not even mention their false forms of worship? (see Deut. 13:6–9).

What We Read

Living in an information age, we are bombarded with materials to read, and more than ever before we must choose carefully, in line with our Christian goals. We might ask ourselves, What is best for my spiritual growth? What will upbuild, edify, and instruct? Is it information I need and can use, or does it only appeal to my curiosity?

What would I want to be found reading if Jesus should be looking over my shoulder?

Relaxation and Recreation

Again the options available today are greater than ever before, and we must be careful that we do not invite the degraded principles and standards of our society into our homes by way of television and video. While there may be good in each, we must be extremely discriminating, keeping in our mind our high goals, our ideals, and our obligation to God to make profitable use of our time.

We will never regret being too selective, for it is much easier to get images and pictures into our

mind than to remove them. A helpful rule often followed in Christian families is, "If in doubt, don't."

When choosing a form of recreation, we want to select something we can do with our family without compromising our Christian values. One might think in terms of hiking, camping, fishing, or any number of activities where one does not have to be involved in competition, or be exposed to unwholesome influence.

How We Relate to Other People

Perhaps our greatest—and most challenging—obligation as Christians is that of maintaining a right relationship with



Our most challenging obligation as Christians is that of maintaining a right relationship with others.



other people. This means that we must be continually applying the principles of Scripture to our own lives, so that we are consistently upright, honest, kind, gentle, forbearing, forgiving, peacemaking, doing to others as we would want to be done by.

Being Christ-like in our conduct toward others gives us an opportunity to develop and apply all the Christian virtues in everyday situations, so that we are, as Paul described it, “*lights in the world*” (Phil. 2:14–15). If we are moody, complaining, faultfinding and ill-willed, we deny the cause we profess to support.

When working with others we have opportunity to practice deferring to others, giving up our own way, acquiring the Christ-like qualities of meekness and thoughtfulness, going the second mile, being patient and longsuffering with the faults of others, and above all showing that our first desire is to please God and be right in His sight.

There is no substitute for the witnessing power of moral, disciplined, cheerful conduct.

Worship, Devotion and Prayer

Whether we are at home or in the workplace, in school or wherever we go, we must keep an

attitude of prayer and devotion, and be often in touch with our Heavenly Father. If we think about how dependent we are on His resources for every breath of air, every bite of food, every drop of water, and how totally

we are dependent on Him for future life, we will want to live always with an attitude of gratitude. Where would we be without God?

The people of God in all ages have been men and women of prayer. They took God into all their plans, and that is what we must do if we would be examples of the believers “*in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity*” (1 Tim. 4:12).

We will also want to take time for Bible study so that we are acquainted with the teachings of the Word and the people whose lives have been recorded for our learning. The Bible is filled with lessons which are helpful to keep in mind, so that we can have a ready answer when we confront temptation, and be able to defend our faith to those who question it.

Bible study helps to acquaint us with people who served God in other ages. We learn what

gave them courage, and are more ready to show courage in our lives. Studying their lives also gives us helpful thoughts to keep in mind so that we can keep our thinking in line with that which the way of Christ demands, so that we can take captive every thought and make it obey Christ (2 Cor. 10:4-5).

In Summary

Altogether, it is a tremendous venture and learning process. At times you will feel discouraged, but if you are serious in your effort you will also be encouraged by your successes. We learn and grow from our failures *and* victories, if we keep growing.

We might say there are three primary ways of learning and growing.

1. When you fail, analyze your failure and learn from it. It is a good self-improvement resource, to learn from our mistakes.

2. Listen to others. Learn from their criticisms, search your heart to see where you can improve. Notice good attributes in others, and try to make them your own.

3. Earnestly seek God’s help. Did you know that He has obligated Himself to help those who earnestly and steadfastly try to please Him?

And remember that all things “*work together for good*”—our eternal good—if we truly love God and are seeking to please Him (Rom. 8:28).

God has a plan for this earth and human-kind, for those who wish to participate in it. Our part right now is to recognize God as supreme Creator over all, and to live so that He will choose us for a place in His coming Kingdom, when He sends His Son to fill the earth with His glory and to take over the management of earth’s affairs (Matt. 6:10). If we would live then, we must become free from evil in any form. How do we become free from evil? The answer is simply stated: “*cease to do evil; learn to do well*” (Isa. 1:16–17).

Answering your question about church services, yes, we do have a church in Rochester with services each Sunday. We also meet daily for prayer and Bible study. Outlying ecclesias hold services in their homes. For those who wish to receive them, the Church offers recordings of Bible studies and Sunday services on our website.

We encourage you wholeheartedly to pursue your convictions, and know that you will find Christ-like living the most satisfying, the most adventuresome, and the most rewarding course you can possibly take in life. ■

When choosing a form of recreation, select something you can do without compromising your Christian values.



"...choice young man...from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people."

A dismal thing is self pity, and a mortal danger to every one of us. Who has not known its octopus-like grip around his heart, as he tells himself that no one ever had it so rough, or suffered so much, or was denied so severely, or had to live so contrary to his wishes as he must.

Self-pity is no respecter of persons. It strikes young and old, rich and poor, unknown and renowned. Even a king, Saul by name, found himself among its victims when he cried to his subjects, *"All of you have conspired against me, and there is no one who reveals to me that my son has made a covenant with the son of Jesse; and there is not one of you who is sorry for me or reveals to me that my son has stirred up my servant against me, to lie in wait, as it is this day"* (1 Sam. 22:8).

Actually, Saul's predicament was the painful result of his own self will. As a young man he seemed to be of a non-aggressive nature, if not outright shy. When Samuel went to anoint him after he was chosen of the Lord to be king, Saul played hide and seek so well that only the Lord could find him. After a thorough search for him proved futile, the people inquired of the Lord as to his whereabouts and learned that he had *"hidden among the equipment"* (1

Sam. 10:22). He had to be called out for his crowning.

Almost overnight Saul was rocketed from a life of obscurity to one of fame. He was called a *"choice young man...from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people."*

For a time he was popular and in favor with God, and Israel rejoiced in their first king. But he sinned by assuming the priest's office and lost his station, his good name and his throne.

Then came David, a little nobody—plus God—who slew the giant that had dissipated the courage of all Israel with his challenges. David's victory almost immediately raised him to space orbital prestige and seriously punctured Saul's ego (1 Sam. 18:7).

"Then Saul was very angry, and the saying displeased him; and he said, 'They have ascribed to David ten thousands, and to me they have ascribed only thousands. Now what more can he have but the kingdom?' So Saul eyed David from that day forward" (1 Sam. 18:8–9).

Jonathan's deep love for David only added fuel to the fire of Saul's jealousy.

Saul needed no amplifier to hear the creaking of his crumbling castle, but he fought furiously to evade the inevitable. He saw himself as a *"has been"* and retaliated by forcing David to flee from cave to cave to escape his jealous wrath. Many of the king's subjects followed David, causing Saul to cry, *"There is not one of you who is sorry for me."*

Who of us will ever find ourselves in Saul's position—elevated to the kingship and then toppled by our own disobedience? Perhaps none. But we have all pitied ourselves with far less reason than Saul had.

Nevertheless, we protest: our periods of self-pity are justified. No one understands the hardships, the trials, the persecutions, the financial difficulties, the physical infirmities, and the endless troubles and disappointments we have had.

But wait. Listen to the apostle Paul, as he recounts his own experiences:

"Are they ministers of Christ? —I speak as a fool—I am more: in labors more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequently, in deaths often. From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness— besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches" (2 Cor. 11:23–28).

What abundant reasons for self pity—perhaps even more than we ever had! But listen to his reaction to it all:

"We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.... Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!" (2 Cor. 4:8, 10; Phil. 4:4).

Poor little me! Born in the land of the free; surrounded with innumerable tangible and intangible blessings; privileged to worship, pray and read God's Word as I desire; blest with physical strength to work for food, shelter and clothing; a sharer in the faith once delivered to the saints; invited to the very best of heavenly friendships and family; called to become a son or a daughter of God and one day be made equal to the angels; looking forward to the return of Christ and the glory and honor He will bring, even life for evermore! (Rom. 2:7).

Is there no one who feels sorry for me? ■



WHEN GOD USED AN ATHEIST

by EDWARD SHAYLER

*How firm a foundation, ye Saints of the Lord,
Is laid to your Faith in His excellent word!
What more can He say than to you He has said
You who unto Jesus for refuge have fled!*

*In every condition, in sickness and health,
In poverty's vale or abounding in wealth,
At home and abroad, on the land, on the sea,
As your days may demand, shall your strength ever be.*

The British Colonies were governed by the appointments of the British Government, who with a suitable staff oversaw the administration of laws and policy. The size of the administration depended on the movement of people and trade. British military forces and police were also part of the process. The native population was subordinate to the administration. This method was quite successful, although at times it allowed for some strange behavior.

A British barrister who was a graduate of Oxford University was assigned to a post in Hong Kong. Among the privileges of the position was membership in the Military Defense Corps. This Corps was unique in its administration of command. In this Corps, the higher ranking staff members, by refusing any or all promotions and remaining privates, encouraged their office staff to become commissioned and non-commissioned officers. Military training was done on a scheduled basis at a defense station in the territories. When war came, these "officers" proved to be good soldiers by never complaining, but being slow and awkward, they were easily taken as Prisoners of War when Britain surrendered the Colony.

As Prisoners of War, they, like us, were separated from their officers and were required to join us in Work Parties (another name for hard labor). At this time I became acquainted with this barrister. He had never done any manual labor in his life, and to me it was pitiful to watch him shovel and lift. He was running the gauntlet with his fellow-captives, and they were not treating him too kindly. I helped him when I could. As we became friends, he explained to me the importance of using proper English. All law and courtrooms demanded it, and by its use a person could have many doors opened for him. He told me that he would like to practice on me. I tried to distance myself from him; my world did not require fine language.

He persisted. But conversation needs a background of similar viewpoints, and as he expounded the virtues of atheism, this caused a discord between us as my belief was Christianity (lightly practiced). Yet for some reason that I cannot understand, one of my meager possessions in the prison camp was a King James Version of the Bible. I could never understand this logic: Why would a soldier without an extra pair of socks, pack around a heavy book that he had never read? The Bible for me was a formidable challenge mostly because it did not make sense. Still, I respected it.

*Fear not, I am with you; O be not dismayed!
I, I am your God, and will still give you aid;
I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent Hand.*

I believe that God intervenes sometimes without our permission; this could have been the case here. An epidemic of diphtheria broke out and many died with it. I became a victim, but a kind doctor secured and administered some serum, which saved my life. When I was allowed out of isolation, my friend the barrister was waiting for me with the balance of my possessions, including the Bible, and he almost immediately suggested that he should come and read it to me for an hour every day. He persisted that it would be of great help to him when the war ended and he would once again perform in a courtroom; the daily reading would help him keep his orientation sharp.

I agreed, and the readings began. What a wonderful and pleasant surprise to me. He was a superb reader. His voice had conviction, as he responded perfectly to every comma, colon and semicolon. I found it a great pleasure to listen to him read. This reading time did not go unnoticed. Many of the other prisoners began to attend, and before long the group became too large for the room. But there being no better location, it continued in the same room.

About this time I became paralyzed with diphtheria poisoning, and was bedridden. My barrister friend came often to help me with personal needs. As I was not in isolation, the daily reading continued; it was beginning to be a close-knit group.

Suddenly my barrister friend fell to the diphtheria plague, was taken to the isolation compound and died about five days later. We could not attend a funeral service because there was none, but this man left a void. He also left a legacy, and here I can only speak about my own. We tried to continue with the daily reading, but it was never the same. Discussions and disputes began, quite naturally because some wanted to

protect their own religion and what they had been taught. Gradually the group dispersed and was no more. But my barrister friend had left me with a legacy he was unaware of: a better understanding of the Testaments, and a foundation for a knowledge of their true meaning.

Because of this participation, I have ever since cherished the desire to prove all things by reading God's Word in the Scriptures, and this is what has brought me to the place I am today.

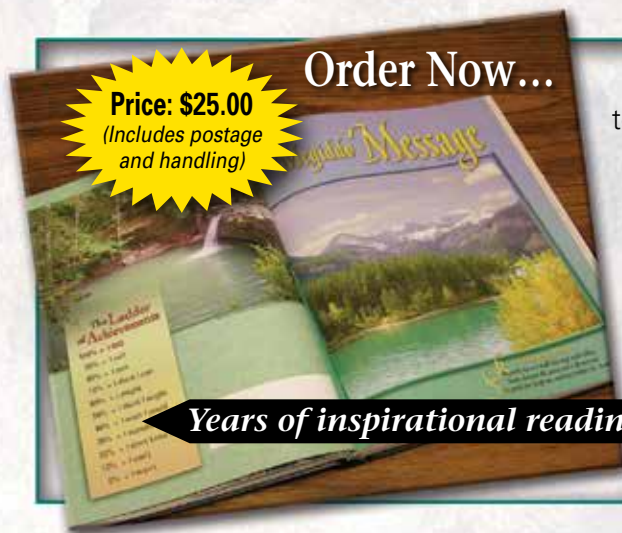
I did read all of that Bible, and I had others read it with me. The pages got thick and wrinkled because of the treatment that it was subjected to. Its resting place was at the Yokohama Docks, where the American Army brought me after liberation, where it had to be discarded because of vermin and disease.

How many times this Book was the only comforter I had. The Book by itself was only excess baggage until I began to eat the words, and then it provided a haven when nothing else around me made sense. Even after I returned home I could not forget what I had learned. The words of that Book haunted me, until I finally surrendered a very stiff neck.

Today I am blessed with a life that few on this earth will ever know—because an atheist barrister provided a strong foundation for me to build on. Who but God could have arranged that!

*When through fiery trials your pathway shall lie
My word, all-sufficient, shall be your supply:
The flame shall not hurt you; I only design
Your dross to consume, and your gold to refine.*

*The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I cannot desert to his foes;
That soul, though all earth should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake! ■*



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QUESTION & ANSWERS

"Rightly dividing the word of truth" -2 Timothy 2:15



The King James Version or The New King James Version?

Please give this question important consideration, if you will.

Can you please tell me why you've chosen the NKJV in place of the standard KJV? I find that the NKJV does not render the same understanding of the older KJV.

"I ask because I was looking at a website that gives 36 examples pertaining to their belief about the devil. These examples show, at least to me, a lack of respect for God's Word, due to the rewording of the Scriptures.

Now there are many who reject Scripture entirely and will laugh at anyone defending it; however, I do not believe Megiddo means to change the Scriptures."

Your question about our choice of the NKJV over the standard KJV brings up a much larger issue, and that is, What is the correct approach to a study of the Bible?

How To Study the Bible?

Many people go to the Bible and look for something to support an idea they have in their minds, i.e., a belief in a burning hell, or their concept of the devil, or their belief that we are born with an immortal soul, etc. When people who hold these beliefs translate the Bible, they are looking for their ideas, and the way they word a text may easily be influenced by their beliefs.

We have total respect for the Scriptures as the Word of God Almighty, and for this very reason we cannot endorse every word of any translation. The percentage of words mistranslated

may be very small, but it becomes significant when something is translated in such a way that it contradicts the general teaching of Scripture. Take, for example, Jesus' saying on the cross, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" recorded by Matthew (Matt. 27:46). We know absolutely that something is wrong with our understanding of His words because Jesus had clearly said, "I am not alone, because the Father is with Me" (John 16:32). If the Father would give Jesus the assurance that He would never forsake him, and then only hours later turn away from His obedient, loving Son, how can we trust Him?

In studying the Bible we always need to remember that:

1) The Bible must be studied by subject, not by general or surface reading. Surface reading is never safe, because we can too easily assume we know what a word means when we do not.

For example, take the word "saved." If when we read that someone is "saved" we think it always refers to **eternal salvation**, we will misunderstand some verses. **The Lord "saved" the people out of Egypt** (Jude 5), then afterward destroyed those who did not believe. What is the passage saying? That God rescued them, redeemed them from bondage, "saved" them. But they were not "saved" with the "everlasting salvation" Isaiah describes in Isa. 45:17-18.

2) The plain statements of the Bible must determine the general Bible teaching, and the less clear must be harmonized with the clear teaching. Because

the Bible has one Divine author overseeing all, we can know it will not contradict itself; all authors will agree when their words are correctly understood.

For example: the Bible clearly states that the dead are without consciousness. *"The dead know not anything"* (Eccl. 9:5). When we see a statement that seems to contradict this plain statement, we need to investigate to find out the cause, because the Bible will not make two contradictory statements.

Take Jesus' use of the term **"devil"**: *"Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"* (John 6:70). Here is a clear statement. If we come upon a passage that seems to contradict this plain statement, we need to look more closely at the meaning of the term, or the translation, to find where our understanding is lacking.

3) Terms must be carefully and properly defined.

In defining terms, lexicons may be helpful by giving examples of how the word was used during a certain period of time. Lexicographers compare the use of words by Bible authors with the use of the same words by secular authors during a given period of time. This comparison is helpful if the definition is in harmony with how the word is used in Scripture. If the lexicons do not agree, and if the word is defined in Scripture, that is the ultimate authority.

Scripture must always be the final interpreter of Scripture. Why? Because lexicons have human authors, who are influenced by their own beliefs. Lexicons may also "update" their definitions by adding current meanings not formerly recognized or known.

For example, consider the meaning of **Logos** in John 1. In Jesus' time, *Logos* was a Greek word which meant "the spoken word, reason, utterance, statement, speech, account" etc. More recently lexicons are adding that the **Logos** means "Christ," which is the interpretation given by theology and which is not according to the Bible.

4) When there is a question about the intended meaning, consult the original text (Hebrew or Greek or Aramaic).

A couple of examples: The KJV translates the Hebrew word **sheol** as **"hell"** 31 times and "grave" 31 times. But if someone believes there is a literal "hot" hell, when they read a verse like Psalm 55:15, *"Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell: for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them,"* they are likely to picture a fiery place of torture they believe in and think the Bible supports their idea—not realizing that the same word could have been translated simply "the grave," as it is in 30 other places (see Isa 38:18, and Ps 6:5). They may not think of the problem being in the translation.

Another example: The KJV of the New Testament has translated the word for "demon" (*daimonion*) as though it were **diabolos** (devil) every time, as though "demons" were the same as "devil" or "satan." But they are not the same. "Devil" (Greek **diabolos**) means only "adversary, opposer," whereas "demon" (*daimonion*) was the word for the pagan peoples' belief in immortal spirits, a false belief that has been common to many superstitious people. ■

Comparing The King James Version with The New King James Version

Now let us address your opening question. Why do we often choose the NKJV in place of the standard KJV?

When the KJV emerged in 1611, it used the everyday language of the common people. But the English of 1611 is not the English we use today. A more modern translation, such as the New King James Version, helps it speak to us again.

Below are a few comparisons of passages in the KJV with the same passage in NKJV. Notice that the differences are in general a modernizing of the English language.

Isaiah 8:19

King James Version

And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter: Should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead?

The New King James Version

And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living?

The principle differences involve 1) what or whom someone is told to seek, and 2) the last phrase.

1) The ideas expressed here are from the Heb. "Ôwb" which means, a mumble, i.e. a water-skin (from its hollow sound); hence a necromancer (ventriloquist, as from a jar):—bottle, familiar spirit.—Strong, J.—*A Concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and The Hebrew Bible*. In other words the woman was a deceiver. The Lord had commanded that sorcerers be put to death; notice that Saul assured her that he would not put her to death. And he is fooled into thinking the medium brings up Samuel from the dead. But notice from the description

that she is a ventriloquist; she can make her voice seem to come from a source other than herself. As for what she said, we do not know if she was given special insight or if she knew that Saul was doomed. She certainly knew he was in serious trouble just from his demeanor.

2) The last phrase of the passage is the same, but the NKJV is clearer. Saul sought out a wizard; but had he obeyed he could have sought God's advice instead; but remember God had already rejected Saul. Those who hold to the popular idea that the "soul" goes to heaven at death prefer the KJV because the last phrase in the NKJV does not support the thought that Samuel is brought up from the grave (he actually isn't, remember the woman was practicing deceit).

Isaiah 14:12

King James Version

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!

The New King James Version

How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations!

Both versions are in error. The name "Lucifer" was supplied by Jerome in the fourth century AD. The text should read "day star" as is noted in the footnote of the KJV. If you read the text carefully you will see that this is a parable against the king of Babylon, the "day star" Isaiah was prophesying about. Even today the word "star" is used to designate leading people in theater or sports.

Also observe what happened to "Lucifer" the king of Babylon; he was "brought down to **hell**, to the sides of the pit" (Isa. 14:15). He went "down to the stones of the pit; as a **carcase** trodden under feet" (Isa. 14:19). This is plain evidence that this "hell" is nothing more than the grave, which is another reason to use the NKJV as it leaves the word "*Sheol*" untranslated instead of translating it "hell" as the KJV does. And *Sheol* simply means "grave."—DBL.

It should be noted that the English word "hell" does not have the same meaning today that it had when the KJV was translated. It comes from Middle English *helle*, from Old English *hel*, *hell*, *helle* ("nether world, abode of the dead, hell"), from Proto-Germanic *haljo* ("nether world, concealed place"), from Proto-Indo-European *kel-* ("to cover, conceal, save"), Cognate Dutch *hel* ("hell"), German *Hölle* ("hell"), Swedish *helvete* ("hell"), Icelandic *hel* ("the abode of the dead, death"). It is also related to the Hel of Germanic mythology.

As you can see, the word hell originally meant "grave" and should have been so translated in newer versions.

"The word Hell, in the Old Testament, is a translation of the Hebrew word *Sheol*, which occurs 65 times, and is rendered "hell" 31 times, "grave" 31 times, and "pit" 3 times. —*Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible*

In 17th century England, "hell" (meaning a cave, pit, or covering) was the word used of the place where a farmer kept his potatoes during the winter. They called it helling potatoes. From the same source we get our word "helmet," from hel-met (literally, hel-covering).

According to the KJV of Acts 2:31, Jesus was buried in "hell". The Gospels give us more detail, stating that he was buried in a new tomb hewed out in a rock which belonged to a rich man of Arimathaea (see Matt. 27:57–60).

1 Corinthians 6:18

King James Version

Flee **fornication**. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that **committeth fornication sinneth** against his own body.

The New King James Version

Flee **sexual immorality**. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who **commits sexual immorality sins** against his own body.

Fornication or sexual immorality? The words mean the same. The original word is the Greek *porneia*, referring to "harlotry (incl. adultery and incest); fig. idolatry:—fornication" (SHG)

The NKJV uses the more modern, more easily understood English.

Ephesians 2:2

King James Version

Wherein **in time past ye** walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit **that** now worketh in the **children** of disobedience:

The New King James Version

In which **you once** walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit **who** now works in the **sons** of disobedience,

"The spirit **that**" or "the spirit **who**"? The definite article "the" (sometimes to be supplied, at others omitted, in English idiom):— the, this, that, one, he, she, it, etc. —SHG.

In this case a word that fits the context should be the choice. "Spirit" is translated from the Greek *pneuma* which comes from the idea of the movement of air. While the word has a masculine gender, it is not a person. "The spirit **that**" (KJV) is the better translation consistent with its use.

The NKJV uses the more modern, more easily understood English.

2 Peter 2:1

King James Version

But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

The New King James Version

But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction.

The NKJV has replaced key terms with words more commonly used in our language today.

Rev. 21:8

King James Version

But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

The New King James Version

But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

The NKJV uses the more modern, more easily understood English terms. ■

Apprehend?

When reading Scripture to myself or others, there are words that I find difficult to understand. I have two dictionaries plus Illustrated Bible Dictionary, yet none of these contain the words in question.

For example, I would like to know the correct understanding of the word: 'apprehend.'

One of my dictionaries states that 'apprehend' means (1) To take into custody; arrest; apprehend the murderer (2) To grasp mentally; understand (3) To look forward to fearfully, anticipate with anxiety.

How does that apply to Philippians 3:12? I'm not questioning the Scripture, but the language.

To understand the meaning of a word in Scripture, modern dictionaries are not always useful. We need to determine what the author of Scripture meant.

The first consideration is to learn the meaning of the word in the language from which the word was taken. Meanings are not always what we expect. The word "apprehend" as used in Philippians 3:12 is translated from the Greek *katalambano*. It is defined in various Greek-English lexicons as:

- 1: to lay hold of so as to make one's own, to obtain, attain to... the prize of victory, 1 Co. 9:24; Phil. 3:12 (Thayer's Lexicon)
- 2: To apprehend, attain, obtain, find. To lay hold of, seize, with eagerness, suddenness (The Complete Word Study Dictionary of the New Testament)
- 3: To capture, lay hold on, seize, make one's own, obtain; to apprehend, attain, obtain, find; to lay hold of, seize with eagerness, suddenness (John 8:3, 4). LSJ
- 4: to make something one's own, win, attain, 'come into possession of an inheritance' (BDAG).

5: to acquire, with the implication of significant effort—"to acquire, to attain, to obtain, to take." ...'run, then, in such a way as to take (the prize)' 1 Cor 9:24. (LN)

Then we must ask: are these definitions in harmony with the context of the passage? Let us read Philippians 3:12–14 and see what the great Apostle wanted to "apprehend" or claim as his own. He says, "Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended [fully attained or achieved it]; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." Paul wanted to be resurrected at Christ's coming (Phil. 3:10), and receive the immortality, the eternal life Christ had offered him (Rom. 2:7; 2 Tim. 4:8), and he was willing to endure, sacrifice, and suffer anything God allowed to that end.

The passage in Phil. 3:12–14 as phrased in the New English Bible is clearer than the KJV. Notice that the NEB translators used "achieved" or "got hold of" in place of "apprehended":

"It is not to be thought that I have already achieved all this. I have not yet reached perfection, but I press on, hoping to take hold of that for which Christ once took hold of me.

"My friends, I do not reckon myself to have got hold of it yet. All I can say is this: forgetting what is behind me, and reaching out for that which lies ahead,

"I press towards the goal to win the prize which is God's call to the life above, in Christ Jesus."

Paul was realistic in his appraisal of himself. He knew at that time he had not already achieved his goal of a perfect character, but he was "pressing on," in hope of obtaining the great prize that Christ had set before him. And in 2 Timothy 4:7–8 Paul says he fought the good fight and finished the race. ■



JESUS' TEACHINGS WORK!

Carolyn was a teenager full of energy, bubble, and ideas. But on this particular night, she was dead serious as she approached her Mother. Mom knew immediately that something was wrong.

After a moment of silence, she said quietly: "Mom?"

"Yes, my Carolyn," she said lovingly, always ready to listen.

Carolyn sat on the arm of her mother's chair. "Something happened at lunchtime today—I—" she hesitated.

"You got in trouble...?" guessed her Mother.

"No—I was so embarrassed and shocked...I didn't know what to do." Carolyn stopped again, but took a deep breath and continued. "We were all together... as usual..." and she stopped.

Just what Mom surmised. In recent months Carolyn had become involved with a group of five girls at school. They ate together, did homework together, and generally helped each other.

From anything she had been able to learn, it was a healthful situation. Three of the girls were from Christian families. The two others had no religion and it was the silent resolve of the three to influence them to Christ-like living.

"Tell me about it, Honey."

"It's too embarrassing, Mom, it really wasn't nice. Marsha..." Mom recognized the name, she had stayed overnight at their house a few times.

"What about Marsha?" urged Mom gently.

"Marsha told an off color story...She knew it would get attention. And it did! But, oh! I couldn't believe my ears! Why, Mom, I felt so ashamed, and...and...Marsha claims to be a Christian!" Carolyn stood up and faced her Mother. "Now what will Tammie and Brenda think of our profession?"

"That is why it is so important to represent our faith," replied Mom. "You know our motto, 'Say nothing you would not want to be found saying when Jesus comes....' What happened in the story?"

"I think it came from some movie she saw at her uncle's. It really was bad, Mom, I wouldn't want to retell it..."

"You don't need to, Honey."

"Mom, the worst of it is that even Chris—who should know better—listened and she didn't seem the least uncomfortable!"

After a moment's silence Carolyn squared her shoulders: "Mom, were you ever in a situation like this? Now, I don't want you to tell me what's right and what's wrong. I know that part. What I don't know is, what should I do? What do I say to Marsha? What do I tell the other girls?"

Mom could see through the problem. Carolyn was saying in effect, Give me an answer that will be right, AND not lose my friends.

Mom tried to think what would be helpful to her young daughter. She knew Carolyn understood what was right and wrong, and that Carolyn recognized that this story was totally wrong. What to do about it was another matter.

Mom turned to the account in Matthew of Jesus cleansing the temple. Together they read, how *"Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple and overturned the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who sold doves. And he said to them 'It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of thieves'"* (Matt. 21:12-13).

At that point Mom asked Carolyn, "What do you get out of this story?"

"Well, the Savior was upset."

"Yes, Carolyn, and may I suggest one more thought. He was saying to His peer group that there comes a time in every person's life when he has to stand up and be counted, and while it may not be the popular thing to do, there are times when you have to do something just because it is the right thing to do. And that isn't easy."

Carolyn was silent, thinking deeply.

"You may even have to stand alone sometime." Mom continued. "Think about it tonight, Carolyn, and tomorrow you and I can have another talk."

"But, Mom!" she said, "you missed my point. You can't do what Jesus did and keep your friends."



Mother gave her teen a big hug. Carolyn was getting a little taller every day.

"You think about it," Mom repeated, "then you and I will have another talk."

Carolyn did think about it, all that evening and the next day. The next evening she approached her Mother again.

"Mom," she said in an upbeat tone—Mom knew something good was coming. "Mom, it is an interesting thing. I took the cleansing of the temple story to school today and tried it out."

"Well, well!" said Mom. "And did you clean out the Junior High?"

"No," smiled Carolyn. Then seriously, "I called Marsha and asked her if she could walk home with me tonight. She said 'yes.' So we walked home. I brought her into my bedroom, and we sat down, and I said, 'Marsha, I just want you to know that our friendship means a great deal to me. Yesterday...when you told that story...I don't think...you realized...

how much you have reduced us in the eyes of our friends....I know you thought this was a captivating story, but...if you ever feel you have to tell a story like that again, would you please warn me...in advance...so that I can be excused?"

"And what did Marsha say?" Mom interposed.

"She broke down, Mom, and put her arms around me, and said, 'I'm sorry. I know it was wrong. What can I do now?'"

"Isn't that wonderful, Carolyn! You didn't lose a friend, you have a better one."

"Mom, we cried together for half an hour. You know what? Jesus' teachings really work!"

"Yes, Carolyn, the New Testament really works. And now you understand Jesus better." Mother gave her young teen a big hug. Carolyn was getting a little taller every day. ■

BIBLE VERSE TO REMEMBER:

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

—Ephesians 4:29 NIV

PURPOSE: *to learn to use our words only to help and upbuild each other.*

Originally printed in the
Megiddo Message, August 2002

Dear God

My name is Rachel Shepherd and I am 14 years old, and I live in Knox, Indiana. My grandmother receives your monthly magazine, and recently, I wrote a poem. She gave me this e-mail address so I could ask you if you would be interested in publishing my poem. I would be very grateful if you could read it and send me a reply. Thank you.

Dear God,

*I'm writing You this letter,
though I'd rather bow my head,
but I'm in school right now, You see,
and a prayer must not be said.*

*Oh, we can pierce our noses,
and our tongues and eyebrows, too,
but it makes us awful people,
if we should speak to You.*

*Our hair can be bright purple,
yellow, orange, blue, or green,
but we would be in trouble,
if a Bible should be seen.*

*We can kiss and hug and fondle
in these high school halls,
we can trade in drugs and cursings,
we can have huge fights and brawls.*

*But one word of God or Jesus,
one bowed head or spoken prayer,
we are seen as hardened criminals:
Break the rules? I do not dare.*

*I may not be able to carry Your Word,
but that's all right, You see,
because I've hid it in my heart,
And that's the best for me.*

Now I pray:

*I pray for my friends and loved ones,
And help each one to see,
that You are the way, the truth, the life,
And only You can save me.*

*I pray for the weak and tired, Lord,
And help them to pull through,
but if not, I pray they made the choice,
to obey and follow You.*

*And lastly I pray for myself
that You show me the way to go,
and help me understand and learn,
and as a Christian, grow.*

*So now I end this letter,
and thank You God, Amen.
I want You to hear this prayer,
I can't wait to speak again.*

by Rachel Shepherd (age 14)



Spiders: Snare Specialists

Spiders are one of the most numerous species inhabiting the earth. Scientists have recorded more than 45,000 spider species, but it is thought that these represent perhaps half of all the different spiders in the world. A British naturalist took a spider census on a one acre plot in the English countryside and determined that more than two million were in residence there, either above or below ground.

Why so many spiders? It may be that our great Designer saw a need for them in controlling the insect population. Spiders eat quantities of insects—grasshoppers, mosquitoes, pesky flies, locusts, beetles, caterpillars. Without spiders, harmful insects might take over our summer landscapes. Someone calculated that all the spiders in England each year destroy insects equal to more than the weight of the human population of the area!

Spiders are not chance creatures. They are fascinating, amazing and highly specialized. Their numberless, specialized designs witness to an Almighty Designer.

Skilled Silkmakers

All spiders make silk, though not all use their silk to build webs. The most studied among web building spiders is the orb-weaver. Its webs, marvels of geometric design, are real death traps for flying insects, and the snared prey seldom escape. At the end of the day, the orb weaver spider often eats its battered web and, working in darkness, builds a new one (in about an hour). The size of its web is usually in proportion to its size as the orb spider uses its hind legs (as we our hands) to pull, measure and secure the silk. Baby orb spiders spin miniature versions of the same webs.

Shall we think that this tiny creature had to learn the art of web-building by trial and error?—or shall we believe that it has been equipped by its Creator with all the engineering skills (instinct) and tools it needs to spin near perfect silk strands which are marvels of strength and elasticity. The finest strands can be stretched by at least a third without breaking!

Spider silk is no mean product. It can be



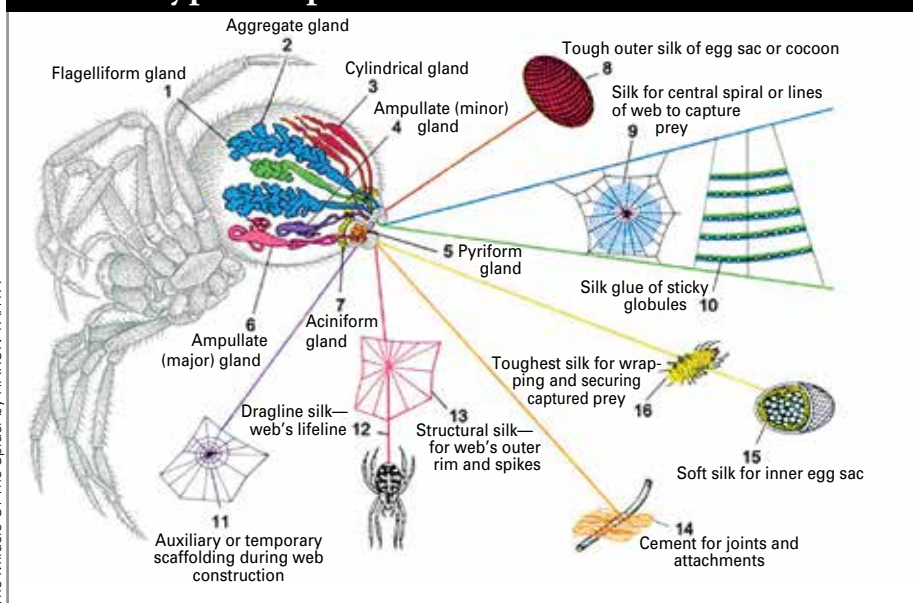
Dirk van der Made

The tiny male of the Golden orb weaver (near the top of the leaf) is protected from the female by his producing the right vibrations in the web, and survives—because he may be too small to be worth eating.

Did You Know...?

- ✓ ...that spiders range in body length from 4.7 inches (in warm climates) down to species that are almost microscopic.
- ✓ ...that not all spiders make webs, but all produce silk.
- ✓ ...that jumping spiders can jump up to fifty times the length of their bodies.
- ✓ ...that spider silk can be as sticky as glue or as slippery as ice, depending on what the spider needs.
- ✓ ...that all spiders have poison fangs, used to subdue their prey and only a few (e.g. black widow) are harmful to man.
- ✓ ...that a frequent mistake is to confuse strength (tensile) and toughness (extensibility, ductility) when comparing silk to other materials.
- ✓ ...that weight for weight spider silk is stronger than steel, but not as strong as Kevlar. Silk is, however, tougher than both. The toughest known spider silk (*C. darwini* silk) is over 10 times tougher than Kevlar, a fabric Du Pont produced after years studying spider silk.
- ✓ ...that silks are extremely ductile, with some able to stretch up to five times their relaxed length without breaking.
- ✓ ...that in most species, the female spider is larger than the male—sometimes as much as 100 times larger.
- ✓ ...that spiders have been seen at an altitude of 22,000 feet on Mount Everest—a full mile above the vegetation line, and in caves two thousand feet below the earth's surface.
- ✓ ...that some spiders have a telephoto-like series of lenses, a four-layer retina, and the ability to swivel their eyes.
- ✓ ...that most spiders have one to four pairs of movable spinnerets that emit silk. Each spinneret has many spigots, each of which connects to one silk gland.
- ✓ ... that there are at least seven types of silk glands, each producing a different type of silk.
- ✓ ... that spiders that hunt actively have dense tufts of fine hairs between the claws at the tip of their legs. These tufts consist of bristles whose ends are split into as many as 1,000 branches. These split end branches enable the spider to walk up vertical glass and upside down on ceilings.
- ✓ ...that because they have no internal equipment to break down solids, most spiders use a system of external digestion. They pump venom into their prey that liquefies the tissues of the prey, then suck in the liquid as processed food.
- ✓ ...that spiders often eat all or parts of their web to recycle the protein in the silk.

Types of Spider Silk and Their Functions



as sticky as glue (yet the spider itself never seems to get “stuck” in it) or as slippery as ice. And it is one of the strongest natural fibers known. Steel drawn out to a similar diameter would not be as strong.

How does the spider make silk? The spider has up to 6 different kinds of silk glands, each of which produces a different kind of silk for a different purpose—one type for wrapping its prey, another for producing sticky globules, another for making the cross strands of the web, etc. The spider is a true silk specialist. Heavier cable-like silk strands are used to support the web.

Lighter-weight strands make up the web itself.

The spider forms the silk threads using its 2 to 4 pairs of spinnerets located at the end of its abdomen. These open to the outside through tiny spigots. A single spinneret may open through as many as 40,000 spigots! As the spider spins silk, the streams of silk from the different spigots unite into a single cable-like strand.

Spiders spend most of their lives just waiting for the hapless insect to fall—or jump, or fly—into their trap.

When an insect touches the web, the watching spider springs into ac-



A female ORB spider wraps her prey with very tough, yet very fine silk from her spinnerets.

How many ants? Three? Actually, there are two ants and one spider. There is an **ant-mimicking jumping spider** between the ants!



ANT-MIMICKING spiders

How do ant-mimicking jumping spiders succeed so completely that they can go among the ants?

To begin with, they are wondrously designed for this mimicking role: they have slimmer abdomens and false “waists” that mimic the three distinct regions of the ant’s body.

Then, their bodies are covered with reflective hairs to resemble the shiny bodies of ants. Only their Creator could have designed that.

Spiders have eight legs and ants have six. And spiders can’t count. How does the ant-mimicker get around that? It raises its front pair of legs to simulate the antennae of the ant.



An ant-mimicking jumping spider

For the disguise to be complete the jumping spider’s eyes must appear different (spiders have eight simple eyes, while ants have two compound eyes). The spider’s Creator has been given large patches around one pair of eyes to mimic the large eyes of the ant.

Finally, the ant-mimicking spiders can modify their behavior to resemble that of the ants. As actors they copy the ant’s walk. Some adopt a zig-zag pattern of movement, and avoid jumping when among ants. The spider is well aware it is among enemies. So after making a kill, an ant-mimicking spider may hold its victim between itself and the group of ants to avoid being attacked by the them.

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Who taught spiders their trickery?

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NET THROWER SPIDERS don’t just wait for insects to land on their web. They spin a small net, then hang upside down. When an insect crawls by, the spider throws its net over the insect to catch it.

FUNNEL WEAVER spiders build webs shaped like a funnel, then hide in the small end of the funnel. When a hapless insect wanders near, the spider rushes out and grabs it.

SPITTING SPIDERS don’t bother to build a web at all. They simply wait for an insect to come near, then spit a zigzag stream of sticky glue and silk over the insect, sticking it down until they can give it the lethal bite.

ORB WEAVER SPIDERS build their symmetrical webs of almost invisible silk strands, then sit in the center to wait for an insect to fly into it.

TRIANGLE SPIDERS build a triangle shaped web, then sit nearby, holding onto a single strand of the web. When an insect hits the web, the spider shakes its line and tangles the insect in the sticky web.

COBWEB SPIDERS have special teeth on their back legs to comb their webs to look soft and fluffy. Actually, their web is a maze of tiny, sticky silk loops to trip insects and tangle them up.

PURSE WEB SPIDERS build tube-shaped webs alongside tree trunks. They mix dirt with their silk to make the tube look like part of the tree, then spend most of their lives inside the tube waiting for insects to come by. When an insect wanders near the tube, the spider instantly thrusts its fangs through the silk wall of the tube, grabs its prey, and pulls it inside to eat it.

Melva E. Walton

We have received word of the passing of Melva E. Walton of Carrollton, Ohio, on December 2, 2016, following an extended illness. Known among her Church friends as Sister Melva, she was a regular correspondent with our members for more than 30 years. She and her husband made numerous visits to the Church until his death in 1977, and she continued to come for special occasions as long as her health permitted; she will be missed.

Sister Melva was born to Willard and Nellie McFeely Francis on June 15, 1925, in Bowerston, Ohio. She was married to Homer Walton, and they had one son who survives her, Willard C. "Will" Walton of Carrollton. She is also survived by a brother, Bill Francis, of Winlock, WA.

The Bible says of John the Baptist, who was 6 months' Jesus' senior, that he was *"a burning and a shining light."* The same could be said of Sister Melva in another sense.

Wherever she went, she was shining her light of faith in God. To her, every beauty in nature—singing birds, bright blue sky, changing seasons—was a reminder of God. The Sunday School song, "Brighten the corner where you are" was her motto. Whatever corner she was in, she brightened it.

Her acquaintance with the Megiddo Church goes back to the early 1950s, when their son Willard was a bright-eyed, bouncy little fellow about 3 years of age. This description comes from Sister Elva Byers, who is almost the same age as Sister Melva, and who is still recalling with delight her first visit to their home. The visit was arranged because Sister Melva's mother-in-law had introduced her to the Megiddo literature and Melva was showing serious interest.

Sister Melva was a solidly devoted wife and mother even through years of extreme stress. Her husband being severely afflicted with brittle diabetes, she never knew when he would pass out and she would have to rush home to bring him back to consciousness. She expressed many times her gratitude for a steady job at the town library and for a very understanding supervisor who allowed her to rush home whenever the call came, and finish her work when she returned.

Sister Melva believed firmly in the Bible promise, that Christ is returning soon, and will restore to life the believers who sleep in Jesus. Within three weeks of her passing, she was visited by



I STAND IN AWE

*I stand in awe, Great God,
When I see what You have done.
As I behold the stars, I know
That You know every one.*

*You put them all in place,
And gave a name to each,
And placed them far above us all,
Way out of earthlings' reach.*

*This tiny little plot of space,
That we humans call "Home"
Is nothing when compared
To all that You have done.*

*We wouldn't be of worth to You,
Without Your truth to share;
And only as we keep Your law
Can we expect Your care.*

*Oh, Father, we give thanks today
For blessings from above.
May we always do Your bidding,
And be worthy of Your love.*

by MELVA WALTON

three sisters from her Church, with whom she talked freely and enthusiastically about Jesus' coming, and the changes He will bring about to make our earth new and beautiful, free from sin, evil, and pain. "If I wait," she said, quoting the book of Job, *"the grave is my house"* (Job 17:13). But she knew also that Job said, *"My Redeemer lives"* (Job 19:25-27), that God has planned a resurrection for sleeping believers. In the words of Isaiah, *"Your dead shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise"* (Isa. 26:19).

The resurrection was her sustaining hope. Speaking of her own approaching death, she said, "the next thing I'll know will be the resurrection, and I will be meeting Jesus, and Paul, and Peter, and James, and John, and Daniel"—her eyes were bright as she mentioned the Bible people she could think of. It was a long



Spiders: Snare Specialists

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tion, wrapping its captive in sticky silk, turning it as on a spit, before giving it a lethal bite—unless the captive is a butterfly or moth. If the spider finds a moth in its web, it bites the moth *first*, as though knowing that the moth has remarkable ability for getting free. (How did the spider learn this wary tactic? How did it know how to pass the tactic on to its offspring?)

Some very large spiders in tropical climates produce silk in huge quantities. A scientist once stripped 6 feet of silk a minute from one of these spiders and stopped only after he had extracted 450 feet! A naturalist exploring the jungles of Central America noted a large spider dangling on a line attached to a tree limb more than a hundred feet above the ground. As he watched, the spider began taking up the silken strand, reeling itself up into the canopy of the jungle.

Chance or Design?

Various types of spiders are variously equipped for their hunting tasks. If the spider is a type that depends on its web-building skills, it has a larger brain, keener sensitivity, and poorer eyesight. The highly sensitive legs of the web builders can feel even very minute vibrations on their webs—that is how they locate their prey. Spiders that seek prey by sight have keener eyesight and a smaller brain. (Did the spider decide how much brainpower, sense of touch, or eyepower it needed?)

CRAB SPIDERS wait for prey on flowers, then use their legs to grasp the victim and give it a lethal bite.

JUMPING SPIDERS locate their prey, then pounce on it. These spiders are able to jump very accurately. If we could jump as far in relation to our size, we could spring the length of a city block in a single bound.

The UNDERWATER SPIDER, like all spiders, must have air to breathe. How does it survive underwater? When it goes under water, it carries a bubble of air with it. Then it spins a sheet of thick silk and attaches it to the stems of water plants. Then it surfaces and carries air bubbles down until the sheet is filled with air. The spider will live in its air bubble.

Web building spiders have *three* claws on each foot. The middle claw hooks over the silk threads of their webs.

Non web building spiders have larger and more powerful jaws—because they have to grab and hold their prey without the aid of a web.

How does evolution account for the numberless variations in the 45,000 plus species of spiders? Can natural selection explain how instinct and emotions come to be? How does evolution account for all the functions that are environment-specific?!

I believe you will agree that these little creature didn't come by chance, but that they are perfectly designed by the Almighty Designer? Truly, the hand that made us is Divine! ■

THE SPITTING SPIDERS

The Spitting Spiders catch their prey by “spitting” a fluid that congeals on contact into a venomous, sticky mass. The fluid contains both venom and spider silk in liquid form.

In high-speed footage the spiders can be observed swaying from side to side as they “spit”, catching the prey in a crisscrossed “Z” pattern; The spider strikes from a distance of a half inch to an inch, and the whole attack is over in less than 1/700th of a second. It bites its prey with its fangs, then wraps it with silk from its spinnerets.



THE GOLIATH BIRDEATER is a spider belonging to the tarantula family. Found commonly in the swampy areas of South America.

The females are the largest spider by body mass in the world having a body length up to 4.7 inches and leg spans of up to 11 inches. The female's lifespan is 15 to 20 years. The males have a lifespan of 3 to 6 years.



Didier Descouens

A **MEXICAN RED-KNEED** tarantula *Brachypelma smithi*



Trisha M Shears



JJ Harrison

This jumping spider's center and main pair of eyes are very acute. The outer pairs are “secondary eyes” that detect motion at sides and behind.

list. Her Bible was her best friend, and she was well acquainted with it. She even included some people from our own day whom she wanted to meet. Altogether it was a glowing expectation, which she knew was well grounded in Scripture.

Sister Melva kept her mind active to the end writing letters to encourage others, composing religious poetry that expressed her faith, and memorizing Scripture. She loved the Psalms, and wanted to have as many in memory as possible in case the time should come when she was not able to read.

Another promise of God that had deep meaning for her was the promise that the future would be life without pain. One of her favorite verses was Revelation 21:4, that “*God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.*” In her sufferings this promise kept her looking forward.

We look forward to seeing Sister Melva in the resurrection. ■

<http://www.harunyahya.com/en/books/985/The-Miracle-In-The-Spider/chapter/3750/The-Characteristics-of-the-Jumping-Spider>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spider>

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/48/Ant_Mimic_Spider.jpg/220px-Ant_Mimic_Spider.jpg

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/8/8c/Scytodes.fusca.female.-tanikawa.jpg/220px-Scytodes.fusca.female.-tanikawa.jpg>

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/6/6d/PlatycryptusUndatusFemale.jpg>

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/6/69/Kaldari_Phidiippus_audax_01.jpg/260px-Kaldari_Phidiippus_audax_01.jpg

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/4/48/Garden_orb_weaver05.jpg/220px-Garden_orb_weaver05.jpg

Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone can start from now and make a brand new end.

There is always a bumper crop of food-for-thought in God's Book. What is needed is people to harvest it and feed on it.

If you want to feel rich, just count all the things you have that money can't buy and be thankful.

Repentance without amendment is like continually pumping without mending the leak.

Learn to bear, and to forbear, and to forgive and to let go! This is the way Christ lived and every Christian should learn to do the same.

I am looking down the road ahead
 Expectantly.
 Not knowing what it holds for me
 I look to You, O Father.
 If it be happiness,
 Let me share it graciously or thankfully.
 If it be sorrow,
 Let me bear it bravely.
 If it be frustration,
 Let me face it patiently.
 If it be success,
 Let me take it humbly
 If it be wealth,
 Let me use it wisely.
 If it be poverty,
 Let me endure it willingly.
 If it be sickness,
 Let me bear it cheerfully.
 If it be health,
 Let me use it gratefully
 If it be persecution,
 Let me bear it nobly,
 Serving You.



Counting time is not nearly as important as making time count.

Spend Your Time Wisely

Realizing how swiftly time is passing, may we direct our every thought and action toward the goal we are seeking, redeeming the time, for the days are evil, for what we do now with our time will determine how we will spend Eternity.

May we work with determination to kill out all the evils of our nature, each day improving our record, increasing in goodness, diligence, faithfulness, humility and in doing the Commandments of the Lord.

Take time to be holy for "behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). Unless we as Christians take time every day to put God first in our lives, we cannot serve Him with our whole heart and in sincerity and truth.

*Work for our Lord and His Kingdom,
 Daily, wherever you go;
 Let every word, every action,
 Beauty of righteousness show.
 Work for our Lord and His Kingdom,
 Learning in numberless ways;
 How to make service and duty
 Count for His honor and praise.*

The time we spend in doing daily tasks can be used wisely by meditating on the eternal blessings and what we must be doing to inherit them. May we be able to discern between good and evil, and in all things to separate the precious from the vile. May we so live each day that if Jesus should appear our life would be pleasing to Him. ■

H. White, Missouri

Lord God,
 I do not ask for happiness,
 Only for joy in doing Your will.
 I do not ask for wealth,
 Only the eternal riches You give.
 I do not ask for health,
 Only strength to walk Your way,
 So that whatever comes
 I may meet it with You
 Today.
 Tomorrow.
 Eternally.



This Year...?

There is something unsettling about turning the calendar over to another year. There is something final about it. We are saying good-bye to a section of our life, and would like to feel that the future is as secure as the past.

Somehow, it can't be. We hear so much to horrify—the proliferation of weapons, pollution, violence, crime, along with the dreadful breakdown of the family, the widespread use of drugs and alcohol by school children, the booming pornography and X-rated movie business—that one wonders: What is ahead? Will the mercy of God permit another year?

In one sense this is the end. There will be no tomorrows like yesterday. This year will not end as last year ended, whatever it brings. And...

It may be that the calendar year we are now entering will not end at all. This may be the year when the Son of God will come, with all His holy angels. This may be the year when *"two men will be in the field, one will be taken and the other left."* This may be the year when *"two women will be grinding at the mill; one will be taken and the other left"* (Matt. 24:40–41).

The question is not, *Will it happen?* because it *will* happen some day, and each day brings us closer to it.

Nor is the question, *When will it happen?* because God alone knows His timetable (Mark 13:32).

The all important question is, *Am I ready?*

And that is a question we can be answering right now, before the time gets any later. It is late, but at this moment it is not too late.

It is not too late to take Christ as our pattern and resolve to be more like Him in thought, in action, and attitude.

It is not too late to represent Christ in my home, where I work, where I shop, where I carry on the daily business of my life.

It is not too late—unless I procrastinate, unless I fail to do what I ought to do today.

This year? Will it be the last? We do not know. But one thing is sure: Jesus Christ *is* coming. On that we can depend. We have His Word. ■



He Is Coming!

He is coming, Christ, Messiah,
Coming to this world again,
Coming as Earth's future Sovereign
Over all the world to reign!

Can't you hear Him getting ready,
Counting down the hours till then?
He has promised soon to be here,
On His word you can depend!

As we see the evil rampant,
Hate and greed and pride and lust,
Oh, it grieves our hearts so deeply,
Fills our souls with deep disgust.

Though things look so fearsome,
Stormclouds hov'ring dark and drear,
Lift your heads, redemption cometh!
Soon the Saviour will be here!

—Contributed