

Megiddo Message

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER, 2003

Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Galatians 6:9 NIV

“I WON’T BE THERE”

Sometimes it’s hard to say no. Something in us doesn’t like to disappoint others. Even if we know their expectations are not in our best physical or spiritual interests, we still dislike saying no. To take the positive side is so much more gracious, pleasant, and satisfying.

But there are times when we have no other choice, when “no” is the only answer we can give—and be in the favor of God.

A variety of situations confront us. Perhaps it is an invitation from a friend. Our first instinct tells us to accept, but our commitment to Christ will not allow us to follow our instincts. Can we decline—and hold no feeling of envy, no touch of sensitivity, no whimper of hurt?

Or perhaps our sense of duty tells us to decline. When we are serving Christ, we simply do not have time for all the diversions of this world. Nor do we “fit” in all circles. Though a certain activity was once a highlight on our schedule, now we must decline.

This is painful enough, but when the invitation is repeated, we have to say it again, in one way or another: “I won’t be there.”

Can we do it bravely, kindly, shamelessly, knowing that we have other and better interests? Does our tone convey the message, that absence is a privilege because better things now absorb us? We have no reason to feel ashamed, no reason to cower from the facts we know we must face. If we hesitate, our “I won’t be there” carries an apology of “...but I wish I could be.” Shouldn’t we be proud to be part of a higher cause, one which gives us higher duties to respect?

Have we registered the message of the Master when He spoke those warning words: *“Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels”?* (Mark 8:38).



I won’t be there—because I’ve accepted an invitation to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

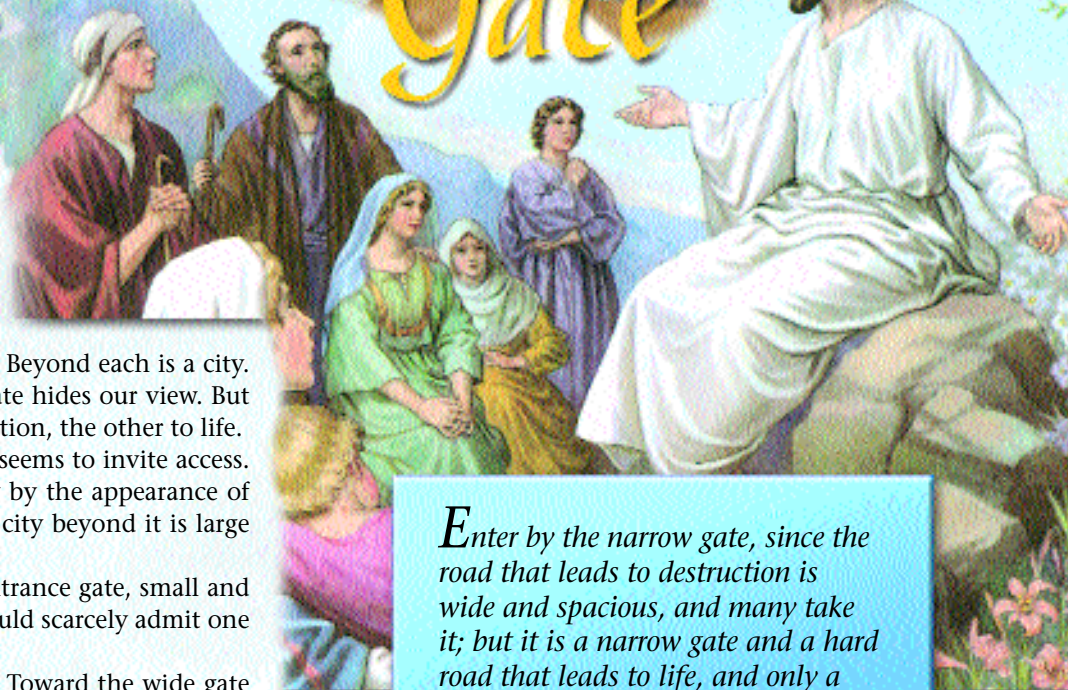
There are many times and places in the world from which Christians are honored to be absent. They have nothing in common with those whose first desire is the pleasure of the moment and whatever appetite they can indulge without giving thought or concern to spiritual issues. At such times Christians can say proudly, for all to hear, that such were they in former times, but a change has come into their lives and consequently they aren’t what they used to be, that their interests have changed, and they don’t go where they used

to go. So they “won’t be there.” It is a sign of spiritual progress, achievement, growth. The Word is plain: *“Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge”* (Prov. 14:7). *“Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go: lest thou learn his ways and get a snare to thy soul”* (Prov. 22:24–25).

What will I do when the question comes up again? My answer will still be the same: “I won’t be there.” Why? Because I don’t have time. I have accepted an invitation to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, and I am busy getting my clothing ready (Rev. 19:7–8). And of all the engagements this is one *I don’t want to miss!* ♦

Enter By the Narrow Gate

A parable by Jesus



Enter by the narrow gate, since the road that leads to destruction is wide and spacious, and many take it; but it is a narrow gate and a hard road that leads to life, and only a few find it. —Matthew 7:13–14 NJB

Picture in the far distance two gates. Beyond each is a city. Large or small? We cannot see. The gate hides our view. But Jesus tells us one gate opens to destruction, the other to life.

The one gate is wide and ample. It seems to invite access. Many may enter at one time. Judging by the appearance of the gate, we might conclude that the city beyond it is large and magnificent.

The other gate appears as a back entrance gate, small and hardly visible. It looks as though it would scarcely admit one at a time.

To each of these gates leads a road. Toward the wide gate there stretches out a road broad and smooth. Its ample width is filled with travelers, all obviously enjoying the smooth, commodious way. Toward the strait gate extends a narrow, difficult path. Out of sight at times, it winds over mountains, along abrupt precipices, here and there across marshy wastes. If you ask how many travel this way, you will learn that they are few, very few.

What lies beyond the wide gate? Enter, and you will find destruction, perdition, hopelessness, eternal oblivion. As the Prophet of old wrote, “*shame and everlasting contempt*” (Dan. 12:2). How wisely the author of the book of Proverbs pictured this road and its ending as the path to the house of the strange woman: “*Entering her house leads to death; ... The man who visits her ... will never reach the paths of life*” (Prov. 2:18–19 NLT).

Inside the strait gate, which seemed at a distance to promise nothing, is that which Jesus calls life. This word is a two-aspect term, including both the future and the present. It denotes, first, the final culmination of Christian living: *life in the world to come!* It denotes, second, the experience of the active Christian even now. The real Christian experiences real *being*, the expansion of every higher power and faculty that makes existence an ecstasy and a delight; that calls into vigorous exercise every capacity of happiness and contentment. It brings the hundredfold in this life and in the end it promises “*life everlasting.*”

Enter!

Now Jesus issues the command: “*Enter by the narrow gate.*” Luke’s gospel adds the verb “*strive.*” “*Strive to enter through*

the narrow gate” (Luke 13:24). In other words, put your utmost effort into it. Struggle, wrestle, “*strain every nerve,*” contend earnestly. Entering at the narrow gate is difficult; it demands exertion and pain. Those who would enter by this gate must exert themselves to their maximum.

The one who enters must be, first of all, **willing to follow a pre-determined path.** We all like our own way best. If we could, we would like to say just where our chosen road will run. But those who choose the narrow road to life must be willing to give up their own way and follow God’s leading, wherever it goes. They are not free to do as they please.

In the life of this world, its trades and professions, one must imitate to learn. Likewise in the spiritual life, we must copy those who have gone before us. Said Paul, “*To his own master he stands or falls*” (Rom. 14:4). There is no place for “*I prefer that*” or “*I like this better.*” One must only ask: What is true? What is right? What does God command?

Second, the one who chooses the narrow way must be **willing to walk alone.** Most of us are naturally gregarious. We like to feel others are approving what we do. It takes courage to walk the narrow, unpopular way with the few. To travel the narrow way, one must be prepared to say, “*Let God be true, but every man a liar*” (Rom. 3:4). The faith in which the true believer lives and dies is the faith once delivered to the saints, written on the pages of God’s holy Scriptures. And for it one must be willing to stand, even if he must stand alone.

Our Lord here warns us that the common opinion and the

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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).

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 Father, 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 HERALD AND THE KING

OUR PLANET will soon witness the greatest events in its history. For centuries God has been silent. But that silence will soon be broken by the arrival of Elijah the prophet, who comes to herald the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. "*Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord:...lest I come and smite the earth with a curse*" (Mal. 4:5-6).

Then shall follow the King of kings and Lord of lords, to begin His momentous work of transforming our world into the glorious and eternal Kingdom of God.

common practice, in things of the soul, is not only an insufficient but even a fatal guide for such as would be saved. For it is the way to destruction, and that way is crowded. It is the wide gate, of which Jesus said, "*Many enter through it.*"

The majority of people today take their religion second hand, from their parents, or teachers, or friends; or from current ideas, or popular notions. Seldom is their faith based on reflection, honest comparison, and an earnest study of the Bible.

And let us ask ourselves: Are we independent of the opinions of our contemporaries in things pertaining to our eternal salvation? Have we looked at the evidence and drawn our own, solid convictions from the Book of Divine revelation? Have we the independent spirit to travel the narrow way and enter the strait gate? Or do we in some measure look to the present culture for our mode of dress, or speech, or our values?

To force our way through the narrow, difficult gate, we must dare to be different. We must dare to think independently; not influenced by popular opinion. The Word of God must be the final arbiter of what is right and wrong for us.

This is one reason why the narrow gate is narrow. Each entrant must know for himself whom he has believed, and why; and must carry out that knowledge consistently in his own life. While the multitudes throng the broad way, he who would enter into life must be willing, if need be, to walk alone.

Then, the one who enters the strait gate must have *a resolute purpose and a submissive will*. What makes you and me want the narrow road? It is just one thing: *what lies beyond the gate*. Though it be inconspicuous and out of sight, we must know that beyond that gate is an ever widening, ever growing, ever expanding opportunity. Beyond that gate is everything our hearts can desire.

Is our heart set on entering that gate, on passing through the pearly portals into life eternal? Nearer objects we all have, and they sometimes seem so alluring. We can work hard for an earthly prize. We can rise early, and take rest late, for the wages of this world, for a fortune, for something to gratify vanity or reward ambition. But the narrow gate in the far distance—who can see it? Who earnestly makes for it?

The Wide Gate: Destruction

Destruction. What is that? One thing certain: it is not hell fire. The term "destruction" cannot by any means be construed to suggest continued misery or suffering. That which is destroyed ceases to exist. It is gone.

But does it mean non-entity? Some might say that is impossible, that God is too good to destroy anyone. That surely cannot be the end of persons whose only fault was that

they wanted the pleasures of sight, rather than living by faith.

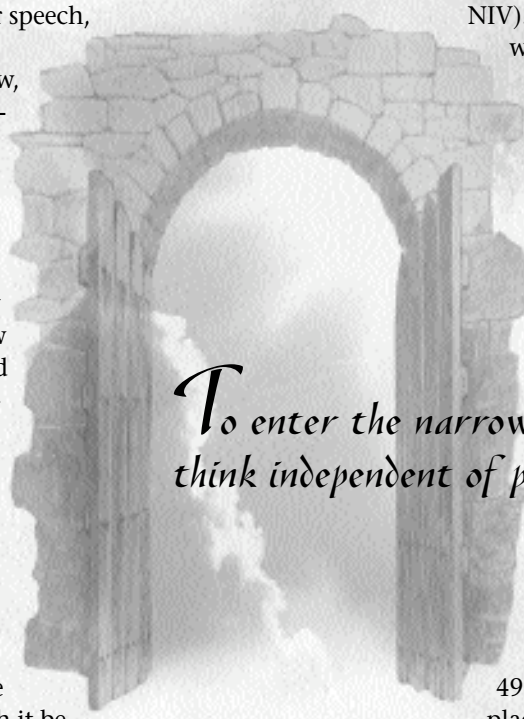
But let us take God at His Word. Let us have the faith to believe that the broad road and the wide gate lead to destruction, and destruction does not signify continued life.

We observed earlier that the wide gate, being so much more commodious, might lead to a place of ever burgeoning population. Our speculation was correct, for Jesus said, "*Wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it.*"

But the fact that it is the destiny of multitudes does not make it attractive. The great masses, who never recognized God or His authority, who are gathered in this supermetropolis, are not gathered to enjoy happiness and bliss. The Divine pronouncement is: "*they will sleep forever and not awake,*" declares the King, *whose name is the Lord Almighty*" (Jer. 51:57

NIV). Such will be the ultimate end of all who reject God.

Who in his right mind would wish to spend eternal years in such a community? The dwellings are too small, too dark, and the congestion unbearable. Just listen to the Psalmist's prediction of these places of habitation: "*They will not last long despite their riches—they will die like the animals....Like sheep, they are led to the*



To enter the narrow gate, we must dare to think independent of popular opinion.

grave, where death will be their shepherd. In the morning the godly will rule over them. Their bodies will rot in the grave, far from their grand estates" (Ps. 49:12, 14 NLT). What a dreadful dwelling place!

Today God is silent. He has been silent now for many centuries. People can deny and defy Him, and show no respect to His cause, His people or His creation, and He does nothing about it. Rebellion brings no swift retribution. The wages of sin have not been paid, and people may easily think they never will be paid. But they will, and with interest. The broad road *will* lead to destruction.

The Narrow Gate: Life

What lies beyond the narrow, difficult gate? It is life, endless, abundant, heavenly LIFE! But one may ask, what is that? I cannot catch the meaning of a life altogether heavenly, a life lived wholly for God. Surely there must be an excuse for me if I cannot yet desire this. I cannot be captured by a goal that I do not understand.

If we have not tasted the joy of the surrendered, consecrated life, it is because we have not yet made the consecration. We are still preoccupied with the present culture, still clinging to our old ways; still pursuing our own goals. We have not yet caught the vision of what God is doing; we have

not yet surrendered our will to be whatever He wants us to be. We are still chasing the trinkets and baubles of this world.

If such is our plight, let us decide at once: Do we want the joy and genuine happiness and friendship that lie beyond the narrow gate, or do we prefer the warm, chummy atmosphere of the multitudes in the broad way—which leads to destruction?

Let us not forget: if we want eternal life, we **MUST** be taking the steps to get in our minds a clear vision of what lies beyond the gate. It will not happen by itself. Things unseen do not automatically impress themselves on our minds. We must be reading, thinking, praying, building up our surety of God and the great things ahead. Because we cannot travel the broad road and expect that it will culminate in life. We cannot continue pursuing the gratifications of the broad road and expect that God will at the last open the gate and usher us into His kingdom. The broad road leads to destruction. Only the narrow road leads to life.

If we want life, we must be doing everything in our power to build our desire for what lies at

Entering the difficult gate is NOT beyond our ability.

the end of the narrow road—LIFE! How can we be sure that we will have strength and determination to keep the narrow road all the way to the end? There is only one way, and that is to picture ourselves going through the gate at the end of the road. Picture the angels welcoming us into their realm

and introducing us to their families, their pleasures, their joys, their delights! See ourselves listening as they tell of their experiences, their victories, and the projects that challenge and absorb their immortal vigor! Feel their delight as they take us to the first level of eternal glory, and let us peer into the glories beyond! Join them as they wing their way from world to glorious world, all filled with the immortal glory of their Father and ours in His vast, endless universe. When we have truly caught a glimpse of what lies beyond that narrow, inconspicuous looking gate, how can we think of missing it!

This is the type of thinking that inspired and motivated the faithful of old. Three times it is recorded that *"Abraham believed God,"* and it was counted to him for righteousness (Rom. 4:3; Gal. 3:6; Jas. 2:23). Moses believed God; Samuel believed God; King David certainly believed God when he said, *"I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living"* (Ps. 27:13). Isaiah believed. Jeremiah believed. Daniel believed. Simeon believed. Jesus Himself believed. Paul believed; he

expressed his honest belief when he quoted the Psalmist saying: *"I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak*" (2 Cor. 4:13).

The Goal: Eternal Life!

The goal of future life is beautifully pictured many times in the Word of God. There are given to us *"exceeding great and precious promises"* (2 Pet. 1:4). For the overcomers the gate to life shall be open, and each one shall be granted an abundant entrance into the *"everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ"* (2 Pet. 1:11). The gate will no longer be narrow, for God will set their feet in a *"broad place,"* a place with *"no straitness"* in it (Job 36:16).

What will that life be like? It will be a life free from sorrow, free from pain, free from disappointment.

No more accidents, no more old age, no more bending forms, no more death.

That blissful life is pictured vividly in Revelation 21: *"And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God. And 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.' Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful'"* (vs. 3–5).

Mortality will be swallowed up of life. *"Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"* (1 Cor. 15:54–55).

The way to life is not difficult. It is only difficult as we ourselves make it difficult by trying to bring our own way into the narrow way. If we let our own way go and decide that whatever God asks we will do, whatever the risk, whatever the difficulty, whatever the cost, we will *enter*, then, God helping us, we shall enter the gate to life!

Yes, enter! For though the gate be difficult, it is not impossible. With men it may be impossible, but not with God. With His help, and with the good counsel provided in His Word, we *can* enter the difficult gate; we *can* banish all sin from our lives. With His help we *can* overcome the tendency to anger, to malice, to jealousy, to pride, to stubborn self-will. We *can* learn to control the evil emotions of mind and body. With His help we *can* overpower our tendencies to deceit, and lying, and prejudice. We *can* overcome our desire for human praise and acclaim and live only to please God.

The difficult gate is not beyond our ability. The work *can* be done, it has been done, and let us reassure ourselves often that we *can* do it, and say, *God helping me, I will enter the gate to life.* ♦



A Hard Look at TV

An Evaluation for Serious Christians

- ☐ *Has your TV viewing affected your life (less time for family, friends, self-improvement, home, etc.)?*
- ☐ *Does TV affect your family activities?*
- ☐ *Do you think your TV viewing is in line with Biblical principles?*
- ☐ *Has your TV viewing affected your spiritual life?*
- ☐ *Does your TV viewing affect you emotionally?*
- ☐ *Do you watch TV to be entertained?*
- ☐ *Do you consider TV commercials in line with Biblical principles?*

If you answered yes to any of the above, you will be interested in this serious evaluation of TV.

The editors recognize that TV could be highly beneficial as a teaching medium. The problem lies in the programming and the fact that the media is controlled by advertisers, who cater to public demand.

If you are looking to please God and secure His favor, you will find no place in your life for TV entertainment. If you want to save yourself and your family for God, TV is your enemy.

Please note that the following material does not address beneficial educational TV.

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A Hard Look at TV

- ✓ Who Let It (TV) In?
- ✓ TV is 3T: Trash, Trouble, and Trivia
- ✓ Why Not TV?
- ✓ TV: A Christian View (next issue)

**THINK YOU ARE
NOT INFLUENCED BY
TV?**

**Why do advertisers
spend \$60 billion a year
on TV commercials?**

Why Not TV?

by GERALD R. PAYNE

The following is based on information from several sources including psychiatrists and researchers at UCLA and Columbia University, film critics, A. C. Nielson Co. (well-known for their TV ratings), and medical societies.

While many articles have been published regarding television, we feel compelled to publish one more for those who are serious about living the Christ-life in today's world. TV has been described as manipulative, addictive, violent, promoter of wasteful spending, obscene, demoralizing and unhealthy. Can we believe these claims? If so, how far reaching are the effects?

The force behind TV: Advertising

The driving force behind TV is advertising.

Is this statement subject to question? Just consider that in the year 2000, total spending for TV ads was \$60 billion.

Television advertising is a science, its aim being to influence viewers to purchase their product. Commercials are engineered based on psychology research with regard to program content and timing. Commercial messages are cunningly crafted to appeal to the mass appetite and to stimulate impatience to purchase that expensive TV, luxury car, pizza, or beer. Viewers are manipulated into thinking they *need* the product.

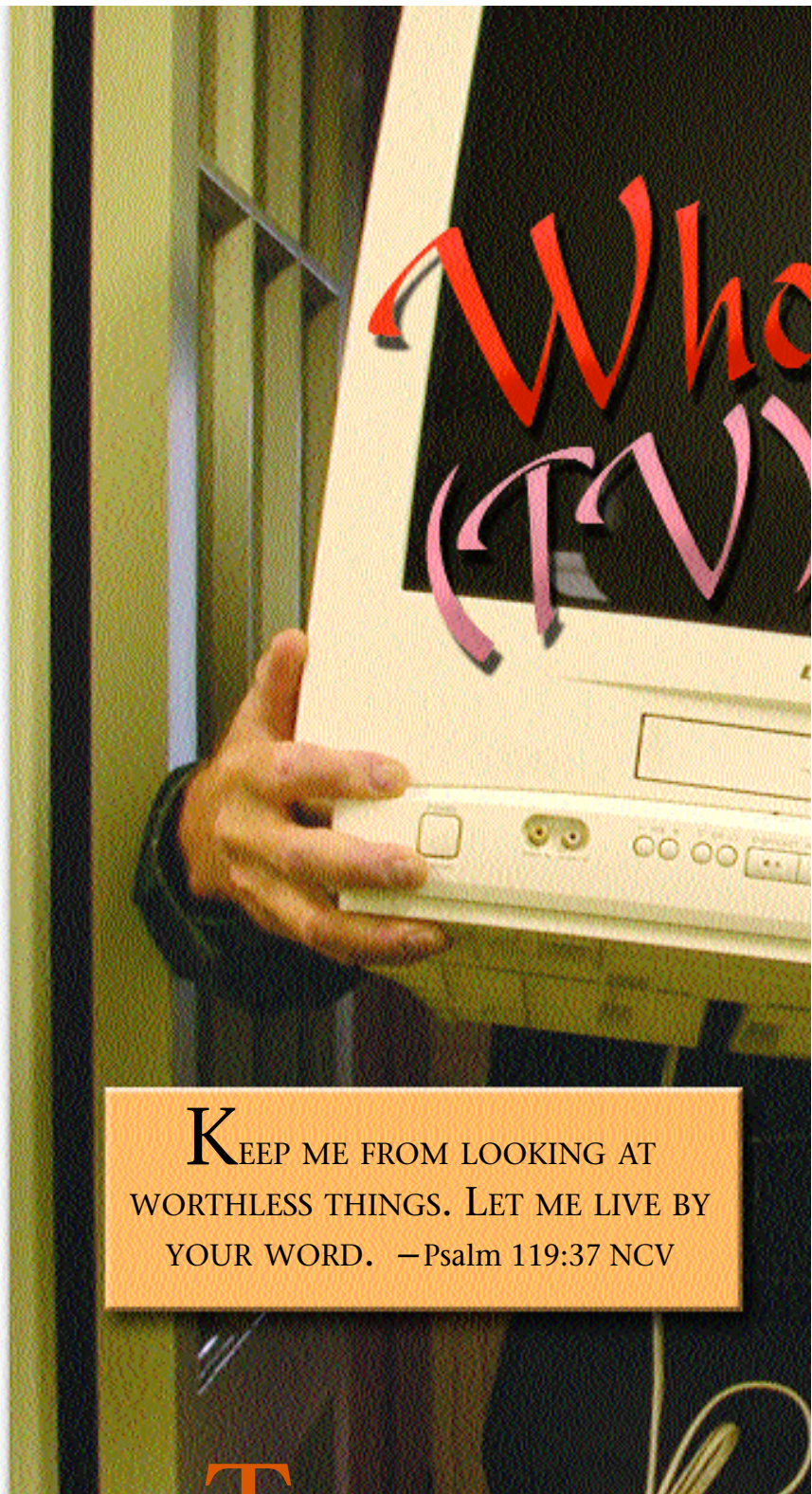
It is difficult to put a limit on desire when one's mind is continually barraged with appealing messages that push short-term gratifications. And when the average American child is exposed to an estimated 20,000 TV advertisements per year, is it any wonder that space for landfills has become an issue?

Detrimental Effects of TV Viewing on Children

Research has documented a number of seriously detrimental effects of television viewing on children.

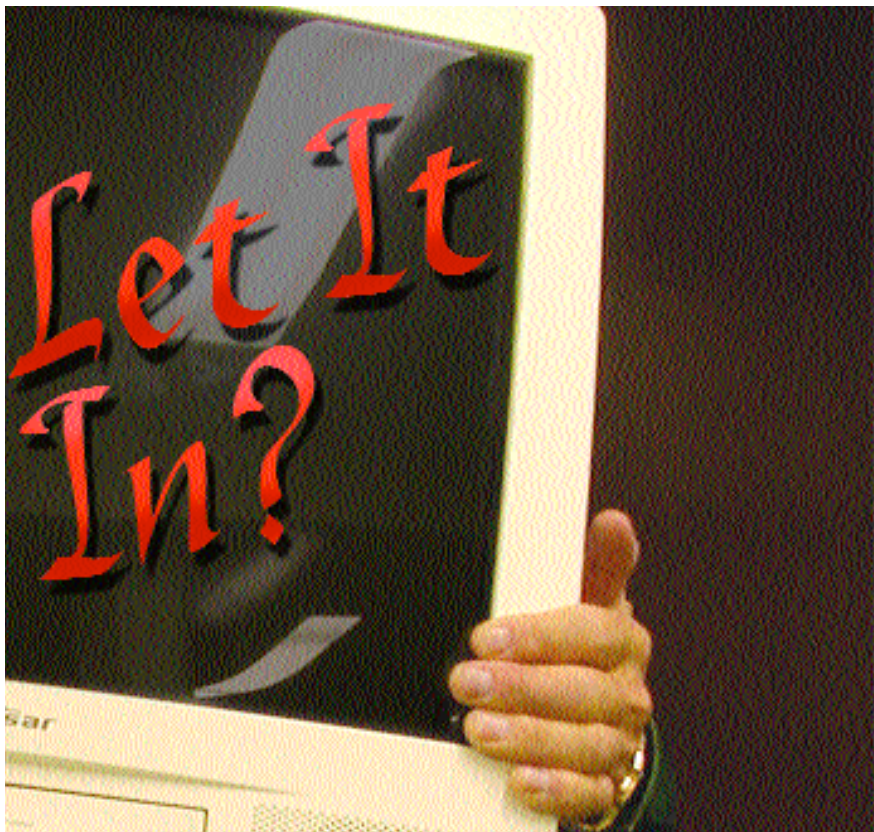
Brain Damage. TV screens change very rapidly, in fact, every few seconds, depending on the age group for which the program is designed. Should we wonder that, given this rapid-fire method of presentation, the attention span of Americans has declined alarmingly?

TV is a virtually limitless source of images and concepts. What we perceive with our eyes has a far greater influence on us than what we hear or



KEEP ME FROM LOOKING AT
WORTHLESS THINGS. LET ME LIVE BY
YOUR WORD. —Psalm 119:37 NCV

The only guests in your home are those you invite in. Mr. Average Jack would protest if I were to tell him that he has invited thieves, robbers, drug dealers, molesters, child abusers, murderers, liars, pornography pushers and the most ungodly persons right into his house. "I have never done such a thing," he would argue! But if Jack could look honestly at the real facts about TV, I think he would change his mind. TV has been compared to running the city sewer line right



No Sewage!!

How would you feel if you suddenly discovered that the water line into your home was actually supplying you with sewage—even a *little* sewage?

What would happen if you were to test the purity of all that you have seen (TV/videos/movies), or read (magazines/books/Internet), or listened to (radio/CDs) during the past week? Would it pass the Apostle Paul's test for proper thinking, i.e., true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report (Phil. 4:8)?

Is it any wonder our society is "sick" when the media is pouring sewage into its programs, and millions are piping it into their homes?

You can compromise and say, "I know a lot of TV programs are bad," or "Most of the music on this CD is all right!" or, "I know that movie has a few nasty parts, but the rest is good!"

Would you knowingly put even a teaspoon of sewage into a pitcher of lemonade you intended to drink? Think about it. Are you knowingly making a way for sewage to enter your home—and your head and your heart? ♦

Remember the motto: *If it's doubtful, don't!*

into our living room. Do we want this kind of garbage in our minds and lives?

The only information in our mind is information that we allow to enter and remain. But, like it or not, much of that information today—if it comes from the media—is garbage. And it is often very difficult to get the garbage out.

You say TV does not affect you? It affects how we think of others, how we raise our children, how we treat our spouse, and what we do with our income.

read. When watching TV, the subconscious mind is impressed in an indiscriminate manner with acts of violence and sensuality—totally lacking in Christian values, or even social values—and one has no option to review or defend his position. Soon behavior is affected, beliefs are altered, and even the thought processes are changed.

Violent or destructive behavior. A few years ago a TV program showed college students lying down in the middle of the highway to demonstrate their courage. Would anyone try such a thing unless he or she were influenced to do so or were suffering from severe mental disturbance? Yet, two college students were killed in New Jersey and Pennsylvania doing this very thing. The scene was edited out of the film to prevent more "copy-cat" casualties.

Before the days of TV, some schools had rifle teams for decades without a single accident, and no one seemed concerned about possible violence. How would parents feel today about sending their child to a school where they knew there was even one gun on campus? One word would describe the feelings: horror!

Why? Because students repeat what they see on TV.

Ready-made stimulation. When a child reads a book or hears a story, his imagination becomes actively involved creating the images he reads or hears. This is comfortable, soothing, habitual, and over time the child becomes passive in the ability to visualize internally. But place him in front of TV, and the child receives ready-made stimulation, while his imagination lies dormant.

Unnatural passivity. Notice how a young child (perhaps around age 3) is constantly in motion. Passivity at that early age is not natural. But set them in front of a TV and their eyes will be fixed in that direction for perhaps half an hour at a time. In this way TV deprives the child of normal exercise and limits the possibility of normal development.

And during that half-hour the TV presents many different messages that can cause a society to view itself and its individuals abnormally.

Impatient spirit. Children who watch many hours of TV gradually lose the perspective of time. For example, a program shows someone leaving a house and arriving at work. The elapsed time is not included. They become accustomed to this sort of constant action and begin to expect it in real life. But real life just isn't like that.

Aggressive behavior. Children have a tendency to be more aggressive and hyperactive after

intensely watching TV. When the TV goes off, they fall back suddenly into real time, which is far less stimulating, but over time they continue to be more aggressive and hyperactive.

Detrimental Effects of TV Viewing on Adults

Unreal expectations. Adults are affected by television also. Many TV shows are compacted within one half to one hour. Some cable movies are 3 hours long. But TV is an unreal world. Is it any wonder adults become frustrated when their efforts to achieve their goals: career advancement,



REMEMBER:

- ✓ Never leave children in the presence of an operating TV *unsupervised*.
- ✓ Never leave a TV turned on *unattended*.
- ✓ Never use TV as a "sitter" for children.
- ✓ Limit total TV viewing time to a *pre-determined amount*.
- ✓ Always *pre-plan* what will be viewed; never flick through the channels.

breaking a bad habit, completing a course of studies, weight loss, etc., fail to produce immediate and satisfying results?

Wasted time. Time spent watching TV is time not spent doing other things. If you watch TV, perhaps you should ask yourself, How many hours a year do I spend in front of the TV? Have I ever said that I just don't have time for my spouse, children or friends, for church, meditation, prayer, a friendly word to a distressed friend, a constructive activity, or exercise? Yet you have time for TV.

Time, when it is past, cannot be retrieved. It is used for either purposeful, wholesome activities, or it is wasted. The Bible advice is: *"Be very careful about the sort of lives you lead, like intelligent and not like senseless people. Make the best of the present time, for it is a wicked age."* (Ephesians 5:15-16, NJB)

TV Is Addictive

A diagnosis of dependence on drugs requires meeting three of the nine DSM-III-R criteria.* TV viewers exhibit twice this many symptoms such as:

1. indiscriminate viewing
2. using TV as a sedative
3. feeling angry with oneself for watching so much
4. feeling loss of control while viewing
5. feeling miserable when kept from watching
6. inability to stop watching.

Most American children by age 18 have spent 11,000 hours in the classroom. Compare that to

TV affects us much more than we may like to think. Consider these factual accounts.

A 7-year-old boy in Texas accidentally killed his 3-year-old brother after imitating a pro wrestling move he saw on television. When interviewed by authorities, the boy demonstrated what had happened by running toward a doll about the same size as his brother and suddenly striking its neck, knocking it backwards. He also talked about his favorite wrestling stars.

In Maryland, a 12-year-old committed suicide and left a note citing *South Park* as a reason why he killed himself. He mentioned a character named Kenny, a small boy who dies violently in every *South Park* episode. The boy did not show any signs of depression before the act.

An 11-year-old boy hung himself. Police suspected that it was an accident and that he was trying to imitate the character Kenny on *South Park*. His mother reported that the day before his death, her son was imitating the character and his friends said, "Well, if you're Kenny, then you have to die." He responded by saying, "That's OK, I'll be back next week."

The boy also drew pictures of the characters and based their portrayal on his classmates' stories, after his mother forbade him to watch the show. After his death, police found a picture drawn by the boy depicting a character hanging himself.

The brutal reality is this: That actions have consequences, sometimes life and death consequences. There is no "I'll do better next time" for the boy who takes the life of his younger brother. There is no "I'll be back next week" for the youth who decides to end his own life by imitating some character he has seen on TV.

Sometimes we feel as though our opportunities are infinite. We can do as we please and change any time. But there are costly mistakes, and those mistakes have consequences.

Influencing our most critical decisions are the streams of trivial messages that flow into our minds by our exposure to the media. Year after year we drink in these messages, not realizing how much they affect our values, our personality, our tastes. Unhindered, they develop into the kind of mind the apostle Paul called carnal. And what does he say about the carnal mind? *"To be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace"* (Rom. 8:6). A mind overflowing with deceptive and erroneous information can only cause missteps at life's most crucial moments. Important decisions that shape our destiny are likely to be

influenced with what has been stored in our subconscious mind. Jack reaches for another cigarette without even thinking; or he finds himself at the local bar, although he promised he would never go there again. He destroys his family when he has an affair with another woman. Jack did not mean to do these things, but these are consequences of thoughts Jack carries in his subconscious mind. These thoughts control Jack. Where did he get these thoughts? When you think about it, they are being piped right into his living room through the media. This is not to say that all of Jack's problems are from watching TV. But how much may TV have contributed to Jack's problems? How much is TV controlling you?

Are you obeying Paul's command to think only on things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report (Phil. 4:8) when you allow the unholy, sordid and base to enter your home?

Excuses, Excuses, Excuses

Mr. Average Jack would not think of letting anyone into his home who uses bad language, yet he allows a regular visitor in the living room who advocates mistreating his children and abusing his wife's purity, at the same time degrading his religious views, and using filthy language. He knows he should control this intruder, but somehow he just shrugs his shoulders and claims there is nothing much he can do about it.

There are millions of "Jacks" in the world, and the intruder's control goes for the most part unchallenged. But the reality is: We *do* have a choice. We

20,000 hours watching TV, during which they witness 17,000 murders, plus other violent and sexually explicit scenes, not to mention countless commercials.

SAFE TV POLICY

"Make the very most of your time, for these are evil days." —St. Paul (Eph. 5:16)

While television can be an excellent teaching medium, the detrimental side of commercial TV is widely recognized. Driven by advertising and media content, the majority of its entertainment programs are designed to appeal to the lowest common denominator. Even when the program is acceptable, the commercials are objectionable.

Why? Because most television producers are culture driven. Bent on pleasing the mass viewers, they endorse a view of the world and of life that is incompatible with Christian values, Christian development and Christian growth.

How much TV is safe? This is a question each individual will have to answer. One researcher observed that just 30 minutes can make a noticeable difference with some children. But what about differences not immediately observable? For example, how many sexually explicit scenes does it take to develop an interest in pornography, especially among teenagers and young men? How many acts of violence does it take to burn an image on one's mind? How many obscene or vulgar or swear words does the man or woman who loves God with all their heart want to hear? The answer is NONE.

For this reason, the only safe course for TV viewing is *planned* viewing that is instructive, inspiring, and free of commercials.

Someone has suggested that the only safe way to handle TV is to handle it as one would handle a rattlesnake—with greatest care and caution.

Remember, it could cost you your LIFE!



Does TV Promote Violence?

What causes violence? The causes are many and complex: drug and alcohol abuse, domestic problems, racism, poverty, mental illness, and others. However, one factor is increasingly acknowledged: that of viewing violence that has been packaged as entertainment.

Thousands of studies over the past four decades have established a link between violent entertainment and violence on the streets.

In 1976, The American Medical Association House of Delegates passed a resolution encouraging opposition to TV violence and its sponsors. Obviously, it fell on deaf ears and unstirred hearts as violent programming continued its explosive growth. A joint US News and University of California survey found that 63% of the Hollywood elite say the industry glorifies violence.

Social science researchers Daniel Linz, Barbara J. Wilson, and Barbara Randall have identified six distinct characteristics of violent media content and their effect on viewers:

1. Reward for Violence

If a violent act is rewarded or left unpunished, it is more likely to foster attitudes supportive of aggression. The lack of punishment actually functions as a sanction or a reward for violent behavior.

2. Reality of Violence

The more realistically a violent act is portrayed, the more likely it is to be imitated. Older children

are more emotionally responsive to programs that depict realistic events and are influenced more by violent movies that feature events that are humanly possible.

3. Violent Role Models

Children are more likely to imitate and look up to characters whose use of violence is portrayed

* Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (Third Edition—Revised).

as necessary or attractive. Moreover, children who strongly identify with a violent media character are more likely to be aggressive themselves.

4. Justified Violence

The more an act of violence is presented as justified, the more likely it is to be copied. Young children are more apt to hurt than to help a peer after watching a cartoon with scenes of justified violence.

5. Violent Connections

Viewers who find similarity between themselves and their actions and feelings and a violent act, theme, or character in a film are more likely to imitate or emulate that violence in real life. This is particularly true of children.

6. Amount of Violence

Excessive exposure to media violence may produce a psychological blunting of normal emotional responses to violent events. It may also lead to a lack of responsiveness to real-life aggression.

Haunting stories confront us every day as we read the newspaper. The escalating epidemic of violence among youth seems to be taking on grisly forms. Whether it is the latest story of a senseless assault, or murder, or a list of statistics like the following, the alarms keep going off:

- ❑ gun violence takes a child's life in the United States every three hours;
- ❑ more than 5 percent of American school children carry a gun;
- ❑ 3.6 million high school students are physically assaulted annually, most by other students;

Review what is selling TV ads, videos, and tickets at the movie houses, and it becomes clear that violence heads the list. There is almost no limit to how far viewers will go in accepting violence from the media. It has been stated that watching even one violent program can increase aggressiveness in children. Yet children watch an average of 3 to 4 hours of TV per day. The effect of watching TV violence may be immediate, or years later, even if the home atmosphere has no tendency toward violence.

During this research, I have noticed the many times the media sends the message, "force, not

can allow TV to control us, or we can take control of it. The TV has an "OFF" switch.

What excuses are most often used to justify TV watching?

THREE OPTIONS for CONTROLLING TV

Lord, what do you want me to do? Here are three possibilities:

Option 1: No television

No TV at all. That may sound drastic. Can TV-free people survive? More than that, they thrive! You will be amazed at the joy and creativity you can find with your children as you show them how to be peaceful and productive in their home time. You will be "less entertaining" but you will be much more edified, enriched and informed!

Option 2: TV only by VCR

To be sure that you know what you are getting, tape record what you want to show to your family in advance, and ask yourself if you would be willing to invite Christ to view it with you and your family.

Careful, selective viewing makes the programs you watch more enjoyable and rewarding. Less becomes more. And in between, you can store your TV/VCR in a closet or behind closed doors, to be watched only during pre-planned family time.

Option 3: Selective Viewing

Choose only wholesome videos, carefully-selected channels and carefully-monitored TV programs. Avoid all commercials. This is a difficult option, because of the enormous temptation to slip back into general viewing or to flick between the channels. If you should drift back into the TV trap, go for option one or two.

Be creative! Design the right strategy for your home, so that TV is under control—YOUR control; above all, under *God's* control. Share everything you view with Him, and if your conscience is well trained, you will be safe. ♦

Note: Every TV has an OFF switch. Use it!



❑ *There are some really good shows on TV.*

Perhaps, but are those "really good shows" the only ones your family members see day after day?

❑ *I can separate what is good from what isn't. It doesn't affect me.*

How do you measure its effects? Are your Christian values strengthened? Are you stimulated to live more like Christ?

❑ *What will I talk about with the people at work if I don't know what is on TV?*

How about having something different to contribute to the conversation, like a good book you read last night, or a Bible study you were part of, or some deep conversation you shared with a friend, or thoughts about some people of God who have influenced your life?

❑ *I need to keep up with what's going on in the world.*

If you are relying on television news to shape your view of life, you may find your view has been misshaped.

❑ *I need to see the weather report.*

Is the weather report truly all that you are viewing? Does this need justify an hour or more of commercials, trivia, and mayhem? Why not try telephone dial-up weather reports, or radio reports, or an inexpensive weather-only unit?

❑ *I watch TV when I'm tired, because it is relaxing.*

Relaxation needs to be constructive as well as physically restorative. We are commanded

to do all to the glory of God. Can we relax to the glory of God by letting immoral, violent or just plain nonsensical pictures into our minds?

Sometimes a change or a different type of useful activity can be as valuable as physical rest, and at the same time accomplish productive work. Rest

time can also be invested in useful conversation, reading, meditation, and prayer.

❑ *Everybody's doing it.*

This is the most unjustifiable statement of all. What was the general attitude of the people



The Stranger

A few months before I was born, my Dad met a stranger who was new to our small town. From the beginning, Dad was fascinated with this enchanting newcomer, and soon invited him to live with our family. *The stranger* was quickly accepted and was around to welcome me into the world a few months later.

As I grew up I never questioned his place in our family. Mom taught me to love the Word of God, and Dad taught me to obey it. But *the stranger* was our storyteller. He could weave the fascinating tales. Adventures, mysteries, and comedies were daily conversations. He could hold our whole family spellbound for hours each evening. He was like a friend to the whole family. He took Dad, Bill, and me to our first major league baseball game. He was always encouraging us to see the movies, and he even made arrangements to introduce us to several movie stars.

The stranger was an incessant talker. Dad didn't seem to mind, but sometimes Mom would quietly get up—while the rest of us

were enthralled with one of his stories of faraway places—go to her room, read her Bible, and pray. I wonder now if she ever prayed that *the stranger* would leave. You see, my dad ruled our household with certain moral convictions.

But this *stranger* never felt an obligation to honor them. Profanity, for example, was not allowed in our house—not from us, from our friends, or adults. Our longtime visitor, however, used occasional four-letter words that burned my ears and made Dad squirm. To my knowledge *the stranger* was never confronted. My Dad was a teetotaler who didn't permit alcohol in his home—not even for cooking. But *the stranger* felt like we needed exposure and enlightened us to other ways of life. He offered us beer and other alcoholic beverages often.

He talked freely (too much, too freely) about sex. His comments were sometimes blatant, sometimes suggestive, and generally embarrassing. I know now that my early concepts of the man/woman relationship were influenced by *the stranger*. As I look back, I believe it was the grace of God that *the stranger* did not influence us more. Time after time he opposed the values of my parents, yet he was seldom rebuked and never asked to leave.

More than thirty years have passed since *the stranger* moved in with the young family on Morningside Drive. But if I were to walk into my parents' den today, you would still see him sitting over in a corner, waiting for someone to listen to him talk and watch him draw his pictures. His name? We always just called him...TV. ♦

reason and discussion, is the acceptable way to resolve problems."

Video games and the internet have also become increasingly tolerant of violent content. The current level of violence in the media would not have been tolerated even a couple of decades ago.

What are the effects of media violence on young children still developing life values? Some of the most common are:

- ❑ Children become insensitive to violence,
- ❑ Children do not sense the finality of death,
- ❑ Children perform poorly in school,
- ❑ Children have impaired attention span,
- ❑ Children are more frightened, perceiving the real world as a place of violence,
- ❑ Children have a greater tendency to resolve disagreements with violence, mimicking what they see,
- ❑ Children have impaired social abilities.

Many researchers conclude that data linking violence in the media to violence in the community are as obvious as data linking cancer to tobacco. A law professor, John F. Dobbyn of Villanova's School of Law said, "During the 1970s, Hollywood films tended to be character-driven, but by the time the '80s arrived, high-concept action films, full of sensationalism, took over the silver screen....'Natural Born Killers,' a perfect example of how far we have come in accepting violence in the media, includes everything from innocent bystanders being blown up for fun, to rape, sexual abuse and every kind of murder imaginable."

Professor Dobbyn also believes that violence "drastically reduces the morality of this country."

The military airline pilot schools, academies for policemen and several other professions use response conditioning, a psychological method that preconditions individuals to reflexively respond to certain stimuli. For example, a policeman is faced with popup targets. Some represent

when God sent the flood in the time of Noah? What was "everybody" in Sodom doing that brought God's judgment on them?

We may be doing what "everybody's doing," but just because everybody is doing it doesn't make it right. Jesus said the "broad road"—where everybody is going—leads to "destruction."

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the enemy. He is conditioned to shoot the enemy when certain situations exist. It is suggested that when a child plays a computer game involving shooting enemies, that child is building a stimulus response which can transfer to real life. Could this lead to high school students killing their fellow students and teachers?

Viewers Want Violence!

Why is there so much violence on TV? The simple answer is, violence and sex sell products. Time to explain a show in a promotion is limited to perhaps 10 or 20 seconds, little time to explain a plot. So they do what is easiest:

- ☐ The show promotionals display violence and sex. —The viewers watch.
- ☐ Commercials often interrupt violent scenes or they are placed just before violence takes place. —Commercial gets attention, viewers keep watching.
- ☐ Viewers watch the commercial, often laced with more violence or sex.—Viewers purchase the products.

A study found that perpetrators in violent scenes go unpunished 73% of the time. Only 4% of violent programs emphasize an anti-violent theme (MediaScope 1).

Viewers want violence and sex. And the promotional experts are keenly aware of what viewers want and will provide with hardly a thought of the damage it causes—violence on the streets, at schools, workplace and home, not to mention the moral degradation caused by immoral language and scenes. It is said that sexual content grew from 56% (1997–98 TV season) to 68% in the 1999–2000 season.

A study was done in an isolated Canadian community before and after TV was brought to the area. The study found that aggression among both boys and girls increased 160% after TV was introduced. Another before-and-after study was done on two Indian communities in Manitoba with similar results.

How does viewing violent scenes on TV affect our ability to obey the Biblical command, “*cease from anger*”? Or “*be at peace among yourselves*”?

Physical effects

Normally, our eyes are continually moving back and forth and the pupils are changing as the distances of vision changes. This is not the case with TV. The eyes are fairly well fixed in one direction and the distance remains constant, severely limiting the motion of the eye. Excessive watching causes the eye to become passive. Some adults, who watched a lot of TV as children, will suffer from lazy eye.

Obesity is another concern. A 1995 report by a National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey found 11% of children between the ages of 6 to 17 were severely overweight, more than doubling this problem in the 60s. The main cause was determined to be inactivity due to watching TV and a large number of junk food ads shown during

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TV is 3T—

In response to a survey we conducted during the early part of this year, we received the following comments from our subscribers and website visitors. All comments are anonymous.

I threw the one-eyed devil out the back door.

Commercials disgust me. They are too provocative and not at all child friendly.

TV can be a big time killer. It's best not to watch it, program(s) are not suitable. Also, it's becoming more difficult to find good quality viewing! TV can interfere in one's daily activities if one would let it. It's best to do Bible Study or memorization or some other activity.

I hardly watch. Don't have cable. My greatest adventures are in reading and knowing the Bible and trying to do it! Act on it!

I try not to watch too much TV as it can reinforce immoral behavior. We do not have cable TV either. It's too immoral. Public broadcasting TV is even getting worse. You must be selective when watching TV.

We limit our TV to non-network viewing. We feel that the advertising does the greatest damage to people. The advertising promotes materialism.

The sexuality on TV is so graphic. I hesitate to even let the children watch wholesome shows because of the disgusting commercials. I usually try to have plenty of family oriented tapes on hand to encourage healthy choices.

Trash, Trouble & Trivia

I feel there are too many sexually charged shows and advertisements on TV. If I had teenagers, I would feel embarrassed to sit alongside them while watching. Too much violence, too!

TV is not a part of our lives...

TV is 3T—Trash, Trouble, and Trivia.

We don't have any television at our house. We don't have children, but when we do, that won't change. TV has way too many questionable and ungodly things on it, we decided it kills us spiritually and it takes away from the time we have to spend together.

I really don't enjoy TV as much as I once did. Since coming to Christ I've honestly lost interest in most programs and movies. TV lacks quality and is a problem I believe for everyone. Most don't even know the effects the programs have on our thought life. That at least was the case for me, and I've learned over the years that the more I can discipline myself to stay away from it, the better I am overall spiritually and emotionally.

I hate television. My husband watches it nightly. I endure the news and remove myself from the environment. I pray it would blow up in smoke.

We got rid of TV when our children were under six, and now they are over 40. Neither had ever had TV in their homes. One is president of a corporation, the other is the wife of a pastor.

We have no children, but if we did, they wouldn't watch TV.

TV is negative: crime, poverty, accidents, war, violence, immorality, society in decadency, negative political campaigns etc., etc... Some people only believe what is said on TV. Very sad.



My suggestion is to store it. Treat the television like the lawn mower, the shop vac, or any other household item. Put it in the closet and keep it there until you have a specific use for it.

Saturday morning cartoons.

"The easiest way to reduce inactivity is to turn off the TV set," according to William H. Deitz, pediatrician and obesity expert at Tufts University School of Medicine.

Our young people will be our future leaders—scientists, teachers, protectors, the directors of every nation. The outlook is bleak because:

- 1 Our culture does not accept or promote belief in God.
- 2 Prayer and non-discriminatory worship in public schools has been defined as a violation of one's rights. Freedom of religious expression is illegal in public. But we can display sexually explicit material, flood the media with violent crimes, use abusive language, and play the worst of music.
- 3 Social ethics, which has largely been redefined as situation ethics, does not allow for morals governed by absolute right and wrong. How does this affect our children when we leave them to the training of the TV?

Television promotes an immoral and meaningless life, short-term and many times useless values, accountability primarily to oneself.

Biblical instruction promotes a moral life of hope, eternal values, and accountability to God (See chart on page 16).

TV affects children's health, likes and dislikes, pastime activities, language, gestures, and interest in family and outdoor activities. One study showed that 54% of 4 to 6 year-olds preferred TV when asked to choose between watching TV and spending time with their fathers. Is your child one of these?

Who has control of your child, you or TV?

Summary

While this article has been primarily about the effects of television on children, there is no doubt that it has a profound effect on adults as well. Our nation, and other nations having access to TV in the homes, have become more immoral, less caring for others, more angry on the road, less productive, less educated, more impatient.

But TV is only part of the total picture. Computer games, especially those involving violence or sex, internet sites promoting or displaying sex, violence and abusive language also contribute to the problem. One study suggests that video games may be even worse than TV in causing the user to be more violent because the person watching TV is somewhat passive, but one who interacts with the video games becomes, in a sense, a "part of the game." Violence which is associated with the suffering or death of another individual, is associated with pleasure. This habitual response

TELEVISION PROMOTES...

Hate and suspicion

Sadness

Hostility

Harshness

Lust

Restlessness, Impatience

Intolerance of others

Desire to harm others

Uncertainty, Apprehension

Disrespect for authority

Short-term "fun" and excitement-based expectations

Situation ethics with little thought of long-term consequences

Self-pity

Fear, panic

BIBLE INSTRUCTION PROMOTES...

Love: "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, and it is not proud. Love is not rude, is not selfish, and does not get upset with others. Love does not count up wrongs that have been done. Love is not happy with evil but is happy with the truth. Love patiently accepts all things. It always trusts, always hopes, and always remains strong." (1 Cor. 13:4-7 NCV)

Happiness: "Behold, how happy is the man whom God reproves, So do not despise the discipline of the Almighty." (Job 5:17 NASB-95)

Peace: "You, Lord, give true peace to those who depend on you, because they trust you." (Isa. 26:3 NCV)

Gentleness: "Are there those among you who are truly wise and understanding? Then they should show it by living right and doing good things with a gentleness that comes from wisdom." (James 3:13 NCV)

Satisfaction: "But godliness with contentment is great gain." (1 Timothy 6:6 NIV)

Patience: "But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing." (James 1:4)

Longsuffering: "Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love." (Ephesians 4:2 NLT)

Goodness: "But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you." (Matthew 5:44)

Faith: "Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The Lord, the Lord, is my strength and my song; he has become my salvation." (Isa. 12:2 NIV)

Respect for authority. "...in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself." (Philippians 2:3)

"...accept the authority of the elders. And all of you, serve each other in humility." (1 Peter 5:5 NLT)

"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities." (Romans 13:1)

Consideration for lasting values: "We must not become tired of doing good. We will receive our harvest of eternal life at the right time if we do not give up." (Galatians 6:9 NCV)

Awareness of consequences of one's action: "For we are each responsible for our own conduct. Don't be misled. Remember that you can't ignore God and get away with it. You will always reap what you sow!" (Galatians 6:5, 7 NLT)

Gratitude: "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (1 Thess. 5:18 NRSV)

Calm, Peace: "Great peace have those who love your law; nothing can make them stumble." (Psalm 119:165 NRSV)

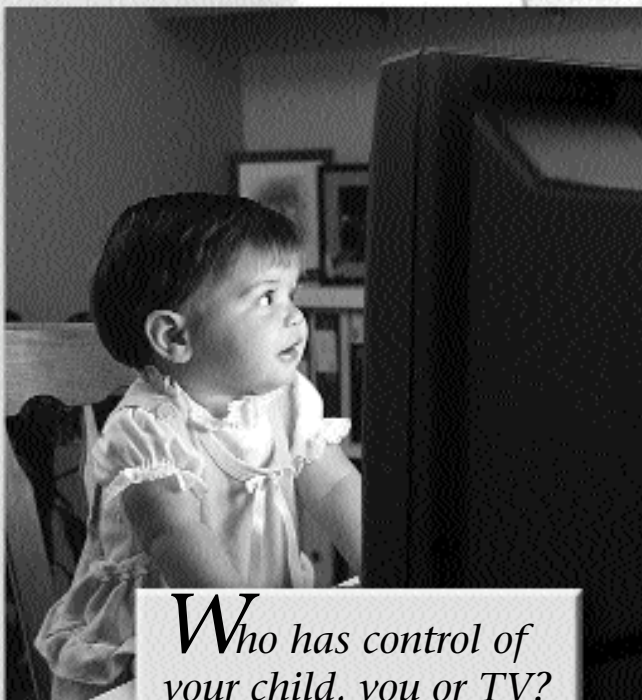
Let It Go

If the favor of God and a place in His kingdom is our goal, it is time to let go of the things that are drawing us away from God and into the world. It is time to grow in the Lord, to take control of our television viewing, and be the master not the slave. We don't need anything to slow us down in the spiritual race. In the words of Hebrews, *"Let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily hinders our progress. And let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us"* (Heb. 12:1 NLT). *"Strip off every weight"* and *"run"*! One of those weights is our attachment to this world and its thinking—which is promoted by television.

But don't expect to win a popularity contest by cutting back on television. Don't expect your children to be excited by the move to cut back or go without TV. Neighbors may ridicule. The children's school friends may taunt. Expect opposition—but expect longer term desirable results as well! A few friends may encourage you, and may even be inspired to take up the challenge. Seek God in prayer as you say "no" to TV. Listen to Paul's words to Titus: *"For the grace of God, which can save every man, has now become known and it teaches us to have no more to do with godlessness or the desires of this world but to live, here and now, responsible, honorable and God-fearing lives"* (Titus 2:11–12 Phillips).

Runners in a race cannot carry excess baggage and expect to win. How can we expect to win the spiritual race if our minds are filled with the entertainments and distractions of this world? We need to pull every item out of our spiritual backpack and justify it before putting it back in. Then once we have it packed, we want to lock it, so that nothing extra can get in.

How important are our goals of thinking and acting like Jesus? Remember, we are seeking a prize—eternal life! In what way does TV help us to be like Jesus? What is more important? Honest answers to these questions should help us to keep the enemy out! ♦



*Who has control of
your child, you or TV?*

could be translated to one's response in real life.

If you are one taken in by political jargon, hear what Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, former West Point Psychology Professor and former Army Ranger, had to say to a group of predominately medical/health professionals:

"Politicians are taking credit for your work," because advances in medicine...not better laws...were lowering the murder rate. According to Col. Grossman's research, there has been a marked increase in youth violence about 15 years after television was introduced into any society, not just that of the United States.

It is argued that the adverse effects of TV, movies, games, etc. are debatable, and thus many will dismiss any negative information as unreliable. Have you thought about this seriously? Yes, there is much debate, likely for two reasons:

1) Media entertainment, movies and interactive games are part of life for millions. Media is used to baby sit the children, an escape from daily routine, a means of relaxation and excitement.

2) It is a multibillion dollar industry. Is there any wonder why the debate goes on and on? Remember, the debate about smoking went on for years. But it is now conclusive: smoking is a serious health hazard.

Others will have you believe that there is nothing wrong with the media, movies and interactive games, or, "My habit hurts only me." But it does affect more than just you. It cheapens everything around you. Your actions and reactions, influenced by these "visual devices," are felt by those with whom you have interactions. It degrades you, your family and your community, and unfits you to worship your Creator.

What will you do about it? ♦

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Awesome
Designs

I Love to Sing!

Four largest Photos by Eric Richoz
of Calgary, Alberta, Canada

If you ever need a testimony to our wonderful Creator, call on me—I sing for Him! Every day. Fall, winter, spring, summer, I love to practice my high-pitched melodies: *chirp, chirp, trrrrrrrrrrrllll...chirp, chirp, trrrrrrrrrrrllll...chirp, chirp, trrrrrrrrrrrllll!* (I'm only being modest when I tell you my Creator gave me a lovely voice.) In fact, on a cold winter day, mine may be the only bird song you hear.

But you may have to do some trekking to hear me. Yes, I like the mountains of southeast Alaska or Western Canada, where the air is clear and the rushing, turbid streams are sparkling and pure. Strange, I have a passion for *pure* water. If it becomes polluted, *I move!*

Why do I sing so much? When I tell you more about myself, you will realize I have a whole lot to sing about!

Do you want to know who I am? I belong to a plucky clan, they call us the "dippers." Why? Because we are always "dipping" with our legs, bobbing up and down, up and down, up and down, like a mechanical wind-up toy. And fast—like 40 to 60 times a minute. Wherever you see me, I'm bobbing. Standing on a rock in the middle of the stream, I'm bobbing. Why? People have done a lot of guessing, but...well, we say it's a secret between our Great Creator and us.

I have several modes of travel. I can walk, or fly, or dive. I especially like to walk on the streambed, completely submerged, or skim just above the surface of the water, then suddenly dive into foaming eddies. The water is my first love—probably because most of the things I like to eat live there. But it must be moving swiftly. No still, placid waters for me!

You see, my Creator gave me just the right equipment to navigate the shallow, rushing streams. Even my toes are just right. I don't know whether you've noticed, but they are not webbed but elongated, with sharp claws, just right for gripping the rocks in the stream. In fact, *I have* to grip the rocks when I am under water—or I would bob right up to the top! And if there are any fish eggs or larva hidden under a rock, I have just the right kind of beak to reach under the rock and suck them up. *Yum yummmmm!*

I imagine you like to swim, and maybe some of you even like to dive. Now may I ask: do you ever get water in your nose when you dive? Well, I don't, because my Creator designed me with nasal flaps. I don't even have to think about it. When

I dive, the flaps cover my nostrils so that no water enters my air passages. Isn't that pretty wonderful?

And do you know how I swim under water? Again, I must sing to my Creator. He designed my wings to lift me into the air, or I can open them part way and they become powerful flappers propelling me through the water.

I expect, too, that when you swim underwater, you like to open your eyes. I do also. In fact, I have to see if I am going to find food—which is my reason for swimming underwater. Well, here again I feel like singing the praises of my wonderful Creator. He designed me with a third eyelid that has a clear lens in it. When I use that third eyelid, my eye is "closed," yet I can see! You don't believe it? Yes, I can see when my eyes are fully protected from the water. Isn't that amazing? But don't give me any credit—this is the work of my wonderful Designer!

Suppose I'm under water, and I need more oxygen. Again, my Designer thought of this need. I can actually block the blood supply (don't think I learned it on my own!) to my non-vital tissues. This way I have extra red blood cells to supply me with stored oxygen. All I have to do is need it—and there it is!

Now when you go swimming, you put on special clothes that shed water easily. What do I do? Imagine if my thick coat of feathers got soaked every time I went for a swim! Wouldn't I be a sorry sight? I would have to spend most of my time lying on a rock, trying to dry out! And in the winter...I'd freeze to death! Well, my Creator thought of this in advance and made a way for me to waterproof myself! Yes, I have a large gland above my tail that makes oil. In fact, He gave me ten times more oil than the average songbird my size! Every little while I spread this oil over my "outer garment," and—I'm waterproofed! It's another reason to keep on singing His praise! *Chirp, chirp, trrrrrrrrrrrllll!*

Now if I guess right, when you go swimming you like the water to be fairly warm. Well, that's a luxury we dippers don't have in the high altitudes of the north. Most of our swimming is in very, very cold—even icy—water. I can hear you say "*Brrrrrr!*" Well, here again I feel like singing. My awesome Designer made me *weatherproof* as well as *waterproof*. Underneath my heavy outer plumage I

have a thick, comfy layer of down, similar to that of the ducks, to insulate me against the cold. Wasn't that thoughtful of Him? And when it gets really cold—like 40 degrees below zero—I can speed up my body metabolism rate by as much as 300%! (That's like turning up the furnace.) So, even when it's the coldest, I am

Living close to rushing waters, the dipper is an expert diver (and can walk along the streambed as easily as on land.)

still warm and cozy inside. Pretty wonderful, isn't it?

When it comes time to build the nest, both of us (my husband and I) work together. Have you ever seen one of my nests? I challenge you to find one without risking your neck (I've heard that some people have). We intend to keep our nests totally hidden and inaccessible—like up under overhanging rocks or roots on the edge of a cliff, or up under a bridge, or in behind a waterfall. Yes, we believe in "safety first"!

For materials we use moss and grass. The finished nest is large, about a foot in diameter. We take turns sitting on the eggs, and when it comes time to feed the little chicks, again we work together. Even the chicks cooperate. Each little chick comes forward to get its food and after it is fed, retreats to the back of the nest, allowing the next one to come forward. Yes, we believe in working together.

What do we like to eat? We like minnows, larvae, insects, and such. One of my favorite foods is salmon eggs. Now we have been accused of damaging the salmon population. But my Creator knew better than that. He arranged that we eat the salmon eggs which will not hatch anyway. Maybe He even provided them special for us!

So what do you think? Shouldn't I go on singing, singing, singing every day, all winter long? Of course I should. And so should you. The same Designer who made me has a lot more for you. Why not praise Him! *Chirp, chirp, trrrrrrrrrrrllll! Chirp, chirp, trrrrrrrrrrrllll!* ♦

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FAITH in Action

Bible Text: Acts 12:1-3 NIV

- 1 It was about this time that King Herod arrested some who belonged to the church, intending to persecute them.
- 2 He had James, the brother of John, put to death with the sword.
- 3 When he saw that this pleased the Jews, he proceeded to seize Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Did you know...

Who was Herod the king?

The New Testament mentions several Herods, all of whom were related either by blood or by marriage. In Matthew 2, at the time of Jesus' birth, a Herod known as Herod the Great was reigning in Judea. Cruel beyond description, he ordered the massacre of all children under age 2 in and around Bethlehem. This same Herod was responsible for the murder of his own son, his mother, his wife, and others in his family, because he felt that they threatened his political career.

Herod the Great had a grandson who also took the name of Herod, and this was the Herod who killed James. When this Herod was a child and his grandfather Herod the Great murdered the child's father, his mother, to secure his safety, sent the child to Rome, where he grew up with the members of the imperial families. After he became of age, he was given the title of king and the dominion of southern Syria. Later he was placed over Galilee, Perea, and eventually Judea.

by RUTH E. SISSON

HEROD PERSECUTES THE CHURCH

 READ ACTS 12:1-12

The time of the early Church was a time of high religious fervor. The Apostles of Jesus, endowed by Jesus with the power of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2), were using every opportunity to tell others about Jesus' life, death, and most of all His glorious resurrection and coming Kingdom. It was a strong wave of missionary activity, and as a result new converts were streaming into the Church. Meanwhile the Church leaders were doing their utmost to teach and instruct the growing body of believers.

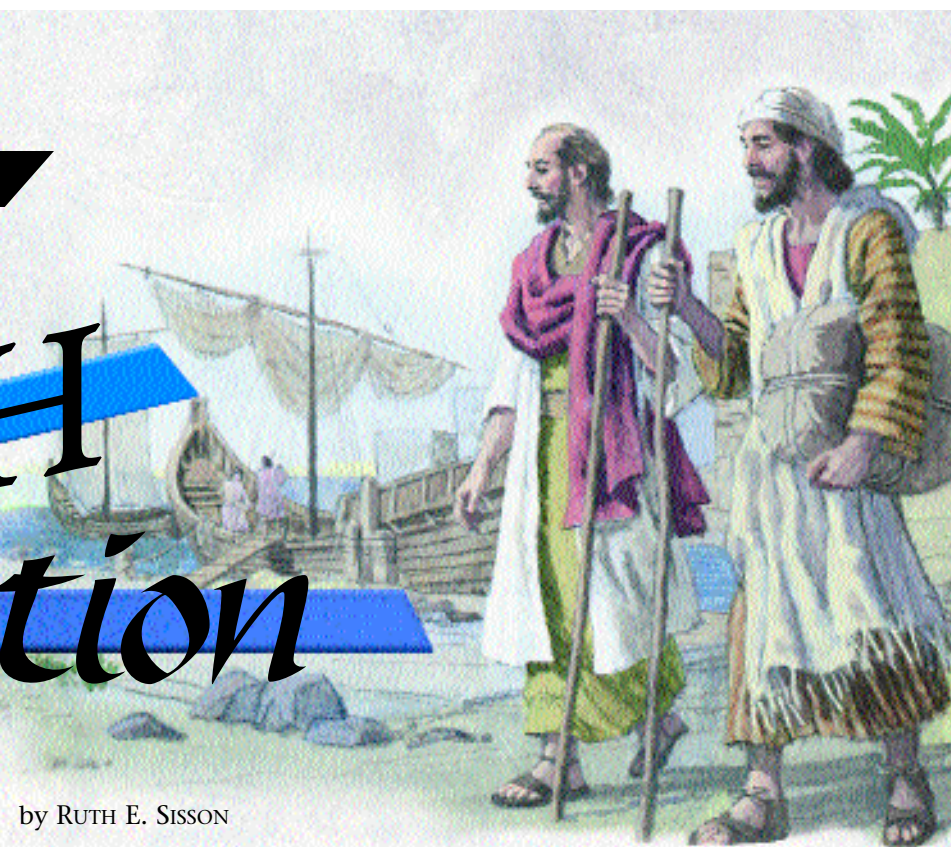
On the other side of the picture was the dark specter of persecution. Less than 20 years since Jesus' ministry, there had already been several significant persecutions, mostly instigated by over-zealous Jews. In Acts 4, when Peter and John preached about the resurrection of Jesus, the Sadducees were disturbed and laid hands on them, and imprisoned them (Acts 4:1-3). When the authorities examined them and let them go, almost immediately (Acts 5:17-18), Peter and John were again imprisoned.

Though they were miraculously released, the opposition was not ready to give up. Their next target was a man named Stephen, "full of faith and power," who did "great wonders and signs among the people." This time the Jewish leaders hired mischief makers to stir up the multitude, which they did effectively, and Stephen was seized and brought before the council, where he gave his defense and was stoned to death by a furious mob (Acts 6:8; 7:60).

Almost immediately, a zealous young Jew named Saul, who had been present at Stephen's stoning, started his own campaign of persecution. The Bible tells us he "made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison" (Acts 8:3).

His campaign ended abruptly when Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus, and for a short while the young Church had peace. But not for long.

The next fomentor of trouble was Herod the king, who suddenly arrested and executed James the brother of John. Though this might appear as



persecution from another source (Roman authority), Herod's actions were still motivated by the Jews, whom he wished to please. Plus, his wife was of Jewish descent.

1. What was Herod's second step in his move toward persecuting the Christians? (12:2-3) _____
2. What was his reason for taking this step? (12:3) _____
3. What season of the year did Herod choose to make this arrest? (12:3) _____
4. Why might he have chosen this season? _____
5. What indicates that Peter was heavily guarded? (12:4) _____

In arresting Peter during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Herod was moving strategically. A shrewd politician, he knew that during that week more Jews were in Jerusalem than usual, and his move could make a greater impact on more people—and win him additional political support. He was taking a step that he knew would please those who elected him and would secure his own position.

Herod was not acting on any good motive. To him, the Christians were defenseless nobodies, and therefore could make no backlash. He never thought of the possibility of having to reckon with their God (Acts 12:17).

The End of A Long Week

It must have been a long and difficult week for Peter, an active and fervent brother, to be confined in prison, counting down the days to his death.

6. What weapon did the Church use against Herod's imprisonment of Peter? (12:5) _____
7. How do we know God heard them? (12:7) _____

Peter was not forgotten by his people. We read that *"Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church"* (12:5).

When the week was spent, and it was the last night before he was to be brought out and executed, the Christians were bombarding the gates of heaven with their prayers.

Now imagine this scene. Peter had been in prison all week. The order for execution had been signed. The date was set, Peter was to die the next day. Was he trembling with fear, afraid of what might happen to him? Was he pacing the floor, muttering curses and oaths under his breath? None of it! Peter was sleeping. The night before he was to be executed, he ate his supper (if he got any), committed himself to the keeping of his Heavenly Father, and lay down to sleep. What total trust!

How could he do it? His life was in the hands of One so much greater than he, that Peter had no fear. Whatever God wanted for him was his will also.

Can't we imagine that this in itself sent a message to the soldiers who were keeping him? For surely this was not the normal course for a prisoner to take. Peter knew absolutely that God's power was greater than Herod's, and that Herod could not take his life unless God signed the edict. And if God let Peter die, he would not be forgotten. For his reward was laid up in heaven, where no Herod or anyone else on earth could touch it.

Now picture Peter, sound asleep. Suddenly there is an angel in the room, his light filling the cell. He shakes Peter to awaken him. Peter stands up, dazed,

Bible Text: Acts 12:4-12 NIV

4 After arresting him, he put him in prison, handing him over to be guarded by four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring him out for public trial after the Passover.

5 So Peter was kept in prison, but the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

6 The night before Herod was to bring him to trial, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and sentries stood guard at the entrance.

7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared and a light shone in the cell. He struck Peter on the side and woke him up. "Quick, get up!" he said, and the chains fell off Peter's wrists.

8 Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." And Peter did so. "Wrap your cloak around you and follow me," the angel told him.

9 Peter followed him out of the prison, but he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening; he thought he was seeing a vision.

10 They passed the first and second guards and came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself, and they went through it. When they had walked the length of one street, suddenly the angel left him.

11 Then Peter came to himself and said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating."

12 When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.



Why Peter?

Why did Herod imprison Peter?
Perhaps he thought he would get even more favor from the Jews by taking Peter, because Peter had recently put Gentiles on a par with Jews—an abominable act in the eyes of any good Jew.

Did Peter think about this possibility when the Lord told him to go to the house of the Gentile Cornelius? If he did, he immediately put it out of his mind because he was intent on obeying God. He could have stopped to think, how will this affect me? But Peter's obedience to God meant more to him than anything else. Remember, it was Peter who had said, *"We ought to obey God, rather than men"* (Acts 5:29).



Insight

Why?

Why did God allow James to be executed and miraculously deliver Peter?

We are not told the answer to this question. God does not always reveal His reasons. We only know that He has long-range plans, and that for those who love Him all things work together in a pattern for good (Rom. 8:28). Our part is not to know the reason, but only to say as did Jesus *"Thy will be done."* God's promise for believers then was the same as it is now: Sufficient life in which to complete the work which God knows we will do (1 Tim. 4:8). James and John were the first two Jesus called to follow Him. James' career was perhaps the shortest of any of the Apostles, and John's the longest. But their eternal rewards will be equal, for both were accepted for a place in the eternal temple (see Rev. 21:14).



Did you know...

In Mary's House

Mary, the aunt of Barnabas (Col. 4:10), was a key helper in the Jerusalem Church. Just as Barnabas had put his property at the disposal of the Church, so his aunt opened her house to be the meeting place of the brethren.

Peter seems to have had a special connection with this family, because he affectionately calls Mary's son Mark *"my son"*. Mark was later the author of the Gospel that bears his name (1 Pet. 5:13).

Bible Text: Acts 12:13–17 NIV

13 Peter knocked at the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door.

14 When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!"

15 "You're out of your mind," they told her. When she kept insisting that it was so, they said, "It must be his angel."

16 But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and saw him, they were astonished.

17 Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet and described how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the brothers about this," he said, and then he left for another place.

not knowing whether it is a vision or for real. His chains fall off, the door opens, and the angel leads Peter out to safety.

8. When did Peter realize he had been delivered? (12:9) _____

It all fitted so well into Peter's dreams, that Peter wasn't sure it was for real! And then the angel was gone. No greeting, no farewell, nor any instructions as to what Peter should do or where he should go. The angel left all that to Peter's common sense. He simply did what Peter could not do, and left.

9. What was Peter doing when an angel of the Lord suddenly stood by him? (12:6) _____

10. What did the angel tell Peter to do? (12:8) _____

11. How long did the angel accompany Peter? (12:10) _____

12. What was Peter's reaction? (12:11) _____

The obvious thing for Peter to do was to make contact with his Church family. And so he made his way to the house of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where believers were gathered (12:12).

THE PRAYER MEETING



READ ACTS 12:13–17

The Scriptures tell us that a large prayer meeting was convened in Mary's house. This being the last night before Peter was to be executed, many of the believers were spending the night in solemn prayer.

And while they were still praying, Peter knocked at the gate.

Just picture this: The room is filled with earnest believers, solemnly praying, when a young sister named Rhoda springs to her feet. Her sharp young ears have heard a knock at the gate. She dashes out to the outer entrance, toward the insistent knocking, her heart pounding with every step. Could it be Herod's soldiers, or a messenger with bad news? Suddenly she stops dead in her tracks. She recognizes the voice of Peter! Overjoyed, she races back to tell the unbelievably good news. "Peter is at the gate! Peter is at the gate!" Can't we picture their faces as they all look at Rhoda in total disbelief? What has happened to the young sister? Has she lost her mind? Rhoda insists that it *is* Peter, and persuades a couple of the bravest to go with her and see for themselves.

Here they are, praying for his release; God had already granted it, and—it was too good to be true!

Rhoda's report is confirmed. They let Peter in, and he follows them to the room where all are gathered.

Imagine the hub-bub in that prayer meeting, as Peter enters and hurriedly tells about his miraculous deliverance! Yes, their prayers had brought about a miracle!



But the meeting is brief, as Peter feels he must leave Jerusalem for a safer region.

13. Whom did Peter tell them to inform about his deliverance? (12:17) _____

14. What do we know about this man? _____

The Bitter End of Pride

Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 15:7 that the risen Christ made a special appearance to James. This may have been for a very specific reason. And perhaps at that point, James promised Jesus that he would follow until he died. From that point forward, this half brother of Jesus seems to be an active, dedicated brother and leader of the Christians. It may well be that he would not believe Jesus was the long awaited Messiah, but when he saw Him die and be resurrected, there was no way *not* to believe. And the change in James may well have influenced many others to follow likewise.

We can't leave this bit of narrative without observing the reaction back at the prison cell Peter had left vacant. Imagine the consternation of the soldiers when they realized Peter was gone! Apparently they were not aware of the angel's visit, apparently they did not see the light, or hear the gates opening and closing. It was all a great mystery. Perhaps they did not know they had fallen asleep. Peter's disappearance seemed impossible,

but it was real. The Bible says *"there was no small stir among the soldiers of what had become of Peter"* (Acts 12:18).

Ruthless, cruel Herod had the last word by ordering all of them executed. Then he went to enjoy himself at the seaside resort in Caesarea.

Just as Herod was riding the crest of the wave of his success, and giving a speech in honor of himself, and the people were shouting *"It is the voice of a god, and not of a man,"* the judgment of God descended abruptly. We read, *"The angel of the Lord struck him, because he did not give glory to God and he was eaten by worms and died."* What an end to a moment of human glory!

Was this the same angel of the Lord who had released Peter from prison? Was this angel perhaps asked to tarry on planet Earth just long enough to depose and punish the wicked ruler who had killed James and imprisoned Peter? Was the angel instructed to strike him just at that high moment when he was admiring himself, and congratulating himself, and parading up and down before his people?

God always has the last word. Herod had gone too far. He had crossed the boundary between God's mercy and His wrath. And it was a bitter end.

"And he was eaten of worms, and he died." Apparently his death followed some five pain-wracked days. We can be sure that the finest physicians were summoned, but no human skill could prevail against the power of God. Suddenly Herod realized he was a man, and not a god.

15. What was the effect of Herod's death on the Church? (12:24) _____

Herod might try to destroy the Church, but the opposite happened. We read in the next verse, *"The word of God grew and multiplied."*

Just at this same time, Barnabas and Saul were packing for their first missionary journey, and young Mark was asking his cousin Barnabas if he could go with them. It was an exciting hour in the early Church, with many glorious chapters yet to be written. ♦

to be continued

Bible Text: Acts 12:18-25 NIV

18 In the morning, there was no small commotion among the soldiers as to what had become of Peter.

19 After Herod had a thorough search made for him and did not find him, he cross-examined the guards and ordered that they be executed. Then Herod went from Judea to Caesarea and stayed there a while.

20 He had been quarreling with the people of Tyre and Sidon; they now joined together and sought an audience with him. Having secured the support of Blastus, a trusted personal servant of the king, they asked for peace, because they depended on the king's country for their food supply.

21 On the appointed day Herod, wearing his royal robes, sat on his throne and delivered a public address to the people.

22 They shouted, "This is the voice of a god, not of a man."

23 Immediately, because Herod did not give praise to God, an angel of the Lord struck him down, and he was eaten by worms and died.

24 But the word of God continued to increase and spread.



"Tell James..."

We are not told where Peter went, or what he did next, but his final instruction was to tell the news to James, the half-brother of Jesus (Acts 12:17).

All we know about James the brother of Jesus from the gospels is that His brothers did not believe in Him (John 7:5), and they actually thought that He was out of His mind (Mark 3:21).

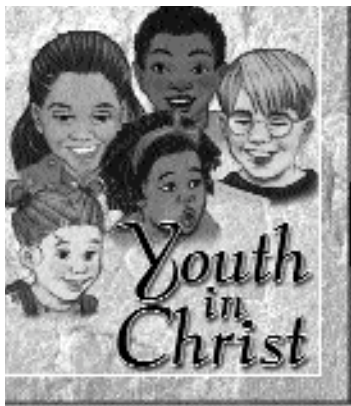
But after Jesus' resurrection the picture changed. In the book of Acts, we find "Jesus' brothers," presumably James and Judas, among those who were gathered together, waiting for the fulfilling of Jesus' promise of power (Luke 24:49, Acts 1:8, 13-14). At the council in Jerusalem, James was taking the leadership in resolving the differences between Jewish and Gentile believers. And in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul mentions James as one of the brethren to whom the Lord appeared after His resurrection (1 Cor. 15:7). James was also the author of the New Testament book bearing His name.



Insight

"A moment of glory."

Josephus suggests that the occasion was the birthday of the emperor, and life in Caesarea stopped for the festival. On the second day of the festival, Herod entered the theater, apparently dressed in a robe of silver cloth that glistened in the sun. It was a high moment of glory.



INPUT/OUTPUT

What goes in is what comes out.

Glenda was upset with herself. She couldn't remember ever using bad words before. But lately whenever things didn't go her way, the first thing that came to her mind was terrible, foul language. One evening as Glenda was helping her mom do the dishes, she dropped a glass and broke it. Out slipped a swear word.

Mom looked at her in shock! "Why, Glenda! Whatever has gotten into you?"

Glenda was so embarrassed she felt like crying. "I—I don't know! I know it isn't right, but lately I can't seem to control what I say."

Mother was quiet for a moment. "Honey, sounds to me like you're being programmed wrong."

"What do you mean?" asked Glenda.

"Well, do you remember the saying, 'garbage in—garbage out.'?"

"Yes," Glenda answered. "It's like the computer song Noah's class sang." Glenda tapped her foot and sang, "Input, output, What goes in is what comes out. / Input, output—That is what it's all about. / Input, output—Your mind is a computer whose / Input, output Daily you must choose."

"Exactly!" smiled Mom. 'What goes in is what comes out.' So how has YOUR mind been programmed lately? What have you been reading? What about your TV viewing? or the talk at school? Where are you hearing those bad words? Non-Christian talk is everywhere. What you let into your mind will eventually come out in your speech. If you read the wrong kind of literature, watch TV programs with foul language and go with people who swear, that's the way you are programming your mind."

"Oooh," said Glenda thoughtfully. "I don't want garbage in my mind."

At school Shawna is my best friend,

and she often uses bad words."

"That is the kind of company you want to avoid. You don't have to go with her, do you?"

"No, it's just that she always thinks of lots of 'fun' things to do. But I guess it would be better to skip the fun if there is a bad influence," mused Glenda thoughtfully. "I can't imagine Jesus using bad words."

"That's the idea," Mom said, smiling. "If you don't listen to bad words you won't be tempted to use them. You won't even think of them. It's the lesson of 'Input/Output, What goes into your mind is what comes out of your mouth.'" ♦

BIBLE VERSE:

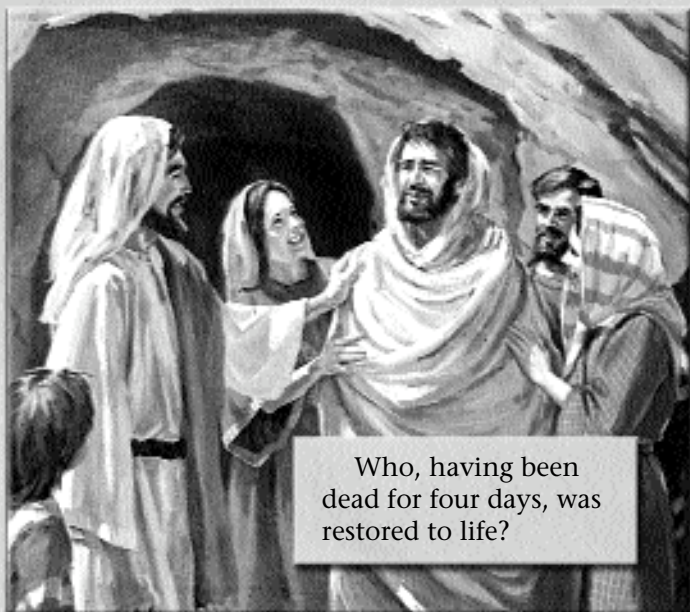
Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. (John 6:57 NIV)

THINK ABOUT IT:

Do you ever find yourself saying (or thinking) bad words? Jesus said He lived by "eating" from His Father. In the same way we "eat" by programming our minds with "Jesus," His words, His teachings. Then we can live the way He wants us to live.

LESSON:

Feed your mind good things.



Who, having been dead for four days, was restored to life?

DEATH

1. Which queen met her death by being thrown from a window and trampled by horses?
2. Which prophet lay on a dead boy and restored him to life?
3. After having his skull broken by a thrown millstone, who had his armor bearer kill him so that, "men say not of me a woman slew me"?
4. What dressmaker was restored to life by Peter?
5. Which king, when he was wounded in battle, died in his chariot?
6. Who died on a mountain top after his priestly garments were put on his son?
7. What is the last enemy to be destroyed?
8. Who fell dead after she lied about a property deal?
9. Who met his death on the gallows he had built for another man?
10. Who committed suicide by hanging because his advice was not taken?

Know
Your
Bible?

GOD'S HEROES

1. Accompanied by only an armor bearer, he climbed into an enemy garrison and killed 20 men.
2. He dared to attack vast armies of Midianites and Amalekites with only 300 men.
3. He killed two lion-like men and on a snowy day a lion in a pit.
4. During a terrible plague, in which thousands of people died, he bravely mingled with the stricken people to make atonement for them with God.
5. Aware that going before a king without his summons meant death, this person disobeyed the decree in an effort to save the Jews.
6. He disregarded a king's edict against petitioning God and continued praying even though it meant being thrown to lions.
7. Even though his life was threatened by Sanballat and Tobiah, he refused to hide in a temple behind bolted doors.
8. After Jesus' crucifixion he dared to ask Pilate for Jesus' body.
9. He fearlessly proclaimed the Gospel of Christ before small and great, Jew and Gentile.
10. He dared to face an enemy giant, armed with only a sling and stones for a weapon.

DECEPTION

1. Who told an escaping enemy captain, he would be safe in her tent, then, after giving him a drink of milk, murdered him?
2. Afraid of recognition by King Achish, who deceived him by pretending "he was out of his mind"?
3. By wearing old clothes and pretending to be ambassadors, who did the Gibeonites deceive?
4. On his wedding night, who was deceived by his father-in-law?
5. Which king angered a witch because he had tried to deceive her by disguising himself?
6. Which two men, at different times, deceived kings by telling them their wife was their sister?
7. Who pretended not to know his brothers, then accused them of being spies and threw them in jail?
8. Who sent a woman of Tekoah, disguised as a mourner, to deceive David?

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

Picture: Lazarus (John 11:39-44)

GOD'S HEROES

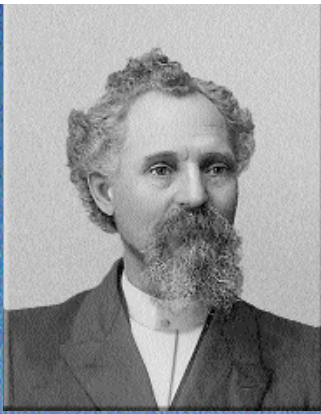
1. Jonathan (1 Sam. 14:13-14)
2. Gideon (Judges 7:7-22)
3. Benaiah (2 Sam. 23:20)
4. Aaron (Num. 16:46-49)
5. Esther (Esther 4:11-16)
6. Daniel (Dan. 6:6-13)
7. Nehemiah (Neh. 6:10-11)
8. Joseph of Arimathea (Mark 15:43)
9. Apostle Paul (Acts 9:15-17)
10. David (1 Sam. 17:4, 49)

DEATH

1. Jezebel (2 Kings 9:30-33)
2. Elisha (2 Kings 4:32-35)
3. Abimelech (Judges 9:53-54)
4. Dorcas (Acts 9:36-41)
5. Ahab (1 Kings 22:34-40)
6. Aaron (Numbers 20:28)
7. Death (1 Corinthians 15:26)
8. Sapphira (Acts 5:1-10)
9. Haman (Esther 7:9-10)
10. Ahithophel (2 Samuel 17:23)

DECEPTION

1. Jael (Judges 4:17-21)
2. David (1 Samuel 21:10-15)
3. Joshua (Joshua 9:3-9)
4. Jacob (Genesis 29:18-25)
5. Saul (1 Samuel 28:8-12)
6. Abraham (Genesis 12:11-19); Isaac (Genesis 26:7-9)
7. Joseph (Genesis 42:7-17)
8. Joab (2 Samuel 13:37-14:3)



IN MEMORY OF THE **REV. L. T. NICHOLS,**
FOUNDER OF THE MEGIDDO CHURCH
BORN OCTOBER 1, 1844

In Tribute to Our Founder

*The following are extracts from personal memoirs,
sermons and writings of the Rev. L. T. Nichols.*

ASPIRING...

Life for me began with earnest toil. In my northern Wisconsin home there were no luxuries, and few even of the necessities of life; but love lightened the toil, and contentment made happy its hours. A boy of fourteen, with only what I could earn by daily toil; an invalid father, a devoted mother, a loving sister, dependent to a great extent on my exertions, I faced the battle of life with few hours to spend in the schoolroom, and none within a college hall. While other boys were at play, I was poring over my books. Truth was the gem for which I sought—and my soul's longing cry was: "Oh, tell me where can it be found?"

A YOUTHFUL VOW

When I was a boy I loved my father and mother, but some things they did I could not agree with. They wanted me not to speak of these things so much. Mother knew I had made a vow—and it pleased her, too. I vowed to my God when only eleven years old that I would never drink one drop of liquor, nor smoke a cigar, nor take any tobacco in my mouth, that I would never commit an immoral act, nor take the name of God in vain. I did it of my own accord, no one told me to, and I have kept that vow inviolate.

A LOFTIER IDEAL...

Personal honor, worldly glory, earth's millions, were not the prize for which I labored. I wanted to be worthy of having written over me the simple epitaph: "One who was faithful to his God, and loved his fellow men."

I looked over the field of human thought and decided that of all the literature of earth, the Bible contained the most knowledge that would benefit humanity for both this life and the one to come. On the very threshold of my investigations I was met with much to appall and bewilder even an older head. Over one thousand faiths in the land, all teaching different things, and all claiming to speak the words of an infallible God, yet that very Bible teaching that its followers must be perfectly joined together in the same mind, all speaking the same things, (1 Cor. 1:10).

With such a state of affairs, I did not wonder that the world was turning infidel. I did not wonder that the inquirer after truth, bewildered by the confusion arising from jarring sects, began to doubt the infallibility of this blessed Word, and infidelity was adding thousands to its ranks. Either the Bible was Divine, the work of an infallible God, or it was the work of fallible man; there was no halfway ground upon which to stand.

THE BIBLE IS TRUE

God tells you His mercy is from eternity past to eternity future. "*The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children*" (Ps. 103:17). Could He have had mercy if there had been no one to whom He could show mercy? There have always been people to whom God could show mercy, and there always will be. There never will be a time the wheel will stop; it will always roll on and on and on. There will be millions and billions and trillions of people created yet. Would you not like to live in that time? It will be exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think. ♦





Opportunities multiply as they are seized; they die when neglected.

The strongest principle of growth lies in human choice.

Language is the apparel in which your thoughts parade before the public. Never clothe them in vulgar or shoddy attire.

*Prayer is the preface to the book of Christian living,
the girding on of the armor for battle,
the pilgrim's preparation for his journey;
and it must be supplemented by action or
it amounts to nothing.*

Dead things cannot grow. Before there can be spiritual growth there must be spiritual life.

When you have been wronged, a poor memory is your best response.

To forgive heals the wound, to forget heals the scar. May each sun find us with something accomplished by way of moral growth. We may not be able to leave for others a heritage of wealth or fame, but we can leave a shining example of character worthy of emulation.

You can't have a better tomorrow if you are thinking all the time about yesterday.

Happiness is an inside job.

A man's conscience, like the warning sign on the highway, tells him what he shouldn't do—but it does not keep him from doing it.

He who gives good advice builds with one hand; he who gives good counsel and example builds with both; but he who gives good admonition and bad example builds with one hand and pulls down with the other.

Excellence is never cheap.

Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom.

For every ounce of enthusiasm you lack, your task increases a pound.

*It takes a lot of courage
To put things in God's hands,
To give ourselves completely,
Our lives, our hopes, our plans,
To follow where He leads us,
And make His will our own;—
But all it takes is foolishness
To go the way alone.*

Nutshell *Messages*

"Hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not." Proverbs 8:33

No one's vision is ever so keen as when
he sees an opportunity to do good.

No one stands so tall as when he stoops
to lift one who has fallen.

No one can walk both sides of the
street at the same time.

No one can climb the mountain
with one step.

No one can be great without serving.

No one can build a lasting house on
the sand.

No one can find ease in walking the
transgressor's way.

No one is stronger than he thinks he is.

No one can be braver than his conscience.

No one is better than his word.

No one is right just because he
thinks he is right.

No one can learn the truth who will not con-
sider and weigh the evidence.

No one can go forward while back-stepping, or
walk straight while going in circles.