

**ALWAYS
JOYFUL?**
— PAGE 9 —

THE KIDS PAGE
Jonah on
the run
PAGE 15

» REPORT «
**TORONTO PASTORS'
CONFERENCE**
PAGE 4

Q&A
One-on-one with
Kirk Wellum
page 14



BARNABAS

BIBLICAL ENCOURAGEMENT // NEWS // CULTURE // & MORE

SUMMER 2009

SPECIAL FEATURE

PURITY IN AN IMPURE WORLD

IN A SOCIETY THAT ENDORSES SEXUAL "FREEDOM" AND EXPERIMENTATION, IT CAN BE HARD TO STAND AGAINST THE TIDE. BUT CHRISTIANS NEED TO LEARN TO BATTLE SEXUAL SIN WITH HONESTY, DECISIVE ACTION AND HOPE. PAGE 6

PRAY FOR TBS

**“Brothers
(and sisters),
pray for us.”**

—1 THESSALONIANS 5:25

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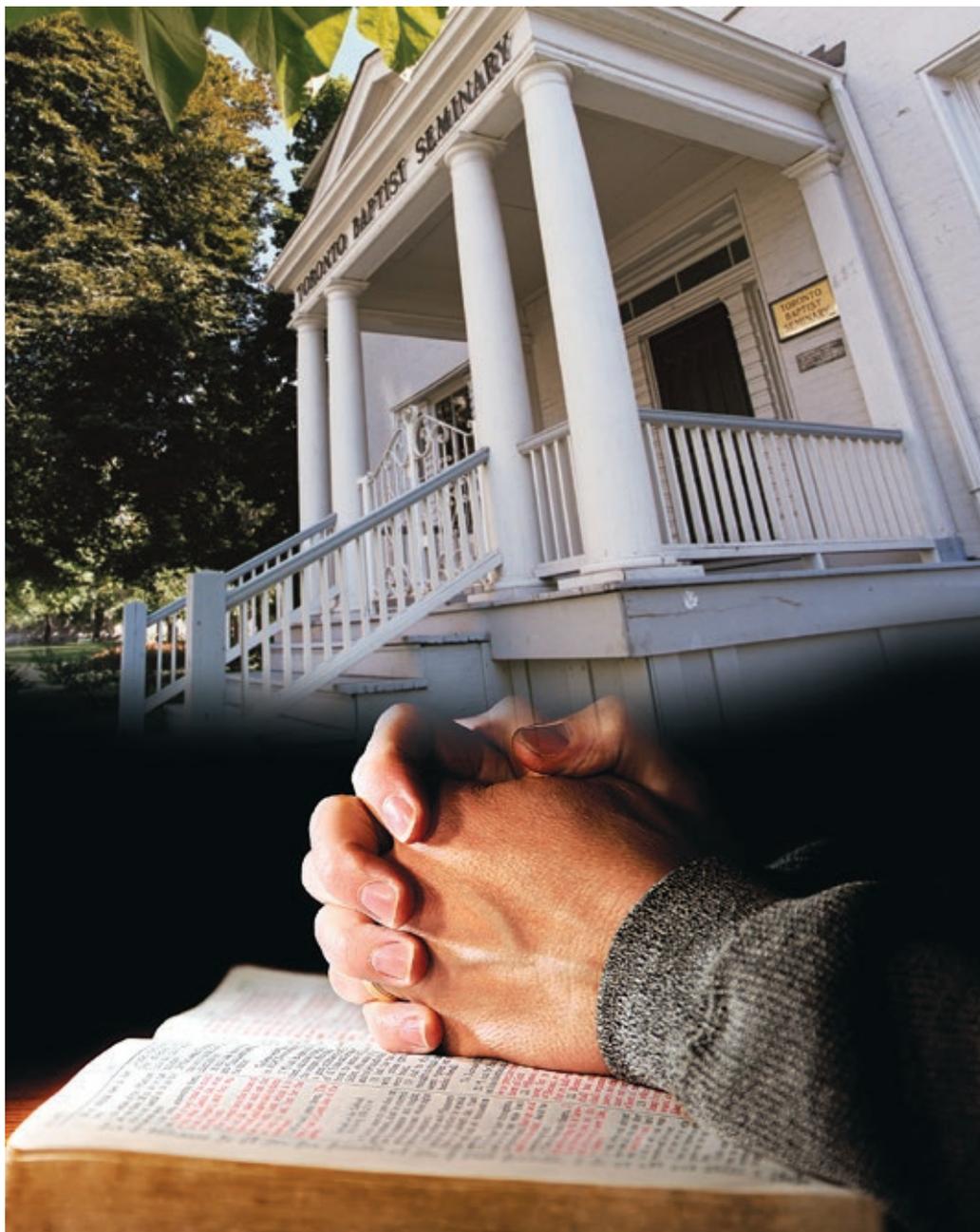
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inside

COLUMNS

- 4 **Editorial**
Hope in temptation
- 10 **Rewind**
A Christ-centred man
- 11 **Walking in the Word**
A devotional study through Hebrews 11
- 12 **Teen beat**
Turning down the world

FEATURES

6 Purity in an impure world

Battling sexual sin with honesty, decisive action and hope

BY BILL JAMES

9 The pursuit of joy

How are we to be always joyful when life is difficult?

BY ROGER FELLOWS

14 Interview

Q & A with Toronto Baptist Seminary's Kirk Wellum

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 **News & events**
Pastors' Conference, field visit, calendar
- 10 **Mixed media**
CD & DVD reviews
- 12 **The arts**
In the name of Jesus
- 13 **Off the shelf**
Great books to sink your mind into
- 15 **The kids page**
Devotional, Bible reading, word search

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www.sgfcanada.com

EDITORIAL

If the Bible is anything, it is encouraging to the believer. That may seem foreign to us. We tend to think of Scripture as “do this” and “do not do that,” ending with “you will probably sin anyway, you know, like the Israelites.” But that is not the whole Word of God, and when we discuss matters of purity, as we do in this issue of *Barnabas*, encouragement and hope must be part of our vocabulary.

I am reminded of James 1:13 as he brings up the matter of temptation: “when [not if] you are tempted.” Temptation will be part of every believer’s life. When we read James 1:13-15, we might walk away depressed and filled with hopelessness. Does all sin lead to death? Can I fight against the sinful desires that entice my heart? Sin is in our hearts and our own evil desires lead ultimately to death.

But James does not leave us defeated and expecting failure. Instead, he continues with four encouragements for holy living (James 1:16-18). First, he gives us proper perspective: Do not be deceived by sin. The battle with sin starts in our hearts, and we need to see sin for what it is.

James then tells us to remember that God is an abundant Giver who grants all that is good and perfect at any moment—including moments when temptations rage in our heart and mind. God will provide exactly what we need in the darkest

**TRUE STRENGTH
IN THE BATTLE
AGAINST
TEMPTATION IS
FOUND WHEN
WE TURN TO THE
WORD OF TRUTH**

times. So we need to pray.

In addition, we have been given the Word of truth, which, as James reminds us, was used by God when he chose to give us birth. True strength in the battle against temptation is found when we turn to the Word of truth, the Scriptures.

And finally, God promises his people that we will be a kind of firstfruits, pleasing to God. This is a far cry from an image of those defeated and beaten by sin, barely clawing their way into glory. By his grace, we will even bring him pleasure.

Perspective. Prayer. God’s Word. God’s promise. These four foundational encouragements in the battle against sin enable us once again to be conscious of “Christ in our lives” and to renew our spiritual battle—this time with great hope.

Through this second issue of *Barnabas*, we pray that God would cause those who have “given up” to “get up” once again in the strength of the Lord, with great encouragement, and to resume the battle in the power of a sovereign and gracious God. That is why we are thankful to have Pastor Bill James write a stimulating, relevant and very necessary article on purity. Read it yourself, and maybe even pass it on to one who struggles. We trust it will be the beginning, and not the end of the battle.

Our Q&A this issue is with Kirk Wellum, principal of Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College. Please continue to pray for TBS as they prepare men to preach the Word and to pastor God’s people in their daily walk and as they equip men and women to serve in local churches and foreign mission fields.

Once again, we seek to reach out to many readers with one main message—the glory of Christ. Can you know joy in pain? How can young people turn the world down when it is so attractive? When our children lay their heads on their “little pillows” what one question is good to ask of Jesus? May God strengthen you in himself! **B**

David Robinson
Associate editor



SGF NEWS

TORONTO PASTORS' CONFERENCE

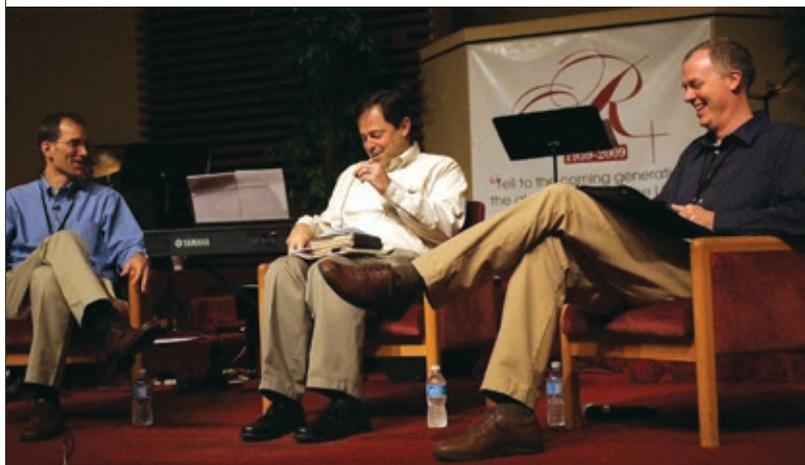
SPECIAL REPORT—June 1, 2 and 3 saw nearly 100 pastors gather in Toronto for the Toronto Pastors’ Conference. Formerly known as Sovereign Grace Pastors’ Conference, this annual event built upon the rich legacy of many years of solid, gospel-focused teaching meant to both encourage and challenge men who labour in the ministry. The pastors in attendance represented churches in five different states and provinces and across a wide spectrum of traditions and denominations. They gathered to benefit from the rich teaching ministry of keynote speakers Mark Dever and Matt Schmucker who represent both Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C., and 9 Marks Ministries. Mark Dever has authored several books (including *9 Marks of a Healthy Church* and *The Deliberate Church*) and is co-founder of Together for the Gospel.

Together Dever and Schmucker offered teaching focused on the theme of “Building healthy churches,” while special guest Carl Muller of Trinity Baptist Church, in Burlington, preached from Romans 8:28 on “Encouragement for the pastor’s soul.” The keynote speakers covered such topics as displaying the gospel, preaching biblical theology, membership and church discipline, evangelism and leadership. On the evening of June 2, local Christians were encouraged to bring their friends to hear a special evangelistic message.

The conference relied upon the gracious and extraordinary efforts of over fifty volunteers and upon the kind support of Richview Baptist Church. This facility, new to the Conference, allowed the pastors to meet together in the heart of the city of Toronto, one of Canada’s greatest mission fields. They were ably served by some well-known ministries such as Compassion Canada, Sola Scriptura and Matthias Media.

All of the messages from this conference are available online. To listen to or download the messages, or to learn about the monthly meetings of the Toronto Pastors’ Fellowship, please visit www.torontopastors.org. —Tim Challies

TPC '09: From left, Matt Schmucker, Mark Dever and Paul Martin.



PHOTOS: JULIAN FREEMAN

NAMPULA NEWS

JUNE 15, 2009—This is a report from the vibrant city of Nampula, Mozambique—a city surrounded by dramatic rock formations that stab several hundred feet into the African sky. Our first few days here were a flurry of meeting missionary colleagues, African co-workers and pastors whose names we cannot pronounce, let alone remember as we recovered from jet-lag. Since then, we have observed **Roland and Susan Seiler** (below) busily engaged in the many aspects of their work. This week the FIEL Conference, sponsored by *Editoria Fiel* was held at the SIL Centre from Tuesday to Friday. It is a much-needed ministry that supplies solid Bible teaching and practical theological training and books to the men who attend each year—and all from a Reformed perspective. Each year the conference has grown, with over 300 attending this year.



We have seen the Seilers busy in their SIL Centre activities. Roland has passed many of his technical support roles over to men he has trained, but he is still called upon daily to help troubleshoot problems and supervise the activities of these men. His main role is now financial director for SIL's Mozam-

bique branch. He has also taken on a number of smaller challenges that keep him hopping. These include negotiating with import brokers regarding goods brought into the country and investigating Mozambique's labour laws so that the Centre deals with its national employees in a just and proper way. Right now he is filling in as field director while his colleague is away in Nairobi. We have seen Susan busy in the Centre's print shop and in literature publication revisions. A highlight was to see both the new printer and gluing machines in action printing and binding portions of the *Koti* Bible. At home she works with women from the church's Sunday School. Today, she and Jackie gave a baking lesson to 25 young teens.

Another highlight for us was last Sunday when we attended a small mud-walled church on the edge of Nampula and heard the gospel faithfully preached by one of the men who works in the Centre's print shop through the week but is also pastor of this small congregation.—*Wilf & Jackie Ball*

INSIGHT FOR LIFE

This past year Trinity Baptist Church, Burlington, hosted a series of public forums intended to present a Christian perspective on current issues of interest and relevance to the general public. The "Insight for Life" seminars were held at the Burlington Library and drew crowds of between 50 and 90. Pastor Carl Muller opened the series in September discussing family and marriage. In January Dr. Stephen Swallow spoke on depression, and the series concluded with Jonathan Wellum exploring financial stewardship. Four more seminars are planned for the next year. Please pray that believers will be instructed and encouraged by what they hear and that unbelievers will be challenged to consider the inestimable value of Jesus Christ in their lives (www.trinity-baptist-church.com).—*Mark Hudson*

UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY 11, 2009

ANNUAL BEACH VOLLEYBALL TOURNAMENT

A day of fun and fellowship, hanging out on the beach or playing volleyball. For College and Career and Young Peoples. Held at Port Burwell Provincial Park Beach on Lake Erie.
amandainkster@yahoo.ca

AUGUST 22-28, 2009

CANADIAN CAREY FAMILY CONFERENCE

Questions for Jesus
Speaker: Thabiti Anyabwile
A Christian camp experience for the whole family! Recharge your spiritual life with fellowship and great ministry. Held at Braeside Camp, Paris, ON. Check website for more info.
www.careyconference.net

SEPTEMBER 17-19, 2009

SOLA SCRIPTURA'S TORONTO CONFERENCE

A celebration of the 500th anniversary of John Calvin
Featured speakers: Joel Beeke, Michael A.G. Haykin, Jeffrey Jue, Joseph Pipa, Randal Lankheet and Derek Thomas.
Cost: \$90/person
Held at Covenant Reformed Church, Toronto, ON. (Evenings open to all.)
www.sola-scriptura.ca

SEPTEMBER 20, 2009

HARVESTFEST EVANGELISTIC SERVICE

Time: 11 a.m.
At the downtown stage in Delhi, ON (Main & Church). Worship & evangelism in the open-air, including a testimony by Mark Hudson. Hosted by Bethesda Baptist Church, Delhi.
sckring@sympatico.ca

SEPTEMBER 27, 2009

TBS FALL CONVOCATION

The official kick-off to the 2009/2010 student year
Time: 6:30 p.m.
Jarvis Street Baptist Church, Toronto, ON.
www.tbs.edu

OCTOBER 22-24, 2009

NEW TESTAMENT INTRODUCTION COURSE

Professor: Allen Mickle
Includes a survey of each NT book, highlighting major theological themes and an analysis of their place in God's revelation.
Fyfe Study Centre, Sarnia
www.sovereigngrace.sarnia.com/fyfe

NOVEMBER 6-7, 2009

DAVID BRAINERD COLLEGE & CAREER RETREAT

Speaker: Richard Valade
Cost: \$25/person
A weekend of ministry, sports and fellowship.
Held at Grace Bible Church, Cambridge, ON.
janicevaneck@rogers.com

NOVEMBER 13-14, 2009

SOLA SCRIPTURA'S LONDON CONFERENCE

The Last Days
Featured speakers: Joseph Pipa, Kirk Wellum, Richard Ganz, Michael A.G. Haykin and Heinz Dschankilic.
Cost: \$50/person
Held at Hillside Church, London, ON.
www.sola-scriptura.ca

NOVEMBER 20-21, 2009

SGF GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Save the date! Plan to attend the SGF annual get-together. Hosted by Trinity Baptist Church, Burlington, ON.
www.sgfcanda.com

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PURITY

IN AN IMPURE WORLD

It's no secret that sexual sin can devastate a person's life. But often sexual sins *are* secret and so can be indulged in for a long time before "someone finds out." But God knows...and he *also* knows what's best for us. In this candid article, **BILL JAMES** looks at what it means to battle sexual sin with honesty, decisive action and hope—and embrace not only God's forgiveness but also the good habits and desires that make us useful servants in his kingdom.

In some parts of the world believers face the threat of hardship, imprisonment or even death because of their faith in Christ, but in the "free" West we enjoy a life of relative ease and tolerance. The assaults of the devil are not so much direct persecution or physical threat, but the seductive enticements of prosperity, ease and sexual sin. We live in a culture where personal comfort and enjoyment of life are at a premium. In particular, sexual experience is highly prized. The images are all around us: on the billboards, books, film and TV. Whether explicit or not, the underlying message is that sex is fun and to be enjoyed by all. The old boundaries of chastity, marriage and faithfulness are outdated and irrelevant in our world of contraception and "safe sex." Everyone is doing it, and to abstain is perverse, unnatural and even harmful. Pornography is readily available at every corner store, or even more easily on the Internet. The chat lines are open and ready to talk.

It is in this area of sexual morality where so many Christians feel the pressure of temptation, and we need supernatural strength if we are to be faithful against the floodtide of immorality. How can we stand firm?

It is a comfort to know that this struggle is not new. The apostle Peter wrote that in the first century the pagan culture of Asia regarded Christians as strange because they did not "plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation" (1 Peter 4:4, NIV*). Corinth was renowned as a centre of sexual immorality and prostitution: a real challenge to the church.

If we are looking for wisdom in this area of purity, we do well to read the apostle Paul's counsel to the church in Thessalonica. Here the local pagan cults positively encouraged promiscuity. Two of the leading pagan deities were Aphrodite, patron deity of the prostitutes, and Dionysus, the god of wine and drunkenness.

Immorality was taken for granted among the men. It was not expected that they would wait for marriage, and even in marriage mistresses and other infidelities were commonplace. So, one of the most striking changes in outlook and lifestyle for someone becoming a Christian was a change in their attitude to sexual morality. This is the first matter the apostle addresses when he writes to the church about godly living. In 1 Thessalonians 4, Paul gives four strands of teaching, which are still so helpful and relevant for us today.

WHO IS YOUR MASTER?

First, we have to decide who is our Master. Being a Christian means making a choice. Our Lord is no longer money, or sex, or pleasure, but the Lord Jesus Christ. The reason we cannot, we must not, indulge in the promiscuous culture of the world is simply because God commands us to be pure. As Paul puts it: "It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality" (1 Thessalonians 4:3). In other words, the only place we are to engage in any sexual activity is within faithful, lifelong, heterosexual marriage.

That makes a very clear testimony in contrast to the world. The pagans in Thessalonica, who didn't know God, just followed their "passionate lust" (4:5). But as those who follow Christ, we live not to serve ourselves but him. Our bodies do not belong to ourselves, to do with as we please. We are not our own; we have been bought at a price (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). The purpose of our bodies is not now for *self* indulgence, but for serving God.

It seems so obvious, but it is a vital starting point. After counseling a young man for hours over his struggles with pornography, I was surprised when finally he saw the issue so clearly, "You know, I've decided I can't do this anymore, because it's a *command*, and I've got to stop." If Jesus Christ is Lord, then that is wisdom for us all.



SHORT-TERM PLEASURE JUST DOESN'T COMPARE

Second, we need to be reminded that knowing God, enjoying fellowship with Christ, and ultimately heaven itself, is infinitely more valuable than the short-term pleasure of sexual sin. In the Garden of Eden the devil promised Eve that tasting the forbidden fruit would be everything she could desire (Genesis 3:1-7). The consequence was misery and death, for both her and Adam, and for succeeding generations.

Similarly, if we choose sexual sin we make a wreckage of our spiritual lives. We grieve the Holy Spirit who lives in us; we forfeit the enjoyment of fellowship with God and lose assurance and joy of our salvation. Paul makes this point in 1 Thessalonians 4:8: in sexual sin we are opposing the Holy Spirit himself. He makes a similar point in 1 Corinthians 6:18-19—there is a clear link between sexual sin and offending the Spirit who lives within us. In other words, immorality is one of the quickest ways to kill off your spiritual life.

One of the glories of a marriage relationship is that love is expressed exclusively toward your spouse. You love your wife or husband in a way that is shared with no one else. Clearly, if that trust is broken in adultery, then the warmth and love of the marriage is endangered. God commands exclusive faithfulness in marriage because it is a picture of the pure faithfulness in the relationship between Christ and his church. He desires our pure devotion, like a jealous husband. If we are immoral then we grieve the Spirit. Our spiritual joy, our consolation, our liberty in prayer, will be banished by our shame.

So we have a choice: Either we choose the “pleasures of sin for a short time” (Hebrews 11:25) or we choose Christ now and for eternity. We cannot have both.

IMMORALITY ENDANGERS OUR RELATIONSHIPS

Third, immorality endangers our relationship with the fellowship of the church. In 1 Thessalonians 4:6 Paul is speaking to a patriarchal culture; if a young man is behaving improperly towards a young woman, that shames the girl's father and family. Our culture may be different but the principle is the same. How can we enjoy pure and trusting Christian fellowship in the church when we are looking at and thinking of our Christian brothers and sisters with lust or impurity? The joy of Christian fellowship is that we can trust one another in love. But that depends on being able to treat one another like brothers and sisters with “absolute purity” (1 Timothy 5:2). We would not think of flirting with our immediate blood family, so we should be careful in dealings with others in the church.

If we are gripped by sexual sin, and fall into scandal, then in discipline we may be excluded from the church family altogether. Worse still, we may tear apart families, or the whole church family, by immorality. I have seen churches torn apart by the pain of struggling with the consequences of sexual sin. Is that what we want? We need to get rid of impurity.

DON'T UNDERESTIMATE SIN'S ENSLAVING POWER

Finally, Paul challenges us if we have any fear of God's judgement (1 Thessalonians 4:6b). Don't you think God knows what you are thinking, what you are doing? Do you think he is indifferent to such things? Do you imagine that there will be no consequences in divine judgement? There is coming a day when all the secrets will be revealed; when God's righteous judgement will be applied. And then how will it be for you? As far as Paul is concerned this

“...immorality is one of the quickest ways to kill off your spiritual life”

is an urgent matter—notice how he warns the Thessalonian believers. “Ah, but I am a Christian,” you say, “God will forgive me.” Perhaps you underestimate the enslaving power of sexual sin. Will you repent of these things in time? Will you want to repent? Will you be able to repent? The devil is like a roaring lion prowling around, seeking whom he might devour (1 Peter 5:8). Too many Christian lives have been shipwrecked in these perilous waters.

NOTHING IS HIDDEN FROM GOD

Essential to sexual sin is that it is all a secret; it is thought of as a private matter. The most seductive words are: “No one will ever know.” No one will discover this secret liaison. No one will find out about your habits of browsing those dubious sites on the Internet. No one will discover what magazines you buy, or what phone calls you make. But, Paul reminds us, God knows. Do we imagine perhaps that *he* does not see? Or do we pretend that, indulgently, he will not mind; he will take no action; our sin will have no consequences?

TAKE DECISIVE ACTION

So, Paul tells us that if we are faced with sexual temptation, then we need to take decisive action (1 Thessalonians 4:4). This verse has been translated in different ways; probably the best understanding is that it is a simple call to self control. We know that we live in a highly sexualized culture. There is no doubt of the temptations with which we have to live. If you are conscious that you are becoming ensnared by sexual sin, then radical action is required. Perhaps the best parallel to this verse is 2 Timothy 2:22: “Flee the evil desires of youth.” We need to be like Joseph who fled from Potiphar’s wife (Genesis 39:12). We need to take *practical* steps to stand against the floodtide of temptation.

Don’t just drift along complacently in such sin. It is time to stop watching those films, get rid of those magazines, stop browsing those websites. Job testifies that he “made a covenant with his eyes not to look lustfully at a girl” (Job 31:1). Jesus teaches us to be *radical* in avoiding temptation (Matthew 5:30). Perhaps that means personal accountability with a friend, agreeing to meet every week or two and being brutally honest about your temptations, what progress you have made and confessing your failures. Or you can install software on your computer that sends details of every website you visit to your pastor. We need to take a clear stand.

Of course, this will be a struggle. Occasionally I hear of a believer who has been suddenly and wonderfully liberated from temptation to sexual sin. But much more commonly it is a continuing and sometimes lifelong battle. We are dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit, and need to pray for enablement to keep this command of God. When we pray, we need to pray *positively*, not dwelling on the impure thoughts or fantasies that we are trying to reject (that would be a snare), but positively praying to be like Christ and obedient to him. “For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life” (1 Thessalonians 4:7).

helpful resources

PURE: SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS GOD’S WAY by Linda Marshall, Inter-Varsity Press (2005); 978-1844740901.
www.ivpbooks.com/559 provides details and downloads about how to run a course based on the book.

JUST SEX: IS IT EVER JUST SEX? by Guy Brandon, Jubilee Centre/Inter-Varsity Press (2009); 978-1844743711.

EMBRACE GOOD HABITS AND DESIRES

All of this so far has been negative. Don’t give in to temptation! But we also need to remember the positive, that our old habits of sin need to be *replaced* with new habits of godliness. We need not only to reject what is evil but also to embrace what is good. If we are cleansed from ungodliness, we will be ready for serving the Lord (2 Timothy 2:21).

Thomas Chalmers, the minister of the Tron Church in Glasgow in the nineteenth century and later professor of theology at Edinburgh University, famously preached on the “expulsive power of a new affection.” The theme of his sermon was very simple. It was that the human soul must always be striving for something. We must have a goal, an aim, an ambition in view. To strive for nothing is to be useless and hopeless. So we are all striving for *something* in life, and sadly too often our ambitions are sinful and unworthy. The answer is not to stop striving altogether, but to *replace our sinful striving with a positive ambition to know and love and serve God*. To make *him* our chief delight and the object of our desires.

Before his conversion, Saul of Tarsus was consumed by furious persecution of the church. After conversion he was consumed with a passionate desire to make Christ known. So we need to replace unworthy desires with an ambition to know Christ better and to serve God with our whole being.

We need to ask ourselves the question, where we will be spiritually in a year’s time, five years time, ten years time? Will we still be enslaved by the unworthy desires we indulge now, or will we have moved on—growing in godliness and being greatly used in the Lord’s service? Where do *you* want to be?

FRESH STARTS AND FRESH FORGIVENESS

The glorious good news of the gospel is that wherever we are now, Christ offers us the opportunity today to make a fresh start, a new beginning. Whatever we have done, however low we have fallen, however depraved we have become, there is no guilt so shameful and so black that it cannot be cleansed by the blood of Christ. The devil will try to enslave us by telling us there is no way back: “You have gone too far already” or “You are too guilty to pray, or to return to God” or “He doesn’t want you back, you’re of no use to him—you’ve failed too often.” But when the devil crushes us with guilt, we overcome him with the blood of the Lamb. Yes, we are sinners, and sinners far worse than even we know or will admit to ourselves. God sees the black darkness of the depravity of our hearts. But the same God who forgave an adulterous and murderous King David, who received back an unfaithful and denying apostle Peter, who turned around the life of the persecutor Saul of Tarsus, is the God who *right now* can make a new start in your life too.

The apostle Paul puts it so well from his own experience: “... forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead...” (Philippians 3:13). That’s what we need to do: to draw a line now on what is past and from this moment to renew our vows to serve the Lord. Sadly, we know too well that we may yet stumble and fail many times. But when we do, we will keep coming back to Christ for fresh forgiveness and grace to persevere.

Positively, we want to get busy in serving the Lord and honouring him. There is much we could and should be doing in the church and in Christian service. We could meet with Christian friends and agree to read through some good books together. We can look out for those who need hospitality or practical care. As we plunge into Christian service, straining towards what is ahead, pray that the Lord will use our new passion for Christ to replace the old unworthy desires.

May the Lord help us to keep a good testimony of purity and obedience to Christ in an impure and ungodly age. **B**

THE PURSUIT OF JOY

How are we to be always joyful when life is difficult? BY ROGER FELLOWS

You are having what seems like the worst day of your life. Everything is going wrong. You feel miserable. You can't see a way out of the problems. Obviously everyone else can see that you are miserable too. Then someone comes along and says, "Cheer up!" Do you ignore them, lash out angrily at them or just think unkind thoughts about them? You know how it feels to hear such comments. It doesn't help; in fact, it seems to make things worse. How do we handle those occasions?

What sort of advice might we get if we could talk to one of the apostles? Supposing Paul was still around. Well, he *did* have something to say to the believers at Philippi. He urges them to rejoice in *all* circumstances. Actually joy is one of the main themes in the epistle: there are 17 references to joy or a similar sentiment.

Let's look at Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: rejoice."* Paul said the same thing in chapter 3:1. If the apostle feels the need to repeat it, then perhaps we should take special note. Repetition underlines the importance of what is repeated.

So, joy is something the Lord *wants* us to experience and exhibit. However, if we're honest, most of us will have to confess that we do not show joy as much as we should. All too often, we seem to be miserable. How can we be more joyful? Not by pasting a big grin on our faces; not by being masochists; not by pretending that pain and problems don't exist; certainly not by excluding all hurtful things from our lives—that would be an impossible dream. Let's note three things that the apostle says.

1. OUR JOY IS TO BE IN THE LORD

"In the Lord"—that removes it from a dependence on circumstances. It is quite easy to be happy when things are going well: even unbelievers find that. They can be cheerful when they have a good job, when their marriage is going well and they are in good health. But things usually change quickly when things go sour. We are to rejoice *in the Lord*. Our circumstances will change, but the Lord is *unchanging*: he is always gracious,



patient, faithful and loving. If we would take time to consider his grace, his greatness, his glory, we should be filled with joy even before we come to the blessings of salvation. And what blessings those are: forgiveness, eternal life, the gift of the Spirit, adoption into God's family, to name but a few. If we are children of God and think about what is involved in that, then we should be joyful people.

2. WE OUGHT TO BE JOYFUL ALWAYS

That's what Paul says: "rejoice in the Lord *always*." You might think that it was easy for Paul to say that when he was sitting on the verandah of his Mediterranean villa. But Paul was a prisoner, chained to a Roman soldier. His life was in danger, and yet he exhorted the Philippian Christians to rejoice *always*. The apostle certainly set a wonderful example, just as he had done when he was a prisoner in Philippi. He and Silas had been beaten and then placed in the stocks in the inmost cell of the local jail; but at midnight they were praying and singing hymns (Acts 16:25). That doesn't mean they didn't feel the pain from their flogging, but nothing could rob them of the blessings of their salvation. We are not suggesting that we should never be sorrowful. Jesus was described as a "man of sorrows" (Isaiah 53:3). He knew what it was to weep. At the same time he must have exhibited perfectly all the fruits of the Spirit, including joy. If we are to be always rejoicing, yet there are times when we will know sorrow, then clearly there will be occasions when we are both joyful and sorrowful. Pain is real; sorrow cannot be avoided, but beneath it all the wonderful, unchanging character of Jesus enables us

to have an inner joy and contentment even during the worst of times.

3. WE NEED TO BE REMINDED TO BE JOYFUL

Having made the first statement about rejoicing, Paul repeats it: "I will say it again: rejoice." We are weak, and at times we can get overwhelmed. We may have heard a sermon about joy just last week, but we soon forget that when things are rough. So we need frequent reminders of the *need* to rejoice, and also reminders of things to rejoice *about*. Just as our children need to be told the same things over and over again, the same is true of us as God's children. If once was enough, the Bible would be much smaller than it is. The Lord has seen fit to structure his Word so that the same exhortations are repeated many times. For example, we are reminded frequently of the need to pray, of the need to be humble and also of the need to be joyful.

We also need, in our personal interaction with one another, to remind fellow brothers and sisters to "rejoice in the Lord." Not in a glib, smug way, but gently and lovingly reminding those who are cast down that, while we do sympathize with them, we must not lose sight of the rich blessings that are ours in Christ.

Once again we must understand that true joy is not measured by the width of a smile, but nevertheless that joy should be seen even in the midst of suffering. Not only is this important in terms of our obedience to the Word of God, but it is also an important aspect of our testimony before unbelievers. All too often the world sees Christians who are whiners and grumblers. How much more effective would our witness be if we showed them the joy of the Lord—always! **B**

“Though dead, they speak”—A series on witnesses from the ANCIENT CHURCH

IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH: A CHRIST-CENTRED MAN



BY MICHAEL A.G. HAYKIN // In recent days there has been much brouhaha about the deity of Christ, especially via Dan Brown’s blockbuster *The Da Vinci Code* (2003). The book essentially asserts that Christ’s deity was foisted on the church during the fourth-century Council of Nicaea. But nothing could be further from the truth. Ignatius, to whom we were introduced in our last issue, can plainly describe Christ as “our God.” Christ has been “with the Father from all eternity,” he writes, and is “wholly one with the Father.” Here then is a very high view of Christ, and that right after the New Testament period.

Along with this high Christology, Ignatius’s letters also reveal a Christ-centred spirituality. Christ is “our Saviour,” our “never-failing Life,” and the salvation he gives is a salvation from death. He *alone*, therefore, is the way of salvation.

Christ always pleased the Father. He never “acted independently” of the Father and so is a model of how we should conduct ourselves

in the church. As such, he alone is to be our supreme Teacher.

One noteworthy description that Ignatius makes of Christ is found in his letter to the Ephesian church. There Ignatius describes the Lord Jesus Christ as the “one physician, who is both flesh and spirit, . . . God in man, true life in death, both from Mary and from God.” Ignatius is the first Christian author to use this term of Christ (though, look at the statements in Luke 4:23 and Matthew 9:12 that imply Christ is a physician). Ignatius’ use of this phrase is not to be understood as an allusion to Christ as One who heals the body. Ignatius never mentions or alludes to Christ the Healer. Rather, what is being stressed is that human beings are sick *in their souls*, and Christ has come as the Physician for sick and dying souls: his medicine is eternal life. It is our privilege, though we live two millennia after Ignatius, to have the same divine Doctor. His healing touch is still the same! **B**

CHRIST HAS COME AS THE PHYSICIAN FOR SICK AND DYING SOULS AND HIS MEDICINE IS ETERNAL LIFE

DID YOU KNOW?

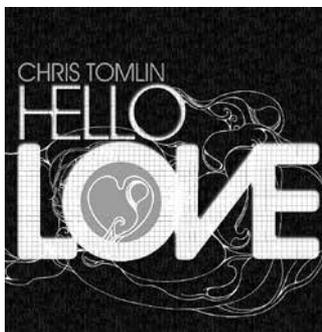
Contrary to popular thinking, the medieval Roman Catholic Church provided a significant stimulus for scientific research during the Middle Ages. Such research was mostly carried on after the emergence of universities like Paris and Oxford around 1200.

| *mixed* MEDIA

Things to hear and see: Chris Tomlin’s latest CD and a DVD on three modern-day martyrs

CHRIS TOMLIN HELLO LOVE

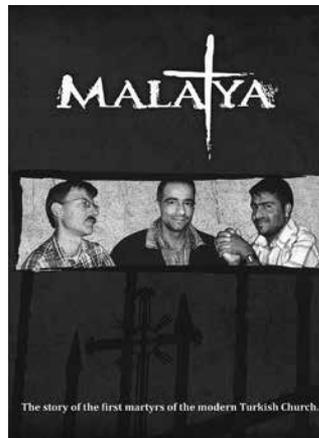
Sixstepsrecords (2008); B001BR4Z48



Though Chris Tomlin’s latest release, *Hello Love*, may not be entirely innovative, it is good music. More than a songwriter/singer, Chris is a worshipper and sees leading others to worship as paramount. One test I put up against music is whether it runs through my head throughout the day and makes me think of God. This CD stands up against this test. Two songs are particularly good for use in corporate worship. “Praise the Father, Praise the Son” is a hymn-like song and could be used regardless of the music style of your particular church. “I will rise” is another excellent one and speaks of us rising with God when we leave our earthly bodies. Tomlin is a leader in the Passion movement and his heart for the post-secondary population comes out strong in the song “God of this city,” where the lyrics seek to encourage us to live for the name of Jesus.—*Melissa Adem*

MALATYA THE STORY OF THE FIRST MARTYRS OF THE MODERN TURKISH CHURCH

Voice of the Martyrs (2009); 76 min.



Necati Aydin, Uğur Yüksel and Tilmann Geske—these are the names of three Christian men who were brutally tortured and killed by five young Turks in Malatya, Turkey, on April 18, 2007. *Malatya* is a feature documentary that tells the stories of these modern-day martyrs. The intensely moving accounts of Necati’s wife, Semse, along with Tilmann’s wife, Susanne, Gökhan (a member of the church in Malatya) and others, provide up-close encounters with what it means to be a Christian in Turkey and what it has been like for these families to go through this difficult ordeal—and the myriad ways that God has sustained them! Prepare to feel united with these Turkish Christians, encouraged by the deep roots of their faith in Christ and moved to pray for them.—*Janice Van Eck*

» Do you have a CD, DVD or book suggestion for Barnabas that we should consider for review? Email your suggestion to: janicevaneck@rogers.com.

A DEVOTIONAL STUDY to spur each other on

HEBREWS 11

BY STEPHEN KRING // Paul exhorts us in Colossians 3:16 to “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.” He continues by mentioning one very important way that this should take place. It is by “teaching and admonishing one another.” The task of teaching and admonishing is not just for pastors/elders, but also for each member of the body of Christ (see also Hebrews 3:13; 10:24). You can use the following outline in your own life personally, but even better, find another believer with whom to share your questions and discoveries, and encourage one another in the race of faith!

READING 1

Hebrews 11

Many people talk glibly about having “faith.” But genuine, saving faith has certain important characteristics that make it worth far more than its weight in gold.

DISCUSSION From the book of Hebrews as a whole, think about how many different ways you could complete the following sentence: “Saving faith _____” (see Hebrews 4:16; 6:10; 10:19,22,38-39; 11:1; 12:2).

SPURRED ON Ask one another if you truly have *this* kind of faith. Thank God if you do. Call out to him if you do not!

READING 2

Hebrews 11:1-3

While the heavens clearly declare God’s glory and the expanse above proclaims his handiwork (Psalm 19:1), yet the foundation for our confidence in the creative power of God as opposed to evolution rests on the bedrock of *faith*.

DISCUSSION From verse 3, can you see that faith not only gives us confidence about what God will do in the future (such as the coming of Christ), but also what God has done in the past? What else that has happened in the past also requires this amazing faith? See, for example, John 20:29.

SPURRED ON How does this passage help you to understand how to approach an unbelieving friend who is caught up in the grip of evolutionary teaching? Be confident as you witness, because you know where faith comes from (Romans 10:17).

READING 3

Hebrews 11:4-7

A key word in Hebrews 11 is “commendation.” As sinners, we have nothing in ourselves that would “commend” us to God. It is faith in Jesus Christ *alone* that secures for us God’s seal of approval.

DISCUSSION Notice how both Abel and Enoch are “commended.” Discuss how God let them and us know that he was pleased with them. How is it that Abel still speaks to us?

SPURRED ON Think about Cain’s long and tragic life *without* faith and Abel’s short and blessed life *with* faith. Do you ever want to trade places with the ungodly? (Read Psalm 73 if you are tempted.) In prayer, thank God that he really does commend you, regard you as righteous, accept your offerings and take you to glory, all because of faith.

READING 4

Hebrews 11:8-22

DISCUSSION List all of the people of faith in this section. What promises did God make to them? Were those promises fulfilled to them during their earthly lives (11:13)? Note that the book of Hebrews is not just about *living* by faith; it is also about *dying* in faith. Discuss how God frequently delays the complete fulfillment of the blessings of salvation for that final day when Jesus returns in glory. Think about how the faulty “health and wealth” gospel denies much of this. Theologians call this “over-realized eschatology.”

SPURRED ON Think about some of the older and suffering saints in your church family with whom you could share the truths of Hebrews 11:8-22. Encourage these faithful men and women with thoughts of that city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God (11:10).

READING 5

Hebrews 11:23-28

DISCUSSION This passage focuses on the power of genuine faith to triumph even in the face of great opposition and temptation. Work through the verses slowly, considering in each instance *what* the people faced and *how* by faith they overcame. Can you find a key verse in 1 John that stresses the conquering power of faith? Look at Hebrews 10:32-39 for a glimpse into what believers were facing at that time.

SPURRED ON What are some of the temptations and pressures that you are facing right now? Seek out brothers and sisters in Christ who you see are facing particularly intense pressures. Pray with them and encourage them to “endure as seeing him who is invisible.”

READING 6

Hebrews 11:29-38

DISCUSSION Were these men and women of faith flawless? Consider those listed in verses 31-32. Yet how would you describe what they accomplished?

SPURRED ON Thank God that, for the man or woman of faith, impossible challenges and sufferings become possible.

READING 7

Hebrews 11:39-40

DISCUSSION What “was promised” that Old Testament believers did not receive? What “something better” have we received?

SPURRED ON If those living in the shadows triumphed by faith, may that be an encouragement to you today “to walk by faith.” **B**

SUGGESTED RESOURCES • William L. Lane, *Hebrews: A call to commitment* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1988); Philip E. Hughes, *A commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1977).

TURNING DOWN THE WORLD



BY MARK HUDSON // Few challenges are greater today than those facing young people trying to live a consistent Christian life. The pressure to conform and be “normal” in the eyes of the world is immense. To be out of step with the majority is to present oneself as a target of ridicule and exclusion. The mind is bombarded by an endless stream of words and images that try to keep it distracted, and at odds with basic biblical teaching. Through popular avenues such as music, movies, advertisements, fashion, TV and computer games, the world proudly and loudly presents itself as the source of all that is good and desirable. It also claims to be able to *deliver* on all its promises. In light of this, it might be asked, “Can a young person survive today by saying, ‘No, thank you,’ to some of the most tempting treats the world has to offer when it seems that everyone around them is saying, ‘Yes, thank you,’ and having a good time because of it?”

It may seem way too simple, but the most fundamental defence against temptation is to learn to say “No.” A simple but powerful verse in Proverbs says, “If sinners entice you, do not consent.” In other words, if you’re encouraged or tempted to say yes when you know it’s wrong, just say no! You don’t have to be obnoxious about it, or try to act superior in some way; you can be both polite *and* determined. The sooner you say no, the better; the more *consistently* you say no, the more people will understand you’re serious about what you claim to believe. It’s much harder to say no after saying yes on previous occasions. Hypocrisy stinks, and everyone can smell it!

Why is it so hard at times? Some members of church families are guilty of living one of two lies: *non*-Christians sometimes try to live like they *are* Christians and *real* Christians sometimes try to live like they *are not*. It’s the real Christian who suffers most in this situation because they know their desire to be like Jesus must outweigh their temptation to be like the world.

How, then, does a Christian turn the world down when it makes an attractive offer? Christians have the huge spiritual advantage of God the Holy Spirit *living in them* and, if the activity is sinful, he helps us identify this and strengthens our will to resist. It’s very important to consistently ask the Lord to help us take a strong stand for him.

Now, of course, you have to decide what you’re going to say no to. Based on biblical teaching there are some obvious ones: drunkenness, illegal drugs, sex outside of marriage, criminal activity, pornography, gambling. Others may not be as obvious, though just as important: swearing, evil conversation, gossip and slander, bullying. Saying no to such things honours God, keeps us from unnecessary suffering and encourages other young believers to do the same.

Reasonable limits are healthy, supportive and wise. Be thankful for parents who set limits to keep you from temptation and trouble. Allowing biblical principles to guide our steps will allow us all to become *self-limiting* so we can stay clear of the world’s traps and live a life that pleases God and does good to those around us. Perhaps we will be strong enough to tell the world, “No, I won’t,” instead of, “Sorry, I can’t.” **B**

You don’t have to be obnoxious about it, or try to act superior in some way; you can be both polite *and* determined

IN THE NAME OF JESUS

BY JEREMY JOHNSTON // “The invention of the arts,” writes John Calvin, “is a gift of God by no means to be despised, and a faculty worthy of commendation.” The arts are not hobbies; they are *gifts from God*, to be used *for* God. Take a quick glance at your church library. There you will find John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress*; maybe you will find C.S. Lewis’s *Screwtape Letters*. Look at your hymnal; there you will find the poetry of Isaac Watts or Fanny Crosby, and the music of Beethoven and Haydn. Flip through your Bible. Read of the craftsmen who ornamented the tabernacle, the composers who created music, or the poets who crafted the psalms. So, how do we glorify God with paintings, poetry, stories or song? One musician, whose life and work helps us answer this question, is Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750).

J.S. Bach used his musical gifts *extensively*. He composed over 1,000 pieces of music, mastered every instrument he could lay his hands on and played them for every occasion imaginable. Bach also learned to use his gifts *extremely well*. To use your talents for the glory of God means to use them *with excellence*: so Bach was determined to hone his skills with study, practice and discipline. Today, Bach is considered to be the most accomplished and inventive composer in the history of music.

Bach also made *all* of his music for the glory of God. He states that “the aim and final end of all music should be none other than the glory of God and the refreshment of the soul.” All music. So, while he wrote hundreds of pieces for use in worship, he also wrote beautiful concertos, humorous cantatas and musical tributes for festivals and concerts. But everything he wrote declared God’s greatness to the world, both inside and outside the church. Bach inscribed the letters “S.D.G.” on many of his compositions (*Soli Deo Gloria*—“To God alone be the glory”) as a testimony to those who would perform his music. Even on Bach’s “secular” compositions, we find inscribed the letters “J.J.” (*Jesu, Juva*—“Jesus, help!”) or “I.N.J.” (*In nomine Jesu*—“In the name of Jesus”). Too often Christians separate their “worldly” callings and responsibilities from their calling to serve Christ. There is no dichotomy between the two—*everything* in the universe is under the lordship of Christ. This means we can glorify God equally well by composing beautiful music or painting a landscape as we can by writing hymns or painting a picture of Daniel in the lions’ den.

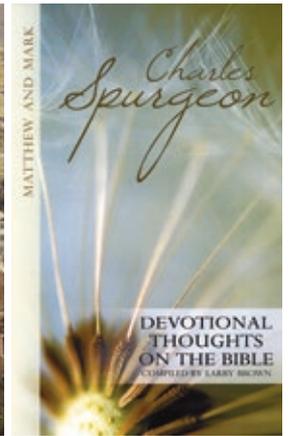
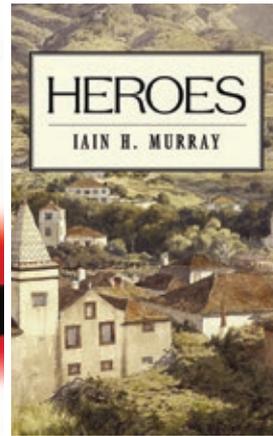
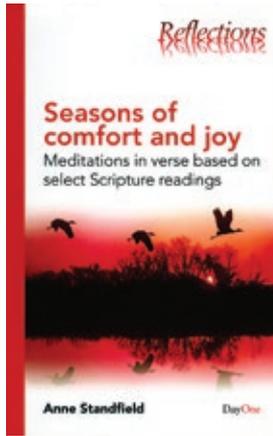
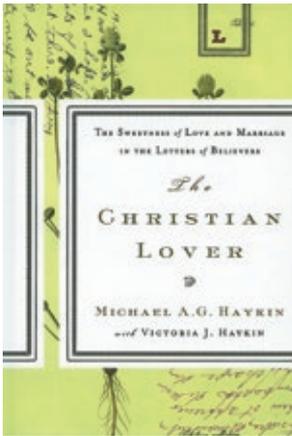
The Bible tells us that we are God’s workmanship; this includes our intellect, body, interests and talents. When it comes to serving God, supporting his church or reaching out to the lost, many gifted Christians don’t think of using their artistic ability. If, however, we believe that God made us as we are, then we must also believe he intends to use us as we are: for some, that means glorifying God with a canvas or a camera, with metaphors or musical notes. Bach used the artistic gifts God gave to him to honour Christ. We should do the same with the gifts God gives to us. **B**

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➡ SUGGESTED LISTENING

J.S. BACH: ST. MATTHEW PASSION [based on Matthew 26-27], Sir David Willcocks and the Bach Choir; 3 CDs; Decca (2006).

A QUARTERLY review OF NEW & RECENT books



THE CHRISTIAN LOVER
The sweetness of love and marriage in the letters of believers
BY MICHAEL A.G. HAYKIN with VICTORIA J. HAYKIN
Reformation Trust (2009), 101 pgs
ISBN 978-1567691115

The Christian Lover propels the reader into the intimacy of twelve relationships from church history. Well-paced and intensely practical, it combines a brief introduction to the historical relationship, application for today's marriages and a focused selection of letters. Transforming their status as theologians to that of dedicated husbands, iconic men of faith such as Martin Luther, John Calvin and Martyn Lloyd-Jones lead and love their respective wives with a Christ-like tenderness. Letters between spouses reflect an honesty and willingness to face the challenges of marriage and life with the timelessness of God's Word. Ranging from the earnest exuberance of pre-engagement to the steadfast commitment of mature relationships, these are the letters of historical lovers who were "intimate allies" in the walk of faith, sharing the "common mission" to present Christ to the world.

Stories of heartache and loss are rooted in the biblical concept of the three-stranded cord, trusting God to uphold and shape them through such intense trials as the death of their spouse or of a beloved child. "You are my thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Cor-

inthians," Helmuth von Moltke writes to his dear wife, days before his brutal death at the hands of the Nazi regime. A rare source of truth in our fast-paced, technology-driven culture, the message of the letters is exceptionally relevant for marriages today. A sanctifying and inspirational read.—*Sarah Vlietstra*

FINALLY ALIVE
What happens when we are born again
BY JOHN PIPER
Christian Focus (2009), 203 pgs
ISBN 978-1845504212

As Piper points out in his introduction to *Finally alive*, one only has to look so far as the Barna Group to discover that there is much confusion among professing evangelicals about what it means to be born again. I won't go into more detail about that except to say that his critique of the Barna Group's perceived understanding is well worth the price of the book. More importantly, however, Piper sets the record straight on this oft-neglected Christian truth by clearly telling us what the Bible teaches about the new birth: what it is, why we need it, how it comes about, what are its effects and how we can help others to be born again. This is not a book of dry doctrine. On the contrary, it is a book that leads to self-examination and God-exaltation. I simply loved this book and now rank it as my favourite of Piper's and would highly recommend it to others.—*Glenn Tomlinson*

SEASONS OF COMFORT AND JOY
BY ANNE STANDFIELD
DayOne (2008), 90 pgs
ISBN 978-1846251030

It's a rare treat to find a book of new Christian poetry these days! In *Seasons of comfort and joy*, Anne Standfield has woven into verse her own meditations on Scripture. The result is a collection of poems which focus the reader on the warmth of knowing Christ and the intimacy of that relationship in daily experience. A suitable devotional companion.—*Janice Van Eck*

HEROES
BY IAIN H. MURRAY
The Banner of Truth (2009), 320 pgs
ISBN 978-1848710245

Unlike our American cousins, Canadians have a difficult time with heroes. Indeed, the modern world is also very much down on heroes. But rightly understood as inspiring, though not perfect, examples of Christian faith, heroes can and should be part of the Christian worldview. In this book from a veteran Reformed biographer, Murray looks at the faith, lives and thought of a number of well-known figures like Jonathan Edwards and Charles Spurgeon, as well as some lesser-known people like Robert Kalley and William Hewitson. Especially noteworthy is Murray's refusal to make these heroes plaster-cast saints and how he shows the importance that their marriages played in the lives of many of them. My

only notable difference with Murray had to do with his analysis of the slave-holding of Charles and Mary Colcock Jones. Murray appeals to the New Testament toleration of slavery to maintain that Southern slavery was not a clear-cut issue. But unlike slavery in the ancient world, slavery in America's South was based on racism. This aside, it is an important book and highly recommended.—*Michael A.G. Haykin*

DEVOTIONAL THOUGHTS ON THE BIBLE:
MATTHEW AND MARK
BY CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON
Compiled by LARRY BROWN
Evangelical Press (2008), 337 pgs
ISBN 978-0852346631

Charles Haddon Spurgeon was a renowned eighteenth-century Baptist preacher in England, with an enduring legacy of ministry—his *Morning and Evening* devotionals have been appreciated the world over. This compilation, *Devotional thoughts on the Bible*, has been taken from the "mini" expositions he gave as he read Bible passages before preaching. The format includes both the biblical text and Spurgeon's expositions, enabling the reader to advance through these Gospels with his expositions—on verses, phrases or even just words—coming alongside the scriptural text. Whether this is your first introduction to Spurgeon, or you are a long-time fan, you'll appreciate this addition.—*JVE* 

KIRK WELLUM, principal of Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College, talks to JANICE VAN ECK about his new role, students, life at the seminary...and what he misses most about pastoral work

Q Congratulations on being appointed principal of Toronto Baptist Seminary and Bible College (TBS) earlier this year. You first served as a professor, then interim principal—and now you are taking on that mantle more permanently. After many years in pastoral work, it is quite a change to be in a full-time position at a seminary. Perhaps you could briefly explain what the role of principal involves?

A. As principal, I am directly accountable to the president and trustees of the seminary for the academic program. This means that I oversee the professors and teachers, and the courses being taught, and make sure that they are consistent with the stated goals and objectives of the seminary. I am also responsible for the pastoral care of the students and representing the seminary in the surrounding Christian community.

Q. Since administering a school like TBS involves more than just academics, what are the most challenging areas for you personally?

A. While I can look after the specific administrative responsibilities assigned to me, I see my primary calling as being a teacher/preacher and pastor. And, while I love to teach and work with people, it is the everyday administration that I find the most challenging. As a privately funded school we do not have huge resources and that requires everyone to pull their weight and do a variety of jobs.

Q. What do you miss most about pastoral work?

A. I miss being involved in the lives of a group of believers in a congregational setting as we move together through the ups and downs of life. I also miss preaching through books of the Bible as part of a weekly exposition of the Scriptures.

5 THINGS ABOUT KIRK

- 1 Kirk is married to Debbie and they have four children: Caleb, Brittany, Seth and Javan.
- 2 Kirk's first car was a 1977 Red Honda Civic with a manual choke. What a machine!
- 3 Kirk and Debbie met at Fair Havens Bible Conference.
- 4 Kirk enjoys basketball even though his 5'2" mother "ruined" his NBA career.
- 5 Kirk also enjoys weightlifting—something he has been doing since high school.



Q. TBS has been involved in a fundraising campaign to renovate its student residences. How is that project going?

A. Despite the difficult financial times, the Lord has enabled us to move ahead with the renovation. So far almost ¾ of the \$1.1 million needed has been given! We are hoping to have the residences done by this September with as little needing to be borrowed as possible. We are thankful for all who have given so generously and sacrificially.

Q. What do you foresee as challenges for the Seminary in the coming year?

A. We are praying that God would increase our student enrolment. This is vital for the long-term viability of TBS. Tied to this is the need to let people know that we exist—although TBS has been around for more than eighty years, there are many in the larger Christian constituency that have never heard it.

Q. Internship opportunities for those in training and mentoring are both vital for any Bible college if they want to prepare grads for placement and usefulness in a local church setting. How does TBS approach these issues?

A. We insist that all full-time students be involved in some kind of ministry in a local church. These ministries can vary greatly depending on the interests, gifts and maturity of the student. This requires the help of local churches in providing opportunities and in overseeing the students.

In recent years, with the breakdown of the family and new Christians being inadequately disciplined, we have seen the need to mentor students in the basics of Christian life and practice. All full-time students are placed in mentoring groups that meet weekly for discussion and prayer.

Q. In the past, there were difficulties with students whose English language skills were fairly

poor. While not wanting to discourage overseas students, how has TBS been addressing this? Could you also talk about sponsorship?

A. While we are happy to receive international students, we do expect students to pass the standard competency tests. We also offer an English class in which students can improve and sharpen their skills.

Bringing students from countries where they have few resources requires that we raise money here at home to provide for their needs while in Canada. This has been largely a word-of-mouth campaign that involves sponsors in different churches.

Q. What do you think is the biggest challenge for students when they arrive at TBS?

A. Biblical illiteracy. Students often reflect the larger Christian community in which people do not know the Bible as well as they should. Then, as students grow in their knowledge of the Scriptures, we must work to ensure that their interest in truth is not merely intellectual, but moral and practical.

Q. While TBS is not an SGF school per se, it has been a training ground for many SGF pastors and where many SGF churches send their students for training. What are some ways that readers of Barnabas could support TBS?

A. You can pray for us, encourage students to consider TBS as a place to receive training and support us financially. SGF churches can also help by providing internship and service opportunities for our students so that they gain real ministry experience.

Q. We've talked a lot about TBS...tell me what's going on in your family life right now.

A. Caleb is starting his Ph.D. in history at the University of Toronto; Brittany is getting married this summer and will be attending teacher's college this fall; Seth is starting at McMaster University; and Javan will be going into Grade 8.

Q. Like most of us, your life is quite busy... juggling work, family and church life. What do you and Debbie do to stay on track spiritually and not just succumb to the busyness?

A. Debbie and I try to keep our focus by reading the Bible and discussing how it applies to our lives. We pray that God would continue to lead us and keep his hand on us. We attend church and meet with Christian friends to encourage and pray for one another. Our lives have never been so busy and hectic and yet, through it all, the Lord has been good. **B**

To find out more about Kirk, check out his blog at redeemingthetime.blogspot.com.

LITTLE PILLOWS

Adapted from Frances Ridley Havergal

The blind man

“What do you want me to do for you?”
(Luke 18:41)

Only a blind beggar by the wayside! But Jesus of Nazareth stood still when he cried out to him. The man could not grope his way among the crowd, but Jesus commanded him to be brought near to him. He knew why the poor man had cried out, but Jesus wanted to hear it from him directly. Jesus said, “What do you want me to do for you?” Wonderful question with a wonderful promise wrapped up in it. It meant that the mighty Son of God was ready to do whatever this poor blind beggar asked.

So, what *did* he ask? He said, “Lord, let me recover my sight.” Firstly, he asked for what he most wanted! Not what he supposed he *ought* to ask, nor what someone had *taught* him to ask, nor what *others* asked; but simply *what he wanted*.

Secondly, he asked straight off for a miracle! He never stayed to question whether it was likely or not, nor how Jesus would do it, nor whether it was too much to ask, nor whether the people would think him too bold. He *knew* what he wanted, and he *believed* that Jesus of Nazareth could do it.

“And Jesus said to him, ‘Recover your sight; your faith has made you well.’” And *that* was enough, his prayer of faith, and Christ’s answer of power, for “immediately he recovered his sight.” Was that all? Did he go back to begging by the wayside? No. He “followed him, glorifying God.” What a change!

Just one thing more is told us in this lovely little story: “And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.” See what that first cry so quickly led to? Who would have expected a few minutes before to have seen this man with his eyes open, following Jesus, glorifying God, and causing a whole crowd to give praise to God? The Lord Jesus says to you, “What do you want me to do for you?” How will *you* answer him? **B**



BIBLE FOCUS

Jonah runs from God

A Jonah is a short book in the Bible—only four small chapters. Find it in your Bible and then read the whole story. If you need help, just get a parent or someone older to help you. Once you’ve read through Jonah, you’ll be ready to answer these questions.

1. Why did Jonah run away from the presence of God?

2. When Jonah was thrown into the raging sea, what two things happened?

3. What did God do to make the fish vomit Jonah up?

4. When Jonah preached to the people of Ninevah, what happened?

5. When God decided not to destroy Ninevah, Jonah was angry. Why?

B Word search

- captain
- cargo
- days
- disaster
- fare
- fish
- Jonah
- Joppa
- king
- mercy
- message
- Ninevah
- overboard
- pity
- repentance
- sackcloth
- sacrifice
- sea
- Tarshish
- tempest
- vows
- wind
- withered plant

R	E	T	S	A	S	I	D	W	M	F	E
E	F	A	R	E	C	A	R	G	O	G	T
P	R	S	A	W	L	N	B	A	A	N	N
E	F	I	S	H	I	I	M	S	R	I	A
N	Q	W	Z	A	L	N	S	E	F	K	L
T	T	O	T	P	M	E	D	S	S	P	P
A	O	P	R	B	M	V	C	W	P	E	D
N	A	I	U	F	E	A	R	O	J	L	E
C	P	T	R	C	R	H	J	V	S	Y	R
E	P	Y	S	A	C	R	I	F	I	C	E
B	O	L	D	A	Y	S	J	O	N	A	H
S	J	H	T	O	L	C	K	C	A	S	T
E	F	X	T	S	E	P	M	E	T	N	I
T	A	R	S	H	I	S	H	K	L	U	W
P	V	O	V	E	R	B	O	A	R	D	Y

DID YOU KNOW?

- › The fall of Ninevah to the Medes in 612 B.C. brought to an end the once-mighty Assyrian Empire.
- › The ruins of ancient Ninevah can still be seen today near the city of Mosul in northern Iraq.

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