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# GRACE & PEACE

An E-periodical For spiritual enlightenment, edification and encouragement

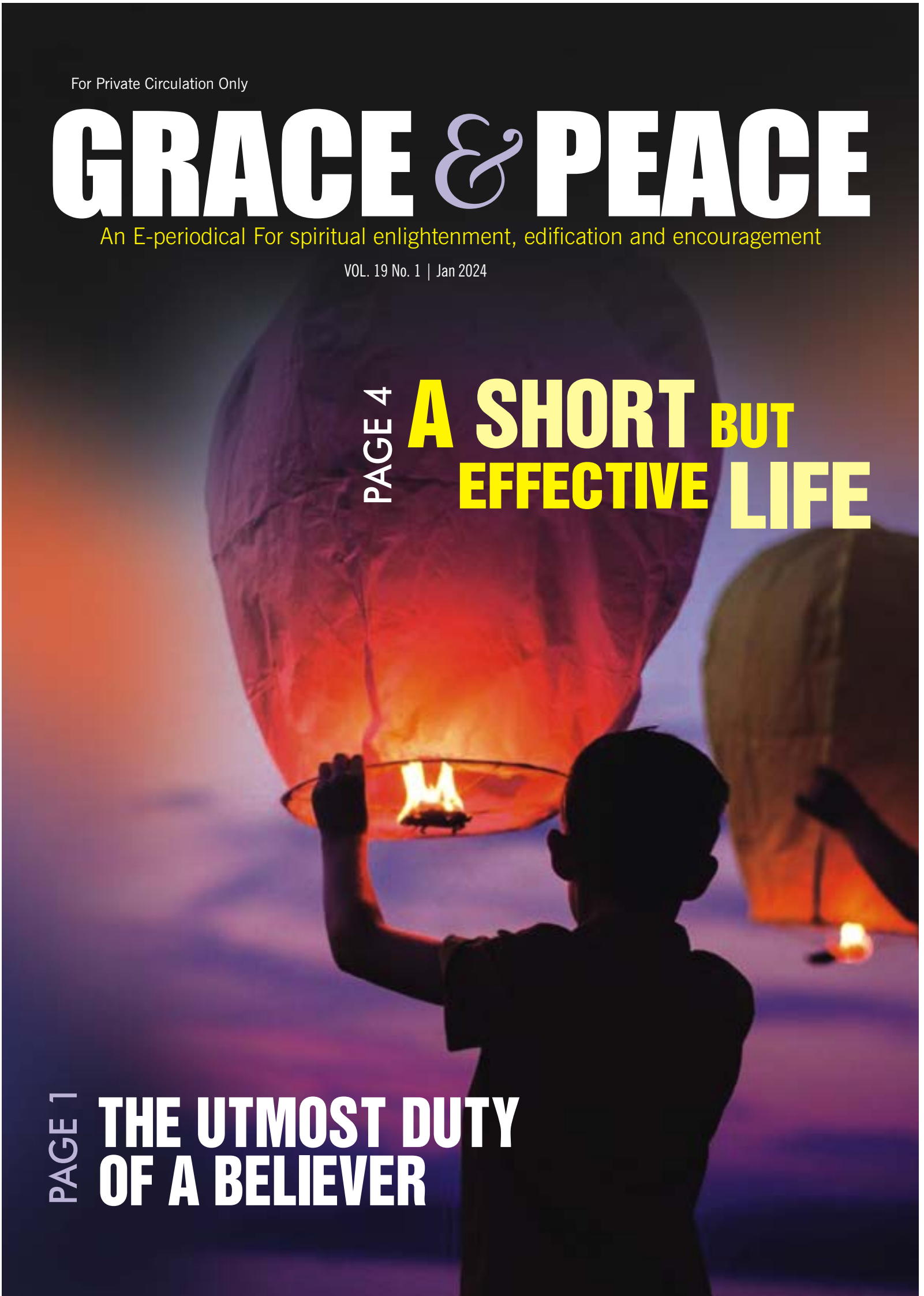
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**THE UTMOST DUTY  
OF A BELIEVER**



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# THE UTMOST DUTY OF A BELIEVER


**P**raise be to God for allowing us to enter into another New Year. We ought to acknowledge with a grateful heart that God in His sovereign will permitted us to continue in this wicked world, for our 'times are in His hands' (Psa. 31:15).

Never forget, that our days on earth are extended to fulfil God's will in and through our lives. So, it's imperative to know God's purposes for our lives and accomplish them during this brief earthly sojourn.

Certainly, any time is appropriate to seek God's will and to yield afresh in obedience to Him. We don't need to wait for any special day or season to please God and live for Him. The scripture also exhorts us that today is the day of salvation, consecration, and obedience (2Cori 6:2; Heb 3:7-15).

## LET'S REVIEW OUR PRIORITIES

Nevertheless, due to our limitations as finite humans, we find certain occasions to be more suitable to reflect upon life. The beginning of a New Year is such a juncture when it's natural for us to look back with a grateful heart for all that God has done in our lives.

A photograph of a person kneeling on a mountain peak, facing away from the camera and towards a bright sunrise. The person's hands are clasped in prayer. The background shows rolling hills and a clear sky with the sun low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow.

It is also a time to review and reaffirm our priorities, in view of accomplishing God's perfect will regarding us.

Meanwhile, some are skeptical regarding New Year resolutions. They rightly point out that most New Year resolutions do not last for more than two months. However, we need to remember that it is these specific decisions and dreams that make us realize when we fail to accomplish them. As someone has well observed, 'with a goal we hit somewhere, but without a goal we hit nowhere'!

Let's consider, what is that area(s) in our life, where we need re-dedication and make determination in this year? What is the most important responsibility of a follower of Christ? In other words, what should be our number one priority for the days ahead?

## BE AT HIS FEET

The answer is found in the words of our Lord Jesus Christ to Martha who was eager to serve Him and the apostles.

And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." (Luke 10:41, 42).

While Martha was troubled and worried about ministering to Christ and His people, Mary her sister quietly sat at the feet of Christ to hear from Him (Luke 10:39). Moreover, Christ commends Mary for her right choice and reproves Martha for her misplaced priorities and the subsequent restlessness.

More than anything else, even than what might seem the most legitimate and spiritual activities, we ought to spend time alone with our Lord. This means that we have to sit quietly with the Word of God to meditate it, while worshipping and pouring our heart before Him in prayer.

It is here we commune with the Lord as friend with friend. And it is here the Lord molds us to be prepared for Christian life and service.

Martha's experience shows the consequences of failure in this area. Self-pity, criticism, murmuring, and other disorders that affect our mood and behavior mainly result from an undisciplined spiritual life. Without consistent meditation and prayer, we become weak, vulnerable, and an easy target for the evil forces. We should always remember the words of our Lord, "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5c).

## DIVINE DEMAND

This quiet time with the Lord is not just an option or a suggestion, but it is an absolute necessity. Four things are noteworthy in this connection:



### a. Christ calls for a quiet time with Him, Matt. 11:29

"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."

Soon after calling upon all those who toil and carry burdens to come to Him for deliverance and rest, the Lord Jesus exhorted them further to walk with Him and learn from Him. Neglecting this aspect of His call, no one can successfully continue in Christian life, even though one is born again and saved.

### b. He taught this to the disciples, Mark 3:14 cf. 6:31, 32; Luke 9:10

"Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach." (Mark 3:14).

Before sending the apostles to preach and serve the people, Christ wanted them to be with Him (cf. John 15:27).

### c. He longs for it, John 17:24a

"Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am...."

The final point in His intercessory prayer is our presence with the Lord in glory. While we share this longing for Christ earnestly expecting to be with Him, we ought to experience the same spiritually even today.

**d. He has exemplified it, Matt.**

**14:23**

“And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there.” (Matt. 14:23).

The Gospel writers repeatedly refer to the time Christ spent alone with His Father (cf. Mark 1:35; 6:45, 46; Luke 5:16, etc.).

Early in the morning, and late night our Lord went to solitary places and communed with His Father. Moreover, soon after a ministry we find Him separating Himself from the crowd to pray alone. If the Son of God found it essential to have such regular quiet time alone with the Father, how much more do we need this personal spiritual exercise!

**A SURE REWARD**

Our Lord made it very clear; that all who wait at His feet will reap blessings of eternal value that no one can take away (Luke 10:42). Our understanding of Christ and His Word will increase as we listen to Him. When the Word of God richly dwells in us, our hearts will be filled with heavenly peace, hope, and the joy of the Lord. (Colo. 3:15, 16) We will be better equipped to face the troubled world around us, for we shall be renewed and refreshed with divine strength (Isa. 40:31).

The secret behind the effectiveness and success of a believer is nothing but the personal quiet time they spend with the Lord daily.

Not only the biblical instructions but also the example of our Lord and the saints in the past, testify to us this fact. Yes, of course, we might know it well, but the question is how successful are we in this area?

Do you have a regular time of personal devotion? Are you struggling to prioritize this utmost Christian obligation amid your busy schedule?

Remember, our adversary who knows well of the result of personal intimacy with Christ and His word, will bring all kinds of obstacles. We have to know and overcome those schemes of the evil forces.

**PRACTICE TODAY**

Intentionally, let's cultivate a habit of quiet time alone with God to meditate on His word and pray. Deliberately separate a time and a quiet place daily to enjoy this personal communion with God without any distractions.

Most Christians find early morning more suitable, but it is up to the individual's convenience when they want to have a quiet time. However, the most important thing is we should plan our quiet time in such a way that it is personal, uninterrupted, and consistent. Apart from this designated place and time, we can come to the Lord any time for a time of fellowship with Him.



There could be plenty of other spiritual obligations we may have to fulfill, But without having a lively relationship with the Lord regularly, all our efforts no matter how sincere and needy they could be will become futile. At the same time, obedience to this supreme duty will take care of all our other things (Matt. 6:33).

Let us examine sincerely, like Martha, if our misplaced priorities have left us bitter, confused, and troubled. Before it's too late, let us resolve to deal with this issue, and experience the wonderful Christian privilege of quiet times alone with the Almighty so that we stay strong and victorious in our spiritual life, despite the challenges and struggles we face.

## OUTLINE

# AT HIS FEET: EVIDENCE OF A TRANSFORMED LIFE

Luke 8:35

1. *Hear the word, Luke 10:39*
2. *Behold Glory unspeakable, John 17:24; Matt 17: 1ff; Rev 1: 10ff*
3. *Awareness of unworthiness, Luke 5:8; Isa 6:5*
4. *Forgiveness and cleansing, Luke 7: 38, 48; Isa 6: 6*
5. *Ministry entrusted, Isa 6:8; John 19:27; Mark 3:14; John 15:27*
6. *Sharing of heart's feelings, Mark 4:10; 1 Samuel 1:10*
7. *Further enlightenment, Mark 4:34; Psa 25:14; 73: 17 - 19*
8. *Reassurance to frightened heart, Rev 1: 17; Psa 73: 17 - 25*
9. *Joy and satisfaction, Psa 63:5, 6*
10. *Rest and Peace internally, Matt 11:29, Phil 4: 6, 7*
11. *Worthy worship that pleases God, John 12:3, 7*
12. *Renewed Strength and boldness, Isa 40:31; Acts 4:13*
13. *Grace and Mercy in abundance, Heb 4:16*

*No wonder Psalmist testified, "it is good for me to draw near to God."  
(Psa 73: 28a)*

**NTK**

**"My order of priorities reflects the level of my commitment to Christ.  
Whoever or whatever is in first place,  
if it isn't the Lord Jesus, is in the wrong place".**

*Charles R. Swindoll*

# A SHORT BUT EFFECTIVE LIFE



**D**avid Brainerd, though born more than 300 years ago and lived only 29 years, continues to impact Christians worldwide for a deeper spiritual experience and ministry.

## THE INFLUENCE

The brief life of David Brainerd has inspired and challenged several great men of God like John Wesley the founder of the Methodist movement, Jonathan Edwards whom God used mightily for the great awakening of the 18th century, and even pioneer missionaries such as, David Livingston, William Carey and Jim Elliot.

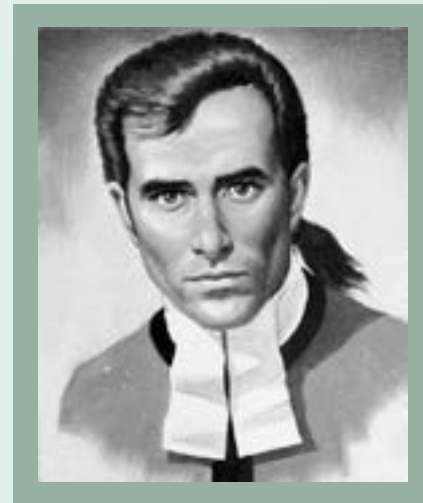
Interestingly, out of his 29 years of life, he was a believer for only for eight years and as a missionary for just four years.

John Wesley said, “Let every creature read carefully over *The Life of Brainerd*”. William Carey said, “Edward's book on Brainerd should be regarded as a sacred text”. Some others consider the modern missionary movement also inspired by Brainerd's short yet challenging life and service.

## THE UNIQUENESS

What was the unique feature of Brainerd's life? His diary published by Jonathan Edwards later, reveals the daily thoughts and feelings of David Brainerd.

Despite the many challenges and struggles Brainerd faced, he maintained a deep passion for God's presence and His Word. For this reason, he used to spend many hours day and night in meditating God's Word and in prayers.



His uttermost priorities were to enjoy God intimately and to lead a holy and useful life. He often prayed with fasting, in the jungles. His notes reveal the grace and power he experienced from the Lord in connection with the ministry among the Indians.

His life and testimony can be summarized well in the words of John Piper, “God can and does use weak, sick, discouraged, beat down, lonely, struggling saints, who cry to Him day and night, to accomplish amazing things for His glory.”

*NTK*

# Yet another New Year: FROM A BELIEVER'S PERSPECTIVE

**T**hrough the course of history, calendars have changed and have been modified from time to time. Different countries and cultures follow different calendars and timelines even to this day, but the most commonly used calendar world over is the Gregorian calendar that we know and follow in multiple walks of life. This New Year (according to this calendar), like every 'new year', we think that we can start our life with a different perspective. The idea of the old year passing away and the New Year dawning, changes our perspective at least for the first few days of the year.

However, as a believer, have we ever thought that what perspective should a believer have toward the change of a year? I don't wish to enter into the question of whether a believer should 'celebrate' a New Year or not. I hope the readers are mature enough to have a spiritual understanding, perspective, and conviction about this.

Let me however, in this article draw your attention to the right perspective a believer should have as every year passes by looking at 2 Peter 3:11, "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness!"



## **A. THE CONCLUSION**

In our lives, as days, weeks, months, and years pass, there is something every believer should focus on, and that is God's timetable for mankind.

The world that we live in is going from bad to worse. No matter the technological advancements or the increase in the scope of man's knowledge, it is evident that we are seeing physical, moral, and spiritual degradation in the lives of mankind.

Moreover, Peter, in the concluding part of his writings, gives us a challenge. He says, one day all this will pass away, and only those who have experienced new-birth or salvation by putting their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ will be partakers of the heavenly glory; they will inherit and inhabit the new heavens and the new earth.



Keeping this wondrous future in mind, our perspective about the present needs to change, and our lives should reflect that change in our perspective.

## **B. THE CHALLENGE**

Peter says further, "...what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness!"

He speaks about the following:

- Holy conversation: *anastrophé* (Gr.)-conduct, manner of life. This speaks to us of our conduct with each other
- Godliness: *eusebeia* (Gr.) piety. This speaks to us of our commitment to the Lord

The problem with many Christians today is that we are focused too much on the temporal and material aspects of life. We spend so much time on possessions, popularity, and position that in the selfish ambition to attain those goals, we lose track of the things that actually matter.

Let's therefore look at how our conduct affects our perspective.

### **1. Our Conduct with Each Other**

As each year passes, there is one reality that we should understand. We are living in this world but for a while before we go into the realm of eternity in the presence of God. And this life that we have here, we need to spend with the people whom the Lord has kept around us. Sometimes, when someone does not behave with us as we want them to behave, we are so full of what we think and how we feel about the whole situation. Thereby, we hold grudges; we gossip; we begin to hate; and this eventually brings divisions in families and assemblies.

There are so many passages in the Bible about Christian conduct. Here are few that concern the following:

- Our speech (Col. 4:5-6),
- Our walk (Eph. 5:15-17), and
- Our life in general, as summed up by Apostle Paul in Phil. 2:5.

The nine-fold fruit of the Spirit should be evident in our lives instead of the works of the flesh (cf. Gal 5: 19-23). In all our conversations, may we prepare ourselves for all that the Lord has laid in store for us!

### **2. Our Commitment to the Lord**

Our life is nothing without the Lord in it. Though we might know this in principle, our practice should exhibit it. Our piety or devotion toward the Lord does not come through good works alone. We need to know why we do what we do. The Christian life is focused upon the purpose of our calling, which is "to be conformed to the image of His Son", our Lord Jesus Christ (Rom. 8:29). And how can we be conformed to the image of the Lord? The question is how can we grow every day to be changed into his likeness day by day?

It is by doing these:

- a. Obeying His word and
- b. Following His example

#### **A. OBEYING HIS WORD:**

If we don't read the Word in the first place, how can we know what to obey? Sadly, we have relegated the Bible to meetings in the local assemblies, and seldom in most houses do we even see a family altar! Even if we have a Quiet Time (personal Bible study), it is relegated to reading 10 verses and a short prayer. It is about time we become men and women of the Word. Spending time with the Word is a process that can be best summarized in Ezra 7:10.

Furthermore, only listening to messages and not changing our lives is like looking at our disheveled faces in the mirror and going out just like that. Would you ever go out like that? How much more are we supposed to accept the Word of God in our lives and let the water of the Word remove all the filth and dross from our lives after looking into it?

If we do not obey, the Lord may use the words that he uses in Luke 6:46 with us as well. We need to be like the wise man mentioned further in Luke 6:47, 48; this strong foundation comes by doing and not just hearing (James 1:22-25).

## B. FOLLOWING HIS EXAMPLE

How beautiful and wonderful it is to know that God came into this world as a Man!

Not only did God tell us in His Word regarding what we should do, but He also has shown us how we should live.

What a wonderful Lord we have! He has shown us by His own example how we are supposed to live in this world! He is there to bear our burdens and carry us through the ups and downs of life. All we need to do is to follow the example set by Him (Phil. 2:5-8; Heb. 12:1-2).

As we pass into one more year in our lives, let us therefore, listen to the words that we heard from God and live our lives for His glory. Let this not be a resolution for a New Year, rather a resolve that will help us to live with a heavenly perspective in this world. May the Lord help us to do so.

## MEDITATION

*Tom Johns, Dallas, Texas*

# AN IDLE MIND IS THE DEVIL'S PLAYGROUND- A BELIEVER'S NEW YEAR CHALLENGE!

*Luke 11:24-26 reads like this:*

*"When an impure spirit comes out of a person, it goes through arid places seeking rest and does not find it. Then it says, 'I will return to the house I left.' When it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order. Then it goes and takes seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there. And the final condition of that person is worse than the first."*

## NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

Usually, most people take some decisive and constructive New Year's resolutions to make their lives and the lives of others around them better. No matter whether they can keep those resolutions to fruition or they fizzle away in a few days or weeks, these are noble gestures and testify to our heart's longings and aspirations.

Many a time we hear about people making resolutions to clean up some of their vices, and they make determined efforts to stay off such bad habits. These are all, to some level or other, projections of our mind to make ourselves better and be useful for our families, churches, or workplaces. The passage I quoted above from Luke 11, however, gives us some guidelines in this regard.

Here, Jesus is warning His audience about such efforts particularly when they are left unfinished, or when they had misplaced priorities to begin with.

Let us look at some of the key points to understand the essence of Jesus' teachings here. He starts by talking about a person who had an impure spirit within him. We do not know how long this spirit occupied this person's mind and physique. We do not read how this person got rid of this spirit. It could either be through exorcism or by the command of some godly people using God's authority.

In this story, Jesus does not bother with such details. However, His message was very focused on an important warning to us. We seldom consider it and often gloss over it just thinking that this was just another fascinating story by Jesus.



### **THE DEVIL SEEKS SHELTER IN US - JESUS' WARNING**

The next part of His story is about the spirit that is searching for a dwelling place. It is looking for a comfortable place and not a dry place.

1 Peter 5:8 is warning us that our 'adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.' Peter is more graphic about Satan's ultimate intentions, whereas Jesus talks about the devil's passive search for a dwelling place.

Nevertheless, Jesus' primary focus is yet another one in this story. The same story we read in Matthew 12:44, where the spirit is deciding to return to the same place it was previously expelled from.

Here is a warning for those making resolutions but not finishing up with the process by relying totally upon the Lord to make them happen.

The devil will make frequent attempts to derail our faith and devotion to God. He is hopeful that someday he will crawl back into his previous residence in us.

The focal point of Jesus' warning is found in verse 25 where we read; "when it arrives, it finds the house swept clean and put in order."

This cleansing is not a bad thing at all. But what that person failed to do was that he kept the inside empty; so, the original spirit found liberty to invite seven other worse spirits and take up residence. This condition made it worse for the person or simply stated 'it would have been better off not doing the sweeping and cleaning.'

The important lesson Jesus teaches us is that we clean the insides and keep filling our minds and bodies only with godly things. The cleaning is like our New Year resolutions, a human effort, which is bound to fail. However, when we fill our hearts with spiritual things, as we are instructed in Ephesians 5:18-21, God will produce lasting results in us.

## BE FILLED AND BE IN HIS SERVICE - JESUS' CALL TO US

In Eph. 5:18-21 we read;

*“Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”*



Another key verse telling us what needs to occupy our hearts is found in Colossians 3:16

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.”

Both the passages speak of what needs to dwell in us.

Let me quote John MacArthur here:

“The word 'dwell' means to 'live in.' Because every Christian is indwelt and baptized by the Holy Spirit at the time of salvation [1 Cor. 12:13], Paul is giving a command for believers to live continually under the influence of the Spirit by letting the word control them, pursuing pure lives, confessing all known sin, dying to self, surrendering to God's will, and depending on His power in all things. Being filled with the Spirit is living in the conscious presence of the Lord Jesus Christ, letting His mind, through the word, dominate everything that is thought and done.”

### A SELF-EVALUATION - A CHALLENGE FOR 2024

Let our hearts be filled with spiritual priorities and never left empty for the devil to find a resting place in us.

Out of the twenty-four hours in a day, how much time is our Lord receiving? How much time are we devoting to entertainment? Do we spend more time surfing through the internet with unprofitable and silly things? How much time do we spend meditating on the scriptures and prayer?

Psalms 119 is a wonderful Psalm describing the longing of the heart for the laws of God.

Vs. 97: “O, how I love Your law; It is my meditation all the day.

Vs. 103: “How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Vs. 105: “Your word is a lamp to my feet and light to my path.”

I am challenging my own heart with these questions; perhaps you would too. Have a blessed year ahead!



# REAL PEOPLE

**W**e often face questions like: who are real people? What makes them real? These are some pertinent questions, because the world we live in is full of hypocrisy and unmitigated robotism. In such a situation, do we as children of God have a vital part to play so that we exhibit the reality of God? Reality is the way things are. We can no longer escape from reality than we can jump from out of our skins. Apostle Paul presents facts to the Corinthians proving that he was true in all his dealings and life patterns, 2Cor. 11:29. He was real when he was absent from them as well as when present among them, 2 Cor. 10:11.

On the other hand, there is escapism - the unhealthy desire to escape from the realities of life by concentrating on other interests.

In the words of St. Augustine, 'Salvation is God's way of making us real people. That is the beginning of real things. It starts from the present life - a saved life - and extends its span beyond the grave'.

A real person is someone who faces up to the issues that life presents and resists every temptation to escape. Every time we run away from the truth in whatever form it presents itself, something dies within us - we become less of a person. Two choices exist: we can either face reality or bury our heads in the sand.

The question that arises here is, "Why do people look for escape?" The answer is: They do not know the one true reality - God.

As a matter of fact, as believers, do we look for escape? Does this dilemma reflect in our lives? Do we fail to show up as real people?

Christ had presented Himself as a real Person throughout His life on earth and ministry. His teachings were devoid of any kind of dichotomy. Therefore, a true follower of Jesus Christ needs to be careful to cast away their mask of double standard.

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF A REAL PERSON**

A person who believes in the living God cannot be a hypocrite. Christ pointed out this truth when He made a discourse on prayer and fasting in Matt. 6:5, 16. Hypocrisy while praying, according to Christ, makes our prayer meaningless words without sincerity, a muffled reality. Even our love for God and for fellow-believers must be free from wrong intentions, Rom. 12:9. And every good work must be weighed down in the light of sincere love.

Apostle Paul loved with an open heart, 2 Cor. 6:11. That's why he boldly defended his cause when he faced the criticism of being a double standard person, 2 Cor. 10:11.

Moreover, the reality we are talking about depends on our intimacy with God. We know God's nature that His power, and His works. We need to remember that God does not act based on our external appearance, but looks into our hearts and knows our intentions, 1 Chro. 28:9.

True worship, in connection with intimacy with God, is a meeting with holy reality; our lives are only as rich as our worship and our worship is only as rich as our lives. Acceptable worship is inseparable from acceptable living.

So, let us remember the exhortation: "For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth...And this also we pray, that you may be made complete." (2 Cor. 13:8, 9).



## STUDY

*Tom Jacob, Mumbai*

# ARE YOU REDEEMING YOUR TIME?



**T**ime and tide wait for none”, goes the age old adage. The Word of God commands all believers at all times, “Redeeming the time for the days are evil”. A majority of believers are very careful with regard to their finances regarding how they spend it, and they understand the need of wisely investing for eternity (though several do not have the same attitude). However, when it comes to our attitude toward time, sadly this is not the case. Quite often, we don't seem to value time the way we value money.

Even in a digital age when we talk about bullet trains and the “new-gen” gets everything at the click of a button, sadly most of us still have a very careless attitude regarding managing our time. Consequently, we end up devaluing the time of others as well! The visible trend in most of our gatherings is that several believers casually walk into a meeting without regard to what time the meeting starts (surprisingly, none of us have this attitude when we need to travel). However, such are very careful to note that the meeting ends at the prescribed time.

So, the question is how do we bring a change in our attitude regarding time? Let's look at what the scriptures tell about this

### **THE REALITY**

The Word of God very clearly reminds us about the brevity of our time on earth (Psalm 39:4-5; James 4:14). Therefore, we are exhorted always to wisely invest our time. Moses the great man of God prays, "Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom" (Psalm 90:12). This can be possible only when we live our lives on earth having eternity as our perspective. Though we are finite humans with a finite lifespan on earth, we possess a spirit which lasts for eternity. Solomon the wise one says that the Creator has set eternity in our hearts (Eccl. 3:11).

Moreover, as children of God, we are expected to be faithful stewards of all that God has entrusted us, and this includes every moment of our lives. And, we need to give an account of how we spend our time to the One who adds every second to our lifespan here on earth. Let's therefore look at certain expectations God has from us as believers regarding our attitude toward time.

### **REDEEM IT**

We are instructed by the Lord in Ephesians 5:15-17, "Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is."

The other words used for "redeeming the time" are "making the best use of the time." We are the ones who have the power to decide how we use the 24 hours that God graciously grants us each day.

We can deliberately make a choice to either make the best use of it or to allow our circumstances and wandering thoughts rob us of our precious time. Mostly, when we don't prioritize and plan out our tasks for each day, we end up either postponing or never doing the most important tasks, while spending hours on things that are of not much importance (spiritually or otherwise).

The reason why we are instructed to "make the best use of the time" is "because the days are evil". Therefore, the instruction given before and after this statement in verse 16 is "walk... not as unwise but as wise... do not be foolish (v.15 and 17)." This very well resonates with Moses' prayer that we saw earlier. In short, when the days that we live in are evil, when we do not make the best of our time we are knowingly or unknowingly walking unwisely and acting foolishly! Have we ever wondered that our casual attitude toward our time is actually robbing us of the priceless opportunities to cry, pray, and witness to numerous of our friends and acquaintances who are each day going headlong to hell! Should not we be a little more serious of how we use our time (at least for the sake of saving a few from fire)?

### **IDENTIFY OUR TIME THIEVES**

God says these words through the wise Solomon in the Song of Songs (2:15): "Catch the foxes for us, the little foxes that spoil the vineyards, for our vineyards are in blossom." We need to watch out for the "little foxes" that rob our time from our beautiful vineyards of life. C.T. Studd who spent his life in faithfully serving the Lord in China, India, and Africa, wrote like this:

*Only one life, 'twill soon be past,  
Only what's done for Christ will last.  
And when I am dying, how happy I'll be,  
If the lamp of my life has been burned out for Thee!*

Before Apostle Paul instructs us to make the best use of our time, he instructs us several things from the beginning of Ephesians Chapter 5:



*“But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving. For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not become partners with them; for at one time you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to discern what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them.”*

Are any these things highlighted here, our “little foxes” that rob us of our time and opportunities? Let's all look to the Lord for His resurrection power (immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might that He worked in Christ when He raised him from the dead [Eph. 1:19, 20]). And let's use the resources of His Spirit, His Word, and His people who fear Him to identify and capture the “little foxes” in our personal, family, and assembly lives that rob our precious moments that actually belong to the Lord. Remember that we are only stewards of

our time, not owners! So let us use our time only for excellent things (Philipp. 1:10).

Our time is limited dear ones. Either the Trumpet will sound any moment for our Rapture or our time on earth will soon finish; only what we did for the Lord (1 Cor. 10:23-31) will be of worth on that Day. Therefore, let us seriously listen to Him, “And if you call on Him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile” (1 Peter 1:17).



# God's Signposts for Believers



**W**e live in an age where many are renouncing the Lord Jesus Christ. While some no longer find Him relevant, some feel they have a higher revelation, and some others don't find faith to be rational. It is good to check if we are also headed in that direction. Are you contemplating whether the Lord Jesus is really the Way?

In this connection, here are three signposts to pay heed to.

## 1. Have you ever put your trust in the Lord Jesus?

Know for certain that this is the most significant decision to be ever taken in one's life. While taking this decision, you might not have known every doctrine from the Bible nor considered every other alternative the world offers. When you trusted the Lord Jesus for salvation, whether it was an intelligent decision or a child-like faith, know for certain that it is by the grace of God that you are saved and it is not of yourself. It is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8).

If there hasn't been such a day in your life when you trusted the Lord Jesus Christ, now is the time for you to consider that step. In the sight of God, each one of us is a sinner and destined to die in our sins. Christ Jesus came into the world to save us.

He did so by dying in our stead and taking the punishment of our sins upon Himself. He rose again on the third day from the grave. There is nothing left for us to do for our salvation but to trust in Him.

## 2. Know that the Lord Jesus you trusted upon is faithful.

We can compare this fact to the one who built his house on the rock. Now, it is the rock which can withstand tides and tremors and secure the house.

The Lord is the rock upon which we need to build our lives. He is not like man; for man is prone to failure. "He is the King eternal, the immortal, invisible, and the only wise God" (1 Tim 1:17). "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made" (John 1:3). "He upholds all things by the word of his power" (Heb. 1:3).

Not just His greatness and power, but His care for all creation is evident. "Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them" (Matt 6:26).

If He cares for the insignificant, consider His careful unchanging protection for His own. The Lord says, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand" (John 10:28). "He is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24).

They who trust in the Lord shall not be ashamed. He is faithful and able to preserve them unto the end.

### 3. Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering.

It is very easy to give up and drift with the tides of this world. Nevertheless we are exhorted to hold fast.

The Lord said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matt. 7:7). "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

Doubts and concerns might arise in your heart regarding your faith. Bring them humbly to the Lord in prayer. He will guide you through his Word. "He giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (Jas 4:6).

The three signposts we have are to know that you are saved, know that God is faithful, and hold fast.

If sidetracked, use these signposts to steer your course back on track. Let us hold fast to the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised) (Heb. 10:23).



**"God is the highest good of the reasonable creature. The enjoyment of him is our proper; and is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied."**

*Jonathan Edwards*

**"Contented Christians are people with priorities, and material things are not high on their priority lists."**

*Warren W. Wiersbee*



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