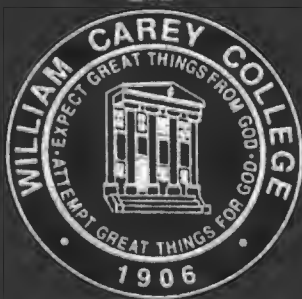


The Carey Pulpit

*I charge thee therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ...
preach the word (2 Timothy 4:1-2a).*



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William Carey College

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"For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent?

As it is written, 'How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!'"

—Romans 10: 13-15

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A NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Acts 11:19-30

Introduction:

How many times have you heard a person say, "I want my church to be a New Testament Church." Every time I hear that statement I want to ask, "Which New Testament church are you talking about?" I don't believe we want to be like the Corinthian Church. Paul's letters to the Corinthians reveal that the church at Corinth was a poor example of New Testament Christianity. However, I do believe the New Testament church at Antioch is an excellent example of what a church should be in today's world. If we are going to be like the church at Antioch, what kind of New Testament church will we be? I'm glad you asked!

I. A Witnessing Church:

- A. The believers at Antioch were involved in personal evangelism. These folks were so effective in witnessing that it was said, "A great number believed and turned unto the Lord" (vs. 21).
- B. The evangelistic zeal of the Antioch church touched both Jews and Greeks (vs. 20). The members really believed the Biblical admonition, "whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13).

II. A Teaching Church:

- A. The leaders at Antioch wanted the believers to grow in the Lord. For a year Barnabus and Paul "assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people..." (vs. 26).
- B. It appears that we are growing a generation of Baptists who really don't know the great doctrinal truths of Scripture. As Dr. Dorman Laird says, "We need to emphasize Biblical theology."

III. A Glorifying Church:

- A. The Scripture says that the believers were first called Christians at Antioch (vs. 26). The Acts record reveals that the

term "Christian" was first used by non-believers to describe the followers of Christ. The believers at Antioch were living the way Christ had lived, and the outside world labeled them "Christians."

- B. Dr. Ray Robbins, former professor of New Testament at New Orleans Baptist Seminary and Mississippi College, says, "God's character is high and holy, but his reputation with most men is very low. When our character exemplifies the character of Christ, we reveal (glorify) God as He really is. And in the process, we lift His reputation up to where His character is." May God help us to be a church that glorifies God.

IV. A Caring Church:

- A. When the Antioch Church heard about the famine that was going to engulf the church at Jerusalem, the members "determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea" (vs. 29). The disciples of Antioch were sensitive to the needs of others.
- B. A New Testament church of today needs to have the same kind of vision that causes it to invest resources in the hurts of others.

V. A Cooperating Church:

- A. As you read the Biblical record concerning the church at Antioch, you sense a cooperating spirit that permeated the entire congregation. These Christians worked together in the Kingdom of God.
- B. Barnabus was willing to invite Paul into a shared ministry within the church. The church caught the spirit of the leaders and was willing to cooperate in meeting needs and in spreading the Gospel.

Conclusion:

The Antioch church provides us with a positive role model. With God's help, let's be a witnessing, teaching, glorifying, caring, and cooperating church.

PHILIP: A MAN IN THE WILL OF GOD

Acts 6:1-7; 8:26-40; 21:8-9

Introduction:

Philip has been described as a deacon, soul winner, and an evangelist. Clearly the book of Acts portrays Philip as a man committed to the Lord Jesus, the kind of Christian that the church wanted in a position of leadership. He was a force for good in the Kingdom of God, a man who was in the will of God. As Christians, we need to be in the will of God. As we look at the life of Philip, let us observe what it means in practical terms to be in the will of God.

- I. **We Are in the Will of God When We Are "in Christ."**
 - A. Philip was a committed Christian. The Apostle Paul would have described Philip as a person "in Christ." He was in Christ because he confessed his need, repented of his sin, and put his faith in Christ.
 - B. The will of God always begins with faith in Christ. If we want to be in the center of God's will, we must confess our sin, repent, and trust Christ.
- II. **We Are in the Will of God When We Are in the Church.**
 - A. Philip was very involved in the life of First Baptist Church Jerusalem. Part of his ministry involved caring for widows. It should also be noted that he was under the authority of the church. He didn't do "his own thing." He sought to reach the goals set by the church.
 - B. After becoming a Christian, the will of God always leads a person to active involvement in a local church. If you are seeking to serve God through a local church, you are in the will of God.
- III. **We Are in the Will of God When We Are "Full of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 6:3).**
 - A. The early church wanted leaders who were "filled" with the Spirit. These were

persons who were being controlled by God. Philip was one of those leaders. It appears that Philip began each day with a simple prayer request: "Lord, I want to do your will today."

- B. As Christians we need to be filled with the Spirit. The country preacher put it best when he said, "When you are filled with the Spirit, you certainly won't be filled with sin."
- IV. **We Are in the Will of God When We Are in the Market Place.**
 - A. Chapter 8 of the book of Acts reveals Philip as a Christian in the market place seeking to lead others to faith in Christ. He saw all men created in the image of God, and he took seriously the Great Commission.
 - B. The will of God will always lead us to the market places of this world. Like Philip, we will be involved in "lifestyle evangelism."
 - V. **We Are in the Will of God When We Are in the Word.**
 - A. God reveals Himself through His Word. Philip understood that truth. As the eunuch struggled to understand Isaiah 53 (see Acts 8:28-35), Philip pointed to Jesus as the fulfillment of the ancient prophesy. He could do so with conviction because the Word was in his head, heart, and hand.
 - B. The will of God always leads the believer to a serious study of God's Word. It is through the Word that God speaks to His people. His will is revealed in His Word.

Conclusion:

You say that you want to be in the center of God's will. If that is so, then you will be like Philip—in Christ, in the church, in the market place, in the Word, and filled with the Spirit.

TREASURES

2 Corinthians 4:5-10

Introduction:

At the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, D.C., my wife and I saw the Hope Diamond, one of the world's largest and rarest gems. As we beheld its beauty securely locked in a glass case, we knew that we could neither touch it nor possess it. Neither our Visa nor J. C. Penney card had enough credit to afford it. We were, however, impressed with its uniqueness, value, and beauty. Although it is a treasure men would like to possess, I would rather keep the greater treasure I already have—salvation in Jesus. It is His treasure that He allows me to carry in "an earthen vessel." The longer I behold this treasure, the more I am impressed with its uniqueness, value, and beauty.

I. The Uniqueness of the Treasure Must Be Understood.

- A. There is only one like it in the whole world. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).
- B. You can give salvation away and still have it. In fact, the more you share salvation, the richer you are.
- C. You can never lose salvation, but you can always find it wherever you go. When Paul found salvation on the road to Damascus, he never lost it; however, he found it again and again in places like Antioch, Philippi, Corinth, Ephesus, and Rome.

II. The Value of the Treasure Cannot Be Estimated.

- A. Salvation enriches everyone it touches without any diminution of its worth.
- B. Salvation's practical value is recognized everywhere, while its aesthetic value remains intact.
- C. Salvation's eternal value is well known while its temporal value must be discovered day by day. God's salvation will sustain you.

"We are troubled on every side; yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (vss. 8-10).

III. The Beauty of the Treasure Is Beyond Comparison.

- A. How long did it take nature to compress carbon into the Hope Diamond which dazzles the eyes of men? Not as long as it took eternity to provide our treasure which blesses the hearts of men.
- B. In how many places can a diamond be seen? Our treasure can be seen on every street corner, in the market place, in the mansion and in the humble cottage, among kings and among bond slaves, in polished pulpits in great city churches and in brush arbors, in banks, offices, fields, forests, in any nation and in many homes, in lofty prestige and in humble circumstance.
- C. The treasure comes from God and goes wherever we live. In 1988 our daughter and her family left the United States to serve as foreign missionaries to Macao. Naturally, her mother and I shed a few tears, but the crying did not last very long. We realized that she was going over there to live out God's salvation.
- D. Is the vessel clean that bears the treasure of God? Pure lives magnify God's salvation.

Conclusion:

An old chorus takes the form of a prayer for us:

*Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me,
All His wonderful passion and purity
Oh, thou Spirit Divine,
All my nature refine
Till the beauty of Jesus
Be seen in me.*

GUESS WHO'S COMING AGAIN

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Introduction:

Just before the release of the movie version of Sinclair Lewis' novel, *Elmer Gantry*, New York City subways displayed placards with the words, "Elmer Gantry is coming!"

The New Testament placards the truth that Jesus Christ is coming again. Opinions about the second coming differ, but the truth is definite—He's coming again! Paul declared this promise in the text.

I. The Setting of the Promise.

A. Paul stated the promise of Christ's return in a setting of uncertainty.

1. Paul preached the second coming in Thessalonica, but as time passed, people began to die, and questions began to develop.

2. In that setting of uncertainty, Paul wrote a certain word to remove doubts (vs. 13).

B. The fact of Christ's return is a certain word in uncertain times.

People today face the uncertainty of the future with questions. Pondering the profundities of life produces perplexity. But in our uncertain times, there is the certain word that Jesus is coming again!

II. The Surety of the Promise.

A. The promise of Christ's return was based on a word from the Lord.

1. In the passage of the text, Paul related details about the second coming not found elsewhere in the Scriptures.

2. His source of data was "the word of the Lord" (vs. 15). This was either an unrecorded teaching of Christ, or some special revelation given Paul.

B. This is the most comprehensive Biblical passage about the second coming.

1. First, the Lord himself will come (vs. 16a).

2. Second, the Lord's return will be accompanied by heavenly noises (vs. 16b)—a cry of command, the archangel's voice and the sound of a trumpet.

3. Third, when Christ comes, deceased saints will be raised (*anastasis*, stand again) and living saints will be caught up (*harpazo*) to be with Christ (vss. 16c-17).

C. Thus, people can be sure about the promise.

The Bible promised that Christ would come the first time, and He did! Christ has promised to come again, and He will!

III. The Solace of the Promise.

A. The promise is a comfort for the Christian.

1. Paul wrote, "comfort one another with these words" (vs. 18).

2. The second coming offers no comfort for the lost, but it is an encouragement for believers.

B. The promise gives believers a hope for the future.

No one knows with exactitude what the future holds, but we do know how history will end. History is moving toward the "Day of the Lord"—the day when Christ comes in triumph.

Conclusion:

Placards were designed to generate a lot of interest in a soon-to-be-released movie. The word of God calls people to be aware that a great day is coming.

THE REPUTATION OF A MINISTER

Philippians 2:19-24

Introduction:

Some people live their lives in the shadows cast by the greatness of others. Their role is secondary and supportive rather than one of standing in the spotlight of attention with top billing on the marquee of history. Timothy was such a man. The mention of his name causes a person to think of Paul. If it had not been for Paul, no one would ever have heard of Timothy.

But Timothy was a minister of magnificent reputation. Paul paid tribute to:

I. The Concern Which Timothy Expressed.

- A. Timothy had concern for the welfare of others.

Paul wrote that he would be "genuinely anxious for your welfare" (vs. 20).

- B. Timothy had concern for the interest of Christ.

1. Paul compared him with others "who look after their own interests, not those of Jesus-Christ" (vs. 21).
2. "Who comes first?" "What has priority?" These are fundamental questions to be answered. Jesus said His kingdom and righteousness should be first (Matthew 6:33).

II. The Conduct Which Timothy Exemplified.

- A. Timothy served in the Gospel.

He shared Paul's zeal for the gospel and gave himself in the service of making it known to other people (vs. 22b).

- B. Timothy proved his worth.

1. Paul wrote, "you know his worth" (vs. 22a). He was reminding the Philippians of the value of Timothy's past services.
2. Some people are counted in the church, but they don't count in ways that matter in life and in eternity.

- C. Timothy cooperated with others.

Paul wrote, "He has served with me" (vs. 22). Timothy was a team member, not a solo act. He was glad to cooperate in service even when others were more prominent.

III. The Confidence Which Timothy Enjoyed.

- A. Paul had confidence in Timothy.

1. When someone was needed for a special mission, Timothy was chosen (see 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2; 1 Corinthians 16:10; Philippians 2:19; 1 Timothy 1:3).

2. When Paul was in prison, it was Timothy he asked to come (2 Timothy 4:9, 21).

- B. Paul's confidence must have been an encouragement to Timothy.

1. Paul's letters to Timothy contain words of encouragement and expressions of confidence.
2. Elizabeth Yates wrote the beautiful Christmas novel, *On that Night*. In the story a young widow, whose husband was killed in battle, attended a Christmas Eve service at her church. On the walk home she is joined by a stranger who turns out to be Christ. The young widow begins to talk to the "stranger" about her deceased husband. She says of him, "Jerry needed someone to believe in him the way I did." The stranger replied, "Everyone who walks this earth needs that."

Conclusion:

What Paul wrote about Timothy shows the greatness of his reputation.

OUR RICHES IN CHRIST

1 Peter 1:3-5

Introduction:

Bertha Adams died on April 5, 1974 at age 71. At death she weighed only 50 pounds. During her life she had begged from door to door. She died in West Palm Beach of malnutrition. But after her death, authorities discovered she left behind a fortune of over \$1 million, including more than \$800,000 in cash. She lived in poverty even though she was rich.

Peter wrote to people who were disenfranchised in the world, but rich in Christ. They had the riches of:

I. An Undying Hope (vs. 3).

A. The character of Christian hope.

1. It is a living hope, thus an energizing power in the believer.
2. Christian hope is not a "hope so" hope, but a firm confidence. The Greek word means a steadfast hope about what will be.

B. The cause of Christian hope.

1. It is because of Christ's resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus Christ proves that life is not a dead-end street ending at the grave.
2. It is because of the new birth. People are born to this hope in the experience of conversion.

II. An Unfading Inheritance (vs. 4).

A. The promise of the inheritance.

The believer lives in the here and now, but we have the promise of the inheritance in the hereafter. The Greek word for inheritance was used in the Septuagint to refer to the promised land.

B. The permanence of the inheritance.

1. The description of the inheritance as "imperishable, undefiled, and unfading" means that it cannot be diminished or destroyed.
2. Material wealth on earth is always at the peril of predators (Matthew 6:20), but the Christian's heavenly inheritance is eternally safe.

C. The protection of the inheritance.

The inheritance is being kept (KJV "reserved"). The Greek word means to be guarded or protected.

III. An Unconditional Security (vs. 5).

A. The source of Christian security.

1. The believer's security is not dependent on what he does, or on his "holding out to the end."
2. Instead, the Christian is under the guard of God. The Greek present participle means continuously kept.

B. The strength of Christian security.

It is God's power which keeps the believer secure. The God who has the power to save also has the power to keep secure in His own hand (refer John 10:27-29).

Conclusion:

Like Bertha Adams, a believer may live like a pauper in this world. However, in Christ Jesus every believer is made spiritually rich. In tabulating your assets, don't forget your undying hope, unfading inheritance and unconditional security in Christ.

LIFE'S LAST LOOK

2 Timothy 4:6-8

Introduction:

The last words spoken by people facing death are very revelatory. Consider these—
 Cesare Borgia: "Alas, I am to die, although entirely unprepared." Talleyrand: "I am suffering the pangs of the damned." Thomas Paine: "Stay with me, for God's sake! I cannot bear to be left alone." D. L. Moody: "This is glorious! Earth is receding, Heaven is opening. God is calling me." John Wesley: "The best of all is God is with us."

The text is judged to be some of Paul's last words, and they are about life and death.

I. Paul's Readiness (vs. 6).

A. Paul was aware that the time of his departure was near.

The Greek word for "departure" was used to refer to unyoking an animal, releasing a prisoner, striking a tent, and casting off a ship's moorings.

B. Paul was ready in the awareness of the time of his departure.

1. Death is an experience for which people should prepare. King Hezekiah was told by Isaiah to put his house in order (Isaiah 38:1).
2. Woodrow Wilson's physician told him he was dying. The former president reportedly replied: "I am ready."

II. Paul's Record (vs. 7).

A. Paul was faithful in conflict.

1. The Greek word for "fought" literally means struggle (*agona*).
2. The Lord never promised Christians an easy road. Jesus said in this life we have tribulation (John 16:33).

B. Paul was faithful in continuance.

1. He wrote in the phraseology of a race. The apostle faithfully ran the race of life without quitting.
2. Paul saw others drop out, such as Demas (vs. 10), but he never quit.

C. Paul was faithful in conviction.

1. He kept "the faith." "Kept" means to guard and defend. "Faith" here refers to the truth revealed.
2. Christians must be people of conviction who believe their beliefs.

III. Paul's Reward (vs. 8).

A. Paul knew the Lord would be faithful to the faithful.

The crown (*stephanos*) was a laurel wreath given the winner in Greek games. Having faithfully served, Paul anticipated the winner's crown.

B. The Lord has promised to reward the faithful.

1. Christians are not to serve in order to gain rewards, yet there are rewards hereafter for the faithful.
2. The greatest reward of all for the faithful is to hear Jesus say, "Well done!" (Matthew 25:21, 23).

Conclusion:

The text is Paul's last look at life. The look was introspective, retrospective, and prospective.

A NEW COMMANDMENT

John 13:34-35

Introduction:

"A new commandment I give to you. That you love one another even as I have loved you. That you also love one another" (John 13:34-35).

Three very important truths about love leap from this passage of Scripture. These are truths that will help us authenticate our relationship with Jesus Christ.

I. Christian Love Is Not Optional for Followers of Jesus Christ.

- A. Jesus said, "A new commandment I give to you." This was not a suggestion, nor a recommendation. It was a commandment. For some this is difficult because there is a part of the human personality that rebels against the idea of pure, unconditional love. We feel it is out of place in the world in which we live. It's great to love to a point, but there are times when we prefer to hold grudges, nurture resentments, and make spiteful remarks.
- B. Always trying to make certain that everyone gets what he deserves is alien to the pure sacrificial love that should be characteristic in the life of a Christian. Therefore, Jesus gives us a commandment to love one another.

II. Christian Love is the Christian's Primary Witness to the World.

- A. It is through love that people know that we are followers of Jesus. Church attendance, crosses around the neck, and gifts to the local congregation are no substitutes for Christian love.
- B. If we cannot love our families, neighbors and people of a different color and background, our Christian faith is a fraud, and we are misrepresenting Christ.

C. Brennan Manning in his book, *Abba's Child*, tells of an old woman that lay seriously ill in a hospital. Her closest friend read Scripture aloud to her. Wanting the comfort and support of faith, the sick woman asked her friend to hold her hand. On the other side of the bed, her husband reached out to take her other hand. The wife withdrew it, saying with deep sadness, "Herbert, you are not a believer. Your cruelty and callousness throughout the 40 years of our marriage tells me that your faith is an illusion."

III. Christian Love Is Derived From Our Relationship With Christ.

- A. We are taught to love one another as He has loved us. We love because He first loved us. This is so critical to our understanding of Christian love.
- B. Love does not happen in a vacuum. It is passed from one person to another. Many Christians try to keep Christ's commandments without first nurturing their relationship with Him.
- C. Many in the church attempt to live the life of Christ where there is no discernible connection to Him. Without that connection, our faith is simply an exercise in noble living. It has no real power to draw us out of ourselves and center us in others.

Conclusion:

Jesus says, "A new commandment I give to you. You love one another even as I have loved you. You also love one another. By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

RESTORING BROKEN BROTHERS

Galatians 6:1-2

Introduction:

All around us we see brokenness. Sometimes we experience it in our own lives. We have the need of restoration, and we are responsible for restoring others. The Bible provides examples of those broken and in need of restoration. The list includes Moses, Peter, David, and John Mark.

Moses began as a missionary and became a murderer. In his brokenness, he spent 40 years on the back side of the desert. Eventually, God restored him. Peter denied that he ever knew the Lord; however, John 21 provides us with clear evidence that Peter was restored. God was not finished with him. It was Peter who preached at Pentecost, and 3,000 souls were saved.

David was a man after God's own heart, but he disgraced God. Nathan confronted David, and the confrontation led to restoration. John Mark turned back while accompanying Paul on the first missionary journey. Mark's action became a serious contention between Paul and Barnabas; however, in his last words to Timothy, Paul indicated that John Mark had been restored to usefulness.

Those who are spiritual must be about the ministry of restoration. It is important that we take the correct approach. The Biblical approach is always best. Paul declared three truths regarding the manner of restoration.

I. We Are To Restore Broken Brothers Gently.

- A. "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted" (vs. 1).
- B. The last thing a broken brother needs is a harsh, critical person trying to help. We often condemn and criticize rather than restore.

C. The Greek word that is translated "restore" was often used to describe the mending of broken bones. Christians are in the business of putting broken lives back together.

II. We Are To Restore Broken Brothers Humbly.

- A. "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted" (vs. 1).
- B. A time could come when you might need this ministry of restoration. You may feel you are on top of the world. But let us not forget that pride goes before the fall, and when you think you stand, take heed lest you fall.

III. We Are To Restore Broken Brothers Sympathetically.

- A. "Brothers, if someone is caught in a sin, you who are spiritual should restore him gently. But watch yourself, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (vss. 1-2).
- B. A Christian brother falls into sin, and it brings guilt and shame. Satan says to this brother, "You are no good. You are not a Christian. You don't love God. You are finished." At this point it is our responsibility to say to this brother, "God can restore you and use you in His kingdom."

Conclusion:

As we perform the ministry of restoration, we fulfill the law of Christ. But what is the law of Christ? The law of Christ is that we love God and that we love one another. That should be our supreme motive. Hasn't the Lord restored you repeatedly? Then you must restore others.

THE GOLDEN RULE

Matthew 7:12

Introduction:

In a city in which I once pastored, a real estate agent had a very visible sign located adjacent to a busy thoroughfare. Each day the sign would contain a short message of motivation for those who passed by. On one occasion, the message was "The Golden Rule—he who has the gold makes the rules."

That may be true, but that is not what Jesus meant when He spoke of the golden rule. The golden rule is one of the most familiar verses in the Bible. Jesus instructs us to live by the golden rule. How do we do it?

I. We Must Remember the Golden Rule.

- A. The golden rule was never intended to be a substitute for salvation. Yet, many people feel that if they do enough good things, the Lord will be pleased with them and allow them into heaven. This is salvation by works. We must remember the golden rule was not intended to be a substitute for salvation.
- B. The golden rule is a guide for Christian living. The Bible says that on one occasion, Jesus was confronted by a tricky Pharisaic lawyer who asked, "Teacher, which is the great commandment?" (Matthew 22:36). Jesus instructed him to love the Lord with all his heart, soul, and might. If he did this, he was taking care of the first four commandments. Jesus then added that when he loved his neighbor as himself, he would take care of the final six commandments. Thus, when we observe the golden rule, we are living in relationship to others as Jesus would have us live.

II. We Must Respond to the Golden Rule.

- A. The golden rule is similar to the Great Commission in that we have memorized it by heart but have failed to apply it. If we live by the golden rule, it will

improve our relationships with other people.

1. We would not judge others.
 2. We would not start or repeat gossip about others.
 3. We would pray for others more frequently.
- B. We need to remember the golden rule and respond to it.

III. We Will Be Rewarded by the Golden Rule.

- A. The apostle Paul said in Galatians 6:7, "Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap." If we live our lives by the golden rule, we will be rewarded for it on earth and in heaven.
- B. One of the ways in which we are rewarded for it on earth is through peace of mind. The Bible says that when the apostle Paul appeared before the Sanhedrin he said, "Brethren, I have lived my life with a perfectly good conscience before God up to this day" (Acts 23:1). What wonderful peace it must be to be able to state that we are content before the Lord.

Conclusion:

A prominent and benevolent citizen of Dallas, Texas, died. His friends sought to express their respect and sympathy by sending more than three truckloads of flowers. A judge in Dallas who knew this man well was standing outside the church by an old servant. As the two of them watched the wreaths being loaded for transfer to the cemetery, the judge remarked, "He surely does have lots of flowers, doesn't he?" The old servant replied, "Yes sir, but you know, he been planting the seeds for them flowers a long time."

Christian, you are planting seeds as well. Live by the golden rule.

WHEN CONTENTMENT IS NOT GOOD

Numbers 32:6

Introduction:

Years ago, Frank Howard was athletic director at Clemson University in South Carolina. Some suggested the school add rowing to its athletic department. Howard responded, "We aren't gonna have no sport where you sit down and go backwards" (*Building an Evangelist Church*; Powell, p. 7).

Unfortunately to sit down and go backwards has become the mindset of many churches. The Lord never intended this. He intends for His church to be reaching people, ministering to people, comforting people, and helping people.

The background of our text is that of Moses preparing Israel to enter Canaan. A census had been taken to determine the number of men available for war. At this time, the sons of Reuben and Gad came to Moses with a request to remain with their families in their present location and not cross the Jordan.

The request sounds reasonable. After all, we are taught to be content with what we have, aren't we? Yes, we are, but in this case, contentment was not good. There was more land to be conquered and more battles to be fought. As a result, Moses asked, "Shall your brothers go to war while you yourselves stay here?"

Contentment is not always good in the church. Let us consider some reasons why contentment is not always healthy for the church.

I. Contentment Limits Expansion.

- A. It limits our growth spiritually. Many people have become content spiritually. They are no longer growing in the Lord. They have become satisfied, and contentment is limiting their spiritual growth.
- B. It limits the growth of the church. Normally, contented Christians make up contented churches. If you are content spiritually, you probably feel the

church is all right like it is. If you are growing spiritually, the Holy Spirit is probably showing you new areas of ministry in which you and your church can be involved.

II. Contentment Limits Encouragement.

- A. Suppose the sons of Gad and Reuben had been allowed to remain behind while the other ten tribes went into battle. Israel would have been short-handed! It is possible they would not have been as effective as they were. It is even possible they would not have been victorious.
- B. The church often limps along in ministry due to the contentment of its members. There are people who need to be touched, loved, and taught, and we have no one to teach them. Members are either too busy or untrained. They are unwilling to make a commitment, and people go unreached.

III. Contentment Limits Evangelism.

- A. One of the most fascinating stories of the book of Joshua is the story of Rahab the harlot helping the spies of Israel. The Bible says that because of her assistance, she and her father's household were spared by Joshua and allowed to live in the midst of Israel. Rahab came to know God.
- B. I realize this is speculation, but suppose the sons of Reuben and Gad had not gone with the other tribes of Israel. Suppose they had remained behind. Suppose Israel had been unable to take Jericho due to a lack of manpower. It is possible that Rahab and her family would have never known God due to the contentment of these people.
- C. If we become content where we are, there may very well be souls who are lost due to our contentment.

HOW TO JUST SAY "NO"

Titus 2:11-12 (NIV)

Introduction:

A 1991 National Institute on Drug Abuse survey of 15,500 seniors at 136 high schools revealed that 11% had used cocaine or crack, 15% had taken illegal stimulants, 18% had inhaled drugs, 36% had tried marijuana, 63% had smoked cigarettes, and 88% had tried alcohol (1993 *World Almanac and Book of Facts*, p. 227)

Our behavior is out of control, and it is destroying our society. What are we going to do about it? Nancy Reagan popularized the saying, "Just Say 'No' to drugs." The Southern Baptist Convention began the "True Love Waits" campaign to encourage young people to pledge themselves to sexual purity before marriage.

Whether it's alcohol, drugs, or sex before marriage, we realize that we should just say "no." But how do we get the strength to say "no?" Titus 2:11-12 tells how.

I. Let God Save You by Grace (vs. 11).

A. God brings salvation. You and I cannot change on the outside until God does something first to change us on the inside. God did this by bringing salvation through grace. Verse 11 begins, "For the grace of God that brings salvation..." God is the one who took the first step to save us by sending his Son Jesus Christ to earth to die a sacrificial death for us on the cross.

B. Grace is available to all. Verse 11 concludes by saying that this grace "has appeared to all men." "Appeared" doesn't mean that salvation is automatic; it means that it is available.

Nobody is too far from God to be reached by His grace. Paul could write these words with personal conviction, for even though he helped kill Stephen, the first Christian martyr, and called himself the "chief of sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15), God's grace still saved him.

II. Let Grace Teach You To Say "No" (vs. 12a).

- A. The NIV translates verse 12, "It teaches us to say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions..." The pronoun "it" refers back to "grace" in verse 11. Who teaches us to say no? Grace teaches us.
- B. John Newton was saved as a slave trader, but he did not immediately get out of the slavery business. It was four years later before he gave up the slave trade, and four more years before he began to preach. As he grew in Christ, the grace that had saved him also began to teach him to see life from Christ's point of view. Slowly but surely, grace taught John Newton to say "no."
- C. No only must you be saved by grace, but you must also let this same grace teach you to say "no" to ungodly practices and worldly passions. Only by grace will you have the power to do it.

III. Let Grace Teach You To Say "Yes" (vs. 12b).

- A. This is the positive side. The easiest way to say "no" to one thing is to say "yes" to something else. If your wife asks you to mow the grass on your day off, it's easier to say, "Well, I was going to change the oil and wash the car" than to say, "No, I won't mow the grass." It's easier to say "no" to something if you can replace it with a "yes" for something else.
- B. The same thing is true in living the Christian life. So the emphasis in the last part of verse 12 is on positive things to which we can say "yes": "live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age."
- C. Jesus said, "I am the vine; you are the branches" (John 15:5). The result of being planted in Christ by his grace is that we produce the fruit of a Christian lifestyle (Galatians 5:22-23). God's saving grace is the root of our salvation, and good deeds are the resulting fruit of our salvation.

HOW TO GRADUATE FROM LIFE WITH HONORS

I Timothy 4:11-15

Introduction:

All across the continent from May to June, graduation exercises take place. Students of all ages walk across the platform and receive high school diplomas and college degrees. A few of these graduates enjoy the special recognition of graduating with honors.

Paul instructed his young protégé, Timothy, how to graduate from life with honors. Paul's words are pertinent to people of all ages and stages in life even today.

Paul declares, "Don't let anyone despise your youth" (vs. 12). It literally means, "Don't let anyone look down upon you." Paul admonished Timothy not to be intimidated by the people who may not agree with his Lord and his lifestyle.

The expression, "be an example to the believers" constitutes the positive counsel from the apostle. Paul described how a Christian can graduate from life with honors and be an example for Christ.

I. Be an Example in Speech.

- A. A Christian should be one who constantly seeks to speak "the truth in love" (Ephesians 4:15).
- B. In Colossians 4:6 the apostle Paul declared, "Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one." How we speak as well as what we say reveals volumes about what we believe.

II. Be an Example in Conduct.

- A. A young child's report card often has a place for grades to be recorded by the teacher for each subject. Such familiar topics as math, science, history, and English are the basics. There is one

other area often emphasized on the report card—conduct. Many times parents examine this area before they consider the grades.

- B. Christians ought to be vitally interested in good grades in the area of conduct.

III. Be an Example in Love.

- A. Love is an overworked and poorly understood word. It is oftentimes used to describe less important things that we like such as food, sports, and hobbies. Love is a beautiful word of pre-eminent importance in the Bible. God loves us, and we are to pattern His love before other people.
- B. In the Academy Award winning movie *Forrest Gump*, the main character is a slow, but lovable fellow. In one scene Gump says to his girlfriend, Jenny, "I may not be a smart man, but I know what love is." You don't have to be a Rhodes Scholar to know what love is; you just need to know Christ and love as He loves!

IV. Be An Example In Faith.

- A. Faith is knowing who Jesus is! Faith is also believing the promises of God and acting on them. That is the way you affirm faith.
- B. Faith leads to faithfulness, which includes sharing your faith with others. When you are an example in faith, other people are encouraged to trust God.

V. Be an Example in Purity.

- A. Ephesus was a center of sexual impurity where young Timothy was faced with enormous temptations.
- B. The same is true of our society today. We live in a sex-crazed culture which seeks to reduce behavior to sexual responses. Like Paul, we must reject such tendencies and maintain the purity of our minds, hearts, and bodies.

Scholarships and Grants for Mississippi Baptist Church-Related Vocational Students

William Carey College

1995 - 1996

1. **William Carey Baptist Student Scholarships** which range from \$150 to \$300 per year for eligible students who are active members of a Mississippi Baptist church.
2. **William Carey Ministerial and Youth Leadership Grants** which range from \$300 to \$900 per year based on a nomination from a church pastor or minister of a Southern Baptist church. Students must have demonstrated Christ-centered leadership activities in local churches or community-service organizations.
3. **William Carey CRV Scholarships** which range from \$300 to \$600 per year for church-related vocation students who enroll at the College.
4. **William Carey Baptist Association CRV Scholarships** which range from \$300 to \$700 per year based on a nomination from the Director of Missions in local Mississippi Baptist associations.
5. **William Carey General Studies Scholarships** range from \$300 to \$600 per year for CRV adult students, age 25 or older, who enroll in a CRV concentration area in the Bachelor of General Studies degree program.
6. **William Carey Chorale/Ensemble Scholarships** which total \$450 each year. These awards are based on auditions for church music students conducted by the Dean of the Winters School of Music.
7. **William Carey CRV Dependent Scholarships** are available totaling \$600 each year for sons, daughters, and spouses of pastors, missionaries, ministers, and other full-time employees of local Baptist churches, Baptist Associations, or other Mississippi Baptist or Southern Baptist agencies.
8. **William Carey College Alumni Dependent Scholarships** are available totaling \$300 each year for sons, daughters, brothers or sisters, and spouses of alumni.
9. **William Carey Baptist Association Student Scholarships** which range from \$300 to \$700 each year based on a nomination from the Director of Missions in local Mississippi Baptist associations. These scholarships are available to students who are active members of a Mississippi Baptist church.

Southern Baptist CRV students may apply to the Board of Ministerial Education of the Mississippi Baptist Convention for additional financial aid. The aid supplied by this Board to qualified CRV students comes directly to the students in a monthly check. This aid is applied for in a separate process through the office of the Director of CRV Programs at William Carey College.



Study Where Costs are Lower
and
Scholarships are Higher
at

William Carey College

Comparative Educational Costs at Selected Colleges and Universities — Fall 1995*

<u>Institutions</u>	<u>Tuition & Fees</u>	<u>Room & Board</u>	<u>1-Year* Totals</u>	<u>4-Year Totals</u>
1. Spring Hill College	\$12,514	\$4,788	\$17,302	\$69,208
2. Millsaps College	12,080	4,700	16,780	67,120
3. Samford University	8,648	4,024	12,672	50,688
4. Belhaven College	8,040	3,100	11,140	44,560
5. Ouachita University	6,970	3,000	9,970	39,880
6. University of Mobile	6,240	3,622	9,862	39,448
7. Mississippi College	6,350	2,930	9,280	37,120
8. Union University	6,350	2,930	9,280	37,120
9. Louisiana College	5,739	2,972	8,711	34,844
10. Tougaloo College	5,925	2,500	8,425	33,700
11. William Carey College (WCC)	\$5,340	\$2,335	\$7,675	\$30,700
12. Mississippi Comprehensive Universities	\$2,508	\$2,520	\$5,028	\$20,112
13. Mississippi Community Colleges (MCC)	798	1,491	2,289	
14. 2 + CAREY Plan (WCC and MCC)				\$19,928

*Survey of Institutional Business Offices

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 - No extra tuition for out-of-state or international students.
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 - Convenient 10-week trimesters — finish your degree in three years
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 - Scholarships average over \$2,000 annually for many students.
 - Pell grants average over \$1,600 annually for eligible students.
 - Work service grants average \$1,000 annually.
 - New grants of \$500 to \$2,500 are available for eligible Mississippi residents.
- WCC has a new 2+2 Plan with Mississippi Community Colleges
 - Maximize your transfer credit to graduate sooner.
 - Personalize your degree plan for your academic major.
 - Continue your studies where teaching is the priority.

For Admissions, Transfer Credit, and Financial Aid Information, Call (800) 962-5991.

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.”

—1 Cor. 1:18

“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

—1 Cor. 1:21

“For though I preach the gospel, I have nothing to glory of: for necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!

—1 Cor. 9:16

“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

—2 Cor. 4:5