

Foundation of Faith

For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ 1 Cor. 3.11



Summer 2011

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For children, summertime is a long break from school. During this time, many families like to travel, whether locally or abroad, and they give much time and thought to where they are going to spend their holiday.

I remember my parents sitting at their kitchen table with a big map opened in front of them, planning and tracing the route we would drive to visit relatives in California.

Today we might skip the map, and instead, surf the internet, looking for good deals on vacation packages, accommodation and tours. Then we pack and make sure we have access to a GPS so we don't get lost. There's an element of adventure in going to new places, and trying new things!

Life is an adventure too. Although we don't know what the future may bring, we nonetheless make plans. In doing so, we may ask family or friends for advice, and we seek God's Will in prayer. I've learned that not every day brings good and exciting things, and not every day goes as planned. Some of my carefully made plans can go completely awry. Disappointments, sickness, and failures, interrupt the straight-forward trip I've envisioned. But despite difficulties, I am learning to trust in God's leading. It is He who says, "I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say, My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please" (Isaiah 46.10 NIV).

God knows where I've been; He knows what tomorrow will bring!

I pray that as you travel on your life's journey, you will trust in the One who says: "I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future'" (Jeremiah 29.11 NIV).



God hath not promised skies always blue
Flower strewn pathways, all our lives through;
God hath not promised sun without rain,
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

God hath not promised we shall not know
Toil and temptations, trouble and woe;
He hath not told us we shall not bear
Many a burden, many a care.

God hath not promised smooth roads and wide,
Swift, easy travel, needing no guide;
Never a mountain, rocky and steep,
Never a river turbid and deep.

*But God hath promised strength for the day,
Rest for the labour, light for the way,
Grace for the trials, help from above,
Unfailing kindness, undying love.*

-Anne Johnson Flint

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A GREAT ADVENTURE

by C.W. Naylor

LIFE HAS WONDERFUL POSSIBILITIES for good or for evil. It may be a great adventure upon which we go, with ever-changing scenes, through which we may march with our heads up and a song of victory in our hearts. To many, life is this.

On the other hand, life may mean a servitude in which the weary, discouraged, and almost hopeless prisoner of fate marches on toward an eternal dungeon. One may be a slave to worry, fear, foreboding. Life may be a series of defeats. But this is not the normal life. No one need live such a life.

Life was intended to be triumphant, joyous, prosperous. It was meant to be filled with gladness, with light hearts and with singing. Facing life as we are capable of facing it we can make it an ever-ascending pathway with our vision expanding to an ever remoter horizon. Life may be a series of discoveries. A great American said, "I shall pass this way but

once." Each day there is new territory to be explored, new experiences to be had.

The terrain of our life is largely of our own choosing. We may go on the upland way or down through the swamps. We may have the fragrance of flowers and of fruit, of pines and cedars, or we may have the miasma of decaying vegetation. Life is full of boundless possibilities. It is a great continent lying before us awaiting exploration. Shall we go through it with bowed heads and burdened shoulders or shall we cast off our burden, lift up our heads, and be men and women in the midst of a great adventure?

Explorers do not always have an easy time. Frequently they have great

difficulties to overcome. But exploration gives zest to life. The constantly changing scenes always bring freshness of interest. The difficulties and privations of the past are quickly forgotten in the inspiring prospect that lies before us. We need to cultivate in life the spirit of the explorer. We need to develop our possibilities, our capabilities, and have the inspiration of a great purpose.

It is so easy to say, "Oh, I do not amount to anything. I never can be anything. I never can do anything worth while," then to settle down in the prison-house of this idea and attitude and never be free, not because we might not be free but because we do not choose to be free. So often people say, "My life is not worth living." Every life is worth living, but every life is *worth living right*. So many lives are like an airplane that is so heavily loaded it can never gain altitude.



There are some things of which we must rid ourselves in order to live a normal life. A bird entangled in the grass cannot fly. It must first be freed from its entanglement. In like manner we must be loosed from our entanglement to have freedom of life. Our entanglements are often of our own making. We build our own prisons; we shut ourselves up in our own cells.

Circumstances can never long imprison us if our spirits are free. Has not someone written, "Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage"? The free spirit cannot be imprisoned. Let us not be content with servitude. Let us cry out with Patrick Henry, "Give me liberty," and then strike with the sword of a determined will to cut our way through whatever may imprison or hamper us. Do you say, "This is easier said than done"? True, but it can be done by everyone. It is well within the possibilities of each of us.

What are we getting out of life? In the first place, we can get out of it no more than we put into it. So if we are getting too little out of our lives, if they are unsatisfying, or impoverished, or hemmed in, it is because we are putting too little into them.

Our lives are what we make them. It is not how *long* we live but how *intensively* we live, how full of worthwhile things we fill our lives that make them worthwhile and satisfying.

Life in reality is what we are within. Circumstances are the casket in which lies the jewel of personality. The value is not in the casket but in the jewel. Therefore, life is not made up of favorable or unfavorable circumstances, nor of possessions either many or few, nor of recognition or the lack of it, nor of honors given by others. It is what we are that gives quality to all these

things when they come into life. We can take musical sounds and blend them to produce either harmony or discord. Things can be made either helpful or harmful.

Chemical elements can be combined to create wholesome things or poisonous things. It depends upon the elements we put into our lives and how we combine them as to whether we have happiness or unhappiness. If we put into our lives selfishness, disregard of others, unkindness, discourteousness, ill-temper, complaints, murmuring, distrust, doubts, fear, hate, malice, envy, covetousness, and the like, we shall inevitably have bitterness, dissatisfaction, sorrow, and similar things in our lives as the natural result. **Let us not say that God makes our life as it is, or that it is our lot or that people wrong us.**

No, we are making the quality, if not the form and outline of our lives. Circumstances alone neither make us nor mar us. It is our reaction to circumstances that produces results in us. What ruins one makes another. The things that are obstacles in life to some become stumbling stones, but to others stepping-stones, according to the use made of them.

So after all, what we shall have in life is our own choice. We are the architects of our own lives. If we build with noble materials, carved with patient care, we shall have beauty and grace in our lives. If we put into them love, loyalty, gentleness, meekness,

kindness, faith, forbearance, patience, hope, we shall not fail to draw good dividends from all these things, dividends which shall rejoice our hearts, cause our eyes to sparkle, and the song of gladness to well up.

The purpose of life is not merely to have a good time, to gratify the senses, to eat, drink, and be merry. Its high and holy purpose is the building of character. Good character is the basis of real happiness.

Circumstances alone neither make us nor mar us. It is our reaction to circumstances that produces results in us.

The poet has said,

*“Only the holy and innocent sing
Out of a bosom where pleasures abide.”*

The process of character-building is not always easy, but it is always profitable. Each of us has capacity to develop a great character, a noble and beautiful life which cannot be unhappy. In such a soul there is a depth into which trouble never can reach. No matter how trials and troubles may press in upon the life there is a calm and undisturbed peace at the very center of life. There is a joy that springs up on the darkest days. There is a light that shines in the deepest night. Life must have its discipline and its difficulties to make it of value, to give it character. Iron ore is of little value until it passes through the fire and is purified, tempered, and shaped. The chisel must bite deeply into the marble again and

again before the angel in it looks out. Paint of little value, when carefully spread upon the canvas by a great artist becomes of rare beauty and worth. Likewise the little things seemingly valueless in our lives become richer than a king's ransom when their possibilities are developed.

The Christian life of many people is unsatisfying. Instead of being joyous with the elements of heaven it is burdensome. There are two causes for this. If when we come to God we still cling to the things of the past and try to graft Christianity upon our old lives, we shall not have the fruits of righteousness. There must be a break with the past. There must be a newness of life. We must be new creatures. Gone with the old life that is forsaken will be many of the causes of heartaches and sorrows and burdens of the past. However, if when we come to God, and give up many things—to make up for the past—and do not replace these things with something just as good or better, we impoverish ourselves and our lives become barren and unsatisfying.

We should fill our lives with the better things, the pleasant things of righteousness, of truth, nobility, and service, that make life

rich for ourselves and profitable to others. We need the freshness and beauty of true spirituality. We need activities—interesting and profitable things. God said to us, “re-joyce and be glad.”

The Christian life is full of wonderful possibilities. I do not mean merely the formal and empty shell of Christian profession. I mean the inner divine life begotten by the Holy Spirit. A life spent in exploring the kingdom of God on earth is always an interesting and attractive and happy life.

Let us make our lives a great adventure. It is our privilege now and then with heart and mind to make an excursion to heaven, there to sit and meditate beside the river of God. We can go back through history and become acquainted with the saints of old. We can have fellowship with their joys. We can drink of the “rivers of pleasure” and eat of the “honey out of the rock.” We can live love’s way; bask in the sunlight of heaven. We can “run and not be weary, and walk and never faint.”

Adapted from Chapter 2 of *The Secret of the Singing Heart*, by C.W. Naylor, copyright © 1930, 1954 by Warner Press, Inc. All rights reserved. used by permission of Church of God Ministries, Inc.

In the day of my trouble I will call upon You,
For You will answer me. Psalm 86:7

JOYFUL IN ADVERSITY:

C.W. NAYLOR

“Adversity is quite certain to come to us in one form or another . . . we may expect our share and should not leave it out of account in life’s plans . . . we ought to be ready to meet it bravely, confidently, and resourcefully, so that we shall not be overwhelmed,” wrote Naylor.

He was a man who knew about adversity. For about forty-one years, while an invalid and bedridden, he wrote books, songs, as well as articles for the *Gospel Trumpet*. His writings were a comfort to others who faced adversity. One of his hymns underlines his attitude toward life’s trials:

God’s way is best, I will not murmur,
Although the end I may not see,
Where’er He leads I’ll meekly follow,
God’s way is best, is best for me.

Charles Wesley Naylor was born in Ohio in 1874. At the age of eight his mother died and he went to live with his grandparents. In 1892 he was saved in the Methodist church. The same year he became acquainted with the Church of God and withdrew from his former denomination. In 1896 he came to work at the publishing venture of the Church of God, the Gospel Trumpet Company, then located in Grand Junction, Michigan.

Sometime thereafter, Brother Naylor joined other ministers in evangelistic meetings and alternately worked at the publishing office. By July 1905 he married Emma Hess and they continued to labor in evangelistic work.

While in Florida conducting tent meetings in 1908, Brother Naylor was seriously injured when he helped move some timbers under a tent. Shortly thereafter he again was injured in a bus accident and by June 1909 was confined to his bed for the rest of his life.

He recalls the most thrilling experiences of his life happened in the hospital. On two occasions, just before surgery, as he lay praying, an angel suddenly stood beside his bed. Such awe and glory overwhelmed him that he could do nothing but look at the angel. During the extreme suffering which followed, he was carried above it all by the glory of the Lord that filled him.

Naylor’s wife Emma, was a inspiration and constant help to him especially while he was an invalid. However, in March 1926, she passed away, leaving him to continue on alone for more than twenty-three years.

Before and after his injury, Naylor did a lot of literary work and song writing. During his life he penned eight books, many tracts and pamphlets and 150 gospel hymns. In spite of severe trials, pain, suffering and adversity, he continued to walk with his God and was a source of encouragement for many others. Charles W. Naylor passed from this life to his eternal reward on February 21, 1950.

-Kurt Pudell

Sources: Heavenly Song, Buehler, Warner Press ©1993, 47-48; When the Trumpet Sounded, CE Brown, Gospel Trumpet Co. 1951, 180-182; Gospel Trumpet, Anderson, IN, March 25, 1926,13



THE GUIDANCE OF GOD

Destiny for the most part is determined by destination, and direction will decide what that will be.

Man has engaged all the skill of scientific inventions to assist him in providing infallible direction finders. These instruments are so reliable that a pilot many miles aloft soaring over a trackless ocean can pinpoint the exact spot of his location at any given time and estimate the distance to any given place on the globe. Men of the forest use other means of keeping bearings. Without a compass and even without sun or stars to tell the points of the compass, a competent guide can read the eloquent writing of nature accurately without getting lost.

If you are lost, it is more important to discover the right direction than it is to multiply miles of travel. ***Distance is not as important as direction.*** This is so true in the physical sense that it is entirely obvious. Basically it is even more true in the spiritual sense even though the importance is less obvious.

Since direction is so important, God has endowed almost all his creatures with intricate and very delicate equipment for this

purpose. A minister friend was visiting at our home one day and he observed a tiny insect possibly not more than one-half an inch long. This insect evidently wanted to cross our lawn and to this end it found a launching pad on a blade of grass where the course was clear and heaved itself forward two or three feet. It landed topsy-turvy like; scrambled around until it righted itself and then took another flying leap. The entire procedure took the better part of an hour but in all that time the tiny insect never got confused or altered its direction. It always leaped towards its objective no matter how much it tumbled about on landing. We call this nature. Sometimes we call it instinct or providence.

But if God can put such reliable mechanism in such a tiny and transitory creature, how much more it seems certain that He would not leave the destiny of man to chance. Surely then God can guide His children if they will but discover the instruments through which His Mind can reveal itself to us.

Nature is replete with examples of things which cannot be accounted for by Chance. A certain small fish lays its eggs in the sand on one particular seashore. This may not seem extraordinary in itself, but the fact that this fish comes in with the tide and that in some miraculous manner instinctively knows the last wave of the high tide is beyond explanation. Yet it is this one and only breaker that deposits millions of the fishes on a particular shore where they perform their domestic duties of laying eggs before the return of high tide. How can all these millions of fishes determine spontaneously and infallibly which towering wave crest of the incoming tide will leave its lapping waters highest on the shore line? If God can put that much guidance in a tiny fish, would He leave the guidance of man to chance?

Many birds travel south for winter and migrate northward again in the spring. There are many marvels related to the various species with scarcely any two being alike although there is a similarity in general. One bird called the cliff swallow, nests in various parts of North America during the summer. In winter the entire species congregates in Capistrano, California. This in itself is a marvelous achievement but it is only a minor part of the phenomena. Nature has in some manner endowed these birds with equipment which enables the entire species to arrive in Capistrano within the space of a few hours. When you reflect that they come from many different sections of the country, and the dif-

ferences in distance amounts to hundreds of miles, this simultaneous arrival is a staggering accomplishment. If God can put such timing and guidance in such a tiny bird, will He leave the homecoming of the soul to chance?

Nature is not only kind in its provisions for its creatures but it is harsh in enforcing its laws. You may have heard the proverb, "The eagle stirs its nest." This is based on actual fact. Mother eagle builds her aerie, or nest on some lofty rocky pinnacle and she lines it with sheep skins and other comfortable material. The young egrets are contented, but as they begin to reach maturity, the mother eagle tosses out all the lining of the nest leaving only sharp prodding sticks to jab and irritate the nesting birds. This is Mother eagle's way of making life so miserable and unbearable that the young ones long to flex their wings and soar. One by one they take the fateful plunge and although

Would God leave the guidance of man to chance?

terrified at first, they soon learn they are not alone in space. Mother eagle swoops beneath the young one and bears it up to heights aloft until it masters the art of flying solo. Is the launching of an egret more important than the initiation of a person on the road of life?

Mother bear has a different technique. When her cubs are old enough to be on their

own she sends them scampering up a tree and tells them in bear language to stay there. Then Mother Bear gets lost, so to speak. She disappears from the scene and leaves the cubs whimpering until hunger finally drives them down—and from that time forward they are on their own.

Each creature in some miraculous manner has a pattern of its own with which Providence has equipped it for survival. No creature is entirely safe. The element of danger is never absent. The laws of Nature are rigid and can be ignored only at one's peril. But the fundamental principle of God's laws works for the good of all His creatures while any violation reacts to the destruction of the violator!

Spiritual guidance may be much more complex, but the God who said, "I will guide thee with mine eye (KJV)," is capable of re-

People who are intent on reaching a destination invariably consult a map to chart their course.

deeming His promise. If a salmon can leave the spot where it was spawned and wend its way for several years through the uncharted paths of the oceans and then unerringly return to the identical place in the stream where it first found life, and there spawn its roe and die, surely the God who gave us the spirit of life is competent to complete the cycle of bringing us ultimately into His everlasting fellowship. The big question is how? This

answer must be simple rather than obscure. Where do we turn for direction? What are the fixed stars of the spiritual realm? What compass or magnet do we consult?

God gave us a magnet. Jesus said, "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all peoples to Myself" (John 12.32). The magnets of the world universally pull downward. Water cascades downward to the sea. Avalanches crash down gorges. Trees topple down in the storm. And sad to say, when men follow their own inclinations, their course is downward too. Someone has said truly, "Men and rivers become crooked by following the way of least resistance."

God's magnet is Christ. He reverses the pull of the world. He draws us upward when our spirit is akin to His Spirit—a magnet only attracts substances of a similar nature. When Christ is our center of gravity, our entire life will revolve about Him and be drawn upwards toward Him.

Secondly, God gave us the light. Jesus is the Light of the World. No one needs to get lost if he regards the sun. Sin is compared with clouds that obscure the sun (Isaiah 44.22 & Isaiah 59.2). Sin is the cloud that obscures the light of God. Jesus is called the Sun of Righteousness, and as long as we walk in His light we can be sure of our direction. The Bible says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Psalm 66.18).

We can only be sure of God's guidance if we unquestioningly walk in the light and turn our backs on sin.

A third direction finder for guidance is the Word of God which is often correctly compared to a map. People who are intent on reaching a destination invariably consult a map to chart their course. They first find out where they are, and then proceed to plot the route which will lead to the desired destination. The Bible will reveal this information to those who will follow its instruction.

God has many other methods of imparting guidance to His children if we are in tune with Him. Godly parents or Spirit-filled leaders, or sometimes our Christian companions help. Circumstances and even sickness may speak in a language which the seeking soul will discover in the path leading to God.

However, in addition to the *map*, the *sun* and the *magnet*, or any other means, God has also given us a *guide*. When Christ was about to leave this world, He said "And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper . . ." (John 14.16). Jesus said the Holy Spirit will guide us "into all truth." (John 16.13). God did not leave His children in this world as orphans. We are not left alone stranded or deserted. We are not islands in a shoreless sea. A *guide* goes with us. A map can show the way; the magnet can attract and the sun can reveal, but a *guide* keeps company with us and shares the journey. This is the role of the Holy Spirit who unerringly and faithfully interprets God's will to us. God gives His best to those who leave the choice to Him.

God, the great righteous Judge, seals our destiny but we determine what it will be by the direction we choose. Jesus emphasized this in these words: "wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matt. 7.13-14). Nature may seem harsh with its inflexible laws, but when we cooperate with them they work providentially. When we violate them we cannot escape the consequences.

The laws relating to the spiritual realm are no less precise and the penalties are no less severe than in the natural kingdom because the same God operates in both spheres. But God has made the compensations for obedience so rewarding, that they far excel any sacrifice that may be required in order to attain the goal. If God can guide a tiny insect, or a little bird or creature of the field, then I know God can guide me too. And just as they must co-operate with the laws with which a kind Providence has endowed them and conform to those laws, so must my mind and will be subject to, and in harmony with, the Divine Transmitter in order to operate effectively.

Reprinted with the kind permission of Gladys Krueger (nee Heffren) on behalf of her late father, H.C. Heffren.

Tell Me About HOLY LIVING

THE CHRISTIAN FAITH MAY BE shared in many ways. However, nothing is as convincing as the life of a person who is totally committed to God. Such a life leaves no doubt about the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. It creates in other people a desire to know Christ.

The Bible calls such a total commitment sanctification, which means “to be fully surrendered to God” or “to be set apart for God.” Only when you make this full commitment to God can you “declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” (1 Peter 2.9 NIV).

Of course, sanctification is not simply what you do—it’s what God does. When you consecrate yourself to God completely, his Holy Spirit will bring amazing changes to your life.

I remember when my brother went to an altar of prayer to be sanctified. He had accepted Christ as his Savior. To the best of his ability, he was living a Christian life. However, he had an uncontrollable temper—the kind of explosive temper that expressed itself in angry outbursts of rage, resulting in broken hearts and broken relationships. Sorry for each outburst of anger, he often returned to the altar, seeking God’s forgiveness. But on this particular night, he did not return to his seat until he had claimed God’s promise of entire sanctification. We heard no shouting or ecstatic utterance, just my brother’s quiet statement that he believed God

would sanctify entirely his spirit, soul, and body (1Thess. 5.23).

I saw immediately that my brother’s life was changed. It was evident in his attitude and conduct. He still had a temper, but it was controlled by the Holy Spirit. His anger was now directed against violence, injustice, poverty, and evil, not on inflicting pain and shame. His total personality was transformed by the grace of God.

A HOLY LIFE IS SCRIPTURAL

Sanctification is necessary for Christian discipleship. Jesus’ first disciples had left all to follow him. Jesus said they belonged to him and were no longer of the world (John 17.6). Yet, while he sent them out to serve in ministry (Luke 10.1), they still wrestled with spiritual pride and selfish ambition (Luke 9.46). Therefore, Jesus prayed, “For their sakes I sanctify Myself, so that they also may be sanctified” (John 17.19). Before ascending to heaven, Jesus ordered them “not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait [there] for the promise of the Father” (Acts 1.4). They were ready to share Christ with the world only after

the Holy Spirit had cleansed their motives and morals. Scripture teaches that sanctification is essential to unity in the church.

Sanctification is God's will for every Christian (1 Thess. 4.3, 7), and anything less will fracture our relationships with one another. "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, to make her holy . . . without stain or wrinkle . . . so that she might be holy and blameless" (Eph 5.25–27, NIV).

Sanctification is required for leadership in the church. Those selected to serve as church leaders are to be "full of the Spirit" (Acts 6.3, NIV). Sanctified leaders do not engage in power plays or political manipulation to achieve personal goals. Through the Holy Spirit controlling the lives of its leaders, God controls the church.

A HOLY LIFE IS PRACTICAL

Today, people are searching for a Christian way of life that is authentic, practical, and real. They wonder whether they can truly experience such a life here and now, or whether it's merely a theoretical ideal. The good news is, God offers such a life to every Christian. It is indeed practical. In fact, it is essential if we are to serve Christ in a world such as ours. Only the Holy Spirit can cleanse and empower us. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit transformed 120 Christians gathered in an upper room. In that experience, tongues of fire rested on each of them (Acts 2.3). Fire is a symbol of the cleansing, purging, purifying power of the Holy Spirit. John the baptizer had

said, "I baptize you with water for repentance . . . he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire" (Matt 3.11, NIV). While salvation brings forgiveness for sins we have committed, sanctification cleanses the human will, where sin originates.

The cleansing of sanctification does not remove anything that is essentially human. All human emotions remain but are cleansed by the Holy Spirit so that they will be used only for God's glory (1 Cor. 6.19–20). The Holy Spirit's cleansing removes an inordinate sense of one's importance, the desire for self-recognition, the compulsion to magnify the faults of others, and selfishness.

Spiritual power is promised to Christ's followers for the primary purpose of drawing others to Christ and telling them about him.

This power comes in the person of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "You know Him, for he dwells with you and will be in you" (John 14.17). The Spirit's power enables us to do God's will faithfully.

This power enables us to be a certain kind of people more than to do a certain kind of work. Some Christians hope to receive extraordinary power to heal the sick, to cast out devils, to teach and preach. But God promises every Christian more than that—the power to be like Jesus (Rom 8.9). We are to be holy as he is holy (1 Pet 1.15–16). Jesus believed the impossible, loved the unlovable, and forgave the unforgivable—and we are to be like him!

Indeed, we can be like Christ when the Holy Spirit empowers us. The Holy Spirit gives sanctified people the power to resist any temptation to sin. Sanctified people can overcome temptation, for “the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world” (1 John 4.4, NIV). Sanctification does not make sin impossible, but now it becomes possible for us not to sin. The Holy Spirit enables us to discern good from evil, to make right choices, and to live free from sin. We should say a word about perfection, because this confuses many people.

Sanctification does not make sin impossible, but now it becomes possible for us not to sin.

Does sanctification mean that a person is perfect? Is there no more room for learning and growth?

While sanctification is an instantaneous experience, it is also a continuous growth in grace (Heb. 12.14). So a sanctified Christian says with Paul, I do not consider myself already perfect (Phil. 3.12), but “I press on toward the goal to win the prize” (Phil. 3.14, NIV). The goal is that we may become more and more like Christ in every way (Eph. 4.15).

A HOLY LIFE IS AVAILABLE

If you are convinced that you need to pursue godliness, then follow the steps to sanctification outlined in God’s Word:

1. Surrender. Totally surrender to God’s will and plan for your life (Rom. 12.1–2).
2. Ask. As a child of God, ask for the Fa-

ther’s indwelling Holy Spirit (Luke 11.13). The Spirit will reveal truth to you, counsel you when in doubt, and convict you when you are tempted.

3. Obey. Yes, obey all of God’s revealed Word, walking in the light of truth as Christ does. Inconsistent conversation and conduct are unacceptable to God. His commandments are not grievous when his Holy Spirit controls us (Acts 5.32).

4. Believe. The Holy Spirit is able and willing to do all that God has promised. We cannot cleanse our own human will and empower ourselves to be Christlike. Our best discipline will not enable us to authentically express godliness and live a holy life (Gal. 3.2). But we believe, on the authority of God’s Word, that the Holy Spirit can do all of these things in our lives.

The inward evidence of sanctification is not some type of ecstatic experience. It is the deep assurance that you have begun a transformation into a life of holiness, into the genuine image of God.

The outward evidence of sanctification is not a life of monastic isolation or an attitude of religious pride. People will see a change in your attitudes. They will notice your unselfishness. They will be blessed by your compassionate response to human need. And they will be drawn to the Lord.

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Heading in the Right Direction?

by Benita Tovstiga

I RECENTLY DROVE TO the optometrist with my daughter. I drive there regularly, so it should have been an uneventful trip. It would have been, too, except that our conversation somehow distracted me and I missed my exit off the highway. By the time I realized this, I had driven quite a distance. Eventually I was able to exit, but by then, I was hopelessly lost. In fact, I missed our appointment by more than an hour and had to reschedule.

A week later, I took the same trip with the same daughter. This time, I asked her to program the optometrist's address into the GPS (global navigation system). She found this quite amusing, but I was not taking any chances: I wanted the voice in the GPS to remind me that my exit was approaching.

The degree of my distraction and the wasted afternoon it cost me is somewhat embarrassing to relate. If I had any sense of direction at all, I would have adjusted my route easily. Unfortunately, without a map that day, I drove around aimlessly for a long time. The fact that I started out knowing where I was going makes this mistake so baffling. Clearly, having a destination in mind is as important as knowing how to get there. Yet, as I discovered, knowing where I was supposed to be—at the optometrist that day—didn't help me in the end.

Not knowing where we are going in this life often leaves our soul

troubled, or dissatisfied. Jesus knew that we could feel this way. He told his disciples:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.

“Thomas said to him, ‘Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?’

“Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.’”

(John 14.1-6).

This present age will disorient us. Without God and His Word, there are few visible landmarks that will lead us in the right direction. Disappointments, failure, disillusionment, burn-

out, or new ideas and philosophies, can cause us to waver in our faith.

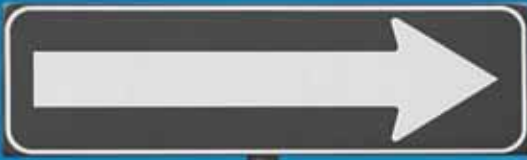
The good news is that there is always a way to turn around from the wrong road we are on. If we are willing to give up our own plans, we will hear the voice of the Holy Spirit prompting us to “turn around” at the next exit, and with grace and compassion, God will recalculate the plans He had made for us, and restore us back to His way and lead us safely home. If we want to reach heaven, we must “take our GPS with us,” so that we hear His voice, telling us where to turn.

Read and understand the principles in God’s Word to discover His will for your life. Pray for direction, and listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit, who promised to guide you. He will give you an inner compass that will keep you heaven-bound.

Benita Tovstiga treasures the time she has with her girls in the car. Still, she is grateful when they are able to drive on their own and hopes they didn’t inherit her sense of orientation.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart
and lean not on your own understanding;
in all your ways submit to him,
and he will make your paths straight.

Proverbs 3.4-6



by Dale Oldham

God Can Make His Will Known to You

THE CLOSER YOU LIVE TO GOD the more you will desire to be led by his Spirit. All of us want to feel that our changes and choices are ordered by him. We wish to move as he directs and feel that a divine hand is guiding us in all we do.

Is this possible? Most of the counseling we pastors do is with folk who either wish to know the will of God, or, knowing it, have wandered, and desire to regain their footing in the right path.

Had you been present at the birth of Moses you probably would have seen no particular indication of coming greatness. His Hebrew relatives were slaves and had been in bondage to Egypt for a long, long time. Early in infancy he was hidden by his mother in the bulrushes for safety. Then, strangely—strangely, that is, unless you believe in divine Providence—the baby Moses was discovered by Pharaoh's daughter as she went to bathe in the river. Was it an accident that Moses was then reared in Pharaoh's palace and educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians? God later used him to lead the children of Israel out of bondage, into freedom and a land of their own. Before he died, Moses said, "The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deut. 33.27). Time after time in a most eventful and perilous life, Moses had sought guidance from God and it was never withheld.

Saul of Tarsus was a creature of his heredity and environment, being reared among religious leaders, many of whom made much of the Law but little of the Spirit. Through divine revelation, however, he was brought into a saving knowledge of the truth. This fuller discovery, bringing salvation, would not have been made had he not been of an honest heart and willing to accept new light when it was given him. See how the Lord used several happenings to lead Saul to conversion.

There was the triumphant death of the first Christian martyr, Stephen, whom Saul watched die. He could never forget the spirit of this courageous, persecuted saint.

Saul also remembered how other Christians had accepted the persecution he thrust upon them. Later he confessed, "I persecuted the church of God" (I Cor. 15.9, KJV). Instead of cursing him, his victims breathed a prayer to God for his enlightenment. Of some influence also must have been his observation of a church that was growing in spite of all opposition. On the Damascus road Christ took a direct hand in bringing Saul of Tarsus to conversion. A short time later, still blind, he was led to Ananias, who dwelt in the street called Straight, and there the Holy Spirit was poured out upon him. This was but the beginning of a marvelously influential career. All during his eventful life Paul was directed by a divine hand.

In Acts 16.7 it says of Paul and his party, "After they had come to Mysia, they tried to

go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them." Verse nine indicates that direct guidance was given that they should proceed instead to Macedonia.

Can you find and be guided in the right way? If you are looking for God's way, be reminded that it will be a narrow way (Matt. 7.14). It will also be a holy way, for God's way must agree with his character. God never guides into questionable attitudes or activities. He who is constantly transgressing God's laws cannot expect the careful guidance of the Spirit. As Romans 12.1-2 indicates, only the dedicated heart is capable of judging "what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Obedience sensitizes the conscience.

If you are seeking God's way, look for a way which is in complete accord with the Spirit of Christ and the teachings of the New Testament. Again, look for a way which leads to your being a blessing. Always remember, God's way will be in harmony with spiritual principles. He never guides us to do wrong or questionable things. His ways are always right and good.

When you are seeking guidance, use every means to see your situation clearly. Sift your predicament for facts. To find the truth is often to know how to proceed. In your honest search God will probably confront you with a variety of choices. How you will choose will depend upon your talents, your knowledge of your present abilities and past experiences, humanity's needs, and your own dedication. Remember, God can lead surely only when

we are perfectly surrendered to his will. He cannot lead the man who prays, "Lord, have your way, but give me Sally." God often gives guidance through the wise counsel and advice of your intelligent, spiritually minded Christian friends. God also gives you an answer sometimes by bringing about certain changes in the situation troubling you, thus clarifying the direction you should take.

I firmly believe God also closes certain doors and opens others before us as we earnestly seek his will. Through a sermon or a lecture we are often reminded of world needs we can help to supply. Sometimes these impressions lead us into an altogether different field of labor. Be sensitive to the will of God by being sensitive to the needs of your brother. God also guides by bringing to mind one certain vocation which would provide the most fruitful outlet for our particular talents and abilities. Some folk have found guidance through the reading of history, as they observed how certain men faced certain situations. Emerson said God's guidance was "to believe what the years and the centuries say against the hours," then accepting their verdict.

Moses turned his back upon Pharaoh's court because God was able to speak to his heart. Every human ambition would have led this stalwart, intelligent young Hebrew in the opposite direction. He who seeks "holy ground" will always find it. He who wishes to know and do the will of God will have that wish fulfilled. Our part is to be humble and submissive and obedient: God will do the rest.

We must maintain a Christian spirit, even toward our enemies. Hard feelings throw askew the needle of the compass by which God would lead us. Any carnal attitude may keep us from rightly knowing God's will. God cannot lead an undedicated youth into the ministry or missions or medicine. God cannot guide any of us if we have already made up our minds and are praying only for his approval of our choice.

An old Scotswoman used to tramp about the country selling goods. Since she had no particular route, when she came to a crossroads she was in the habit of tossing a stick into the air and would then take whatever direction the stick pointed. One day she was seen tossing the stick several times. When pressed for an explanation she said the road to the right looked so uninviting she just kept on tossing until the stick fell pointing to the left. Is any of our seeking to know the will of God after this fashion?

A certain preacher received a call to a larger, more prosperous church. The salary was much higher and the parsonage much more comfortable. A few days later an officer of his present church stopped the preacher's son to inquire as to whether the family would be moving on to the "larger opportunity." The boy replied, "Well, Father is upstairs praying for God's guidance, but Mother is in the kitchen packing the dishes."

When you come to a dangerous place in climbing the Alps, the guide will fasten you to

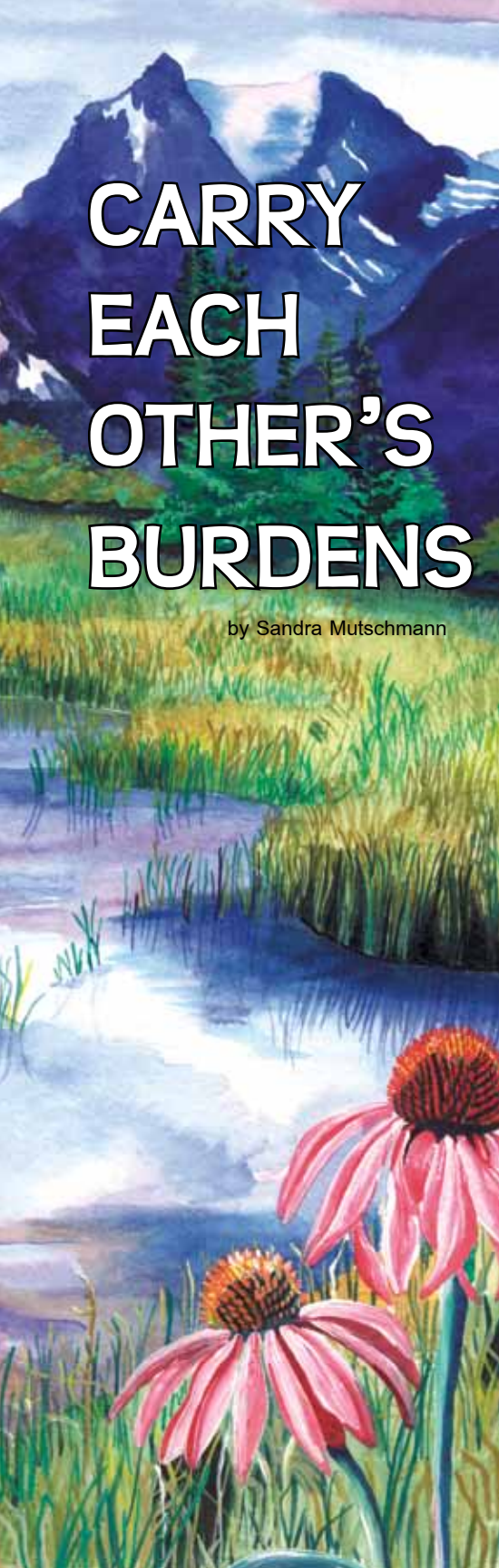
himself by means of a long rope, and then will go before you as guide, testing every step of the way. Stay “fastened” to Christ and you need not fear the heights, depths, or length of the journey. Don’t be too impatient to know exactly what lies ahead. When you need definite direction it will be given. One of my most favorite passages in the Bible is Proverbs 3.5-6, “Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.” How many times I have put this word to the test! And it has never failed me.

Dr. Jowett said he was once in a most pitiful quandary. In his need he consulted with Dr. Berry of Wolverhampton. “Dr. Berry,” he asked, “what would you do if you were in my place?” His friend answered, “I don’t know, Dr. Jowett. I am not there and you are not there yet. When do you have to act?” “Friday,” Jowett replied. “Then,” said Berry, “you will find your way perfectly clear on Friday. The Lord will not fail you.” That is exactly what happened. When Friday came, Jowett had his answer.

Live close to God. Put your trust squarely in him. Be thoroughly committed to do his will, and he will never fail to give you guidance. He will be your pillar of cloud by day and your pillar of fire by night. God may not make a way for you through your own personal “Red Sea” until the Egyptians are fairly breathing down your neck, but he will make a way, and in time!

God once permitted Abraham to raise his knife in the air before showing him the ram caught in the thicket; but direction came in time to save Isaac’s life (Gen. 22.13). Take your problems to the Lord, also, and he will help you work them out for your good and for the benefit of others. Relax before him and trust his guidance. Open your heart and mind without reservation to do his will and he will guide you.

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CARRY EACH OTHER'S BURDENS

by Sandra Mutschmann

“WHERE ARE WE GOING for summer’s vacation this year?” Cole asked at the Steiner’s dinner table one evening. As his school friends buzzed about their big summer plans, Cole realized that his family had not talked about any summer plans yet.

They always did something together as a family—took a two week trip to visit their grandparents out east or perhaps a tenting trip to some out-of-the-way campground Mom had discovered in her “Camp-for-Free in BC” book. Their trips were rarely extravagant, perhaps a train trip across the prairies being one of the most memorable, but over the years, Cole had learned to appreciate his Dad’s words: it’s not where you go, it’s with whom you spend your time that matters!

Cole’s question was met with silence. His two older brothers glanced uneasily at Dad, and Mom cleared her throat and answered quietly,

“Cole, we’ll be staying home this summer. Dad just started this new job and can’t take any time off.”

Cole looked around the table in disbelief.

“Well, can I at least go to a basketball camp?” he squeaked.



The outburst surprised even Cole, and it obviously upset his dad, who quietly laid his napkin down beside his plate and pushed his chair back from the table.

"I'm sorry, Cole, but no basketball camp. There's just no money for extras like that this year." And with that, his dad was gone from the room.

His dad had been out of work for over a half year. Christmas had been "thinned down" as his mom had put it, but now that Dad was working again, he thought everything would get back to normal.

It was Cole's turn to help with dishes, and as he helped clear the table, his mom broached the subject again.

"You need to know that Dad's new job is very different from his old one. Let's just say it's an in-between job until he can find something that pays better. Right now, we really just have to focus on paying for the necessities. But that doesn't mean we can't have a good summer! What do you say about going on a backpacking adventure?"

Cole's face brightened. A backpacking adventure sounded exciting! But wait a minute—how could they afford a backpacking trip? Or perhaps the question was, how did a backpacking trip count as a necessity?

"Where would we go? Backpacking together would be really cool! James did a backpacking trip with his dad on the West

Coast Trail last summer . . ." Cole chattered on for a bit but stopped when his mom handed him a piece of paper. He unfolded it and read, "Galatians 6.2."

"There's your road map, Cole. It won't take you to the West Coast Trail, but I want you to look it up when you do your Bible study before bed. The kind of backpacking we're going to do won't take us out of town, but it will certainly ensure you don't have a boring summer!"

Cole stuffed the piece of paper in his pocket and forgot about it until bedtime. Reading the passage certainly didn't help to clear anything up though: "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ (NIV)." He was more confused than ever. Obviously, the word 'carry' had something to do with the idea of a backpacking trip, but this was going to take some further explanation.

"Well, do you want to join us for the backpacking trip, Cole?" Mom asked the next morning at breakfast.

"I don't get it, Mom. What's going on?"

"Your dad has a heavy burden right now, Cole. He feels badly that even our special family vacation time has had to be sacrificed. Your brothers and I have decided that this is a burden we can help Dad with, so we've come up with a plan. Rather than sit around moping about what we don't have or what

we can't do, we're going to plan our summer in a way that will ease Dad's load. Devin is going to help with the load by getting a job at the produce farm down the road. Luke's backpack includes mowing lawns, and filling in for some neighbour boys' paper routes while they're gone this summer. I think we can find some ways to fill your backpack too, Cole!"

Cole wasn't too sure. He was too young to get a job anywhere. "But how can I earn any money, Mom? No one is going to hire an 11-year-old!"

"I will! With the boys working away from home a bit more, I'll need more help around here."

"I don't suppose that's going to pay much, though, it is?" Cole muttered. This

was just everybody's plan to make him do more chores!

"Cole, you won't get paid for doing chores. But then again, Devin and Luke have agreed to put their earnings towards things you boys are going to need when school starts again: new clothes, shoes, backpacks, and probably a new computer, since ours isn't working anymore. This is going to be a summer of teamwork: everyone pulling together.

By the end of summer, Devin's old ripped-up backpack that Mom had converted into a "piggy bank" contained enough earnings to buy the supplies needed for the new school year. As the family gathered beside the new computer in the living room, Dad had them all join hands and bow in prayer. "Thank-you, God, for providing for us in unexpected ways. Thank-you for a loving, hard-working family. Thank-you for a summer of backpacking. Bless my family for helping carry this load. Amen."

Sandra enjoys beautiful summers with her husband and five children in Kelowna, BC. She loves watching God turn what looks to be difficult circumstances into opportunities for growth and reliance on Him.



*We can make our plans,
but the Lord determines our steps.*

Those who listen to instruction will prosper;
those who trust the Lord will be joyful.

**The wise are known for their understanding,
and pleasant words are persuasive.**

Discretion is a life-giving fountain to those who possess it,
but discipline is wasted on fools.

**From a wise mind comes wise speech;
*the words of the wise are persuasive.***

**Kind words are like honey—
*sweet to the soul and healthy for the body.***

*Scripture taken from NLT