

2001 Proclaimer

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, .. to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord!" - Isa. 61:1-2

A teaching and exhortation medium by members of the Carmichael Church of Christ, meeting at 6044 Sutter Ave. Carmichael, CA 95608

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December 9th, 2001

HOW GOD TESTS MEN

By Gordon Wilson

Ten thousand men went down to the spring of Harod to get a drink of water. Of the ten thousand, three hundred were separated from the others after they had drunk. Gideon, their leader, sent the rest of the people home and kept the three hundred with him; this small company had been selected to do battle with the thousands of Midianites camped in the valley of Moreh. But the fascinating part of the story (found in **Judges chapter 7**) is the manner in which the small number was selected and the rest rejected. Gideon watched them drinking at the spring. The most of them bowed down on their knees to drink, but the three hundred put their hands to the sides of their mouths and lapped the water with their tongues --somewhat after the manner of dogs. These men, as God commanded, were chosen by the way they drank!

But why? Is there anything superior to drinking in a dog-like fashion? Not that I know of. And even if there is some advantage to a soldier drinking in this way, it is surely not an advantage sufficient to offset the manpower of 9,700 persons. Why were these few chosen? I suggest that it is precisely because they were fewer. Had the drinking test gone the other way, with the majority lapping and the few bowing down on their knees, I feel sure that God would still have told Gideon to take the smaller group. This way, when the battle was won, Israel could not suppose that they were saved by their own strength, or by their superior numbers. Thus, the test that God had Gideon conduct at Harod was designed to end in the glory of God.

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This leads us to consider tests conducted by God. That the Lord does sometimes test men is seen in the case of Abraham. For what could you possibly call what happened at Moriah except a test? A command was given to Abraham in unmistakable terms that he was to sacrifice his son, Isaac. When it was clear that Abraham meant to do just as he was told, God prevented him from taking the lad's life. It is certain that the Lord never intended to let Isaac die in the first place. The test was the thing, and Abraham passed it. Does God test men? I believe that He does in a number of ways.

God tests men when He requires us to walk by faith instead of by sight. While the commandments of the Lord are reasonable, this does not mean that men are always capable of fully understanding His ways. There are times when we are called upon to take His word just because it is His word, and to act just because He says to act. Our confidence in Him is truly tested under such conditions and, just as in the case of Gideon's soldiers, the purpose is to glorify God. There is no glory to Him if we do a thing just because it is easy. He receives no honor if we act only because the deed is pleasing to us. He is not glorified if we do only what appears logical.

God tests men when He asks us to obey our faith. Faith has always, from the very beginning, been tested at the point of obedience. It is easy to say, "I have faith;" it is another thing entirely to demonstrate that faith. It is not a dead faith, devoid of works, that the Lord wants from us, nor is it that kind of faith by which we are justified. Faith versus works? Not at all: but faith tested by works.

God tests men in the adversities of life. This is not to say that evil comes upon us as a direct visitation from God; that He causes afflictions. Yet adversities will come, for we live in a world cursed by sin and influenced by Satan. As we suffer reverses and pain, the Lord is watching. These things are tests to see if we will endure --for properly used they can work patience and hope. Moreover, such tests are self-revealing; they help us to see ourselves as we really are. We can, if we will, use such things to chasten us and make us strong --or we can fail the test.

KENNETH TRUMAN CLAIBORNE
1916 - 2001

He died on Monday, after a long battle with health problems. How easy it would be to write headlines about the talents and faith and influence of Truman Claiborne. He made a great impact on many of us with the kindness of his words, the genuine interest he had in us and our problems, and the enormous storehouse of energy and information he had in working for the Lord!

Truman had authored Bible class material, been in charge of getting out weekly bulletins, had helped maintain programs of training young preachers, served as an elder, and was an excellent Bible teacher, personally.

His multiple talents were honorably used in different places and his love for the Lord was exemplary. It's a real understatement to say that we'll miss him here in our associations, and in our work for the Lord! May we all continue to glorify God because of his influence!

--Vern Wilson

DO THE BEST YOU CAN

Robert F. Turner

Out in Arizona they tell about a “never say die” judge who sentenced an old man to twenty years of hard labor.

The prisoner pled, “I’m ninety years old, your honor, and I won’t live another twenty years.”

To which the Judge replied, “Well just get in there and do the best you can.”

That’s the old spirit --- of sorts. Anyhow, it reminds me of an attitude all too scarce these days: the bull-headedness ---the try, try again, that **will not give up**.

People who succeed at anything are usually a special breed that go ahead and “do it” after it is impossible. They have learned to **use** troubles and failures as their stepping stones to the top.

I once heard of a mishap which spread a lack indelible stain across a young lady’s expensive evening gown. The girl looked at the stain and cried. Her artist boyfriend looked at the stain, called for a brush and more of the same indelible liquid, and **enlarged** the original stain to a beautiful design which complemented the dress.

One winter morning our Arizona mountain town was blanketed with deep snow. The aging president of a bank came to work on skis atop the same snow that kept lesser employees home. It is just barely possible that this kind of spirit explains why he was president.

Morals? Horatio Alger stories? Perhaps so --- and why not? Our modern sophisticated and blasé society does little to make better men of us.

The hep, hip-swinging, banner-toting parasites of our day are dime-a-dozen. And who is to mind the store? Those who learn unselfish principles of honesty, hard work, and “try again.” We sorely need those who dare to be the “squares.”

And the principle is much the same in the cause of Christ. The church member who lives only on the excitement of controversy or the glamour of “Campaigns for Christ” is of little genuine value. The future of our work for Christ depends upon those sturdy souls who just keep on working, overcoming obstacles as a matter of course, asking no quarter with the world, and giving none. They live, not to do that which is easy, but that which is right. If, and when they fail, they get up and try again. God asks not more!

(From “Stuff About Things”)

THESE NEED OUR PRAYERS:

Edith Ayers Sue Claiborne Jamie Cole
Helen Gray Roger Lehman Willa Lockett
Clifford Marshall John & Norma Romine
Barbara Sterling Nancy Valine Evie Westphal
Bob Blachly is having health problems where he’s been working in Mojave.
Ray Rude is now at home recuperating from his heart attack.

ALSO THESE TRAVELING:

Dan Singleton preaching in Grass Valley today

PLEASE PRAY for these and others as you are aware of their needs.

Carmichael Church of Christ

Times Of Services

SUNDAY:

Classes	9:00 AM
Worship	9:55 AM
Eve Worship	6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY:

Classes	7:00 PM
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ON PURPOSE WORSHIP

Acts 2:46-47; Psalm 34:1-3

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Generally, how would we respond to the question, "When do you worship?"
 - 1. Probably, the majority of us would reply, "Worship is on Sunday mornings at 9:55.
 - 2. The Bible use of "worship" insists that it must be broader in our lives than an hour together on Sunday morning.
- B. I believe it makes a real point for much of our worship **that it is not ALWAYS confined to a specific place!** John 4:20-21, 24
- C. On Purpose Worship magnifies two words that will help us have a better perception of acceptable worship to God: "**Preparation**" and "**Participation.**"

I. PURPOSEFUL PREPARATION IS BASIS FOR ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP!

- A. Can worship just happen? Certainly, I believe it can. Not unfeelingly, nor heartlessly, and certainly not flippantly!
 - 1. Did you **MAKE PLANS** and **GET READY** for your part in this group praise service today?
 - 2. Or were you like a lot of the *ho-hum religious crowd* that just "**wakes up** and **shows up?**"
- B. **WHAT DIFFERENCE does it make?** Primarily because getting ourselves ready to worship activates the Spirit in our lives. Psa 122:1
- C. I must mentally, emotionally, spiritually and physically be prepared to worship GOD!

II. ON PURPOSE WORSHIP SAYS "GET READY TO PARTICIPATE"

- A. "*Worship is communion with God.*"
- B. Worship is not a spectator event, but rather it is to be a participatory action in which we involve ourselves in the adoration of God. Psalm 122:1; 100:1-4; 34:1-3
- C. On-Purpose-Worship means a **Participation in Humility.**
- D. On-Purpose-Worship demands **Honorable Participation!**

III. ON PURPOSE WORSHIP MAGNIFIES THE LORD TO THE SEEKERS

- A. I'm sure we all are aware that not all who come into our church buildings for a time of worship are in the family of God.
 - 1. God ordained worship is to magnify (or, enlarge) the Lord in the minds of those *SEEKERS* who come in to study and pray with us. Acts 2:47
 - 2. Let me emphasize again, it is not so much the "**how to**" for effective worship, but the "**WHO TO**" and the "**WHY TO**" worship is what impacts **our** lives.
- B. Those N.T. Christians were giving prepared and participating praise to God, and **through it** they had "*favor*" with other people.

CONCLUSION:

- A. So much more can be said on the matter of worship, but this is sufficient for now.
 - 1. **True worship** is not just an emotional experience. It reaches to the very depths of our souls and touches every facet of our being.
 - 2. Such is the power of the sincere praise and adoration of our heavenly Father.
- B. True worship needs to be generated from a mind that's truly set on belonging to God, and we can truly belong to God through His Son, Jesus Christ. Matt 7:21ff