

CRIST IS RISEN! HE HAS RISEN INDEED!



PRISONER

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«And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free»

(John 8:32)

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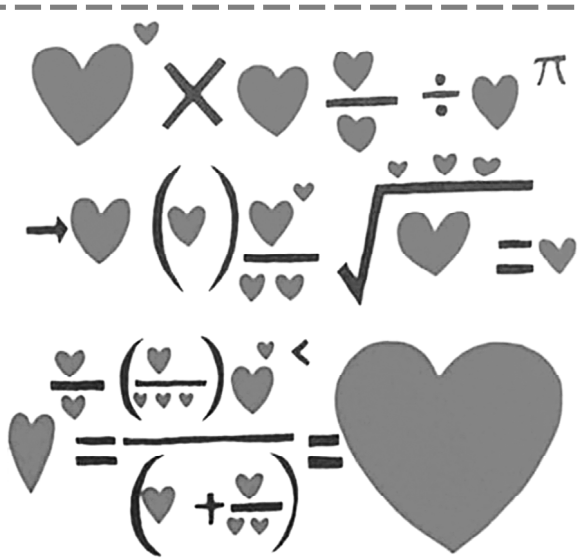
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When I was not yet familiar with the biblical interpretation of Love, such a thing as love was an abstract tome, that is, I could not give a complete formulation for this feeling. For love can be anything, ranging from love towards parents and ending with loving delicious food. If you make a list of what a person loves, then this list will be quite long, because each person can use the verb «love» in many different ways. However, I was always struck by the fact that human love quickly fades and leaves towards many things, not only in relation to inanimate objects, but also towards people. It is understandable that when a person becomes an adult, a lot of things that he loved as a child, like candy, ice cream, a variety of games and such, he can now easily say, «I do not love it anymore.» There is nothing special in that, for a person has grown — his feelings and emotions have changed.

do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now we see only a reflection as in

FORMULA OF LOVE

In many cases of life a verb, like «I love» and «I do not love», is very clear. However I never understood until now, why such a verb ceases to have effect in relations between people. How often do people tell each other of their love, and sometimes even swear, that it is for a lifetime, but the time passes, and for many people not only is the love gone — but hate took over in its place. But one point the word «love» was heard day and night in their spoken



a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love» (1 Corinthians 13).

As you can see, true love consists only of verbs, that is, of our deeds and actions. If someone says «I love you,» then love should consist of everything listed above. Because love without faith, mercy, patience, and so on — cannot be love. Love

language. What happens to the love of the people, or, perhaps, in many there never was love, except in words?! How is it that this sacred word gets so easily used by people? Today the word «love» is perverted to complete vulgarity. I do not know about you but I cannot bear to hear when someone says, «They made love,» without even knowing each other's names. Excuse me but of what kind of love in these cases are we talking about? Calling sex in the first encounter love — it is not only the sin of fornication, but it is also full of perversity, reminiscence of the animal world.

Why does this intimate feeling of love disappear so quickly? Today, they say that they love each other and cannot live without each other and in a short time — hatred and hostility have no borders. As it turns out, everything is explained very very simply: love, it is either there, or it was never there. You cannot be endowed with such a feeling of love, and love today and hate tomorrow. Very often people simply confuse love with carnal lust. Therefore frustration grows into hatred.

The most important and most vital is that the word «love» is always converted into a positive form of action. For when we tell each other «I love you,» by that we are ready for any high deed for the sake of a loved one. Love — is primarily doing something for the sake of a loved one or loved ones. The feeling of love is always expressed through our deeds and actions. Love cannot be just one word, for words of love are only words if they do not turn into a form of action. The Bible reveals to us a sample of perfect love, and what is most striking, in all cases the characteristics of true love is only in a form of the verb, and if you really love then it is always followed by action. These are the verbs, on which true love is based on:

«If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but

is the face of God. For no one, before Him or after Him, could love mankind as He loved mankind. Scripture says, «**For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life**» (John 3:16).

As we all know, God sent His Son into the world, so He could become an offering for the sins of all mankind. Have anyone's earthly parents done something like that? Of course not. There have been attempts in sacrifice, including the biblical story, but they did not have that value and importance in comparison with what God has done for us. His infinite and perfect love was proved by His Son. Jesus showed us how to be humble, so that we manifest true love in deeds and actions. He was very reserved, and did not use too many words to express His love to people in words (John 13:34; 15:9, 12), but at the same time He expressed all His love in His deeds and actions as much as martyrdom.

Today, unfortunately, everything is the opposite in humans: mostly words but very very little actions and deeds that prove love. That is how most of humanity lives now. How important it is to reinforce that love with our deeds when we confess love to each other. For as faith is dead without deeds, so is love without corresponding deeds and actions is dead. Love — is a verb, meaning action. Therefore it is impossible to prove the existence of love only with words. Even to the most sensitive people, words about love without deeds get annoying very quickly.

God has always and everywhere expressed His infinite and perfect love by deeds only. Let us also strive for that perfect love which is God. It will always be nice and sweet for the human ear to hear the words «I love you,» so let us to not be stingy on these words, but also confirm with acts and deeds, which are the main root of the sacred words. For our true love will always have an unambiguous formula: I + deeds = love!

I. GORIK.

PROVERBS

The parable of good and evil thoughts. What is easier to get rid of?

A woman complains:
— Father, evil thoughts get into my head. I do not know how to deal with them. The priest smiles.
— If two people come over to your house — one good and one evil — which is easier to get rid of?
— The good one, — she responds.
So it is with a good thought, it is easy to scare off. But from the evil thought — it's hard to get rid of. So we have to ask: «Lord, help!» And it leaves...



The Parable of the heavy cross, and a sly man



A crowd of people walked upon a road. Each bore their cross on their shoulder. One

person thought that his cross was very heavy. He was very tricky. He fell behind everyone else and went into the woods and sawed off a part of the cross. Satisfied that he tricked everyone, he caught up with them and went on. Suddenly there was a chasm on the way. Everyone put their crosses over the chasm and passed. The sly man was left behind as his cross was too short to get over it.

<http://www.smisl-zhizni.ru/pritchi>

The 9th Commandment

DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS

With this commandment, the Lord God forbids telling lies about another person and prohibits any lie at all, such as to give false evidence in court, making a false accusation, slander, gossip. Slander — a devilish thing, because one of the names of the devil is Accuser.

Christians are not allowed to lie in any form, since every lie is unworthy of the Christian calling, and does not agree with love and respect to others. Apostle Paul says: *put away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor, because we are members of one another (Eph. 4:25)*. Never rebuke and condemn others, if we are not called to it by our position or duty. *Judge not, that ye be not judged* — says the Savior.

We always have to remember that a brother or sister is not corrected with condemnation, reproach or ridicule but with love, indulgence and good advice. It must be remembered that we are all, to some extent, sinners and each of us has many weaknesses and shortcomings.

The Savior commands to always restrain our tongue, to tell the truth and to keep from speaking deceit and idle talk. Words are God's gift. Jesus said: *I tell you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment: because by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned (Matt. 12:36-37)*. Therefore, every person will have to answer for every word they said in their lifetime.

SINS AGAINST THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

False testimony about someone on trial and making someone else do it

Many bared false witness against Jesus in the Jewish Sanhedrin. But there was no plausible slander against God in the flesh, so *...their testimony didn't agree (Mark 14:56)*. Slander is often plausible and, in any case it leaves a shadow of doubt in listeners: «Who knows, maybe the accused is in fact guilty?» The worst kind of slander is perjury against someone on trial. It is not just to publicly discredit someone but to impose undeserved punishment. The prosecution itself (when the accused is innocent) is much more difficult to bear if it occurs in public; for example, when it's in court or at some social gathering rather than someplace private. False witnesses are even guiltier in that they repeat it several times during the course of the investigation and at the trial. From experience shows that these false witnesses are often subject to severe judgment from God: or after this sin is committed they are constantly pursued by failures in life, or they themselves are, all of a sudden, subjected to the punishment which they wanted to inflict.

Falsely defending someone or a business in court

Protect me from my opponent (Luke 18:3-5). In modern courts some ask to be protected from others, and a third party agrees to be their protectors (lawyers). The need for and the benefits of such protection is recognized by the law and agrees with the spirit of Christian charity. But do all attorneys defend the accused in good faith? Unfortunately, no. Some lawyers totally deny obvious crimes of the defendant and by the manipulation of facts, mislead the Court. They promise a lot of unrealistic things to their defendants, stretching out the trial so as to obtain as much money as possible. These actions are not out of pity to the criminals or the desire to fix their lives, but with selfish motives and concealed character. With a large number of available lawyers, those who create a good image of being a defender get the clients. In their eyes, a good lawyer is the one who will be able to justify and free even the most explicit offender. Thus, the lawyer often goes on a compromise with his conscience, he breaks divine and human laws; which Christians are not allowed or justified to do. It's better for a Christian lawyer to abandon the «profitable» unjust deeds, and undertake an honest job which may pay less than to sell their soul and conscience for «thirty pieces of silver».

Justification of the guilty on trial because of false compassion or for money

Have neglected... justice, mercy, and faithfulness (Matt. 23:23). At one time the Pharisees violated the divine requirements for trials entirely. Now judges and jurors (where there are) have a full opportunity to fairly confirm the guilt or innocence of the accused (based on the information of the investigation, interrogation of the accused, witnesses and so on). The judge or jury are to decide the fate of the accused guided by their conscience and the law, and for this decision they are responsible before God. They should be very careful when entering the heart of the matter, so as not succumb to pressure from the outside and, obviously, not take any bribes for a positive resolution to the case. Nor can the judges and the jury acquit the obvious, even repentant criminals. Sincere repentance can only soften the sentence of the guilty, it will not blot out their grave fault.

In the Old Testament, even the civil laws and their sentences for crimes were given directly by God. Therefore, if the judge and jury release the offender

from false compassion or bribes, they by the same token take part in the crime, and take responsibility before God for the new lawlessness that could have easily been prevented if the defendant had not remained at large.

Denying your crimes in court

«False witnesses» (Ps. 27:12). The criminal, originally deceitful during the investigation and completely denies his or her crime in court, sometimes even with obvious evidence. They only hurt themselves and increase the severity of their guilt before God. They do not listen to the voice of conscience, try to deceive the investigation and thereby slow its course.

Admitting to a crime you did not commit

It is extremely unwise and even a sin to take responsibility for a crime you did not commit. Some take the blame under direct pressure of the investigator, who are often pushed to «just close the case» and are totally indifferent to the fate of the accused. Others, being guilty and convicted of a crime, falsely assume a new crime. This is sometimes done also under pressure from the investigators who want to pin the crime onto someone because it is difficult to solve but they want that promotion. In other cases it is done with an obvious criminal purpose; to confuse the investigation, to find new excuses to justify themselves in the first case and so on. Whatever the motive of this action, it means to slander yourself to aiding in the concealment of the true crime.

Blaming someone else for your crime

In the Scriptures we see many examples of such sinful activities. For example, in the time of Solomon there were two women who slept in the same room. While they were sleeping, one of them crushed her infant to death. She then took advantage of the fact that the other women's child was of similar age and took the live sleeping baby and placed the dead one in its spot. Then she publicly claimed that the child was squished by the other woman (1 Kings 3:16-28). Even now days there are people who dare to stand trial and put all the blame onto someone else such as the one who was with him when he committed the crime. Often there is no one who could refute these accusations and there are no external circumstances that prove the physical impossibility or unreality of this slander. Thus the slander falls on the innocent. Transitioning sin to an innocent person is a huge spiritual, moral, and ethical offense. Its even more criminal if the motive of this act is not only a desire to avoid punishment, but also a desire to upset, or harm one's neighbor. All this testifies to the terrible evil of the criminal mind.

False accusation

If anyone will be an enemy to his neighbor. Thine eye shall not pity him... Then shall ye do unto him, as he had thought to have done unto his brother (Deut. 19:11, 13, 19). According to the rigor that is characteristic of the Old Testament law, he who made the false denunciation did not deserve mercy and was to be awarded the penalty which was subjected to the innocent. Explicit crimes under false denunciation apparently did not happen, but the punishment for the intended offence was similar. Currently, there is no such strictness of the law, and detractors write their denunciations in way so as to avoid possible punishment. They send anonymous letters, stirred lies with bits of truth. In any case, the motive for false accusation is flawed — anger or jealousy, or just to upset your neighbor. If they cannot bring an innocent under punishment, they are happy with tarnishing his reputation and destroying his nerves.

Litigation

Brother with brother suing... very humiliating for you that you have lawsuits among yourselves (1 Cor. 6:6-7). Litigation should be understood not just written complaints to superiors or court is a kind of unfounded complaints with petty, lingering or vengeful nature. Often such lawsuits are because of property disputes, on grievances and harassment, due to sustained ill-treatment. As such complaints are valid, courts exist to pacify them. Often it motivates the instinct of self-preservation, an attempt to protect oneself from harassment and resentment, a desire to get rid of obstacles to any useful occupation, and so on. However, it is more blessed for a Christian not to resort to complaints. Because in this case there will be more space for the manifestation of faith in Providence, more devotion to the will of God and ability to sacrifice themselves and their personal interests for the sake of the neighbor (1 Cor. 6:6-7), leaving his complaint, and be an imitator of «Christ's forgiveness».

When the word of God is talking directly about «lawsuits», it explicitly states that there should no litigation between Christians. In fact, how can they be positive anyway? If it's a dispute about cash or property, often half the estate goes to lawyers, the courts, spent nerves, health and time so that no benefits remain. If they come to insult, the other succeeds during the process even more, since the person is tarnished and offended in ways for which you cannot bring to justice. Before the lawsuit not

many people know about what happened but as you start suing everyone starts talking about it.

Lawsuits interfere with prayer, harm spiritual life, and cause many unnecessary temptations. Lawsuits air a whip for the body and soul; they deprive the inner peace and calm inherent to Christians, they stir up malice and vengefulness. In suing we also bring strangers into temptation, it provokes condemning your neighbor and other sins. The «litigant» loses societies trust and his status; many keep their distance and are even afraid to talk in case he decides to sue them.

Whisperings, Conceits and favor to snitches

I shall not find... selfish ambitions, backbitings, whisperings, conceits, tumults (2 Corinthians 12:20) — the Apostle Paul warned the Corinthians before to coming to them. Snitches are people who secretly (in writing) or verbally accuse people to the superiors, not objectively but with exaggeration, dramatizing, and based on nothing but guesses. What begins as children's faults turn into the evil of snitching. It is common between children at school and in families and if not stopped in the beginning, but on the contrary is allowed or promoted, then it gradually becomes part of the character as they become an adult. What is so bad about snitching? The fact that it is never driven by a good purpose; the only purpose is to find favor with a superior. Often times it is done to hurt people as well. If the snitching or gossip is based on groundless opinions compiled only on conjectures and without understanding the motives and intentions of the person, as well as with considerable exaggeration, this is pure gossip. Meanwhile these false accusations really hurt the person they are aimed at. With good reason David kicked out of his house those who secretly slandered to him about his neighbor (Ps. 101:5). It is unacceptable for a Christian (even though sometimes there is a good purpose; to stop sin) to resort to gossipers, and snitches.

Sowing enmity and discord among the people

Gospel commands us to be peacemakers; it gives the high name of «sons of God» (Matt. 5:9) those that imitate the example of the Son of God, who reconcile fallen people with God. However, some sow enmity and discord among people out of envy or their own selfish goals. Gossiping and building rumors against one another and rejoicing in the hostility they create. Others sow discord between people because of carelessness or paraphrasing who said what about others.

Spreading gossip and rumor about people

The first to begin spreading rumors about others are guiltier than those who repeat it. They are more «judging» than «spreading». If from the beginning, the rumor/gossip was cut short in the mouth of a smart individual, then it would not bring so much sin and temptation. You can often hear from the mouth of a gossip: «What I say is what I heard». Instead of rushing to pass on it is better to thoroughly find out where this discrediting information come from. How creditable is the source, as well as how factual the rumor is and are these the real circumstances of the case?

Condemning your neighbor

Judge not, that you be not judged (Matt. 7:1). There are people who have a legitimate right to judge; a priest, a federal judge, and the head of a family in relation to his members. But these people are guilty of the sin of condemnation if their actions have no goal of correcting or holding others from evil or if they condemn their neighbors behind their backs. Condemnation is inherently not slander because it is not baseless; it is pronounced in view of wicked deeds or qualities of someone. Condemning your neighbor, if done rarely or when you get carried away when talking to others, is human weakness and falls under the category of everyday sin. But as soon as it turns into passion and permanent vice, it offends God. Condemning others for sins misappropriates Gods judgment, but *who are you condemning someone else's slave? Before his Lord he stands or falls (Rom. 14:4)*.

False suspiciousness or suspicion towards others

False suspicion of a neighbor is «slander inside the heart».

Insulting your neighbor with words, actions, letters or media

The Savior said: *...whoever says to his brother, «Raca!» (empty, useless person) shall be in danger of the council (Matt. 5:22)*. Abusive language differs from defamation and gossip in that it not only attributes the person with a shameful act, but also insults his personality by assigning him as a human with an extremely negative trait. Abusive language is often expressed in slander, offensive gestures, and actions. For example, describing a person as «vile,» we ascribe to him a number of dishonest acts. «Unscrupulous,» we deny the presence of all honor and virtue. Cursing using the names of animals like «ass» and similar, deprive them of all reason and sense equating them to dumb animals. Such abuse is a personal insult when it affects his

wife, parents or children. Many swear out of habit without attaching meaning to their words, others swear in moments of anger or short-lived fury. Such spurs of abusive language are less sinful than the conscious, deliberate oaths. But sin is still sin. It is written in the Scriptures: *But I say to you, that by every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment: because by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned (Matt. 12:36-37)*. Therefore, everyone should be very careful in his choice of words when conversing with others, even when someones behavior towards you is not proper.

A habit for disputing on any occasion
...Obsessed with disputing and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions (1 Tim. 6:4). The consequence of the fall of Adam has upset the whole of human nature, including the reasonable part of it. Since then, people have lost harmony. Arguing and controversy have become an unavoidable reality. There are benefits, especially in science when as a result truth is born and explained. But often spiteful passion and disputes are completely unnecessary.

Self-Imposed Curses
In a fit of depression, uncontrolled anger, misfortunes, and/or under the influence of dark forces a person can make curse himself; curse the day he was born.

Falsehood
Distortion of the truth in thoughts, words, and/or deeds.

Deceit for the sake of a prank
...No lie is of the truth (1 John 2:21). Even if a funny joke contains no intent to annoy or hurt someone with false news, it is still the conception of a lie. Eventually people stop believing those who repeatedly joke, even when they speak the truth. Really, how can deceit bring benefit to one's neighbor? It often makes the person who is the victim in the joke distraught, angered, and insulted. Christians should avoid humor with lies, humor is good but it must be free of the impurity of lies.

Excusing yourself before others with the full consciousness of guilt (self-justification)
Don't let my heart turn toward evil (Ps. 141:4).

Flattery
They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent (Ps. 140:3).

A solid promise to fulfill requests but with an inner determination to not do it (cheating)
There are people who are ready to promise all they can, but in their hearts they are not going to fulfill the promise. They promise simply just to be witty or because of ambitious intentions to emphasize their importance and status in society. Sometimes they make promises to flatter their neighbor, so as to sway him and get what they want. These people commit outright deception and are inherently servants of falsehood. Christians, when making a promise should have a strong intent to fulfill the promise, even if the requestor does not fulfill his/her promises or becomes a personal enemy.

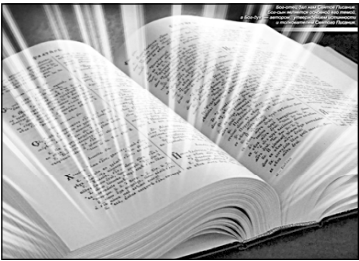
Gossip and blabbering
For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account in the day of judgment... (Matt. 12:36); Too much talk leads to sin. Be sensible and keep your mouth shut... (Prov. 10:19) You may not be a railer, not swearing with abusive words or insulting others but at the same time constantly idle talking and exhausting others with your verbosity. The use of words in this way is inherently sinful. Our word is inherently creation; we bring it into the world. The Lord God created the world with His word thus our word should bring only positivity to the world around us. How many empty and meaningless conversations are constantly happening around us: unrestrained chatter about the weather, the prices of things, tastes, politics, animals and their behavior, about illnesses, feelings, etc.

Empty superstitious tales and stories for children
Do not have anything to do with godless myths and fables of old women... (1 Tim. 4:7) — just like the Apostle Paul condemns empty superstitious stories that are equal in their reliability to children's fairy tales and horror stories. Similar stories suppress the truth in the soul and cause superstitious fears to develop which provoke bad dreams and empty fantasies. Children are often unable to distinguish reality from fiction.

Boasting
Let someone else praise you, not your own mouth; a stranger, and never your own lips (Prov. 27:2).

Curiosity to others correspondence
Curiosity towards someone else's correspondence can be intentional and unintentional. In the first case they may illegally open and look at other's correspondence, go to those able to find out and explain its content, dig through other people's papers, or read through postcards and mail before delivering it to the recipient. Involuntary curiosity is the same thing but it is not actively pursued, it is done when you have an opportunity. Similarly, with unchecked curiosity one's private life is violated. Unexpectedly his secrets are made public and this often causes damage to his good name and property. All this is improper and unacceptable in the light of God's commandments. For it is said «Do not bear false witness», that is, do not lie.

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PASTOR'S WORD

I HAVE LEARNED TO BE CONTENT

(Phil. 4:11)

1. No one likes unhappy people.
Who likes whiners, complainers, and unhappy people? Nobody. Communicating with them, to put it mildly, is not pleasant. We do not like these qualities in our children or spouses. Even Solomon, king of Israel, who had no problems with living space, came to the following conclusions:

Prov. 21:9 (ISV) — *It's better to live in a corner on the roof than to share a house with a contentious woman.*

Prov. 21:19 — *It's better to live in the wilderness than to live with a contentious and irritable woman.*

Prov. 30:15-16 — *The leech has two daughters: «Give» and «Give». Three things will never be satisfied; four will never say «Enough» — The afterlife, the barren womb, earth that still demands water, and fire — they never say, «Enough».*

2. Even God does not like complaining and discontent.

Sometimes God helps people get rid of this evil in this manner: He deprives the unhappy person all of which he had. Such a person begins to remember and appreciate what he had before, after losing everything. When the conditions are returned with which he was dissatisfied with, he is happier and more content than ever before.

3. What about us?

Is it pleasurable and easy for people to communicate with us? What about God? Does what He sees in us bring Him joy? You do not need to learn how to be dissatisfied. Discontentment is a manifestation of the carnal and sinful human nature which we inherited from our ancestors. The more it reigns in a man, the more discontent and resentment it brings, when things are not exactly as desired. Any dissatisfaction with ones' circumstances may hurt God, who deliberately (according to His plan) and wisely allows for our improvement. After all, the Bible says *...for those who love God, that is, for those who are called according to His purpose, all things are working together for good (Rom. 8:28)*.

4. The Apostle Paul said that he learned to be content in all circumstances.

Phil. 4:11-12 — *am not saying this because I am in any need, for I have learned to be content in whatever situation I am in. I know how to be humble, and I know how to prosper. In each and every situation I have learned the secret of being full and of going hungry, of having too much and of having too little.*

This satisfaction is not something that come to Paul naturally, as if from birth; it was something he had to learn. He initially had the same problem as that of most people; ingratitude. At some point in his life he discovered the flaw and began to fight with it. Just like the process for any sort of skill or knowledge, it required a lot of effort and personal discipline.

1 Tim. 4:7 — *...train yourself to be godly.*

5. What must one do to get rid of the flaw of being discontent?

I. Consider your discontentment not as something unimportant, but as a big problem.

II. Hate it in yourself. The more detestable discontentment becomes, the greater the likelihood of getting rid of it.

Amos 5:15 — *Hate evil...*

III. Humble yourselves before God and ask for His help.

ATTENTION!

Dear readers, today the newspaper «Prisoner» has the status of the two languages: Russian and English. «Prisoner» is printed in the Ukraine and in America. However, the newspaper is published and distributed exclusively by voluntary donations. For all those wishing to contribute to the success of «Prisoner» all the requisites are indicated in the last column of the newspaper. For those in America who wish to donate to the newspaper «Prisoner» and support the prison ministry, there is a tear off form below, where you can donate and specify what you want the donation to go for. God bless you!

Matt. 19:26 — *Jesus looked at them intently and said, «For humans this is impossible, but for God all things are possible».*

John 15:5 — *...apart from Me you can do nothing.*

IV. Work on yourself:
☉ Compare yourself with those who are many times worse off than you.
☉ Recognize that the failures which cause our displeasure only seem like failures.

Rom. 8:28 — *And we know that for those who love God, that is, for those who are called according to His purpose, all things are working together for good.*

☉ Walk with the Lord. When our spiritual eyes always see God in front, it doesn't even cross our minds to be discontent.

Ps. 16:8 — *I have set the LORD before me continually; because He stands at my right hand, I will stand firm.*

☉ Begin to thank God for what you have.
Christ, being in a deserted place with starving people, first thanked the Heavenly Father for what was available — the five loaves and the two fish, and then He was able to multiply that which He gave thanks for.

Thanksgiving to God opens up opportunities for the manifestation of the glory of God in the life of the thankful.

Ps. 50:23 — *Whoever offers a sacrifice of thanksgiving glorifies Me, and I will reveal the salvation of God to whomever continues in My way.*

1 Thess. 5:18 — *In everything be thankful, because this is God's will for you in the Messiah Jesus.*

There is only one kind of dissatisfaction which can benefit a person: being dissatisfied in yourself in areas that need to be fixed. For example, being dissatisfied with taking offense, being irritable, lazy, or judgmental. For everything else: *Godliness with contentment does bring a great profit.* We bring nothing into this world we bring; we leave it with nothing. With food to eat and clothes to wear; we are content with everything. But people who want to get rich keep toppling into temptation and are trapped by many stupid and harmful desires that plunge them into destruction and ruin. *For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.* Some people, in their eagerness to get rich, have wandered away from the faith and caused themselves a lot of pain. *But you, man of God, must flee from all these things. Instead, you must pursue righteousness, godliness, faithfulness, love, endurance, and gentleness (1 Tim. 6:6-11).*

Heb. 13:5 — *Keep your lives free from the love of money, and be content with what you have, for God has said, «I will never leave you or abandon you».*

I cannot keep silent about one outstanding quality that prevents a person from being discontent. This quality is modesty. Modesty is the reluctance to draw attention to oneself, to ones' merits and achievements. It is the opposite of finding fame for oneself. Modesty adorns a person. Truly wise people are always modest.

James 3:17 — *However, the wisdom that comes from above is first of all pure, then peace-loving, gentle, willing to yield, full of compassion and good deeds, and without a trace of partiality or hypocrisy.*

Rom. 12:3 — *For by the grace given to me I ask every one of you not to think of yourself more highly than you should think, rather to think of yourself with sober judgment on the measure of faith that God has assigned each of you.*

Aleksandr BORISENKO.

Our main focus is ministering to inmates in jails and prisons.

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That you may say to the prisoners, «Go forth», To those who are in darkness, «Show yourselves» (Is. 49:9).

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TESTIMONIES OF BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIANS

NOW I AM NOT ALONE

My name is Vitaliy Amelin. I am 34 years old. The first time I heard about God was when I was 12 years old. A woman I did not know brought my mother, who was in a drunken state, home. Upon seeing my seven-year brother and me at home, the woman lovingly told us about God, the God who is able to change the life of our mother. She said that we can talk to God at anytime and anywhere. Sometime later, when I became a believer, I finally understood the meaning of her words. I remembered that I often turned to God in difficult circumstances, and He always kept me safe.

At one point in time, my mother got married to a man she loved dearly; they had a son. Soon after, her husband died. Sometime later, at one gathering mom met a young man who liked to drink alcohol. They got married and soon I was born. During this time, my mother and father became even more dependent on alcohol. I think my mother turned to alcohol because she was still grieving the loss of her first husband who had died at war. She had loved him dearly. At that time we lived in Bryansk (Russia). However, our grandfather decided that if my mom and her family would be closer to their relatives in Belarus, the alcohol problem would resolve itself. We moved to the city of Mozyr in Belarus and soon my mother stopped drinking. At this time her third son was born, my younger brother. Nevertheless, my father continued to drink. This resulted in many scandals at home.

After some time passed, mother began to drink alcohol again. Soon gatherings turned into heavy drinking. My mother's parents decided to have my older brother live with them. My younger brother and I stayed with the family, as my father thought that he would be able to raise us. My mother, meanwhile, began to turn to rehab centers, mental hospitals, and even ended up in prisons. Her life was crumbling before my eyes. My heart contained a lot of pain that I could not share with anyone. This pain grew into a sense of abandonment and loneliness.

When my mother was let out of prison, her lifestyle changed and she began to take care of me. I felt her love and hearing her talk about life encouraged me. Every time I thought, this time everything will change, but as time passed my hopes collapsed because once again mother would choose the former path. Once, I found my mother's diary and read it. Her reasoning and thoughts were radically different from her behavior. This did not fit in my child mind, how could this be? Now I could at least try to understand my mother's worries in her

warped life. Mom did not find anyone who could understand and help her. No family moral teaching could heal a broken heart.

During this time, I became used to taking care of myself and soon the 90s rolled around. Many people changed their attitudes and values in life. Drugs became fashionable and destroyed more than one life. My older brother tried them. For the first time, I met drug addicts and discovered the truth about addictions. They destruct human life, health and relationships. Yet that did not stop me. Somehow, just like most drug addicts, I did not think I could have the same problems. I tried drugs for the first time when I was 15 or 16 years old. I did not have any regrets. I was lonely, alone and feared what my future held for me so I turned to drugs.

Soon, my father took my younger brother and moved to Russia to live with his mother. In 1998, my mother once again returned from prison. She, as always, promised that she would change. But this time I did not care, drugs had become a substitute for what I needed from my mother and relatives. Sometime later, my mother's second cousin moved from Estonia to Belarus. She was a believer and through her God changed the life of my mother: In a short time, my mother changed from a long gone alcoholic to an energetic woman believing in God. She had her passport and parental rights restored. She got a job and returned the debt for her apartment. Soon my little brother moved back to Belarus to live with our mother.

At this time, I was drafted into the army and after a month, my older brother died due to drug overdose. These events helped me clearly understand the results of drug addiction. The fact that I ended up in the army saved my life. Returning home from the service, I felt care, love, and my mother's attention — all the things I had missed as a child. All was well: my mother attended church; my younger brother went to Sunday school. My mother often invited me to church and though I saw real changes in her life, I considered believing in God madness. I thought, «How can something be found in religion?» And, in general, I did not realize that I needed to look for something else in life, that I was missing God. As a result, I started using drugs again, comforting myself with the thoughts that nothing bad would



happen to me, I can take care of myself and that I did not need God.

In the 2003, my mother was diagnosed with cancer. The disease was deadly, and within a few months, my mother passed away. My heart was hardened, I could not even cry at her funeral. My younger brother and I became distant and our relationship was just a formality. In 2006, I again came to the understanding that I was walking on the edge and started trying to stop taking drugs but I only failed each time and my «narcotic marathons» became longer. Soon I began to have problems with my health, with the police and with relatives. I decided to run from these problems to Russia to the city of Bryansk, then to Moscow and St. Petersburg. The result was always the same — narcotics. In 2010, doctors diagnosed me with severe arthritis and told me I was disabled. This again made me look soberly at life and I clearly understood that I was at the edge of my life but I didn't know what to do. Now, looking back at my former life, I often remember the words of my mother, «I pray to God for you and tell Him that if you need to be broken, may He break you in order that you may turn to Him and be saved». From one acquaintance, I happened to hear of a rehab center called «Right to Life» and decided to go there, as that was my last hope. The rehabilitation program was Christian and was the ministry of the evangelical church «Light of the World» in the town of Rudnya, Belarus. After talking with ministers from this

rehabilitation center, I had a life changing moment where I prayed the prayer of repentance and asked God to begin His work in my heart.

There was a lot that I did not understand but at the same time, a flicker of hope appeared that my life might change. I saw former addicts live normal lives and have happy families. Their lives spoke for themselves. These people not only obtained freedom but also helped others gain freedom from addictions.

Throughout the rehabilitation program, God broke strongholds that had formed in my mind through the past years. Loneliness, fear, anger, and rejection did not allow me to understand why the ministers of the center helped addicted people without looking for personal gain. Now I understand; they were moved by God's love. When I accepted Jesus and was born from above, God showed me how many people participated in my life. Some people spoke to me about God's word and others prayed for me. I no longer felt rejected and truly knew that God always surrounds me with His love and care. In the Bible in the book of Jeremiah 33:3, the Lord says, «**Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know.**» I see how this is happening with me. My understanding of God changes again and again. He opens to me those parts of my life where He wants to create order. All that I need is to be obedient clay in His hands, for Him to mold me and make something beautiful out of me.

Currently I am a member of the church «Light of the World». The church became my family. God gave me a ministry at the rehabilitation center «Right to Life» and I began to work with the relatives and close ones of drug addicts. The Lord is restoring my health and helping me build my life anew. The Lord broke the curse of loneliness and now I have a wonderful wife. She truly complements me and helps me be a husband and future father. In my past life I could not have even dreamed of this.

My vision of the future is not clouded with past failures, because «**I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me**» (Philippians 4:13). Facing any sort of hardships, I know, sooner or later I will have victory because faithful is the One who promised this. I am very thankful to my pastor Alexander Averyanov and his wife Veronica and to the ministers and members of the church «Light of the World» and to all who have in some way contributed to my spiritual development. I ask God that these people receive their reward in Heaven.

Vitaliy AMELIN, Belarus.

TO STAY ALIVE

Most people have a surface level understanding about drug addicts and addictions; that which they saw in movies or maybe a dry statistic given out by the police or drug treatment centers. But in fact, drugs are a real and deadly weapon that kills everyone in its path.

One of the ways to combat drug addictions is to rip out the root of the cause that leads people, most of them young, to try narcotics. Often times these problems hide in their families. Maybe a child is not busy or their parents don't give them the necessary attention, or perhaps it is the opposite, the child is spoiled by the parents and looks for mischief. My parents were very caring. My father was an engineer and my mother was an economist, both had degrees. My father also had an issue with drunkenness. I wanted to escape the care of my parents and was drawn the image of rock stars, «free and rebellious.» I first started using drugs the so called «light» drugs, I used many narcotic medicines, ones one might get at a pharmacy. I would even buy chemicals in flower shops. I did not even think about heroin at the time, that came later. I injected amphetamines also much later, after I dropped out of college where I was learning. A few times I was in the emergency room from drug overdose but I do not remember



how I fell into such critical conditions. One time I had my stomach pumped but I only remember myself saying, «Why are you all disturbing me? Don't break my high». My path in life at that time seemed easy and enjoyable. That is the danger of drugs, after using them for a long time you do not realize that you are dying.

At work, people started realizing that I was a drug addict when I started using methadone. At that point I did not care, not even about an overdose. At that time I became

a real sociopath, I hated work, my life and society surrounding me. There were many reasons for all this. I lived with one girl for five years. I spoke half-truths. When she asked what was with me, I lied that I drank or smoked and traded what I then considered a little trust to hide something greater. But when we broke up, my girl already knew I was a drug addict.

I do not know how it would have all ended if I would not have been once found with drugs. It was the dose I wanted to use a little later, so I was carried it with me on the subway. My physical appearance was questionable from the viewpoint of the police and they conducted a search. For having found me with drugs, I could have been sentenced from two to five years of prison considering that this was my third conviction. Prior to that, I had failed to do my community service hours which I

was charged with and for this I was arrested.

Praise God, thanks to the intercessory workers of the «Alternative» project I was given the opportunity to go to the rehabilitation center in Mikhalkovskaya Rudnya. As a result, I came away from court practically free. But at that point, I did not care became of me. I sat on the train to get to the center and thought that this was the trip to my death.

My mother turned to the organization «Mothers Against Drugs» three years before. She realized that I had a real problem with drugs when I was 28 and was stuck on opium. Before that I was able to deceive my mother. This was easy to do, because she wanted to believe me. But my way of life and the change of my interests opened her eyes to the truth. If before my goals were set on my career, a successful life, at that point, social life became uninteresting to me. Even though learning came easy for me, I dropped out of the technical institute I was in, not even considering that I had almost finished it. By then I was already working as an engineer to earn money for drugs.

Receiving pleasures and fun was the goal of my life. But now I have a different goal, I have concrete plans. After finishing rehabilitation, which helped me become free from

drugs, I remain by the church. I rent an apartment by Rudnya and am help with the drug prevention program. I visit schools in the city and teach classes about drug prevention, teaching children about the dangers of drugs. I also serve in the center, help with the construction of our new church and am getting ready to take water baptism. I very much want to serve in the church and help people that have the same problem that I used to have.

I am glad and joyful to know the Lord. Happy that I have received His salvation from the power of sin, have joy in life, and am free from drugs. Before I did not believe in God, but only He helped me get free from my drug addiction. There is no point of living in the past, now I have a new life. If I still have some sort of problems with my past, I can now solve them. I can ask forgiveness from people whom I have hurt and can reimburse what loss I have caused. I try to keep up with friends, and tell them that they too can quit using drugs. They listen to me and are not against becoming free but for now the momentary high, a few minutes of pleasure from a dose of narcotics, takes force over them. But I pray for them and believe that they will also decide to turn to freedom.

Pavel ANOHIN, Belarus,
<http://kolokol.net/testimonies>

TESTIMONIES OF BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIANS

My life has never been calm and smooth — rather it was very actively and violently lived but not in a good adventure type of way.

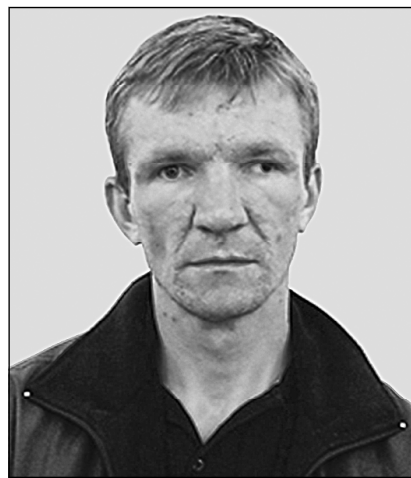
In the nineties there were a lot of criminal gangs and I participated in one of them. After a while I did a few things that resulted other guys seeking for my life. One time they came to kill me but thank God the people who were passing by called an ambulance. I was in a terrible condition: whole body beaten, blood and bruises, instead of my face — a live mash-up. I was sent to the intensive care unit (ICU). I was unconscious for eight full days. When my mom asked the doctor, «What medications are needed?», the doctor shook his head and said, «Go to church».

A mother's prayer in front of God is effective and honored in the eyes of the Lord. The proof of this is that the Lord had mercy on me, I stayed alive. But here is a point where I returned to a normal life and it was not easy. At first, for a long time I was

HOW TO BEAT DRUGS

paralyzed at the right side of the body. I lost how to use that side of my body: I had to relearn to walk, talk and write.

When I was just becoming conscious in the hospital a woman entered my hospital room and asked: «Do you want to talk about God?» I was a man of unbelievers, but thought, «Sure, why not?» and replied: «Let's talk». We talked; she told me about Jesus Christ and invited me to repent the sins I committed. That day I repented. Nothing amazing really happened: no special feelings, no chills down my back. But now I can look back and say that God began to produce His work in my heart. We humans can't predict in advance how God will act in our situation. His work is invisible, but the results of it being visible come slowly and may be hard to notice at first. Looking back, we can already notice that God was with us and had a helping hand, kept us safe in risky situations, prepared us for change.



So I sort of repented, but did not know how to

live differently. Coming home from the hospital I went right back to the old way of life: beer, vodka, and then away we go: drugs, prison and so forth... And so another 8 years of my life I lived in sin. It took a long time for God to humble me. Then when I was freed from prison, I met an old friend who had once introduced me to crack. He told me about the organization «Mothers against Drugs» and rehab. This was where people were being exempt/freed from drug addiction. While I was in prison my friend underwent rehabilitation and got himself free from the addiction.

I looked at his life; yes, he changed radically! I also decided to try. But behind me stretched a prison train: since in prison I behaved very badly, and I was not fully released. Three years I had to live under the supervision of local law enforcement. Therefore, I was not allowed to leave their city to a rehabilitation center. I was disappointed... «I guess I am not really needed for God» I thought. I did not give up but contacted the organization «Mothers against Drugs». It turned out that there are many believers, including pastors and churches and some in my city. I found out that they help not only to eliminate the physical craving for drugs, but also look at human thinking and change patterns of behavior. This was the key to permanent freedom! They were willing not just to help me get rid of my old lifestyle, but also show me how to live a new life, and to instill Christian values in me.

I came to the local department of «Mothers against Drugs,» and asked to go to a rehab center, but they told me that there was none. Instead, they offered an outpatient program in place where I had to come for classes. However, I didn't see the point. It was in the district where all addicts I knew and the lure of the needle will be great. Everyone came to my apartment to cook drugs and I wanted to get away from all that to a rehab. How could I beat addiction where any time of day people could just give me free doses?

But, thank God, these Christians had enough wisdom, and they suggested I regularly go to meetings and classes and that God Himself will shield me from all these temptations. They told me: «Do not search for drugs yourself, and the Lord will provide you with everything else that will be needed». And then they all prayed about it. While words like «Trust in God», just looked like silly phrases, something happened that I consider a real miracle. After the prayer, for the next months no druggies came to visit me! It was so odd, I was being my normal self: I wasn't in hiding, didn't disconnect telephones, and walked to the grocery store as I usually did. I did not use secret paths at night nor was hiding in bushes. I've opened the door for anyone who rang — I've lived as always. But within those six months I did not meet any addict.

During those six months I went to the classes, where my thinking changed. In the end I got complete freedom from drugs not only physical freedom, but spiritual freedom. Six months after there were drug addicts knocking at my door to get some drugs cooked. However, a conversation with them took place already in a different way: they could not offer me a dose because I immediately told them go to rehab! I became a witness to them about Christ, about their release from drugs. Some listened to my words, and some just bypassed me to party. Now I not only live without drugs, but also participate, reach out and help other people with addiction.

Valery GRANKOVSKY, Belarus.

FROM DEAD TO ALIVE

Being a drug addict and ending up in prison — could there be anything worse? It turns out, there can. When I served time, I started having great pain in my side. The pain did not cease but then formed into a kind of tumor in the groin... The doctors said that it was most likely the start of dropsy. A few months later my kidneys began to ache and I was soon taken to Minsk for examination. At Minsk, it was discovered that I had cancer. The tumor was located in the reproductive organs, they cleaned it out but after a while it became worse.

It turned out I had para-aortic lymph node metastases. When I did a CT scan it revealed that lymph node metastases had spread to many organs. The Doctor of Cancer Center in Borovlyany (Belarus) said, «If, within three months, the court decides to release you for treatment then we will cut out the metastasis, and even then, how many more months you would live is unknown». I had advanced to the last stage of cancer, and there were no hopes for a long life.

Since only three months was left for me to serve time, the court released me, and I went through chemotherapy. True, I quickly realized that everything was useless. In addition, the side effects were painful; vomiting, hair loss, and other «pleasures». I was very ill, so much so that at some point I decided that if were to die, than why with these additional torments? I refused further treatment. I still had no hope or faith in recovery.

After leaving the hospital, I continued my former way of life; I began to use drugs again. At that time I lived in Brest. I had a friend who was in a drug treatment unit, and periodically Christians would come and visit him. They told him about God, that there is another way of life happy and free from drugs. My friend went to a Christian church once, where he was invited, and he told me about his experience. And because he was able to tell it so beautifully I then decided to go and see: what if it were true, maybe it was something interesting? Next we went to worship together.

I remember that day after the service; I went to the pastor of the church. We talked, I told him about my situation. He asked me to pray and ask God's forgiveness for my past sins, and advised me to accept Jesus Christ as my Savior and Lord. I repeated a prayer after him. I cannot say that I did it consciously, I at that time understood very little. However, after returning home from the service, I took and threw away several packs of psychotropic pills, which were in my house. And then I found one last pack — and I also threw it away.

The next service, I was waiting and I really wanted to go. It was like something pulled me back there. The Lord «hooked» me, and changes began to take place in my heart. The second time I went to church was not out of curiosity. I thought about all that I had learned from my conversation with the pastor, and this time I consciously decided to turn to God. The

second service, I once again repented of my sins and accepted Christ into my heart. So I began a completely different life. My friend, who told me about Christianity, eventually stopped going to church and returned to his former way of life. Many of my comrades who were in the same circumstances are no longer alive. I however turned out differently: I went to church on the third, the fourth time... and after some time went to a Christian rehabilitation center for drug addicts.

I understood that it would be wise to stay away from former friends-addicts, because by that time I had already for many years been a drug addict. Arriving at the rehabilitation center, I not only told the director of my addiction, but also of my cancer. He and other Christians prayed for me to God in Jesus' name, and I began to undergo rehabilitation. We were taught to live a sober life, but not only that, we also learned to live according to God's Word, read the Bible and to apply it in practice, according to what was written in it.

Of course, the thought of a possible impending death frightened me at first. Before, when I was always «stoned,» I somehow did not think about the future, but now I was faced with serious thoughts. However, I was taught to counter this with the help of God's words, which I found in the Bible. I

«Compared with what you had, — it is nothing!» The doctor said. I told him that I believed in Jesus and God helped me. He admitted that in the past he faced such cases (where God healed). On this note we parted. When I spoke with his friend, the urologist, he said that such metastases that I had do not usually respond to treatment. What happened to me was clearly a miracle.

When I was released from the drug rehab center, the Director of the rehab center offered me a job — repairing cars. So that's how I started to make a living, and then I went to study in college. My life changed and I wanted to help other people too, to get rid of their drug addiction and to find God. I will help others as much as possible in this. For me the greatest happiness is to see people change by recovering their lives as they gain faith in Jesus Christ.

At first, after rehabilitation my former friends offered me drugs — but I refused. Now I find it hard to imagine myself living the same life. In place of the artificial «high» came true happiness — pleasure from other things in life. I find it interesting to learn, to discover new things. I have a family, a beloved wife, I like helping people to fill their needs, and I like to be useful to God. This joy cannot be replaced by anything else. I am still working on myself: trying to



wrote out these words of encouragement, God's promise of victory. I learned his words by heart. And every time fear came again, I confronted this fear with the spiritual weapon of God's Word.

Then I realized that it makes no sense to be afraid of the disease. And I began to fight the idea of death in the name of Jesus Christ. I tried everything I was taught in church, and the results were immediate. After a while I noticed that I felt differently: in the past, when the cancer progressed, I felt my lymph nodes and it was an unpleasant feeling, the disease made itself known of its existence. And after praying, these feelings diminished and slowly disappeared. Since March 2010 to this day I feel good.

Four years after the healing I went to the doctor. They ran scans... and metastasis was nowhere to be found — I saw only a tiny mark in the abdomen.

grow spiritually, and gain strength physically as well. Now I feel even more energetic and fresh than ever before. God literally gave me a new life.

But that's not all. Since the tumor was located in the reproductive organs, they told me that I would not be able to have children. However, contrary to their predictions, I and my wife had a son!

Anyone who has read my story, I want to say, the Lord is faithful to His word. My life is proof of this. And if you accept Jesus Christ and believe in all that he says in his word — your life will change too. If you have faith in him, God will not in any way fail you. I sincerely wish you to accept Jesus Christ into your heart. By doing this, you cannot go wrong. Once I have done so — and I do not regret it.

Vitaly OLEMPEYUK, Belarus.

TESTIMONIES OF BORN-AGAIN CHRISTIANS

My name is Sasun Manukyan. I want to testify about how the Lord delivered me from the underworld. The whole point of my life was to steal and to deceive everyone. This gave me fulfillment and pleasure. The Bible says that anyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. For a man occupied with such passion, it seems to him that he is in control and can manage everything. If that were only so. For a person who commits sin is a slave of sin. I was a slave of sin.

«I will be glad and rejoice in You: I will sing praise to Your name, O most High»

(Ps. 9:2)



At one point in my life, God preformed a miracle. This was not luck nor a simple accident; this was unheard of! God preformed it Himself. At that time, I lived in the city of Novosibirsk. I was 24 years old with my life ahead of me. I had great plans. I needed to gain some cash before moving to the city of Voronezh, where my fiancé was waiting for me. She was planning our wedding while I was on a «business trip». At that time, my fiancé Albina did not know anything about my criminal plans; I simply told her that I was on a business trip. So here I was in Novosibirsk, 3,500 kilometers away from my fiancé.

The police were suspicious of me and kept a close eye on me. Six months later, they caught me in a criminal act. When this happened, the police rejoiced greatly. They broadcasted my picture on the news, declaring that they had caught a dangerous criminal. They threatened me to fifteen years of confinement. As they beat me severely, breaking my ribs, they said, «You will remember us for a lifetime». After these beatings, I thought I would never be able to have a family and children. In this situation, there was no hope, and I thought that I would die in prison, but God did His miracle.

Prior to all of this, I had heard about God. I visited Orthodox temples and obeyed the priests by doing whatever they told me to do. I did all of this in order to calm my conscience, not to actually try to please God. Therefore, my life never changed. So here I was again, serving a criminal sentence. Sitting in the chamber, I turned to the Lord. I cried out to Him saying, «If You really exist and free me from this life of crime and from prison, I promise I will serve You». I wept and prayed all night.

The next morning the investigator summoned me to his office. As I walked out of my chamber, my handcuffs were removed. This made me think that something was wrong. «Why are they removing the handcuffs, as I am a criminal and am capable of anything?» — I thought.

Upon entering the investigator's office, I saw that the Mayor was there. This Mayor knew me but hated me because of my crimes. He knew that I planned to move to the city of Voronezh, where my fiancé was waiting for me. During the interrogation with the investigator, the investigator asked me suddenly, «If we let you go, do you promise to go and never to return to this city?» The Mayor had apparently informed him of my plans to move. Of course, I could not believe it, but quickly regained composure and said, «I promise to leave and not to return».

A miracle! I was free and 24 hours had not even passed since the time when I had been shown on the news. Many of my friends and acquaintances asked me how much I paid to be released so quickly. It was a miracle of God. Praise God!

The Bible says that what is impossible with men is possible with God. Upon my release, I got married, and moved to Voronezh. I asked God to help my family and I serve Him. God sees sincere hearts of those who turn to Him and answers their prayers. Today my family and I serve the Lord and thank Him for His great love and mercy to us. Seek the Lord with all your heart for nothing is impossible for Him!

Sasun MANUKYAN, Russia.

My name is Denis Shapelle, I am 37 years old, and today I am the director of «Life», a rehabilitation center for drug addicts. However, it was not always so. I want to tell you about what God has done in my life.

I was born and raised in Minsk, Belarus in a quiet, good, average family. From early childhood, I was a very capable and gifted boy. I wrote poems, painted well, studied music since first grade, sang and played the violin. I did not like music so I quit it after a short time. I liked sports more so I took up wrestling. In fourth grade, I was selected to go to the school of olympic reserve, where I continued my studies and practiced. I had very good results, and if I had continued working hard, I would have been a good athlete.

At 13 years of age, I wanted to spend more time on the streets than in the gym. I became friends with others boys who were a bad influence for me. At 14 years old, I dropped out of the school for athletes and tried marijuana for the first time. Having barely finished ninth grade, I dropped out of school completely. In 1992, the «iron curtain» collapsed and freedom came literally and figuratively. When I was 17 years old, I tried opium for the first time. At that time, people did not know about the dangers of drugs. While using drugs, I thought I had found myself. The drugs filled the void that was in my soul. I was very proud of myself, I thought I was the coolest person ever and thought that those around me were missing out, not understanding anything in life. I felt like I was on the crest of a wave, and believed that I was truly happy.

This illusion of freedom quickly vanished with my first withdrawal. Since then, drugs brought me less and less joy with each time. I realized that I was hooked, caught in a trap and had no freedom. Heroin was like medicine to me. I no longer used it to relax and get «high». I used it to ease my withdrawals and used it in order to live: to sleep, eat, and walk. It was a nightmare. With each passing day, month, and year it got worse and worse. In order to find the money for another dose of the drugs, I committed crimes. Heroin killed everything in me: love, friendships, respect. I was void of feeling and emotions. I was capable of doing anything, even killing if it were necessary.

At the age of 23, I was imprisoned for the second time. When I was 25 years old, I was let out. From the first day of freedom, everything went back to «normal», the way my life was before prison. Due to drug use, my health began to deteriorate. Several times during withdrawals, my heart started drawing down and I began having seizures. I was afraid to be alone, without drugs, because I knew that at any moment during yet another

SECOND CHANCE

withdrawal, my heart could fail and I would die. At 26 years old, I was like an old man, almost an invalid. When I was admitted to a drug rehab clinic, doctors told me that I had less than a year left to live. I would not live long — not more than a year. I felt hopeless and accepted the fact that I would die, not having lived a full life. Yet somewhere deep in my heart there was a small flicker of hope, hope that something could change. That night I dreamed of how my life would have been if I had not tried drugs. In the morning, reality sunk in. I realized that it was just a dream, a dream that would probably never come true. I felt like I was drowning, grasping at straws in order to survive.

Summer of 2001, I once again was admitted into a drug rehab clinic. Christian people often visited this clinic. Here for the first time in my life I hear the good news and repented. Although my repentance was not genuine, God began His work in my soul. I dreamed that the devil came and started pulling me into darkness. I struggled and tried to resist but could not. I had great fear, coldness and horror overwhelm me, I cried out, «Jesus, help me!» Upon hearing me scream, the devil turned tail and ran like a scalded cat. That's when I saw light and felt an indescribable warmth and peace.

From that day, my life began to change. I admitted myself to a rehabilitation center, August of 2001. God performed a miracle for me

realization melted my hardened heart.

One sunny autumn morning, I woke up and felt God's presence. I felt and realized that God loved me! I began to cry, sing, and praise Him. I felt so good, I realized that no «charm» in this sinful world could ever compare to what I had just experienced. At that moment, I decided that I never wanted to leave God for anything else in my life. These feelings were the best that I had ever experienced in my life. It was then that I dedicated my life to Jesus, making the decision to serve Him until my last breath. As time went by and my physical health began to improve, I gained 20 kilograms and began to feel like a young healthy person. Now I was sure that the doctors' predictions would not come true: I could still live!

After the rehabilitation program, I became a minister at the rehab center. The realization that my life could help save many lives, brought me great joy. At the rehab center, I re-learned how to read. As a result, when I was 29 years old I graduated from high school. Then I began attending the University of Culture and Arts. Now I have two degrees, God helped me see that I have a talent for painting, so I became an artist.

A year later, I married a lovely girl who had never tried drugs. Earlier whenever I looked at my physical condition, I realized that I could never marry and could never have children. Now my



there; I completely stopped having withdrawals. At first I thought, «It's good that a lot of people surround me here; if I suddenly started having a heart attack, they would call an ambulance». However, to my great surprise, I never had a seizure or a heart attack. Accustomed to living like a stray dog, I could not understand what people at the rehab center wanted from me. They all smiled very sweetly at me and I thought that they wanted something from me. In the past, I used to live by the principle: get what you can from people and drop them when they have nothing to give to you. Therefore, I thought that the people at the rehab center talked to me because they wanted something from me. Then I realized that all these people loved me for who I was and sincerely want to help me, this

wife and I have three beautiful, healthy children, two sons and a beautiful daughter. Currently we are awaiting the birth of our fourth child. One time when I prayed, God asked me, «What do you want Me to do for you?» The question caught me off guard, and without thinking, I said: «Lord, I want people to see You in my life, that You may be glorified». God is glorified through my life. Not because I am perfect or righteous, but because He is loving and merciful.

Now I serve God, not because of what I can get in return, some kind of reward, but because of God's kindness and mercy towards me. I no longer know how to live a different life nor do I want to live a different kind of life without God.

Denis SHAPELLE, Belarus.



«Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also» (Matthew 6:19-21).

Every time I reread Jesus Christ’s Sermon on the Mount, I stop at these verses and once again reflect on these words. In the present day these teachings of Jesus Christ are not only neglected, but everything is measured exclusively by worldly measures. The focus on earthly values has alienated a great portion of the inhabitants of planet Earth from heavenly treasures. Moreover, this attraction to earthly treasures has engulfed not only unbelievers, but also a significant portion of those who call themselves Christians. Unfortunately, many people today measure everything in comparison to earthly «treasures,» or in other words, by the size of wallets. Many times I have heard and read about how some Christians characterize particular churches. I do not know why, but words like «this church is very large and rich...» always sounded jarringly wrong. It is all too closely associated with earthly values...

Mentally transferring myself to the time when the Lord Jesus Christ walked on earth among men, I start imagining the decoration of the temples, as well as what Jesus Christ and His disciples wore. Everything was so much simpler back then. Our Lord Jesus Christ was not picky at all, and His attire was little different from that of His disciples and others around Him. He did not wear any head ornaments with emeralds, gold chains, rings and other paraphernalia, which today is an integral part of the many priests and pastors who teach and lead the people of God. In those days there were no fancy cars such as «Mercedes», «Lexus» or «Audi», which many of our modern day «priests» drive. Jesus did not even use a riding animal, aside from one well-known instance — His entry into Jerusalem. And in addition to all that, He preached to people of different villages and cities, overcoming great distances by foot. The same was done by all the Lord’s disciples, who were mainly from the common people, not requiring special attention, much less earthly goods.

Where did the Christians of today get all their ambition and craving for earthly values? It is one thing when Christians make a lot of money and spend it on the Lord’s work, but it is a completely different situation when they accumulate the money and other earthly values, making them it their focus of «worship». Why does a person need/want earthly riches? To control others? Most likely, this is one of the main criterion that pushes a person to accumulate money. Power and superiority over others is the main goal of all those who are rich. And the more a person has accumulated, the stronger the superiority and power over other people. However, no matter the extent of the power and the wealth that supports this superiority, the Bible clearly states: «Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death» (Proverbs 11:4).

I really like how apostle James in his epistle writes to the rich and reveals to them their end. Here is what he says: «Come now, you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your



treasure! Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter» (James 5:1-5).

Reading the words of the Apostle James, you begin to understand how pathetic those who have been hoarding over the years look, looking for personal enrichment. It really is hard for those people to part with their wealth. There is a very interesting story about this in the Scriptures: «And someone came to Him and said, «Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?» And He said to him, «Why are you asking Me about what is good? There is only One who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments». Then he said to Him, «Which ones?» And Jesus said, «You shall not commit murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; Honor your father and mother; and You shall love your neighbor as yourself». The young man said to Him, «All these things I have kept; what am I still lacking?» Jesus said to him, «If you wish to be complete, go and sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me». But when the young man heard this statement, he went away grieving; for he was one who owned much property. And Jesus said to His disciples, «Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God» (Matthew 19:16-24).

This Biblical story is not much different from the life of modern day rich people. The same personas exist today, who attend churches and even set aside money for the «temple». However, this is only a minor part of their riches — the money they donate to good causes. Basically, all the profit these people make is spent on increasing their own well-being and on entertainment. Following the Lord and spending their wealth on the constant expansion of the work of God, is something that rich people will risk. Both then and now, the rich cannot part with their wealth because, for them, earthly comfort is worth more than treasures in heaven. Rich people who don’t use their earthly wealth for the glory of God are in fact very miserable people. Their wealth affords them any earthly comforts, but not one of them can buy eternal life. And here the words of the Apostle James sound like a verdict: «...weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you. Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! ...You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a

day of slaughter» (James 5:1-3, 5).

Today, these Biblical truths are of little interest to the rich of the earth. They have everything, and if there is something they don’t have, they can easily buy it. Other people’s problems and God’s work on earth does not worry them at all! It’s not their daily worry about what awaits them beyond earthly existence. The most important thing is to make more profit. Many people think that they can buy just about anything with money. However, at some point in their life, every person understands that not everything can be bought. For example, no one can buy love, because it is either you have it or you don’t. It is also not possible to buy health, especially once it’s wasted. You can only buy medicine, but not the natural health. And as for eternal life, God never makes monetary deals with anyone, because eternal life can’t be bought with any amount of money.

There is a very sad Biblical story, which clearly illustrates the sad end of all earthly treasures. This is the story of the rich man and Lazarus: «Now there was a rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, joyously living in splendor every day. And a poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man’s table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. Now the poor man died and was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. In Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, «Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus so that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue, for I am in agony in this flame». But Abraham said, «Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us». And he said, «Then I beg you, father, that you send him to my father’s house — for I have five brothers — in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment» (Luke 16:19-28).

When I reflect on all the earthly treasure and on the purpose for which we came into this world and for which we live, many questions arise in my head. And I want to finish this written monologue with them:

Why is it not as it should be, why?!
I’m constantly catching myself on this thought.
Why is it all this way — poverty and chaos...
Why? I don’t understand? Al, maybe I’m a fool?!
Why is there falsehood and lies everywhere?
Why has the word «homeless» become fashionable?
Why does only flattery come from people’s lips?

Why are love and kindness forgotten?
Why is only rudeness growing day by day?
Why is a sensible mind rarely valued nowadays?
Why does a clear day turn into nighttime darkness?
Why is so much blood shed and who can help?
Why instead of worthwhile deeds, just empty words?
Why, where from — so much rottenness in the world?..

* * *

What does a person need,
To be happy?!
Where do we get the answer to this —
Who am I to ask?
What brings joy to everyone in life,
Why do we live?
How do I get to the truth,
To learn about...
How much money, how much gold
Is needed without lies,
To call life good —
Once and for all?!
How little, or how much,
Is there any limit?
And where does the road lead —
Under the title «destination»?..
I want to understand just a little,
Understand one thing:
What is it that is good —
And who has it?!

Discussing with myself,
I come to a conclusion:
All of us live in the world and,
God created us all.
He created perfect
Everything in this world!
He gave us heaven and the light
of the universe,
And we cannot count all that
He has given...
And, of course, in the beginning
The question did not stand:
What is too much, what is too little,
What it is purpose of the everything?
But, from the moment of leaving God,
Heading into temptations lure,
Our ancestors were caught
Under a wicked eye...
And since then all over the planet
The world is ruled by a demon
That leads in each new age —
Farther away from Heaven...
Analyzing the pieces
Of all that is inside us,
You can become assured of —
Who and what we are:
Greedy, seeking only self-benefit,
revenge and envy,
Happiness — is the only feast!
Nothing we have is ever enough,
nothing ever serves as a joy —
Oh, the ugly world...
Vanity all around,
Vanity and more vanity...
A man breathes malice on a friend,
All his life.
Lies ooze out, without opposition,
The day does not bring truth;
A Heart — hard as stone;
a soul — something unclean,
Instead of light — the darkness...
What does a person need,
How can understand him?
God, Oh, God, what is it —
Who is he — and what from?!

«Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, «I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you» (Hebrews 13:5).

I. GORIK.

QUOTES FROM FAMOUS PEOPLE ABOUT GOD AND THE BIBLE

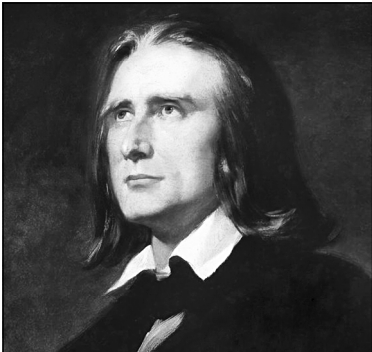
John LOCKE
(1632-1704),
English teacher and
philosopher




He said about the Bible: «It has God for its Author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture for its matter».

Heinrich HEINE
(1797-1856),
German poet

«The Bible. Rightly do men also call it the Holy Scripture; for he that has lost his God can find Him again in this Book, and towards him that has never known God it sends forth the breath of the Divine Word».



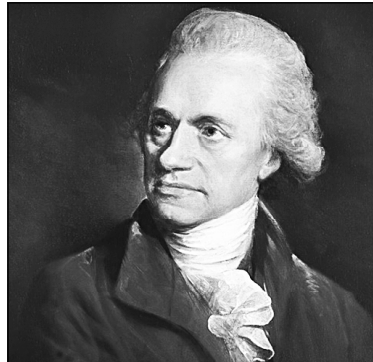
Antoine-Laurent de LAVOISIER
(1743-1794),
Founder of precise
chemistry




«You are doing a wonderful deed,» he wrote to a certain King, who published a treatise in defense of religion, «being an advocate of Revelation and the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures».

William HERSCHEL
(1738-1822),
British astronomer

«All human discoveries seem to be made only for the purpose of confirming more strongly the truths come from on high, and contained in the sacred writings».



Andre-Marie AMPERE
(1775-1836),
Physicist
and mathematician



In the year of his death, Ampere wrote, «I would like to always remember Paul’s words: «those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it».

<http://blago.dp.ua/aphorisms/101-podborka-citat-stihov-fraz-izvestnyh-lyudey-o-boge-vero-biblii.html>

TOPIC FOR REFLECTION

INTRODUCTION:

In this article, we will focus on the Lord's Supper.

1. Biblical names of the breaking of bread:

- «Supper of the Lord» (1 Cor. 11:20).
- «Chalice of the Lord» (1 Cor. 10:21a).
- «Lord's Table» (1 Cor. 10:21b).
- «Cup of Blessings» (1 Cor. 10:16).
- «Communion» or «Breaking of bread» (Acts 2:42).

2. The Bible's detailed description of the last supper is found in:

- Matt. 26:26-29;
- Mark 14:22-25;
- Luke 22:19-20;
- 1 Cor. 11:23-26, 27-34.

3. Let us read one of these descriptions:

1 Cor. 11:23-31 — *For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, «This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.» In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, «This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.» For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.*



Eucharist. Sandro Botticelli, 1495

THE LAST SUPPER

So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep. But if we were more discerning with regard to ourselves, we would not come under such judgment.

I. The Aim and Purpose of communion:

In remembrance of Christ: *do this... in remembrance of me* (1 Cor. 11:24-25).

1. The proclamation of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ:

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes (1 Cor. 11:26). It is an act of confession of our faith in Jesus Christ.

2. Communion symbolizes the unity of the believers with their Lord:

Eph. 4:4-6 — *There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*

3. Communion symbolizes the unity of believers with each other:

1 Cor. 12:12-13 — *Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body — whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free — and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.*

II. Elements of the Lord's Supper

1. The elements of the Lord's Supper (the body and blood of Christ) are the bread and wine.

A. The bread — the body of Jesus, «which is broken for us».

Jesus did not go into the details of what was supposed to be the bread during the Lord's Supper:

thrown into the mix, or without yeast. However, we know that the bread Lord broke with His disciples was the Passover bread (not mixed with yeast).

B. Wine — the blood of Jesus «poured out for many for the remission of sins».

According to Matt. 26:26-29, it was wine from «the fruit of the vine».

2. When we call bread the body of Christ, and wine the blood, it does not mean that we literally eating His flesh and drinking His blood. Bread and wine are attributes, symbolizing flesh and blood of our Lord.

3. It also does not mean that after the prayer of thanksgiving and blessing of bread and wine, they literally turn into blood and flesh.

III. Adjoining to the Lord

1. Above we read that partaking in the Lord's Supper, we partake of the Lord, and to the believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. It should be noted that the introduction to the Lord does not take place during the actual Supper.

2. Supper — it is the result of (evidence) that we have already gained access to the body of Christ.

3. The actual joining with God and God's people happens when...

- not in words and not the Lord's Supper,
- a belief in the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ,
- as well as in the strength and help of the Holy Spirit.

IV. SYMBOLISM

Read John 6:47-69 and note that many disciples did not understand the words of Jesus, and so they left and no longer followed him. To understand the words of Jesus that the disciples did not understand we need to look at what was said through spiritual eyes and see the spiritual meaning of the symbols.

1. Bread.

A. Jesus said about himself: I am the bread of life (John 6:48).

B. During the trial in the wilderness, Jesus said: ...It is

written, «Man shall not live on bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God» (Matt. 4:4).

C. Jesus — the Word of God. John 1:1-4 — *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. John 1:14 — Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

Conclusion: The Word of God (the Bible) is our spiritual bread.

2. Wine.

A. John 6:56 — *Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in them.* Note the passage in Romans 8:9 — *You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.*

B. Eph. 5:18 — *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.*

Conclusion: The Holy Spirit — the blood of the New Testament.

CONCLUSION:

The breaking of bread, that is, the breaking of bread (the body of Christ) — is not only participation in the sacraments, but also participate in the blessings of God, to which access is opened for us through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross. It also includes the following of Christ (when we act in accordance with His teachings), and participated in His ministry and life, and for some it is to partake in communion and remembrance of His death.

This article for the newspaper «Prisoner» kindly provided by Biblical discussion club, Montreal, Canada <http://www.cogmtl.net/Articles/019.htm>

CHRISTIAN NEWS

86-year-old nun starred in a Nike commercial

At 86 years of age, Madonna Bader can swim, ride a bicycle and run (sometimes walking) 16.5 hours without a break. How is this possible? With God's strength. Sister Bader — a nun of the Roman Catholic community in Spokane, Washington (Spokane, Washington).

Nike recently released the short film «Limitless youth», whose hero was Sister Madonna Bader. The nun has long been engaged in triathlon — a sport, which is a race of swimming, and jogging in stages between a bike and then on foot. «The first 45 races did not kill me» — jokes Sister Madonna Bader before the swim. The caption to the video states that «youth has no age limits».

Madonna Bader was born in 1930 in St. Louis, Missouri, and at 23, she came to the monastery. In 1970, she left the monastery, joining a religious organization Sisters for Christian Community, relating to the Roman Catholic Church.

First, she completed the Ironman distance, which sometimes cannot be done by the young people, when she was 52 years old! After this she became interested in triathlon with a priest's advice, her spiritual father, who assured her that this a great way of training the mind, body and spirit.

Many times, she became the oldest woman to finish in super-triathlon «Ironman». This is one of the most complex types of all-round, in which the participants first swim almost four kilometers, then a 180-km bike ride, and then the 42-kilometer run. Non-stop, with strict time constraints on each of the stages. Sister Bader has her own way of dealing with such hellish loads. While other participants of the competition are fighting for victory, she prays. Pedaling, swimming, running — and mentally praises to the Lord. She prays for all the friends who asked her for prayers.

Throughout her 30-year career in extreme sports, Madonna Bader injured herself more than once. Once, when she was 76, during a regular triathlon she unfortunately fell from a bicycle (she was clipped by some of the participants) and broke her arm. The doctor did an x-ray, the plaster cast and ordered 10 weeks of complete rest. «I really wanted to take part in another competition, that was to be held in just 6 weeks» — says Bader. Therefore, she began to listen to her body, praying to get better soon, went on walks and spent a lot of time in the sun to get vitamin D.



After 5 weeks, the doctor was shocked when he looked at fresh X-rays of the hand of Madonna Bader. The Fracture healed completely! The nun still had a week to restore fitness and prepare for the competition.

«Remember, no one doctor knows your body as well as you do» — says Sister Bader.

The Sister was a member of the Ironman 45 times (triathlon competition that includes swimming 2.4 miles (3.86 km), race on a bike on the highway for 112 miles (180.25 km) and a marathon of 26.2 miles (42.195 km)).

However, after the Ironman in 2013, she decided to stop taking part in the competition. Of course, she will continue to swim, bike and run, no question, but no longer in a competition.

As to her age (and now Madonna Bader 86 years), her looks are in Christian humility: aging only brings us closer to a meeting with the Creator. Where does this power come from in this 86-year-old woman, who overcomes what back-breaking healthy young people can't? Madonna says that she draws power from her faith in God. However, without serious training one cannot do it either, and only she herself knows how much effort and work was invested in each of her victories in addition to her heavenly aid.

The news agency CNL NEWS.



TOPIC FOR REFLECTION

MONEY IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE

1. The Bible treats labor as a means of income.

Ephesians 4:28 — *Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give to the needy.*

2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 — *For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that some among you disorderly, doing nothing, and vanity. Them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that they work quietly and eat their own bread (we recommend to read Proverbs 31). God also wants us to trust Him in our needs (Philippians 4:6, 19 — Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God).*

2. All that we have does not belong to us — but to God.

All that we have, does not belong to us — but to God: **Psalm 24:1** — *earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.* Once you get down to it, I have no right to use money the way I want. I am only the manager of the funds which God has entrusted to me. So I must use these funds for the Lord's work.

Christians are called to serve and provide for their families (**1 Timothy 5:8** — *But if anyone on his own and especially of the home does not provide for, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel*), and then to share with those in need, especially with the needy brothers and sisters in the faith (**2 Corinthians 8:13-15** — *Do not require others to be relieved, and the severity of you, but now that there may be equality your abundance may supply their want, that their abundance may supply your want; that there may be equality, as it is written who gathered much had nothing over, and he who little had no lack*).

Galatians 6:6-10 — *Taught in the word share all good things with him who teaches. Do not be deceived: God is not mocked. Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap: he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Doing well, but do not lose heart, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. Ask yourself: «How am I managing God's resources? Is God satisfied?»*

3. God uses the money for a specific purpose.

A. In order to meet our immediate needs and requirements **Matthew 6:11** — *...our daily bread Give us this day...*

1 Timothy 6:8 — *And having food and clothing let us be therewith content.*

What does it mean? The context of this verse (carefully read the passage from **1 Timothy 6:6-10**) shows that see that greed is insatiable by nature, it has no boundaries. Wherefore the apostle Paul also teaches us to be content with what the Lord has already given us in His great mercy, and not repeat the mistakes of the old woman from Pushkin's fairy tale «Goldfish».

B. To form our character and personality.

Philippians 4:10-13 — *I am very glad in the Lord that you have revived your concern for me; you cared before, but you lacked opportunity. I say this not because I need, for I have learned to be content with what I have. I am able to live in poverty, I am able*

to live in abundance; and I learned all around, filled and going hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Also King Solomon — the wisest of men — said: *...neither poverty nor riches: give me, nourishes me daily bread, so that, sated, I deny thee, and say, «Who is the LORD?» Or lest I be poor, and steal, and use in vain the name of my God (Proverbs 30:8-9).*

C. To guide us on the right path (Through giving or taking away funds).

D. To help and bless others through us.

E. To show His strength and power in our lives.

4. Greed and covetousness are sin.

Exodus 20:17 — *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; do not desire your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's.*

1 Timothy 6:6-10 — *But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many grieves.*

Hebrews 13:5-6 — *Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, «Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you». So we say with confidence, «The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?»*

Jesus' answer to the question «What happens to those who are not rich toward God.

Luke 12:15-21 — *And he said unto them, Take heed and beware of covetousness: for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions. And he told them a parable: a certain rich man produced a good crop in the field; and he thought within himself, saying, what shall I do? There is no place to store my crops. And he said, this will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and all mine, and I will say to my soul! Many goods laid up for many years; you shall rest, eat, drink, be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool! This night thy soul shall be required of thee; whose shall those things, which thou hast provided? So is he who lays up treasure for himself but is not rich toward God.*

The conclusion is clear: no earthly riches can save a man from death nor from judgment, or from the wrath of God. That is why Jesus said: *...what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? (Matthew 16:26).*

5. The book of Proverbs warns us from wanting quick and easy profit.

Proverbs 28:20 — *A faithful person will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished.*

Proverbs 28:22 — *To show partiality is not good — yet a person will do wrong for a piece of bread.*

6. The Russian idiom «it come quickly and quickly it will leave» in action.

Proverbs 13:11 — *Dishonest money dwindles away, but whoever gathers money little by little makes it grow.*

7. Goods acquired by unjust means, breaks up families.

Proverbs 15:27 — *The greedy bring ruin to their households, but the one who hates bribes will live.*



BIBLICAL REFERENCES TO MONEY

Money generates greediness.

Ecclesiastes 5:10-11 — *Whoever loves money never has enough; whoever loves wealth is never satisfied with their income. This too is meaningless. As goods increase, so do those who consume them. And what benefit are they to the owners except to feast their eyes on them?*

The love of money.

1 Timothy 6:10 — *...the root of all evil is the love of money, which some wandered from the faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

Please note that it is not money or wealth is the source of all evil, but the love of money.

You cannot serve God and money.

Matthew 6:24 — *No one can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or will hold to one and the other; you cannot serve God and mammon.*

Can a man rob God?

Malachi 3:8-12 — *Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. «But you ask, «How are we robbing you?» «In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse — your whole nation — because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this», says the Lord Almighty, «and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe», says the Lord Almighty. «Then all the nations will call you blessed, for yours will be a delightful land», says the Lord Almighty.*

The attitude of Jesus to donations.

The two mites of the widow: **Luke 21:1-4** — *As Jesus looked*

up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. «Truly I tell you», he said, «this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on».

God wants our donations to be generous and voluntary.

2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 1 Timothy 6:17-19 — *Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in*

inheritance claimed too soon will not be blessed at the end.

Value of money.

Ezekiel 7:19 — *They will throw their silver into the streets, and their gold will be treated as a thing unclean. Their silver and gold will not be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath. It will not satisfy their hunger or fill their stomachs, for it has caused them to stumble into sin.*

How to understand the words of Jesus: «It is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven»

Let us carefully read the words of Jesus:

Luke 18:24-25 — *Jesus looked at him and said, «How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God».*

Jesus did not say that the rich cannot enter into the kingdom of God. He said that it would be very difficult to enter into the kingdom of God. And now let's look at two questions:

1. Why did Jesus say «difficult», but not «impossible»?

2. Why is it hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God?

1. Why did Jesus say «difficult» not «impossible»?

Salvation is the gift of God. And if not for our loving God then no one would be saved, not only the rich but also the poor. However, our Lord loves, and is long-suffering and merciful. The Bible says that He is the God who wants all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (**1 Timothy 2:4**).

What does the phrase «all men» mean? Does it only apply to the affluent? No, it applies to all people, the poor and rich, intelligent and illiterate, the good and bad. In the eyes of the Lord God we all look the same. We are sinners, because of sin we lost the image and likeness of God He created us in. This is stated in **Romans 3:23**: *...for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.* Thus it is possible for anyone to get saved, only through God's grace. This grace extends everyone coming to God as a repentant sinner. As Jesus himself said to his disciples after speaking to the rich young man, *what is impossible with men is possible with God (Luke 18:27).*

2. Why is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God?

The answer to this question is given by Jesus himself during the conversation with the rich young man. To find Jesus' answer let us turn to the Gospel of Mark, and see how the story is recorded there:

Mark 10:23-25 (ISV) — *Then Jesus looked around and told his disciples, «How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!» The disciples were startled by these words, but Jesus told them again, «Children, how hard it is for those who trust in their wealth to get into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to squeeze through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to get into the kingdom of God». So Jesus explains that it is difficult for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God because he trusts his wealth more than God.*

In **Matthew 6:24**, Jesus said that it is impossible to serve God and mammon. The word «mammon» is derived from the Aramaic word «wealth» and has the same root with the Hebrew word for «that which you trust» or «something that you hope in».

(Continued on the 10th page)

The Lord wants us to be merciful and share with the needy.

Proverbs 14:21 — *It is a sin to despise one's neighbor, but blessed is the one who is kind to the needy.*

Psalms 14:5 — *An honest witness does not deceive, but a false witness pours out lies.*

Easy Money.

Proverbs 20:21 — *An*

TOPICS FOR REFLECTION

MONEY IN THE LIGHT OF THE BIBLE

(The ending. The beginning is on the 9th page)

The Lord wants us to build our hope not on our wealth, nor on ourselves and our abilities and talents, nor on idols, or someone else, but only on God. The following are Bible verses that confirm this truth:

Isaiah 42:17 — *They shall be turned back, they shall be greatly ashamed, that trust in graven images, that say to the molten images, Ye are our gods.*

Isaiah 40:30-31 — *Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.*

Isaiah 49:23 — *And kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and their queens thy nursing mothers: they shall bow down to thee with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of thy feet; and thou shalt know that I am the LORD: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me.*

Isaiah 57:13 — *When thou criest, let thy companies deliver thee; but the wind shall carry them all away; vanity shall take them: but he that putteth his trust in Me shall possess the land, and shall inherit My holy mountain.*

Proverbs 16:20 — *He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he.*

Proverbs 28:25-26 — *He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife: but he that putteth his trust in the LORD shall be made fat. He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered.*

Proverbs 29:25 — *The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.*

Psalms 125:1 — *They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever.*

WHAT WEALTH AND TREASURES SHOULD WE COLLECT OR WHAT TREASURES ARE TRUE AND ENDURING?

☉ **God's blessings are the true wealth:**

A faithful man shall abound with blessings: but he that maketh haste to be rich shall not be innocent (Proverbs 28:20).

☉ **The Lord is the real wealth (treasure):**

Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed (1 Peter 2:7-8).

☉ **Knowledge and understanding of the Lord is the true wealth:**

Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD (Jeremiah 9:23).

☉ **Goodness, forbearance and longsuffering of God are riches:**

Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? (Romans 2:4).

☉ **God's grace is the true wealth:**

In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace (Ephesians 1:7);

That in the ages to come He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (Ephesians 2:7).

☉ **Joy and generosity (kindness) are the true wealth:**

How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality (2 Corinthians 8:2);

And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work: (As it is written, He hath dispersed abroad; he hath given to the poor: His righteousness remaineth for ever. Now He that ministereth seed to the sower both minister bread for your food, and multiply your seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness;) Being enriched in everything to all bountifulness, which causeth through us thanksgiving to God (2 Corinthians 9:8-11).

☉ **Eternal life (the glorious legacy of Saints) is the true wealth:**

The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints... (Ephesians 1:18).

☉ **A good name and a good fame is the true wealth:**

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold (Proverbs 22:1).

☉ **Good deeds and hope in God is the real treasure:**

Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

☉ **Suffering for faith and Christ is the true wealth:**

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward (Hebrews 11:24-26).

☉ **The Kingdom of heaven is the real wealth:**

Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it (Matthew 13:44-46).

☉ **Faith is the real wealth:**

Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him? (James 2:5).

☉ **Hope in God and salvation is the real wealth:**

Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost (Romans 15:13).

☉ **The true wealth is in Christ:**

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope. Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers (1 Corinthians 1:4-8).

☉ **Spiritual gifts that God gives to Christians to build churches is the act of true wealth:**

Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the church (1 Corinthians 14:12).

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the firstborn of beasts. And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel.

After the tenth plague Pharaoh let the Jews out of Egypt. He drove them away so that the Lord would not smite Egypt even more.

In **Exodus chapter 15th**, it describes the song of praise to the Lord, which Moses sang after the miraculous exodus from Egypt: **Exodus 15:1-21**.

Passover (Easter) or Secular Easter?

Every year on the eve of Passover, many have wondered: «What is this holiday all about?», «Where did it originate from?», «Who should celebrate it?», «How should it be celebrated?», «What are the similarities between the Jewish and the Christian Easter and how do they differ?»

To answer these and other questions, it is necessary to look into history and see where this holiday originated from. And only after that we will be able to conclude whether or not to celebrate this day, and if so, how.

The following article will help guide you through the questions above.

Passover (Easter) of the Old Testament

1. This holiday was established by God.

The Old Testament Easter is one of the Old Testament feasts or festivals which was established by God Himself:

Leviticus 23:4-6 — *These are the feasts of the LORD, even holy convocations, which ye shall proclaim in their seasons. In the fourteenth day of the first month at even is the LORD'S passover. And on the fifteenth day of the same month is the feast of unleavened bread unto the LORD: seven days ye must eat unleavened bread.*

Leviticus 23:37-38 — *These are the feasts of the LORD, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD, a burnt offering, and a meat offering, a sacrifice, and drink offerings, every thing upon His day: Beside the sabbaths of the LORD, and beside your gifts, and beside all your vows, and beside all your freewill offerings, which ye give unto the LORD.*

2. History of the holiday.

The history of this holiday is described in the Book of Exodus from the 3rd to the 10th chapter. These chapters describe how the Lord called Moses to return to Egypt and bring out the people of Israel, who were in slavery for 400 years. «Ten plagues» is a well familiar story from the Bible.

Pharaoh refused to let the Jews go to the desert for the holiday as the Lord commanded. For this the Lord began to send one plague after another on Egypt. After the first rejection to the Lord's command, the Lord turned all of the water in the rivers and other sources into a **bloodstream**. After the second Pharaoh's refusal, the Lord struck all of the land of Egypt with **frogs**. After the third refusal, the Lord distressed Egypt with **gnats**. After the fourth — **flies**. After the fifth — the Lord sent down a plague upon Egypt so that all the **cattle died** out in the land of Egypt. But this did not soften the heart of Pharaoh, and he continued to persist to harden his heart. Then the Lord sent down the inflammation with **boils** breaking out on the people of Egypt. The seventh punishment of Egypt was **hail**, which killed not only people and animals that were in the fields, but also all plants and trees. But even after that Pharaoh's heart did not soften and he continued to oppose God and did not want to let the people of Israel leave Egypt. Then the Lord sent down upon Egypt, the **locusts** that gulped everything what hail did not destroy. And even then Pharaoh did not let the people of God go to the desert, then the Lord sent down **thick darkness** upon Egypt, which did not disappear for three days, while it was light in the homes of the Israelites. But this hardened Pharaoh's heart even more and he refused to release the Jews from Egypt...

The tenth plague was the **death of the Egyptians' firstborns**. The angel of the Lord passed over the houses of the Israelites, but struck only the families of the Egyptians: killed all of the firstborn of man and beast. Only the firstborns of the Israelites remained alive, those who believed and obeyed the instructions given to Moses by God. The instructions were these: they had to kill the Passover lamb and use the blood of the lamb to anoint doorposts of their homes. The angel of the Lord passed by their homes at night, but only the Egyptians homes were struck. This is the story of the Old Testament Passover. This story is described in detail in the **Book of Exodus** from **chapter 11th to 14th**. Let us refer to one passage:

Exodus 11:4-7 — *And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all*

3. Attributes of the Old Testament Passover.

In **Exodus chapter 12th** we read that the Lord said to His people in order to avoid the death of their firstborn:

Exodus 12:3-13 — *Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb.*

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood, and strike it on the two side posts and on the upper door post of the houses, wherein they shall eat it. And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat not of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but roast with fire; his head with his legs, and with the purtenance thereof. And ye shall let nothing of it remain until the morning; and that which remaineth of it until the morning ye shall burn with fire.

And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD'S passover.

For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the LORD. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

So, what are the attributes of the Lord's Passover of the Old Testament?

- A. Lamb male without blemish.
- B. The blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintel.
- C. The unleavened bread (without yeast).
- D. Bitter herbs.
- E. Eat in haste.

4. What is the Old Testament Passover of the Lord?

Exodus 12:11 — *the LORD's passover.* What is Easter?

Russian word «Easter» comes from the Aramaic «Easter» and Jewish «Passover», which means «clearance» or «pass by».

This is what happened that night when the angel of the Lord passed by the homes of Israel, but the Egyptians' homes were struck. This way the Lord brought His people out of Egypt's bondage. Therefore, He commanded the Jews to remember this day for all ages and mark it as one of the most important holidays of the Old Testament.

Exodus 13:16 — *And Moses said unto the people, Remember this day, in which ye came out from Egypt, out of the house of bondage; for by strength of hand the LORD brought you out from this place: there shall no leavened bread be eaten. This day came ye out in the month Abib.*

And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Amorites, and the Hivites, and the Jebusites, which he swore unto thy fathers to give thee, a land flowing with milk and honey, that thou shalt keep this service in this month. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, and in the seventh day shall be a feast to the LORD. Unleavened bread shall be eaten seven days; and there shall no leavened bread be seen with thee, neither shall there be leaven seen with thee in all thy quarters. And thou shalt shew thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the LORD did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the LORD'S law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the LORD brought thee out of Egypt. Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year.

(Continued on the 11th page)

Passover (Easter) or Secular Easter?

(The beginning is on the 10th page)

And it shall be when the LORD shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as he sware unto thee and to thy fathers, and shall give it thee, That thou shalt set apart unto the LORD all that openeth the matrix, and every firstling that cometh of a beast which thou hast; the males shall be the LORD'S. And every firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break his neck: and all the firstborn of man among thy children shalt thou redeem.

And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the LORD brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would hardly let us go, that the LORD slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem. And it shall be for a token upon thine hand, and for frontlets between thine eyes: for by strength of hand the LORD brought us forth out of Egypt.

Passover (Easter) of the New Testament

As you have noticed we live in the New Testament and also celebrate the holiday of the Lord's Passover. However, this is not the same holiday that God commanded the Jews to celebrate in memory of their liberation from slavery in Egypt.

However, these two holidays (Easter of the New Testament and Passover of the Old Testament) have much in common. But first, let us consider the history of the New Testament Passover.

1. History of the New Testament Passover (Easter):

History of the New Testament Passover is described in all four Gospels:

- ☉ The Gospel of Matthew, Chapters 26-28;
- ☉ The Gospel of Mark Chapter 14:12 — 16;
- ☉ The Gospel of Luke Chapters 22-24;
- ☉ The Gospel of John, Chapters 12-21.

2. The New Testament Passover (Easter): A celebration of the death and resurrection of Christ.

We Christians do not celebrate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ — we celebrate His Resurrection! As for his crucifixion, we remember the death of Christ by taking part in the Lord's Supper:

1 Corinthians 11:26 — *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.*

Jesus commanded us to remember His death until His second coming.

3. The importance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

1 Corinthians 15:13-17 — *But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.*

4. Was Christ really risen?
Did Jesus Christ rise from the dead? Or is it a figment of His followers and pupils? There is plenty of evidence that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is an incredible fact and an outstanding event in the history of mankind. Here are some examples:

The parallel between the Old and New Testament Passover is as follows:

Old Testament Passover	New Testament Passover
A male lamb shall be without blemish: Exodus 12:5-6	Jesus — the Lamb of God: John 1:29; Isaiah 53; John 1:36; Acts 8:32-35; 1 Peter 1:19
The blood of the lamb had to be on the doorposts: Exodus 12:7	We were reconciled with God through the blood of Jesus. We get atonement through the blood of Christ: Colossians 1:20; Ephesians 1:7
It was prohibited to crush the bones of the lamb: Exodus 12:46	The bones of Jesus were not broken: John 19:33, 36
God brought the Jews out of slavery in Egypt: Exodus 12:17	God has delivered us from the slavery of sin and death: Revelation 1:5; John 8:34-36; Hebrews 2:14-15; Romans 8:2
It was necessary to eat unleavened bread (Without yeast): Exodus 12:17-20	The teachings of Jesus Christ are the truth and life, there is no leaven of the Pharisees: John 6:63; Matthew 16:6; Luke 12:1
God proved to the Jews that He is their God, and they are his people: Exodus 6:7	God has proven to us that He is our God, and we are his people: 1 Peter 2:9-10; Romans 9:23-26; Ephesians 2:12-13

A. The predictions of Jesus Himself. The resurrection of Christ is not a myth or fiction that the followers of Jesus realized after his death. Jesus repeatedly predicted his death and resurrection:

Matthew 16:21 — *From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.*

Matthew 17:22-23 — *And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.*

Matthew 20:17-19 — *And Jesus going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.*

Matthew 26:31-32 — *Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.*

B. Eyewitness Testimony. After the crucifixion and death of Christ, Jesus was seen alive more than 40 times. Among the people who saw Jesus alive were men and women, believers and skeptics, individuals and groups of people. In total there was more than 500 eyewitnesses:

1 Corinthians 15:3-8 — *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.*

C. Evidence in history. A great number of historical documents of Jesus Christ were kept by scholars. These documents contain records of His life, death and resurrection. If you treat them with an open mind, we see that in addition to the Bible there are many historical documents indicating the resurrection of Jesus that can be trusted like any other historical document.

D. All the other theories are fictional. Apart from the fact that there are much strong evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it should also be noted that all the alternative theories (that someone else was crucified instead of Jesus or the disciples forgot where his tomb was, or that he simply survived the crucifixion) are absolute nonsense. These are the pathetic attempts to get around and distort the real fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

The parallels between Easter of the Old and New Testaments

The Passover of the Old and New Testaments have many similarities. But we should not forget that these are two different holidays based on two different events. Nevertheless, it is very easy to trace parallel events of both holidays and notice that the Passover of the Old Testament is symbolic of the New Testament Passover.

Jesus was crucified during the annual celebration of the Lord's Passover. That is why the Christian Easter is celebrated simultaneously with the time of the Jewish Passover.

Jesus is our Passover Lamb, slain for the sins of the whole world: **John 1:29** — *The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. John 1:36* — *And looking upon Jesus as he walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! Acts 8:32-35; Isaiah 53.*

We have been in bondage of sin. The Lord freed us from this slavery, we are washed with the blood of Jesus, which is the «Blood of the New Testament» (**1 Corinthians 11:25**).

Passover (Easter) or Secular Easter?

When celebrating the feast of Easter, many people paint eggs, bake traditional Easter bread with raisins, and buy bunnies... Some people go to church for all-night vigil or march under the church flags around town or around the church... How does the Passover of the Lord need to be celebrated?

A. To begin with let us turn to the term «Secular Easter»p

What it is? The name of the Easter bread well known among the people. What does Secular Easter and Easter of the Lord have in common?



☉ **Referring to the Old Testament.** What does the Old Testament call Easter?

The answer lies in **Exodus 12:11**: *...and eat it in haste: it is the Lord's Passover.* Easter is the Easter lamb, which was slaughtered and eaten by the Jews on the eve of Easter.

☉ **Referring to the New Testament.** What does the New Testament call Easter? The answer lies in a few verses below:

Matthew 26:17-19 — *Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.*

Mark 14:13-14 — *And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And whersoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?*

John 18:28 — *Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the passover.*

As you can see in the New Testament Easter is also called the Passover lamb, which ought to be slaughtered before the holiday and eaten on the night of vigil.

☉ **The direct answer** is written in **1 Corinthians 5:7** *...For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.*

Jesus Christ, being the Lamb of God, a lamb without blemish (without sin), is our Passover. Through His death on the cross we find favor in the sight of God the Father. Through the death of Christ, we are reconciled with God and receive the gift of eternal life. And knowing this it becomes foolish to call bread cake or painted eggs our Easter. Not only is it a cake roll but it is baked with yeast. This is at odds with the teachings of Christ and the symbolism of the New Testament.

B. With regards to the celebration of Easter, the Bible states:

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 — *Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of*

malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

1 Peter 1:18-21 — *Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you. Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.*

Therefore, the best celebration of the Lord's Passover is not dyeing eggs, nor baking cakes or pancakes, nor religious demonstrations and festivities, but the remembrance of the death of our Creator, who came down to earth in the form of Jesus Christ, who died for our sins on the cross and arose on the third day!

How then can we honor this great sacrifice of our Lord? **The answer is simple:** by accepting Jesus Christ as our own Lord and Savior. Only by recognizing Jesus as God, we honor the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, by which He delivered us from the slavery of sin and given us eternal life:

1 John 5:10-13 — *He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

How do you celebrate the Passover of the Lord?

ECHOES OF PAGANISM

1. The origins of Easter

The word Easter came from Saxon origin. Estra (or Ishtar) is the name of the goddess of spring and light, that is when gifts were put on the altar for the goddess and was celebrated around the same time as the Jewish Passover (around the vernal equinox). Easter was a pagan festival in the past. In the eighth (or according to some sources, in the fourth) century AC, this was called the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ, merging a Christian holiday with a pagan festival.

2. The tradition of painting eggs on Easter.

Dyeing eggs is an ancient pagan tradition, practiced among many peoples including the Slavs.

An egg was considered a symbol of life for centuries in many nations, and so on the eve of spring holidays the pagan people wrote magic spells and prayers to their pagan gods on chicken eggs, and then the eggs were devoted to the idols and were put by their feet. If we talk about our ancestors, in this case the prayer written or drawn on the eggs for Perun (God of War) — a pagan idol with gold whiskers.

Now painted eggs are not being brought to the feet of idols, nor magic spells written on the eggs but it was replaced by harmless pictures and even religious symbols. But do not forget that the dyeing of eggs does not make it a Christian tradition, but continues to be an echo of pagan roots of our people.

3. Easter bunnies.

Easter bunnies are another pagan tradition. In many countries and in many nations, the rabbit with its ability to rapidly reproduce was considered a symbol of fertility since ancient times and an object of worship. The Western world borrowed this tradition from their pagan ancestors and managed to «successfully» merge it with the Christian Easter.

Some people went ahead and managed to mix together Easter and eggs and rabbits. Now, from the stories of modern Americans, Easter bunnies on Easter Sunday are able to carry a few eggs, which are then hidden and are assigned to be found by small children and as a reward for finding an egg they receive a gift or a coin.

Many believe that these echoes of paganism are just harmless fun and some believe that these are the ancient Christian customs and Easter without them is not Easter. But, dear friends, I would like to note that these harmless traditions destroy the true meaning of Easter.

(Continued on the 12th page)

Passover (Easter) or Secular Easter?

(The ending. The beginning is on the 10-11th page)

With time people forget that Easter is a celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ our God who came to earth and died on the cross for our sins. Easter is a reminder for believers in Jesus Christ, that they too will one day be raised in order to spend the rest of eternity with their Lord. And for the disbelievers Easter should be a reminder that if they do not accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, they will not have eternal life but eternal damnation:

John 5:28-29 — *Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.*

Matthew 25:46 — *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*

Do you now see how serious this is? Pagan traditions distract people from making the most important decision in their lives, accepting Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross. They replace the true meaning of Easter with pagan attributes, which are based on the worship of idols and graven images.

How to determine the date of Easter?

If you notice Easter is not assigned to any particular date like the rest of the holidays. Every year Easter falls on a different date, and sometimes on different months. One year we celebrate Easter on the 28th of March and the following year it's celebrated in early April. In addition, the entire Western world celebrates Easter by the **new calendar** and the Orthodox Church by the **old calendar**, and therefore, very rarely do these two calendars coincide on the same day of the year.

How is the date for Easter determined?

We offer you a simple calculation scheme by the **new calendar**:

1. First determine the day of vernal equinox (when the length of daytime is the same as nighttime). This is usually the 21 or 22 of March.

2. Next, determine the next full moon after the vernal equinox.

3. Easter day is always the Sunday following the full moon. This day is when Christians celebrate the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.

According to this simple rule, the latest date that Easter falls on is April 25. We will celebrate the Lord's Passover on that day in 2038. Earliest date on which Easter falls on is March 22, 2285. But more often, Easter falls on the first week of April.

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Frequently asked Questions

What does the Bible say about managing your finances?

ANSWER: The Bible has a lot to say about managing finances. Concerning borrowing, the Bible generally advises against it. See *Proverbs 6:1-5; 20:16; 22:7, 26-27 («The rich rule over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender... Do not be a man who strikes hands in pledge or puts up security for debts; if you lack the means to pay, your very bed will be snatched from under you»)*. Over and over again, the Bible warns against the accumulation of wealth and encourages us to seek spiritual riches instead. *Proverbs 28:20: «A faithful man will be richly blessed, but one eager to get rich will not go unpunished»*. See also *Proverbs 10:15; 11:4; 18:11; 23:5*.

Proverbs 6:6-11 offers wisdom concerning laziness and the financial ruin that inevitably results. We are told to consider the industrious ant who works to store up food for itself. The passage also warns against sleeping when we should be working at something profitable. A «sluggard» is a lazy, slothful person who would rather rest than work. His end is assured — poverty and want. At the other end of the spectrum is the one who is obsessed with gaining money. Such a one, according to *Ecclesiastes 5:10*, never has enough wealth to satisfy him and must be constantly grasping more and more. *First Timothy 6:6-11* also warns against the trap of desiring wealth.

Rather than desiring to heap riches upon ourselves, the biblical model is one of giving, not getting. **«Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver»** (2 *Corinthians 9:6-7*). We are also encouraged to be good stewards of what God has given us. In *Luke 16:1-13*, Jesus told the parable of the dishonest steward as a way of warning us against poor stewardship. The moral of the story is **«So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches?»** (v. 11). We are also responsible to provide for our own household, as *1 Timothy 5:8* reminds us: **«If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever»**.

In summary, what does the Bible say about managing money? The answer can be summarized with a single word — wisdom. We are to be wise with our money. We are to save money, but not hoard it. We are to spend money, but with discretion and control. We are to give back to the Lord, joyfully and sacrificially. We are to use our money to help others, but with discernment and the guidance of God's Spirit. It is not wrong to be rich, but it is wrong to love money. It is not wrong to be poor, but it is wrong to waste money on trivial things. The Bible's consistent message on managing money is to be wise.

What does the Bible say about healing?

ANSWER: *Isaiah 53:5*, which is then quoted in *1 Peter 2:24*, is a key verse on healing, but it is often misunderstood and misapplied. **«But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed»**. The word translated «healed» can mean either spiritual or physical healing. However, the contexts of *Isaiah 53* and *1 Peter 2* make it clear that it is speaking of spiritual healing. **«He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed»** (1 *Peter 2:24*). The verse is talking about sin and righteousness, not sickness and disease. Therefore, being «healed» in both these verses is speaking of being forgiven and saved, not physically healed.

The Bible does not specifically link physical healing with spiritual healing. Sometimes people are physically healed when they place their faith in Christ, but this is not always the case. Sometimes it is God's will to heal, but sometimes it is not. The apostle John gives us the proper perspective: **«This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us — whatever we ask — we know that we have what we asked of Him»** (1 *John 5:14-15*). God still performs miracles. God still heals people. Sickness, disease, pain, and death are still realities in this world. Unless the Lord returns, everyone who is alive today will die, and the vast majority of them (Christians included) will die as the result of a physical problem (disease, sickness, injury). It is not always God's will to heal us physically.

Ultimately, our full physical healing awaits us in heaven. In heaven, there will be no more pain, sickness, disease, suffering, or death (*Revelation 21*). We all need to be less preoccupied with our physical condition in this world and a lot more concerned with our spiritual condition (*Romans 12:1-2*). Then we can focus our hearts on heaven where we will no longer have to deal with physical problems. *Revelation 21:4* describes the true healing we should all be longing for: **«He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away»**.

What does the Bible say about anger?

ANSWER: Handling anger is an important life skill. Christian counselors report that 50 percent of people who come in for counseling have problems dealing with anger. Anger can shatter communication and tear apart relationships, and it ruins both the joy and health of many. Sadly, people tend to justify their anger instead of accepting responsibility for it. Everyone struggles, to varying degrees, with anger. Thankfully, God's Word contains principles regarding how to handle anger in a godly manner, and how to overcome sinful anger.

Anger is not always sin. There is a type of anger of which the Bible approves, often called «righteous indignation.» God is angry (*Psalms 7:11; Mark 3:5*), and believers are commanded to be angry (*Ephesians 4:26*). Two Greek words in the New Testament are translated as «anger.» One means «passion, energy» and the other means «agitated, boiling». Biblically, anger is God-given energy intended to help us solve problems. Examples of biblical anger include David's being upset over hearing Nathan the prophet sharing an injustice (2 *Samuel 12*) and Jesus' anger over how some of the Jews had defiled worship at God's temple in Jerusalem (*John 2:13-18*). Notice that neither of these examples of anger involved self-defense, but a defense of others or of a principle.

That being said, it is important to recognize that anger at an injustice inflicted against oneself is also appropriate. Anger has been said to be a warning flag — it alerts us to those times when others are attempting to or have violated our boundaries. God cares for each individual. Sadly, we do not always stand up for one another, meaning that sometimes we must stand up for ourselves. This is especially important when considering the anger that victims often feel. Victims of abuse, violent crime, or the like have been violated in some way. Often while experiencing the trauma, they do not experience anger. Later, in working through the trauma, anger will emerge. For a victim to reach a place of true health and forgiveness, he or she must first accept the trauma for what it was. In order to fully accept that an act was unjust, one must sometimes experience anger. Because of the complexities of trauma recovery, this anger is often not short-lived, particularly for victims of abuse. Victims should process through their anger and come to a place of acceptance, even forgiveness. This is often a long journey. As God heals the victim, the victim's emotions, including anger, will follow. Allowing the process to occur does not mean the person is living in sin.

Anger can become sinful when it is motivated by pride (*James 1:20*), when it is unproductive and thus distorts God's purposes (1 *Corinthians 10:31*), or when anger is allowed to linger (*Ephesians 4:26-27*). One obvious sign that anger has turned to sin is when, instead of attacking the problem at hand, we attack the wrongdoer. *Ephesians 4:15-19* says we are to speak the truth in love and use our words to build others up, not allow rotten or destructive words to pour from our lips. Unfortunately, this poisonous speech is a common characteristic of fallen man (*Romans 3:13-14*). Anger becomes sin when it is allowed to boil over without restraint, resulting in a scenario in which hurt is multiplied (*Proverbs 29:11*), leaving devastation in its wake. Often, the consequences of out-of-control anger are irreparable. Anger also becomes sin when the angry one refuses to be pacified, holds a grudge, or keeps it all inside (*Ephesians 4:26-27*). This can cause depression and irritability over little things, which are often unrelated to the underlying problem.

We can handle anger biblically by recognizing and admitting our prideful anger and/or our wrong handling of anger as sin (*Proverbs 28:13; 1 John 1:9*). This confession should be both to God and to those who have been hurt by our anger. We should not minimize the sin by excusing it or blame-shifting.

We can handle anger biblically by seeing God in the trial. This is especially important when people have done something to offend us. *James 1:2-4, Romans 8:28-29*, and *Genesis 50:20* all point to the fact that God is sovereign over every circumstance and person that crosses our path. Nothing happens to us that He does not cause or allow. Though God does allow bad things to happen, He is always faithful to redeem them for the good of His people. God is a good God (*Psalms 145:8-9, 17*). Reflecting on this truth until it moves from our heads to our hearts will alter how we react to those who hurt us.

We can handle anger biblically by making room for God's wrath. This is especially important in cases of injustice, when «evil» men abuse «innocent» people. *Genesis 50:19* and *Romans 12:19* both tell us to not play God. God is righteous and just, and we can trust Him who knows all and sees all to act justly (*Genesis 18:25*).

We can handle anger biblically by returning good for evil (*Genesis 50:21; Romans 12:21*). This is key to converting our anger into love. As our actions flow from our hearts, so also our hearts can be altered by our actions (*Matthew 5:43-48*). That is, we can change our feelings toward another by changing how we choose to act toward that person.

We can handle anger biblically by communicating to solve the problem. There are four basic rules of communication shared in *Ephesians 4:15, 25-32*:

1. Be honest and speak (*Ephesians 4:15, 25*). People cannot read our minds. We must speak the truth in love.
2. Stay current (*Ephesians 4:26-27*). We must not allow what is bothering us to build up until we lose control. It is important to deal with what is bothering us before it reaches critical mass.

3. Attack the problem, not the person (*Ephesians 4:29, 31*). Along this line, we must remember the importance of keeping the volume of our voices low (*Proverbs 15:1*).

4. Act, don't react (*Ephesians 4:31-32*). Because of our fallen nature, our first impulse is often a sinful one (v. 31). The time spent in «counting to ten» should be used to reflect upon the godly way to respond (v. 32) and to remind ourselves how the energy anger provides should be used to solve problems and not create bigger ones.

At times we can handle anger preemptively by putting up stricter boundaries. We are told to be discerning (1 *Corinthians 2:15-16; Matthew 10:16*). We need not «cast our pearls before swine» (*Matthew 7:6*). Sometimes our anger leads us to recognize that certain people are unsafe for us. We can still forgive them, but we may choose not to re-enter the relationship.

Finally, we must act to solve our part of the problem (*Romans 12:18*). We cannot control how others act or respond, but we can make the changes that need to be made on our part. Overcoming a temper is not accomplished overnight. But through prayer, Bible study, and reliance upon God's Holy Spirit, ungodly anger can be overcome. We may have allowed anger to become entrenched in our lives by habitual practice, but we can also practice responding correctly until that, too, becomes a habit and God is glorified in our response.

<http://www.gotquestions.org>

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«Lord Jesus, I believe you are God's Son; You died for my sins and rose again for my salvation. I accept you as my personal Lord and Savior. Please forgive all my sins and grant me eternal life. Amen!»



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