

GEMS OF TRUTH

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FROM THE EDITOR

The apostle Paul speaks of “the simplicity that is in Christ” (2 Corinthians 11:3 KJV). Of late I’ve given much thought to simplicity in its broad scope. Over the past 20+ years I’ve especially been led to keep simplifying my life in every area whether it be how I manage my personal finances, my living situation, relationships with others, my daily routine, time management, my diet and other health habits, my personal possessions, the way I dress, my

thinking, and my devotional disciplines. My theology has simplified to the point where I feel that what the apostle says in 1 John 4:7-8 seems to me to be the most important of all (see article below). This has worked really well for me and as I observe how highly complicated are the lives of most folks that I meet I give thanks that God called me out of what appears to me as insane bondage. Many are cumbered down with so much “stuff” and their lives are out of control in so many areas. The “hypnotic spell” of popular culture makes all kinds of demands which people slavishly and mindlessly follow. I’ve been “counter culture” all of my life and have always felt the inner urge just to be myself and not feel that I had to copy whatever the masses were doing. I never have been able to fit perfectly into society. My guidance to live the simple life has become even stronger recently as I observe the prevailing drama and frantic pace of so many. By the help of God I simply refuse to get drawn into the entanglements of the world around me. Watch for the thread of *simplicity* as you read the articles in this issue of **GEMS OF TRUTH** and may your journey become more simple and lead you into an ever closer walk with God in the days to come.

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EVERYONE WHO LOVES

1 John 4:7-8 Common English Bible (CEB)

7 Dear friends, let's love each other, because love is from God, and everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. 8 The person who doesn't love does not know God, because God is love.

Recently the impact of these words has come to me more than ever as I continually seek to grow in my walk with God. I wonder how we could ever have overlooked something so simple.

"Everyone who loves is born from God and knows God. The person who doesn't love does not know God." There is no mention here of

believing certain things about God, Jesus, or the Bible. All who love are reflecting the Spirit of God and so revealing that they really do know God. The principle here is *the unfolding of love* rather than something going on in the realm of belief. Notice that the verse doesn't say that love is an *attribute* of God but rather *"God IS love."* I feel the need to pray something along this line, "Dear God, forgive me for being so blind so often as to what is really important and help me to love every thing and every person around me without any judgment or conditions."



THE UNPARDONABLE SIN



Matthew 12:31-32 Common English Bible (CEB)

31 "Therefore, I tell you that people will be forgiven for every sin and insult to God. But insulting the Holy Spirit won't be forgiven. 32 And whoever speaks a word against the Human One will be forgiven. But whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit won't

be forgiven, not in this age or in the age that is coming.

Forgiveness is much more than mere pardon of sin but it involves the *discontinuance of sin* for sin is whatever exists in our lives that falls short of the perfect Law of the Kingdom of God which is LOVE. Sin continues to bring its own punishment until it is forsaken. This does not mean that we will ever be perfect and faultless but when we ignore God's Voice and refuse to make needed changes we simply are choosing our own punishment both here and hereafter. What makes the difference is being *willing* to lay aside those things which are ungodly and which bog us down (see Hebrews 12:1-2). *Love, joy, and peace constitute the essence of Heaven* and this is a present experience both in this life and is continued in the age to come. So I see the unpardonable sin as hanging on to things in our lives that bring suffering to ourselves and others and so there is no forgiveness, cessation of suffering, as long as the sin is continued. This understanding seems to me to be more simple than many dissertations on the topic that I've read.

These words are sometimes attributed to Albert Einstein but we are not sure who wrote them. However, they are closely related to this topic of the unpardonable sin:

Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

GOD'S WORK OF REFINING AND PURIFYING

Malachi 3:1-3 English Standard Version (ESV)

1 “Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. 2 But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

For he is like a refiner's fire and like fullers' soap. 3 He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver, and they will bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD.



Fire is used many times in the Bible as a metaphor depicting God's purifying process. Fire both *consumes* and *enlightens* and in our lives these two aspects are continually at work. The moving of God's Spirit consumes all the dross and at the same time awakens us to better ways of thinking and living. "Who can stand when He appears?" Sometimes this purifying and refining is painful indeed and when God's light begins to shine upon us we may be very fearful but the result of surrendering on our part to the work of God is that we are able to "bring offerings in righteousness to the LORD" and thus become an even greater blessing to the world. "The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple." As we submit to being purified of our sense consciousness and awaken to "the land of milk and honey" which is already within we shall indeed have many visitations and revelations of the Lord as He comes many times to His temple. Perhaps He will come to us through some other person or unexpected circumstance. We need to always be alert to any way that He may work.

FINALLY THE GRAIN RIPENS



Mark 4:26-29 New Living Translation (NLT)

26 Jesus also said, "The Kingdom of God is like a farmer who scatters seed on the ground. 27 Night and day, while he's asleep or awake, the seed sprouts and grows, but he does not understand how it happens. 28 The earth produces the crops on its own. First a leaf blade pushes through, then the

heads of wheat are formed, and finally the grain ripens. 29 And as soon as the grain is ready, the farmer comes and harvests it with a sickle, for the harvest time has come."

In this parable our Lord compares spiritual growth to a farmer who scatters seed on the ground. Whether the farmer is asleep or awake the seed first sprouts and grows and the farmer is not able to understand how all of this happens. There is the process of

the blades pushing through, the heads of wheat being formed, the ripening of the grain and finally the time of harvest, come in a simple, natural way. The farmer's role is to sow the seeds and provide whatever care is needed but he can't make the grain ripen. What a lesson both in our individual spiritual growth and in how we relate to others. We can sow spiritual seeds of the Word daily in our lives but we can't *make* anything happen from that point forward. We need to water and nurture what has been planted but can't go beyond that. We want to help others and we can sow seeds of love in every possible way but we can't force needed changes. We can only continue to be a loving presence in whatever ways are possible. Love has to do its own work and if we try to use human persuasion or force in some way we will only hinder as good as our intentions may be.

THE PURE IN HEART

Matthew 5:8 New King James Version (NKJV)

**8 Blessed *are* the pure in heart,
For they shall see God.**

Blessed, spiritually fulfilled, are those who have singleness of purpose [are pure in heart] and those who have as the most important thing the pursuit of God and going ever upward in their spiritual journey. Such shall see life with spiritual vision and thus experience

God in ways that most will miss. The spiritual journey requires absolute and total commitment and enlightenment is not for selfish purposes or only for us individually but rather that we might be an instrument to bring love, joy, and peace to all. As we enter the "most holy place" of God's presence we are indeed blessing all and those who are reaching for something higher and better will be especially blessed no matter where they may be and whatever their situation in life. God loves everyone equally and so God's love will flow through us like rivers of living water. To truly be "pure in heart" is to live in the simplest way possible and to find freedom from bondage.



WAKE UP SLEEPER



Ephesians 5:14 Common English Bible (CEB)

14 Everything that is revealed by the light is light. Therefore it says, *Wake up, sleeper! Get up from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.*

The light of God is ever shining upon us and His inspiration is continually at work. Unaided human reasoning always perverts and hides the light. In

God there is *only* light. Those who are living merely on the level of human consciousness are spiritually dead and are bidden to *awaken* and to let Christ, the Presence of God within, shine and thereafter walk in the light of God. As we awaken to the light of God which ever surrounds us our life becomes increasingly more simple.

IN THE TWINKLING OF AN EYE

1 Corinthians 15:52 New King James Version (NKJV)

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

As we travel along on our spiritual journey we may have "dry spells" in which we look at outward appearances and are tempted to think nothing is happening. We are always God's children, precious in His sight, and His love and grace are always at work whether we see any outward manifestations or not. However, in God's timing, "in the twinkling of an eye," we sometimes receive special blessings and revelations of God's love and deeper insights about life and eternity. The



trumpet of Truth sounds anew, we are "raised incorruptible" and are "changed." Our old false, corruptible sense of life takes another step of fading away and we go on to the deeper things of God.

OFFENDER BY A WORD



Isaiah 29:21 New King James Version (NKJV)

**21 Who make a man an offender by a word,
And lay a snare for him who reproveth in the
gate,
And turn aside the just by empty words.**

Every religious belief system as well as all academic disciplines have their unique vocabulary in which words are often used that have a distinct and special meaning in that system which may differ in some cases from everyday usage of the same words. I've seen a lot of discussions over words and often more heat than light was being generated and equally sincere people found themselves in an adversarial relationship instead of a mutually supportive one. Such should never be the case for words in and of themselves have no substance and, at best, are a human attempt to convey certain meanings which always fall short of perfection at some point. Words are never Reality. The principles of *simplicity and love for others* will help us to communicate in ways that will exceed all of our words. That is one reason why I feel the need to have set apart times of Silence where I'm willing to let go of words and thoughts and experience a "sabbath rest." It is easy to make an idol of our thoughts and beliefs and we must "watch and pray" in order to avoid this.

TOUCHED BY AN ANGEL

***We, unaccustomed to courage
exiles from delight
live coiled in shells of loneliness***

***until love leaves its high holy temple
and comes into our sight
to liberate us into life.***

***Love arrives
and in its train come ecstasies
old memories of pleasure
ancient histories of pain.
Yet if we are bold,
love strikes away the chains of fear
from our souls***

***We are weaned from our timidity
In the flush of love's light
we dare be brave
And suddenly we see
that love costs all we are
and will ever be.
Yet it is only love
which sets us free***

Maya Angelo





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