



# February 2023

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- unless otherwise noted, answers to questions by Keith Sharp -

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Finally, brethren

# WHATEVER THINGS

are true  
are noble  
are just  
are pure  
are lovely

PHILIPPIANS  
4:8

are of good report  
IF THERE IS ANY VIRTURE AND IF THERE IS ANYTHING PRAISEWORTHY –  
**meditate on these things.**

You can download this month's Meditate On These Things as a PDF file by clicking [here](#). Also, an archive of past MOTT issues is available at [christistheway.com](http://christistheway.com).

## Is "Once Saved, Always Saved" a True Bible Doctrine?

Jefferson David Tant | Hendersonville, Tennessee, USA

A popular doctrine among many is the idea that once you have been saved, you cannot be lost. No matter what sins or evils you may commit after salvation, they will not harm your soul, even if you die in that state. This is a prominent doctrine among some denominations, and is very well known among Baptists.

Consider a statement from the Hiscox "Standard Manual for Baptist Churches" on page 53, under the heading

*"XI. Perseverance of Saints: We believe the Scriptures teach that such as are truly regenerate, being born of the Spirit, will not utterly fall away and perish, but will endure to the end...and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation."*

I was recently reminded of this doctrine due to the event of the Southern Baptist Convention that was recently held here in Nashville, Tennessee. The newspaper has had many articles concerning this event, and much has been written concerning the scandal of sexual sins that have been brought to light. Pastors have been cited for committing adultery with women in their churches, and there were multiple cases of pastors committing sexual sins with children.

Now, one may wonder why this seems to be so prevalent among Baptist churches. There may be various reasons, but is it possible that the doctrine of "once saved, always saved" might be a factor? Notice the following quotes from Baptist preachers:

*"All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the State of grace, but shall persevere*

*to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, bring reproach on the cause of Christ, and temporal judgments on themselves, yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation” (V. God’s Power of Grace — from a statement adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention May 9, 1963)*

Sam Morris, a Baptist preacher in Stamford, Texas wrote a little tract explaining that all the sins one may commit cannot harm the soul or cause the person to be lost. Look at the quote:

*“We take the position that a Christian’s sins do not damn his soul. The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul... All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bibles he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger... The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul... The way I live has nothing whatsoever to do with the salvation of my soul” (“Do a Christian’s Sins Damn His Soul?”).*

It’s hard to believe that the Baptist doctrine claims that *“all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger.”* If that is true, then no wonder pastors will have no fear in committing fornication or raping young girls.

But is “once saved, always saved” a true, Biblical doctrine? Let us examine God’s Word to see what it says.

In the book of Galatians, Paul is expressing concern that some Christians in the church there were trying to bind the Old Testament law of circumcision. Note Paul’s warning:

*“And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. You have been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace” (Galatians 5:3-4).*

Consider two questions from the above passage. (1) How can you be “severed from Christ” if you were never “in Christ?” (2) How can you “fall from grace” if you were never “in grace?”

Then the writer of Hebrews has the following warning.

*“For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame” (Hebrews 6:4-6).*

The writer mentions four things that his readers had experienced: they had “been enlightened,” and had “tasted the heavenly gift,” and were “partakers of the Holy Spirit,” had “tasted God’s word and the powers of the age to come,” and then fell away...” Thus, the question is, how could you possess all of these things if you never owned them? And again, how can you “fall away” from something you were never in?

Then later in Hebrews the writer is giving a warning and exhortation to his readers, who are Christians.

*“See to it that you do not refuse Him who is speaking. For if those did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape who turn away from Him who warns from heaven” (Hebrews 12:25).*

Note that the writer is warning Christians that there is no escape for those who “turn away from Him who warns from heaven.” Question: How can one “turn away” from something of which he was never a part?

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## **Who Is Amenable To Jesus' Divorce And Remarriage Law?**

Matthew 19:9 reads:

*“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”*

Some Christians say this verse doesn't apply to non-Christians, and therefore sinners may divorce and remarry all they want to for just any reason, and then when they become a Christian, they can just stay in whatever marriage they are in at that point in time. For example our brother Homer Hailey wrote about Matt 19:9 and marriage:

*“A covenant and the laws of the covenant are bound only on those who are under that covenant (... Rom.3:19). The alien, not being under Christ's covenant, is not judged by its laws, but is judged by the universal moral law under which he lives”*

**(The Divorced And Remarried Who Would Come To God. 24-25).**

It was true the law of Moses was only binding upon the Israelites (not Gentiles), but the law of Christ (the gospel) is binding upon “all nations” / “every creature”:

- Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations ...
- Mark 16:15 ... preach the gospel to every creature ...

Since the gospel is binding upon “every creature,” then Matthew 19:9 (which is part of the gospel) is binding upon “every creature” (not just Christians).

Now there is only one law for all:

- John 12:47-48 - “if any man hear my words, and believe not ... the word that I have spoken ... shall judge him in the last day.”
- Acts 17:30-31 - “he will judge the world in righteousness by that man”
- Romans 2:16 - “God shall judge the secrets of men ... according to my gospel”
- Titus 2:11-12 - “the grace of God ... hath appeared to all men, Teaching us
- John 17:2a - “You have given Him (Jesus) authority over all flesh”
- Revelation 20:12 - “the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books”

Saint and sinner alike are going to be judged by the same New Testament law, which includes Jesus' law on divorce and remarriage.

I might ask - is the denominational believer amenable to these laws?:

- Romans 1:26-27 - homosexuality?
- I Corinthians 7:2 - polygamy?
- Matthew 15:9,14, I Peter 4:11 - false teaching?
- Matthew 23:8-10 - call no man your father upon the earth?
- I Corinthians 14:34-35 - women preachers?
- Ephesians 4:29 - cussing?
- Matthew 5:27-28 - did Jimmy Swaggart violate this law?

This is the very reason a non-Christian is a sinner; he has violated the law of Christ! Why would the denominational believer be amenable to all these other laws, but not God's law on divorce? Why is there only this one exception?

That's right, only on Divorce And Remarriage do gospel preachers make a distinction about who is amenable. For example, who is responsible to not commit these sins?:

fornication ..... the world and the church

nudity ..... the world and the church

pornography ..... the world and the church  
covetousness ..... the world and the church  
stealing ..... the world and the church  
drunkenness ..... the world and the church  
faith ..... the world and the church  
repentance ..... the world and the church  
idolatry ..... the world and the church  
homosexuality ..... the world and the church  
divorce ..... just the church?

So those in unlawful marriages (Mark 6:18) according to New Testament texts like Matthew 19:9 must quit committing adultery when they repent to become a Christian. In short, they must terminate their unscriptural marriage.

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## Be Faithful

Jim Mickells | Lewisburg, Tennessee, USA

In the book of Revelation we read:

*“Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life” (2:10).*

This message from the Lord was delivered to the church at Smyrna (Revelation 2:8). He fully expected them to remain faithful, even if it meant dying for His cause.

The word faithful is defined as “trustworthy, faithful; of persons who show themselves faithful in the transaction of business, the execution of commands, or the discharge of official business” (**Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon Of The New Testament**).

There are several passages in the New Testament where Jesus speaks of faithful servants (Matthew 24:45; 25:21, 23; Luke 12:42; 16:10, 11, 12; 19:17). As we look at these verses and the text around them, one will find only those whom the Lord considers faithful will be blessed eternally by Him. Even though an individual may have obeyed the gospel, been saved by grace through faith, yet they must remain faithful to inherit eternal life. Notice His words, “And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved” (Matthew 24:12-13).

In Revelation 2:10, which we just looked at, this passage is telling the saints at Smyrna to remain faithful even when persecuted. Warnings are sounded throughout the Bible that we will face opposition because of our faith (2 Timothy 3:12; 1 Peter 4:12-16). Yet they were also told to remain faithful. The pages of history are stained with the blood of those who have followed these instructions, giving up their life rather than their faith.

We all face temptations in our daily lives (James 1:13-15). God has promised to His children that He would not allow them to be tempted above what they are able to bear and will also provide a way of escape. The point of this verse (1 Corinthians 10:13) is, God will do His part, we must do ours as well, be faithful. Seek the way of escape, avoid the areas of our life where we know we have weaknesses, and pray to God for deliverance (Matthew 6:13). James said, “Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him” (James 1:12).

Another area that we must be faithful in is our service to our Heavenly Father. Jesus said in His mountain sermon to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness (Matthew 6:33). Paul said that we must be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord (1 Corinthians 15:58). These verses speak

of our faithfulness and dedication to Christ. Would you consider yourself a faithful servant? I'm sure most members would say yes even when the evidence says no.

Do you attend all the services? Hebrews 10:25, tells us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (no specific assembly mentioned). If I deliberately miss any of the church assemblies, how could I possibly be considered faithful? Look back at the definition of this word. What if I don't give as I have been prospered? Don't visit the sick? Don't study and pray like I know I should? Fail to partake of the Lord's supper? Don't try to teach and lead others to the Lord when I have the ability? On and on we could go. God expects us to be faithful just like He did His servants which we read about in the Bible. Only the faithful will be saved.

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## Your Child's Childhood

Mike Thomas | Bowling Green, Kentucky, USA

Someone once said, "Your children only get one childhood. Make it memorable." I love that thought because it highlights the limited time we have with our children and the lasting effect it will have on them. For better or worse, we all take our childhood experiences with us throughout life. Most of our perspective as adults stems from what we learned as children. God's word says it this way – "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). So, what kind of memories will your children have of their childhood? Will they remember a peaceful home life filled with love, friendly communication, companionship, godliness, commitment, and forgiveness? Or will their predominant memories be that of parents who would not get along, family members isolated in their own rooms, and very little affection shown to one another? Where is the value in that kind of upbringing? A Christian I know who serves as a family court judge tells people in his court, "There is no substitute for kindness, courtesy, and treating others with respect." He should know since he sees daily examples of families who have fallen apart. Thus, there is no substitute for how God tells us to treat one another in the home, beginning with our spouse since this sets the tempo for the entire family. "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter towards them" (Colossians 3:18-19).

Will your children have pleasant memories of a father and mother who took time for them? Will they look back and have warm thoughts of a dad who played, prayed, and studied with them? Will they remember a house that was well-organized and filled with love by a caring and devoted mother? Or will their primary memories be that of being stuck in front of a television or computer screen because their parents were too busy for them? Again, this should not be the case if we do as God says in maintaining order in the home. "Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4). And

*"admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed" (Titus 2:4-5).*

All of these duties require time together as a family, especially in learning how to live with faith in God. There is a reason why the gospel only lasts for a few generations in most families. It is because the parents of each generation (gradually) place less importance on spiritual development and more emphasis on worldly pursuits. And the ones who are sacrificed on this altar of selfish living are the children who are raised without a proper respect for God and very little knowledge of His will. We must create better memories for our children and grandchildren.

What a tremendous honor God has given us by entrusting us with the task of parenting. Certainly, we have a greater awareness of His love for us from our experiences in the family. But let us not squander the limited time we have with our children. The investments we make of daily encouragement, sacrificial involvement, and spiritual importance will pay future dividends of peace, honor, and hope. Will we fail as parents? Absolutely. Will we get everything right? Not a chance. Yet, overall, it is possible to impress upon our family the importance of loving God and keeping Him first in life. We must tell of His greatness and

speak of His many wonderful ways –

*“That the generation to come might know them, the children who would be born, that they may arise and declare them to their children, that they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (Psalm 78:6-7).*

Your children only get one childhood. Make it memorable.

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## Called Children Of God

TEXTS TO PAUSE & PONDER ON

William Stewart | Odessa, Ontario, Canada

The Bible says God is love (1 John 4:8, 16). His love compels us to love Him in return (1 John 4:19), and it teaches us how to love others (1 John 3:16). I am not sure how many times the Bible speaks of God's love for us, but it is a common theme throughout the Scriptures. His love has been expressed in many ways, from the provisions we enjoy day to day sustaining our lives to the gift of His Son through whom we have access to eternal life.

As you may have noted from the few statements above, 1 John has a lot to say about the love of God. In 1 John 3:1, we read:

*Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him.*

Our adoption as the children of God is the ultimate manifestation of God's love for us. The NIV is more emphatic, calling to our mind "...what great love the Father has lavished on us..." How appropriate, for lavish means "to bestow something in generous or extravagant quantities upon" or to "cover something thickly or liberally with."<sup>1</sup> God's love is not sparsely sprinkled upon us, we are showered in it!

Friend, realize we do not deserve to be the children of God. In John 8:38-44, Jesus identified the Jewish leaders of His day as sons of Satan. They were not alone. In fact, the apostle Paul said we've all served Satan in the pursuit of the lusts of the flesh, and were dead in sin as a result (Ephesians 2:1-4). All have sinned (Romans 3:23), thus all have made themselves children of the devil. The apostle John concurs, saying the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one (5:19). You and I were not exception, but now, God be praised, we can have confidence for "we are of God" (5:19; we are the children of God.

John repeats in 3:2 the fact that we are children of God. It is a fact worth repeating. Building upon this blessed position we hold, the apostle writes:

*...it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (1 John 3:2-3)*

We know we will have a spiritual body in heaven (1 Corinthians 15:42-43), but what will it be like? We don't know. We can't know until we are there. Nor do we need to know. What we need at the present time is to imitate the example of Christ. If we are to maintain the hope of being with Him and like Him in eternity, we need to be with Him and like Him in the here and now.

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## Yahweh

Keith Sharp | Mountain Home, Arkansas, USA

If the title above means nothing to you, don't worry about it. It has no connection to your soul's salvation.

But this is the opposite of what some religious leaders teach. There are various religious groups that place great importance on the Old Testament Hebrew name for God, usually rendered in English letters as "Jehovah" or "Yahweh." The reason for the divergence is no one really knows for sure how to pronounce it.

"The Tetragrammaton YHWH appears without its own vowels, and its exact pronunciation is debated (Jehovah, Yehovah, Jahweh, Yahweh)" (Vine, e-Sword).

### Translations

Hebrew is a Semitic language, a family of languages totally different from the family to which English belongs. Any English speaking person who has ever attempted to learn Hebrew, which has a completely different alphabet, which reads right to left, and which has pronunciations sometimes almost impossible for our tongues, can attest this is a "burdensome" requirement (c.f. 1 John 5:3).

Obedience to God is essential to our salvation (Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:9). The righteousness of the gospel is something readily available to all who come to Christ in faith (Romans 10:6-10). But if we must learn to pronounce Hebrew names, which not even Hebrew scholars know for sure how to pronounce, our salvation is hopeless.

Muslims claim we can't really comprehend the beauty of the Qur'an unless we learn Arabic and read it in the original language. I've read the entire Qur'an in English, and I readily admit I see no beauty in it. You can appreciate the beauty of the Twenty-third Psalm without knowing a word of Hebrew.

When the apostles of Christ preached on Pentecost, although their audience was entirely Jewish, they preached in the languages of those assembled (Acts 2:5-11). The audience learned the will of God sufficiently that three thousand were saved in one day (Acts 2:41). Knowledge of Hebrew was unimportant.

"The word of the Lord endures forever" (1 Peter 1:25). Peter wrote that in Greek, I quoted it in English. "According to Tyndale Bible Translators, the Bible has been translated fully into 717 languages..." (grunge). Regardless of the language, if it's a faithful translation, and you can read that language, you can learn all God's will from it. This is one important way "the word of the Lord endures forever."

### Calling on the Name of the Lord

Calling on the name of the Lord does not mean to pronounce with the mouth a certain word or even to request with the mouth salvation from that being (Matthew 7:21). The sinner outside Christ calls on the Lord by hearing the Word of God (Romans 10:13-17), believing in Christ (Romans 10:8-13), repenting of his sins (Acts 2:21, 38), confessing His faith in Christ (Romans 10:8-13), and being baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:21, 38; 22:16). When one is baptized for the remission of sins, he is appealing to God for a good conscience (1 Peter 3:21, **NASB**).

### Name of God Manifested

The Lord made His name known to Israel through Moses (Exodus 3:15-16). But almost 1500 years later Jesus prayed to His Father, "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world" (John 17:6). The term "manifested" means "to bring to light, to set in a clear light; to manifest, display," and in this passage means "to declare, make known" (Mounce. 1302). The same term is translated "revealed" in both the **New King James Version** and **New American Standard Bible** in Mark 4:22. If Moses revealed the one divine name that all people must use for all time, how is it that Christ revealed the name of God to His apostles, who were all Jews?

The fact is the word "name" is used, not just of the appellation by which one is called, but "for all that a name implies, of authority, character, rank, majesty, power, excellence, etc., of everything that the name covers" (Vine. 3:100). "A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, Loving favor rather than silver and gold" (Proverbs 22:1; cf. Ecclesiastes 7:1). Is Solomon commending a name that sounds good or a good reputation? We must "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). Must we go about saying, "Lord Jesus" or do all by His authority?

God is not concerned whether or not we pronounce a word correctly. Remember, no one knows for certain how to pronounce the tetragrammaton (Hebrew word translated "LORD"). "Sacred name" devotees have a

misunderstanding of the significance of names parallel to that of the sons of Sceva (Acts 19:13-16). They thought the name “Jesus” was a magical talisman that, if pronounced, would accomplish wonders. This superstition nearly got them killed.

### **Our Father**

When Jesus taught His disciples to pray, He did not teach them to use the Hebrew appellation for the one true and living God, but to address God as “our Father” (Matthew 6:9; Luke 11:2). When the apostle Paul blessed those to whom he wrote, he did not use the Old Covenant name but used “Father” (Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 2 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 1:2; Philippians 1:2; Colossians 1:2; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:2; 1 Timothy 1:2; Philemon 1:3).

The Old Testament taught Israel the unique, uncreated, eternal existence of God (Exodus 3:13-16). The term “Father” expresses the closeness and the love God has for His people (Galatians 4:6-7). It is not sinful to address God by names which He taught Old Testament Israel to call Him. He still has the nature those names express. It is sinful to bind the use of Hebrew words, it is superstition to think the proper pronunciation of those terms is associated with salvation, and it is pride to show off some knowledge of Hebrew in our public prayers.

It is certainly true that most, although not all, of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew. But, as we have seen, the New Testament was given by the Holy Spirit in Greek. And, when the New Testament writers quoted from the Old Testament, not only did they quote it in Greek, they characteristically quoted from the Greek translation of the Old Testament called the “Septuagint.” This includes passages which in the Old Testament contain the Hebrew name of the Lord, but in the New Testament that name has been translated into Greek (“kurios” – “Lord”) or is referred by the New Testament writer to Jesus, whose name is given in the Greek (“Iesous”) (e.g., Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:2; Luke 3:4; 4:14; John 1:23; Acts 2:21,38; 4:26; Acts 15:17; Romans 2:24; 9:28; and Hebrews 13:6).

### **Conclusion**

It is not necessary to know one word of Hebrew or even to know most of the Old Testament was written in Hebrew to be saved.

*“At that time Jesus answered and said, ‘I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and have revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight’” (Matthew 11:25-26).*

I decline to give up the blessed privilege of addressing God as “Father” to employ a Hebrew word used by Old Testament Israelites which I can’t even pronounce properly. Why return to “the weak and beggarly elements”? (Galatians 4:9)

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## **A Prophet Sharing Plan (3)**

Jefferson David Tant | Hendersonville, Tennessee, USA

### **IX. Ask for a Decision**

Too often we are too timid about asking a person about obeying the gospel. It reminds me of the older lady who had never married. When asked why, she replied, “No one ever asked me.” More than once I had seen people obey the gospel who seemed to be waiting for someone to ask them. We’d like to think



everyone is like the Ethiopian eunuch who asked Philip, "Here is water. Why can't I be baptized here?" Some are more like Saul of Tarsus, whom Ananias told, "What are you waiting for? Get up and be baptized, and wash away your sins..."

We had a girl from Brazil staying with us one summer. Jackie had been taught and knew the gospel. There came a time when she was leaving to go back to Brazil, and we were leaving about 4 a.m. for a trip out west. We were reluctant for her to leave in her spiritual condition. Flora offered to stay up and study with her some more. After a time, Flora asked Jackie if she wasn't ready to be baptized and become a Christian. Jackie was just waiting for someone to ask her. So they woke me about 1 a.m. and we went to the water. I have seen it happen this way time after time.

We must be persuaders.

*"For we must all be made manifest before the judgment-seat of Christ; that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men..."*

(2 Corinthians 5:10-11).

Do we understand Judgment; do we understand the fear of the Lord? Then we cannot but seek to persuade men and women.

If you had a loved one who was dying of cancer, but refused to see a doctor because they didn't think anything was wrong, would you seek to persuade? Of course! Then why do we have the same perspective on eternity?

### **X. Confirm the Convert**

Too often we leave the new convert to flounder and find his own way. This results in a high mortality rate for babes in Christ. It is better to convert and confirm one than to baptize and lose ten. This may have been the problem mentioned in Hebrews 5:12:

*"For when by reason of the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need again that some one teach you the rudiments of the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of solid food."*

We should follow the example of Paul. He returned to strengthen the Christians in cities where he had previously preached.

*"And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, and to Iconium, and to Antioch, confirming the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith..."* (Acts 14:21-22).

He desired to go to Rome for the same purpose—to strengthen the disciples. "For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established" (Romans 1:11).

### **Conclusion**

Dear reader, prospects are literally everywhere. All we have to do is open our eyes and look around us. Here is a listing of a few that I have "prospected," and who accepted the gospel of Christ: our postman (an elder in a large Christian Church), a teacher in our children's elementary school, a hitch-hiker I picked up on the way from Atlanta to Nashville, a clerk on a cruise ship, our children's high school friends, young people in our neighborhood, a Buddhist friend of one of our "adopted" daughters, a drug store clerk, bank tellers, a clerk in Blockbusters, a visitor in our home from Zimbabwe, a waitress at IHOP, a Pentecostal preacher, and on it goes. The power is in the gospel (Romans 1:16), not me. I am just the messenger who delivers the "good news."

As to the "prophet sharing plan," there are "profits" from such a plan.

1. The Lord is glorified. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; and so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8). I believe the "fruit" here is the making of disciples, not the "fruit of the spirit," which are the qualities displayed in the Christian's life as mentioned in Galatians 5.

2. Souls are saved from sin. "Let him know, that he who converteth a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins" (James 5:20).
3. The church grows. "And every day, in the temple and at home, they ceased not to teach and to preach Jesus as the Christ. Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying..." (Acts 5:42-6:1a).
4. We strengthen ourselves. "Iron sharpeneth iron; So a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17). It should be obvious that as we teach and strengthen others, we benefit ourselves as well.

Is it too much? Is there a single soul who would say, "I cannot convert others?" Is it a reasonable goal to convert one soul in one year's time? You know the answer! Can you imagine what it would be like if people really took this seriously? Imagine a congregation of 100 members who were serious about this. If only 25% were able to convert another, that would be 25 baptisms in the year. How many congregations experience this? I would venture to say not many. The second year would see 31 baptisms, then 39, then 49. At the end of the 4th year, the membership of the congregation would be close to 250.

Brethren, let us be about our Father's business, as Jesus told his mother (Luke 2:49). And what is the "Father's business"? "For the Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).



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