

# The Mountain Messenger

A CHRISTIAN VOICE FROM THE MOUNTAIN STATE AND BEYOND

**FOLLOWING JESUS OR  
FOLLOWING HIM AROUND?**

**COMPLAINING IN  
OUR TENTS**

**I'M NOT YOUNG ENOUGH**

Along with other great articles by...  
David R. Kenney, Brenda Poarch, Joshua Hall,  
and more...

“...The churches of Christ greet you” (Romans 16:16).

# Editor's Note

Have you ever found yourself straining to catch every word when someone speaks about something profound or challenging? This effort stems from a genuine desire to understand and learn. It's a testament to our willingness to seek knowledge and grow.

In the first century, many who heard Jesus speak failed to believe His words. They either didn't listen or outright refused to understand. Jesus addressed this when He said, "If God were your Father, you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and came from God; nor have I come of Myself, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand My speech? Because you are not able to listen to My word" (John 8:42-43 NKJV). A very valuable part of loving Jesus is listening to His words; through this, our understanding of the Christian life deepens. Ignoring His teachings hinders our growth and service to God.

Have you committed to reading God's word daily? This daily practice is a commitment to listen to Jesus through His written word.

At Added to the Church, we strive to bring you insightful and thought-provoking content that encourages you to listen, learn, and grow. Your support helps us continue this mission. We invite you to read, share, and engage with our magazine. Together, let's embark on this journey of understanding and faith.

*Executive Editor — Daniel P. Curry, Jr. "DJ"*

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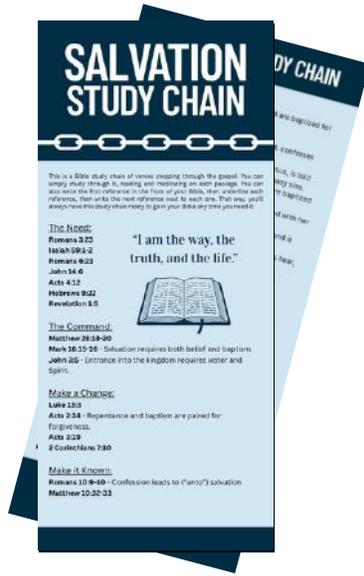
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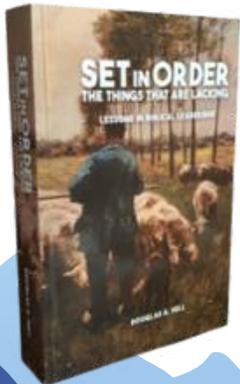
Volume 2, Issue 3 — June 2025  
© Added to the Church 2025

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Cover Photography — Angela Kuhns

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# FOLLOWING JESUS OR FOLLOWING HIM AROUND?

Hunter Melott



In the gospel of John, Jesus fed the multitudes with only a few loaves and two fish (John 6:9). As a result of this miracle, over 5,000 people were fed, and there was even a collection of leftovers taken up! Surely, seeing this and experiencing it must have been incredible. The people had no other choice than to declare, “This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world” (John 6:14 NASB).

Jesus eventually departed and the next day many of the people who were fed continued to look for Him. Jesus had walked on the Sea of Galilee to meet His disciples in the boat, and once He had gotten into the boat, Jesus and His company went to the other side of the Sea, opposite of where the crowd was. In an attempt to seek Jesus out, many of those who were fed took boats to the other side as well (John 6:22–24).

They found Him (John 6:25), and when they asked Him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” the answer that they received was probably not what they expected: “Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate some of the loaves and were filled” (John 6:26). According to Jesus, the people weren’t seeking Him because they believed He was the Messiah, rather they sought Him out because He was a means to fill up their bellies once again. Throughout the course of their conversation, Jesus explained to them that they needed to be seeking the food that leads to eternal life. He reminded them that the Israelites ate bread in the wilderness, but they died. So, if they were going to be truly filled (spiritually), they needed to partake of the true bread which came from heaven, Jesus himself (John 6:32–58). These teachings confused and upset the people, and because they were not going to get fed again, they left (John 6:66).

This text gives us an example of those who don’t follow Jesus but follow Him around. That is, they were willing to follow Jesus so long as it suited them. However, the moment that they disagreed with Jesus, or didn’t get what they desired, they left Jesus to never see Him again.

We must ask ourselves the question: Are we following Jesus or are we following Him around? Do we care about Jesus, or do we simply care about the things which He gives us? Do we love the person of Jesus, or the things which the person of Jesus does for us?

There are some in this world who follow Jesus because they believe they will be richly prosperous in doing so. Others seek him out when they need healing. Some become “Christians” to receive a social tag, another accessory to add to their lives. But we must follow Jesus because of who He is, not what He can do for us.

When the teachings of Jesus are hard to accept, when He calls us to great sacrifice, or when He requires faith amid hardship, will we still be willing to follow Him? Our answer will inform us as to whether we are truly following Jesus or simply following Him around. ▲

# Ladies! Just DO What You Can!

Brenda Poarch



When Mary anointed Jesus at the home of Simon the Leper, Judas and some of the disciples chastised her claiming she was wasting the very expensive oil. Jesus didn't agree. In fact, He honored her with praise and a prediction. "She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her" (Mark 14:8-9 ESV).

I just love it that Mary was praised for doing what she could! She couldn't perform miracles like the apostles or preach the first gospel sermon like Peter. She simply did what SHE could, and Jesus was pleased. Ladies, I believe that there's a message here for us all. God is not calling us to do "great things!" He's simply calling us to "do what we can with what we've been given." Now, this will look very different from woman to woman. We can't allow Satan or self-doubt to stop us from doing God's will. In Matthew 25, beginning with verse 14, Jesus tells the story of a master who went away after leaving three servants with different amounts of money.



When the master returned, the servants gave a report as to what they had done with what he had given them. Many of us may know that story, but please let me point out something that you may not have considered. Servant two

was NOT condemned because he didn't have the exact same amount as servant one. Both servants pleased the master because they had doubled what they'd been given. God didn't compare them to each other. They were only required to act wisely with what they had. Likewise, we are not in competition with one another!

This master didn't give the three servants the same amount of money because he knew what each servant was capable of handling. Matthew 25:15, "To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away." We, also, must never compare ourselves to other sisters when it comes to serving God. We have no way of knowing what that sister has been given or is responsible for using. We are different because God designed us to be different, and that includes the gifts that God has given to us all. 1 Corinthians 12:4-5, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord;" The goal for all Christian women is to serve God and each other by using the talents and resources with which God has blessed them. God's design is always perfect! When we work together and combine our strengths, great things can happen in the Kingdom of the Lord!

So, ladies, let's all DO WHAT WE CAN in service to our Lord, knowing that we're not competing with each other! We're simply different parts of the whole. ▲



# Proverbially Speaking

David R. Kenney

The phrase “proverbially speaking” is used for a truth, expression, or observation applicable in a given situation. Proverbs speak more about probabilities than absolute certainties. The book of Proverbs is a treasure of wise sayings or aphorisms. Pithy sayings are popular. We purchase them for our wall décor, put them on plaques, and such like. We still celebrate sayings from Benjamin Franklin’s *Poor Richard’s Almanac*.

Desiderius Erasmus’ bestselling work was *Adagia* (“adages”), which was a collection of aphorisms from the Greco-Roman era, published in 1500 CE. It began with about 300 sayings but was expanded through multiple editions to include more than 4,000. These were successful probably because people were looking for wisdom they could use. Well, the proverbs and wisdom literature of the Bible are far superior to these maxims of men because the source is our Creator, the one who established the creative order. God knows man because He created man. He knows how the world operates, and the damage sin is capable of initially and in the long term, too. Now, I am not saying to ignore *Adagia* or other sources of manmade wisdom, but we must place a premium on the teachings from God.

When I was in Egypt in 2024, one of my traveling companions was Denny Petrillo, who has been long known for his work at Bear Valley Bible Institute. I was delighted he was going to be on this journey because I had consulted his other works, primarily in the *Truth for Today Commentary* series. Now, his two-volume series on *Proverbs (1–15 and 16–31)* has been released by Resource Publications. It contains a sound introduction, outlines, and charts to help one to study the book from a more analytical perspective. I sometimes hear young preachers ask for a teaching outline for the Proverbs that goes through the book “not so randomly.” Well, that is not easily arranged because this book is an anthology of a

variety of topics. This work will help preachers and teachers formulate instruction plans to help a congregation profit from such a study. It is still not going to be easy because such requires work, i.e., study and preparation. I encourage everyone who is interested in a scholarly study of the Proverbs by a respected member of the churches of Christ to obtain this set.

This commentary series, edited by Eddie Cloer and others, is invaluable for this and future generations because it has a greater degree of academic scholarship without sacrificing sound doctrine. I see laments from younger preachers about the “academic superiority” of commentaries published outside of churches of Christ. The challenge we face is two-fold. First, we must have capable scholars to write such materials. Second, members must purchase and read such materials. Being in graduate school, we look for works that are “current,” “academic,” and “scholarly.” Some may not like this, but “currency” is leaving many of the works of prior generations behind. Scholars of prior generations, whom I love, men like Alexander Campbell, J. W. McGarvey, N. B. Hardeman, Guy N. Woods, and others who were once household names, barely make it to our bookshelves. We can complain about it, but what are we going to do about it? Thankfully, Resource Publications has produced a set of commentaries that can help the church with this problem. Some will quickly reply, “But these are so expensive.” It is sad that some will say that while students purchase analytical commentaries by denominational publishing houses,



that can be three times more expensive! Where are our priorities? We need to encourage academic scholarship that recognizes and respects the works upon which we have stood upon as part of upholding the restoration plea.

Some object to commentaries, claiming such is akin to creeds, but that is mistaken. A commentary is the opinion of the writer's study. Sometimes I hear, "I would like to know what brother so-and-so thought about this passage."

A commentary allows you to know his thoughts at a given time, though the person may now be deceased. Obviously, not all commentaries are equal, but the authority ought to still reside with the Bible. Why not purchase this set and begin a serious study of this marvelous collection of proverbs? It is a study that never grows old. ▲

## The Prayer Life of Jesus Cheyenne Blizzard

Youth Group  
Christian  
Author



In the four gospels, we read about Jesus' life. We read about His healings, His love, and His miracles. The one thing that sticks out the most to me in these wondrous things is His prayer life.

Jesus prayed to God regularly when He felt He needed it and when He wanted to talk to His

Father. He prayed when choosing the apostles (Luke 6:12–16). He prayed for the Lord's supper (Matt 26:26–29; Mark 14:22–25; Luke 22:19–20; 1 Cor 11:23–25). He went to pray while the disciples were in the boat crossing the Sea of Galilee (Matt 14:23). He prayed before His crucifixion (Matt 26:39). He prayed while He hung on the cross (Matt 27:46; Mark 15:34; Luke 23:34, 46). Knowing this, I want to ask, how is your prayer life? Philippians 4:6 tells us not to be anxious but to let your requests be made known to God. You should pray in hard times and tell your worries to God. 1 Thessalonians 5:17 tells us to pray without ceasing. It's not saying to pray every second of the day; it just means to pray continually. We can't just say words to pray; there is a certain way to

pray. The Bible tells us to pray, but not to doubt (Mark 11:24; Jas 1:6–8; 1 John 5:14–15). We have to believe that God is hearing our prayers and will answer them as He sees fit. Matthew 6:9–13 tells us a prayer that we can pray and gives us an example of what to say in our prayers. James 5:16 says that when we pray, we should confess our sins to God and to one another.

God wants to hear from you, and He wants you to cast all your cares on Him because He cares for us (1 Pet 5:7). It helps us to gain a stronger relationship with God and strengthens our faith. Go and pray to your Heavenly Father. He loves you and wants to hear from you. ▲



# GOD'S GOT ME COVERED

Deborah Amos (PhD- Biomedical Sciences)

In our last article, we explored the role of white blood cells (WBCs) and their ability to defend our bodies from foreign invaders. Many parts of the integumentary system share in the same mission as WBCs, but they act long before some evil little invader gets to the WBCs! Let's explore God's plan of protection through the integumentary system by analyzing the skin, glands, nails, hair, and sensory structures.



The skin is the largest human body organ, accounting for approximately 16% of the body's weight! [1] The skin's primary role is to protect the body's internal organs, and it will find success if it remains intact. It strives to keep all foreign materials from coming inside, not only specific species, as we discussed last week with WBCs. Skin is non-specific regarding protection, so it's classified as being a part of the innate immune system.

In conjunction with the skin, we possess different types of glands. Many have ducts that run through our skin's layers. Most people know about sweat and sebaceous glands because of stinky armpits and acne that they have experienced at some point in their lives. Just as a side note, sweat doesn't stink, but what smells is the waste products of specific microbial species after they eat and digest your sweat. So really, you smell microbe poop! Anyway, in addition to sweat glands (found everywhere on the body's surface except the lips/palms/foot soles), humans possess lacrimal glands (located near the medial

corners of the eyes), mammary glands (found at the chest in female mammals), and salivary glands (6 different glands found within the oral cavity) which all produce enzymes that protect us by chemically breaking down invaders where there are openings in the skin. Outside of bacteria and viruses, another external factor the skin protects us from is the sun. The skin is vital in maintaining a stable internal temperature so we don't scorch, as well as producing

melanin so we don't fry (as bad). Regarding temperature, we produce sweat, and when sweat evaporates, it takes heat with it, which allows us to cool down when we become too hot. Plus, the skin helps keep water in our blood vessels and other organs unless it is released through a sweat gland (recall the vital roles of water discussed in the December edition). The melanocytes, located in the deepest layer of the epidermis, produce melanin, which gives us a more tan-like appearance and hence protects us from the sun's rays. The reason people tan differently isn't because of the number of melanocytes. It's because of how much melanin is produced and how widely distributed the melanocytes are in the epidermis.

Nails and hair are two other protective parts of the integumentary system and are connected to the skin. Nails protect the nail beds underneath them. Here, we have blood vessels and nerves. The blood supply is responsible for the light pink color of your nails, and the nerves are

# God's Got Me Covered

• Deborah Amos (PhD- Biomedical Sciences) •

responsible for the pain you feel when you cut your nail(s) back too far. Ouch! Hair plays a role in temperature regulation and helps block debris and other foreign materials from entering the nose, ears, eyes, etc. For example, think about the Creator's placement of your eyebrows and eyelashes in His design (Psalm 139:13-14).

Ok, now I want you to think about when you grabbed a hot cookie that just came out of the oven or stubbed your toe in the middle of the night. Sorry, painful memory, but why did you feel that? It's because your skin is also a sensory organ. In the previous examples, pain receptors (nociceptors) were stimulated, but we also have receptors for temperature (thermoreceptors), light touch, pressure, and stretch (mechanoreceptors). Your ability to sense your surroundings, although it may be uncomfortable, is there to keep you from initial or continued tissue damage.

Just in case it's not evident, your integumentary

system plays a primary role as a mechanical barrier and so much more! God truly "has us covered." The aforementioned information was all physical, but God has equipped us with a lot of spiritual armor, too! He sent the word which we now have written to study and apply (John 1:1-3; 2 Tim 3:16-17), the Holy Spirit which guides us if we pray and keep His word in our hearts (John 14:16-17), elders who devote their lives to shepherding and keeping us on the narrow path (1 Pet 5:2), encouraging brothers and sisters as a part of God's family (1 Thess 5:11), and more! If you want to learn more about God's protection from evil and ultimate destruction, please contact the editor or any of the authors in this magazine. We would be more than happy to speak with you. Whether you have questions or not, I do hope you will look for the next article, where we will move into a bit more complex system: the cardiovascular system! ▲

[1] Remy Melina, Remy. "How Much Does Your Skin Weigh?" Live Science. 19 May 2025. <https://www.livescience.com/32939-how-much-does-skin-weigh.html>.

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# Diving Into 1 Corinthians 10:13

Joshua Hall



One of my favorite passages in all of Scripture is 1 Corinthians 10:13. An in-depth study of this verse reveals some amazing truths about God, His dealings with the individual Christian, and overcoming temptations. Let us dive into 1 Corinthians 10:13 in this article!

The verse begins by saying, “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man...” (NKJV). Literally saying “no temptation has overtaken you except what belongs to man.” Mankind, today, is not tempted by anything new. We have always been tempted by the same three types of sin: “For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world” (1 John 2:16). These are the same temptations Eve fell to in the garden (Gen 3:6), and the same temptations Satan tempted Christ with in the wilderness (Matt 4:1–11; Luke 4:1–13).

Though we face these temptations, the verse reminds us that “...God is faithful...” The idea here is that God is credible; if He says He is going to do something, He is going to do it! God has promised to establish and guard us “from the evil one” (1 Thess 3:3). When we do fall short and cave to temptation, He has promised to forgive us of those sins when we confess them (1 John 1:9).

Paul continues, “... who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able...” An amazing statement showing God’s involvement with the individual Christian. Our Creator knows our ability to bear temptation. He then deals with us individually and adjusts the deliverance in each particular case. This statement also shows that Satan is limited by our ability, with God’s

help, to resist the temptation.

God’s individual involvement does not end there, “... but with the temptation will also make the way of escape...” This next part of the verse shows us that not only is God’s providential care unique to each individual, but also to each situation. It tells us that God provides a way for the faithful Christian to avoid sin, to escape temptation. This way of escape is consistently found within His Word, notice Hebrews 5:14 “...who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil” (ESV). Those who spend time in God’s Word, who practice, and are trained in the Scriptures, can recognize evil and flee from it!

The verse ends by saying “...that you may be able to bear it.” Make no mistake about it, dealing with temptation is difficult. The Greek word translated “bear” here means to “bear up under trouble or extreme difficulty.” Having to bear any temptation is exactly that—extremely difficult. Just look at David and Bathsheba (2 Sam 11–12) and compare that situation to Joseph and Potiphar’s wife (Gen 39). David attempted to bear the temptation he was facing, and he fell to great depths of sin. Joseph fled the temptation and avoided falling into sin.

In his letter to Timothy, Paul is talking about things that the Christian is to fight for, things the Christian is to pursue, and things the Christian is to flee from such as: mishandling the truth (1 Tim 6:3–4), pride (1 Tim 6:4), a contentious spirit (1 Tim 6:4–5), and the love of money (1 Tim 6:9–10). Paul goes on in 1 Timothy 6:11–12 saying that we ought to flee these things, among others found in Scripture, and “pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness.” These are found when one grows in their faith through the knowledge of God’s Word (2 Peter 1:5–8). May we all act upon Paul’s warning in 1 Corinthians 10:12, “Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall” (NKJV). ▲

# Sacrificial Love

## Clista Heintzman

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends” (John 15:13 NKJV). The term “lay down” means “to surrender” or “give up.” Jesus exemplified the greatest love by laying down His physical life for us on the cross. Have you ever considered that the Savior also laid down His life while living? During the three years of his ministry, He typified extreme love through sacrifice. One who sacrifices puts aside his own desires and comforts for another’s well-being.

Our nation recently celebrated mothers, and in honor of them, I’d like to share a true story [1] of a mother who, I believe, embodied the idea of “laying down one’s life” in an unbelievable way. May Lemke spent her life raising five children and working as a nurse governess. As we all know, raising our own children is no easy task, but at the

age of 52, May was asked to take in a baby—one not her own, who was expected to die in a matter of days. The baby, named Leslie, was born on January 31, 1952, in a Milwaukee, Wisconsin hospital. He was born very prematurely. Because of his early birth, he developed retinopathy, which caused his eyes to have to be surgically removed. Leslie was blind, weak, brain damaged, and had cerebral palsy. His biological parents abandoned him, which led the hospital staff to ask

May to take Leslie home and care for him till he died. May’s own words were, “If I take him, he won’t die. Nothing ever dies that comes to me.” Leslie couldn’t move, couldn’t see, and couldn’t eat. May sucked on Leslie’s cheek as she put milk to his mouth with her finger. Eventually, she got him to suck. She prayed and cried for him and daily massaged his body. For years, Leslie could do nothing on his own, but he lived. He couldn’t sit or stand or communicate. Several people told her she was wasting her time and that she should put him in an institution. May refused and continued to love and



care for him. May carried him around wherever she went until he was too big to hold. To set him up, she tied him in a chair so he wouldn’t fall over. When Leslie was about seven, she purchased a secondhand piano. Thinking a little music might brighten his bleak life, May played the keys for him, and when Leslie learned to sit on his own, she would place his hands on the keys and help him depress them. At the age of ten, May and her husband devised a leather harness which May used to carry Leslie around in a standing position on her back so he could feel what it was like to stand. He stood on his own at the age of twelve and could walk unassisted at the age of sixteen. It was at this age that something incredible happened. May and her husband were awakened one night to the sound of beautiful music. Thinking one of them had left the television on, May went downstairs to turn it off and found Leslie sitting at the piano, perfectly playing Tchaikovsky’s Piano Concerto No. 1—a piece he had heard only once earlier that evening. Leslie was a savant. A whirlwind of emotions came over May, including shock, overwhelming joy, tears, and thanksgiving. All the years of work and love on Leslie’s behalf had not been in

vain. Leslie went on to play all types of music—whatever he heard, he played. May had never heard Leslie’s voice, so imagine how she felt when, out of the blue, he began singing the songs he played! Since his beautiful talent has been discovered, Leslie has played and sung for many people, bringing them joy and happiness.

I am so inspired by the tireless sacrifice of this mother and the example of faithful Christian mothers who have such extreme love for their children that they never give up praying for, teaching, and encouraging them to live to their full potential in Christ.

“Love suffers long and is kind...does not seek its own... bears all things, believes all things, endures all things. Love never fails” (1 Cor 13:4–8). ▲

[1] The references I used for this story include: Wikipedia, ABC’s That’s Incredible 1981 (YouTube), To Creation and Beyond: The Remarkable Life of Leslie Lemke, wisconsinacademy.com, and The Extraordinary Story of Leslie Lemke by Caleb Cliff.

# Complaining In Our Tents

Debbie Kea

A recent study in Deuteronomy has caused me to consider what a murmuring lot the Israelites were. But then, as it should, the Word has convicted me as I have applied it to my own life. While at first I was amazed at God's longsuffering and love for His people in the long ago, now I stand amazed at His forbearance toward me. Maybe you feel the same—so grateful for God's mercy and grace.

## Why Do We Complain?

- 1) Habit—we humans are creatures of habit, and many are in the habit of complaining. Everything is negative with them.
- 2) Blind—how many of us have become blind to our blessings? We don't see the good that surrounds us every moment. God's providence is taken for granted.
- 3) Not honest with ourselves—we lie to ourselves sometimes and act as if life/God/everyone is against us—we have it worse than anyone—look at all I do, but nobody cares! This was true of the Israelites in the wilderness. “And ye murmured in your tents, and said, Because the Lord hated us, he hath brought us forth out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites to destroy us...” (Deut 1:27 KJV).
- 4) Lack of faith—many complain because they don't trust God. The Israelites were rebuked for their unbelief when they complained (Deut 1:32–37). When we complain, we are speaking against God's care for us.
- 5) Never satisfied—some people are never satisfied. You know the ones I mean. Mama would say, “She wouldn't be happy if she was hung with a new rope!” Maybe they've endured bad circumstances in life and think they have a right to complain. Maybe they enjoy the attention it brings them.

## What are the Results of Complaining?

- 1) Constant complaining ruins relationships. Who wants to be with someone who complains all the time? The

person who is never satisfied, sees only the negative, and always whines about everything is not someone others will want to stay with, in friendships or marriage.

- 2) Complaining pulls us away from God. How do you expect to draw nearer to Him if you aren't grateful for all He does or

if you don't trust His power and wisdom? For the Israelites, the results were doom. “How long shall I bear with this evil congregation which murmur against me?... in this wilderness they shall be consumed and there they shall die.” (Num 14:27–36)

- 3) Complaining does not adorn our souls. If we care about making our souls fit for heaven, we will strive to beautify them, not mar them with a complaining spirit.

## How Can We Overcome This?

- 1) Pray. Prayer to God for help should always be our first response to everything in life, joy or struggle. We must pray for help and forgiveness for our complaining.
- 2) Focus on our blessings. We must change our negative thinking. We must see all the good, even amidst life's difficulties. We know the Savior and enjoy the benefits of His blood! That alone should be more than enough to bring us joy!
- 3) Believe in God's providence and power. When we truly trust in God's care and His ability to handle our problems, we will stifle our complaints. He is the All-Knowing All-Powerful One who cares for me and you infinitely. His wisdom is above all—who am I to question His ways in my life?!
- 4) Make thankfulness your habit. Yes, habits are hard to change, but if you fill your life with His word and His



way, your mind will be renewed (Rom 12:1–2), and as you are transformed, your habits will change.

5) Seek a life of holiness instead of constant self-satisfaction. As Christians, we are set apart for a divine purpose. That's what holiness is. Many complain because they seek satisfaction in everything but God. The wise man tells us to acknowledge Him in all our ways, and he

will direct our paths (Prov 3:6).

6) Obey His Word. “Do all things without murmurings or disputings” (Phil 2:14).

Whether our journey brings us to bitter water as in Marah or sweet water as in Elim (Exodus 15:23–27), may God help us not to be murmuring Israelites but grateful people of God who trust their Maker. ▲

## I Gave Up!

Sarah Curry

Not long ago, I bumped into an old classmate from high school. We chit-chatted for about half an hour as our topic of conversation bounced from one topic to another like a soccer ball at a children's soccer game. As we were about to part ways, the classmate who was graying at the edges of her hair and showing signs of ageing, much like me, asked me a surprising question, “You have changed, what happened?” As her words rolled off her tongue, she smiled and laughed a little. I thought for a moment before responding, for I knew what the change was, and I wanted to make my words count. My response was anything but eloquent: “I just gave up!” Wow, what a great response I said to myself. Her confused look did not take me by surprise, so I proceeded to explain.

I gave up, that's what I did. You may be thinking, “What exactly does this mean?”

I gave up on striving to be rich and to gain the whole world. Instead, I aimed my focus on something much greater (Matt 16:26).

I gave up my wild ways and my party days. Instead, I live my days in peace and quiet (1 Thess 4:11–12).

I gave up trying to be friends with everyone, and people, please. Instead, I strive to please only the One who loves me (John 14:15).

I gave up the selfish lifestyle I was living day to day, only looking after me, myself, and I. Instead, I look at the interests of others (Phil 2:4).

I gave up trying to be friends with everyone, and people, please. Instead, I strive to please only the One who loves me (John 14:15).

I gave up the selfish lifestyle I was living day to day, only looking after me, myself, and I. Instead, I look at the interests of others (Phil 2:4).

I gave up worrying and trying to control everything in my life. Instead, I give my anxious thoughts to the One who made me and knows my heart and needs (Matt 6:8, 34).

I gave up hating myself and trying to be the best out of everyone. Instead, I strive daily to walk in the footsteps of the One who is perfect. (Matt 16:24–26).

You see, I gave up. I gave up on all the things in my life that were bringing me down, causing me pain, and putting my soul in jeopardy. Instead, I took up my cross and decided to follow Christ.

Giving up is not all bad if you are giving up things that are not good. I gave up and I decided to give in and follow Christ. ▲



# I'M NOT YOUNG ENOUGH

Douglas Pell

“I am not young enough to know everything,” Sir James M. Barrie (1860–1937).

“Obey your leaders, and submit to them; for they keep watch over your souls, as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you” (Heb 13:17 NASB).

“Obey your leaders and submit to them” is the preamble to one of the most consequential verses on church leadership in the New Testament. Who are our leaders? Can we tell by their actions or only by their titles? The writer of the Hebrew letter continues, “for they keep watch over your souls.” That’s interesting. How will they do that? Let’s continue — “as those who will give an account.” Why would a man volunteer service as a leader knowing he must give an account to God for souls other than his own (cf. Rom 14:12)? Keep reading — Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you.” Oh, that makes a big difference. What kind of soil (Luke 8:4–15) must I become before my relationship with my shepherds brings them joy? How vulnerable and honest must I be? Although the word “leaders,” not “elders” or “shepherds,” is used in Hebrews 13:17, we know that the recipients of this message were in Jerusalem, facing persecution, and were among the apostles and elders of the church (Acts 15:4).

“I am not young enough to know everything,” a quote by Sir James M. Barrie [1] reminds me of my zeal as a young Christian. I could not understand why my shepherds deliberated so long and did not come to the same conclusion as I did. As an older man, I struggle to understand why the youth are impatient with me. The Bible refers to our spiritual leaders as shepherds, overseers, stewards, sentries or watchers, fathers, caretakers, instructors, managers, and rulers. However, the term elder is the subject of this article because, more than all the other terms, it describes why a young man does not qualify to lead the church. From Genesis to Revelation, the word elder in Hebrew [zaqen] or Greek

[presbuteros] simply means older man. When the Holy Spirit selected presbuteros (elder) by the pen of the apostle Paul to describe a special ruling body of men over a congregation (Titus 1:5), He recognized experiential knowledge [Gr. gnōsis] in addition to revealed or true knowledge [Gr. epignōsis] as a qualification. “We associate an eldership with timeworn eyes, giving respect to what they have seen. Old eyes cause us to smile when the young childless couple gives child-rearing advice to parents or when the teenager speaks of true love. They do not know, but perhaps they will one day. ... The old eyes of the presbuteros (elder) are valuable because they see the opportunities. More so, elders see the problems before they arrive.” [2]

We criticize older men sometimes because they are “slow to speak” (Jas 1:19), i.e., slow to lay out an answer. Why are they like this? Preceding the slowness of speech is “quick to hear,” which is an art born from patience. Patience is necessary and beneficial in smothering an argument and leading souls to salvation. Patience is not quick. Peter tells us to imitate Paul as Paul imitated the patience of Jesus for salvation (2 Pet 3:15).

The term “leader” [Gr. hēgeomai] is nuanced; it can signify both governor and ruler while also embracing the concepts of consideration, esteem, thoughtfulness, regard, and precision in our inquiry. Quick decisions are only feasible when those experienced eyes foresee the challenges ahead and substantial “considering” has already occurred. “The natural order is that wisdom accompanies age.



# I'M NOT YOUNG ENOUGH • DOUGLAS PELL

Thus, the characteristics we must look for are advanced wisdom and experience. Secular leadership does not qualify one to become an elder, nor does age alone. Spiritual age, accompanied by sound judgment and humility, does qualify.” [3]

We love our youth, who, through their faith and zeal, seem to grow in knowledge rapidly. We must never look down on them (1 Tim 4:12), but bring them near, i.e., “urge [Gr. parakaleō] the young men to be sensible”

(Titus 2:6), where we can place them in our leadership incubators. We can give them opportunities to serve others until their aspirations and desires mature (1 Tim 3:1). Then, they can use their “old eyes” to lead the flock of God. ▲

[1] Sir James Matthew Barrie (1860-1937), a Scottish novelist and playwright is best remembered as the creator of Peter Pan.

[2] Pell, Douglas A. Set In Order The Things That Are Lacking. Pulaski, TN, Sain Publications, 2024, p. 160.

[3] Ibid., 195



# Events

## JUNE

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**OVCYC\* SENIOR WEEK — June 15-20**

**OVCYC INTERMEDIATE WEEK — June 22-27**

**OVCYC JUNIOR WEEK — June 29 - July 3**

Register at [www.ovcyc.com](http://www.ovcyc.com)

**WVCYC SENIOR WEEK — June 29 - July 4**

Register at [www.wvcyc.com](http://www.wvcyc.com)

## JULY

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**WVCYC INTERMEDIATE WEEK — July 6-11**

**WVCYC JUNIOR WEEK — June 29 - July 13-18**

**WVCYC ALL-AGE WEEK — June 29 - July 20-25**

**WVCYC SINGING EMPHASIS WEEK — July 27 -**

**August 1 • Register at [www.wvcyc.com](http://www.wvcyc.com)**

## AUGUST

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**WVCYC GOLF TOURNAMENT — August 9 •**

Contact Andy Robison at [andyrobisonster@gmail.com](mailto:andyrobisonster@gmail.com)

**AREA-WIDE SING & PIE FLING — August 29 •**

Meet incoming WVSOP\* students! Singing: 7-8pm,

Desserts: 8pm-?

\*WVSOP:

West Virginia School of Preaching  
2 Willard Avenue  
Moundsville, WV 26041

\*WVCYC:

West Virginia Christian Youth Camp  
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\*OVCYC:

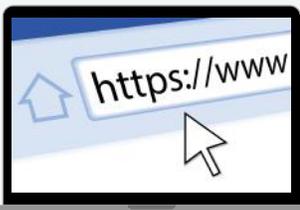
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# Resources

## General Resources



**Added to the Church** - Publisher of Mountain Messenger, New Testament Expositor - [addedtothechurch.com](https://www.addedtothechurch.com)



**Our Authors** - Meet the authors of The Mountain Messenger!  
[addedtothechurch.com/christian-authors/](https://www.addedtothechurch.com/christian-authors/)



**West Virginia School of Preaching** - 2-year program of classes taught by sound Christians - [wvsop.com](https://www.wvsop.com)



**Sharp Five Media** - Affordable church websites and media by a member of the church - [sharp-five.com](https://www.sharp-five.com)



**Bible Call** - Access Bible information recordings online or by phone. - [biblecallonline.com](https://www.biblecallonline.com)

## Songs & Hymns



**Teaching and Admonishing** - Free to listen and use original hymns by members of the church - [churchofchristsongs.com](https://www.churchofchristsongs.com)



**WVCYC "Pressing On" CD** - Contact Andy Robison to order your CD or Thumb Drive!  
[andycd2020@gmail.com](mailto:andycd2020@gmail.com)

## Podcasts



**The Religious Coffee Hour** - Podcast hosted by Hunter Melott found wherever you listen to podcasts.



**Authentic Christian** - Podcast produced by GBN, hosted by Aaron Gallagher and Scott Ingram  
[gbntv.org/the-authentic-christian/](https://www.gbntv.org/the-authentic-christian/)

## Deepen Your Knowledge



**Apologetics Press** - Articles, videos, books, etc. focused on the defense of New Testament Christianity - [apologeticspress.org](https://www.apologeticspress.org)



**Gospel Broadcasting Network** - Provides Bible-based and unbiased resources from the Word of God - [gbntv.org](https://www.gbntv.org)



**Focus Press** - Provides podcasts, articles, videos, books, and daily devotionals. - [focuspress.org](https://www.focuspress.org)



**World Video Bible School** - Videos and free study courses on Biblical topics - [wvbs.org](https://www.wvbs.org)



**Through the Scriptures** - Study through the entirety of the scriptures - [throughthescriptures.com](https://www.throughthescriptures.com)



**Families of Faith** - Bible materials for families & churches. - [familiesoffaith.store](https://www.familiesoffaith.store)



**Salvation Study Chain Cards** - Order these tract-like evangelism tools for your congregation. - [bit.ly/study-card](https://bit.ly/study-card)

## Fun and Games



**Birble** - Bible version of Wordle. Guess the five-letter word from the KJV Bible! - [ajrv.us/birble](https://www.ajrv.us/birble)



**Memoria** - Bible verse memorization tool. Removes 1 word at a time as you practice. - [ajrv.us/bible/memoria](https://www.ajrv.us/bible/memoria)



4788 Stillwell Road  
Davisville, WV 26142

# “How Long Will It Be”

Stephen R. Diehl

How long will it be,  
till Jesus comes for me.  
How long will it be,  
till I enter eternity.

Oh how long will it be,  
till I stroll the golden glee.  
How long will it be,  
till I feel the jubilee.

Oh how long will it be,  
till I eat of the tree.  
For its leaves heals the curse,  
the curse, of death and strife,  
That is the tree,  
the tree of life.

That will heal my broken soul,  
that will make my spirit whole

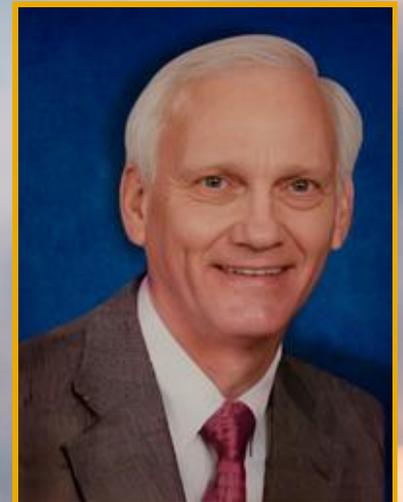
Oh how long will it be,  
till I kneel on the sea.  
That is the sea, the sea of glass,  
mingled with fire in the crystal  
glass.

Sparkling and brilliant,  
to the ever last.

Kneeling before God’s Holy  
throne,  
for Jesus’ blood did atone.

That set me free and heaven bond,  
for I’m kneeling on Holy ground.  
With the gospel Key in my hand,  
worshiping God in heaven’s land.

Oh how long, how long will it be,  
till Jesus, my Savior comes for  
me.



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