



# New Testament Expositor



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## So Great A Salvation – When We Struggle

Frequently, in our obedience there is joy in the heart, and sometimes it lasts for a good while. As the days turn into weeks, perhaps months, we settle down and the struggles we had previously, that we so readily and quickly gave up, begin to surface. This time it seems to come with more force. We say to ourselves, “I am too embarrassed to say anything to anyone because I said earlier that it was easy to dismiss – and now here I am again!”

In Hebrews 12, the Holy Spirit (human author unknown) understood this, and He reminds us of those who have gone on before us. Reflect on their lives and see what you can learn. Their struggles may have been different than yours, but a wrestling match is a wrestling match any way you look at it. Let us consider some thoughts from Hebrews 12:4-8.

“In your struggle against sin you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood” (12:4 ASV). You say to yourself, “No, I can’t say that I have. How is this designed to help me?” Perhaps not one of us struggled to the point of shedding blood, but it does not take that extreme in experience for us to relate, does it? We can surely relate with the “journey” one makes in the temptations and persecutions experienced. The outside force or the enticement from within is a powerful force that is heavy to shoulder. “Brother, I understand more than you know.”

### **How do we address it?**

“And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? ‘My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives’” (12:5-6). In these two verses exists the Holy Spirit exhortation about how to get away from the pull that is so strong. Reflect on how Jesus did it in the wilderness with the great adversary (Matthew 4:1-11). Perhaps we know well from the Lord His admonitions about what not to do, and about how about what to do. It was Paul who wrote, “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God” (Col. 3:16). Is there something wrong with this approach? If not, perhaps it’s the solution. When Paul wrote to the church in Rome about the great conflicting struggle with sin under the banner of authority of the Law of Moses (Romans 7), he said at the end of that soliloquy, “There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus made me free from the law of sin and of

death” (8:1-2).

### **Knowing how to address it, what now?**

“It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom his father does not discipline?” (12:7). You’ve heard of the old saying “anything worth having is worth taking time to get”? This truism should not be misunderstood. If it is worth having, then do what you can to get and maintain it. This is discipline. Have you considered that the struggle you have is *not* the Lord’s giving up on you, but His effort to keep your mind holding on to His Word in your heart. Think about it for a moment. As you take time to read, contemplate, implement and hold on to holiness, the Lord makes a home in your heart (mind). The struggles with which each of us contend must address the Lord’s presence. Which one wins? The one held onto the hardest.

*“If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons”* (12:8). Since a child belongs to parents, when the child is struggling, parents do what they can to be there to help. The child can only be saved (if you will) if there is a desire to let go of the strength that pulls them in a different direction.

Do you ever wonder if what you’re doing (thinking) is pleasing to the Lord, will He receive you when you pass from this life? If you do, you’re normal. We know our failings better than any other (apart from the Lord), and with that knowledge we ask, “Will the Lord save me?” This is where the greatness of our salvation plays a significant role. Our failings are multiple, but our trust in the Lord is even greater. We struggle, but we don’t live in rebellion. There is a difference. “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life” (1 John 5:13).

In Proverbs 3:5 we learn the importance of trusting Him who is above all that we ask or think. “Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.” We do this because when we look around we are discouraged at every corner. “Even though a sinner might commit a hundred crimes and still live a long time, yet I know that it will go well with God-fearing people – for they stand in fear before him. But it will not go well with the wicked, nor will they prolong their days like a shadow, because they do not stand in fear before God” (Ecc. 8:12-13, NET).

Our salvation is great because Jesus died for me (us). Whether we know a lot of Bible or little, our failures are before us in bright lights. “Lord, be merciful to me, one who struggle mightily with my failures.” RT

## The Brick Makers of Rekhmire

On Friday, May 31, 2024, we entered the mortuary or memorial chapel of Vizier Rekhmire (TT100). (You are encouraged to read the previous article to learn more about this memorial chapel). Rekhmire oversaw many building projects in Egypt in the New Kingdom Period, serving both Pharaohs Thutmose III (ca. 1504–1450 BCE) and Amenhotep II (ca. 1440-1425 BCE).

There is very little archaeological evidence remaining in Egypt relating to the Israelites being in Egypt. This is because of two major factors. First, only a fraction of Egypt has been excavated by archaeologists. Second, the deterioration of items from the period has destroyed much of the evidence in our day. Still, there are details in the Bible that match what we find in Egypt. One such example is when the pharaoh (unnamed) demanded the taskmasters to force the Israelites make bricks: “You shall no longer give the people straw to make brick as before. Let them go and gather straw for themselves. And you shall lay on them the quota of bricks which they made before. You shall not reduce it. For they are idle; therefore they cry out, saying, ‘Let us go and sacrifice to our God.’ Let more work be laid on the men, that they may labor in it, and let them not regard false words” (Exodus 5:7–9 NKJV).

Along the walls of Rekhmire’s chapel walls are many scenes painted including a fascinating scene of brickmaking being overseen by taskmasters. The Egyptian bricks were known to be made of mud, sand, straw, and even cow dung. This would be poured/packed into wooden molds to be laid out to be baked by the sun. These bricks (sometimes called blocks) would be used throughout all kinds of structures within Egypt. These were stacked in such a way to improve the structure’s soundness. They used a similar mixture as mortar to hold these bricks in place. In the pictures, one will see figures holding the rod which was a symbol of authority, the taskmasters. (One does not have to imagine how that came to be used). The others are Syrians and Nubians working as slaves to build bricks. Some sources state that Israelites are usually depicted with facial hair or beard. An inscription states that the bricks were for the workshops of the Karnak Temple. There are records of quotas and slave labor. Even bricks made with straw have been found.

While there are no Israelites in this painting, it reveals that there was a position in Egypt that was similar to the rank that Joseph obtained. It also shows that brickmaking was a major enterprise in the days of Thutmose III and Amenhotep II, utilizing slave labor that could be harsh work. This matches what was described in Exodus 1:13–14. Often people comment about the massive building projects of Ramses II, but he certainly was not the only pharaoh to have massive building projects. This scene describes similar work as found in the Bible performed by the Israelites. So, this scene supports the scene in Exodus where the Israelites served in making bricks of straw with rigor during the time in which the Exodus would occur ca. 1446 BCE.

## SOURCES:

Byers, Gary. “The Bible According to Karnak.” *17:4 Bible & Spade* (Fall 2004): 97–106.

Painted illustration of the bricking making process. Mortuary Chapel of Rekhmire, Thebes Necropolis, Egypt (TT1000).



First, workers would go to the pond (notice the blue surrounded by lotus flowers to gather water to mix with dirt to make mud. Straw was then added and material put in casts. Mortuary Chapel of Rekhmire, Thebes Necropolis, Egypt (TT1000).



The bricks formed in casts then stacked in preparation for transport. Mortuary Chapel of Rekhmire, Thebes Necropolis, Egypt (TT1000).



The bricks formed in casts then stacked in preparation for transport. Mortuary Chapel of Rekhmire, Thebes Necropolis, Egypt (TT1000).

(All pictures by David R. Kenney and should be so designated unless otherwise stipulated)



The bricks are then carried to where these will be used as the taskmasters supervise. Mortuary Chapel of Rekhmire, Thebes Necropolis, Egypt (TT1000).

David Kenney is the Minister at the Newcomerstown Church of Christ.

### Wiles of the Devil

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus, “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the **wiles** of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11NKJV). A wile is a trick or deceit. Satan is filled with ways to pull the Christian apart from God. The English Standard version uses the word scheme, perhaps providing a better understanding: “Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the **schemes** of the devil” (Ephesians 6:11 ESV). Satan is interested in our souls and will use any means necessary to try to attain them.

Have you thought about how Satan may try to win us? It is usually through our weaknesses that he will find triumph. Satan works to blind our eyes causing us to think that we might be doing something for a greater good, but it is leading to our destruction. Consider how Satan tempted Eve in the garden (Genesis 3: 1-7). Satan told Eve that her eyes would be opened, and she would be like God, knowing both good and evil (Genesis 3:4). Physically, she and Adam did not immediately die. However, it was the bite that would eventually lead to physical death because of sin and the defiance of Adam and Eve resulted in separation from God. Sin is deceitful. The deceitfulness of sin can lead to division of the Christian and God.

Jesus spoke for unity and the oneness of the church. “I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me” (John 17:20-21). Division is confusing to the minds of people. God is not the author of confusion but of peace (1 Corinthians 14:33). Confusion and division lead to people working against one another and working against God. Jesus wants us to be one in His body with no division. Those that cause division are of Satan and should be noted, marked and avoided (Romans 16:17).

As we distance ourselves from those that cause division,

we cannot distance ourselves from calling out sin. Satan would have the world be indifferent to sin. Sin is defined not by man but by God. What God has deemed sin is and will always be contrary to His word, His desire and His expectation for the Christian. We must have knowledge of sin and do right to avoid the influence of Satan. We must be awake and aware of the severity of sin. Let us never become indifferent toward unrighteousness through the callousness of hearts to turn against the word of God.

Indifference toward sin can also lead to compromising. Satan wants us to have a spirit of compromise. Paul addressed conduct worthy of a Christian as he wrote to the church at Philippi. “Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel, and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear *is* in me (Philippians 1:27-28). Our Christian lives cannot be compromised. We cannot sit on a fence with one foot in the world and one foot in the church. Sin is separation from God and no sin can be in the presence of God. It is the blood of Jesus that allows us to come before His presence.

Satan has a great desire for all souls. God has a great desire for all souls. Satan has this desire because he hates God. God has this desire because He loves His creation and wants our souls to be with Him. What a contrast between the power of darkness and the Creator of all things. One has desire because of hatred, and one has desire because of love. Satan will continue to work through deception, division, indifference and compromise. God will give us every piece of armor to defend ourselves against the schemes of Satan.

Scott M. Judge (Minister– Elm Grove Church of Christ)

### Questions of Life

Life is filled with questions. We start asking questions from an early age and continue until the day that we die. Many questions are asked of others as we try to learn, and some are asked of ourselves as we try to find identity and purpose. We will find answers to some questions others will always puzzle us. James wrote, “Whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away” (4:14). Knowledge and understanding of our life can never be fully attained unless we look for the answers from the One who created us. Let us consider three questions.

#### **Who am I?**

In Genesis 1:27, we read, “So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male

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and female He created them". To be able to answer the question of who am I, we must realize that we are created by God, and we have a likeness to Him. Man is a two-fold being. He has a perishable body and an immortal spirit. God formed man out of the dust of the ground and then breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (Genesis 2:7). The perishable body will one day return to the dust of the earth. Ecclesiastes 12:7 tells us that the body will return to the earth. It also notes that man is spirit, and the spirit will return to God. This is a distinguishing mark of man. Our soul will continue after the flesh has died. Jesus stated in Matthew 10:28, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell". God is the giver of life, and though the flesh will return to the dust of the earth, the soul will return to Him! Paul states in 1 Corinthians 6:20, "For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's". Since He is the giver of life, our life belongs to Him, whether we serve Him or not. If we serve Him, it will define my actions and behavior until the day I die

### What is My Life?

James described our life as vapor. Many other words are used to describe the brevity of our life. Peter describes our life as a flower. "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away" (1 Peter 1:24). How beautiful the grass and the flowers are in the spring and summer of the year, but in the fall the beauty fades and is not seen until the following spring. Solomon describes the end of life in this way, "All go to one place: all are from the dust, and all return to dust" (Ecclesiastes 3:20). He also wrote in Proverbs 27:1, "Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring forth". In Psalm 90:11, a Psalm attributed to Moses, he writes, "The days of our lives are seventy years; And if by reason of strength they are eighty years, yet their boast is only labor and sorrow; For it is soon cut off, and we fly away". In the word of God, life is described as short and uncertain. We do not know when we may have seen our last tomorrow. Our time is precious! How will we use this time to make a difference in our life as well as the lives of others.

### Where Do I Go?

We establish by scripture where we come from but where do we go? The word of God also establishes this. Many believe that there is nothing after death. Some believe you go to the unknown while others may state you just go to the dust and that is all. God teaches that there is a soul as well as an afterlife. Afterlife is defined by two places, Heaven and Hell. Those disobedient will suffer the consequences of eternal punishment while the righteous will experience the joy of eternal life (Matthew 25:46). This fact of eternity should direct our steps here on earth and help direct our path. Paul told the Corinthians, "For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10). Judgement cannot be avoided and by this we know that we must be resurrected (1 Corinthians 15:21). To go to Heaven, we must go to Christ: our captain, redeemer, intercessor, savior and teacher.

God has given us life. Our life is defined by our own choices; however, we should desire to be obedient to the creator. In everything we do in life, Christ should be our priority that we may have eternal life. I breath because God has granted life. I live knowing that I will die. I move forward day by day with a direction to do the will of God that one day I may hear the words, "Well done thou good and faithful servant" (Matthew 25:21).

Scott M. Judge (Minister— Elm Grove Church of Christ)

## AREA EVENTS UPCOMING

**May 3**, Day of Edification, Chapel Hill Church of Christ, 234 Chapel Dr. Gallipolis OH 45631, Various Speakers, 740-446-1494

**May 4-7**, Gospel Meeting, Allen Webster, Bridge Street Church of Christ, 1139 S. Bridge Street New Martinsville WV 26155, P-304-455-2130

**May 8** Spring Apologetics Lectures, Daniel Stearsman, 1:00 Registration, 1:30-4:30 Program Camden Ave Church of Christ 2900Camden Ave. Parkersburg WV 26101

**May 31**, Dunbar Lectures, 309 15th St. Dunbar WV 25064, Various Speakers, 304-768-020

**June 9-13**, VBS, Rio Grande Church of Christ 568 State Route 325, Rio Grande, OH 45674; P-740-245-9130

**July 18**, Friday Night Sing. 7pm– 9pm Rio Grande Church of Christ 568 State Route 325, Rio Grande, OH 45674; P- 740-245-9130

**August 3-6**, North Central Ohio Lectures, Growing With Christ, Various Speakers, 5075 Toledo Rd. Lorain OH 44055

**October 19-23**, Victory Lectureship, West Virginia School of Preaching, 4th St. and Willard Ave. Moundsville WV, 26041

## WORKS WORTHY OF CONSIDERATION

West Virginia School of Preaching  
([www.wvsop.com](http://www.wvsop.com))

Warren Christian Apologetic Center  
([www.warrenapologetics.org](http://www.warrenapologetics.org))

Southeast Institute for Biblical Studies  
([www.makingpreachers.com](http://www.makingpreachers.com))

Added to the Church  
([addedtothechurch.com](http://addedtothechurch.com))

## SUMMER CHRISTIAN YOUTH CAMPS

**Fort Hill Christian Youth Camp**  
Hillsboro Ohio  
[forthillcamp.org](http://forthillcamp.org)

**Pennsylvania Christian Camp**  
Imler Pennsylvania  
[pachristancamp.net](http://pachristancamp.net)

**Surprise Valley Christian Youth Camp**  
Beckley West Virginia  
[surprisevalleyyouthcamp.com](http://surprisevalleyyouthcamp.com)

**West Virginia Christian Youth Camp**  
Pensboro West Virginia