

# christian

## WORKER



"We are workers together with Him..." (2 Cor. 6:1)

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## “ARE WE PREPARED FOR THE JUDGEMENT DAY?”

Don Walker

In Hebrews 9:27, the inspired writer reminded us “*And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*” Biblically speaking, it is no secret that the last great prophecy to be fulfilled is the return of our Saviour Jesus Christ and our standing before the Great Sovereign, our God, in judgment. For the righteous, the events of that day are set on display in First Thessalonians 4:13-18. The same is true for the wicked in Second Thessalonians 1:7-9. The Bible is transparent, even when it comes to the standard of judgment on that day. Jesus said,

He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day (John 12:48).

The Bible is clear, as well, concerning those who shall stand before our God in judgment. “*For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ*” (Rom. 14:10). After proclaiming the purpose that you and I have here in the world Solomon wrote, “*For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil*” (Eccl. 12:14). Even the results of that great day do not have to be a secret or a surprise for anyone. In John 5:28-29 Jesus said,

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

Therefore, it stands true that the fact of the judgment, the details of the judgment, the standard of the judgment, the participants in judgment and the destination of the judged are all clearly set forth for us in the Word of God. It becomes very evident that the only thing that stands between men and the knowledge of what judgment will be is an ignorance of God’s Word. Truly, the Bible sheds a beacon upon those willing to pay attention to the powerful message. The blame therefore for being ill prepared thus falls upon

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# Editor

Cody Westbrook



"We are workers together with Him..." (2 Cor. 6:1)

## JESUS: THE SINLESS SACRIFICE

Cody Westbrook

**B**ut God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) (Eph. 2:4-5).

Imagine the horror of cutting the throat of an innocent lamb, watching as its life's blood pours from its body, and knowing you are the reason it had to die. This is precisely what was required of the Jew's living under the Law of Moses. The Old Testament is filled with the blood of innocent animals that died on the altar of sacrifice. This, of course, was not without cause. God said,

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul (Lev. 17:11).

The Hebrews writer offers further insight by saying "And according to the law almost all things are purified with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22). Jehovah wanted His people to understand the seriousness of sin—that it came with a high cost. So, each sacrifice was to be "without blemish" (Lev. 1:3; etc.). A pure, spotless lamb was required to deal with sin under the law, but that arrangement was not intended to be permanent. It was but a shadow of what was to come. Hebrews 10:4 says, "For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins." The blood of a lamb was powerless to forgive sin. Ultimately, it was the blood of The Lamb that was needed.

Paul wrote,

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief (1 Tim. 1:15).

There is an ocean of meaning in that sentence. Sin is a violation of God's law (1 John 3:4), and its penalty is death (Rom. 6:23). When we sin we separate ourselves from God (Isa. 59:1-2), and find ourselves in a hopeless position, destined for eternal destruction (Eph. 2:12). We have no ability to remedy the situation. We stand guilty, and cannot provide a sacrifice powerful enough to remove that guilt. Sin has a high cost!

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved) (Eph. 2:4-5).

Motivated by His immeasurable love, Jehovah looked down upon us with grace and mercy and provided for us the sacrifice that was needed—Jesus, "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

The tragedy of the death of Christ is seen in the fact that He did not deserve to die—we did. Peter described Him as a lamb "without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:19). Hebrews 4:15 says, "For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 7:26 describes Jesus as "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." He "offered himself without spot to God" (Heb. 9:14), and, in perhaps the most sobering passage of all we learn, "For he made him who knew no sin, to be sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. 5:21). Though He did not deserve to die, he chose to do so, so that we may be right with God, through Him.

When we consider the sinless sacrifice of Jesus, it ought to move us at our very core. Undoubtedly, it was a difficult and sorrowful thing for those under Moses' law to sacrifice the innocent life of an animal, but that holds no comparison to the tragedy of sacrificing the spotless Lamb of God. He was innocent. Free from guilt and transgression, yet He stood in my place and suffered in my stead. As J.R. Baxter wrote, "My precious Savior suffered pain and agony, He bore it all that I might live." How thankful we should be for Jesus, the sinless sacrifice.

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## ENCOURAGEMENT

Johnny Ramsey

*When we sincerely search the sacred text, we can find myriads of reasons to hold to our Creator's unchanging hand.*

Everyone needs encouragement. In this wicked world finding the joy and happiness we all cherish is never easy. But the very God who made us has revealed in the Scriptures many reasons for Christians to find calm in the midst of stormy surroundings.

In Joshua 1:7, Jehovah promised to bless Joshua's future days with boundless benefits if that valiant leader would constantly follow in the pathway of righteousness—"turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest" (KJV). Today, when servants of God devote themselves to holiness and never swerve from the highway of godliness, these same promises hold true.

No verse has more depth of encouragement than Deuteronomy 33:27:

The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee; and shall say, Destroy them.

Under the everlasting arms of our Maker, we find solace and balm for troubled hearts.

What a wondrous haven of rest we have in the security God provides. Mankind is often inept in providing the real needs of his soul. In fact, we often are our own worst enemy in seeking the wrong things. Failing to meet the challenge of spiritual growth we often wallow in the mire of shallow endeavor that demands very little of us. But, those willing to walk near to the heart of God find strength, beauty and resolve to rise to heights of loyal service in the kingdom of the Lord.

God has promised to guide us in this life and afterward receive us unto glory (Psalm 73:24)! All this and heaven, too. A three-time winner is the faithful follower of the Savior. Such a one misses hell, goes to heaven and also lives the best possible way upon this earth. What comfort the Bible holds!

It truly warms our hearts as Christians to realize that wherever we take the message of salvation, the Lord will be with us: "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." When we take the great commission seriously and launch out into world evangelism, we can expect the providence of God to open doors (1 Corinthians 16:9) that even adversaries cannot shut. When we work with the Savior (2 Corinthians 6:1), the demons in hell tremble.

Even "the sufferings of this present time" (Romans 8:18) cannot overwhelm us because "the Father is with us" (John 16:32). We can have boldness in living for Jesus regardless of external circumstances. When God is for us and supplies our every need (Philippians 4:19), we lead buoyant lives upon the earth. This naturally produces peace beyond human comprehension and adds vibrant hues to the panorama of our existence. No one fully enjoys all the good things of this world but those in Christ (Ephesians 1:3).

Children of God live in the vibrant hope of glory based upon the surety of heaven's promise (Titus 1:2). We do not serve the Redeemer in vain. This hope serves as an anchor for our souls (Hebrews 6:19)

that propels us to higher ground. Earthly aspirations by the ungodly may prove futile as John Vanbrugh wrote nearly three centuries ago: "The want of a thing is perplexing enough; the possession of it is intolerable." But, hoping "to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13) is joy unspeakable and full of glory. These are, indeed, words of encouragement!

Yes, we are told to cast all our anxieties upon our blessed Savior because He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). What-ever the burden, whenever the sorrow, wherever the obstacle, we have a Friend who will make the tribulation bear-able. He has promised never to leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5-6) and to keep the door of heaven wide open (Revelation 4:1) to help us "in every time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

How blessed, beyond description, are those who live and die in Jesus. To know that our heavenly Father knows and cares about our present sojourn and future destiny ought to be enough encouragement for anyone. Daniel's words sum it up mightily: "God rules in the kingdom of men" (4:17).

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## WENDELL AND BETTY WINKLER'S ADVICE ON MARRIAGE

Neal Pollard

Several years ago, I asked the Winklers to pass along advice for married couples on how to have a successful, happy marriage. They were very kind to comply and I have the material, in brother Winkler's easily distinguishable hand-writing, in my files. Their suggestions were broken into two categories, the first being positive things couples can do for their marriages and the latter being habits, actions, and attitudes that hurt a marriage. Here are the answers from a couple who seemed as happily married as any two people I have known (Wendell Winkler passed away in 2005).

### Positive things:

1. Put your companion first.
2. Build the confidence of each other, never making the other feel inferior.

3. Maintain a beautiful togetherness [laugh, cry, plan vacations, and work together]. Walk through life together. Do not ride off in opposite directions [in interests, finance, recreation, etc.].

4. Adjust to your companion's interests [if he fishes, she learns to fish; if she loves to shop, he learns to shop].

5. Be united in your goals and aspirations [for your children, for your retirement].

6. Cooperate with each other [in disciplining your children, etc.].

7. Make your companion a partner in all things.

8. Be open, free, and uninhibited in your communication.

9. Close each day on a positive note.

10. Practice 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

### Things to Avoid:

1. Excessive debt.
2. "Me" and "I" syndrome instead of "we."
3. Suspicion and distrust.
4. Failure to understand what is involved in "headship" and "submission."
5. Misarranged priorities.
6. Failure to be commendatory.
7. Failure to notice and apply the little things.
8. Refusal to eliminate annoyances.
9. Failure to keep romance in the marriage [never become too old to hold hands].

*This material was written down by brother Winkler on February 14, 2004. ~Neal Pollard, Daily Bread*

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CW

## THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER

Troy Spradlin

So, how is your prayer life? Do you pray as often as you should? Prayer is and should be an essential part of a Christian's life. Our Savior, Jesus, was a man of prayer (Matthew 14:23, 26:36-44; Mark

1:35; John 17:2-24). This implies that we must ask ourselves, “If prayer was so important to our Lord, why should it be less important to me? “We should infer that every disciple of His ought to learn how to pray correctly and pray often. In fact, Jesus’ Apostles asked Him to teach them how to pray (Luke 11:1). I find it interesting that they never asked him to teach them how to do anything else, like preach or sing

**WHAT IS PRAYER?** The ISBE\* describes prayer as, “a supplication; making a plea or request; to speak to a superior; to approach God.” We could say it is the desire of the heart that expresses itself to God, (Romans 10:1; 1 Timothy 2:1). The Bible uses the term prayer in its various Hebrew and Greek forms about 350 times. It’s an important word and more important action!

Prayer is also a great PRIVILEGE for the Christian! Read 1 Peter 5:7 and Philippians 4:6,7. It is something very POWERFUL according to James 5:16-18; Hebrews 4:16; and Revelation 8:3-5. The enormous amount of power and privilege lies in the fact that prayer is a way for us to speak directly to God Himself, the Creator of the universe! He created everything, including us, yet, how marvelous is it that our Almighty God desires to hear from His own creation? Can you imagine having a direct line to the office of the President of the USA where you could use it to call him at any time, ask anything from him, and he would always be there, listening. This would be an incredible privilege and something truly powerful! Well, Christians has something even more powerful than that, we have prayer.

**EXAMPLES AND COMMANDMENTS.** Matthew 6:5-15 provides us with a divine model for prayer. It is the form that Jesus taught His disciples and we can still use it today! In other verses, such as 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 7:25 and Colossians 3:17, we also learn that we must pray through our Savior, Jesus. We must pray in His name according to John 14:13,14. This means praying according to the authority of the Lord. This is significant because according to the Hebrews, one’s name represented everything a person was (Acts 4: 7-10). Jesus truly is the highest authority.

**PURPOSE OF PRAYER.** Prayer serves many purposes. It is a means to worship God. It is away to glorify and praise our God. It is an avenue to thank God for what He has done for us. It is the manner in which we ask for forgiveness. It is also our given method for expressing help for others. Prayer is a spiritual discipline, which one should strive to develop, maintain,

and improve on a regular and daily basis. Prayer is practically the “lifeblood” of a Christian’s spirituality.

**HOW OFTEN SHOULD WE PRAY?** According to Acts 20:36-38, we should pray at the time of separation. James 5:13-18 teaches to pray when one is sick. James 1:5 says to pray when we lack wisdom (when we make decisions). We must pray that other’s faith increases (1 Thessalonians 3:10) and to be continually giving thanks to God (Colossians 4:2). In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 we must pray without ceasing? Which means that we must seek every available opportunity to pray.

**SOME PRACTICAL TIPS FOR YOUR PRAYERS:**

- Pick specific times and places for praying each day (plan for multiple times). If possible, select a place where there is sufficient privacy and no distractions.
- Pray when first waking up. Pray before eating a meal. Pray in times of need, or temptation, or when you think of the many ways God has blessed you. Pray before making important decisions. Pray before, during, and after studying the Bible. Pray before going to sleep at night. Pray much and pray often!
- Make a prayer list to help you remember those who need prayers (or take the one in the bulletin home with you!).
- When you do pray in public, pray with sincerity of heart and without the intention to impress others.
- Pray with fervor! (Colossians 4:12) and persevere in prayer! (Matthew 26:44, 2 Corinthians 12:7,8).

Prayer is such a powerful and wonderful privilege that every Christian should be constantly practicing in their spiritual walk. I pray this has helped and encouraged you to seek out God more often in prayer. Remember, He wants to hear from you!

*\*International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*

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## “...AND BE YE THANKFUL”

Bill Jackson

Someone told of the fine old brother who always began his prayer with, “*Father, we thank Thee for this fine day!*” He would thus pray in a flood, or when the sun was oppressively hot or when the snow was four-foot deep. It was always, “*Father, we thank Thee for this fine day!*” And then one day the rains came, and came and came. Each day was cloudy and dark, and it went on and on. People became depressed, out-of-sorts and dismal. When this had gone on for days and days, our brother was called on for prayer one Sunday. Naturally, many wondered, “*What will he say now?*” His prayer began, “*Father, we thank Thee that it is not always like this.*” A slight change, yes, but the point is that he was still thankful!

Paul says that one at peace with his God has that proper basis on which to stand and be thankful (Col. 3:15). Thanksgiving will be in the heart of the child of God, and it will be there undiminished, regardless of things that happen in life to momentarily dampen the spirit. Surely, it is the same in regard to joy. Christian joy is a constant and permanent thing, and the instances of pain and sorrow that come to us do not at all remove the joy. Here we must think of Job and his being notified of the great and hurtful losses of his goods and children. His response: “*The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord*” (Job 1:21).

It is striking that when Paul warns the young preacher of “*times of peril*” to come (2 Tim. 3:1ff), men being

“*unthankful*” is listed among the items like fierceness of disposition and blasphemy. It would be clear to anyone that times of adultery, times of murder, times of drunkenness and times of theft would be times of “*peril*” for God’s cause and God’s people. But here we find a lack of thankfulness as a mark of such times. Similarly in Romans, in giving us a picture of the filthy avenues the Gentiles took away from God, it is in sum stated as their not liking “*to retain God in their knowledge*” (Rom. 1:28). If they do not desire even to think of God, they will most certainly not be thankful to God!

In teaching concerning true Christianity as it is seen in life, we need always to stress the spirit of thankfulness. We think of our own times and how too few people of our day seem to want to look upward toward God. We indeed can become like the beast, in that we will take our daily food, along with all other benefits the Almighty provides, and never even consider the source of it. The Lord’s model prayer point is so fine here: “*Give us this day our daily bread*” (Matt. 6:11). We should be so thankful for so many things that we immediately know that it is beyond our ability to number them. We should teach our children the same. As stated, we do fear that we are living in a world now so unthankful. The lack of a spirit of thanksgiving will always be present when the times are such that men are “*lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God*” (2 Tim. 3:4). To be properly thankful, the priorities of life must be in order.

For effect, notice these passages:

- (1) Ephesians 5:20—Give thank always for all things
- (2) Philippians 4:6—In everything by prayer, supplication with thanksgiving
- (3) 1 Timothy 4:3-4—Receive our table items with thanksgiving
- (4) Colossians 2:7—Abound in the faith with thanksgiving
- (5) 1 Timothy 2:1—For all men, prayers, supplications, intercessions
- (6) 2 Corinthians 9:12—Benevolent work, causing many thanksgivings to be made

And these only touch the hem of the garment when it comes to the spirit of thanksgiving to be in the heart of God’s child. We note that in faithful service rendered to others, there is the occasioning of thanksgiving on the part of others. How much of the Bible is devoted to the matter of offering of thanks!

It is probably true everywhere the saints meet that so many men who lead prayer begin with, "...we thank thee." One once criticized this, stating that we are saying the same thing over and over again. I would be most reluctant to offer any criticism, because I think the person offering the prayer begins with the proper frame of mind: thanksgiving! I also would be reluctant because I note in John 11, when Jesus began to pray in appreciation of the power wherein Lazarus was raised from the dead, he said, "*Father, I thank Thee...*" (John 11:41). That is completely satisfying to me!

We fear that the spirit of thankfulness does not abound in our world. It never does when men turn away from spirituality. However, it will be—and it must be—within the saints of God. They wish to abide by all things taught of God, and they wish to heed this: "*Be ye thankful!*"

(March 1991)

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CW

*continued from page 1*

the shoulders of those who have not made preparation. However, the sad truth is that most in this world live as if there is no God in heaven and as if there will be no day of reckoning as we are ushered into eternity.

The apostle Paul wrote,

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men (2 Cor. 5:10, 11).

When men stand unprepared for eternity, they put themselves in an unenviable position. Concerning those, God said,

Their foot shall slide in due time: For the day of their calamity is at hand, And the things that shall come upon them make haste (Deut. 32:35).

Every moment one stands unprepared, he stands as one on slick ice or a wet mossy rock. The next move could be the one that brings the fall. Jonathan

Edwards, in a sermon presented on July 8, 1741, entitled "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," made these observations concerning Deuteronomy 32:35: 1) These (the unprepared, DWW) are always exposed to destruction; 2) these are always exposed to sudden unexpected destruction and 3) these are liable to fall of themselves without being thrown down by the hand of another. His words are certainly valid. In fact, the reality of the situation is that the only thing that keeps the unprepared out of hell is the longsuffering of God and His great desire that men not "*perish, but come to repentance*" (2 Pet. 3:9).

However, with each fleeting moment, as men pass from this life to the next, we are reminded that God's longsuffering is not "everlasting," and His grace and mercy are not His only characteristics. The Psalmist reminded us that "*God judgeth the righteous, And God is angry with the wicked every day.*" Just as sure as is the Day of Judgment is the fact that those who are not prepared will face the severity of God.

Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off (Rom. 11:22).

In the closing verses of Revelation 6 we see a portrait of those who were not prepared. They

said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb: For the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand? (Rev. 6:16, 17).

Both Paul (1 Thess. 5:2) and Peter (2 Pet. 3:10) warned that the "*day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.*" For the majority of those who have lived on this earth it will be a day of regret and great horror. It will be the moment in which they come face-to-face with the reality that their eternity will be one removed from God and all that is good and desired (2 Thess. 1:9). It will be the day when they hear from the mouth of our Saviour, "*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*" (Matt. 25:41). So the great question remains. "Are we ready for the Judgment Day?"

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