OH THAT MEN WOULD PRAISE THE LORD!

ARTICLE ON PAGE 38

RELIGIOUS MEN HAVE ALWAYS WANTED REVIVAL WITHOUT REPENTANCE, AND ABOVE ALL, REVIVAL WITHOUT THE CROSS; BUT SUCH IS NOT TO BE.
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“Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;) and all the brethren which are with me, unto the churches of Galatia: Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father: To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.”

—GALATIANS 1:1-5
Justification And Sanctification

The book of Galatians explains the tremendous doctrine of sanctification as no other epistle that Paul wrote. It was to Paul that the Lord gave the full-blown measure of justification and sanctification plus, to be frank with you, every major doctrine of the Bible—all of it resting upon the cross of Christ.

Now I want to make a statement that I’ve made several times: Justification is deliverance by the power of God from the penalty of sin; sanctification is deliverance by the power of God from the power of sin.

You might ask, “Now what do you mean by the penalty?” Man broke the law, to be frank with you; there’s never been one who didn’t except the Lord Jesus Christ. The penalty is eternal hell forever and forever, and I don’t say that with any gladness or joy. And let me say it again because it’s phenomenally important: Justification is deliverance of the penalty of sin, which is eternal hell. People ask me a lot of times about certain people, whom I mostly don’t know, “Do you think they’re saved?” My answer always is, “I pray they are,” because I would not wish eternal hell on anyone. It’s the most horrifying thought that the mind of man can comprehend, and at great price at Calvary’s cross, Jesus Christ delivered us from that penalty.

Man’s Ways

About a year ago, Loren Larson made a statement, and when he made it, I didn’t say anything, but I thought, I’m not so sure that’s right. He said, “I don’t think the modern church understands justification by faith.” But I’ve come to find out that he was exactly right—they don’t.

I got a letter the other day from a preacher that I have met one time, but I didn’t know him, really—never heard him preach. Anyway, he had run into a problem—a morals problem—and he was telling me how that he was in a certain church in a certain city, a big church—four or five thousand in attendance, or something like that, and the pastors put him in their version of a penance program. In regards to the sin which he had committed, he was to spend two hours a week with a psychologist, an hour a week with one of the pastors of the church, do certain physical chores around the church every day, spend an hour a day in prayer and Bible study; and not go more than thirty miles outside of town. Now stop and think: what in the world would all of that do about setting somebody free? Zero. Absolutely zero—I don’t mean it will help a little—it will help none.

Anyway, I wrote him back and I said, “My brother, I’m sure they mean well (I didn’t know the men, the pastors of the big church; I’d never heard of them) and I’m sure that they’re trying to help, but it won’t do you any good.” It’s like trying to make aspirin have an effect on cancer—it doesn’t work. Now you might say, “Well what should they have done?” Well first, they should have told him why he failed and how that his faith in something other than Christ and the cross allowed the sin nature to cause the problem. But they didn’t do that because they didn’t know anything about the cross—zero—and that’s the tragedy of so many today, they just don’t know anything about it. Sure enough, when the time...
“Number one: you can’t sanctify yourself. You cannot, I don’t care what you do. It’s something the church has wrestled with since I guess the time of the apostle Paul up until today—the ongoing process of believers trying to sanctify themselves by works that we conjure up.”

allotted came, and those pastors told that man, “Now you’re free,” in a week’s time he had fallen right back into the same problem all over again, which showed that they did not understand what justification was.

Sanctification
Now let’s look at sanctification: Paul said, “Grace be to you and peace from God the Father”—that is sanctifying peace. It is sanctifying peace—not the sanctification that is given to the person who comes to Christ. The moment he is saved he is instantly sanctified.

Now stop and think a moment, justification is the declaration that one is not guilty. Justification declares one clean, and sanctification makes one clean. Before one can be declared clean, he has to be made clean. That’s the reason Paul listed sanctification as number one, sanctified first—cleansed and sanctified—and then justification comes. But I’ll say it again because I want you to get it: Justification is the declaration that one has been made clean, but before that declaration can be met, one has to be made clean, and that’s why sanctification comes first.

Paul is not speaking here of the sanctification that comes at conversion; he is speaking of ongoing sanctification, progressive sanctification: “Grace be to you and peace,” it is a sanctifying peace. I Thessalonians 5:23 says, “And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Paul says, “sanctify you wholly,” that’s sanctifying peace. Every believer can have sanctifying peace, but every believer does not have sanctifying peace because his faith is in something else.

Sanctification How?
Let me explain to you how a believer can be sanctified. Number one: you can’t sanctify yourself. You cannot, I don’t care what you do. It’s something the church has wrestled with since I guess the time of the apostle Paul up until today—the ongoing process of believers trying to sanctify themselves by works that we conjure up. You can set about to read a hundred chapters in the Bible a day, you can say, “I’m going to pray twenty-five hours a day,” and I could go on and on with that litany, but you cannot sanctify yourself; it is impossible. Like the poor brother that I mentioned earlier—foolishness that men conjure up thinking that somehow this is going to get one victory over sin, but it won’t. And ladies and gentlemen, sin is the problem, it always is the problem.

Finis Jennings Dake, author of the Dake Bible, was with a group of preachers once, and they were talking about entire sanctification, and that denomination believed in that—entire sanctification—meaning that you go to the altars, and the Lord’s Spirit comes upon you, and then you will never sin again. I think they’ve just about abandoned that foolish doctrine, I never hear it mentioned anymore. Anyway, Dake was trying to tell them, “No, there’s no such thing as entire sanctification; it’s an ongoing process.” One of the men who was touting the entire sanctification doctrine got so angry that the other preachers had to restrain him and hold him because he was about to hit Dake. How could that preacher be entirely perfect? He was about to punch Dake in the nose!

Man’s problem is that he keeps trying to do what only God can do. So how am I sanctified? When you place your faith exclusively in Christ and what He did for you at the cross and maintain it there, the moment you do that you are instantly sanctified. But that doesn’t mean now that you’ll never sin again, and it doesn’t mean that Satan will never bother you again; it doesn’t mean that at all.

The Holy Spirit
Jesus Christ has already done it at Calvary’s cross. You might say, “Well there are problems in my life, how then can I be sanctified?” Ah, that’s a good question. The Holy Spirit, who is in your heart and in your life can now go to work and give you victory over those problems that beset you and made you struggle for so long without victory because your faith was in something else. But once your faith is in Christ and the cross, the Holy Spirit, who works exclusively within the parameters of the finished work of Christ (and He will not work outside of those parameters, which means that you and I have to have our faith exclusively in Christ and what He did at the cross), now has latitude. “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Rom. 8:2); it’s a law. Now, it’s not the Mosaic law; it’s a law devised by God, and it will function exactly as it was meant to function. And, once your faith is right
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Continued from page 6

in Christ, that means you are sanctified, and Jesus Christ has paid the price at Calvary’s cross.

You see, justification and sanctification are the two most important doctrines for the human race: Justification for the believing sinner that’s coming to Christ—the single most important thing in the world—“Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness” (Gal. 3:6). And then, the second one, sanctification, is power over sin, and that’s the only way you’ll ever have victory over the sin nature, victory over sin. So that’s the most important thing for the child of God: sanctification.

The Cross
And yet today it is so little understood that most churches don’t even mention it anymore. I would say that ninety-nine percent of all Christians have no idea what sanctification is. It means to be set apart from something—the spirit of the world—to something, which is the Spirit of God and that exclusively. But if they know that much, and that’s about all they know, as to how to be sanctified, they don’t have the foggiest idea. Period.

The biggest thing that the child of God really faces is sanctification. You say, “Well isn’t the cross the biggest doctrine? We use the word cross as a doctrine, but really it isn’t, it’s the foundation of all doctrine. All biblical doctrine is based on the foundation of the cross. Whenever you see false doctrine, if you trace it back enough, you’ll find out that it’s a wrong interpretation of the cross, a misinterpretation of the cross, an erroneous interpretation of the cross, or ignoring the cross—it all centers up in the cross of Christ; that’s where all false doctrine has its beginning.

The way the modern church is trying to overcome sin, if they even try at all, is by willpower or disciplines. Disciplines as in a person fasting so much or witnessing so much, and those are things that should be done, but none of that will bring you victory over sin. The old song says, “Victory over sin and purity within,” it won’t do it.

The Modern Church
The modern church has pretty well discarded all teaching regarding sanctification because they don’t understand it. I don’t believe the modern church really understands justification or sanctification. Churches today, including the Assemblies of God, the Church of God, the Four-square, the Pentecostal Holiness, have, regrettably and sadly, adopted psychology as a means to deal with sin.

That’s because the church doesn’t recognize the power of sin. If it did, the church wouldn’t try to address sin with the foolishness that they use. Donnie was telling me of a young man here in Baton Rouge who was on drugs, and they put him in a church, and he mowed the yard and cleaned the restrooms—that was his rehabilitation program. And, regrettably, in a few days he went back on drugs and committed suicide, took his life.

This is the problem with the church, it either does not know God’s way, does not understand God’s way, or else does know it and chooses to reject it. And then they try to institute something of their own devising.

Sin
The crowning demand of the child of God is to rid him of sin, and the blood of Jesus Christ does that when a person accepts Christ as his Saviour. But we all know that Satan doesn’t wash his hands of that person, walk away, and say, “Well, he’s saved now, I can’t bother him anymore.”

The bottom line is this: Believers have got to come to grips with the sin in their lives. Satan is not going to give up easily, understand that. He is going to do everything he can to try to steal, kill, and destroy, and he does that with sin. And, friend, the only cure for sin is Jesus Christ and Him crucified; there is no other.
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At times, it’s a little surprising to get emails that ask, “What does your religion teach?” yet they come in every day, some from the United States but most from other countries. They want to compare Christianity to their religions. So, with the help of my husband’s commentary, let’s compare them.

RELIGION VS. Relationship

FIRST OF ALL, Christianity is not a religion—that’s a big difference right there. As a Christian, I have a relationship with the Lord. What do I mean by relationship? I mean that I know the Lord because I talk with Him—I call on the Lord several times a day to help me; I ask God to give me discernment, understanding, and wisdom several times each day—it’s an interaction between my Saviour and me.

Listen, God loves His children. He never lets us down. He helps us even when we’ve been bad and don’t deserve His help. He doesn’t cast us aside when we do something wrong. When we come back to Him in humble repentance, He is very, very willing to forgive us, and His grace is sufficient to cover all of our sins.

You might not think it’s possible, but the Lord Jesus Christ can become your friend. He can become your companion, your comforter, your strength, your peace, your joy—all at the same time being your Saviour. Isn’t that a wonderful truth? That’s so comforting to me. When I get up in the mornings, and I come to work, I know the Lord is with me. Throughout the day, I know He’s guiding me and directing my footsteps because that’s the very first thing that I ask Him to do each morning. When I leave the office, and I go get in my car to start home, I know the Lord is with me. He’s with me. Just as if you and I were to
have a conversation—we would visit and talk and laugh—that's the kind of personal relationship that Jesus Christ wants to have with you today as your Saviour and as your Lord.

As a Christian, you can reach the throne room of God in a moment's time. It's been done millions of times—people fall on their knees in repentance or cry out to the Lord for mercy, and He hears them, and He's makes His presence known to them.

The believing sinner can ask for God's forgiveness and receive it. But to my knowledge, in all of the religions of the world, there is no teaching on the subject of forgiveness. That's because there is no atonement. Every single thing that man receives from God—all relationship with God, all salvation, the baptism with the Holy Spirit, divine healing, financial prosperity, the knowledge of the Word of God—all comes through the blood atonement of Christ.

Christianity is alive because our Saviour is alive. They tried to kill Christ, they tried to keep Him in a tomb, but He didn't stay there, He got out. That means we don't have to stay there either. Think about that—because He lives, we also live.

Christianity is a relationship with our Lord and all that He did to save lost humanity—that's how it differs from any other of the world's religions. As believers we don't claim to “have a religion.” We say, “We're Christians. We're followers of Jesus Christ. He's our Lord. He's our Saviour. He's our Master.”

Now let's talk about religion. My husband defines it this way: “Religion in any form, is always that which is devised by man. Therefore, anything other than faith in Christ and the cross can be labeled as ‘religion.’”

On the other hand, Christianity, he says, can be summed up in this phrase from Philippians 3:9: “The righteousness which is of God by faith.” Why? Because this righteousness proceeds from God, which means that God, and God alone, is the source. None is of man—it cannot be of man—so if man is to obtain righteousness, he must look outside of himself. That's one of the reasons that all religions of the world such as Buddhism, Confucianism, Hinduism, and Islam are bogus. All of these religions were started by men—men who needed redemption themselves—so how in the wide world could they impart righteousness to anyone when they didn't have it themselves?

Christianity is completely different because it comes from God, who became man—the man, Christ Jesus. As God, He has the power to change men, and as man, He paid the price on the cross so that man could be changed without defiling the justice of God.

So why does man, who needs righteousness but has none of his own, continue to create and chase after religion?

The answer is simple: Man wants to create his own rules for righteousness. Religion is devised by man supposedly to help him reach God, or to help him better himself in some way or manner. It is always self-improvement in some fashion, and it seldom makes an effort to curtail his involvement in sin. Consequently, the doing of these religions makes man feel good—it's the greatest narcotic there is—while at the same time allowing him to maintain his particular lifestyle, whatever that might be. All of this is of man and is, therefore, unacceptable to God.

So what is it that God will accept? To answer that, we have to go back to His standard and what He required of man as it regarded righteousness—the Ten Commandments, listed in Exodus 20:2-17:

• I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
• Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
• Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth: Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.
• Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.
• Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt...
not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: Wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

*Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.
*Thou shalt not kill.
*Thou shalt not commit adultery.
*Thou shalt not steal.
*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.
*Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour’s.

When we read these Commandments they seem simple enough; however, due to man’s depraved, fallen nature, it was and is impossible for him to keep them. It simply cannot be done. Because of his fallen nature, man substitutes other gods in place of his Creator and other saviors in place of Jesus. Therefore he keeps right on stealing, murdering, lying, and engaging in immorality and covetousness. This is the cause of all the trouble and heartache in the world, even though man refuses to recognize it.

God still demands that mankind come up to the standard which He gave us in Exodus 20. Of course, man cannot do this, so God provided a way that it could be done: He became man, kept the law in every respect, and took its penalty and curse upon Himself through His death on the cross—even though He never failed Himself—all on our behalf. If man exercises simple faith in what Jesus did—Christianity—then the great righteousness that belongs to Christ—the perfect, pure, spotless righteousness that He won by keeping the law completely and handling its penalty through His death—is given instantly to the believing sinner and makes him, in the eyes of God, just as pure as Christ.

So we see how Christ’s righteousness enables the believer to have a right relationship with God. No religion in the whole world offers that because religion deals with doing while relationship is concerned with being. Religion says, “I can do it.” Relationship says, “Christ can do it through me.”

A person with a genuine relationship with Christ will also perform good works, but those deeds will emanate from the relationship (James 2:18–26). We are facing a battle between what is good, and what is best. Religion constantly involves itself in doing good things. This is commendable, but it is not best. God’s way is the best way because it emphasizes a living relationship with Christ, and out of this relationship will come good works.

Philippians 3:9 says, “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:”

The word found carries the idea of a testing of metals to ascertain if it is what it claims to be. All who are not “in Him,” but rather in a church, a denomination, any other particular religion will be found wanting. It is only that which is “in Him” that God will recognize.

People are saved by faith in Christ, not because they do or don’t do certain things. When these type of things are done, religion is the result and not relationship with Christ.

Paul learned about religion the hard way. Before his conversion to Christ, his entire life was absorbed in religion, yet he did not have a relationship with Jesus. But at a particular time, God allowed him to hear the testimony of a person, Stephen, who did have a living relationship with Jesus (Acts 7:54–60), and what he witnessed in Stephen made a tremendous impact on him.

Unfortunately, there are very few modern Christians today who really want a relationship with Christ. Most desire to make up their own religion—one that appeases...
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Continued from page 12

the conscience toward their wrongdoing. Sadly, there are always plenty of churches that will accommodate about anything that these lukewarm believers crave. However, anytime the Word of God is abrogated, curtailed, hindered, weakened, or compromised, it always falls out to the hurt of the individual who is involved. The problem is, these local churches eventually impact entire countries because a nation is guided much by its religion.

The greatest atrocities in the world have taken place in the realm of religion. When men leave God and His ways, they become lifted up in their own self-righteousness, and they justify anything and everything they do, irrespective as to how cruel it might be. That's how the Pharisees and the Sadducees, the religious leaders of Israel, could crucify the Lord in the name of the Lord.

Going back to Paul, prior to his conversion, he was adamant about his religion: “Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless” (Phil. 3:5-6).

The phrase, “Concerning zeal, persecuting the church,” portrays the fact that Paul at that particular time frame in his life (before his conversion) considered his persecution of the church a meritorious work. That's how spiritually blind religion actually is. Zeal was supposed to be an important part of religion; it still is. Paul was saying that he had shown the highest degree of zeal possible. He had gone so far in his attachment for the religion of his fathers as to pursue, with purposes of death, those who he claimed had departed from it and embraced a different form of belief.

But on that road to Damascus, praise God, he falls to the ground when he hears the voice of the Lord ask, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?” I believe people cling to dead religions and dead churches because they are afraid to face the person of Jesus Christ. They know that none of their religious rules, zeal, or self-righteousness can stand in His presence. But it's in His presence that every single person is given the opportunity to know Him as Saviour, to walk with Him, and to have fellowship with Him. When Paul encountered the living Christ, he instantly chose relationship with Jesus over religion: “And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?”

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On November 10, 1483, Martin Luther was born to Hans and Margareta Luder in the small town of Eisleben, Germany. Having been born into the Holy Roman Empire, Luther was immediately ushered into the strict Catholic lifestyle.

MARTIN LUTHER’S father, owning a nearby copper mine, saw his profession as harsh and often dangerous. He aspired for his son to ascend to a greater calling. He sent a young Martin Luther away to a highly regarded school. At the age of seventeen, he entered the University of Erfurt, a premiere university in Germany, where he received his bachelor’s degree in only two years and his master’s by the age of twenty-two. Obeying his father’s wishes, young Luther went on to study law.

Luther became increasingly drawn to theology and philosophy. He was determined to seek out the meaning of life through these avenues, but he soon found little satisfaction in the ideals of philosophy. His concentrated studies made him aware of the need for divine intervention, spiritual truth, and salvation, but this did not mean he understood the true grace of God. In reality, Luther was attempting to be righteous in God’s sight through works. Martin Luther became increasingly eager for a change in his life that would fill the void in his heart.

Martin Luther had been attending law school for only a few weeks when his father sent for him to come home and celebrate his recent graduation from the university. On his journey home, Luther found himself in the midst of a tumultuous thunderstorm. The night sky lit up in a magnificent display of nature. The rains poured. The thunder crashed. Suddenly, a lightning bolt struck near him. Stricken with panic, terrified, and desperate, he cried for help: “Help, St. Anne! I’ll become a monk!” In times of great adversity, a true believer knows to call on the name of Jesus, but for Martin Luther, he knew no better.

After this declaration, the storm quickly subsided, and Luther emerged unscathed. To him, a bolt of lightning was a sure sign of God’s judgment. Having been spared of his life and seeing this as divine intervention, Luther kept his bargain with St. Anne, dropped out of law school, and immediately entered an Augustinian monastery, much to the chagrin of his father. His joining of this religious order began a journey that would lead him from a confused, young monk to a man who would defy an empire.

Feeling haunted by the insecurity of his salvation, he felt the monastery to be a perfect venue to seek assurance. Life as a monk was not simple, and Luther did not haphazardly undertake his devotion to the boundaries of monkhood. Every waking minute was dedicated to rigorous amounts of fasting, prayer, confession, and pilgrimages—even flagellation.

His room was small. It contained one chair, a candlestick, and a straw bed. There was no heating, which made the winters nearly unbearable. He would beg for food.

LET THERE Be Light Part III
Luther’s monastery. Staupitz decided that Luther needed more work to distract him from constantly mulling over himself. He ordered Luther to pursue an academic career, and in 1507, Luther was ordained into the priesthood.

Three years later, Luther was given the opportunity to be a delegate to a church conference in Rome. Staupitz believed this trek to Rome would revitalize Luther’s devotion, not only to God but, also, to the Catholic Church.

Upon Luther’s arrival in Rome, he witnessed nothing less than a hotbed of debauchery. There was witchcraft in the streets, luxury and apathy among his fellow clergymen, priests soliciting prostitutes, and ignorant clerics with no compassion for the spiritually broken. He became more disillusioned than ever. Discouraged by the immorality, wickedness, and corruption he witnessed among the Catholic priests in Rome, Luther decided he wanted no part of this deliberate abuse of authority.

Upon his return to Wittenberg, Luther lay hold on the Word of God and continued his meticulous study of Scripture. He went on to receive two bachelor’s degrees in biblical studies and a doctorate of theology, subsequently accepting a teaching position on the theological faculty at the University of Wittenberg. The demands of preparation for delivering lectures drove Martin Luther to study the Word of God in even greater depth.

In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul tells of the “righteousness of God.” Luther had always understood that phrase to mean that God was a righteous judge who demanded human righteousness. Now, Luther was beginning to understand righteousness as a gift of God’s grace. This discovery set Luther afire. He had discovered, or recovered, the doctrine of justification by faith.

A spark ignited.

His awakening to the understanding of justification opened the divide between the Roman Catholic Church and himself. It led him to a fresh understanding of the doctrines of salvation. Luther finally found the assurance that had evaded him, and his critique of the theological world around him was beginning to take shape.

“This article is continued from the October issue, and will continue in the December issue of The Evangelist magazine. “He had discovered, or recovered, the doctrine of justification by faith. A spark ignited.”
Preachers, Patriots & Providence - Season 1 (15-690)
Is America a Christian nation? Those who have studied the founding of the United States of America often call to rememberance the Founding Fathers, but overlook the contributions that a number of other key patriots provided to the colonists. Among these American patriots were some of the most powerful preachers the world had ever seen. But, just because someone was considered a patriot, or even a Founding Father, doesn’t mean that he was a Christian. Evangelist Donnie Swaggart hosts this timely DVD series on the true history regarding the Christian heritage of young America.
Episodes:
1. Let There Be Light
2. They Desire A Better Country
3. Awake Thou That Sleepest
4. Proclaim Liberty
5. Stand Fast
6. Christ Is The End Of The Law
7. As For Me And My House
8. The Battle Is The Lord’s

The Story Behind The Song - Season 1 (15-708)
Hymns of the church that minister to generation after generation are more than songs. They are messages—revealed and annointed by the Holy Spirit—and given to believers in moments of deepest despair, holiest communion, and purest joy. In Season 1 of this DVD series, The Story Behind the Song, Evangelist Donnie Swaggart shares the testimonies of eight familiar hymns that continue to bless every believer who lendeth faith to these sermons set to music.
Episodes:
1. It Is Well With My Soul (Robin Herd)
2. Amazing Grace (Kim Coleman & Randy Knapp)
3. Send The Fire (Joseph Larson)
4. Blessed Assurance (Tara Montpetit)
5. There Is A Fountain (Richel Larson)
6. I Have Decided To Follow Jesus (Grace Brumley)
7. I’d Rather Have Jesus (Brian Haney)
8. Silent Night (Jimmy Swaggart)

The Story Behind The Song - Season 2 (15-709)
The act of writing lyrics designed to glorify and worship the Lord is a life-changing experience that occurs between the believer who pens them and the author and finisher of our faith. In Season 2 of this DVD series, The Story Behind the Song, Evangelist Donnie Swaggart unveils the experiences of such believers, who, with the help and annointing of the Holy Spirit, captured in song their revelations of God’s love, goodness, and mercy.
Episodes:
1. Rack Of Ages (Martha Borg)
2. Holy, Holy, Holy (Joseph Larson)
3. Precious Lord, Take My Hand (Kim Coleman & Randy Knapp)
4. Stand Up, Stand Up For Jesus (Brian Haney)
5. What A Friend We Have In Jesus (Kim Coleman)
6. The Old Rugged Cross (Joseph Larson)
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When I See The Blood
In Exodus, we find Moses before Pharaoh with this message from God: Let My people go. Pharaoh heard the word and saw God’s mighty miracles, but his hardened heart would not obey. Deliverance of the children of Israel came when they applied the shed blood of the lamb—a type of Christ—to their doorposts. When the Lord saw the blood, He passed over them as He smote the Egyptians. In this powerful book, Brother Swaggart takes his readers inside those houses where the blood was applied and where God’s people—whether spiritually weak or spiritually strong—were all saved. The same is true today—when people place their faith in Christ and Him crucified, they are saved and every sin is washed away by the precious blood of the Lamb.

Elisha
Elijah first cast his mantle on Elisha as he plowed a field with 12 yoke of oxen—an indicator of God’s true calling. Years later, Elisha would pick up the same mantle that fell from the prophet who was suddenly taken to heaven in a whirlwind by a chariot and horses of fire—a sign that Elisha had received a double portion of God’s anointing. In this book, Brother Swaggart replays the miracles that God did throughout Elisha’s ministry: dividing the waters of Jordan, healing the poisoned waters of Jericho, and raising the dead son of the Shunammite woman. Believers are reminded that we serve a miracle-working God and that we should live—as Elisha did—in a state of expectation that cries out, “Where is the Lord God of Elijah?”

The Temple
King Solomon, who typified Christ as the Prince of Peace, was chosen to build the temple that represented redemption and the coming kingdom age. Everything pertaining to this glorious palace of Jehovah portrayed God’s grace and His glory. Not only was the temple a forepicture of the kingdom of our Lord to come, but it also foreshadowed the believer’s place and relationship in Christ. In a book based on more than 60 years of Bible study, Brother Swaggart examines the relationship between the temple of old and today’s Christian, including the burnished brass pillars that glowed from the reflection of the rising sun. The author reveals how these ornamental pillars, typified by the child of God, reflected a brilliance that emanated solely from the Light of the World—Christ Jesus.

How The Holy Spirit Works
In the Old Testament, we see God at work, creating the heavens and the earth, and we hear Him speaking promises to patriarchs and warnings through prophets. In the New Testament, we see Christ about His Father’s business—preaching, teaching, healing, and casting out demons. But the question that puzzles most believers is, what exactly does the Holy Spirit do? How does He work? In this anointed book, Evangelist Jimmy Swaggart answers these questions and much more through a powerful teaching that reveals how the Holy Spirit operates in the heart and life of the believer when his faith is properly placed in Christ Jesus.
“And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” —II CORINTHIANS 12:9

MY GRACE IS Sufficient

Part I

THERE IS ONE THING that I try to convey to my congregation, whether at Crossfire or Family Worship Center, and that is that we as Christians are not exempt from life’s difficulties. Unlike the methods presented by the world, practical Christianity is designed by God the Holy Spirit to face our problems head-on. It’s not on the mountaintop where we grow as Christians but rather in the crucible of faith. I wish that were not the case, but it is during this time—in the crucible—where we find out who God really is and who we really are. We must prepare ourselves even now to face these issues because many will come when we least expect them. Please remember that these difficulties are not liabilities; they are, however, key to our Christian experience.

To prove our point, let’s take a look at the apostle Paul. Here is a man who is the very epitome of Christianity, who is, quite possibly, the greatest example of Christianity that Christ would ever produce. And yet, we find the apostle dealing with an issue that is causing him some serious problems. What these problems were we really have no way of knowing; they could have been that which he described in the previous chapter, but that is just conjecture at this point. Whatever the issue, it was difficult and it seemed as if the enemy was trying to kill him. But in the midst of this trial, Paul made a statement that we might find odd: “Yet of myself I will not glory, but in mine infirmities” (II Cor. 12:5). Why would Paul make a statement like this? Why would he say that he would glory in his infirmities?

I believe the answer is simple: The reason why Paul would rather glory in his infirmities is so that pride would not creep in and cause even more problems in his life. Take a look at this: here is a man who, according to his own words, was taken up into the third heaven (the first heaven is the sky above, the second heaven is the starry space, and the third heaven is the place where God dwells), and was
possibly given at that time the meaning of the new covenant, which is the message of the cross. Paul said that he saw and heard things that mortal eyes could not comprehend, nor would mortal ears be able to fully understand what had been given. This could have been, and no doubt was, one of the most remarkable things ever witnessed and could cause one to be lifted up in pride. So Paul would state that he would much rather glory in his infirmities than in what he had received.

The idea is this: if this man, the apostle Paul, was in danger of spiritual pride, then all of us are at risk of the same thing. Pride was the cause of Lucifer’s fall and the crowning sin of man. Pride is nothing more than self-exaltation—a belief that all accomplishments one experiences in life result from his own doing. In the case of Christians, self-righteousness is an arrogance that something has happened to them and to no one else. Paul feared that self-righteousness would creep in, which made him state that he would rather glory in his infirmities. He did not want to be puffed up, which would cause people to look to him rather than Christ.

There is a danger in people placing others on pedestals, and I strongly encourage anyone who is reading this to never put a person on a pedestal. There is only one person who belongs on any pedestal, and that is Christ. I pray that you love, respect, and appreciate my ministry, but do not place me or any other minister in a position of the be-all and end-all. We are not to be looked at as celebrities or famous people just because we are on television all over the world. We have been given a platform to declare the message of Jesus Christ and Him crucified to the world, but we are not above anyone else. We are not without our faults and struggles; we are human just like you, and we bleed the same as you. We hurt the same way you hurt. We all have fallen short of the glory of God, and will continue to do so while on this earth. However, there is one who deserves to be on that pedestal—He who is without fault and suffered as no man has suffered as our representative man and the Last Adam—Jesus Christ. He alone is worthy of man’s adulation and praise because He has overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. He is the perfect one, the magnificent and mighty warrior, and the Saviour of all mankind. Jesus Christ is the most influential person who has ever lived and has impacted more lives than anyone else. He is the Deliverer, the Healer, the Restorer of souls, the Redeemer, the Baptizer, the Blesser, and the soon coming King. None should point to any other person outside of Christ, for He is the answer to all of life’s problems. We should point people to Him and Him Alone, for He can and will meet their needs.

Whatever his problems were, Paul related to them as being a thorn in his flesh, something that would not go away. But these things, whatever they might have been, were allowed by God to keep him humble. It is no different with us. At times, God allows or orchestrates certain things to take place as a preventative measure to keep us on our knees before Him and continually seek His face in all things. And like Paul, God may not take those things away from us no matter how much we ask Him to. Remember, Paul prayed on three separate occasions for God to remove this thorn, but God would not.

There are some of you who have sought God on many occasions to remove certain things from your life, but the Lord has not seen fit to do so, and you are beginning to wonder why. If you are feeling like the Lord has not heard your prayer, or that your prayers are going unanswered, the Lord might be allowing that situation to keep you humble and to keep you seeking Him. The answer that God gave Paul was a simple, but firm “No.” He was not going to remove it just yet, for God was more concerned with Paul than He was Paul’s ministry. It is no different today. God is more concerned with you than your ministry. If you are right, then your ministry will be right. Everything that we go through in life has been designed for a purpose and a reason and will serve as lessons from which we can learn.

“...the Lord might be allowing that situation to keep you humble and to keep you seeking Him.”

This article will be continued in the next issue of The Evangelist.
All of these are Scripture albums, meaning that we are reading Scripture over the songs, which I know will be a great blessing to you. In fact, it would be good to have one of these playing at all times in your home, which I guarantee will drive away evil spirits, etc. Take advantage of this most excellent offer.

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- When My Saviour Reached Down For Me
- There Is A Fountain
- Blessed Assurance
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- In The Shelter Of His Arms
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- Room At The Cross
- Amazing Grace
- He Heith My Soul
- The Old Rugged Cross

**The Psalms (02-208)**
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- Blessed Assurance
- I See A Crimson Stream Of Blood
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<td>A Study In The Word (Repeat)</td>
<td>A Study In The Word (Repeat)</td>
<td>A Study In The Word (Repeat)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:30 AM</td>
<td>FWC Music</td>
<td>FWC Music</td>
<td>FWC Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:00 AM</td>
<td>A Study In The Word (Repeat)</td>
<td>A Study In The Word (Repeat)</td>
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<td>A Study In The Word (Repeat)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5:30 AM</td>
<td>FWC Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>6:00 AM</td>
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<td>7:00 AM</td>
<td>A Study In The Word (Repeat)</td>
<td>Insight (Live)</td>
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<td>7:30 AM</td>
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<td>8:00 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>9:00 AM</td>
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<td>Insight (Repeat)</td>
<td>Insight (Repeat)</td>
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<td>9:30 AM</td>
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<tr>
<td>10:00 AM</td>
<td>Family Worship Center Sunday Morning Service (Live)</td>
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<td>11:30 AM</td>
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PLEASE NOTE: Sonlife Broadcasting Network and SonLife Radio now follow the same programming schedule.
### Preaching the Cross | 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family Worship Center - Associate Pastors</strong></td>
<td>Jimmy Swaggart</td>
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<tr>
<td>FWC Music</td>
<td>FWC Music</td>
<td>FWC Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jimmy Swaggart Crusade Classics</td>
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<td>Jimmy Swaggart Crusade Classics</td>
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<td>FWC Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Study In The Word</td>
<td>A Study In The Word</td>
<td>Family Worship Center - Associate Pastors</td>
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<tr>
<td>FWC Music</td>
<td>FWC Music</td>
<td>FWC Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Message Of The Cross (Live)</td>
<td>The Message Of The Cross (Live)</td>
<td>The Message Of The Cross (Repeat)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FWC Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insight (Live)</td>
<td>Insight (Live)</td>
<td>The Story Behind The Song (RPT)</td>
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<td>Frances And Friends (Live)</td>
<td>Frances And Friends (Live)</td>
<td>Frances And Friends (Repeat)</td>
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<td>FWC Music</td>
<td>FWC Music</td>
<td>Generation Of The Cross (E/I)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A Study In The Word (Replay)</td>
<td>A Study In The Word (Replay)</td>
<td>Family Worship Center - Associate Pastors</td>
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<tr>
<td>FWC Music</td>
<td>FWC Music</td>
<td>FWC Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Swaggart</td>
<td>Jimmy Swaggart</td>
<td>Jimmy Swaggart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crossfire Service (E/I)</td>
<td>FWC Music</td>
<td>FWC Music</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donnie Swaggart</td>
<td>Jimmy Swaggart Crusade Classics</td>
<td>Donnie Swaggart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Insight (Replay)</td>
<td>Insight (Replay)</td>
<td>The Message Of The Cross (Replay)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Study In The Word (Replay)</td>
<td>A Study In The Word (Replay)</td>
<td>Family Worship Center - Associate Pastors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frances And Friends (Replay)</td>
<td>Frances And Friends (Replay)</td>
<td>Frances And Friends (Repeat)</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Message Of The Cross (Replay)</td>
<td>The Message Of The Cross (Replay)</td>
<td>FWC Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossfire Service (E/I)</td>
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<tr>
<td>FWC Music</td>
<td>FWC Music</td>
<td>Crossfire Service (E/I) (Repeat)</td>
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<th>State</th>
<th>City</th>
<th>Channel</th>
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<tr>
<td>ALABAMA</td>
<td>Anniston</td>
<td>91</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cable One</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Berry</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Birmingham</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>Fayette</td>
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<td>Montgomery</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Statewide</td>
<td>157 / 776</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALASKA</td>
<td>Anchorage</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARIZONA</td>
<td>Phoenix</td>
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<td>Safford, Show Low</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARKANSAS</td>
<td>Ft. Smith, Fayetteville</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Springdale, Rogers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Little Rock</td>
<td>14.2 / 49.3</td>
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<td>CALIFORNIA</td>
<td>Bakersfield</td>
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<td>Burlington</td>
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<td>Fresno</td>
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<td>Los Angeles</td>
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<td></td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>470</td>
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<td>Salinas</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Santa Maria, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara</td>
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<td>San Rafael</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Lucas Valley Cable</td>
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<td>Wave Division</td>
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<td>San Bruno Cable</td>
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<td>Google Fiber</td>
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<td>Horizon Cable</td>
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<td>OTA</td>
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<td>Hartford, Newtown, North Haven</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>OTA</td>
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<td>Manchester</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cox Cable</td>
<td>487</td>
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<td>COLORADO</td>
<td>Denver</td>
<td>51 / 16.3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Hartford, Newtown, North Haven</td>
<td>22 / 129 / 854</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Comcast</td>
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<td>72</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Cox Cable</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Denver</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONNECTICUT</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Hartford, Newtown, North Haven</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Manchester</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cox Cable</td>
<td>487</td>
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</table>

## District of Columbia

**WASHINGTON DC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
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<tr>
<td>RCN</td>
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<td>Comcast</td>
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<td>OTA</td>
<td>68.1</td>
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</table>

## Florida

**FLORIDA**

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<tr>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Astor, Astatula, Lakes of Mt. Dora, Magnolia Point</td>
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<tr>
<td>Florida Cable Inc</td>
<td>22.3</td>
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<td>Fort Myers-Naples</td>
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<td>Gainesville</td>
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<td>Jacksonville</td>
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<td>Orlando</td>
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<td>Tallahassee</td>
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<td>Tampa (Hillsborough, Manatee, St. Petersburg)</td>
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## Indiana

**INDIANA**

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<td>14 / 36.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Des Moines, Aimes</td>
<td>91</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sioux City</td>
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## Iowa

**IOWA**

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Des Moines, Aimes</td>
<td>14 / 36.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sioux City</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
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## Kansas

**KANSAS**

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Dodge City</td>
<td>162</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emporia</td>
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## Kentucky

**KENTUCKY**

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<td>Bowling Green</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cincinnati Bell</td>
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## Louisiana

**LOUISIANA**

<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Baton Rouge, New Orleans, Lafayette</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baton Rouge</td>
<td>14.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monroe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plaquemine</td>
<td>225</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prairieville, Gonzales</td>
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24 Hours A Day, 7 Days A Week
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Channel</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shreveport</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>OTA ...........................................</td>
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Canal Sat

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Our daughter is beginning her third year at Jimmy Swaggart Bible College (JSBC). We are so thankful to God for what He is doing in her life, and JSBC has been a big part of it. Her knowledge of God’s Word has increased tremendously, as well as her ability to deliver His message with clarity and accuracy. The fruits of the Holy Spirit in her personal life have grown. As parents, we realized the importance of releasing our daughter to God’s will for her life.
God has a great plan for her, and all of the precious students at JSBC. I have grown to love many of my daughter’s classmates, and I pray daily for the students at JSBC. They are a mighty Army of God being prepared to serve Him in these last days. God bless all of you! —Florida

RIGHT THROUGH THE SCREEN...
I don’t know where to begin. I was sitting in my living room broken and defeated when I channel surfed on to your network and Brother Swaggart spoke to me right through the screen. What he said brought me to tears as I repented then and there. At that time he prayed, and I felt the Holy Ghost sweep over my spirit! Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift! Oh, and thank God for Jimmy Swaggart! —Email

FAITHFUL VIEWER LOVES JSM
Brother Jimmy, I find you such a blessing in my life, since the early 1980s. When I am in such a deep dark hole, and my faith is at its lowest, and I feel like giving up, I put one of your music DVDs or CDs on and a bright light goes on around me. Peace flows through me. Watching your old crusades, you on the piano and your blessed voice—El Shaddai has always and will always use you mightily. You have no idea what a comfort you are to me after all these years. At the age of sixty-eight you are still the only one. I have so many of your teachings. Your old end-time prophetic teachings are still my faves. I pray El Shaddai keeps blessing you and your wonderful ministry. May He keep you in good health. Never stop singing! —South Africa

CROSSFIRE BIBLE IS BEST GIFT
I just wanted to say my grandfather had purchased me a Crossfire Bible from the Bible-thon y’all had this month, and let me say it is the best Bible I’ve ever read! It brings so much life to the Scriptures and makes you learn the Bible in a more clear way. I just wanted to say thank y’all for this Bible and say a prayer for me as I’ve had a lot going on in my mind and heart lately. —Email

SBN AROUND THE WORLD
I’m from South Africa and work in Saudi Arabia. I just want to say thank you for the Word of God preaching across borders into Saudi Arabia. You bless me every day, and I thank God for people like you. Your ministry is in my prayer. —South Africa

THE GIFT OF TONGUES
The most incredible thing happened to me today as I was watching Pastor Donnie preach on Acts. I am Pentecostal but never understood how to speak in tongues, yet when he had the people gather around the octagon who were born-again believers yet struggle with speaking in tongues, and He explained how to let the free flow of the Holy Spirit bring the words that flowed in to my mind, it happened. In my living room they poured out for the first time ever! I’m a sixty-eight-year-old disabled Vietnam veteran married forty-six years, and now I thank God for His only Son Jesus who died upon the cross for me every day, and now to experience the Holy Spirit in a way I never have before is a life blessing to me! Thanks for Donnie’s teaching of God’s Word. —Missouri

“I’m from South Africa and work in Saudi Arabia. I just want to say thank you for the Word of God preaching across borders into Saudi Arabia.”
I’m reminded of a fight I was involved in with a neighborhood bully when I was a twelve-year-old boy living in North Utica, New York. It was one of several fights with neighborhood bullies that year. I wasn’t looking to fight, but the bullies came looking for me.

**Do Not Look Away From Jesus**

I DO NOT advocate fighting at all, only in self-defense. Without going into all the details, in one of those fights, I got sucker punched in the eye when I briefly looked away from the bully. It became a swollen, black eye that I will never forget.

Why did I look away? Well, it was because I didn’t want to fight. The bully had about ten of his friends with him, and I only had one. I tried to talk my way out of what seemed to be an obvious beat down, then I looked away, and boom! He hit me—hard. The bully was satisfied with his punch and the fear he saw in my friend and me, so he and his friends let us go. His seventeen-year-old brother had punched me too.

That day the bully got the victory, but in the end, I won the war.

Later on that same day, I was hitting some baseballs in an open field. An older teenager happened to walk by, saw me with my black eye and asked, “What happened to you?” (There was a group of older teenagers in my neighborhood that liked me.) I told him what happened, and the Spirit of God gave me the street smarts to tell him that the bully’s seventeen-year-old brother had punched me too. He said, “Don’t you worry about,” and he called the boy’s name. “I’ll take care of him!”

I don’t know what he did to that bully and his seventeen-year-old brother, but apparently it scared them good. The next morning, the bully’s older brother came to my house, pleading for forgiveness for him and his bully brother, which I gave. I was completely shocked. Needless to say, I saw that bully several times
in Christ has opponents. There will always be enemies to our faith and dependence in Christ and the cross. When we encounter opposition or temptations—not if, but when—it will not always be easy to have a focused faith on Jesus and what He has accomplished for us on the cross. This “fight” to keep trusting in Christ—when we, in our weariness or apathy, want to look away to something else—is a very real fight.

The difference between our lives as believers and my fight as a twelve-year-old is that I looked away from my opponent; whereas we can look away from our Saviour, Jesus. In Hebrews 12:2 Paul wrote, “Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.” He used the word looking as a synonym of faith, belief, and dependence. Figuratively, our faith has “eyes.” The word looking means “to gaze upon, to stare, to keep looking at.” We are to have a focused faith in Jesus Christ and all that He has done for us and to us on the cross.

Sometimes in our weariness, apathy, or busyness of life, we can become distracted in our faith. It is in those seasons, or even in those moments, when we look away from Christ that we open ourselves to sin, pride, and overwhelming discouragement. It is not always easy to depend on who Christ is and who He has made us through His death at Calvary. The fight is not against sin. I emphasis that point: Our fight is not against sin. The fight is to keep our focus of faith on Jesus and His victory on the cross. He won the victory over sin and every enemy. He conquered our enemies and gave us His victory. Paul called it “the good fight of faith” because it is a fight in which we win over every enemy—all through our dependence in Christ’s victory at the cross.

afterward, but never had a problem with him or his friends ever again. I had some older friends looking out for me. This was one of those childhood memories that I look back on with fondness.

There are numerous spiritual parallels in this story that could be drawn out, but I will focus on one: When I looked away, I got hit. Even though it was just for a moment, that bully knew I didn’t want to fight, so he took advantage the moment my focus was off of him.

In our lives as believers, we are called to “fight the good fight of faith” (1 Tim. 6:12). The word fight—agon from which we get the words agony and agonize—literally meant “to fight, to struggle, to compete for the win.” It was mostly used in regards to athletes who competed in the Greek games. The Holy Spirit led Paul to describe faith in this way because our faith...
The Call To Praise
The Psalmist calls upon all men to lift the praises of the Lord. Without debate, God is worthy to be praised. The God I speak of is the Creator of heaven and earth, sea and sky, and all that is in them. He has given life to every living creature on this planet. He has breathed the breath of life into all humanity. Nothing exists without Him and everything owes its ability to live or thrive successfully to Him. He upholds the law of creation and consistency in His hands and all things exist and consist due to His will and by His power. He is worthy to be praised simply because He alone is God. There are not multiple “Gods” in this world; there is only one. He is the magnificent, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God of the Bible. And the Psalmist tells us that He is worthy to be praised. When humanity is thankful for life and acknowledges the God of creation, God is well pleased and will continually draw that man toward an intimate relationship with Him. For those who refuse to be thankful or who even refuse to acknowledge His existence, the wrath of God will abide upon their lives. Every man should hear and answer the call to praise the living God.

The Reasons For Praise
“Why should I praise the Lord?” a man may ask. The Psalmist declares that God is a good God! This same God saw the need of man’s redemption and sacrificed His own Son in order to provide forgiveness and freedom from both the penalty and power of sin—for all those who would believe. It is God’s will that every man should participate in the salvation afforded by Jesus Christ (II Peter 3:9).

Oh That Men Would PRAISE the Lord

“Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.” —Psalm 107:21-22
Whosoever will may come and drink of the water of life that He offers freely! His wonderful salvation exhibited toward and offered to mankind makes Him worthy of our praise. And for those who have come into covenant relationship with Him through faith in Christ, His goodness and His covenant benefits abound.

The Sacrifice Of Praise
The Psalmist also declares that those who are in covenant relationship with the Lord should prepare themselves to sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving. What does this mean? It means there will be times in the lives of believers when circumstances will be very difficult and seemingly impossible to lift our voices and praise the Lord. Thanksgiving and praise will seem conflicting to our present surroundings. It will make no sense that we should glorify and thank Him for all that He does for us. Situations will surely arise that will threaten our faith and call us to doubt the goodness of God and even the reality of God. Powers of darkness will sit on our shoulders and speak to us the lies of the enemy. They will tell us that God is not real. They will speak to us that God does not care. They will try to tell us that God is busy somewhere other than where we are. But the lies of our spiritual enemies must not stop us from being willing to praise God. He has promised to never leave us nor forsake us.

Faith admits the presence of adversity, it does not deny it. Faith does not try to confess untoward situations away or ignore the fact of their existence. Faith acknowledges the attacks of the enemy but does not fail to turn its eyes toward God in a time of great difficulty or heartache. In these times, praise becomes a sacrifice. We do not feel like praising the Lord. We wonder even if we should. But God's Word declares that He is forever worthy of praise. It is our responsibility to express heartfelt thanksgiving at all times. So with a face wet with tears, we lift our eyes to the heavens and declare that our God is faithful. We continue to believe that He is loving, full of goodness, and interested in our situation. We put on the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. We give to Him all glory, despite what we are going through. Our faith declares that He is always worthy and is greatly to be praised. We will offer to Him the sacrifice of praise!

The Witness Of Praise
The believer is also instructed to declare the works of God accompanied with rejoicing. This reveals a grateful heart. A person who has been the beneficiary of God's supernatural supply and prominent provision should openly declare that his God has done what no one else could ever do. If God has been good to you, then let the world know it. Declare publicly whenever and to whomever you can how wonderful God is. Declare how magnificently He has kept His promises and worked His wonders on your behalf. The world does not need to know about another ritualistic religious relationship with an uncaring God. They need to know about the relationship that we have with the living God who comes to our defense; who meets our every need. The one who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we could ever ask or think. Our God is worthy to receive thanksgiving and praise!

Oh that men would praise the Lord!

These benefits can be realized in our present and will produce beneficial consequences for all eternity. His graciousness toward believers is amazingly and outstandingly marvelous. Just when we need Him, He appears on the scene with the exact provision required. We are to praise Him for His expressed goodness toward us and the wonderful work of salvation which He has made available to all.

“Declare publicly whenever and to whomever you can how wonderful God is. Declare how magnificently He has kept His promises and worked His wonders on your behalf.”
Recently I was given a list of books that were recommended by the leadership of a large Fortune 500 company. The leadership was asked which thought-provoking books they recently read inspired them.

Within the list of twelve books they recommended were several that I found most interesting. At the top of the list were two books that dealt with meditation and one that dealt with trying to understand God through human reasoning.

One of the books on meditation was written by an author who boasts of being a Tibetan priest. The world is ever exploring how to find God within themselves through Far Eastern meditation; while Buddhist meditation principles have also crept into the church unawares. It began with yoga and now has expanded with spiritual formation. A recent Christianity Today article says, “Spiritual formation is in.” Although the term spiritual formation sounds innocuous, its tenants are spiritually dangerous and harmful.

Over the last thirty years we have seen a departure from the truth of God’s Word. What has been filling the void is a move toward mysticism. Few Bible teachers saw this avalanche coming and are now buried in a cesspool of unbiblical error. One of the consequences of ignoring or minimizing the correct doctrines of the Word of God has been the rise in mystical experiences. The escalation of these experiences are presented to convince the unsuspecting that Christianity is more about feeling, touching, smelling and “seeing” God” than believing or understanding His Word.

Thomas Merton
Thomas Merton believed what was lacking in the modern church was mysticism. The foundational idea behind spiritual foundation was to introduce the idea of mysticism to awaken God’s people. Mysticism was and is practiced by Roman Catholic mystics—those known as the Desert Fathers and others—who used Far Eastern meditation to enhance their experiential knowledge of God. Thomas Merton had learned from a Hindu swami named Mahanambrata Brahmchari that anyone could obtain mystical properties from the Catholic mystics. Merton set out to bring mysticism, often called contemplative prayer, to the Catholic and Christian world. However, due to an unexpected early death, Merton was not able to fulfill his goal.

Richard Foster picked up Merton’s mantle and in 1978 introduced his book, Celebration of Discipline. In a pastoral letter Foster wrote: “When I first began writing in the field in the late 70s and early 80s the
term spiritual formation was hardly known, except for highly specialized references to the Catholic orders. Today, it is a rare person who has not heard the term. Seminary courses in spiritual formation proliferate like baby rabbits. Huge numbers are seeking to become certified spiritual directors to answer the cry of multiplied thousands for spiritual direction.

Countless Christian evangelical leaders have jumped on the Foster spiritual formation train. Rick Warren considers the spiritual formation craze to be “a worthy wake-up call.” Warren would extol the need for the church to reemphasize its need for this neglected purpose. He claims, “A re-emphasis on developing believers to full maturity has been the focus … authors such as …Richard Foster and Dallas Willard have underscored the importance of building up Christians and establishing personal spiritual disciplines.”

What Is Spiritual Formation?

A Christianity Today article summarized spiritual formation in this way: “Formation, like the forming of a pot from clay, brings you mind shaping and molding, helping something potential become something actual. Spiritual formation speaks of a shaping process with reference to the spiritual dimension of a person’s life. Christian spiritual formation thus refers to the process by which believers become more fully confirmed and united with Christ.

What is conveniently left out of their statement is, what is the process of how it is done? The how is done through spiritual disciplines. The most ardent of the disciplines is the discipline of silence. The silence is an altered state that is reached through a mantra-like meditation, sometimes referred to as breath prayers. When you go into this silent state, you will eliminate distractions, most particularly your thoughts. Only then will you be able to hear God’s voice. He in turn will transform you to be like Christ. An interesting caveat to this practice is the “Who” that can practice this meditation to become like Christ. According to Richard Foster and other spiritual formation teachers, anyone can become like Christ—a Christian, a Buddhist, a Muslim, even an atheist.

Richard Foster’s mentor, Thomas Merton, said this: “I intend to become as good a Buddhist as I can. It is a glorious destiny to be a member of the human race … now I realize what we all are … At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusions, a point of pure truth … This little point is the pure glory of God in us … I believe that by openness to Buddhism, to Hinduism and to these great Asian (mystical) traditions, we stand a wonderful chance of learning more about the potentiality of our own Christian traditions … The most important need in the Christian world today is this inner truth nourished by this Spirit of contemplation … without contemplation and interior prayer, the church cannot fulfill the mission to transform and save mankind.”

Notice that he emphasizes the “spirit of contemplation” instead of the Holy Spirit. Merton believed that God dwells in all people and we are in fact, all part of God. In other words, spiritual formation is carrying on the Hindu message of “God is in all things”; this is known as panentheism. He further believes that God is all things—pantheism. This teaching negates that man is sinful and heading for eternal damnation and in need of a Saviour.

Dallas Willard

Dallas Willard is another proponent of the spiritual formation teaching craze. Here is what he says about spiritual formation: “Sometimes we think of spiritual formation as a formation by the Holy Spirit. Once again. That’s essential … But now I have to say something that may be challenging for you to think about: spiritual formation is not all by the Holy Spirit … We have to recognize that spiritual formation in us is something that is also done to us by those around us, by ourselves, and by activities which we voluntarily undertake … There has to be a method.”

In other words, spiritual formation, as taught and believed by Foster, Willard, and Warren is a works-based substitute for biblical Christianity. Warren identifies Willard as a key player in the spiritual formation movement.


Next month, we will dig deeper into this movement. In the meantime, every believer must understand that it is the working of the Holy Spirit alone that does the work in us as we place our faith solely on Jesus Christ and Him crucified.

“Over the last thirty years we have seen a departure from the truth of God’s Word. What has been filling the void is a move toward mysticism. Few Bible teachers saw this avalanche coming and are now buried in a cesspool of unbiblical error.”
Mike Muzzerall

It has been said that everywhere the apostle Paul went, there was either a revival or a riot. The message he preached was the instrument that produced both results.

**THE CONTROVERSY OF THE CROSS**

Paul was not shy in declaring the central theme of his sermons. In I Corinthians 1:23 the apostle declares, “But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness.” Why did this message cause such strong opposition? What is the controversy of the cross?

**Foolishness**

Let’s look at the view of those who rejected the gospel Paul preached. “For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (I Cor. 1:18). The logos of the cross—the message of the cross, the preaching of the cross—is to them who are presently in the act of perishing, foolishness. A. T. Robertson said, “Present middle participle is here timeless, ‘those in the path to destruction call it foolishness.” (Robertson’s Word Pictures). In a sense, Paul was telling us that no matter which generation we look at, those who oppose the message of the cross declare it as foolishness. “Greek mòria; folly—old word from mòros: foolish” (RWP). To them the message of the cross is “moronic.”

**Why The Controversy?**

The controversy lies in the entrenched belief that given enough time, man can solve his own problems. This way of thinking began with Adam and Eve who sewed fig leaves together in an attempt to hide their shame. Today, we see works and religious deeds being knitted together in a futile attempt to cover spiritual nakedness. With every succeeding generation, the resolve to fix the problem of sin without divine intervention seems to become stronger and stronger.
The Twin Brothers Of Humanistic Christianity
One brother believes that salvation is attainable through self-awareness, self-improvement and self-elevation. He believes he could always reach down, pull himself up by the bootstraps, and walk holy. His brother, on the other hand, thinks himself much wiser. He sees the need for the cross in order to pay the initial debt of sin. However, from that moment on, he is convinced that he is able to produce his own type of righteousness. Humanistic Christianity therefore rejects the notion that our righteousness is as filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6).

The Double Edge Controversy
The message of the cross declares that Calvary is the power of God manifested to the ones who are saved (literally being saved). It is the realization that only through the blood of the Lamb could sin be washed away. These are fighting words and controversial to those who maintain that man is capable of saving himself. This is a timeless controversy. They cannot see that ongoing sanctification is forever tied to the atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

In The Cross
Righteousness attained by faith in the completed work of Calvary (imputed righteousness), is the only means of walking rightly before God. You cannot be saved by grace then sanctified by works. You cannot be saved by the blood of the Lamb then think you can be sanctified by the sweat of the brow. You cannot be saved by God then sanctified by self. This is the controversy of the cross.

To The True Believer
To the true believer, removing the cross from the preaching of the gospel produces the true controversy. It is no longer “good news” if it bypasses the completed work of Calvary. Most Christians would agree with this for “without the shedding of blood there is no remission” of sin (Heb. 9:22). Yet too many Christians are attempting to then live a victorious life apart from what Christ accomplished for us at the cross. Since we overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb (Rev. 12:11) which occurred on the cross, how could we ever hope of living a victorious life? The cross is for the sinner and the saint alike. And so the controversy of the cross continues.
First of all, Christmas is going to be here before you know it. Consequently, I would pray that you would take full advantage of the offers made in this magazine. The music we offer, the books, and above all the Bibles, will make the greatest Christmas gifts in the world. It will be far more than something just unwrapped and thrown aside.

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We have cut the price of the Bibles in half, which means a 50 percent discount. If you don't have one, now is the time for you to get your copy, or copies for friends, relatives, and neighbors, which, as stated, would make the greatest Christmas gifts of all.

I believe that The Expositor's Study Bible is the Bible for the twenty-first century. I believe the Lord has shown me that, and if that is the case, you should make certain that you have your copy, as well as give copies to your friends and relatives who do not have one.
A Story
The other day I was told of a dear brother in a foreign country who was given a copy of The Expositor’s Study Bible. He was a pastor, and his mind was on what he was trying to teach his church about the book of Revelation. He went outside of where he was staying, sat down under a tree, and said “Lord, I’m trying to teach the book of Revelation, and I do not have any knowledge of what that book is all about. Would You give me something to help me understand it?”

At that moment, the Spirit of the Lord moved upon him to turn to the book of Revelation in The Expositor’s Study Bible. When he turned to it, he couldn’t believe what he was seeing—virtually every Scripture was explained. As he sat there with tears in his eyes, he realized that the Lord had beautifully and marvelously answered his prayer.

Do you realize that there are pastors in some of the third world countries that do not even have a Bible? They have to go look into a Bible that is borrowed for the message that they will preach the following Sunday. When they get a copy of The Expositor’s Study Bible, it is a godsend.

I just want to thank you for helping to make it possible for now some two million copies being placed into the hands of those who could not have gotten one on their own. Thank you for helping to make it possible. Thank you for helping to bring a miracle to pass. Thank you for making something possible that will change the lives of these individuals, whomever they might be.

Thank You!
And I want to thank you for helping us as well with the SonLife Broadcasting Network. Without you we could not do what we are doing. Thank you so much for making it all possible. Thank you for helping a miracle to come to pass. Thank you for doing what no one else could do.

Now I’m going to once again impel you to make certain that you include The Expositor’s Study Bible in your Christmas giving this year. That would go not only for the Bible, but also the commentaries, the music CDs, the books—in fact everything that we have to offer. All of it would make the greatest Christmas gifts in the world. A lady wrote me the other day and said, “Brother Swaggart, the things that we get from your offers are A1. In other words, it’s quality. So much that I order from other ministries is little more than junk.” Now she said that, and I didn’t. But this I do know, we do everything within our power to give you quality books, music, and Bibles—not only the content, but the finest production that money can buy. Whatever you get from us, we want it to last for a long, long time. So thank you so very, very much for taking advantage of these offers, which we hope all of you will do.

Now get your Christmas shopping done early. It won’t be long before that day will be here, and some of you will say, “I wish I had ordered quicker.” And then we have others who order three days before Christmas, and there is no way in the world we can get it to them in time for the holidays. So take advantage of the offers now, and it will be certain to reach you on time.

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