

Security

By Mason Harris

An old European proverb says, "If you can swallow a toad every morning before breakfast, you have conditioned yourself for the troubles of the day." We live in a world of frustration and despair whose greatest problem seems to be that of security, or rather the lack of it. The history of man is a history of combat and a struggle to survive. And even now the possibility of a nuclear war or some other cataclysmic event dims our hope for survival.

Added to this is a future threatened by inflation, higher taxes, and the snare of easy credit. With all this it is difficult not to worry, to be anxious about the outcome of it all. But Jesus said, "Do not be anxious, saying: What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, With what shall we clothe ourselves? . . . But seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own" (Mt. 6:31-34).

Engineers, in planning a structure, make provision for an ample reserve factor (or safety factor); they design it to be

able to withstand a strain ten to fifteen times as large as anything to which they expect it to be subjected in the ordinary course of its existence. Man also needs a reserve factor that he might keep from reaching a breaking point. He has a tremendous need for courage, patience, and faith. Such strength is available in God. Peter said, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you at the proper time, casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:6-7).

God heard the ancient Israelites when they cried from Egyptian bondage - and delivered them. He heard them again when they cried to Him because of their oppression by the pagans in the land of Canaan - and He sent men like Gideon, Samson, and Samuel and delivered them. God delivered the three Hebrew children from the fiery furnace and Daniel from Lion's den. *Do you serve the same God?* Then what greater security do you need?



Classes This Week

Sunday 5:15 Kid's Class at the building	Thursday 10 AM Ladies 'Proverbs' class at Laura Humphrey's	Saturday 1st - 6th Grade 6-8 PM 7th - 12th Grade 6:30 - 8:30 PM
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Sick

Sam Cox (Friend of Anna Stallings)	Owen Mauldin (Seth and Summer Mauldin's Son)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Joan Parker (Aurie Adams Grandmother)
Emma Hettinger (William Herd's Mother)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Roger Whatley (Daphene Whatley's son)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Betty Bradford	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Sandra Qadeer (Rafia Qadeer's mother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Meredith NeSmith (Jessica Anderson's Cousin)	Emily Stallings (Anna's sister)	Madi Wise (Friend of the Roberts')
Marty Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Peggy Theis (Timothy Jones' grandmother)	Toni and William Herd	Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller)

May Birthdays

- 2 - Emily-Anne Rouse
- 3 - Paula Davis
- 4 - Cadence Pittman
- 10 - Ian Norman
- 11 - Caleb George
- 11 - Scott Perkins
- 12 - Daphene Whatley
- 13 - Jana Hall
- 13 - Anna Grace Long
- 15 - Bryce Daniels
- 16 - Shawna Harris
- 19 - Madison Seals
- 22 - Sarah Holliday
- 24 - Andy Roberts
- 25 - Chuck Hahn
- 26 - Fallon Hartsell
- 28 - Candy Long
- 31 - Rachel Tolliver

News and Notes

☒ - Let us remember our upcoming VBS (June 24-27). Those who signed up to help are asked to meet in Adult 2 classroom after evening service.

☒ - Congratulations to our grads! Heath Fowler, Jillian Petty, John Mark Henderson, Allison Chandler, Megan Obert, Kyle Sexton, Leah Northcutt, Kyle Gibson, Art Daves, Haley Hudson, Chris Davis, Shawna Harris, Blake Bagent and Jordan Toombs.

☒ - Hosts and teachers are needed for the 1st-6th grade and 7th-12th grade classes this Saturday.

☒ - We want to pray for our students that are graduating and those who are returning home for the summer. You have blessed us during this time we have served the Lord together!

The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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The Gap Between the Real and the Ideal

By Edward O. Bragwell, Sr.

$$\text{DISAPPOINTMENT} = \frac{\text{EXPECTATION}}{\text{REALITY}}$$

Thoughts to Ponder

Our generation has seen more changes than another in human history, but the "discontent" that has produced them has not always been "splendid."

Since we live in an imperfect environment, there is always a gap between the real and the ideal -- between things as they are and as they ought to be.

All responsible people sin, even Christians (Rom. 3:10, 11, 21; 1 John 1:8, 10). Paul described his struggle with sin while under the law (of Moses) in Romans 7:14-25. His conflict is typical of every conscientious person's struggle to bridge the gap between the real and the ideal.

We know all too well that while there are a lot of good people, there are no absolutely perfect people. There are many good marriages, good churches, good businesses -- but no perfect ones.

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We know all too well that while there are a lot of good people, there are no absolutely perfect people. There are many good marriages, good churches, good businesses -- but no perfect ones. People make a variety of attempts, good and bad, to cope with the gap between things as they are and things as we know they ought to be.

and to measure and correct our lives by it. Many, who do not deny it outright, pervert and water it down until it is meaningless as a perfect standard of living. (Cf. Gal. 1:8, 9).

To many, the solution is to *abolish the real without improvement*. These are aware of their imperfections. They freely acknowledge their sinfulness. Yet, they have no desire to correct themselves. While a Christian must not willfully continue in sin (Rom. 6:1; Heb. 10:26), he does sin from time to time. He knows that as he sins he must correct the matter by obeying God's condi-

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Elders
Walker Davis
(334) 703-0050
Larry Rouse
(334) 734-2133

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday

Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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tions for forgiveness. (1 John 1:7-9).

There are many areas in our lives where we fall short of the ideal, so we must continue to press on toward perfection. (Heb. 5:12-6:1; 2 Pet. 3:17,18; Phil. 3:12-15). Yet, there are many who resist improvement. They are kind of like country comedienne Minnie Pearl's brother. She said "Brother is no failure, he just started at the bottom and liked it there." Many Christians, so-called, show no desire to improve their spiritual skills.

To others, the solution is to abandon the struggle for the ideal. The great apostle, Paul, knew that he had not yet attained the ideal for which he had been struggling so long, but he kept right on striving. He said, "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me." (Phil. 3:12).

Many abandon the struggle for the ideal within themselves. They know they have not reached perfection and are not likely to in this life, so they cease all efforts to improve the moral and spiritual quality of their lives. They may accept the status quo and drift along, satisfied with their present level of development, without any further effort to improve. Or they may turn to some form of escapism, such as substance abuses and hedonism, trying to avoid the pressure to improve their lives. Some even turn to suicide to get away from what they consider a hopeless struggle.

Many forsake the struggle for the ideal in their personal relationships. Since their families, their jobs, and their brethren are not ideal, they just walk off and leave them. Or, as often happens, they jump out of one relationship into another in an endless search for the ideal marriage, ideal job or ideal congregation until they finally realize there are no completely ideal situations; and that they must take their imperfect predicament and try to improve upon it or they become so dejected that they virtually become dropouts from life.

To still others, the solution is to patiently strive for the ideal. A Christian works on himself to that end. He strives to avoid sin, yet he does sin, so he repents, asks God's forgiveness, and tries again. (Cf. 1 John 2:1-3). He works within his various

personal relationships to bring them ever-closer to the ideal. To still others, the solution is to *patiently strive for the ideal*. A Christian works on himself to that end. He strives to avoid sin, yet he does sin, so he repents, asks God's forgiveness, and tries again. (Cf. 1 John 2:1-3). He works within his various personal relationships to bring them ever-closer to the ideal.

A good sister may be married to a non-Christian. This is not an ideal situation, but rather than leave it, she patiently sets the proper example of a Christian before her skeptical husband, hoping to influence him to obey the Lord. (1 Pet. 3:1, 2). A father has children who are far from perfect, he patiently "bring(s) them up in the training and admonition of the Lord." (Eph. 6:4). This involves teaching and discipline.

A Christian is a member of a "less than ideal" congregation, but one in which he can remain and maintain his personal faithfulness. So he through "lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit" (Eph. 4:3, 4), preaches the word, rebuking and exhorting with all longsuffering and teaching (2 Tim. 4:1-4). He hangs in there making improvement where and when he can.

Impatience has a tendency to wreck rather than to build ideal situations. Nagging and coercing may force external changes, but teaching changes men from the inside out. The former may produce noticeable changes faster, but the latter produces real and lasting changes for the better. If we are not careful, our desire for instant results may cause us to lower the standard so that it can be more readily met. Impatience can also cause one to simply give up on others too quickly.

At the same time, we need to realize that patience and longsuffering have their limits. We cannot become a partaker of other men's sins in the name of patience (1 Tim. 5:22). There comes a time when stronger measures must be taken and one has to withdraw himself from those who persist in sin.

Yes, there will always be a gap between the real and ideal that must be bridged by the grace of God. We must cope with this fact. While it may be true that we will not be lost for not reaching the absolutely ideal in this life -- we may very well be lost for not *reaching for it*.



"Vindicate Me, O Lord" (Psalms 26)

By Doy Moyer

To ask God to judge us can be both uncomfortable and purging at the same time. It forces a sense of honesty from us and causes us to tear away any wall of hypocrisy. Uncomfortable? Yes. But necessary.

"Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?" 2 Cor 13:5

"The Lord judges the peoples; Vindicate me, O Lord, according to my righteousness and my integrity that is in me" (Psalm 7:8).

We must constantly evaluate our relationship with God, lest we fall into that complacency, taking everything for granted and just floating along. Psalm 26 is a good reminder of this.

Taking a look at the Psalm, notice how well this fits with the way we ought to be thinking and living.

1. See the necessity of God's judgment and examination (vv 1-2). The Christian should welcome God's vindication and judgment. This goes to the very heart and mind. Note also Hebrews 4:12-13.
2. We must fully trust God if we are going to walk in integrity and faithfulness (vs. 1).
3. We must keep these two matters before our eyes: A) God's lovingkindness (grace, mercy), and B) His truth, so that we may walk in it.
4. We must identify wickedness so that we will separate ourselves from those who practice it (vv. 4-5). See Paul's argument in 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 for more on this.
5. Be prepared to offer sacrifice to God in purity and holiness (vs. 6). See Romans 12:1-2 and Hebrews 13:15-16 for the types of sacrifices we are offer God under Christ.
6. Serving God also has the goal, not only of personal purity and sacrifice, but also of proclaiming the mes-

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Try me and know my anxious thoughts;
And see if there be any hurtful way in me,
And lead me in the everlasting way."
(Psalm 139:23-24)

sage to others. We must have the "voice of thanksgiving" and the desire to "declare all Your wonders" (vs. 7). God's people are not content to sit on God's truth; they want to share it.

7. God's people love to be where God is, where His glory dwells, and they love to be with each other (vs. 8). The tabernacle and temple were meant to represent God's dwelling among the people. In Christ, we are His temple, and our purpose is to glorify Him.

8. There is an intense desire for salvation and not wanting to be carried away with the wicked (vv. 9-10). Once again, wickedness is identified and shunned. See Ephesians 5:1-12 for the New Testament counterpart to this point.

9. We must make a full commitment to walking in integrity (vs. 11). We cannot expect God to redeem us and be merciful to us if we do not trust Him and commit to truth.

10. Stability is found in God, and once we recognize this, nothing will stop us from blessing and praising His name (vs. 12).

Psalm 26 is a great reminder of what it means to serve the Lord completely and faithfully. We strive to glorify Him, praise Him, tell others of Him, and maintain personal holiness, offering up ourselves as sacrifices for Him.

While it may be uncomfortable to ask God to judge us, this is exactly what we need to do in order to keep our integrity before Him.

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Try me and know my anxious thoughts;
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