

BRIGHT HOPE

"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope."

JEREMIAH 29:11 NKJV

Our with the old, in with the new" is often the slogan of a new year, followed by many resolutions made by people determined to "turn a new page" and do better than the year before. Sadly, most New Year's resolutions die before the end of January.

Jesus Christ had memorable slogans that have endured through the ages, and we would all do well to pay attention to them and adhere to them. Jesus announced His great society, "His kingdom," which was the promise of Heaven and eternal life with Him—forever. It will endure because the Kingdom of God is not built on a false promise—but on the word of the Lord. Conversion is a requirement of citizenship in this wonderful place. Many people say that it doesn't matter what's believed [to get to Heaven]. But Jesus Christ said, "Unless you are converted . . . you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:3).

Are you holding on to the solid Rock, Jesus the Savior? Do not delay. Start the new year off with a sure thing—God's promise to give you a hope and a future.

BE OF GOOD COURAGE

This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast.

HEBREWS 6:19 NKJV

There is a longing in people's hearts for happiness. The human spirit also groans for something new. We run after hope as though it has magical power. We trick ourselves into believing that if everything lines up just right, we'll gain hope and success. But true hope is a sure thing, and it is only found with certainty in the Man Jesus Christ.

The history of mankind has been a continuous series of half successes and total failures. Prosperity exists for a time, only to be followed by war and depression. Civilizations have come and gone. Success is worshiped, and God is disdained. Pleasure takes precedence over purity, and gain has priority over God. Mankind still battles with the same problems over and over again. One day, the fluctuations of time, the swinging of the pendulum from war to peace, from starvation to plenty, from chaos to order, will end forever because the Bible says, "And of His kingdom there will be no end" (Luke 1:33).

Determination is only part of realizing hope. True hope is not dependent upon us but rather where our hope is anchored. "Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all [you] that hope in the Lord" (Psalm 31:24, KJV). We can walk in the "newness of life" (Romans 6:4). Place your trust in the God of hope.

SALVATION FOR ALL

There is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.

ROMANS 10:12 NKJV

God's message of salvation is for all people. He died for the sins of the whole world. "Whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:13). God our Savior "desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of truth" (1 Timothy 2:4).

This word "whoever" is a wonderfully big word; it speaks of the grace of God and His invitation that extends to all people.

Christianity is centered on the Gospel that brings comfort and the assurance that God will forgive sin. Now this doesn't mean that all people will indeed call upon the name of the Lord for salvation. The majority of people resist Him, block His voice out, and ultimately reject Him.

The Bible teaches that life is only a vapor that appears for a moment and then vanishes (James 4:14). This is why God calls out to the nations of the world to get right with Him. History will someday come to an end, rendering the world's system dominated by evil a total failure. Wickedness in every form will cease: hatred, greed, jealousy, war, and death. This "day of the Lord" will be glorious, when He comes to bring peace to the "whosoever." Be part of this wonderful host of people who love Him.

KNOWING THE TRUTH

Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 TIMOTHY 2:15 KJV

People have all kinds of ideas about truth. Some think that there is no absolute truth. Whatever the view, wisely study and believe what Jesus taught about truth. He taught not only that there is truth, but that He is the Truth. Through prayer ask Him to give you the faith to believe and put into practice His absolute truth, and pray the same for others.

Scripture tells us to study to show that we are approved to God—that our beliefs line up with His. We are to know God's Word, believe it, obey it, and live by it. Great blessing and comfort come in the midst of a conflicted world embroiled in turmoil.

There are those who are offended by absolute truth—but it doesn't change with the blowing of the wind. "The Spirit of truth . . . will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13). Jesus made the bold claim, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).

People question whether the Bible is really the Word of God. But the truth is clear: from beginning to end the Bible is God's Word, inspired by the Holy Spirit who will teach us, and we can know the truth, and the truth will set us free (John 8:32).

REFERENCE POINT

We . . . rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received the reconciliation.

ROMANS 5:11 NKJV

As sin has progressed and gained momentum, mankind seems to have lost his ability to be shocked. Behavior that was once considered abominable is now acceptable.

One thing is certain, however. There are many new sinners today, but there aren't any new sins. The Old Testament speaks of a time when "everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6).

It doesn't have to be this way. Where we start determines where we end. Each new year brings hope and a new opportunity for change. We can reset our starting line. Take the compass, for instance. If the compass is not accurate, the traveler will lose his way. If the sun and the stars were not ordered in their stations, no mariner could depend on them to find his way through the oceans of the world. If there are no absolutes, no fixed reference points, there can be no certainty.

This is why God's Word is Good News, because the absolute truth is that Jesus came and died on the cross and rose from the dead, to save us from sin. We can be reconciled to God and put back in a right relationship with Him by accepting His provision for sin, His Son, Christ the Lord. There is hope, there is certainty, and there is a reference point, and it all begins with God.

WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE

Does not wisdom cry out, and understanding lift up her voice?

PROVERBS 8:1 NKJV

The eighth chapter of Proverbs is deep and wide because it is the voice of wisdom speaking to our hearts. It is the Lord Jesus Himself gathering up His eternal attributes that call out to us with His understanding, truth, righteousness, knowledge and instruction, prudence and discretion, reverence, counsel, strength, love, riches and honor, justice, rejoicing, blessing, wisdom, and eternal life.

Knowledge is fact-gathering; wisdom is applying knowledge with discernment and good judgment. The Bible says, "The Lord gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding" (Proverbs 2:6).

But the blessing of knowledge becomes a curse when we pervert it. If ever a generation was bequeathed the knowledge of God, it has been the generations of today. Yet we are throwing away the glorious heritage on self-pleasure and satisfying immediate gratification. Our worldly wisdom has made us calloused and hard. Our natural wisdom comes not from God but is earthly, sensual, and devilish. In spite of the knowledge young people have accumulated, they are more confused, bewildered, frustrated, and without moral moorings. Today society is turning its face against God, ignoring Him as the Source of all knowledge and wisdom.

The only right place to turn is God's Word to learn about knowledge and wisdom and how to apply them to life. "According to your word [O Lord], teach me knowledge and good judgment" (Psalm 119:65–66 NIV).

THE SOURCE OF PEACE

These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace.

JOHN 16:33 NKJV

The human race continues its futile search for peace in all the wrong places. Today there is little personal, domestic, social, economic, or political peace anywhere. Why? Mankind has within it the seeds of suspicion, violence, hatred, and destruction.

Peace will not come to the world until Christ returns. "Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division" (Luke 12:51). Jesus was not saying that He prevented peace; He was giving fair warning that His message would divide people. After all, who likes to be told they are sinners who must repent? When Christ began His earthly ministry, He showed love, gave comfort, and brought healing. The people's response was to oppose Him, reject Him, arrest Him, and kill Him.

Satan does everything in his power to steer peace seekers away from the Peacemaker, Jesus Christ. The same people that talk of peace, lobby for it, and convene peace conferences are often the same people who are blinded by Satan who does not want the world to recognize the Source of peace.

But personal peace can be realized in the here and now. The future does not hinge on the world situation, however grim it might become. It depends on what each person does about Jesus Christ.

OVERCOMING ANGER

Be angry, and do not sin.

EPHESIANS 4:26 NKJV

It takes a great deal to stir God's anger, but when it happens, it is holy anger because God is pure and righteous. When the Bible tells us that God "is slow to anger" (Nahum 1:3), it simply means that He is patient beyond man's capability. The prophet Nahum preached that God "will not at all acquit the wicked." Who are the wicked? Those who break the law of God, and we have all broken God's law.

We must not think that we get away with anything. Sin will bring us to repentance or retribution. When His anger is stirred, He often uses the power of nature to demonstrate His pending doom. "The Lord has His way in the whirlwind and the storm, and the clouds are the dust of His feet. . . . The earth heaves at His presence" (Nahum 1:3-5).

So the storm clouds are swift, as holy feet stir up the dust of anger against man's sin and disobedience, because God's plan is to have fellowship with the human race, not conflict.

Man's anger, however, is sinful. It leads us into bitterness and hurts everyone. Can we overcome our anger, instead of constantly being overcome by it? Yes! With God's help.

Anger makes us lash out at others, destroying relationships. The history of the human race is largely the history of its anger. Anger flees when the Spirit of God fills our hearts.

WALKING IN HUMILITY

When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom.

PROVERBS 11:2 NKJV

Sin gathers up all that violates a holy God and keeps souls from entering God's wonderful eternal home. But pride is pivotal; it stirs up everything that is against the Lord, including lying. The book of wisdom says with pride comes shame. Proverbs is a marvelous little book to read daily. There are thirty-one chapters—one for each day of the month. It teaches man how to get along with others and overflows with wisdom.

When God sees us walking by His truth, He is blessed. The opposite of pride is humility. We are commanded to seek the Lord and His righteousness and humility (Zephaniah 2:3). This is difficult, especially in our world today. The culture shouts, "Me, myself, and I!" This is dangerous. Police your own heart. Ask God to convict you when you have your eyes turned inward. Pride comes from looking only at ourselves; meekness comes through looking at God.

The Bible teaches that we should think more highly of others than we think of ourselves (Philippians 2:3). This is made very difficult today by self-help books and seminars, advertisements, and entertainment that fill our minds with bolstering our self-confidence. Pride flees when we compare ourselves to God instead of to other people. Humility causes us to look outward to others, and most of all upward to God.

THE GIFT OF THE GOSPEL

The gospel . . . is not according to man. . . . It came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

GALATIANS 1:11-12 NKJV

Before God could use Jonah, Jonah first had to humble himself and repent. Only then would God use him to preach the Gospel to a pagan culture. Jonah is one who thought he could escape from the Lord. He found out differently. He was called to preach to rebellious Nineveh (in modern-day Iraq), but instead he rebelled against God's call. This miraculous story proves that God's eyes are everywhere and that He devises retribution and punishment to bring about eternal blessing in response to repentance.

Jonah was called to preach God's Word, but in a very different way from other prophets who preached to Israel. Jonah resented the fact that God was sending him to the "great city" (Jonah 1:2), the capital of Israel's pagan neighbor, Assyria. He didn't believe the people of Nineveh deserved God's salvation. So he did the very thing he was called to preach against—he disobeyed God and did what was in his heart.

God reprimanded Jonah and, in graciousness, expressed His pity and love for those drowning in sin. This is a demonstration of the long arm of God's salvation extended to those who turn from rebellion and receive the Lord's mighty message of forgiveness.

The Gospel is not just for those who receive it, but to bring the whole world to salvation. The Gospel shows us our sins and points us to the Savior.

BY FAITH ALONE

If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we . . . do not practice the truth.

1 JOHN 1:6 NKJV

There are many among us today who acknowledge Jesus as a historical figure. Many even claim to follow Him, but their lives are not transformed. Possessing salvation in Christ by faith alone is what proves that He is the Redeemer of souls.

Someone wrote that Buddha never claimed to be God. Moses never claimed to be Jehovah. Mohammed never claimed to be Allah. Yet Jesus claimed to be the living God. Buddha said, "I am a teacher in search of the truth." Jesus said, "I am the Truth." Confucius said, "I never claimed to be holy." Jesus said, "Who convicts me of sin?" Mohammed said, "Unless God throws his cloak over me, I have no hope." Jesus said, "Unless you believe in me, you will die in your sins." While it is captivating to read what others say about Jesus, faith is still the key to believing in Christ.

Years ago in a monastery in India, old relics that had been dug up were worshiped by Buddhists in the area. Muslims point with pride to Mecca, where the body of their prophet, Mohammed, is buried. Followers of Confucius revere the remains of their master, buried in an imposing tomb in China. We don't need a religion that worships the dead; we need the living Savior. Christianity is the faith of the empty tomb.

GOD'S TENDER COMFORT

Blessed be the God . . . of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble

2 CORINTHIANS 1:3-4 NKJV

It pleases God when He sees mankind reach out to others in need. He intends for people to have fellowship, to challenge and help one another. He gave us relationships to bring us joy.

We are created to need others in our lives. There was a popular song years ago: "People Who Need People." But more than that, we need Jesus Christ in our lives.

When we are comforted and encouraged by the Lord, He expects us to do the same for those who cross our paths. Humanity cries out for comfort in sorrow, light in its darkness, peace in its turmoil, rest in its weariness, and healing in its sickness and diseases.

Ask God for help in communicating His comfort to those who need support. Point them to the God of all comfort through His Word. We are told that He is a refuge for the oppressed (Psalm 9:9), an ever-present help in trouble (Psalm 46:1), and His promises give life (Psalm 119:50).

Ask the Lord to make you a blessing to others. Many times this is most evident when we share our own struggles and testify to how God helps us. Our own witness of Christ meeting our needs speaks to those who need a tender touch from the Savior.

OUR HEAVENLY HOME

In My Father's house are many mansions.

JOHN 14:2 NKJV

Heaven is beyond the reach of our satellites and telescopes, but that doesn't mean that it is beyond the reach of our hearts. The key to finding Heaven is finding Christ. Today's technology is performing things past generations would have never thought possible. GPS alone has changed how people travel.

But there is something far greater that has been available to man since the beginning of time: a heavenly GPS that will bring you safely to your eternal destination in Heaven. It is called the Gospel Plan of Salvation. It only has one direction—up—and the Navigator, the Lord Jesus Christ, is “the way” (John 14:6). He appoints the time of arrival and has prepared all that is necessary to welcome us.

By nature, people are bent toward home. When we finish our day and evening activities, we generally head for our homes. Far better than any dream you can imagine is the supernatural transformation that will take place for all of God's people when He transports us to His heavenly home. We are assured that in Heaven we will be living in God's dwelling place forever, and it will be glorious beyond description. It will be greater than any earthly palace or mansion. Technology will never surpass the glories of this place that Jesus is preparing for His people.

TRUTHFUL OPTIMISM

If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

1 JOHN 1:8 NKJV

Admiral Jim Stockdale served in Vietnam and spent time as a prisoner of war in the infamous “Hanoi Hilton.” He once was asked which men didn't make it out of the prison. His answer was surprising: “The optimists.” He went on to explain. “You must never confuse faith that you will prevail in the end.”

While optimism can strengthen our resolve to persevere, it can also mislead us when we deny facts. A CNN documentary reported that optimism can take on the tone of arrogance. For instance, when bad weather approaches and the warning goes out to evacuate an area, the optimist might “opt” to stay put instead of getting out of harm's way. It might work for them, even many times, but then one fateful day the storm hits hard, and they suffer greatly.

This happens with those who put God out of their thinking. They are optimistic that since they lead a good life, they will cross the finish line into Heaven. Their optimism leads them astray. They were not willing to acknowledge before God they are sinners and need salvation.

Truth is not always pleasant, but it is always right. Truth is absolute. The Bible tells us to be on the alert and not be arrogant. The true optimist will heed warnings and be wisely led by the Word of God.

SAVED FROM DESTRUCTION

By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household.

HEBREWS 11:7

God told Noah to “build an ark.” Noah knew nothing about sailing the high seas, and he certainly was at a loss as to how to build a boat. But he believed God.

Noah chopped down trees to build an enormous ark on dry land—far from any ocean—because God was going to send a great flood. Destruction was coming to a godless society. People mocked Noah, but through his obedience and faith in God, he was the first person in the Bible to be called righteous.

Centuries after Noah lived, Jesus spoke of him. In the days of Noah the world was filled with violence. People loved sin—they were immersed in sin. The flood was not a natural catastrophe but a moral tsunami. God brought judgment on people who disbelieved Him. Noah’s building project took 100 years as people heard Noah declare God’s warning, but only Noah and his family climbed aboard the great boat with the animals. It had never rained upon the Earth. People scoffed, but Noah believed God and survived the greatest catastrophe the world has ever known.

This is a call to those who do not know that Christ wants to save those from drowning in sin. He wants to lift them up out of the turbulent waters and set them on higher ground.

RE-CREATION

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17

We live in a revolutionary, changing world. Man’s moral capacities lag far behind his technological skills and discoveries. The greatest need in the world is to bring about the transformation of human nature, something man cannot do.

Many of our technologists are saying there is a great need for a new breed of man. Even the political radicals and the humanists talk about the “new man.” From this it is clear that they acknowledge that man, as he is, is not good enough. So they look for the arrival of the new man who, they say, will come into being when society has been changed so that a new environment can produce him. There are also the technocrats who believe that technology is now advancing so rapidly that mankind will be able to create an entirely new human race. Some genetic engineers believe that they will be able to create any type of person they want.

But there is only one ultimate answer to the need of man to be changed. Science and technology cannot change man’s basic nature. Economic restructuring cannot change man’s basic nature. No amount of self-improvement or wishful thinking can change man’s basic nature. Only God the Creator can re-create us. And that is precisely what He does when we humble ourselves and submit to Jesus Christ.

PUT ON THE NEW LIFE

Put off . . . the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and . . . put on the new man which was created according to God.

EPHESIANS 4:22-24

There is a mindset today that if people believe in God and do good works, they are going to Heaven. But there are many questions that must be answered. It should not be surprising if people believe easily in a God who makes no demands, but this is not the God of the Bible. Satan has cleverly misled people by whispering that they can be saved without being changed, but this is the devil's lie.

There are many religions in the world and enormous confusion about where to find truth. Many preach that God is love, not a God of wrath. People proclaim that Heaven is real but Hell is only a figment of imagination.

God created Heaven for those who humble themselves before God, and Hell is created for Satan and those who serve him. A loving warning comes from Heaven. "Prepare to meet your God" (Amos 4:12). How is this done?

The Bible tells us that when we submit our lives to Christ, He gives us the ability to take off our former life and put on the new life He gives.

We must admit our sin and turn from it through faith in Jesus Christ and obey Him. The greatest joy and peace comes to those who take this important step.

WHERE CONTENTMENT LIES

In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

PHILIPPIANS 2:3

Envy, jealousy, and covetousness are interrelated. Discontent with our position and possessions often indicates a self-centered attitude, which leads to intolerant, resentful, and even malicious feelings toward a real or imagined rival. We may covet the success, personality, material possessions, good looks, or position of another. Then, in order to compensate for a frustrated ego, we make unkind and destructive remarks and submerge ourselves in self-pity, anger, bitterness, and depression.

Recognizing it and admitting it takes courage and truth. Being convicted is the first step toward the Savior. It pleases Jesus when we acknowledge our sin. There is nothing more healing than to take our minds off ourselves and put them on others.

Some people may appear to "have it all," but everyone suffers to some extent in their lives. There are many things that can hide behind a beautiful face, a sweet spirit, and talent. We think that they are always accepted and treated special, but often such people harbor pain of some kind. How wonderful when we can show love. For those who are truly happy, they will bring joy to others. A beautiful spirit is apparent when we submit ourselves completely to God who is "able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:8).

HOPE OF HEAVEN

Hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit.

ROMANS 5:5

Heaven will be a place in which its inhabitants will be freed from the fears, insecurities, and disappointments that plague us in the present life. We will be free from financial pressures that burden us down here; free from the fear of personal harm. There will be no fear of personal failure. Our relationship with God will be intimate and direct.

It pleases God that His children would long for His heavenly home that He is preparing for us; not as a place of escape, but as a place where we will enjoy His presence forever.

But we mustn't shirk our responsibilities in this life. God intends for us to live full lives and to be engaged with others. We do not have to look far to find those who are more disappointed than we are or perhaps in worse health. Life is not about us; it is about learning to get along with our fellow man, and most of all, life is about what we decide concerning the Lord Jesus Christ. A true Christian spirit desires to spend eternity with God in Heaven and wants to tell as many people about this great hope so others can also enjoy the rewards of Heaven and the glory of God Himself. Until then, be faithful to proclaim this great message.

HEALING WORDS

Speak evil of no one, [be] peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all.

TITUS 3:2

Many people are quick with the deadly thrust but slow with the ointment of healing. The harsh criticism of others and unfair appraisals of those about us sting with pain. The unjust condemnation of others has a boomerang effect. When we hurl vindictive indictments with the hope of crippling others, we discover that we hurt ourselves more.

Many people are conflicted today because they are driven away by their own bitterness and harsh words to those who may also need a kind word. Many people go through their entire lives with a chip on their shoulder, carrying hurts and resentments over things that were said or done decades ago. Like a poison, their bitterness has made not only their own lives miserable but the lives of those around them. They have never learned the secret of forgiveness and forbearance.

The Bible warns us to be on guard "lest any root of bitterness springing up cause trouble" (Hebrews 12:15). Meekness and forbearance are "musts" if we are to live harmoniously in society and develop healthy homes, families, and friendships. While Christians must always speak the truth, we must do it in love.

God wants to help us overcome the bitterness that we feel. "Everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger" (James 1:19 NASB).

BIG NEEDS, BIG GOD

I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

2 CORINTHIANS 6:16

God created animals first, and then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness" (Genesis 1:26). He gave man dominion over every living thing on Earth.

Man has three attributes which animals do not have: reason, conscience, and will. Animals are motivated by instinct. Their behavior patterns are instinctive, not intelligent.

The first man, Adam, used all three of these attributes. First, he reasoned that his own judgment was as good as God's, and he ate the forbidden fruit. In that act, the will of man came into play, for he could have decided either way. Then, after he broke God's command—not to eat of the fruit—he felt conscience-stricken and ran away to hide. Man has been following the same pattern through the centuries—willfully disobeying God and running away.

Within these God-given attributes are life or death, happiness or sorrow, and peace or conflict. If he dissipates the powers which God has given him, he is of all creatures most miserable. People are little creatures with big capacities, finite beings with infinite desires, deserving nothing but demanding all. God made people with this huge capacity and desire in order that He might come in and completely satisfy that desire. God wants to commune with mankind.

HOPE IN THE MIDST OF TROUBLE

"In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

JOHN 16:33

Only in fairy tales do people live charmed lives. We may think that some people have it all, but if we turn the pages of their lives, we may see a very different picture.

Life touches some people with bouquets and others with thorn bushes. But the first may find a wasp in the flowers, and the second may discover roses among the thorns.

The Bible never promised that life would be fair. As we pray, we can give thanks when storms finally subside, or when the pain of ill health lets up, but the reality is that new troubles will come. While we should not anticipate trouble at every turn, some people spend so much time worrying about what might happen that they never enjoy what is happening; they never see what lies beyond trouble—perhaps the opportunity to comfort someone or to help someone. We can water the seed of hope in those around us and pray that the Lord will help prepare us for new challenges ahead.

Trouble is different for all of us. For Christians, we are blessed to have the promise that Jesus will be with us in the midst of our problems. He gives us the power to overcome whatever circumstances come our way.

WELL ARMED

When a strong man, fully armed, guards his own palace, his goods are in peace.
LUKE 11:21

It is impossible to believe anything into existence. Try it. Who can simply “believe” that they can inherit a million dollars and it happens? Who can say that they can believe a child into existence?

People who make such claims are deceivers. Their motive is to draw others into believing lies. This is just what Satan did in the Garden of Eden, and Adam and Eve fell prey.

There are many authors, talk show hosts, and newscasters who become wealthy or famous by using high-sounding words that seem like the epitome of scholarship and culture. They are intellectually clever and crafty, adept at beguiling thoughtless men and women. The Bible tells us to be on the alert, “because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

Be on your guard. Arm yourself with the Word of God. It will guide and protect you. Believers are to test the various aspects and doctrines that abound, including the theories of others. Most of all, we are to test them against the standard of the Word of God.

Put your belief in the one true God. Have faith in Him. He is the One who spoke into existence the sun, moon, and stars—and yes, your very life. Reject the pride of man and embrace the Man Jesus Christ.

KEEPING WORK IN ITS PLACE

Whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.
1 CORINTHIANS 10:31

The story is told about R.G. LeTourneau, an industrialist who received an order from the government for a very complicated machine to be used in lifting airplanes. No machine of this type had ever been designed. LeTourneau and his engineers could not come up with a plan. After some time, everyone was becoming tense and nervous. Finally, on a Wednesday night, LeTourneau told his staff that he was not going to work, that he was going to a prayer meeting. The engineers were upset, because they had a deadline and the boss was deserting them.

“But,” he said, “I’ve got a deadline with God.” He went to the prayer meeting, sang the hymns, and prayed. Afterward, as he was walking home, the design of the machine in complete detail came into his mind. He needed time with God and creative silence to bring it to the surface.

Sometimes we try so hard to solve our problems without taking them to God, and we become agitated or depressed. It pleases God when we express to Him our thanks and gratitude for His guidance and direction. But one caution: Our work was never meant to become the center of our lives. That place belongs only to God, but He did give man work to do. There is dignity in work.