

Bible Standard Ministries

“Send out your light and truth! Let them lead me;...”

Psalm 43:3

“LIFT UP A STANDARD FOR THE PEOPLE”

Isaiah 62:10

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OUR INTERNET MINISTRY



The Golden Rule for understanding spiritual matters is not intelligence but obedience

THE HELPFULNESS OF PROPER VOWS

“I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people” Psa. 116:14.

The King James Version uses the words vow, vows and vowed 90 times. The Prophet David refers to his vows to the Lord 10 times showing the propriety of so doing and his appreciation of the responsibilities thus incurred and his determination to fulfil

his vows. The word *vow* is rarely used today except in respect to clerical vows, baptismal vows, marriage vows, etc. The word *vow* has to a considerable extent been superseded by the word *promise* and other words which signify an obligation to the Lord, for instance, we speak of making a covenant with the Lord, meaning our vows or obligations. The word *consecration* is frequently used to express this thought of promised obedience and sacrifice to the Lord and His cause. One of the greatest exhortations to consecration and fidelity to the Lord comes from St. Paul given in Rom. 12:1, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” The privilege of having a vow with Jehovah comes with a cost. As St. Paul here exhorts us to consecration, the cost is that we live our promise unto and until death!

The Scriptures contain severe warnings against the making of vows to the Lord carelessly, assuring us that it would be better to make no vow at all than to vow and to fail to perform to the extent of our ability. It is in harmony with this, that our Lord forewarns us to sit down first and count the cost of discipleship; “Whosoever does not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple” (Luke 14:27). Oh, there may be no falling back or even looking back. He declares, He that puts his hand to the plow and then looks back, regretting his covenant or vow of sacrifice, will not be accounted worthy of a share in the Kingdom. The Scriptures abound with exhortations that we take heed to promise the Lord nothing that we will not fulfill to the best of our ability. Some instances: “When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay

it; for he hath no pleasure in fools: pay that which thou hast vowed. Better is it that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay” (Eccl. 5:4, 5). “Thy vows are upon me, O God. I will render praises unto thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death: wilt thou not deliver my feet from falling” (Psa. 56:12, 13)? “I will pay thee my vows, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble” (Psa. 66:13-14).

In these scriptural illustrations we can recognize, a vow represents a promise or covenant with God, respecting some matter not strictly called for by Divine Law. God is now justifying believers through faith, in order to give them an opportunity to consecrate themselves, to make their vows unto the Lord and to show their love and loyalty by keeping these vows. In view of this who will say that God has not attached a great blessing to this vow of consecration—to all those who present themselves in sacrifice or ministerially to Him?

DO PERSONAL VOWS ASSIST US IN OUR CHRISTIAN WALK?

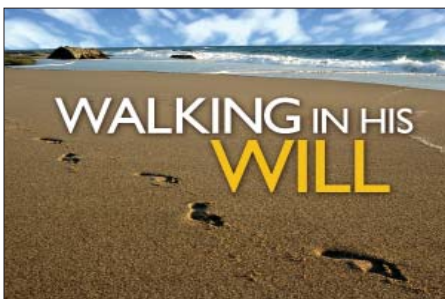
Yes, as consecrated children of God we have given over to Jehovah our heart, mind and will, the will being the proper ruler of human life; but the fact is that a great many people are without this ruler and guide as respects the higher things of life. Early in life the will usually decides for name and honor and wealth, to be secured as honestly and as easily as possible. The will represents the sentiment of our strongest or preponderating characteristics or mental qualities. In a majority of people these are not the highest qualities of the mind, but rather the lowest. Selfishness, combativeness, destructiveness and animal passion lie at the base of the brain and are usually persistently cultivated, encouraged and gratified, with merely certain limitations of decency, honesty and respectability associating with them as a veneer. The owner of the brain often finds it inconvenient to consult the higher elements of his organism, because these usually through a good conscience would be inclined to *reprove* his course of life. His justice would frequently forbid commercial transactions which his lower nature desires to put through. His spirituality and reverential respect for God and His Word, if allowed to speak, would thwart his selfish plans and resolutions.

What such a man needs to do is to make *a vow to himself* that he will seek to live in harmony with his own convictions—that he will not allow the baser qualities of his nature to rule him, but will regulate those qualities by the noblest and best sentiments of which he is possessed. We suggest that this vow be to himself, because it could not be a vow to God. *God's Law commands his best*, and in living according to any other standards he is living in violation to the Divine Law written in his very constitution, represented in the organs of his brain. True, our fallen brains are not perfectly balanced. Nevertheless, a measure of the Divine likeness is found in almost every human brain.

If the whole world could come to appreciate these facts and if each person would *vow to himself* to live his own very best—according to his own highest ideals—in full harmony with the measure of the Divine likeness which he possesses, the world would straightway be comparatively a Paradise. True, many things would still be amiss, but the will, the most important factor, if right with God, would bring a measure of peace to every heart, to every home, to every land.

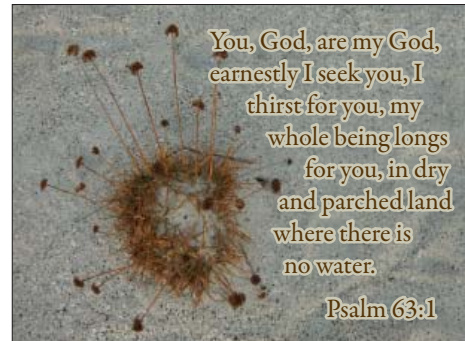
Does the consecrated child of God falter and fall under some testings? Oh yes, but if the heart is right, we like King David can call out to the Lord “Create within me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me” (Psa. 51:10). The man or woman who begins reformation of life by *vowing to himself* to live according to his best natural ability will find himself disappointed still; because of the impossibilities of harmonizing all the various qualities of his mind under present conditions connected with the reign of Sin and Death in the world. He will find that to *will* may be present with him, but to perform the will of his nobler mind will be seen as an impossibility; because through heredity, and through commercial customs, and through his own habits of life, his lower organs are fully developed and stronger in their combination, while the organs representing his nobler sentiments are relatively weak, inexperienced from a lack of use.

We much desire to walk in the footsteps of our LORD, a follower of the Lamb, to have Him as our example. Well,



did He make a vow of consecration? Oh yes, it was expressed in these words “Behold, I have come—in the volume of the Book it is written

of me—to do Your will, O God” (Heb. 10:7). The will of the Father was that our Lord Jesus should have the opportunity of presenting Himself a living sacrifice on man’s behalf. Our Lord accepted this and His acceptance was His consecration Vow of obedience, even unto death, even the death of the cross.



Our original Consecration Vow, even if carefully made, we found to be but an imperfect one because of our imperfect knowledge of the trials

and responsibilities and difficulties and the Lord’s requirements. We found need for *new vows covering new features* or guarding newly discovered weaknesses. Such vows we made for our own assistance, although it might be said that everything possible was included in our original Vow. Those who follow this course bind their sacrifices the more firmly and the more closely to the altar of sacrifice, and, correspondingly, are assisted in the narrow way and in maintaining themselves in God’s love.

SPECIAL VOWS FOR VARIOUS PURPOSES

The Scriptural statement is that we were shapen in iniquity and in sin did our mothers conceive us (Psa. 51:5). With this understanding would it be proper to make a special vow to God to overcome something fleshly, or should special vows be made only for spiritual things? Our understanding is that a vow is a solemn promise to God. Our general vow of consecration binds us to seek in all things to do God’s will faithfully. Special vows pertain to things to which we are not already bound specifically by our general consecration vow in such circumstances and proportions.

Most of God’s people at times, out of thankfulness and appreciation to Him, feel a spontaneous urge to do some special good thing for Him who has done so much for them (Psa. 116:12-14), and so make special vows to Him. He is well pleased with such vows, if proper and properly made. Some when in special danger or in serious illness have made special vows.

Some have a desire, more or less fleshly, to dabble in Spiritism and Occultism, or may have dabbled in them, to try to communicate with dead loved ones, or to know what to expect in the future for oneself or in general. All should make to God and resolutely keep the third special vow on our Vow Card (copies free), “I vow to Thee that I

will be on the alert to resist everything akin to Spiritism and Occultism,” *etc.* This will fortify the individual against the desires of the fleshly mind to dabble in these things, to avoid contacts with people who advocate and practice Spiritism and Occultism, to avoid television and radio programs along this line, to avoid seances, witches, wizards, ouija boards, tarot cards, fortune-telling, horoscopes, palmistry, tea-leaf reading *etc.*

Some are tempted—and some have given in to the temptation—by the flesh, either on their own part or by suggestions of others, to wrong conduct with the opposite sex, to sin in this way against God (Gen. 39:9) and others (including one’s spouse, if married). All should make to God and resolutely keep the fourth special vow on our Vow Card, regarding proper conduct with those of the opposite sex.

Some have felt that they could live celibately, without marriage, in order better to serve the Lord; and Jesus and the Apostle Paul referred to this approvingly (Matt. 19:12; 1 Cor. 7:37; 38). Some have made special vows along this line. Some of both sexes have made special vows to keep their purity, their virginity, until marriage, which is the

MY SPECIAL VOW

Our Father which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. May Thy rule come into my heart more and more, and Thy will be done in my mortal body. Relying on the assistance of Thy promised grace to help in every time of need, through Jesus Christ our Lord, I register this vow.

1. Daily will I remember in prayer the general interests of the harvest work, and particularly the share which I myself am privileged to enjoy in that work, and the dear co-laborers at the Epiphany Bible House and everywhere.

2. I vow to still more carefully, if possible, scrutinize my thoughts and words and doing, to the intent that I may be the better enabled to serve Thee and Thy dear flock.

3. I vow to Thee that I will be on the alert to resist everything akin to Spiritism and Occultism, and that, remembering that there are but the two masters, I shall resist these snares in all reasonable ways as being of the Adversary.

4. I further vow that, with the exceptions below, I will, at all times and in all places, conduct myself toward those of the opposite sex in private exactly as I would do with them in public – in the presence of a congregation of the Lord’s people. And so far as reasonably possible, I will avoid being in the same room with any of the opposite sex alone, unless the door to the room stand wide open. Exceptions in the case of Brothers—wife, children, mother, and natural sisters; in the case of Sisters—husband, children, father, and natural brothers.

right course to follow, especially in this time of sexual permissiveness, rampant illicit sexual related diseases and related evils. Some wisely make special vows not to use tobacco, hallucinogenic drugs and alcohol.

Special vows usually have to do also with personal devotion to God, such as class or personal study. Sometimes a special vow may be made to set aside a certain time or amount of time every day or week to study the Truth. Sometimes it may be a special vow to read through the *Studies in the Scriptures* volumes in a year. Sometimes special vows have to do with developing a special grace or the graces. Or a special vow may have to do with spreading the Truth, such as a certain amount of time a day or week for witnessing to others (Eccles. 11:6; John 18:37; 2 Tim. 4:2, 5) as ambassadors for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20).

At or near the close of one year and the beginning of another, or at one’s birthday anniversary, are good times for making special vows and resolutions before the Lord. Like our consecration vows, our special vows should not be made in our own strength, but always with reliance on the assistance of God’s promised grace through Christ to help in every time of need (2 Cor. 12:9; Phil 4:13).

Vows that are not in harmony with the teachings and principles of the Bible should not be made. As with prayer, which is God-pleasing *if we abide in Christ and the Word of God abides us* (John 15:7), so it is with vows. Vows and resolutions should not be made rashly, but conscientiously, with good determination to keep them (Eccles. 5:4-6; Prov. 20:25).

If we have failed properly to keep a vow, or have done contrary to it, we should not just disregard the matter. We should go to the Lord in prayer and humbly ask His forgiveness through Christ for our pertinent sins of omission and/or commission.

In conclusion, then, let us not make a vow in haste, but soberly, wisely. Let us bring ourselves under all reasonable restraints of thought and word and action—restraints to God and not to men or creeds. So doing, our cup of blessing will more and more overflow.

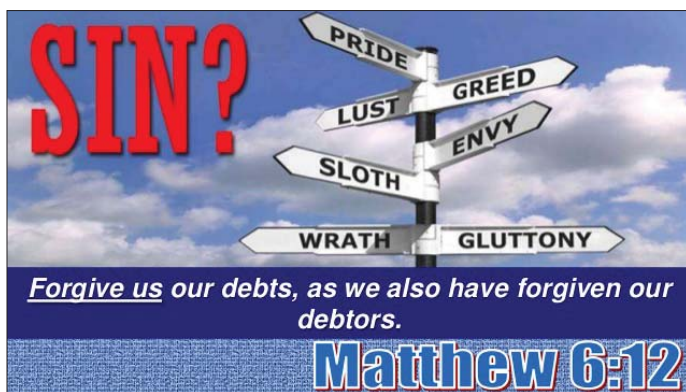


CONSCIENCE

“Holding the secret of the Faith in a Pure Conscience.” 1 Timothy 3:9 (Diaglott)

“Herein I also exercise myself to have a conscience void of offence toward God and men always” Acts 24:16

Most everyone has heard the saying “Let your conscience be your guide.” So we ask: is this thought enough for the consecrated child of God to guide him into righteousness? No, conscience is not a sufficient guide, we also need the light of God’s Word! Without the Truth provided in God’s Word, one of the greatest foes to character building, *indecision* can surely creep in, while the liberty or privilege of choosing, exercising our wills, is one of the grandest blessings accorded to humanity, and is an important element of man’s likeness to his Creator. True, we see will (decision of purpose) manifested on every plane of life, even by the crawling worm or snail. But the human will, more richly endowed by the Creator, has a higher range, which includes, especially, decision in respect to the higher moralities, taking hold of questions of justice and love which affect and influence all of life’s affairs. As we look about us we find that the people who are successful in any department of life are those who have purpose and will and determination—also that those who have no fixity of purpose, will, intention, are unsuccessful. As the Scriptures declare, “A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways” and if we look into the teachings of history we find this same lesson taught by all the past. It may, therefore, be well settled in our minds that one of the chief difficulties of the majority of the race is lack of decision, indecision of purpose (James 1:8).



When we ponder this reasoning with some great depth, observation shows us that the vast majority of our race are in this very condition of uncertainty, indecision—they have no positive aim, no fixed purpose in life. As a consequence they are unhappy, discontented and, like the chaff, ready to be blown by every wind. These discontented ones, purposeless, aimless, half awake, are the dangerous element of society, which will very shortly

bring to the world the awful anarchy which the Scriptures clearly show will close the present Age and usher in the New Dispensation of glory.

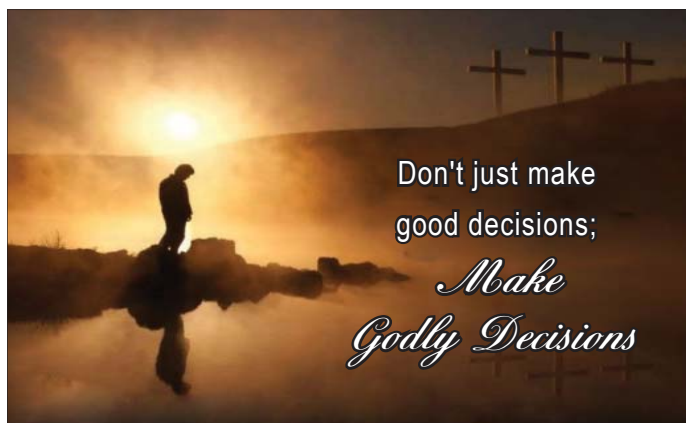


As man, looking at his fellow man while walking through the streets, can read in the countenances of their fellow-creatures the indecision, the lack of a fixity of purpose or real aim in life. Some look sour, sullen. They feel a grudge against their neighbors, who, because of purpose and decision, are more successful in the various affairs of life. Others have a resigned and despondent look, which intimates that they see no prospect in the future, and are merely enduring the present existence through a fear that the future may be worse. Other faces show eagerness—a desire to find a successful path, a realization that it is difficult to find and a hope that they may be amongst the favored few.

How few faces indicate that their owners are well balanced in mind, that they have a purpose in life, and that it is a noble, honorable, exalted purpose, generous and benevolent toward others! This, however, should be esteemed the ideal face, the one which indicates that the higher elements of the mind are in control, that the animal instincts for food and raiment have not run away with the manly qualities created originally in the image and likeness of God. Whoever recognizes this as the proper, the ideal condition, should search diligently to find the secret of it. That secret will be found to be a fixity of purpose, an establishment of mind and will [the giving of our mind and will to God in consecration] along the lines of wisdom and righteousness “study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth” (2 Tim. 2:15), in opposition to sin and injustice.

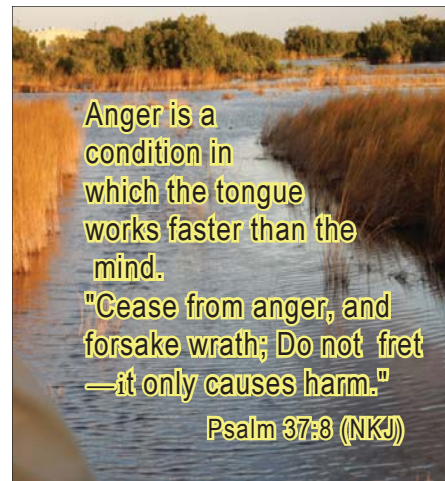
While it is very important that we make a wise choice, come to a correct decision, follow right principles, in

some instances there are certain particulars in which even a poor choice, an unwise purpose, might be more desirable than none. For instance, a determination to be rich cannot be classed as a good or honorable or trustworthy ambition. Nevertheless, by occupying his time, awakening his energies, stimulating his brain, it may prove a source of much rest and comfort to the one who makes such a decision, and who lays out his life for its accomplishment as a goal. Whether he accomplish his aim or not, it at least gives him a purpose in life which, by engaging his talents, gives him refreshment, ministers to his comfort, and makes him ten-fold more useful to society than the purposeless man. Not that we are commending such a course as a worthy one, but merely noting that though unworthy it is better than none. When we consider that the average life is seventy-five years, and that comparatively few of the race attain to ninety years, and that to the majority the present existence is but the vestibule to a future life, when we note the present tendency on the part of the entire civilized world to strive for money, wealth—not merely for the necessities, comforts and luxuries for themselves and their dependents—when we perceive that to gain wealth the majority are willing to sacrifice almost everything of virtue and character, time, energy, relationship and communion with God and even life itself—we realize that this choice indicates a serious unsoundness of mind, an unbalance which amounts almost to monomania. Nevertheless we repeat that such an unbalance, such an excessive concentration on a single object, is preferable to no choice, no decision of the will, and no purpose in life.



All reasonable people, then, can agree (1) that there is an advantage in making a choice, in reaching a decision in life as to what we will do with our time, our talents, our influence; (2) that the choice would preferably be a wise one, and (3) that we all need counsel in respect to what would constitute a wise choice, a wise decision, so that we

may make the most of our opportunities and attain the largest degree of blessing out of life in its present condition and also its hope for the future. To such a one comes the query, Where shall we obtain the counsel, the assistance so necessary to us—so necessary to our prosperity in the life that now is and in that which is to come? Jesus,



our Comforter, pointedly declares that he who does not seek to please Him by conforming to His instructions, thereby manifests that he does not love Him. Surely there can be no better test of love than devotion, and no better test of

devotion than obedience. Our enlightened consciences render hearty assent to the Master's words, and with the Apostle we exclaim, "The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then all were dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (2 Cor. 5:14, 15).

You can't have a positive life with a negative mind and a selfish deceiving heart lacking Love and Faith

The reformed one, if rightly instructed, realizes his inability to stand in his own strength, realizes that his *only hope of maintaining justification* granted to him lies in getting the Lord to take charge of him. At first he may think to go into partnership with the Lord, and to say, "Some of self and some of thee," some of my own will and some of the Lord's will; but rightly instructed he finds that this will not be satisfactory to the Lord; that the Lord will accept him, and become responsible for him, and guarantee him glorious victory and eternal reward, only upon this one condition, namely, a full self-surrender, a full consecration of heart.

It is after the sinner, with good conscience, has come through all this process and has made a full consecration of his heart to the Lord with purity of his intentions and motives to fulfill the Lord's great commandment, which is briefly comprehended in one word, Love, he will find that he has a battle to wage, that the law of his members, depraved through heredity in sin, is a strong law of

selfishness, in opposition to the new law, to which he has pledged himself, the law of his pure heart or new heart or will, the law of Love.

As we stated the conscience needs the help of God's Word, yet it is a divinely-implanted tool for Christian growth! We could say our culture has declared war on guilt. People are trained to ignore their guilt and yet they are drowning in it. Many people are enslaved to sex, numb to violence, and terminally self-consumed. The rapid increase in the pervasiveness and openness of sin is paralleled by a decreasing sensitivity to conscience. Our society refers anyone with guilt feelings to a therapist. When we ponder this situation it could be said that society encourages sin, but will not tolerate the guilt it produces.

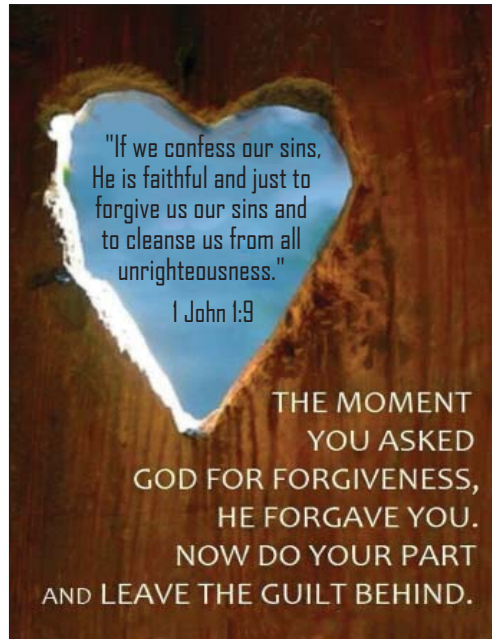
So we must ask, how do we deal with guilt! Do we ignore it? No, that would be very dangerous. We must understand that God has graciously implanted a powerful helper for our aid in the battle against sin. Yes, He has given us a conscience that can help to bring joy and freedom. Some Christians have come out from despicable backgrounds seeking freedom from sin and God has been gracious to "purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb. 9:14). This can be a daunting task in this world so full of sinful ways, but rest assured—you have every resource to keep a healthy, sensitive, and pure conscience. Here are some simple principles to remember involving confession, forgiveness and education.

God has provided a way to confess and forsake known sin which is an ongoing characteristic of the Christian walk "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). We should confess to those we have wronged, but above all, we should confess to the One whom sin offends most; our LORD!

We should educate our conscience to focus on the correct objects, the Divinely revealed Truth. Our conscience cannot look only at personal feelings. A conscience fixed only on feelings becomes unreliable.

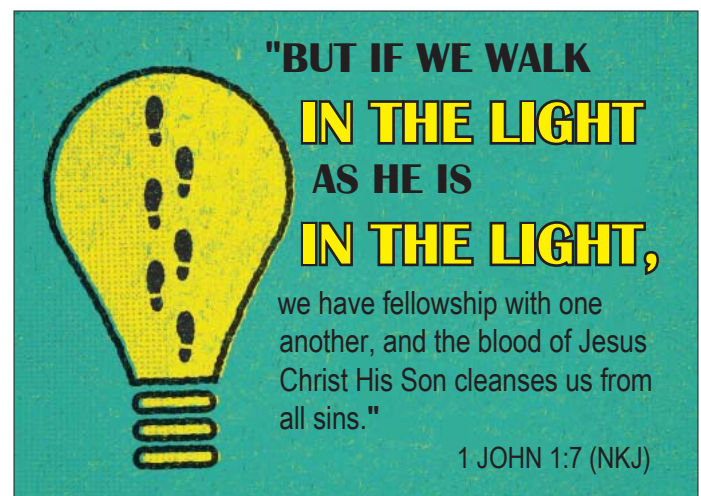
Learn to subject your conscience to the Truth of God and the teaching of Scripture. As you do that, your conscience will be more clearly focused and better able to

give you reliable feedback. With a trustworthy conscience, you have a powerful aid to spiritual growth and stability. With a clear conscience, you live in an abundance of freedom and joy which produces love for God and our fellow man.



We are, therefore, to have clearly before our minds the fact that the ultimate object of all the Divine dealings for us and with us, and the ultimate significance of all the Divine promises made to us, is the development of love, which is godlikeness, for God is love. And to have this love developed in us, in the sense and to the degree intended by the Lord, it is necessary that it shall come from a *pure* heart, in full accord with the Lord, and His law of love, and wholly antagonistic to the Adversary and his law of selfishness. To have this kind of love in its proper development requires also a good conscience: for be it remembered that there are bad

consciences—our consciences require regulating, as do all the other features of our fallen nature. If our consciences are to be regulated, we must have some standard by which to set and regulate them. The conscience is like a clock whose dial is properly marked with the hours, but whose correctness as a timekeeper depends upon the proper regulating of its mainspring, so that it may point out the hours truthfully: so our consciences are ready to indicate right and wrong to us, but they can only be relied upon to tell us truly what is right and what is wrong after being regulated, in connection with the new mainspring, the new heart, the pure will, brought into full harmony with the law of love, as presented to us in the Word of God.



OUR INTERNET MINISTRY

BibleStandard.com

The foundation of our worldwide Gospel ministry is the Bible, God's Word. Since our Movement's founding (1918), Bible Standard Ministries [LHMM] has sought to spread the True Gospel through the written and spoken word. Some of these methods have included our Bible study books, magazines, pamphlets, charts, *etc.*, and our convention and traveling minister programs. Through the years, we have always stood ready to utilize new methods of reaching God's people, such as radio, film, television, *etc.*

Technological pre-millennial blessings continue to expand our outreach. The Internet is without doubt the great modern vehicle for disseminating information. Previous methods of broadcasting religious information could only target the broad audience who identify as Christian. They could not target the smaller subset who are seriously interested in researching other Christian sources.

Are you a "thinking Christian"? The advantage of the Internet is that the Christian who finds our website is a "thinking Christian", a person who is searching and seeking for Biblical knowledge. You can read and re-read at your own pace and in the comfort of your own space.

We have had a continuous presence on the Internet since 2000. But the modern web is constantly changing and so we are upgrading to stay fresh and inviting.

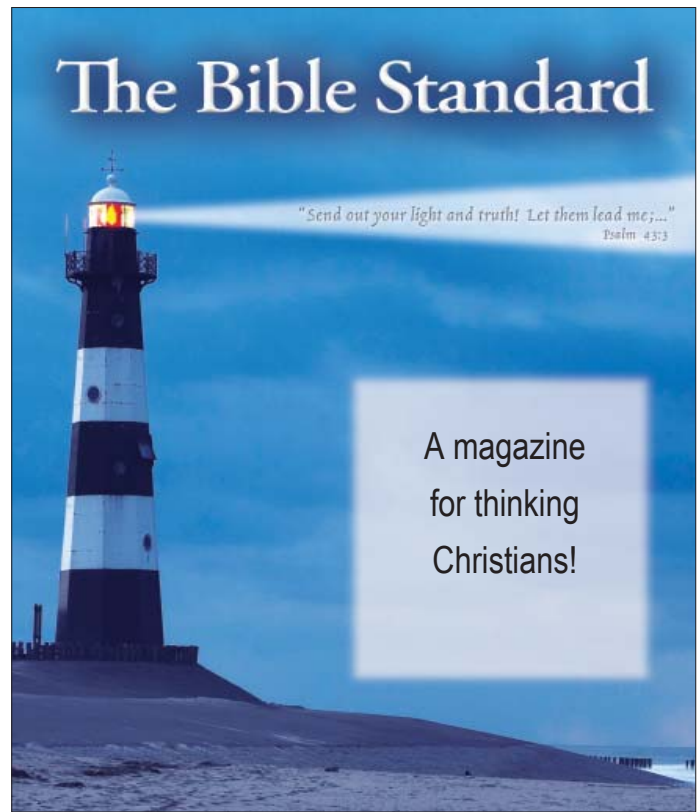
We invite you to our newly redesigned website.

Whether on a mobile device or standard computer, we believe it to be aesthetically pleasing and easy to navigate. With a great deal of expanded content and more on the way, it is our goal to make the Bible Standard Ministries website your study resource destination.

Some of the resources available:

- *The Bible Standard* magazine, published continuously for over 90 years
- Bible studies, a large selection including the seminal *Studies in the Scriptures*
- Bible questions with Scriptural answers
- Daily devotional messages
- And much more!

"My word ... shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I shall please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it" (Isa. 55:11).



Encouraging Scripture

"For his anger is but for a moment, His favor is for life; Weeping may endure for a night, But joy comes in the morning."

Psalm 30:5 (NKJ)