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*"The Churches of God Outreach Ministries provides leadership, information, and biblical teaching in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:19-20"*

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## Helping Them Grow

by Ian Hufton

One of our greatest joys in the "true believer" lifestyle should be the thrill of helping others come to a knowledge of the precious truths of God.

We are fighting the good fight and marching forward into the kingdom of God and working out our own salvation, and each of us should be saying, with confidence in God and His guidance, "I will make it to the first resurrection."

The only thing that can stop us is ourselves, doing things that cause us to become unfaithful to God. If we determine to love truth, to endure to the end and always be faithful to God and His teachings, we will make it, of that you can be certain. If you have any questions or concerns, request our free article "***Make Your Calling and Election Sure***," or contact CGOM at the number listed above.

### **ONCE SURE OF THE KINGDOM—THEN WHAT??**

After we are certain of God's guiding and our commitment never to deny Jesus, we need to be busy doing our Father's business. We have such great "eternity knowledge" of immense value in our minds, that God has helped us learn and understand. What is it worth to someone to have an opportunity to be in the first resurrection? Would they think it worth a billion dollars? Do we think that our knowledge of the first resurrection is worth a billion dollars? I think many of us would say "more than a billion." If God has given us this billion dollar plus knowledge, should we not be eager to pass this knowledge on to as many as will listen to God's glorious truth?

### **HOW CAN WE GIVE THIS PRICELESS KNOWLEDGE AWAY?**

Let us look at the apostle Paul for a great clue on how to spark non-believers curiosity. In Acts 17:22-34, Paul shows a great way to speak to strangers and develop a thirst for more of God's eternity-changing truth.

*Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious. For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD**. Whom therefore ye ignorantly*

*worship, Him declare I unto you. God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that He is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though He needed any thing, seeing He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after Him, and find Him, though He be not far from every one of us: for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also His offspring. Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device. And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: Because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead. And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again on this matter. So Paul departed from among them. Howbeit certain men clave unto him, and believed: among the which was Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them. (Acts 17:22-34)*

Notice that Paul starts with something they all are familiar with and weaves in the explanation of what God is doing with mankind. As we talk to people we should focus carefully on what we both accept as a true basis for discussion. Then just as Paul did, we should proceed to add a little of God's truth to draw their interest. In the verses above, Paul starts with their "unknown god" and leads them into new understandings of God's ways. As he proceeds he gently demonstrates that God does not live in buildings made by the hands of mortal men. He builds a little at a time to peak their interest in the truth. When Paul is interrupted he has managed to fully interest a few and partially interest many. Yes there were scoffers but many said we want to hear more of this next time. The great excitement is that a few immediately grasp the great value

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in what Paul is saying and they joined themselves to Paul's work. We, too, can interest non-believers in God's mighty truth by being patient and sharing at their level. As they develop a curiosity, they will begin to ask questions.

### SHARING JESUS'S PASSION

Jesus, in Matthew 9, demonstrates His yearning to have more laborers in the harvest to help the scattered people.

*But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest." (Matt 9:36-38)*

Jesus is deeply moved with compassion for the people "like sheep with no shepherd". As a result of this compassion, Jesus turns to His disciples and urges them (and us, by extension) to get active and help remedy this situation. He stresses the need for His servants to share in His compassion and be busy in prayer that more laborers will be sent into the harvest for the sake of educating those without the true knowledge of God's purposes.

In 2 Peter 3, God indicates His yearning to help people change to full acceptance of His teachings.

*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)*

God's passion is that none should perish but, instead, receive the knowledge of true repentance and of living by His precious truths.

### GOD URGES US ALL TO — FILL THE WEDDING

Jesus gave a powerful parable indicating how eager He is to have the marriage of the Lamb of God well attended.

*Therefore say I unto you, the Kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. (Matt 21:43-44)*

*And Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son. And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding; and they would not come. Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready; come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: And the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully,*

*and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth; and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, the wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good; and the wedding was furnished with guests. (Matt 22:1-10)*

God shows here that He wants us to go out and talk to people and invite them to the wedding supper and the first resurrection. We have so much of God's truth zipping around in our brains that it may be difficult to know what to say first and what to leave for later. First we need to ask God to guide our minds to mention those things most needed by each person we are contacting. Like Paul we need to perceive where the listener is theologically and craft our comments to gently lead them to accept great truths along the way to repentance and baptism.

### CUTTING A THICK STEAK

In Hebrews 5:12, Scripture tells us the brethren had enough time to become "teachers". Instead of first becoming mature in God's truth by exercising their senses to discern good and evil, the brethren were still unskilled in the word of righteousness (Hebrews 5:13,14). The unskilled are called "babes", who need "milk" not solid food. Non-believers need US to be mature (using solid food) and to be able to feed them milk at first, then small bites of solid food and finally help them to be able to eat a "full steak meal" by their own study habits. None of us would attempt to feed a young child a piece of steak (solid food) without first cutting it into small pieces. Likewise we should be mindful of cutting the many truths we understand into "bite-sized" pieces for those who are eager to learn more of God's ways on their own.

### PERISHING—A SMALL BITE OF TRUTH

If we can analyze what we know and how each piece of truth fits into the whole picture, we should be able to take a small piece and explain it in detail – thus feeding a small piece of truth (a bite-at-a-time). The rest of this article shows examples of how we can study a small piece of truth and be able to explain it (a little at a time) to the benefit of those who can't see the whole picture as yet:

### HEAR JESUS SPEAK..... ON PERISHING

Jesus speaks directly and indirectly (through Bible writers) about the word "perishing". Believe it (or not), Scripture (Jesus speaking) says all mankind will end up in either of two conditions. The best condition (or destiny) is to inherit eternal life in God's Kingdom. Amazingly (but true), the second destiny (the "life's end" condition) is simply to perish or cease to exist for all eternity. Jesus Christ states this in the Scripture below.

*For God so loved the world, that He gave His only*

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*begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)*

Jesus makes the same point through the Apostle Paul in these Scriptures:

*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. (1 Cor 1:18)*

*For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish; To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things? (2 Cor 2:15-16)*

Jesus shows that His sheep shall never perish, but instead, have eternal life:

*And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. (John 10:28)*

Jesus again refers to two destinies through Paul, in Thessalonians:

*And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. (2 Thess 2:10)*

Jesus speaks again in Matthew 5:30 saying your hand will perish (die or cease to live), if you cut it off. He also says it is better to lose a part, than for one's whole body (being) be cast into hell (fire). (Note: See Revelation 21-8 for an understanding of "hell fire." Also, see our booklet "*Lazarus and the Rich Man.*")

*And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. (Matt 5:30)*

Jesus then tells us that our loving heavenly Father does not want even one little one (child of God) to perish:

*Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish. (Matt 18:14)*

In Second Peter 3, Jesus tells us (through Peter) that God is not willing that any should perish but instead He wants all people to come to repentance.

*The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter 3:9)*

If people repent, turn to and follow God's ways, He will give them eternal life and they won't have to perish (see John 3-16). Again, Jesus presses the point home repent or perish.

*Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. (Luke 13:4-5)*

Contrary to men's traditions, people do not live for all eternity in hell fire. Jesus clearly says that mankind's two choices are: a) live for all eternity in God's Kingdom or b) perish (be destroyed).

### ADDITIONAL STUDY VERSES

For more proof on this subject, study the following verses:

Matthew 8:25,9:17,26:52

Mark 4:38

Luke 5:37, 8:24, 11:51, 13:33, 13:35, 15:17, 21:18

John 3:15, 6:27, 11:50

Acts 5:37

1 Corinthians 8:11

Hebrews 1:11

James 1:11

1 Peter 1:7

2 Peter 3:6

Jude 11

Request our article:

### ***Make Your Calling and Election Sure***

*(All Scriptures references are KJV unless otherwise noted.)*

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