

# The Mountain Messenger

A CHRISTIAN VOICE FROM THE MOUNTAIN STATE AND BEYOND

**THE BIBLE AS SCRIPTURE**

**OVERCOMING FAMILY BATTLES**

**DOES IT MATTER HOW WE WORSHIP GOD?**

Along with other great articles by...  
Jonathan Jarvis, Deborah Hoople (Amos), Dale  
Babinsky, and more...

“...The churches of Christ greet you” (Romans 16:16).

# Editor's Note

There is something peaceful about a mountain stream. Water makes its way around rocks, beneath fallen branches, and through narrow places as it continues its journey downstream. Here in West Virginia, we are blessed with countless scenes like the one pictured on the cover of this issue of *The Mountain Messenger*.

Working to understand a stream, sometimes you have to travel in the opposite direction. Follow the water backward, and eventually you begin getting closer to its source.

Our religious world has become filled with traditions, opinions, movements, denominations, philosophies, and practices accumulated over generations. Sometimes we can become so accustomed to what is downstream that we never stop to ask the important question: **Where did this come from?**

When it comes to our faith, we must continually return to the source. The psalmist wrote, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105 NKJV). God has not left us to wander through life attempting to discover truth for ourselves. He has spoken. His Word teaches us who He is, how He is to be worshiped, how we are to treat one another, how we should pray, how we should order our homes, and ultimately how we may be reconciled to Him through Jesus Christ.

In this issue, you will be challenged to consider whether it matters *how* we worship God. You will be reminded of the sufficiency and authority of Scripture. You will consider contentment, prayer, family relationships, Christian mentorship, and even the posture of the heart before God. We also look back 225 years to Cane Ridge and an important period in the history of the Restoration Movement when men began questioning inherited religious systems and searching again for the old paths of Scripture.

That same work of restoration must continue in every generation. Restoration is not merely something our spiritual forefathers did. We cannot inherit faithfulness simply because someone before us returned to the Bible. Each of us must open the Scriptures, examine ourselves, and ask whether what we believe and practice actually comes from God.

"Thus says the LORD: 'Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls'" (Jer 6:16).

Perhaps that is one reason I enjoy a mountain stream so much. No matter how far the water travels, somewhere upstream there is a source. Spiritually speaking, no matter how complicated the religious world around us becomes, we can always go back to the source.

If you have been encouraged by this work and would like to help us continue providing *The Mountain Messenger* free of charge, you can support this work by visiting [AddedtotheChurch.com](http://AddedtotheChurch.com) or by mailing contributions to:

Added to the Church, LLC  
4788 Stillwell Road  
Davisville, WV 26142

In Christian service,

Daniel P. Curry, Jr. "DJ"  
Executive Editor

# Contents

4

Does It Matter How We Worship God?  
Josh Hall

6

The Secret of Contentment  
Cheyenne Blizzard

What's Your Posture?

Jonathan Jarvis

7

8

O Taste and See that the Lord is Good  
Deborah Hoople (Amos)

10

The Bible as Scripture  
Sarah Curry

Older Women, Teach the Younger Women

Sally Rutter

11

12

The Friend at Midnight: What Jesus Teaches About Persistent Prayer  
Dale Babinsky

14

Overcoming Family Battles  
Debbie Kea

16

225th Anniversary of Cane Ridge Revival  
David R. Kenney

18

Other Publications

Resources

19

Back  
Cover

Who is a Christian?  
Eddie Cooper

CHARGE!  
Friday @ 5:00 AM  
WVAH TV 11.4  
Dish 290-36  
You Tube TV & Sling TV

V96.9  
MORE MUSIC. BETTER VARIETY!  
Sunday 9:30 AM

WUAM  
THE TRUE OLDIES CHANNEL  
98.1 FM • 107.9 FM  
AM 1450  
wwwradio.com  
Sunday 9:00 AM

Let us help  
your local  
work...call us!

Download the IGH APP...listen at your podcast platform  
Watch us on our YouTube channel...follow us on Social Media!

A MULTIMEDIA MINISTRY  
INTERNATIONAL GOSPEL HOUR  
www.internationalgospelhour.com 855-444-6988

# Events

JOIN US FOR

# FALL CAMP

AT WVCYC

FIRST 30 CAMPERS TO PRE-REGISTER GET A FREE T-SHIRT!



## GOD'S GIFTS TO US

**OCTOBER 17, 2026** 🌸 **10 AM-7 PM**

|                     |                        |                     |
|---------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>CHAPEL</b>       | <b>EVENING WORSHIP</b> | <b>CAMPFIRE</b>     |
| <b>PRAYER</b>       | <b>HIS WORD</b>        | <b>HIS SON</b>      |
| <b>CONNOR CURRY</b> | <b>COLE CURRY</b>      | <b>DJ KESSINGER</b> |

**BIBLE CLASS** **USING OUR GIFTS FOR GOD**

**ROD GODDARD (11-14 YEAR OLDS)**  
**GABE ADAMS (15-18 YEAR OLDS)**  
**JOSH DEHAVEN (COLLEGE)**  
**JOHN BOARD (ADULT)**



# SEEING GOD

## A BIG PICTURE Study of the Bible

**Free Live Online Study**  
One Story. One Savior. One Plan.

 **House to House Heart to Heart**

**What if you didn't just attend a Bible study ... but learned one you could lead?**

This January through June, we're hosting a weekly online Bible study every Tuesday night, designed especially for non-Christians who are reading our magazine. But this invitation is for you.

We're encouraging Christians to join us—not just to learn, but to prepare. Sit in. Take notes. Learn the flow. Ask questions. Then during July through December, you can open your living room, kitchen table, or coffee shop and confidently walk friends, neighbors, or family through the same study.

You don't need a Bible degree to lead friends and family to the cross—just a clear way to share what you already know with those around you.

If you've ever thought, "I wish I knew how to study the Bible with someone," this is for you. Join us January through June. Teach it July through December.

Scan the QR code to register and start your journey through the Bible's big picture!  
[housetohouse.com/study](http://housetohouse.com/study)



# The Mountain Messenger

Volume 3, Issue 3 — August 2026  
 © Added to the Church 2026

*Executive Editor* — Daniel P. Curry, Jr. "DJ"  
*Assistant Editor* — Jon Hescht  
*Graphic Editors* — Andrew J. Robison V, Kaylynn Robison  
*Cover Photography* — Abigail Morris

Articles in *The Mountain Messenger* may be copied and distributed for use in Bible studies and other such uses without any changes or edits to the text. In any instance of usage, copyright credit must be given to *The Mountain Messenger* a publication by Added to the Church and must include the author's name and volume/issue information cited.

[www.addedtothechurch.com](http://www.addedtothechurch.com)  
[Office@AddedtotheChurch.com](mailto:Office@AddedtotheChurch.com)

**f** "Added to the Church"

Receive *The Mountain Messenger* publication for free via e-mail every other month. View the digital version with your chosen device as a digital flipbook and enjoy the extras not available in the printed version.

OR

Receive a free copy of *The Mountain Messenger* shipped to you or your congregation every other month as funding permits. This version is excellent for those uncomfortable with electronics or who prefer larger print.

# SUBSCRIBE



# Does It Matter How We Worship God?

Josh Hall

In today's religious world, we often hear statements such as, "As long as your heart is in it, it will be pleasing to God," when it comes to worship. The idea being promoted is that we can worship God however we



# Does It Matter How We Worship God? • Josh Hall

choose, provided we are sincere and zealous. Scripture, however, presents a very different picture of what worship is and what makes it pleasing to God. To answer the question, “Does it matter how we worship God?,” let us consider one of the clearest examples used in the New Testament: Cain and Abel.

Many are familiar with the account of Cain and Abel in Genesis 4. Both men knew they were to worship God. Cain brought an offering from the fruit of the ground, while Abel brought an offering from the firstborn of his flock (Gen 4:3–4). God accepted Abel’s offering but rejected Cain’s (Gen 4:4–5). As a result, Cain became angry, refused to repent, and eventually murdered his younger brother (Gen 4:6–9). This raises an important question: Why was Abel’s offering accepted while Cain’s was rejected? Thankfully, the New Testament provides the answer.

“By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, through which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it he being dead still speaks” (Heb 11:4 NKJV). Scripture teaches that “faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Rom 10:17). Therefore, when the Hebrews writer says that Abel offered “by faith,” he is saying that Abel’s sacrifice was offered in accordance with God’s Will. In contrast, Cain’s offering was not offered by faith because it was not offered according to the word of God.

This does not mean that Cain was insincere in his offering. I believe he was very sincere; why else would he have been so angry when it was not accepted? The issue was not his sincerity but rather how his worship aligned with God’s command. God “obtained witness that [Abel] was righteous, God testifying of his gifts” (Heb 11:4 *emph. mine*). Pleasing worship to God is not merely a feeling of sincerity. You absolutely must be sincere in your worship; however, one can be sincere and be sincerely wrong in what they are doing.

The implication of Hebrews 11:4 is that if Abel was commended for what he brought before God, then, in part, what was wrong with Cain’s offering was what he offered. The apostle John puts it this way, using the example of Cain and Abel: “...he who practices righteousness is righteous” (1 John 3:7).

John further explains, “Not as Cain who was of the wicked one and murdered his brother. And why did he murder him? Because his works were evil and his brother’s righteous” (1 John 3:12). John describes Cain’s works as evil before he ever murdered Abel, referring back to his unacceptable worship. Therefore, the common belief that people can worship God however they choose and be right with God is absolutely false!

God has clearly revealed what He desires in worship: singing with our voice as the only instrument (1 Cor 14:15; Eph 5:19; Col 3:16), observing the Lord’s Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor 10:16; 11:23–26), prayer (Luke 3:21–22; 22:31–32), giving of our means on the first day of the week (1 Cor 16:1–2; Phil 4:18), the teaching and preaching of God’s word (Acts 17:2–3; Rom 10:14–17), and lives wholly devoted to Christ (Rom 12:1–2). To do less than God has commanded, to go beyond what He has authorized, or to substitute our own practices for His Will is to transgress His commands (Prov 30:6, Gal 1:6, Rev 22:18) and practice what Paul calls “self-made religion” (Col 2:23 NASB).

Jesus said, “...the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him” (John 4:22–23 NKJV). May we strive not only to worship God with zeal and sincerity but also in faithful obedience to His word. ▲

# The Secret of Contentment

Cheyenne Blizzard

Sometimes we as people can be very selfish. We want certain things like that one new car, a million dollars, or we may even want to live a certain lifestyle. The things we want may not always be right in front of us, but we often stop at nothing to obtain them. We may work more hours to try and make more money than what we get. We may try to change who we are as people to live the life that we want. Sometimes we can get so caught up in seeking to obtain these things that it can blind us to what we truly have. We can forget where all of these blessings come from: God. When we seek to obtain more, we neglect to acknowledge what we do have. But most of all, we neglect and forget about God.

Paul wrote in Philippians 4:12, “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want” (NIV). Notice that he says in

EVERYTHING he LEARNED to be content. Being content doesn’t just mean that we are thankful; it means that we know where those blessings come from. We should take time every day to thank God for what we have. Even if we want to thank Him for little things, it matters to Him.

While the Israelites were in the wilderness, God provided them with Manna to eat. He didn’t have to. He could’ve left them to find food for themselves, but He gave it to them by the love in His heart. How did they react to this? In Numbers 11:4–6 it says that they complained because they didn’t have meat or garlic. They even wanted to go back to their life in slavery just

to obtain those things. We often can have this same attitude. We want so badly to have all of the things that we desire that we leave the way of righteousness that Jesus gave His life for. When we make that commitment to walk with Him, we have to keep it. Nothing else should matter to us.

“Beware that you do not forget the Lord your God” (Deut 8:11 NKJV). Even in our times of want, we cannot forget God. We cannot forget His love for us. ▲



# WHAT'S YOUR POSTURE?

Jonathan Jarvis



I was recently reading a book on leadership entitled, *How to Lead When You're Not in Charge*. In one chapter, the author, Clay Scroggins, talks about challenging the way a certain thing is done in an organization to affect change. In the next chapter, he discusses what key

things are needed in making a challenge, and one of those things is the idea of posture.

Posture in the discussion of leadership and life in general is an interesting topic and one worth considering, even from a biblical perspective. Posture is a form of nonverbal communication that communicates something about us to other people. When thinking of posture, the common way of thinking about posture is physical posture. Physical posture is the way our bodies are positioned at any given moment. Not only does Scroggins briefly mention physical posture, but he also adds nonphysical posture (how we carry ourselves), specifically emotional posture (our thoughts and feelings toward ourselves and others). I also want to add the idea of spiritual posture, and how these all connect when it comes to how we position ourselves in relationship with God.

In the first place, let us consider what the Bible has to say with regard to posture in prayer. Discussions today seem to focus primarily on the physical posture while in prayer, but I believe the Bible stresses more the importance of emotional and spiritual posture of those who pray. Toward the end of the synoptic gospel accounts (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) of Jesus' life, Jesus goes to the garden of Gethsemane to pray before He gets arrested and goes through the process leading to His death. Luke records that Jesus "knelt down and prayed" (Luke 22:41). This is a common practice in the worship

of the Roman Catholic church, and a position in which some Christians take in their private prayers. Kneeling can show strong emotion and deep respect for someone, and sometimes it reflects physical or emotional weakness, like falling to one's knees. In fact, Mark records that Jesus "fell on the ground, and prayed" (Mark 14:35), and Matthew says almost the same thing, writing that Jesus "fell on His face, and prayed" (Matt 26:39). These are all ways of showing a moment of weakness and vulnerability. I am not suggesting that Jesus was weak, but His physical posture in this critical moment was one of humility and complete submission of His will to God the Father.

One's physical posture in prayer does not have to be limited to kneeling down. Luke 18:9–14 shows (in a parable) a Pharisee and a tax collector standing up to pray, but their emotional and spiritual postures were vastly different. Also think about Jonah. He prayed when he was in the belly of the great fish. Unlike popular pictures suggest, Jonah could not be in a formal sitting, kneeling, or standing position, as he was being digested by the fish. What matters more to God is the posture of the heart.

In the second place, let us notice what the Bible has to say with regard to posture in worship. In Psalm 95:6, the psalmist connects worship to the physical posture of bowing down and kneeling. Just as mentioned above with the prayer of Jesus, kneeling and bowing down can show a deep respect and reverence for God, and it can also reflect one's own humility and submission. In Acts 16, after Paul and his companions travel to Philippi, Paul and Silas are thrown into prison, and they begin worshiping God with praying and singing (v. 25). Their physical posture is not mentioned, but that is not the focus. The focus is on the spiritual posture of giving their glory and praise to God. They did not consider their physical circumstance as something to agonize about. Rather, they turned their attention to God. Jesus says in John 4:24 that worship is to be done "in spirit and truth." Ultimately, our physical posture is not the true focus of our relationship with God, but the spiritual posture of the inward man. ▲

# Taste

## AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD

Deborah Hoople (Amos), (Ph.D. Biomedical Sciences)

In our last article, we discussed olfaction (the sense of smell). Did you know that 70% of taste is controlled by smell? That's why when you're plugged up with snot, or you have caught the common cold, and you feel like you can't breathe, your taste changes too. Smell and taste are two of our "special senses," in that they are specific and require chemicals we breathe in or ingest to dissolve in body fluids so we can detect our environment (smell or taste). As you would expect, our taste buds are going to contain receptors that allow us to experience something like the sweet taste of honey or maybe the sour taste of a lemon. Many people think that the little bumps on your tongue are taste buds, but they're not! Those bumps are actually called papillae, which means finger-like projections. As odd as it seems, our taste buds are embedded within the papillae and possess many parts to allow us to taste. One part is a pore, which allows



dissolved chemicals to come in contact with a taste hair (receptor), which sends a signal down to one of three cranial nerves (the facial nerve - CN VII; the glossopharyngeal nerve - CN IX; the vagus nerve - CN X), so you can perceive what is in your mouth! I say what is in

your mouth vs. solely your tongue because you actually have taste within the tissues of the cheek, roof of the mouth, and the throat in addition to the tongue! As with smell, taste has an important and protective role. An unpleasant taste can indicate something has gone bad or is fermented, while something that is needed or good for the body may be pleasing to the palate. Did you know that it's believed sometimes we can get cravings for particular foods because we are deficient in a nutrient that food contains?!

Taste is sent through a signaling cascade associated with memory. As with smell, we can remember tastes we have encountered before, which helps us to determine what we are tasting, if it's good or dangerous, or if we are trying something new. As we age, our taste hairs become less receptive to chemicals. That is why individuals who are elderly commonly enjoy foods with stronger tastes: very sweet, salty, sour, etc.



## O TASTE AND SEE THAT THE LORD IS GOOD

• DEBORAH HOOPLE (AMOS), (PHD- BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES) •

Another fun fact is that it has been believed that different areas of the tongue are more or less responsible for perceiving certain tastes. For example, supposedly, we can taste sweet things better at the tip of the tongue. However, this theory has been recalled by some researchers. It's fun to think about, though!

If you'd like to see in action how things need to be dissolved for you to taste, put a napkin or paper towel on your tongue before you eat something and make sure the tongue is dry. Then, only put that food item on your tongue and see if the taste is as detectable as if your tongue were moist!

The Bible alludes to the sense of taste many times in the Scriptures. For example, taste is shown to explain the Lord's goodness in Psalm 119:103. In Ecclesiastes 9:7, Solomon explains that God's word is sweet to the taste, even sweeter than honey. Furthermore, Simon Peter also confirms that we long for the taste of spiritual milk, indicating that the Lord is good in 1 Peter 2:2-3. The book of Song of Solomon uses taste to describe the love between a couple that is passionate about one another (Song 1:1-8). Hebrews 6:4 uses taste to give light to the delights of heaven and that it is highly pleasurable.

One last example we should contemplate is the opposite of the verses mentioning taste as being good. Revelation 3:16 indicates that those who do not follow God's commands as He has given them are distasteful. It states that if one is lukewarm (not hot or cold), He will spew us out! By reviewing these verses, we can see that God is using a sensation, one that can help protect us and give us pleasure, to help us better understand His character and the Scriptures. We can see what is good and

evil in addition to just understanding an environment by taste. Furthermore, we can clearly see that as we want to be a sweet-smelling aroma for God, we also want to be a pleasant taste. We want to follow in Christ's perfect footsteps as He pleased God and made Him proud (Matt 3:17). Although not directly stated in Scripture, we can infer that Christ would be a sweet taste to the Lord; nothing God would want to spew out!

If you are curious about all the ways that the Lord is so, so good, please feel free to contact any of the writers in The Mountain Messenger. We are far from finished exploring the human body, so you can look forward to reading about another one of the special senses in the near future if you so choose! ▲

Blessings,  
Dr. Debbie Hoople (Amos)



# The Bible as Scripture

Sarah Curry

Scripture is thought of as religious writings that hold within them holy or sacred texts that are given to people by a Holy or Divine Being to instruct and guide our path or our life.

Personally, how I see the Bible to function as Scripture is like a light guiding my path. Within the Bible, we read in Psalm 119:105, “Your word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path” (NKJV).

This Scripture, given to us by the Lord, tells us that the Bible is to function as a guide for us. We are to live by the Scriptures and mold our lives to match what we read and study within Scripture. Some have asked, why follow what the Bible says? Why this book? The reason we can look at Scripture found within the Holy Bible and use it as our guide on how to live our lives is that Scripture has proven time and time again to be truly the word of the Lord and divinely inspired.

There are sixty-six books, thirty-nine books in the Old Testament and twenty-seven books found in the New Testament. These books were written or compiled over a span of about 1,500 years and have over forty different authors. In short, these facts alone solidify my personal belief that Scripture is indeed from a Divine Being; therefore, we should be reading and studying it daily to see what messages we are being told or lessons we are being taught within the text.

I believe that Scripture has authority in our lives

because it has been given to mankind to learn from and to follow. We learn how to follow Scripture by studying the Bible deeply to get to know who God is, who we are, why we are here, what sin is, how to avoid it, and so forth. With a basic understanding of these things, we can move on to learning how to live our lives as we are being guided by God’s word.

Since I believe that Scripture is indeed given to us by God and is holy, I believe everything within Scripture is for our learning. We can read in 2 Timothy 3:16 that Scripture is given to us for reproof, for teaching, and for training. We can read in 2 Peter 1:3 how God has given mankind everything we need for life and godliness. The Bible is our complete handbook on life and everything we need to know. It is also the book where we can learn about God, Christ, and how to live a faithful life so we can one day go to heaven and be with the Lord.

Our lives should always revolve around Scripture and we should constantly work to improve. That is what is so wonderful about the power of God and His word. If we let our pride down, submit to the Lord, and allow His word to penetrate our hearts, He can mold us according to His word into what He desires us to be. ▲



# Older Women, Teach the Younger Women

**Sally Rutter**

Ladies,

Growing up, I never understood why God would tell the older women to teach the younger women how to love their husbands and their children. I always thought that came naturally. But once again, God knows more about us than we know about ourselves.

Since I have become an adult, I have witnessed several times when I could see why we need to teach them. Sad to say, I have met several young families where the mother doesn't know how to love her spouse and especially their children.

I know a girl who is living with her grandparents. She is a senior in high school, and at this time in her life, she needs her mother. She has very important decisions to make that will affect the rest of her life, and right now she does not have that rapport with her mother. Her father lives in another state and has a new wife and baby. He made it clear when he left that he was out of her life. My prayer is that she meets a Christian boy and they raise their family in the church, and she will be the wife and mother that God wants her to be.

Children are such a blessing to a family. I come from a family of 6 children. I don't think any of us ever felt unloved or unwanted. We ate together as a family. We

went places as a family, and the only babysitters we ever had were our grandmothers when another sibling was being born. I remember my Dad saying to one of my aunts, "If my children aren't welcome, neither am I." We did not go to that function.



Wives are to love their husbands and submit to them. That means when they agree with them and when they don't. God made man the head of the home, as Christ is the head of the church. Sometimes I am sure the husbands feel neglected because of the mother taking care of the children, doing laundry, cooking, cleaning, and keeping everyone on schedule. At the end of the day, we shouldn't be too tired to spend quality time with our husband.

There are too many girls out there today who have not been taught the values that a Christian should have. They start dating way too young. They do not have the discipline that they need. Some have parents who have died; some parents are very sick. They feel like they are on their own at a very vulnerable time in their life, and they end up doing things and going places that get them in trouble. Now they have a baby to raise on their own, and they are still a child themselves.

Yes, God said in Titus 2:3-5, "The aged women likewise, that they may be in behavior that becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the younger women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed." (KJV).

God knows about love. He gave His only Son to die on the cross of Calvary in order that we may be saved. We need to hear His Word (Rom 10:17). Believe it (Acts 16:31). Repent of our sins (Luke 13:3,5). Confess our faith (Rom 10:10). Be baptized (Mark 16:16) and live our lives in His service for our lifetime.

God is Love. Christ is Love. And we should follow the teachings and examples that we have set before us in the New Testament today. ▲

# The Friend at Midnight: What Jesus Teaches About Persistent Prayer

Dale Babinsky

There is a noticeable difference between receiving a generic form letter and receiving a handwritten note. One may communicate the necessary words, but the other carries thought, attention, and sincerity. Prayer can be much the same way. It is possible to say the right phrases while still failing to offer God the thoughtful, heartfelt communication He desires.

Many prayers contain familiar expressions such as “guide, guard, and direct us” or “give us a ready recollection.” These words are not wrong, but when repeated without thought, they can become routine rather than relational. Jesus modeled something different: a prayer life marked by sincerity, purpose, dependence, and persistence.

Luke’s Gospel gives special attention to the prayer life of Jesus. In Luke 11:1, the disciples find Jesus praying “in a certain place,” and when He finishes, they ask, “Lord, teach us to pray.” Their request suggests that they saw something in His prayers that was different from ordinary religious habit. They witnessed a relationship with the Father that was intimate, steady, and powerful.

## **The Parable of the Friend at Midnight**

In response to the disciples’ request, Jesus tells the parable commonly known as the Friend at Midnight in Luke 11:5–10. The story is simple, but its lesson is profound. A man receives an unexpected guest late at night and discovers that he has no food to offer. In need, he goes to a neighbor and asks for three loaves of bread.

To understand the force of the parable, it helps to remember the culture in which Jesus spoke. In ancient Israel, hospitality was a serious responsibility. Travelers depended on the generosity of households, especially when there were no modern conveniences such as hotels, restaurants, or late-night stores. If a guest arrived, the host

was expected to provide food and shelter.

The man in the parable has no bread left, and his need is urgent. Yet the neighbor he approaches is already in bed, likely with his family. Getting up would disturb everyone. From a practical standpoint, the request is inconvenient. From the host’s standpoint, however, the need cannot wait.

## **Persistence in Prayer**

The heart of the parable is persistence. The man continues knocking because the need is real. Luke 11:8 describes his approach with a word often understood as “impudence” or “shamelessness.” He is not casual, timid, or easily discouraged. He keeps asking because he recognizes both the urgency of the situation and the ability of his neighbor to help.

Jesus immediately applies the lesson with three commands: ask, seek, and knock. These are not one-time actions performed without conviction. They describe a continuing posture of dependence on God. The faithful person keeps asking, keeps seeking, and keeps knocking, trusting that God hears and responds according to His wisdom.

Persistence in prayer does not mean that every request will be answered with a simple “yes.” Scripture gives many examples of faithful people who prayed earnestly and received an answer different from what they desired. Moses prayed to enter the Promised Land, David



# The Friend at Midnight: What Jesus Teaches About Persistent Prayer

## • Dale Babinsky •

prayed for his sick son, and Paul prayed for the thorn in his flesh to be removed. In each case, God heard, but His answer was shaped by a wisdom greater than human understanding.

### **The Father Who Gives Good Gifts**

Jesus continues in Luke 11:11–13 by shifting from the image of a reluctant neighbor to the image of a loving father. If a child asks for bread, would a father give a stone? If he asks for fish, would he give a serpent? If he asks for an egg, would he receive a scorpion? The expected answer is obvious: even imperfect earthly fathers understand how to give good gifts to their children.

Jesus' point is not that God must be worn down by repeated requests. God is not like the sleepy neighbor who finally helps because he wants the knocking to stop. Instead, the parable argues from the lesser to the greater. If persistence can move a reluctant friend, how much more should believers confidently approach a loving Father who already desires what is best for His children?

The contrast in the parable is powerful. The friend is reluctant, but God is willing. The request comes at midnight, but God never sleeps. The neighbor is

approached on behalf of a stranger, but God knows His people intimately. The requested gift is simple bread, but God offers eternal blessings. The man in bed is inconvenienced, but God's love is perfect and generous.

### **Prayer That Keeps Knocking**

The Parable of the Friend at Midnight teaches that prayer should be sincere, persistent, and rooted in trust. God does not desire empty phrases or mechanical repetition. He desires honest hearts that seek Him with faith.

When our needs are real, our prayers should be real as well. Whether we are seeking salvation, wisdom, healing, strength, forgiveness, or guidance, we are invited to keep the conversation with God open. We ask humbly, seek earnestly, and knock boldly, trusting that our Father hears us.

God's answer may not always match our expectations, but His gifts are always shaped by perfect wisdom and love. The One who invites us to pray is not distant, indifferent, or unwilling. He is a Father who knows what is good and gives what is best.

So keep asking. Keep seeking. Keep knocking. God is listening. ▲

# OVERCOMING FAMILY BATTLES

Debbie Kea



We've all experienced them—battles in our family, in our physical family or our spiritual one. That's common to us all because we are all different; yet we must find a way to live peaceably and to resolve our conflicts. But how? I don't have all the answers, but

God does, in His Word. I hope these points will help you:

**Look at yourself first.** Do you remember Jesus' teaching in Matt 7:5? We need to get rid of the log/beam in our own eye before we start pointing at others. Own up to your part of mistakes made. James 5:16 says to confess your faults and to pray for one another. Practice that. Don't be a blame shifter! Consider what is the root, and consider what is the cost. Is this worth it? Also consider what you can change and what you can't in the situation. More on that later.

**Listen.** James 1:19 is clear when he says to be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. That's a command. Swift to hear, not just thinking about what you are going to say next. Actually listen so people know you value them. Pause and think before you speak, even when you are angry. And don't get angry over the slightest thing.

**Maybe you need to reframe the narrative.** That

means take a new perspective on the story running through your mind. Stop rehearsing the bitterness of what you think happened. We keep repeating offenses in our minds and tend to blow them out of proportion. Try to change perspectives. And don't keep a loop repeating in your head! Don't dwell there! You may visit the memory but don't camp out there. Determine to move on and live your life.

**Beware of landmines.** Differing opinions, habits, and practices can be serious landmines. Determine to resolve your misunderstandings, hurts, and conflicts peaceably and gently.

**Check your heart.** What is in our hearts comes to the surface. Clean out any pride you are holding on to. Don't get caught up in the me-me-me cycle.

**Speak the truth in love.** We all know this verse, Ephesians 4:15. But do we practice it? Also practice Matthew 18:15. If your brother trespasses against you, go to them. Most families either yell to get it off their chest, or they sulk alone to maintain peace. Do we desire something from someone so badly we crush or bruise anyone that gets in our way? Stop your selfishness and speak in love to resolve.

**Sometimes spiritual division versus harmony must be considered when dealing with family strife.** In Matthew 10:34–36, Jesus declares that He brings a sword to some families. In other words, His truth will set a mother against a daughter, and so on. A person's foes can be of his own household. We must love the truth and the

# OVERCOMING FAMILY BATTLES • DEBBIE KEA

Lord more than our own family. Some things are sinful and just cannot be allowed in your home. Maybe you are dealing with an unfaithful child. Look at the parable of the prodigal son. The father didn't go chasing after him. He didn't seek him out in the far country, follow him around, or nag him to come home. His son knew what he had done. The father waited for him to come to his right mind and come home. Then he compassionately forgave. Maybe your family member is choosing a wicked lifestyle. You cannot agree or condone that. The devil can use many things to wreck a family. We cannot choose peace over truth.

**Forgive.** Ephesians 4:32 is clear and will solve so many problems. "Be ye kind, tenderhearted, forgiving one another" ... Colossians 3:13 also says "forbearing one another and forgiving one another" (KJV). We must learn to overlook offenses. Proverbs 10:12 says "hatred stirreth up strifes, but love covereth all sins." Proverbs 19:11 says "discretion of a man deferreth his anger and it is his glory to pass over a transgression." James 5:20 and 1 Peter 4:8 remind us that love covers a multitude of sins. You can forgive and still have pain from mistreatment or situations. We have memory, and sometimes events will raise their ugly heads in our minds. Sometimes we must forgive again, over and over, until our wounds heal or until the Lord comes back!

**Protect peace and set boundaries.** Romans 12:18 tells us, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live

peaceably with all men." While this is true and we should live that way, we are responsible for protecting our homes from the devil's snakes in this world. Parents set boundaries to protect their families and to teach discipline. What do you allow in your home?

**Seek reconciliation.** Some people love strife; they are happier when they are stirring things up. We can't be like that as Christians. Remember to be kind, gentle, without anger or malice, serving one another, not to win the argument but to win back the relationship.

**Submit to God.** In James 4:6–7, 10, God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you...humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up!

## Summary:

Look at ourselves. Do a self-exam.

Listen. Show you care; hear them out.

Let go through forgiveness...over and over if necessary.

Lean on God in prayer and on brethren for help. Ask for wisdom and strength of heart.

Live peaceably. Remember what your purpose is—to glorify God!

Learn from mistakes...yours and theirs.

Look to God's Word for your answers...then live them out.

Let God take care of what you can't. Some things won't be settled in this life. ▲

# *225th Anniversary of Cane Ridge Revival*

David R. Kenney



In August of 1801, an event that has been called the “America’s Pentecost” and “The Second Great Awakening” by some occurred at Cane Ridge, Bourbon County, Kentucky. Some claim that this was a pivotal point in the American Restoration Movement. But in what way was this event a restoration event?

Perhaps one would benefit by realizing that “The First Great Awakening” goes back to Colonial Days, where Calvinistic Preachers, such as Jonathan Edwards and his famous sermon “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” called people to cry and plead at the Mourners Bench for a direct operation of the Holy Spirit to inform and confirm they were of the elect, as taught by Calvinism. During the pioneer days, it was not uncommon for what were called “Camp Meetings,” which some today may call Revivals. These events would lead to some interesting happenings, many of which also occurred at the Cane Ridge Revival.

Barton W. Stone was a Presbyterian at the time who had reservations about the Westminster Confession of Faith, which was Calvinistic, and expressed such in 1798 when he was asked if he would support it as part of his ordination: “I do, as far as I see it consistent with the

word of God.” The Cane Ridge Revival included several Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist preachers who shared in Calvinistic views, including the need for a direct operation of the Holy Spirit to identify those of the election. The attendance was in the thousands over the multi-day event, and emotional exuberance was high in the air. Some estimate the attendance was a tenth of the population of Kentucky at the time.

There were intriguing things that happened. One of the witnesses, Richard McNemar, was with Stone, and even signed *The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery*, until he left for Shakerism. In his eyewitness account, he wrote: “Under such exhortations the people began to be affected in a very strange manner. At first they were taken with an inward throbbing of heart; then with weeping and trembling; from that to crying out, in apparent agony of soul; falling down and swooning away, till every appearance of animal life was suspended, and the person appeared to be in a trance. From this state they would recover under different sensations” (20). There are other reports of “barking,” as if treeing Satan or evil forces. Some claimed “Holy Ghost Laughter” for when they seemed to laugh uncontrollably, unable to cease laughter.

From the Cane Ridge Revival of 1801, there is a chain of events worth noting. Stone was already questioning Calvinism, and two of his associates were brought up on charges by the Presbyterian authorities for preaching against their creed. Seeing “the writing on the wall,” Stone and his associates withdrew on September 10, 1803. They immediately formed the Springfield Presbytery on September 12, 1803. So, their course was moving further away from the Calvinistic doctrines that contributed to sensational experiences back in 1801 based on their study of the Bible.

They came to realize that they were merely forming another body like the one they were being expelled from. They were seeking to follow what the Bible taught, not what men claimed the Bible taught. They issued one of the greatest documents of Restoration History, *The Last Will and Testament of the Springfield Presbytery* on June

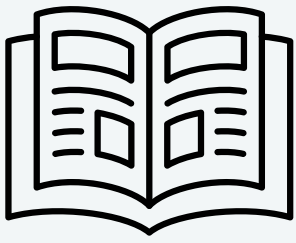
28, 1804, nearly three years after the events of the Cane Ridge Revival. The “die had been cast,” and they were on the path, the old paths of Scripture (cf. Jer 6:16). Notice some excerpts from the document of 1804: “We will, that this body die, be dissolved, and sink into union with the Body of Christ at large; for there is but one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling.” “We will, that the people henceforth take the Bible as the only sure guide to heaven; and as many as are offended with other books, which stand in competition with it, may cast them into the fire if they choose; for it is better to enter into life having one book, than having many to be cast into hell.” “Finally we will, that all our sister bodies read their Bibles carefully, that they may see their fate there determined, and prepare for death before it is too late.” Sadly, some would be taken away by other manifestations and joined Shakerism. Some defected and went back to Presbyterianism. Even some who signed the *Last Will and Testament* were deceived. It is a cautionary tale that all need to hear. God’s word is truth, and we must direct our lives in conformity with it. Thankfully, some would persevere and lead an important restoration movement so that others could learn the gospel truth.

So, while the Cane Ridge Revival may have been a catalyst to the restoration movement in Kentucky, the journey had actually just begun. Restoration is not just an event; it is a journey! A journey of “Back to the Bible” and “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified” (2 Cor 13:5 NKJV). It is a reminder that though men may do sensationalistic things, the true sensation is found in God’s Word. ▲

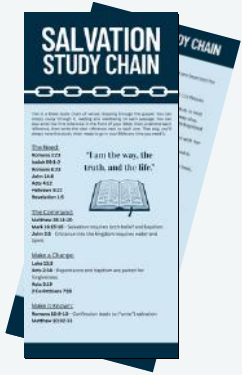
*Hope S. Dickinson, editor. The Cane Ridge Reader: The Biography of Elder Barton Warren Stone, Observations on Church Government, Last Will and Testament of That Reverend Body; History of the Christian Church in the West, Paris, KY. Cane Ridge Preservation Project. 1972.*

*Richard McNemar. The Kentucky Revival; or, A Short History of the Late Extraordinary Outpouring of the Spirit of God in the Western States of America, Agreeably to Scripture Promises and Prophecies Concerning the Latter Day: With A Brief Account of the Entrance and Progress of What the World Call Shakerism Among the Subjects of the Late Revival in Ohio and Kentucky. New York: Edward O. Jenkins. 1846.*

*Wayne Shaw. “The Historians’ Treatment of the Cane Ridge Revival.” The Filson Club History Quarterly. 37 (1963) 249–57.*



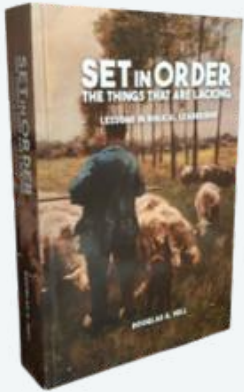
# Other Publications



## ***Salvation Study Cards***

Study chain reference and evangelism cards that take you step-by-step through the bible and what it says about salvation.

Available at [bit.ly/study-card](http://bit.ly/study-card)



## ***Set In Order The Things That Are Lacking***

A new work by Douglas Pell discussing the eldership and leadership in the Lord's church.

Available at Sain Publications



## ***New Testament Expositor***

A digital publication of scholarly articles on biblical topics.

Edited by Scott Judge and Ron Thomas.

Included with a digital subscription to *The Mountain Messenger*.



# Resources

## General Resources



**Added to the Church** - Publisher of *The Mountain Messenger* & New Testament Expositor - [addedtothechurch.com](https://addedtothechurch.com)



**Our Authors** - Meet the authors of *The Mountain Messenger*!  
[addedtothechurch.com/christian-authors/](https://addedtothechurch.com/christian-authors/)



**West Virginia School of Preaching** - 2-year program of classes taught by sound Christians - [wvsop.com](https://wvsop.com)



**Sharp Five Media** - Affordable church websites and media by a member of the church - [sharp-five.com](https://sharp-five.com)



**Bible Call** - Access Bible information recordings online or by phone. - [biblecallonline.com](https://biblecallonline.com)

## Songs & Hymns



**Teaching and Admonishing** - Free to listen and use original hymns by members of the church - [churchofchristsongs.com](https://churchofchristsongs.com)



**WVCYC "Pressing On" CD** - Contact Andy Robison to order your CD or Thumb Drive!  
[andycd2020@gmail.com](mailto:andycd2020@gmail.com)

## Podcasts



**The Religious Coffee Hour** - Podcast hosted by Hunter Melott found wherever you listen to podcasts.



**Authentic Christian** - Podcast produced by GBN, hosted by Aaron Gallagher and Scott Ingram [gbntv.org/the-authentic-christian/](https://gbntv.org/the-authentic-christian/)

## Deepen Your Knowledge



**Apologetics Press** - Articles, videos, books, etc. focused on the defense of New Testament Christianity - [apologeticspress.org](https://apologeticspress.org)



**Gospel Broadcasting Network** - Provides Bible-based and unbiased resources from the Word of God - [gbntv.org](https://gbntv.org)



**Focus Press** - Provides podcasts, articles, videos, books, and daily devotionals. - [focuspress.org](https://focuspress.org)



**World Video Bible School** - Videos and free study courses on Biblical topics - [wvbs.org](https://wvbs.org)



**Through the Scriptures** - Study through the entirety of the Scriptures - [throughthescriptures.com](https://throughthescriptures.com)



**Families of Faith** - Bible materials for families & churches. - [familiesoffaith.store](https://familiesoffaith.store)



**Salvation Study Chain Cards** - Order these tract-like evangelism tools for your congregation. - [bit.ly/study-card](https://bit.ly/study-card)

## Fun and Games



**Birble** - Bible version of Wordle. Guess the five-letter word from the KJV Bible! - [ajrv.us/birble](https://ajrv.us/birble)



**Memoria** - Bible verse memorization tool. Removes 1 word at a time as you practice. - [ajrv.us/bible/memoria](https://ajrv.us/bible/memoria)



4788 Stillwell Road  
Davisville, WV 26142

# WHO IS A CHRISTIAN?

## Eddie Cooper

You might wonder why this question is being asked. I know that many Christians have heard hundreds of sermons on how to become a Christian. And, I'm sure when they obeyed the gospel, they understood the significance of that, but maybe not as thoroughly as they ought of the significance of that decision.

It is important for all of us to think about WHO is lost, and WHO is saved. Based on the New Testament, one who is lost needs to read Ephesians 2:11–13: “Therefore, remember that, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called uncircumcision by what is called the circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were WITHOUT Christ, being aliens from the covenants of promise, having no hope and WITHOUT God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ” (NKJV).

Notice the phrases “without Christ” and “without God.” Would this mean that one is lost? If not, why not? Now notice that those “in Christ” were brought near by the blood of Christ. Would that mean they were saved? As an example, ballplayers state that Jesus is their Lord, demonstrate their faith in God, and state their love for God. I've heard Christians say that by their acknowledgment of these things, it must mean they are Christians. But is that what makes them a Christian? Upon checking, one may find out that they are a member of some denominational group, which doesn't even believe in

God's only plan of salvation. I'm thankful that we are hearing ballplayers acknowledge there is a God, and demonstrating their dependence on God, but what about obeying His will in becoming one of God's children?

I know immediately, someone will claim that I'm putting myself up as judge. How do we really know if a person is a Christian or not? Is it not by comparing what they have done with God's plan?

On one occasion, Jesus asked what might seem to us an odd question: “Who is my mother and who are my brothers?” Then he answered, stretching out His hand toward His disciples and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother” (Matt 12:49–50). So our answer should be that a Christian is one who does the will of God. Yes, we can know whether a person is a Christian or not.

Check out these verses: “Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one's slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness? But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness” (Rom 6:16–18).

Each man needs to make the decision whether he wants to be a slave of sin, which leads to death, or a slave of righteousness, which leads to life. ▲



## SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

[WWW.ADDEDTOTHECHURCH.COM](http://WWW.ADDEDTOTHECHURCH.COM)

