
April 01
TRASH CONTAINERS
Bill Griffin
05/25/1999

I have a friend who is an elderly lady and is like a mother/sister to me. I visited weekly with her and her husband until he died this past year. Now I visit and try to make sure she is doing okay.

Every other Monday, I have been riding my mower through the streets of the subdivision over to her house and cutting her grass. My brother goes with me most of the time and I'm sure we are quite a show on the streets of Southgate.

This past Monday, I was alone and picked the same time to be on the streets that one of the waste disposal trucks was running his route. I thought he had me one time when the arms started to reach out and grab the container.

I thought about that container and how we place all our garbage and trash in the container and push it out to the street once a week to be emptied so we can haul it back and refill it again. Some of the containers I passed had closed lids indicating partial filling. Some could not contain all the garbage inside and the lids were left up and open to help with the spillover. Over and over the cycle goes. I thought about how we as people are like this. We fill our body, soul, and spirit daily with the trash and garbage of sin and worldly things. Then, once a week we haul

our containers to church in an effort to have them emptied and shined for reuse. Some who try to live exemplary lives can get the lids closed but there are others who live the world's way day by day and therefore the trash runs over. Notice though, that both have to be emptied.

I know that we will never be able to do away with all waste and trash in our daily worldly living and we will always have trashcans. But, we can begin to lower the amount of spiritual waste we contain in these earthly bodies. To do this, we need to remember who we are and Whose we are.

1 Cor 6:19-20... What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Would you throw trash or garbage in the physical building we call a church or temple? Heaven's no! Why then do you let trash and garbage into your mind, body, soul, and spirit? You are much more precious to God than any physical building could ever be. Remember: He did not send His Son to die for a building.

April 02
WARNINGS
Bill Griffin
5/19/1999

My brother lives on the corner on the street behind me and this corner is controlled by a **STOP** sign. A couple of days ago, my niece came easing up to the sign but did not come to a complete stop before proceeding. Needless to say, there just happened to be two Gaston County Police cars sitting on the side street watching. Now by the time they had started their vehicles and pulled to the intersection, my niece had already pulled into my brother's driveway. When two police cars pulled into the driveway behind her, her first thoughts were: 'Oh my God! Something has happened to momma and daddy'. Now this scene would have been really hilarious if she had taken off running into the house with her first thoughts but since the Patrolman was just walking easily toward her, she stood and waited. That's when he nabbed her for not coming to a complete stop at the sign. Oh! Was she embarrassed! Especially when momma and daddy came out to see what all the commotion was about.

Thankfully, since she did almost stop, he gave her a warning ticket. Thinking of this ticket brings a couple of thoughts to mind. The ticket was written because she had broken the law. The ticket was a warning ticket. It cries a warning that there is danger in breaking this law. A serious accident could occur and possible bodily harm.

How many times has God issued 'warning tickets' to us? Over and over in His Word are

warnings of consequences for breaking His Law. Just as Melissa tried to compromise this law by 'almost' obeying, don't we continue to try to water God's law down to fit our daily lifestyles? Breaking God's Law also carries a warning. Hell awaits! God continues to issue us warning tickets to steer us clear of hell and toward a relationship with Him. We who have been warned also have a responsibility - An awesome responsibility.

Ezek 3:18-19... When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.

The Patrolman with the citation was warning Melissa that there is a danger ahead if she continues. There could be monetary fines or possibly worse; an accident with loss of life. Are you warning those who do not know of the dangers of breaking God's Law and of the impending consequences? Not only loss of life, but separation from God forever. Heed the warning above that God gave to Ezekiel to share with us.

April 03
WE ARE ALL TERMINAL
Bill Griffin
8/25/99

God's choice to heal sickness is a right reserved exclusively to HIM. Because He is an all powerful living God, He certainly has the power to heal. Why one person is to be healed and not another; a few and not all. Ultimately though, even all who are healed must face death. God says

"it is appointed unto man once to die". Only two have ever escaped but both were taken by God in a special way. One other was removed from the jaws of death after four days by the living God but was later left to face death again. Permanently.

Notice though how God heals. It is miraculous. It is immediate. It is permanent. There is no showboating to draw attention but all attention should be given to HIM alone. There is no gradual healing. No falling down; 'slain in the spirit'. Healing comes at God's discretion, not because I paid someone or stood in line for it or appeared before an individual who claimed he or she was able to do it.

Do not discount the natural process of healing though. God allows healing to take place and only HE can mend the body. Healing naturally

takes time. God is still there too. The God I know is the same God you know and sometimes we just have to trust HIM and allow HIS will to be done. He is acquainted with any pain, grief or illness you may be facing. HE can handle your prayer requests. Sometimes I get a busy signal when I try to dial out on my phone but I never get a busy signal with God.

Best of all though, it is free! No where in scripture did God ever charge an individual for healing.

April 04

WE ARE NOT HERE TO GET ALONG

Bill Griffin

2-19-99

Satan is stealing our children and our families. How, you may ask? By feeding them with the idea that the things of the world are to be desired and that they can believe in 'A' religion and everything will be okay.

We are in that time mentioned in Scriptures as the great falling away and we are asked to be tolerant. We are asked to live in harmony with other religions. The World Council of Churches is ushering in the one world religious system. We are asked to believe that we can all be God's children, live under one umbrella side by side, each contributing to the common good, and believe any religion we want and it will be okay. BULL! Satan's deceptive lie. We are asked to be tolerant of each other's beliefs. We are asked to have understanding and to live in harmony with those religions that do not believe as we do. AS CHRISTIANS, WE CANNOT! God did not so love the world that He gave His only begotten Son so that whosoever believes in 'any other way' will not perish. God forbid that the people who call themselves by the name of His Son fall into this trap being so carefully laid by Satan.

When God called the Israelites to be a Holy nation unto Him and to be a witness to the gentile nations around them, He stated:
Exod 20:3-5... "You shall have no other gods before me. "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, THE LORD YOUR GOD, AM A JEALOUS GOD, punishing

the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me...

God, as a jealous God for us does not make allowances to tolerate all other religions and live in harmony with them. Jesus said He had come not to bring peace, but to bring a sword, to divide. Jesus also gave us two directions for our lives.

1. You are the salt of the earth. Salt preserves. We are to preserve the truth of the Gospel of Christ even when those around us try to pervert it. We are not to preserve another gospel. In fact, look at another characteristic of salt. It irritates. It stings. Have you ever cut yourself and gotten salt in the wound? Makes you want to hop around and holler. The Gospel of Christ will always be salt to the wounds of the other religions of the world.

2. You are the light of the world. Light and darkness cannot co-exist. When the light comes on, the darkness flees. We are children of the light. How then can we live side by side with darkness when the darkness is so filled with evil?

Rom 1:25 - They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator-- who is forever praised. Amen.

I Jn 1:6 - If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth.

April 05

WHERE IS YOUR TRUST?

Bill Griffin

03/04/1999

It was bound to happen sooner or later. The company changed the policies governing fund transfers in the 401k plans because the daily traffic was shutting down both the computer system and the voice response system at Metlife.

You would have thought the company had cut the throats of some of those manipulating the funds. In their eyes now, the company is the scum of the earth. I saw e-mail from many others though that gave thanks to the company for even having a 401k plan.

I was one of the day traders but I still like to put my real priorities in order. Sure, I made money by taking advantage of the existing policy at that time but now that it has changed, I do not blame the company and I will abide by the new rules. When I look around at so many others in the job market that do not have a 401K

or any type of pension plan short of Social Security, I am thankful for all that BellSouth has made possible for me.

Even beyond BellSouth though, I am thankful to a God that has provided for me over the years and even now has made it possible for me to retire early. The psalmist describes it this way:

Ps 20:7... Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

What chariot or horse are you depending upon? The stock market? Your current job? Houses and land? Cars? True, we have opportunities to save and invest for the future and we need to do so but we also need to understand that it is God who gives us a future.

April 06
WHY PRAY?
Bill Griffin
01/14/99

Most of us pray simply because we want something to benefit us in our lives. In other words, we want what we want, when we want it, the way we want it. That is why most of our prayers fail to reach above the ceiling when we offer them to God. When things are going good in our lives, we even reach the place in our thinking that says: 'I don't need to pray.' Let our gravy train jump the track though and we find ourselves squalling to God and trying our best to convince Him that He didn't really mean to let this happen to us.

Jesus gave us a great clue into the very heart of why we need to pray. Look at His earnest prayer in the garden.

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done."
[Luke 22:42]

The real purpose of prayer is to draw us closer to God so He may accomplish His will in our lives. When I owned a boat and was into the fishing thing, there were times when I would take the boat anchor and toss it onto the bank and then use the anchor rope to pull the boat through the shallow water until I could step out onto dry land. What was I doing? I was not moving the bank to the boat; I was moving the boat to the bank. Prayer is designed as such, for us to draw close to God. It is not designed to move God to our will. When we realize this principle, we are ready to yield ourselves to God and whatever He has for our lives. My selfish prayers will no longer hold precedent in my life. I will want God's will to be accomplished through me.

April 07
ROOM TO GROW
Bill Griffin
1998

Have you ever walked by an outside pool and noticed the huge goldfish swimming about? Ever given thought to why they can grow so big and the ones in your goldfish bowl stay tiny? I hadn't either until one of the men in church used the goldfish in an illustration.

As long as the fish is kept in a small bowl, it never has room to grow. Put it in a tank and it will grow larger. Put it in a larger tank and it will grow even larger. Put it in an outside pool and it may even get huge.

Our faith and walk with God is like these goldfish. If we only take small steps, our walk will always be small. Faith will have no room to grow. As we take a bigger step of faith, we have room to grow. Our ultimate goal should be to continue taking larger steps to grow until we reach the full potential God has for us or He calls us home first.

As we grow in Him, we should also remember that He must have room to grow in us. God Room as Dr. Bob Pierce told Franklin Graham. If I work in my own power, using my resources and finances and talents, where does God work? Everything I do will be man=s accomplishments. I have to be willing to move beyond what is humanly possible for me to attain. That is when God can take over and I can watch Him work a miracle. He will then be able to do what only He can do and He can receive the honor and glory due Him.

When I empty myself and allow Him to take over and grow in me, the Scriptures are made alive with the saying:

Luke 1:37.... For with God nothing shall be impossible.

April 08
PLACING BLAME
Bill Griffin

Have you noticed the vendetta being brought against the tobacco industry lately? It is hard to believe that intelligent people can read a warning label for thirty or forty years on a pack of cigarettes continue to smoke in spite of the warning, and then when they get cancer, blame it on the cigarettes.

We are a blaming people though, so it should be no surprise. Ever since the Garden of Eden, we have been blaming our problems on someone else.

Adam first blamed God: 'The woman you gave me'.

Adam next blamed the woman: 'The woman gave it to me and I ate it'.

Eve blamed the snake: 'The serpent deceived me'.

Not once did they admit 'I blew it God'!

How the world has fallen into this same trap. Look at the juries that are awarding fantastic settlements because someone was able to blame someone else for their own mistakes.

The lady at the drive through window of McDonald's that thought she could hold a cup of hot coffee between her legs and not get scalded if it overturned. McDonald's paid for her goof.

States are settling for millions and billions of dollars from the tobacco industry to recover the health costs associated with smokers. The industry took the blame.

Everywhere you look or read, especially in America, lawsuits are the norm now, not the exception. We as a people have gotten as the people of Israel with their thinking.

Jer 31:29 ... In those days they shall say no more, The fathers have eaten a sour grape, and the children's teeth are set on edge.

BLAME THE PARENTS: BLAME OTHERS

Jer 31:30 ... But every one shall die for his own iniquity: every man that eateth the sour grape, his teeth shall be set on edge.

GOD SAYS NO! NO! EVERYONE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN

April 09
ATTACK THAT, BUT DON'T TOUCH THIS
Bill Griffin

Isn't it interesting how the government and the news media and public are going after

cigarette smokers with a vengeance but you never hear them attacking 'ALCOHOL'.

I am not defending the tobacco industry but I think we should treat it all fairly. Cigarettes do not kill people in other cars. [I had a few occasions when I thought I might when the fire from the end of the cigarette dropped off and fell between my legs. The slapping, jumping, squirming, and the trying to get the vehicle stopped before the car or I burst into flames.] Cigarettes do not break up families. Cigarettes do not ruin lives. Cigarettes do not put people in a stupor where they cause abuse, either to their mate or their children. More homes are broken up each year due to alcohol than cigarettes could ever think of doing yet you hear nothing from the government or the media about abolishing alcohol.

Drunk driving is the most frequently committed violent crime in America but no one treats it as a crime. Only now are some states trying to pass tougher DUI laws. Too little, too late. The number one killer of those between the ages of 6 and 33 strikes every 32 minutes. Injuries caused by drunk drivers occur at the rate of one every 30 seconds. Drinking is a serious problem but no one wants to take 'Societies Social Pleasure' head-on.

Driving drunk is not an accident. No one forces an intoxicated driver to get behind the wheel. It is an act of choice and we need to be held accountable for the choices we make. The tragedy and travesty of our legal system is when we see people with up to ten DUI counts against them still on the road, still drinking, still driving.

We need to be aware of how God views 'strong drink'.

He destroyed an entire race on earth:
Matt 24:38-39 ... For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away;

He cursed an entire generation of His servant Noah.

Gen 9:20-29 ... And Noah began to be an husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: And he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, ... And Noah awoke from his wine, ... And he said, Cursed be Canaan;...

April 10

WHAT FRUIT ARE YOU BEARING?

Bill Griffin

John 15:5 Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be my disciple.

One of the things about growing up in the country was the ability to look at the different trees or plants and recognize the fruit they were bearing. Peach. Apple. Plum. Berry. We also knew which was sweet to eat and which was bitter.

Have you ever noticed that most fruit begins in a bitter state? Green apples. Green plums. Green persimmons. Whew! Some we used to bite into just to see if we could stand for our mouths to turn inside out.

Our lives in Christ are a little like the fruit of the different trees. We are not good for much until we grow and mature a little. [Bitter] We are not useless by any means. Some green fruits make wonderful jellies or preserves. Or just for plain cooking for flavor. As we develop, God uses us in small ways, but the real use is to come later. No one turns aside to look upon or be drawn to a plant with unripe fruit.

As we grow and mature, we are expected to produce beautiful fruit that works in the following ways.

1. We are to be a fruit that is seen. If we fall off the tree and rot on the ground, we are good for nothing but hog feed. Jesus said we are not to hide our light. As we bear fruit, we are to be seen.

2. We are to be a fruit that draws. If our fruit is not inviting and drawing others to come, we are not accomplishing all we should. Our fruit should shine. *Matt 5:16... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.*

3. Our fruit should be sweet. Our lives should be such that when others have tasted what we have to offer, they come back again and again for more. What could be sweeter than Christ.

1 Pet 2:3... If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

Jer 15:16... Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.

To bear fruit is one of three examples Christ told us about to be His disciple. What fruit are you bearing? Green and bitter or ripe and sweet?

April 11

LOVE GOD COMPLETELY

Bill Griffin

Have you ever chunked a rock in a pond and watched the ripple effect it has? Ever notice how the ripples start at the center and work their way out.

Loving God is like these ripples. Our love for God should be the center of our lives; heart, soul, and mind as we were told by the Lord. *Luke 10:27... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.* This includes our mind, will, and emotions. My total being.

As God's love fills our lives, it will spread out to everyone we meet. Notice Jesus said in the second half of the verse; And your neighbor as thyself. We are to love God completely.

Are you? If not what is standing in the way?

Your mind? Is there something in the Word of God that you do not understand or find hard to believe? Have you taken it back to Him and asked for guidance and understanding or have you just shrugged it off and let it simmer until it now clogs your brain?

Your emotion? Do you blame God for some personal hurt that has made trusting Him hard? Why? He is acquainted with your grief and feelings. Did not He place His own Son on the altar of sacrifice to give you peace and forgiveness for just such occasions.

Your will? Is there something in your life that you just can not give up? Is your will in constant conflict with the Will of God. If there is an obedience problem, there is a love problem. Are you afraid to let go and let God have His way in your life. Surrender to what He asks you to do.

Problems in any of these areas can keep you from knowing the true joy of God's love. Loving God completely knows no boundaries and is

limited only in how much we are willing to give of ourselves.

April 12
THE ELECTRONIC AGE
Bill Griffin

How close do you think we are to the time when we will have a cashless society? Look around you now! We can now use a single card to do all our business transactions. Debit cards swipe through the reader at the grocery and it deducts from our checking account. Payroll deposits with the ability to dial in and transfer funds from savings to checking or around the world. With our ATM cards we can make deposits and withdrawals at the money machines. The SYSTEM is here.

I BELIEVE THIS IS THE SYSTEM THE ANTICHRIST WILL SEIZE PEACEFULLY WHEN HE COMES TO POWER.

Rev 13:17-18... And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.

What better way to control a world that is all tied to a world monetary system. The groundwork has been laid for a universal social security card number already.

Computers have reached such sophisticated levels that another digit was required in the basic code. One which could be programmed both in its normal position and also upside down. The perfect digit is a 6", still usable as a 9". Look at your checks and other card items. They are beginning to be coded for the new system. 6110.

International prefix '6', USA code '110'. These computer codes work with displacements of characters, or information. The formula for this system is simply: 6 60 6. In order to number an item (or a person's card) the transaction must be prefixed Six hundred, threescore, and six!

Laser tattooing is already being used in animals for coding and tracking. How long before a bar-code or universal number is tattooed on the back of the hand or forehead for scanning with an electronic wand?

In Brussels, Belgium is a computer that occupies three floors of a thirteen story building. It has been in existence for many years now gathering information from around the world and through the use of credit cards, it has been easy to put almost all the trading nations into the memory banks. You are there! By one or more ways. Social security number, birth certificate, passport, driver's license, marriage license, etc. Every move you have made, and every penny that you have paid to the IRS is all on record. They call this computer: THE BEAST.

Not to worry though. There is a way of escape. If you belong to the Bride of Christ, you will leave when He returns in the rapture and will not have to endure the time when the Antichrist demands that all people of the world worship him. You are a part of the Bride aren't you?

April 13
Will We Know Them?
Bill Griffin
4/20/1998

One of the questions asked most is will we know our loved ones or other people in heaven? Most of us want to be assured and comforted of this fact. We hear tales from people that have supposedly had out of body experiences and claim to have seen a loved one somewhere in a bright environment. Could this be true?

While the Scriptures do not speak specifically to this subject, there are some verses that will help us understand something of what God has in store for us.

Luke 16:22-25... And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime received thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.

At this point in time, both the good and the bad in different places were able to recognize each other. Notice that the rich man recognized Abraham, even though they lived at different times. Notice that even though they recognized each other, they could not cross from one area to the other. The separation is fixed by God and non can cross from one to the other except the one who created it.

Matt 17:3-6... And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt,

let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

Here we see Peter, James, and John recognizing heavenly visitors. How? They did not live in the time frame with Moses and Elijah. In that brief moment of Christ's Glory on the mountain, these three earthlings were given a special glimpse while in the presence of God.

[1 Cor 13:12... For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.]

Rev 20:12-21:2... And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God;... And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them:...

How did John recognize the who's who of hell? He had to be in basically the same state he would be in when he died and his spirit taken to heaven. Here again, I don't think we will have to ask many questions of God. We will know. Again, we are seeing people and recognizing them from another part of God's universe - hell. If we are to know these who will be eternally separated, will not God allow us to know and enjoy the company of those who belong to Him? Is that not what the Bible teaches? We are to love God and we are to love each other.

Will we remember these that are lost forever? No! Look at these few verses that God has placed in His word as a promise to each of us.

Rev 21:4... And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall

there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Ps 37:10... For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be.

Isa 26:14... They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise: therefore hast thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.

Prov 10:7... The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot.

SPRING CLEANING

Bill Griffin

4/22/98

I have done more physical work in the past two weeks around the house than I have done in the past three years. I have been prone to put things off and stack 'stuff' up but it finally overtook me this year. I could not stand to see it any more.

I shoveled 'monkey grass' with the six foot backhoe until I thought I would die on the spot. Pruning, trimming, hauling off. I had full intentions of tearing down my small out-building when I built my garage/workshop but I can not get everyone out of the building. If you have any room at all, don't tell the kids. Or the wife! I have thrown away everything from weight benches to flower pots.

Our lives are like my junk accumulation sometimes. We allow little things to accumulate until we look like Sanford and Sons to the Lord. Absenteeism at God's House. Absent from study of the Word. Absent from the prayer closet. Harboring grudges. Gossiping. Lackadaisical love and fellowship with out brothers and sisters in

Notice that God wipes all tears away after the Great White Throne judgment when all non-believers are cast into hell. I think we are going to be standing there and crying as we watch loved ones who did not accept Christ or those we witnessed to and they refused to believe. I also think that it will be at this time that God will wipe the memory of those from our minds. Eternity in Heaven with Christ is not to be spent in remorse and lamenting over those who did not make it. We will be rejoicing with those who did.

Christ. Sometimes just plain indifference. Immorality. The list could go on and on, just add your own.

When we realize we are carrying all the extra weight, it becomes time to clean up and get back right with God. When we acknowledge and repent, God will begin to 'clean up'. There is no garbage pile too large for Him to clear. Look at how He refers to His cleanup.

1 Jn 1:9... If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

2 Chr 7:14... If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.

Just as my yard and buildings are beginning to take on what appears a new shape, God helps our lives to take on new meaning.

Are you willing to clean up? Let God know.

April 15

UNSINKABLE TITANIC

Bill Griffin

4/25/1998

One of the most popular movies to be made in a while is the current money leader "Titanic." As I see the advertisements and listen to the rave reviews, I think of another side to the story. The pride of a sea captain in what was supposed to be an unsinkable ship on its maiden voyage.

Prov 16:18... Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.

Most of you have heard of this little story but I retell it to make the point of the Titanic.

One night at sea, the ship's captain saw what looked like the lights of another ship heading toward him. He had his signalman blink to the other ship:

"Change your course 10 degrees south."

The reply came back: "Change your course 10 degrees to the north."

The ship's captain answered: I am a captain. Change your course south."

To which the reply came: "Well, I am a seaman first class. Change your course north."

This infuriated the captain, so he signaled back: "I say change your course

south. I'm on a United States battleship!"

To which the reply came back: "And I say change your course north. I'm in a lighthouse."

We are often prone to let our egos or pride get in the way of making sound decisions. Just when we think we know it all, or can do no wrong, the Lord has a way of bringing us back to reality. He reminds us that 'our sins will find us out'. Even the Captain of the Titanic was warned several times of the danger of sited icebergs and advised to change course. He ignored these warnings and it is attributed to him or someone the statement prior to sailing: "Even God can not sink this ship."

We need to learn to listen to the still small voice inside warning us of the dangers of the path we are walking away from God. It may be time in your life or mine to slow down and change course before we face the same fate.

1 Cor 10:12... Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.

April 16

The Homeless

Bill Griffin

05/16/1998

Tonight I was privileged to visit a Homeless shelter in Gastonia and participate in a hamburger supper for some of the men there. As I left my house, the thought came to me that there

were the equivalent of homeless shelters in the days of Christ. These were leper colonies.

For whatever circumstances, these people became lepers and in so doing were driven out from the people. They were outcasts, isolated

from society. They became dependent on others for their very existence. Some bemoaned their fate and gave up. They lived in the colonies until they rotted away and died.

There were a few though that had the courage and desire to get out of the pit of hell. They braved the stones and derision of the people as they cried "unclean! Unclean!" to warn people of their presence. They were the scum of the earth in the eyes of the people because they thought that "their sin" had placed them there. Holier than thou! You deserve your fate! Your sins have found you out!

Do we of society today not place the homeless in the same category? We allow what we see in a few to make us judge them all. We need to get beyond what put them there and learn that God loves them even as he loves me. He died just as dead for them as He did for me. The same cross covered their sins as well as it did mine.

April 17
LANGUAGES
Bill Griffin
05/16/1998

When we think of language, we think of that which is spoken that we understand with our ear and our intellect. English, French, Spanish, German, just to name a few. And to think, there is not a language that God does not understand. We may be able to speak and understand only one but He knows them all as if a native.

There is another language that we seldom hear but God hears all the time. That is the language of the soul or the heart.

God heard the language of love enough to send His Son into the world to show us who He is and How to have access to Him. Nothing but love would allow this activity with full knowledge of what the people would do with Him.

There is the language of anguish or grief. Have you ever anguished over a situation or someone until your sweat became as great drops of blood? Christ did. Over you. Over the rejection of the message from the Father and the atonement given to clear the way back to Him.

He heard the language of hurt when He faced the sisters Mary and Martha at the tomb of their brother. The Scriptures say "Jesus wept."

We see from scripture that the few from the leper colonies who dared take the step to get out and meet Jesus were cleansed and made whole. We see that they even became a vital part of society again. [Mark 14:3... While he was in Bethany, reclining at the table in the home of a man known as Simon the Leper...]. This same Simon may be one of those whom Jesus had cleansed earlier.

Just as it took courage and desire to get out of the colony, it takes courage and desire to get out of a homeless shelter and back into society as an integral part. What they need from us is the encouragement that would come from Christ if He were here. They also need to feel that someone loves them. Before we condemn the many for what we see from the few, lets help the few that want to 'get out'.

He felt their hurt and agony at the loss of their loved one.

Have you ever felt or heard the language of betrayal? Jesus did. After being beaten and ridiculed, He was escorted across the courtyard just in time to hear His disciple and friend Peter bellow out "I DO NOT KNOW HIM!". One whom He loved so deeply denied Him. What a broken heart He must have carried on through His trial and walk to the hill called Calvary.

What language are you hearing with your heart and soul? If you are living and being conformed to the image of Christ, you should be hearing all of these. Once we hear, we are obligated to help. Are you comforting or encouraging your brother? Helping to pick up the pieces of broken hearts and offering the salve of Christ to restore and mend? You should be.

Luke 22:31-32... "Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers."

April 18
GROWING FRUIT
Bill Griffin
6/8/1998

I decided to do something this year that I haven't done in many a day. I decided to plant a small garden. Very small. Nine plants to be exact. Three tomato, three bell pepper, three cucumber. Well! It's a start. I promised myself when I got off the rock farm in North Georgia in 1961 that I would not be a farmer again. It has taken a long time for the memories to wear off and the fingernails to grow back but I thought I would give it another shot.

Anyway. Saturday I picked five cucumbers from the three vines. Now you have to understand that I have had to spend the time to water, fertilize, and weed these plants. I have babied them. I have watched every bloom come and the small fruit begin to appear. It has been worth it if I do not get anything else from the plants.

As I picked the cukes, I thought of the Holy Spirit producing fruit in my life. That is part of His job you know. To produce love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness,

faith, meekness, temperance in the Christian. Check out Galatians 5:22-23.

His producing in me is somewhat like the garden I have. If I do not keep the fruit picked, it will not produce more fruit and the fruit on the vine will wither and die. If I do not pick the fruit of the Spirit and give it away, He can not produce more on this earthly vine. That is why Jesus compared Him to a river of living water flowing from within us. If we use one of the fruit, (singular), He can grow another inside us. If I give love away, He has more room to grow more, even bigger than the first. If I use temperance, He has room to replace.

Ephesians 4:18 tells us to be filled with the Spirit. This verb is an active verb and indicates this is an ongoing forever task. I can not refill something that is not empty. Neither can He.

Give it away and He will replace abundantly.

April 19
THE SICKNESS IS INSIDE
Bill Griffin
07-09-1998

When I returned from Savannah two weeks ago, I must have brought one of their bugs back with me. This one was no "Lady" bug either. She was mean. It started simple enough. A sore throat, then an ear ache, then the cough and stuffed up head. By the time I finally realized the over-the-counter medicines were not going to make it go away, I was paying for it. I finally relented and went to the Doctor for help and he prescribed a bottle of pills and a bottle of narcotic based cough syrup. The pills looked like they were for a horse and the syrup... well... I've smelled better. I wondered if I could break up the pills, mix them with the syrup and smear them on my throat and ears. Nope. Wouldn't work. The sickness was inside so the medicine had to go inside.

We treat our sin somewhat this way do we not? First, we wait until we are knee deep in trouble before we admit we need some help. Only then do we begin to seek a remedy to help us clean up our act. Or we try our external methods

(religions and philosophies) to deal with our sins. We say we confess and repent but it is superficial and our lives do not change. We continue to carry the sickness and its affects. It is not until we allow the Holy Spirit to "hold our nose, tilt our head back" and give us a super dose of repentance that we begin healing from the sin disease. That's what Jesus referred to in Luke 11:39-40...

Then the Lord said to him, "Now then, you Pharisees clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You foolish people! Did not the one who made the outside make the inside also?"

Man can not stand to admit he has a problem of any kind. Even when we admit one, we try to justify it. "MY ENVIRONMENT". "MY UPBRINGING." "MY SCHOOLING". Until we admit the problem is inside of us, all the medicine rubbed on the outside will never reach the source of the problem.

April 20
IS THERE CONFUSION IN YOUR LIFE
Bill Griffin
08/22/1998

The pain and swelling only lasted for a couple of days but the itching is still with me. It has only been a week and I know it too will go away soon. One bite on the ear and one on the right rib cage are worse. Let me explain.

Last Saturday, I went over to my Father-in-law's to clean up some of the litter we had been storing while working in his basement. I had the small trailer hooked to the lawn tractor and had driven down and behind the house. We had two saw horses set up where we had been storing lumber and a couple of tarps covering the area. I guess my sister-in-law had thrown the old blanket up on the pile with half of it sticking out from under the tarp. It was ruined so I grabbed it and started to throw it into the trailer. Ouch! EEW! UGHHH! MMPH! EEEK! That's the sound a fellow makes when he gets a swarm of angry yellow jackets around his head and shoulders. I left the lawn mower running and started my wind sprint up around the house toward the front. A human, moving, windmill; flailing away with my cap, swatting with my hand when they lit, jumping with each bite. Twelve to be exact. TOTAL CONFUSION! Nothing else was important at that time.

As I thought of it later, I thought about the confusion created at that moment. Have you ever had confusion to enter your life and take over? A crisis? Job loss? Death? Divorce? Trouble with the children? You know what I mean. Nothing matters and we lose site of everything else around us. We lose site of the fact that nothing surprises God. He knew it was going to happen before we discovered it. He also sees the end of it where we can only see that which is physical before us.

God uses confusion in a couple of ways. Look at what He Himself does with bees. If we need help in our lives against the evil, He sends them to help. Exod 23:27-28 says ... "I

will send my terror ahead of you and throw into confusion every nation you encounter. I will make all your enemies turn their backs and run. I will send the hornet ahead of you to drive the Hivites, Canaanites and Hittites out of your way. Maybe it was not bees or hornets as such but God has continually helped those who place their faith and trust in Him. He does not tell us not to care, but not to WORRY. There is a difference.

If we claim to be His and turn away from Him and fail to respond to His calling, He has other ways to deal with us. Look at Deut 1:42-46. But the LORD said to me, "Tell them, 'Do not go up and fight, because I will not be with you. You will be defeated by your enemies.'" So I told you, but you would not listen. You rebelled against the LORD's command and in your arrogance you marched up into the hill country. The Amorites who lived in those hills came out against you; they chased you like a swarm of bees and beat you down from Seir all the way to Hormah. You came back and wept before the LORD, but he paid no attention to your weeping and turned a deaf ear to you. Sometimes in our confusion, we try to go into the battle alone. We fail to listen to all that God has promised or told us. It is no wonder then that we end up being beaten down and in despair. We fail to heed the word of the Lord.

I know that sometimes we have to do some short-term damage control such as I had to do by killing and avoiding the yellow jackets but as soon as we catch our breath, we need to look toward heaven and say thank You. We can be thankful it was not any worse. We can be thankful that God will handle it. Remember the promises of the Lord the next time you are faced with confusion in your life.

April 21
REVENGE
Bill Griffin
08/22/1998

Aaaahhhh! Revenge is sweet! Especially when you have time to plan it out and then enact it. I got them suckers. The yellow jackets what got me,

that is. Even though I sprayed them last Saturday, I did not have enough spray to kill them all. That plus the fact I was not going to

get close enough to the nest to let them see me. I'd had enough. They whipped me.

Armed with two bombs that you press the button over here and it sprays over there, I returned to the scene of the battle Tuesday. They won the battle last Saturday but I won the war. I totally saturated the nest and the little fellers and when all activity had subsided, I ripped the tarps off and destroyed their hideout.

Aren't we like that with other parts of life though? When someone does us wrong, do we not let the thoughts of revenge become our first thoughts. They hurt me and I want to get them back. None of us want to be hurt and when we are, we often react in the wrong way. We harbor ill feelings and unforgiveness. 'I CAN'T FORGIVE THEM FOR WHAT THEY DID TO ME!' When we do this, we are the losers. We can never find peace in our heart and soul as long as there is any root of hatred inside us. I know it is a bitter pill to swallow to forgive someone who has hurt us but we

need to overcome the human emotions and failures and get back to a spiritual plane that lets us have fellowship with our God. Look at the advice He gives us on how to handle the situations.

Heb 12:15 ... See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

Lev 19:18 ... "Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD.

Rom 12:20-21 ... On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

If we can live within these, we can overcome anything the world throws at us. We can have peace in the midst of our storms. We can live at peace with all men and turn to our God and say 'I believe and I trust'.

April 22

WAGES AND BENEFITS

08-08-1998

Bill Griffin

It's Saturday night and the negotiations continue between BellSouth and CWA. Those items of most importance: wages and benefits. The haves want to keep it and the have-nots want to get a piece of it. I can't help but think of the selfishness on the part of each. In today's society, we are all being shaped into this mold. Selfishness. The more we have the more we want. As the old saying goes, "The rich get richer and the poor get poorer." When I was growing up, millionaires were scarce. Today they are plentiful. Just look at sports and entertainment figures. Whew! How we do spend our money!

What if God had taken the same approach with us? How could we beg out of Romans 6:23... The wages of sin is death. Could I negotiate with God to try to improve my wages? This death is not only a physical death but also one of separation from God forever. From the One who is Holy and Just, I would be earning exactly what I deserve if this is what He gave me.

CWA is negotiating for benefits in dollars and cents. I can not belong to this union but there is one to which I belong and the

benefits are out of this world. God through BellSouth provides the monetary benefits I receive now. I do not worry about what they will be because I know they will be by His hand.

James 1:17... Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.

Other benefits enjoyed are peace, joy, rest for the soul, and so many others.

These benefits did not come easy though. There was a heavy cost to the giver. THE CROSS. Each item was negotiated with blood. Human blood. The blood of God's Son.

The benefits that will be decided by BellSouth and CWA will not all be seen immediately. Some will be future. Some of the benefits I have with my union with God will be in the future also.

1 Cor 2:9... However, as it is written: "No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him"--

April 23

BEAUTIFUL FEET

Bill Griffin

08/09/1998

Many years ago when I was a lad, the only source of heat and cooking we had in the old house was 'wood'. The only way to get the wood was to cut it and then if needed, chop it down even further with an axe. Since I was the oldest of the four children, it was my job to keep the wood supplied.

One of those hot summer days when boys go barefoot without thought of their feet, I got careless. After I had cut a piece of wood with the ax on the old chopping block, I stuck the ax in the block for keeping. It didn't stick. Out it came and down across the toes of my left foot. The blade trimmed the skin off the end of one toe, came across behind the toenail of the middle toe, and nicked the next toe in the side. By the time I hobbled into the house and yelled for my mama, I could make out the end of the middle toe hanging on by just the smallest strip of skin. Mom wrapped me up and got my uncle to drive us to the doctor. After examining, he exclaimed that the best thing to do was to snip the small piece of skin and let the end of the toe come off.

"NOTHING DOING! I DON'T WANT TO BE DEFORMED! SEW IT BACK ON!"

Little did I know. When he got through with the shot in the end of the toe I was ready to give them all to him. He sewed the end of the toe back and it mended to the rest of the toe but I now have the dangdest toenail I have ever tried to trim. It came back twice as thick and hard as a brick.

We don't think much of our feet do we? Not until they get so tired they ache from carrying us around. But just kick a piece of furniture in the middle of the night and the whole body wants to talk about that little toe. The stomach wants to give back last night's supper in sympathy. Both legs get weak and want to rest. If we could look instantly in a mirror, both eyes are probably crossed. The best pair of eyes that ever looked into each other. The tears are instant that want to wash the little digit.

When is the last time you heard someone say "You sure do have beautiful feet?" When young folks are dating, they are quick to talk about beautiful eyes, hair, lips, etc but never the

feet. How would it sound, "You sure do have the prettiest feet I have ever seen?" Beverly Hillbilly time.

Only God has the courage to speak of the feet. Look at how He describes them in the verses below.

Eph 6:15...and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;

God did not give us our feet to just look pretty and to carry our bodies around to those places we want to go. He intended them to be an instrument for carrying His gospel to a lost world. Our feet are to be shod, permanently fixed, like a horse, always prepared to carry the gospel that establishes peace between God and man. We are even given instructions on how to put on the armor of God to do battle. Believe it. When you go to the lost of the world, you are attacking Satan where he lives. Those folks are

his and you are out to get them. He is going to put up a fight. If the feet and legs are wounded, man becomes incapacitated and can no longer carry on the fight. He can not even chase the fellow down and whip him if his legs or feet are damaged. Lord help, if we have to turn and become a devout coward to flee a whipping. Not only are we to be obedient to the gospel, we must have a willingness to proclaim the gospel. When we do, God takes care of the results and the battle.

Isa 52:7...How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"

Rom 10:15...And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

April 24

CAN YOU SPARE A MOMENT?

Bill Griffin

08/23/1998

When I think of all the things we have gained in the modern technological age, it brings to mind the fact that we have lost some things also. There is no program or work-around for 'time'. We have all the modern conveniences to save us time but I look at my own life and wonder where all the time went that I am supposed to be saving. We no longer have time to even get to know our neighbor, let alone stop and sit a spell. One of the things I remember most about growing up in the country was that when the chores were finished for the evening, we would gather around on the front porch of someone's house and the grown-ups would talk for hours as the children ran and played into the night. I know some of it was to allow time for the tin roofs to cool off before we had to go in for the evening but most of it was to spend time with each other. When one hurt, all knew and were like an encouragement group. When someone killed a hog, everyone came to assist. If someone needed something built, all participated. I marvel at the Amish sometimes that they have been able to hang on to these traditions in the face of our changing world. Some things are just more important but most of us are caught up in the hustle of our work-a-day lives and we do not see or hear the sounds of the hurt around us.

When is the last time you changed your schedule to help someone? To listen to a crying soul as they poured out a problem to you. To detour from your trip to church because someone needs a friend, maybe just to listen as they pour out their heart. To visit someone who is all alone. To cook or wash or clean for someone sick. Where is our CHURCH? Our church is really where we find it in God's service.

Christ gave us many examples of service and how our relationship to God should be established. If I pass a friend in a ditch

because I am on my way to church in my Sunday go to meeting clothes, what kind of example have I set? Look at what Christ taught and then demonstrated by example.

THE SETTING: He had set His face toward Jerusalem and the cross that waited. Matt 20:17-18.. Now as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside and said to them, "We are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and the teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death

THE TEACHING: To settle an argument among the disciples, He had to take them aside and explain to them what the kingdom was about and how it would be structured.

Matt 20:28.. just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

THE EXAMPLE: Jesus stopped along the way to help, even though it did not please the crowd. Matt 20:29-34.. As Jesus and his disciples were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. Two blind men were sitting by the roadside, and when they heard that Jesus was going by, they shouted, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" The crowd rebuked them and told them to be quiet, but they shouted all the louder, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on us!" JESUS STOPPED and called them. "What do you want me to do for you?" he asked. "Lord," they answered, "we want our sight." Jesus had compassion on them and touched their eyes. Immediately they received their sight and followed him.

Are you willing to go against the crowd or your busy schedule to help the next one the Lord places alongside your way? Are you willing like the blind men to 'follow Him'?

April 25

ROADMAPS

Bill Griffin

09/28/1998

Right after Hurricane Bonnie struck Wilmington, I was sent to help with the restoration of the phone facilities. Since I am not from Wilmington, nor am I familiar with the streets, the first thing I acquired was a road-map. Since someone had already taken the time to lay out all the streets and their directions on the map, I could find my way around without too much difficulty. Somehow I always got to my destination.

There were some of the streets though that are just like here, They go nowhere and stop even though the map shows them going through. Creeks have a way of getting in the way and then you have to back up and drive around to find a bridge to cross, then backtrack to where the other street left off. Wilmington has quite a few of those. There were a few which got down right frustrating.

We have another trip that also requires a road-map to help us get to our destination. The Scriptures tell us that there are only two roads on this journey though. One is broad and most people find it. The other is narrow and few are the people that find it. If we do not have a Bible to use for our map, we end up lost.

Just like trusting the map, how do I know I can trust the Bible? Job 23:12 said it well; "I have esteemed the Words of God's mouth more than

my necessary food." Paul also told Timothy [2/3:16] "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." I trusted those that drew the lines called streets on the street map. Can I do less for the One that prepares the path for my life?

Do you feel at dead ends or on no-where streets sometimes? Make that turn that will bring you back to the map that will shed new light on your directions. God's Word. The Bible.

April 26
MY FUTURE
Bill Griffin
11/28/1998

Most of you already know that I plan to retire from BellSouth in March of 1999. The official forms have not been submitted just yet, but that is just a matter of timing which will be very soon. I will have 33 years in the workplace at that time and I feel it is time I moved on to something else. [I know some of you think I should have moved on long ago, that I am retired in place now.] In today's environment of downsizing, layoffs, and firings, I feel fortunate that I am not leaving under any of these conditions. Many are leaving the work force due to the added pressures of downsizing or changes that adds to existing work loads. Truthfully, I am not leaving because of job stress or pressure. I just want to do other things while my health will allow it. In other words, I plan to be a 'professional piddler'. I want to sling sawdust in my workshop and maybe have more time to just write. Who knows?

The decision to retire has not been without anxiety or thought. When I started long ago, I could only look forward to 30 years and retiring but when it arrived, I found I was not

quite ready. All the familiar questions arose. Will I have enough money to retire now and will it be enough ten years from now? What will I do if it isn't? Will I look to work part-time somewhere to supplement my income? Will I have enough to even piddle?

Like so many other times in my life when I needed an answer, I had to take this one to the One Who Knows All Things. As I reflect back on where I had been and where God has me at this moment in time, I marvel at how He has brought it all together. My future is not for me to know, and I am to trust God to lead me. His promises have not failed me yet and I do not expect a failure in my future.

Ps 139:2-3... Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.

Jer 29:11... For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

April 27
THANKSGIVING
Bill Griffin
11/28/1998

I once again had an opportunity to speak at the Dallas Prison Facility when our Brotherhood had services for the inmates. Since it was the Thanksgiving season, I felt lead to speak of giving thanks.

Most of us have no problem giving thanks for physical things that we have been given. A job. A family. A home. All of the physical things that we call blessings every day. What about the spiritual though? That part of man for which thanks are seldom spoken? Look at what we have promised and in our possession.

1 Thes 5:18 - In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

Even in our darkest circumstances, if we look to God, we can find something to be thankful for since it is God's will to give thanks.

1 Cor. 15:57 - but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

We have victory in our lives, not defeat. We should never hang our heads and act like we are whipped.

2 Cor 1:11 - ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.

We have power in prayer and especially when we gather together to pray. The gift we have is God's own Spirit to be our comfort and our guide.

Eph 5:20 - giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ

We have but to mention His name and call upon Him. No other name under heaven can help when we call without a moments notice. He is always listening.

Rev 4:9 - And when those beasts give glory and honor and thanks to Him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever We serve a risen Savior; an empty tomb testifies to the fact that He lives. There is no other god of theology that can match this statement. Because He lives, I can live also.

Ps 107:21-31 - Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailling love and his wonderful deeds for men. Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy. Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. They saw the works of the LORD, his wonderful deeds in the deep. For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven. Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailling love and his wonderful deeds for men. Oh to be thankful to God for His goodness, for His wonderful works to man. We could never really count the ways that God is good to us. So many small coincidences or lucky streaks that are really God's answer to a whispered prayer but we

do not give Him credit. But when we get ourselves in over our heads, we cry out to Him and he hears us. He brings us out of our distress and into our desired haven [rest].

1 Chron 16:23-24 - Sing unto the Lord, all the earth; show forth from day to day His Salvation.

Most of us admit we are thankful for our salvation but have you really looked at the verses concerning salvation? It is not MY

salvation but HIS salvation. It is His to give. I can not earn it nor can I work to purchase it. It is given freely by the One who dispenses mercy and grace. No one comes to Him unless He draws him. It was God who went looking for man when man fell in the Garden. Adam and Eve hid. Thank God that He went looking that day and He still looks today for His wayward children. Can you give Him thanks for finding you?

April 28

WITHOUT BEING ASKED

Bill Griffin

1995

There is a story most of us are familiar with which involves Jesus and a woman who had just lost her only son but have you looked at the story closely?

Luke 7:11-15.... And it came to pass the day after, that he went into a city called Nain; and many of his disciples went with him, and much people. Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat

up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.

Did you notice the lady asking Him to heal her son? No! It is not there! She did not ask, but the Lord did it anyway. The Bible says He was moved with compassion. So many times in the scriptures, we see Jesus doing things because He just loved people.

God knows what we need in our lives before we ask. Sometimes He allows us to ask before He does anything. But how many times in your life has Christ done things for you before you asked?

We need to be aware always of the blessings that are ours, even when we did not ask for them. God loves His people and is glad to do good things for them.

Did you ask God for the cross? No! God did it without being asked. Did you ask Christ to die for you? No! He did it without being asked. He did it because He loves you.

April 29

WITH A SHARP SICKLE

Bill Griffin

02-01-97

Rev 14:14-15 ... And I looked, and behold a white cloud, and upon the cloud one sat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a sharp sickle. [15] And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that sat on the cloud, Thrust in thy sickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harvest of the earth is ripe.

When we studied these verses in Sunday School the other day, my mind took me back to the farm where I grew up. We did not have modern tools or machinery. Everything was hand held or pulled by a mule. One of the instruments we used was a 'sickle'. The sickle is a reaping instrument with a long, curved blade on a short handle.

When the corn had quit producing, we had to cut the stalks and put them into what we called 'shocks' [just a bundle tied together with

one of the drying leaves of the corn itself, and then sticking the ends down in the ground to allow the stalks to stand up-right until needed as animal food]. To do this, I used a sickle. Not before. Not after. But when the harvest was ripe or ready.

The sickle was also used for cutting or reaping other crops or for just cutting weeds to feed the hogs.

Notice the time is coming when the earth will be ready for the harvest. Just as the corn had stopped reproducing to become ready for harvest, the earth is also becoming non-producing. Those on earth calling themselves Christians are failing to plant and produce new crops for the Lord. We too, are rushing toward the time He will come to reap the earth.

As the corn was chopped for reaping, so shall mankind also be reaped with the sickle of the Lord.

April 30

ALGEBRA

Bill Griffin

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One of the subjects that gave me the most trouble when I was in school was A-L-G-E-B-R-A!!! Ugh! It just never made sense to me how $x + y$ could = z . Somehow, though, I managed to drag my way through it in the ninth grade and pass. Mean stuff. I like to stick to the simple numbers, hopefully no wider than two columns, three at the most.

Algebra does have it's place in life though. I realize that most of it is just logic and reasoning. It does give us a way to figure out an unknown if we have parts that are known.

I try to incorporate a little heavenly algebra in my life now. Like:
Known -- God came to earth to show us the way to Him
Known -- God died for His creation
Unknown -- How in the world could He love me enough to save me

Try this one:

AG	+	GR	=	R				
ABUNDANT GRACE		+		GIFT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS	=			REIGNING WITH CHRIST

Rom 5:17 ... For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

When we look at all that has been given us in Christ, there is not enough algebra to calculate it. If Christ were to place a price on each, I could never begin to pay the debt. That is why He bore all the cost and stamped my debt 'PAID IN FULL'.
