
October 01
MEASURED DAYS
Bill Griffin
1995

If Christ is risen, and I believe He is, and if I've trusted my life to Him, and I have, the psalmist's questions: "Lord, how long will I live? When will I die? [Psalm 39:4], hold no fear for me. The answers are: [1] forever and [2] when God wills. For Christians, the question "When will I die?" is not as terrifying as it is for nonbelievers. Paul said it right:

"O death, where is thy sting?" [1 Cor. 15:55].

One writer calls us Christians an Easter people. In other words, we are children of the resurrection. Remember, Jesus said,

"I am the resurrection, and the life; he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live" [John 11:25].

And living is what we Christians should be about. Belief in Jesus Christ and His resurrection frees us from the horror of death. We are set free to live -- to celebrate, to spend, to share, to dare!

We should measure our days as precious opportunities to sing and love and laugh in the Spirit of the Lord. We should live each day to its fullest and enjoy our lives that God has given.

October 02
MY REDEEMER LIVES
Bill Griffin
1995

In Chapter 19 of Job, we see Job once again dare to reach out from his misery to express hope in God.

In verses 13-19, we see the very depths of human despair and loneliness. Every person who at one time or another has felt shut out from family, friends, and the world can identify with Job's predicament. His brethren are far off. Long time acquaintances will not come around him. Forgotten by friends. Servants in his own household ignore and hide from him. Crying out to those close to him and receiving No answer. Ignored by his wife. Unbearable physical pain. What a tragedy in anyone's life!

In spite of all these things, he was not ugly in spirit toward those who made his life a daily drudgery. He pleaded with his servants when he had authority to command. He reached out to the wife who had rejected him because he would not curse God. He referred to them all as "they whom I loved".

Job made one final plea to his friends in verses 21-22. Job expresses clearly who has struck him. God! He then accuses them of playing like God. "Would they never get enough of accusing him?" he

asked. If they could not have pity on him, he asked they at least stop censuring and badgering him.

In verses 25-26, Job answers the question of eternal life. It is fair to say that the doctrine of eternal life stated in the New Testament could not have been known to Job. Yet, the insight he gives us in these two verses is remarkable.

25 I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.

26 And after my skin has been destroyed, yet in my flesh I will see God;

27 I myself will see him with my own eyes-- I, and not another. How my heart yearns within me! Job knew that he would be vindicated [cleared of all accusations and suspicions]. His Redeemer was living, not dead. Though his body would rot in the grave, Job would see God in his flesh. Job would see God with his eyes, no one would have to tell him about Him.

The term "liveth" is emphatic. Job may die, but his Vindicator cannot die. It is by relying on the undying life of his Vindicator that he will conquer his own mortality. Job KNEW!
DO YOU KNOW YOUR REDEEMER?

October 03
MERCY FOR SIN
Bill Griffin
1995

When we are battered by life, we want a merciful God to pick us up from the roadside like the good Samaritan and carry us to an Inn. We want our hunger and thirst quenched, our wounds bound and a comfortable place to recuperate from the blows we have received in life. Can we give less and call it mercy?

Not an even trade -- mercy for sin. And yet, Jesus made it, reconciling that which he loved most - his human creation - to himself, that we who would believe and accept it would be called God's sons and daughters.

The thief had nails through both hands, so that he could not work; and a nail through each foot, so that he could not run errands for the Lord; he could not lift a hand or a foot toward

his salvation, and yet Christ offered him the gift of God; and he took it. Christ threw him a lifeline, and took him into Paradise.

Jesus taught: "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." It's a cycle. We receive mercy, we extend it to others. The eyes of mercy are deep with compassionate glances, full of tears, the homes of prayer. The feet of mercy are soft in their tread, for they will not break the bruised reed. The voice of mercy is generous to the fallen, gentle to the weak and gracious to the offender. From the heart of mercy smoothing balm flows to the wounds of sinners, of sufferers, and of the world.

Only the mercy of God's grace saves us from our having to pay the wages of sin.

October 04
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE
Bill Griffin
1995

In affluent America thousands of us Christians have become too comfortable. We are too much at ease in this world. We have ceased to challenge the world in which we live; and if God

wanted to do a great work in our time, we would probably be bypassed.

In John 4:9 we read, "...the Jews have No dealings with the Samaritans." The disciples might have thought that the Samaritans were

totally outside the kingdom of God. Perhaps they thought these "outsiders" were unreachable and untouchable by the Message. How many Christians have given up trying to win their neighbors, their business associates, or their school friends to Jesus Christ. They think they are totally uninterested. Perhaps that friend or neighbor is watching you very carefully to determine whether you back up your belief with your life. Some of us have already made up our minds that God has no intention of reaching this person and that -- they are too hard; they are not interested; they are so materially minded; they are so filled with sin, lust, and pride that they are unreachable.

Thus, when the woman of Sychar who had six "husbands" was converted to Christ, the disciples were not used. Many men in history who have been used of God were great sinners and seemed unreachable. John Newton, who wrote the hymn, "Amazing Grace" was a slave dealer in Africa and one of the worst sinners who ever lived. Who could ever have believed that he would one day be a clergyman in the Anglican church and become one of the greatest hymn writers of all time! Even Paul the Apostle was Saul the persecutor. Many times God takes the absolutely impossible person and transforms him by His own grace and mercy and providence to become a mighty servant of God. Don't give up on any one. There is no man beyond the grace of God.

October 05
MONSTERS
Bill Griffin
1995

I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety. Psalm 4:8
Remember the monsters and wild animals that used to hide under your bed? Those that seemed to pierce the darkness with red or green eyes from a cracked closet door? How the shadows from the tree limbs reflecting on the windows were hideous monsters trying to get inside? As long as you stayed covered up and didn't hang your arms or legs over the edge, you were safe. But there were those nights when the creatures were especially restless. Then there was No substitute for having your mom or dad lie down beside you until you drifted off to sleep.

The psalmist who wrote this verse must have been having nightmares about the depression and despair of the people in his world. But he knew what to do. Read the verse again.
Can you lie down with your adversity, depression, or fears and drift off to sleep peacefully? I end each day with prayer as I prepare for sleep. It seems that every time I begin to pray from my pillow, I drift off to sleep. Most of us have the same problem. Maybe that's because being in God's presence brings tremendous peace of mind. I thank God for that peace that 'passes all understanding'.

October 06
MORE TO SAY
Bill Griffin
1995

When my children were growing up, I tried to tell them about things they would encounter as they grew older. As parents, we wish we could convey to them everything that we learned the hard way. Just as I did not listen to all my parents told me, my boys did not listen to everything I said.
It is as we encounter the obstacles of life that suddenly we remember from the cobwebs of our mind the warnings of our parents. I remember the curse that all mothers put upon their children. [Don't tell me you haven't]. "I hope you have a dozen just like you!" There must be something about little old moms that reaches the heart of God and makes him comply with their wishes. There are not many dull moments around a household with children growing up. It's the learning part that is exciting sometimes.
Consider: My wife had taken our two boys shopping with her one Saturday. Ages? About 6 [Joe] and 8 [David] at the time. They had gone into the fabric department at Belk's. Of course they were told not to touch anything. As Sarah looked at cloth patterns, the boys became intrigued elsewhere. Ah ha! Scissors! Fun time. My oldest picked up the large pair of scissors from the end of the cutting counter and began to snap them open and shut using both hands and holding them up. My youngest felt he was faster than the glinting blades and therefore started poking his finger in and out of the blades as they snapped open and shut. You guessed it! In a moment the blood curdling scream halted everyone in the entire area. Blood was shooting out the end of his finger. Joe was yelling at the top of his lungs. David had thrown the scissors down and was dancing around hollering, "I think I'm gonna be

sick." My wife and the ladies of Belk's were in a panic to see how bad Joe was hurt. As Sarah got them into the bathroom and was cleaning the finger and getting the bleeding stopped, David kept dancing and saying "I think I'm gonna be sick" or "I didn't mean to."
Needless to say, after the trip to the hospital to get the end of the finger bandaged [just nipped the meat off the end, No bone] and dealing with David wanting to be sick, Sarah was not in a good mood. As she came busting in the front door, I commented, "hey honey" to which came a reply, "YOU CAN WATCH THEM FROM NOW ON!! I AM NEVER TAKING THEM WITH ME AGAIN!"
I knew not to ask at the time. I am not one to purposely stick my head into a flogging if I can help it.
In John 16:12 we see that Jesus wanted to say so much more to the disciples before He left . He only had a short time so He comforted their fears by telling them He would send a comforter. Just as we don't listen to what is being said to us sometimes, the disciples did not listen to all Christ was telling them. Only later, when they were alone, with the Spirit's help did they begin to remember all He had told them.
The Holy Spirit only speaks what Christ tells Him to speak. He does not speak on His own. The Spirit communes with Man's spirit to reveal the message Christ has for the individual. The Spirit is not in competition with Christ but is totally in sync with the message of the Gospel of Christ and the Kingdom of God.
Are you ignoring the warnings of those who advised and taught you from long ago? Their teachings were out of love for you, just as God's teachings tell of His great love for you today.

October 07
MUSHROOM GRAVY
story adapted for co-worker
Bill Griffin
1995

A few years ago, my friend Bert decided to have a little homecoming type get together for all the family in the neighborhood. Since Bert lived out in the country on a dirt road far enough to pump moonshine out and sunshine in, it was not to be a very large crowd. A few cousins, aunts, uncles, and friends. Now as Bert was putting together a menu, she wanted to make this one of the best parties ever put on in her neck of the woods. She poured over the cook-book, looking for just the right item to serve to her guests. Finally, she found just what she was looking for; "MUSHROOM GRAVY AND CUBE STEAK". Everyone would be so proud of the meal she was going to serve. The first thing Bert had to do was get Uncle Sam to carry her to town so she could buy some mushroom sauce. After seeing the prices of the mushrooms, she stomped out of the store hard enough to make her half hose slink down around her calves. She was mad. "I'm not paying that kind of money for mushrooms," she snorted. Bert was still fuming when she returned home. She had taken part of her anger out on poor old Sam and all he did was drive the old pick-up. When they arrived back at home, Sam said, "Why don't you just go on down yonder in the pasture and pick you a mess of mushrooms. The cows and goats eat them all the time so they must be okay." After careful consideration, Bert gathered her basket and off she went. The lower end of the pasture was covered and in just a little while, she had plenty of mushrooms for her feast. "You don't think they are poisonous do you?" she asked Sam upon returning. "No, if they were poison, then the animals would know it and not eat them," Sam replied. Well, Mrs. Bert began to prepare her meal for the big day. Still thinking about the mushrooms, she

decided to try them out on her old dog, Buck. She took a small helping of the mushroom gravy and cube steak and placed it in Buck's food dish. Old Buck went to town and ate every bit of it and licked the dish clean. "No ill effects at all," thought Bert as she watched him. Now Bert had hired her neighbor Betty to help her serve at the feast. Everyone had a great time. The food was excellent and shortly, everyone had gathered on the porch, licking their lips, rubbing their stomachs and commenting on how good the mushroom gravy and cube steak was. It was just at this time that Betty pushed through the screen door and announced to Bert: "Buck's dead!" Bert fainted; two or three times. She didn't know just what to do. She called 911 and the man told her to keep everyone just here they were, he was sending three ambulances and everyone would have to have their stomachs pumped out. When the ambulances arrived, they took everyone back into a bedroom one at a time and pumped out their stomach. Now everyone was on the porch feeling peaked and ill. No one felt like talking. No one was moving. Just holding their stomach's and moaning. Betty returned to the porch, serving coffee and dry toast to those who had their stomach's pumped. "You know, it does look like that man would have stopped when he ran over old Buck," she commented. We need to be careful sometimes when we only hear half of a story. It is those times when we go into a panic that we do the least thinking. There are times when we do have to react to situations, but not in a panic. We should always remember that God knows the situation and it did not surprise Him. He is still in control. As Psalm 46:1 says, "God is our refuge, a very present help in our time of trouble." Go to God when you need help of any kind. He is only a prayer away.

October 08
CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS
Bill Griffin
03-02-2002

Across the side street from our church, the land is being prepared and developed for a housing subdivision. New streets have been graded and laid out with curbs and gutters. Trees have been cleared. New lots have been staked out. In other words, new homes will soon be constructed and inhabited - one big construction project.

One thing about the subdivision though, it will only contain so many houses - no more no less. If you do not purchase one of the lots and have a house built, you are not going to reside in that subdivision. When all lots are sold and houses built no one else will be allowed in there. Construction will be finished. The subdivision will be closed to newcomers.

This construction project will only last for a short while - possibly a year before all the homes are complete, maybe a little more.

Another construction project was started about two thousand years ago and is still in progress. One of the verses in our Sunday school lesson this week made me consider this comparison:

[John 14:2] . . . I go to prepare a place for you.

In other words, Jesus promised a provision for the future for us. Will there be unlimited spaces? No! Will the project go on forever? No!

Just as the subdivision is limited, the dwellings in heaven will also be limited. How then will anyone be able to obtain a deed to one of these dwellings in heaven? Jesus gave us the answer to this question also.

[John 14: 6] Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

When we come to Christ by faith, we are given a deed to one of these dwellings at that time.

Those with deeds who have preceded us have already moved into many of those dwellings. Many are still to be claimed and only God knows how many more are to be issued. One thing is for sure, the construction project will not last forever and the signs of today's world indicate that it is finishing up now. God put a limit on the time and Jesus gave the information to His disciples.

[Luke 21:24] They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled.

As we see the gentile nations persecuting and warring against Israel, we can take God at His word and know that this building project is almost over.

Do you have your deed?

October 09
NEW HOME
Sharing a story
Author: Unknown

It was well-known author and Pastor Charles Allen who first told the story of a little lad named John Todd, born in Rutland, Vermont, in the autumn of 1800. Shortly after the boy's birth, the Todd family moved to the little village of Killingsworth. It was there, when John was only six that both his parents died. All the children had to be parceled out among relatives -- and a kind-hearted aunt who lived ten miles away agreed to take John, to love him, to care for him, and to give him a home.

The boy lived there for some fifteen years and finally left as he went on to school to study for the ministry. Time passed gently as he began and later excelled in his work as a pastor. While he was in middle life, his elderly aunt fell desperately ill. Realizing death was not far off, in great distress she wrote her nephew. The pitiful letter included some of the same questions all of us must one day ask: "What will death be like? Will it mean the end of everything?" Fear and uncertainty were easily traced in the quivering lines of her letter. Moved with compassion and swamped with the memories of yesteryear, he wrote her these words of reassurance:

It is not thirty-five years since I, a little boy of six, was left quite alone in the world. You sent me word you would give me a home and be a kind mother to me. I have never forgotten the day when I made the long journey of ten miles to your house in North Killingsworth. I can still recall my disappointment when, instead of coming for me yourself, you sent your colored man, Caesar, to fetch me. I well remember my tears and my anxiety as, perched high on your horse and clinging tight

to Caesar, I rode off to my new home. Night fell before we finished the journey and as it grew dark, I became lonely and afraid.

"Do you think she'll go to bed before I get there?" I asked Caesar anxiously. "O No," he said reassuringly. "She'll sure stay up FOR YOU. When we get out of these here woods you'll see her candle shining in the window." Presently we did ride out in the clearing and there, sure enough, was your candle. I remember you and that you lifted me -- a tired and bewildered little boy -- down from the horse. You had a big fire burning on the hearth, a hot supper waiting for me on the stove. After supper, you took me to my new room, you heard me say my prayers and then you sat beside me until I fell asleep.

You probably realize why I am recalling all this to your memory.

Some day soon, God will send for you, to take you to a new home. Don't fear the summons -- the strange journey -- or the dark messenger of death. God can be trusted to do as much for you as you were kind enough to do for me so many years ago. At the end of the road you will find love and a welcome waiting, and you will be safe in God's care. I shall watch you and pray for you until you are out of sight, and then wait for the day when I shall make the journey myself and find you waiting at the end of the road to greet me.

Not only is this a true story, it is the hope for all who believe in God and His Son, Jesus Christ. It is the way it will be. It is the "Well done, good and faithful servant" we shall hear. As the letter indicates, we are expected. He is waiting to welcome us. He promises a reward. And we can be sure He will keep His promise.

October 10
YOUR LAWS IGNORE OUR DEEPEST NEEDS
Author: Darrell Scott - Columbine Father

On Thursday, May 27, 1999, Darrell Scott, the father of Rachel Scott, a victim of the Columbine High School shootings in Littleton, Colorado, was invited to address the House Judiciary Committee's sub-committee. What he said to our national leaders during this special session of Congress was painfully truthful. It needs to be heard by every parent, every teacher, every politician, every sociologist, every psychologist, and every so-called expert! These courageous words spoken by Darrell Scott are powerful, penetrating, and deeply personal. There is no doubt that God sent this man as a voice crying in the wilderness. The following is a portion of the transcript:

"Since the dawn of creation there has been both good and evil in the heart of men and women. We all contain the seeds of kindness or the seeds of violence. The death of my wonderful daughter, Rachel Joy Scott, and the deaths of that heroic teacher, and the other eleven children who died must not be in vain. Their blood cries out for answers. The first recorded act of violence was when Cain slew his brother Abel out in the field. The villain was not the club he used. Neither was it the NCA, the National Club Association. The true killer was Cain, and the reason for the murder could only be found in Cain's heart.

"In the days that followed the Columbine tragedy, I was amazed at how quickly fingers began to be pointed at groups such as the NRA. I

am not a member of the NRA. I am not a hunter. I do not even own a gun. I am not here to represent or defend the NRA - because I don't believe that they are responsible for my daughter's death. Therefore I do not believe that they need to be defended. If I believed they had anything to do with Rachel's murder I would be their strongest opponent. I am here today to declare that Columbine was not just a tragedy - it was a spiritual event that should be forcing us to look at where the real blame lies! Much of the blame lies here in this room. Much of the blame lies behind the pointing fingers of the accusers themselves.

"I wrote a poem just four nights ago that expresses my feelings best. This was written way before I knew I would be speaking here today.

"Your laws ignore our deepest needs
Your words are empty air
You've stripped away our heritage
You've outlawed simple prayer
Now gunshots fill our classrooms
And precious children die
You seek for answers everywhere
And ask the question "Why"
You regulate restrictive laws
Through legislative creed
And yet you fail to understand
That God is what we need!"

"Men and women are three-part beings. We all consist of body, soul, and spirit. When we refuse

to acknowledge a third part of our make-up, we create a void that allows evil, prejudice, and hatred to rush in and wreak havoc. Spiritual influences were present within our educational systems for most of our nation's history. Many of our major colleges began as theological seminaries. This is a historical fact. What has happened to us as a nation? "We have refused to honor God, and in doing so, we open the doors to hatred and violence. And when something as terrible as Columbine's tragedy occurs - politicians immediately look for a scapegoat such as the NRA. They immediately seek to pass more restrictive laws that contribute to erode away our personal and private liberties.

"We do not need more restrictive laws. Metal detectors would not have stopped Eric and Dylan. No amount of gun laws can stop someone who spends months planning this type of massacre. The real villain lies within our own hearts. Political posturing and restrictive legislation are not the answers. The young people of our nation hold the key. There is a spiritual awakening taking place that will not be squelched!

"We do not need more religion. We do not need more gaudy television evangelists spewing out

verbal religious garbage. We do not need more million dollar church buildings built while people with basic needs are being ignored. We do need a change of heart and a humble acknowledgment that this nation was founded on the principle of simple trust in God!

"As my son Craig lay under that table in the school library and saw his two friends murdered before his very eyes - He did not hesitate to pray in school. I defy any law or politician to deny him that right! I challenge every young person in America, and around the world, to realize that on April 20, 1999, at Columbine High School - prayer was brought back to our schools."

"Do not let the many prayers offered by those students be in vain. Dare to move into the new millennium with a sacred disregard for legislation that violates your God - given right to communicate with Him. To those of you who would point your finger at the NRA - I give to you a sincere challenge. Dare to examine your own heart before casting the first stone! My daughter's death will not be in vain. The young people of this country will not allow that to happen!"

October 11
NOT AS IT SEEMS
Bill Griffin
1995

My youngest son seems to have a mischievous sense of humor. I don't know where he got it? Not me.

Joe had gone to the grocery store some years ago with my wife. He was about ten or eleven, I have forgotten the exact age. As they were standing in the crowded check out line with a buggy running over, he suddenly jerked back, stooped, threw his hands over his head and started yelling: "DON'T HIT ME NO MORE MAMA...DON'T HIT ME NO MORE MAMA...DON'T HIT ME NO MORE!" As people began to look in shock and fear for this poor boy, my wife was horrified. Everyone was looking. All activity had stopped. So quiet you could hear a pin drop. Now what? Needless to say, she was fuming when she came through the front door. The boy was still laughing.

Appearances can be deceiving sometimes. Even in the church itself, there is deception. Satan has many people deceived into believing they are safe. Somewhere, they may have said a shallow prayer, or just said they believed and now think they are saved. I know that God alone knows those

who belong to Him and I am not to guess or judge, but to lead others to the Lord and let Him establish the relationship with them. I can not save. I can not forgive sins. I can not promise anyone a home in heaven. Only God can. I am troubled at the thoughts of those who attend church and will still be in church when the Lord comes again.

That is why we are compared to the wheat and the tares. As they grow and live together, they look so much alike that only an experienced farmer could tell the difference. That is why only Christ and His angels will be able to do the harvesting. Man will not be harvester, but the harvested. Look at the Lord's statement in Matt 13:30..."Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn."

My friend, do not be deceived. The Scriptures were written to allow us to KNOW that we belong to Him.

October 12
ON THE ANVIL
Bill Griffin
1995

I used to love to watch my grandfather when he would take time to become what we know as a blacksmith. He would pick a day when repairs had been neglected as long as they would wait and then he would start. Into the old open shed he would go and the fire would be stroked until it became as we say, "white hot".

When all was ready, he would put his tongs into the fire, grasp the heated metal, and place it on his anvil. His keen eye examines the glowing piece. He sees what the tool is now and envisions what he wants it to be -- sharper, flatter, wider, longer. With a clear picture in his mind, he begins to pound. His left hand still clutching the hot mass with the tongs, the right hand slams the two pound sledge upon the moldable metal. On the solid anvil, the smoldering iron was remolded. Grandpa knew what he wanted, whether it was plows, harnesses, or horse shoes. The size, the shape. He knew the strength.

As the hammer would pound, the shop filled with noise. Whang! Whang! But the response didn't come easily. Not without discomfort. To melt down the old and recast it as new is a disrupting process. Yet the metal remained on the anvil, allowing the craftsman and the hammer to remove the scars, repair the cracks, refill the voids, and purge the impurities.

With time, a change occurred. What was dull became sharpened, what was crooked became straight, what was weak became strong, and what was useless became useful. Now comes the final stage. With the iron still red hot, he would plunge it into a nearby bucket of water. With a hiss and lots of steam, the metal would harden immediately. The item has now become a useful tool

"For a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. These have come so that your faith -- of greater worth than gold,

which perishes even though refined by fire -- may be proved genuine and may result in praise, glory

and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1 Pet. 1:6-7).

October 13
ONLY ONE DISH NEEDED
Bill Griffin
1995

Do you ever wonder what Martha served in that special meal that she prepared for her beloved guest -- Jesus? I'm sure that nothing was too good for this occasion -- nothing! What were the "things" Scripture tells us she was so busy about? Why, dishes, of course -- fish, meat, breads, vegetables, fruits -- dishes, maybe as many as ten!

But Jesus said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and bothered about many matters, when there is need of but one thing

(dish)." Luke 10:41 Like Martha, it is easy to be too extravagant, to work more than is needed so that we end up exhausted, fretful, tense, and too tired to enjoy our times with the Lord. Jesus says to me, to you "Don't. Live simply. Then there will be plenty of time to sit at My feet. Work, yes, but not so much that you have no time for fellowship with Me."

Programs, meetings, clubs, and purely social activities can never satisfy the longing heart. "Take time to be holy; speak oft with thy Lord." Only one dish is needed.

October 14
ONLY THE REDEEMED
Bill Griffin
1995

When I worked in Miami on the hurricane restoration, I had to travel from North Miami to South Miami on a toll highway. For a while, the booths were out and it was a free trip. A lot of other streets would take me around the city and eventually to the south side but this was the most direct route. Before I left, the booths had been restored and I could not travel on this road without paying a toll. Try as I might, there was No way through the booths without coins or currency. The booths were labeled "EXACT CHANGE" or "CHANGE NEEDED". They did not take tokens. They did not allow trades or bartering. They did not discount the price, even for senior citizens or handicapped.

There are many roads that we can choose to follow during our lives. They can take us just about anywhere we want to go. But if our final destination is an eternal visit with our Father, then there is only one road we can take: the way of holiness. It happens to be a toll road. For centuries people have tried to pay the toll by doing good deeds, living good moral lives, and obeying the law most of the time. But access to the way of holiness can only be gained by paying the exact price. Christ has already paid the exact price in full for all who are willing to follow Him.

Because of His unselfish love,
"Only the redeemed will walk there"...Isaiah 35:9.

October 15
OUR GREATEST NEED TODAY
Bill Griffin
1995

If someone asked you what was the greatest need in our country today, what would you say? Tax Relief? Disarmament? Balancing the budget? Crime relief?

I believe the greatest need in this day and time is a spiritual awakening which will restore people to the morals and integrity we had at one time in this country.

To bear the name "Christian" is not enough. We bear the name "Christian nation" but we are far from the standards that our founding fathers established. If we do not soon measure up, condemnation will be ours. We will be like the church to whom Christ was speaking in Revelation 3:1

"Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."

To attend church is not enough. If we fail to let Christ be Lord and Master of our lives, we must come under the judgment of God. We become like the children of Israel of whom God said: "These people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me." ... Matthew 15:8

Don't cheat yourself out of spiritual victory by allowing sin to imprison you. Seek God's face and He will hear from heaven. He will give you rest from your worldly cares and bring you into His peace.

October 16
OUR HOME
Bill Griffin
1995

I grew up in the rural mountainous area of North Georgia. Until Jimmy Carter became president and built a mountain cabin in the area, there was very little growth. Most of the stores and land had been in the same families for generations. Even after I jumped ship on the night I graduated from High School, I still referred to my Mother's house as the home place.

We moved into the old house in about 1953. My mother, a sister, a brother, and a newborn brother. The old house was just a three room house adjacent to my great-grandmother's place. Nothing to write home about but I still returned for visits during the years.

In about 1968 the old house burned. Everything my mother owned was lost except for what she and my youngest brother, George, could grab as they ran out the door. Since the house was made of old wood and lined with cardboard, they barely had time to escape with their lives in the middle of the night.

This house and land I referred to as the old home place turned out to be temporal. Isn't it great to know that the home being prepared for us in Heaven can not be burned! Neither can it be auctioned, sold, or transferred to another owner. It is large enough that everyone will have space without having to sleep two or three in a bed.

The greatest of all attributes though is a Father's love that is great enough to provide everyone the security of a permanent home place.

Psalm 90:1 says... Lord, through all the generations you have been our home.

October 17
PAIN A GIFT?
Bill Griffin
1995

To Martha Owens [who has since gone home to be with the Lord]

All the hardships we face in life are insignificant when compared to the deterioration of the body as we grow older. When we find ourselves face to face with some type of life threatening illness, we have to be careful or we will think God singled us out individually for punishment.

We have to also guard against self pity. We have to look at our trials... as gifts... opportunities to grow. You will not grow if you sit in a beautiful flower garden. But you will grow if you are sick, if you are in pain, if you experience losses ... and if you take the pain and learn to accept it as a gift with a specific purpose.

PAIN A GIFT? I wonder. But I realize it is true. Haven't other friends rushed to comfort you? Aren't you more aware of the suffering for others? Aren't you growing as a person? God is giving you new insights and new friends to make

up for the loss of health. Do you not feel that you are coming to know God better because you need Him to help you through the pain?

God's plan is perfect. Every event that enters our lives is an opportunity. Think of this little story I heard:

Noon. The towering downtown buildings spewed forth a torrent of office workers, and the sidewalks suddenly became crowded. At a corner was a mother and her little son, perhaps four or five years old. The light changed. Without looking up the little blonde boy reached his mittened hand upward. The mother kept her eyes on the light as she reached down. Their hands met and clasped tightly and they proceeded to cross.

Because they had reached for each other so many times, each knew the exact distance to be spanned. God knows us that well, too, and His hand is always there when we reach for it. Nevertheless I am continually with Thee; Thou hast holden me by my right hand. Psalm 73:23

October 18
PASSOVER LAMB
A Study by Bill Griffin
1995

Dan 9:24-26 - "Seventy 'sevens' are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy. "Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven 'sevens,' and sixty-two 'sevens.' It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two 'sevens,' the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing.

The 70 weeks are divided as follows: 7 weeks, 62 weeks, and 1 week. Why? The first 7 weeks of years (49) is most likely distinguished from the rest because it was that exact period of time (from the beginning of the 70 weeks) until Malachi, in 397 B.C., penned the last of the Old Testament. To understand the 62 weeks (which added to the 7 makes 69) and the one week remaining, it is necessary to go back to the time when these 70 weeks began.

Daniel is very specific. The 70 weeks (490) years was to be measured "from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem." This period begins, not with the rebuilding of the temple, but with the decree Nehemiah received to rebuild Jerusalem.

Neh 2:1 And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.

There was more than one Artaxerxes, but only one who reigned longer than 20 years and his reign started in 465 B.C.. Thus the twentieth year of his rule would have been during 445 B.C. That Nehemiah did not specify another day in the month indicates, as was the custom, that he was referring to Nisan 1, 445 B.C. Counting 483 years

(69 x 7) of 360 days each, the Hebrew and Babylonia calendar of that time (173,880 days), from that date brings us exactly to Sunday, April 6, A.D. 32. That was the very day Jesus made His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

What an incredible prophecy. The God who watches over history declared 500 years in advance not only that a specific event would occur but that it would happen on a particular day! Think of the things which had to fit into place!

Why does this date not refer to His birth? The Messiah could only be revealed to Israel on the precise day foretold by Daniel and in the manner described by the prophet Zechariah.

Zech 9:9..Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

The birth of Christ was known to a very few. There was no announcement that the Messiah had been born. It was too soon for that. Whether Jesus was the Messiah would not be established by a majority vote on the part of the Jews. Nor would it be by the persuasiveness of His disciples. The Old Testament prophecies had to be fulfilled to the letter. On no other basis was the Messiah to be identified. Therefore, the Messiah could not be revealed until the appropriate time and in the manner prophesied. Had Christ allowed His disciples to proclaim Him as the Messiah before that time, it would have been proof that He was in fact not the Messiah! This was the "coming of the Messiah the Prince" referred to in Daniel 9:25 on the precise day Daniel had prophesied and in the very manner Zechariah had foretold!

It was largely in response to the resurrection of Lazarus that the crowds would line the approach to Jerusalem a few days later to hail Jesus openly for the first (and last)

time as the Messiah. The exact day for that climactic event to occur was of the utmost importance.

As we have noted, it was Sunday, April 6, A.D. 32. Depending on the date it falls each year in our calendar, that day is now celebrated as Palm Sunday. More significantly, however, it was Nisan 10! Nisan 10! Yes, the very day that the Passover lamb was taken out of the flock (Exodus 12:3-6) and kept for four days under observation to be certain that it was unblemished! Christ was not only presenting Himself to Israel as her king, but as the sacrificial Lamb of God who, rejected by His own, would pay the debt for the sins of the world.

Exod 12:3-6 -- Speak ye unto all the congregation of Israel, saying, In the tenth day of this month they shall take to them every man a lamb, according to the house of their fathers, a lamb for an house: And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbor next unto his house take it according to the number of the souls; every man according to his eating shall make your count for the lamb. Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep, or from the goats: And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening.

For some time Jesus had been avoiding Jerusalem because of the plots to kill Him. Now, however, He remained in the vicinity at night and returned to Jerusalem each day. It was if He, "the Lamb of God" were placing Himself on display before Israel during those particular four days when all over Israel the Passover lambs, set apart, were being inspected prior to being sacrificed.

The following Wednesday night, betrayed by Judas, Christ was arrested and taken to the palace of the high priest. That was Nisan 14, the day of "preparation" when the Passover lamb, after the days of observation to make certain it was "without blemish", had to be slain. In A.D. 32, that special day began at sunset Wednesday and ended at sunset Thursday.

In the few hours before sunset Thursday -- "in the evening" of Nisan 14 -- the Passover lambs would be slain all over Israel. The Passover Lamb would be slain as well, just as Moses had foretold in that remarkable prophecy (Exodus 12:6). Daniel, too, had declared: "Messiah [shall] be cut off, but not for himself" (9:26).

Shortly after sunset Wed. night, Nisan 14, the disciples had begun to prepare the upper room for the Passover to be eaten there the following night. It would only be natural for them, while preparing this room, to eat their pre-Passover supper there as well. In fact, it turned out to be the "last supper" with their Lord, though they did not suspect it would be at the time. The next night, when the disciples had thought they would be taking the Passover together in that same room, Christ's body would be in the grave.

Then why did Christ, when they sat down together that Wednesday night, say, "I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15)? The disciples No doubt thought He was referring to the following night, when the preparations would have been completed and the Passover actually celebrated. In fact, Jesus was introducing a new "Passover feast" which would be celebrated weekly instead of annually --and not looking back to the exodus from Egypt but in remembrance of His sacrifice upon the cross.

Thereafter, each Sunday, the day of His resurrection, the disciples would take bread and break and eat it (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2) as a symbol of His body, and share the cup as a symbol of His blood. This they would do in remembrance of the sacrifice of His body and blood for the sins of the world. Today, we, too, continue with this remembrance "until he come" (1 Corinthians 11:26)

To fulfill the Old Testament type, the Messiah had to be crucified when the Passover lamb was slain. And so it happened. There was a supernatural darkness from noon until 3 P.M. while Jesus hung on the cross. It was therefore shortly after 3 P.M., "in the evening" of Nisan 14, when the Passover lambs were being slain all over Israel, that Christ "cried with a loud voice, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit; and having said thus, he gave up the ghost" (Luke 23:46).

He did not weakly expire as His life ebbed away, but He "cried with a loud voice". For He had said, "I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again"(John 10:17,18). When His work was finished upon the cross, He cried in triumph, "It is finished" (Matthew 27:50; John 19:30). The debt demanded by God's justice had been paid in full.

In addition to Old Testament type, prophecy also required Him to die at that time. On that first Passover in Egypt, Moses, in explaining the sacrifice of the many Passover lambs, "a lamb for [each] house" (Exod. 12:3), made what must have seemed a very strange statement: "And ye shall keep it up until the fourteenth day of the same month: and the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening" (Exodus 12:6). Of course not just one but thousands of lambs were slain that day, yet Moses referred to "it".

Here was a prophecy, clearly stated but not understood by Israel, that one day there would be one lamb, the "Lamb of God" (John 1:29), who would be the fulfillment of the Passover. Moreover, this one Lamb would be sacrificed by the whole assembly of Israel - and for the sins of the world.

And so it happened, on the very day and at the very hour foretold by Moses, Daniel, and Zechariah. Those who reject Jesus Christ as Messiah and Savior do so in the face of such overwhelming evidence that they are without excuse.

SAT/SUN NISAN 10 CHOOSE THE LAMB	CHRIST RODE INTO JERUSALEM ON PSALM SUNDAY, NISAN 10-APRIL 6, AD 32; THE FIRST TIME CHRIST ALLOWED THE PEOPLE TO HAIL HIM AS THE MESSIAH; THEY CHOSE THEIR LAMB
SUN/MON NISAN 11 OBSERVATION	CHRIST STAYED IN JERUSALEM IN THE OPEN INSTEAD OF GOING IN AND OUT AS HE WAS HIS HABIT
MON/TUE NISAN 12 OBSERVATION	CHRIST OPEN FOR ALL TO OBSERVE IN JERUSALEM
TUE/WED NISAN 13 OBSERVATION	CHRIST OPEN FOR ALL TO OBSERVE

WED/THU NISAN 14 KILL THE LAMB	CHRIST WAS ARRESTED ON WEDNESDAY NIGHT, NISAN 14. CHRIST WAS CRUCIFIED AND BURIED ON THURSDAY NISAN 14 IN THE AFTERNOON BEFORE 6 P.M.
THU/FRI NISAN 15	CHRIST IN THE TOMB NIGHT [1] DAY [1]
FRI/SAT NISAN 16	CHRIST IN THE TOMB NIGHT [2] DAY [2]
SAT/SUN NISAN 17	CHRIST HAS RISEN NIGHT [3] DAY [3] VERY EARLY IN THE MORNING WHEN THE WOMEN CAME, THE TOMB WAS EMPTY

October 19
GOOD FRIDAY????
A Study By Bill Griffin

John 13:1-2 - Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end. And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him;

John 19:31 - The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

Matt 26:17-20 - Now the first day of the feast of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the Passover? And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with my disciples. And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover. Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

Read superficially, the Scripture account of those important days from Nisan 10-14 seems to contradict itself. Unless one has a clear understanding of events, Matthew, Mark, and Luke seem to indicate that Christ kept the Passover that last night with His disciples. Of course, if Christ and His disciples kept the Passover the night of His betrayal and arrest, then the Passover lamb must have already been slain that afternoon. If that were the case, then His death the following afternoon did not coincide with the killing of the Passover lambs. Yet we know it had to, and it did.

Verses which are not clear need to be understood in harmony with those which are clear. And we do have many very plain statements that the Passover lambs were slain the afternoon following the "last supper," and at the time of the crucifixion.

Mark 15:42 And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath,

Luke 23:54 And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on.

John 18:28 Then led they Jesus from Caiaphas unto the hall of judgment: and it was early; and they themselves went not into the judgment hall, lest they should be defiled; but that they might eat the Passover.

John 19:14 And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

John 19:31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate

that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

While the other gospels refer to "the Sabbath" drawing nigh, John alone explains that the Sabbath which began at sunset the day Christ was crucified "was a high day." In other words, it was not the ordinary weekly Sabbath which always began Friday at sunset. It was, in fact, the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (the fifteenth of Nisan), of which the first and last days were special Sabbaths during which No work was to be done.

John also clarifies the fact that the "last supper" was not the Passover: "Now before the feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come ... supper being ended, ...". So the "last supper" actually took place the night before the Passover. How could it have taken place both "the first day of unleavened bread" and "before the feast of unleavened bread"?

Although technically the Feast of Unleavened Bread began with the fifteenth of Nisan after sunset of the fourteenth (the Passover lamb was slain just before sunset, roasted, and eaten that night), the days of unleavened bread were also counted from the fourteenth of Nisan because the eating of unleavened bread began "on the fourteenth day of the month at evening". Though they were two separate feasts, the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread were treated as one inasmuch as they overlapped. The Passover lamb, though "prepared" (i.e., slain and the roasting process begun) just before sunset on the fourteenth, was not eaten until that night, which was then the fifteenth.

Obviously, had Christ been crucified on Friday, He couldn't possibly have spent three days and three nights in the grave by Sunday morning. The verification of that fact is simple. What was left of Friday afternoon can be counted as day one. All day Saturday is day two. Friday and Saturday nights until dawn Sunday total only two nights. The period comes up short by one night.

Had the Scriptures simply said "three days," then a Friday crucifixion could have qualified by counting any part of a day as the whole. If Christ were crucified before sunset Friday, then that would be part of the day which began Thursday at sunset and ended Friday at sunset. The second day went from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset, and the third day, which began at sunset Saturday, would be counted as well.

The Bible, however, is precise in its language and quite specific about "three days and three nights." The specifications derive from Jonah's experience: "And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights" (Jonah 1:17). Jesus Himself declared: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three

nights in the heart of the earth [i.e. in that part of Hades known as Abraham's bosom]" (Matthew 12:39,40; Luke 16:22). That specific requirement cannot be met by a Friday crucifixion.

Does it really matter? Yes! Aren't we just splitting hairs? No, we are not. The day of our Lord's crucifixion is of the utmost importance. Christ said He would be three days and three nights in the grave. If He did not spend that time there, then He lied. Nor is this all. As we've already seen, in fulfillment of numerous prophecies, Christ had to die at the very time when the Passover lambs were being slain all over Israel -- and He did. That necessity determined the day of His crucifixion.

Again we see how important the precise timing of prophesied events is. Saturday, which is associated with the old creation, is the last day of the week. It would have been inappropriate for Christ to rise from the dead on that day. He rose from the grave on Sunday, the first day of a new week. He is called "the firstborn from the dead", and "the last Adam", the forerunner of a race of

"new creatures", "born-again" people who are "his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus". Only these new creatures in Christ will inhabit the new universe.

Christ was born "when the fullness of time was come [i.e., at the time God had foreordained]". His Second Coming will also take place at the exact time God has decreed. ARE YOU READY FOR HIS COMING AGAIN? The rapture will happen in the "twinkling of an eye". Can you repent, confess, and accept Christ faster than a blink? If not, you need to accept the Lamb of God, the Passover Lamb now as your savior. By accepting His blood sacrifice for your sins, you can be assured that you have been "sealed until the day of redemption". If you already know Christ, then I truly believe you can "lift up your head for your redemption draweth nigh".

Research taken from the books:

The Holy Bible
How Close Are We?...Dave Hunt: author

October 20
PLANTING TIME
Bill Griffin
1995

We recognize April when it comes each year. The earth begins to bloom forth into new life. Nature begins to dress herself in her finest. The fragrance of the new flowers is refreshing for most of us. For those with allergies and hay fever, they can still enjoy the colors. It just seems that God is everywhere. We see Him in His creation.

Along with the sweet smell of nature, we begin to hear the rumblings of the tractors as the farmers begin their spring planting. The smell of fresh loose earth. We begin to see the dust clouds following behind the plows or planters. They can now open the soil, drop seeds, apply fertilizer, and close the furrows in one operation. This used to take the mule and me two or three trips for this same operation. (He didn't like the work any more than I did either).

The conversations now turn to hoping for dry days to get the planting done, and then sunshine and just the right amount of rain.

The farmer knows the futility of his finest efforts without the blessings of God. The farmer knows all his success depends on God. Isaiah 55:10 emphasizes God's power to bless:
10 For as the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater:

11 So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.

We can also see in these same verses the power of God to bless the seeds of the Gospel. Whether it's planting a crop or planting seed for a soul, God's timing is vital. As God's timing continues to hasten toward the return of His Son, we need to be busy planting and watering Gospel seeds to insure a bountiful harvest at His appearing.

October 21
PREJUDICE
Bill Griffin
1995

To have been born in the deep south, Georgia, and be able to keep away from the racial prejudice, is a feat in itself. I guess part of it was that there was only one family of black folks in our entire county. A husband, wife, and two children whom we very seldom saw. The children had to get up early in the morning to catch a school bus that would take them about twenty five miles away to a 'colored school'. We had busing before the Supreme Court knew what to call it. I know there was hatred and prejudice because the language of a lot of the older folks inflamed it. Somehow though, this was one hatred my mom did not pass on to me.

My first real encounter with racial prejudice came when I was about sixteen or seventeen years old. I was used to being around the blacks and people who came into my dad's garage in Spartanburg. Most of his employees were black. To me, I never saw the difference. They were people. Good people. My dad sent me and two black men from Spartanburg to Knoxville to pick up a load of their furniture. I was to do the driving of his old truck. Everything was fine until we were coming back. About lunch time, we began to look

for a place to eat. We stopped at a little mountain cafe somewhere along the way, but when we started in, the owner ran us out, exclaiming: "We don't serve 'n_gg_rs' in here." I didn't like the word then and I still don't like it. We all left. I was not quite ready for this confrontation but since we were all hungry, I went back and got us some burgers and drinks for all of us to eat outside in the truck. I am not so hick that I can not look around today and see some of that same prejudice but not everyone of any race or color or culture should be stereotyped by a few. We need to learn to accept people just as they are. People. God given souls. All in need of the savior who came to set us free from those bonds. I am glad Jesus did not look at race, color, or culture when He came to walk on the earth. He did not isolate Himself to any one class. Matthew was a despised tax collector. Simon was an outcast leper. Nicodemus was a Pharisee. Simon the zealot. Zacchaeus, the rich tax collector. He shocked the known world at that time by associating with the downtrodden, the diseased, the outcast. The woman with the blood issue. The

woman at the well. He touched a leper. He spat in the mud and rubbed it on a blind man's eyes. Anyone with no where to turn could turn to Him. Today is no different. If society shuns you, turn to Christ. Think about something. When Christ encountered Paul in Acts 9:4, His question was, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute ME?" Do you

see who Paul was persecuting? He had warrants for the arrest of the people who believed in "the way". None of those warrants had the name of Jesus Christ, but who did Jesus say Paul was persecuting? Jesus, Himself. We need to be careful. We, too, may be persecuting Him. He is the church. He is His people.

October 22
PRESIDENTIAL VISIT
Bill Griffin
1995

I was stationed at Fort Bragg, N.C. for the biggest part of my Army tour. We were headquartered there, but we were on the go most of the time. It seemed we were always in the field on maneuvers somewhere. In late 1962 or early 1963, I have forgotten which, we were told that President John Kennedy was coming to Fort Bragg to see the troops that he had sponsored. It was Kennedy that finally authorized the use of the Green Beret, by which the Special Forces became known. I have never seen such preparation in all my life. For weeks, we spit shined anything that sat still, and even some things that were moving kinda slow. We turned out in force in our area and shoulder to shoulder, we walked and picked up any trash that may be on the side of the road or in the grass, even into the edge of the woods. Cigarette butts, candy and gum wrappers, anything that did not grow naturally. We got ready for the President's visit. Near our barracks, we had a demonstration area set up to display all the functions of the Special Forces teams. [NOTE--this area is now known as the John F. Kennedy Warfare Center]. A rappelling tower, first aid displays, communications displays, weapons and even demolitions areas. I was assigned to the first aid section since I was a grunt specialist at that time. When Kennedy came marching through, I was laid back on a sheet with one leg from the

knee down stuck down through a hole, a plastic stump around my knee to emulate a leg missing. Every so often, I would squeeze a small bulb at my side and red dyed water would ooze out the ends to look like I was bleeding to death. I did not get to speak to the President but I was close enough [about 3-4 feet] to see him real well. I guess that will always be the highlight of my earthly life. I do not imagine I will ever get another chance on earth to be in the presence of someone so great. With all the preparation, we were prepared for his coming. We were determined 'not be ashamed' at his coming. Most of us felt we could have just taken our meals out in the yard. Isn't it a shame though. There is another one coming one day and we are making absolutely no preparation for the visit. His coming is just as sure as the visit by the president. He has never missed an appointment. John Kennedy will be pale in comparison to the King of Kings and LORD of LORDS. Each of us should be preparing to meet Him by living every day as if it were our last. If you knew today was your last day, what would you be doing differently? Helping someone in need? Witnessing to a lost neighbor? Studying your Bible? In church?
2 Tim 2:15..."Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

October 23
PRESSURE
Bill Griffin
1995

Pressure! It comes at us from all directions. It pushes, pulls, consumes, and deprives us of needed sleep. We long for an escape, a simpler life, a little quiet to ease the raw edges of our souls. We want peace. We want time alone with God.

Pressure will always be there. We seem to think that somehow it should go away of it's own accord. It won't. It is a robber, a thief. It steals peace and health and leaves us cold, angry, depressed and ill. The question is not, "Why am I under such pressure?" The question is, "What will I do with the pressure that always waits to come in on me?"

Time, talent, and treasure are not given to me to scatter everywhere as if they have no value. Neither are they given to me so that I may allow others to take them and use them as they will. I do not throw money out onto the streets; but I will give it willingly as an offering or to help. The same is true for time. It is No act of stewardship to throw my time after every cause,

or to feel that because of my talent I alone can do some ministry, or to let others spend my time for me according to their agenda.

There is a control to be exercised before the Lord. Every minute, like every bit of treasure, is to be committed prayerfully to God. If I do that, I will indeed be the "good and faithful servant" and will hear the words, "Well done." For, like Mary, I will have chosen the better part. But if I don't, I will be like a worried, frazzled and worn-out Martha. That is no testimony to the grace, the peace and the healing of our Lord.

Pressure is a daily reminder that "I am not my own." And with the reminder comes the obligation to follow and do what God wants me to do. He is not a taskmaster with a whip. In fact, Jesus showed something of the Father's heart when He told His disciples, "Come aside ... and rest a while." To the weary and heavy-laden he offers his rest.

October 24
PRONE TO MAKE MISTAKES
Bill Griffin
1995

"ALL PEOPLE MAKE MISTAKES;
THAT'S WHY THEY PUT ERASERS ON LEAD PENCILS."

These new computers with word processors are wonderful features. No white out. No correcting tape. When I make a mistake, my page is not

ruined. I just backspace over the mistake, and 'voila', the mistake is lifted from the screen. I can then type the corrections and the person reading my typing doesn't even know I made the mistake.

I have an automatic correcting power in my life, too. Nobody's perfect; I know I'm going to make mistakes. But Christ came to correct the sins in my life -- to erase them, as if they never had been. I need not feel that my whole life is ruined because I have goofed up.

I am the one who must flick the switch. I must first acknowledge my sin, then ask His forgiveness. Then my life is cleared, like a

blank page, to be re-typed, this time more carefully.

But the best part of all is that Christ isn't a machine to break down, wear out, or become obsolete. He is steadfast and true, always ready to forgive you and help you begin again.

I John 1:9-10 ... If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

Call on Him today, confessing where you have erred, and let Him give you a fresh start.

October 25
PUPPY LOVE
Bill Griffin
1995

Most of us know what the expression "puppy love" means. As youngsters, when we first began to notice there was a biological difference in boys and girls, we probably fell into and out of love every week. If a spell lasted longer, it was said to be 'puppy love.' Puppy love was supposed to fail. Our parents called it that because they knew that just as soon as the next girl or boy walked by and smiled, a new romance would be born.

As we grew older, late teens, the puppy love withdrew and we began to consider longer relationships. All of us began to look for that special someone. I thought I had found her when I went to South Carolina in 1961. We became inseparable. I wanted to be with her every moment. Even when I was having to work, I missed her. I just knew everything was going to work out, even when I enlisted in the Army. She promised to wait. I promised to come back. It is amazing what six weeks of separation will do to young folks. We drifted apart. We never regained what we had before I left. By mutual agreement,

we decided it would be best to part company, see other people, and if it was meant to be, somehow we would be drawn to each other again.

Christ speaks to each of us about losing 'our first love'.

Revelation 2:4... "Yet I hold this against you: you have forsaken your first love." Astonishing isn't it, that the Church that started out so in love with Christ, had abandoned Him. So many of us today are exactly like this early church. We started some time ago with a burning desire to know Christ and to be a part of Him. We desired to spend time with Him. We wanted to feel His presence, to hear the sweet sound of His voice as He whispered our name. Somehow, though, we have drifted away. If you do not feel as close to God now as you did then, WHO MOVED? He loves us -- present tense -- not a one time shot at Calvary; but this love is unchanging, even though our love changes and we don't love him as we ought to love Him.

Is He calling you, even now, to return to that 'first love' you experienced with Him?

October 26
RECONCILED
Bill Griffin
1995

The word 'reconciliation' means making friends of former enemies or putting on good terms again people separated by rejection. For people to be reconciled, they have to be willing to put the past behind them, make up and be friends again. They need not have harmed one another equally. One may have a lot more forgiving to do than the other!

My cousins James, Bill, and Pete [yes, I had a cousin named Bill] were working in the barn one day storing hay. To make room for the hay, they had to move some stored equipment out of the hay loft. Now my cousin James was a scrawny fellow and to hear him tell it, he knew everything. You know the kind. Each of us has met someone like that before. He decided how they would lower the equipment. I do not remember what it was but it was quite heavy. It had taken about four grown men to put it in the loft to begin with. He got the idea to put a rope through the pulley, tie it around the equipment, and he would ease it to the ground. He got him a good firm stance, wrapped the rope around his wrists and arms and hollered for Bill and Pete, "Ya'll push it out easy now."

Well, when the equipment left the loft, down it came and up James went! The equipment hit the ground WHOOMMP! and busted to pieces. James' head hit the pulley at the top, and down he came WHAMMM! right in amongst the equipment. Knocked him unconscious. Out cold as a cucumber. Bill came running down out of the loft crying "James", "OHHHH James", lifted his head in his lap and began to softly slap the side of his face. "Speak to me James", "Speak to me." James finally looked up at Bill and said, "Why should I speak to you? I just passed you up there twice and you didn't speak to me!"

Each of us has a need to be reconciled to our Creator. That is why Christ came into the world. 2 Corinthians 5:19 explains this reconciliation. "That is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation."

If you belong to Christ, you have been given this message to carry on the reconciliation by bringing others to God. Are you carrying the message?

October 27
REDEEMED
Bill Griffin
1995

I was still in the Army when I first met my wife. Most of the time my money ran out way before my month did. Sometimes, the only way I could get enough money to travel from Fort Bragg to Charlotte was to visit the local pawn shop. Every military post has an abundance of pawn shops, bars, and used car lots leading to the very gates of the post. Everything the soldier needs: instantly.

Cameras, radios, TVs, and watches made good pawn items. I would have to 'hock' something of value to receive much less than what it was worth. When I would get my next check, I would take my pawn ticket in and redeem the article.

Pawning and redeeming are old customs. In the Old Testament, the term originated from the custom of buying back something that formerly belonged to the purchaser but for some reason had passed into the hands of another. The original owner could regain possession by paying a redemption price for it.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they 'hocked' the earth and all its contents to Satan. That is why Satan could tempt Christ and offer Him "all the kingdoms of the world". They belonged to Satan. The only way to get them back was to redeem them. God did this by using His only Son as payment.

To redeem something, equal or greater value had to be paid. When God created Adam, He made a pure soul. Only a pure soul could redeem Him. God had to once again create a pure soul, but this time He said, "I'll be the Father."

Adam sinned. Christ did not. Christ became the acceptable sacrifice, or payment. Jesus came to "give His life a ransom for many" as our Redeemer. Knowing about Jesus is not enough. You must know Him. He knows those whom He has redeemed and they know Him.

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins. [Colossians 1:14]

October 28
REFUGE IN TIME OF TROUBLE
Bill Griffin
1995

Psalm 46:1...God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

The Statue of Liberty in New York harbor is a reminder that America is an immigrant nation. Nearly all of us can trace our roots to another land.

Today, thousands of refugees from Haiti and Cuba are coming to America looking for safe havens for themselves and their families. They are fleeing war, hunger, and need. America has provided a safe haven for millions, a place where immigrants can pursue their hopes and dreams. Like the torch held by the Lady in the harbor, God's light shines to signify that He is a refuge for all who wish to flee from the storms of life, "a helper in the time of storms," as the hymn says.

A story:

There was once a poor Chinese woman who went up into the foothills to cut the grass. Her baby was tied to her back and a little child walked beside her. In her hand was a sickle to cut the grass.

Just as she reached the top of the hill, she heard a roar. Frightened, she turned and saw a mother tigress springing at her, followed by her two cubs. The illiterate Chinese woman had never attended school or church, but a missionary once told her about Jesus, "who is able to help you when you are in trouble." As the tiger's claws tore into her arm, the woman cried out, "O Jesus, help me!" The tiger, instead of attacking again, suddenly turned and ran away.

The Bible says, "He will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways" (Psalm 91:11). What "beasts" are attacking you? Chances are you will never be attacked by a wild beast, but you will be attacked by doubts, by fears of other kinds, by worry, by loneliness, by despair. Cry out to Jesus and He will answer you just as surely as the Chinese woman's desperate cry was heard and answered.

October 29
REJECTION
Bill Griffin
1995

When I was a freshman in High School [9TH grade... our town was not big enough for a Junior High or Middle School], the football coach could not get enough recruits to have bodies for practice. He could barely scrape enough bodies together to have a team. He came to our freshman home room one day and announced that anyone who would come out for football would earn 1/2 a credit each year. I never had whole credit so 1/2 of a credit looked good to me. I found out later that he was talking about a different kind of credit. I never envisioned myself being big enough to play or having the time. Chores had to be done after school.

Two of my friends talked me into giving it a try. We heard they just needed blocking dummies so we should fit in okay. Somehow I was able to convince my mom that I could walk home after practice in the afternoon and still have enough

time to do my chores. I didn't fully understand what I was promising but I decided to PLAY FOOTBALL!; all 121 pounds of me.

I wanted to make the team but most of the other boys were larger than I even though they were nowhere like the young men of today. If we had been blessed with someone 6'8" and 270 pounds, we would have given him the field. Most were also more experienced. I never had time for sports before that time. I hung in though. The coach gave me jersey # 11. Most of the other boys clothes fit so the numbers were on their back between their shoulder blades. Me I fit between the numbers 1 and 1. The coach finally gave me another number. When I ran, it looked like I had a [1] under each arm. The team couldn't play for laughing.

I kept looking for that day the coach would come by and tell me that I could not make the

team. Somehow, even as a runt, I did make the team and played for four years in High School. I was not rejected.

God does not reject us either.

Zechariah 10:6 says ... "They will be as though I had never rejected them. I am the Lord their God; I will answer their prayers.

He accepts us and loves us and wants to show us how to become the best person we can be.

October 30
RELIGION
Bill Griffin
1995

A Southern Baptist traveled to England on vacation. While there, he attended a religious service and was amazed at how quiet and reserved it was. Not one word was spoken out of turn. All of a sudden he heard the minister say something he really liked.

"Amen!" he shouted. Everyone in the church turned and stared, and the usher came running down the aisle.

"You must not talk out loud," admonished the usher.

"But," protested the Baptist, "I've got religion!"

"Well," said the usher, "you did not get it here."

Isn't it amazing how our concepts of worship and religion differ? Even here in our own country there is varied worship between denominations. Sometimes, we are quick to criticize or judge others for their methods. If we could really see what we are doing to ourselves, we would seek instant forgiveness of the One for whom the

worship should be intended. Too often, we worship to fit ourselves, not God. Just because my mama and papa did it this way, or 'this is the way this church has always done it' is not the answer.

The Scriptures tell us what worship is all about. Deut 6:4-5 tells us...

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

If God is one, we cannot be worshiping anything but Him. If we do that with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, what is left over to worry about how some one else worships? Every person needs to worship God in his or her own way. If you feel led to shout, shout; if a silent tear streams down your cheek, let it travel unashamedly. God sees your worship when it is from your heart. Do not be worried about what others think. They will not be standing before you in heaven to be your judge. Thank God!

October 31
HALLOWEEN
Bill Griffin
1995

Soon it will be Halloween and, for some, a time for make-believe spooks, witches, and devils. Do you ever wonder what kind of treats the Devil desires? Maybe Deviled ham, Deviled eggs, Deviled Food cake? Jalapeno peppers? Traditionally, a devil is dressed in red and black, sports a forked tail and horns, and wears a grotesque, leering mask. He is a ridiculous figure - a joke. A joke created in the mind of man. Nowhere is Satan described this way. He is a being with intellect, emotions, and a will.

But real evil by whatever name is no joke. All persons who think straight know that they meet real evil and that it comes in many forms. All you have to do is pick up any newspaper in the country and read the articles that our news media deems necessary to sell papers. Evil is glorified every way you look or read. There is another side to evil though. It would be simple if we could always identify evil by it's devilish dress.

But evil is tricky. It is subtle. Satan is the deceiver, the father of lies. He "roams the earth seeking to devour those whom he will." What may seem good at first sight is really all wrong. To feed the hungry would seem to be good. Yet, Jesus refused to be tempted to win His kingdom with bread. He understood that bribery is evil's way, not God's.

Doing battle with evil can affect even the strongest. Angels came to help Jesus recover from His strenuous encounter. [Then the Devil left Jesus; and angels helped him. Matt. 4:11] The Bible does not give us information about His helpers or what kind of help they brought, but we know that angels are God's messengers. They came because God is always alert to support His own.

Look out for the tempter. But also be open to the helpers God sends you.
