

The Church of the Damascus Road Echo!

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Musings

I have been struggling with something that has been laying heavy on my heart. There is a great deal of peer pressure here as to whether or not we should choose to turn over our lives to the Lord.

I think it comes from a lack of maturity among the inmates. A short time ago it was brought up that less than 10% of the prison population here is 35 years of age or older. Although I have known men still in their teens that act so much more mature than some men in their 30's or 40's, these men have yet to grow up.

What I struggle with is when a Christian inmate is confronted by his fellow inmates and asked, "Did you go to church on the streets?" They use this question to discourage Christian inmates, and as an excuse not to accept Jesus into their own hearts. I must admit that I may have lost a few brain cells due to so many years of drug abuse, but even I can see that this makes no sense at all.

I've had fellow inmates look down their noses at me because I am doing my best to live a righteous life. They should take a look at their own salvation rather than concentrate on what should only be between us and God.

I will explain my relationship with Jesus as my own personal testimony, not to justify why I choose to follow Jesus.

Many years ago when I was 17 years old and somewhat immature, I was invited by my uncle to attend a revival meeting at a church that he attended. I accepted the Lord into my heart. I was even looking into entering the ministry. I am not too sure why I drifted away from the Lord, all I know is that I turned and walked away from the best thing that anyone could have in his life.

I continued to believe in God even though I no longer let him be a part of my life. When I turned my back on him I began to live a life of drug addiction that would last for over 25 years.

I praise God that even though we turn our back on him, he still loves us and forgives us. I believe that he will always be present in our lives and keep us from harm. Just because we do not always recognize his presence does not mean he's not there.

As to the question whether or not I attended church on the streets, the answer is, "Yes, I did." If I had continued to go to church on the outside I would not be where I am today.

The sad thing is that I let my drug addiction rule my life. It became the most important thing in my life. I allowed it to come between me and my family. I never had the time to be there for my wife and children. In that insane state of mind as a drug-addicted individual, I was out of control.

The only way I could have been lured to church would have been if someone had convinced me they had methamphetamine there. Sad, Huh?

I praise the Lord for loving me enough to do the one thing that would make me stop doing dope. He knew that I had to be separated from dope long enough to bring sanity back to my drug addicted mind. It would take years away from drugs and the people that I hung around with to show me the truth.

It is by the grace of God that he has entered my life and started the healing process I so badly needed. My heart breaks many times every day when something reminds me how I miss my wife and children, and I remember the times that I told my children

I did not have time for them because I was too busy playing the dope game and supplying my habit.

I would fill the void in my relationship with my family by substituting money and material objects instead of what they needed and wanted—a relationship with me.

Sin is like an illness that can only end in death. Not just physically but also spiritually. When someone has been healed from a life-threatening disease or illness we all give thanks and praise God that this person will live. When someone turns his life over to Jesus, as children of God we rejoice with the angels that another soul has been won!

When someone has been healed, we should not question when, how, or why they were healed, but be happy for them. We should be glad that they have been healed by the salvation that only Jesus can bring into their lives.

I have discovered that when someone other than a Christian is concerned about my salvation, it is actually that individual's salvation that's in question. As Christians we pray that these individuals will see the need for Jesus in their lives. It is by grace that salvation is given to us.

In summary, what's important is not how, where, or when we accept Jesus into our lives, but that we do it, and do it soon. Only God knows when the day of judgment will come and we want to be ready.

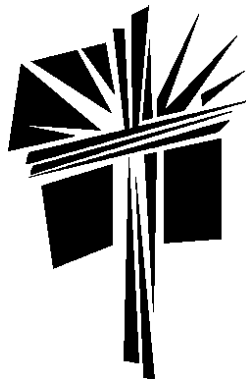
Do not let the unbelievers get you down. Pray for them and remember that misery does love company, so don't let them destroy your faith. I pray that you all will seek what is eternal and not what is temporal.

Go in Peace, serve the Lord.

-- Robert Johnson II

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It's a Pleasure

One of the most lasting pleasures you can experience is the feeling that comes over you when you genuinely forgive an enemy—whether he knows it or not.

O. A. Battista



If God had voice mail

Most of us have now learned to live with "voice mail" as a necessary part of our daily lives. But, have you ever wondered what it would be like if God decided to install voice mail? Imagine praying and hearing the following:

Thank you for calling Heaven.
 For English, Press 1
 For Spanish, Press 2.
 For all other languages, press 0.

Please select one of the following options:
 Press 1 for Requests.
 Press 2 for Thanksgiving.
 Press 3 for Complaints.
 Press 4 for all other inquiries.

I am sorry; all of our angels and saints are busy helping other sinners right now. However, your prayer is important to us, and we will answer it in the order it was received. Please stay on the line.

If you would like to speak to:
 God, press 1.
 Jesus, press 2.
 Holy Spirit, press 3.
 If you would like to hear King David sing a Psalm while you are holding, press 4.

To find a loved one that has been assigned to Heaven, press 5, then enter his or her social security number, followed by the "pound" sign. (If you receive a negative response, please hang up and try area code 666)

For reservations at Heaven, please enter J-O-H-N, followed by the numbers 3-1-6. For answers to nagging questions about dinosaurs, the age of the earth, life on other planets, and where Noah's Ark is, please wait until you arrive. Our computers show that you have already prayed today. Please hang up and try again tomorrow.

The office is now closed for the weekend to observe a religious holiday. Please pray again on Monday after 9:30 a.m. If you are calling after hours and need emergency assistance, please contact your local pastor.

Thank you, and have a heavenly day!



What do you see in this photo of a tornado? Turn this picture 90 degrees counterclockwise to see what people in an Iowa town saw.

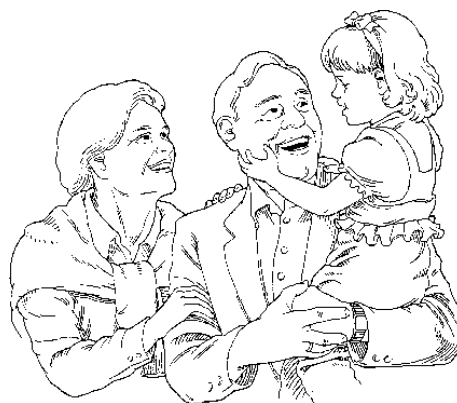
Special

Feeling special is hard to do
 When the world is so crazy
 And seems it's all on you.

Feeling special some people will never feel.
 So many things have happened to some
 Their hearts will never heal.
 If you have anything in life
 to feel special about,
 Keep it with you forever
 and never let it out.

Anything counts if it made you feel good,
 Feel special. Feeling special,
 Unhealed Hearts wish they could.

— Eric J. Conerd



Ever Thought about This?

It's always too soon to quit! No matter how dark things look. No matter how insoluble the problem- how impossible- how imponderable . . . despair is never justified. Because to despair of self is really to despair of God! It is to count God incapable- to measure God by human standards- to ignore the clear Word of God. Nothing is too hard for God! With Him all things are possible! This is a truth men have tested and tried again and again to their satisfaction. Not once has God failed to help the man who called on Him for help. Not once have His promises been found wanting.

Dr. Richard Halverson

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Eric Conerd, Editor,
 Glenn Wooten, Regular Contributor,
 If you are reading a copy of this letter that is not yours, you can subscribe and receive your own copy by writing to:

The Church of the Damascus Road
 PO Box 834
 Fort Dodge, IA 50501-0834
 Office at St. Olaf Lutheran Church
 239 North 11th Street, Fort Dodge
 515-955-3579



To My Children

Where does Daddy want to be while you are growing up? With you my children.

While you are growing up, Daddy wants to teach and show you all the things God has created in life. To lay in the grass, put a worm on your hook for the first time, sit and watch the sunrise and the sunset, the feel of a new puppy and the playfulness of a little kitty.

While you are growing up, Daddy wants to be able to see things through your eyes and hopefully be able to understand the things that seem so big to you, but so small to him.

While you are growing up, Daddy wants to share the important things in life: God, Family, Trust, and Responsibility.

But first Daddy must get home. It won't be real soon. He won't make it for Christmas or your birthday. He won't be there for your school projects or baseball. He won't be there when you cry. But someday he will be there, because where Daddy wants to be while you are growing up, is with you my children.

—Eric J. Conerd



A Thought...

What an amazing phenomenon is the Bible! Written by more than 40 different writers, living in entirely different cultures, over a period of 1500 years, in at least three languages, about many different subjects, such as: history, hygiene, physics, astronomy, jurisprudence, ethics, philosophy, psychology, etc. Virtually a library, yet regarded as one book. Knowledge of the Bible reveals that the 66 books which comprise it are concerned with one central theme—redemption—and that every part ties into every other part to form an organic unity. It leaves but one sound and reasonable conclusion: the Book of books is God-directed, protected, inspired.

Dr. Richard Halverson

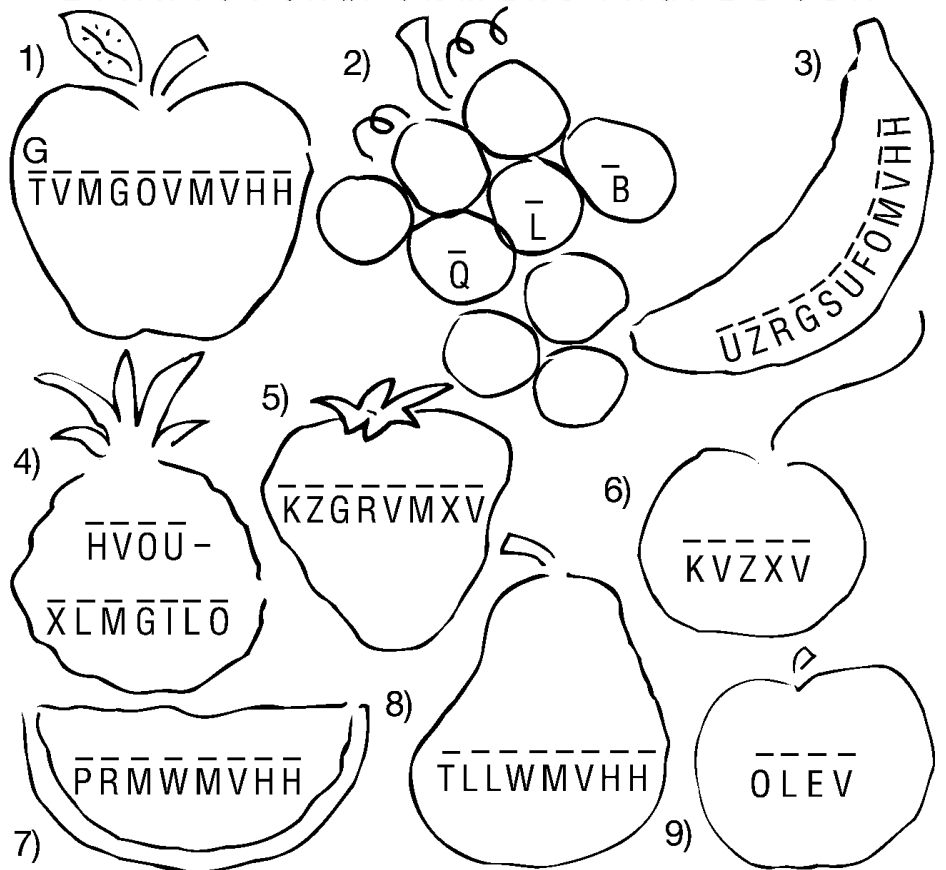


Fruits of the Spirit

In the book of Galatians, Paul told the people to "live by the spirit" – to live God's way. He told them what they would need to do this. These characteristics are called the "fruits of the Spirit."

Find the "Fruits of the Spirit" using the code below.

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
Z Y X W V U T S R Q P O N M L K J I H G F E D C B A



Gentleness, Joy, Faithfulness, Self-Control, Patience, Peace, Kindness, Goodness, Love



*Sing psalms, hymns and
spiritual songs with gratitude
in your hearts to God.*

Colossians 3:16

The Rose

It's only a tiny rose bud,
A flower of God's design,
But I cannot unfold the petals
with these clumsy hands of mine.
The secret of unfolding flowers
is not known to such as I.
The flower God opens so sweetly,
in my hands it would fade and die.
So I'll trust in him for his leading
Each moment of every day.
And I'll look up to him for his guidance
every step of the way.
— Mike Stevenson

Tears

Tears are water of sorrow,
Tears are water of joy,
Liquids of emotion,
Hate, love, happiness,
fear, plot, or play.
Crying can release things.
Sometimes crying is good.
At times it's a feeling
that doesn't feel that good.
But for whatever sad reasons
your tears may flow,
I hope it releases some tension
for a better tomorrow.
—Eric J. Conerd

Our Broken Vessels

In this world, we discard or repair them, leaving them with a much smaller value. Once broken they can never have their original value again. In scripture, we see a totally different picture. God uses broken things to change lives, meet needs and win wars. Gideon's 300 soldiers defeated their enemy by breaking their pitchers to reveal the light from their lamps within.

So it is in our broken nature letting the light of his love be revealed. A widow broke the seals of her pot of oil and poured it out until all were filled and her debt was paid. As we break the seal that guards our heart and let his love and compassion flow to empty vessels around us, we are giving back to him for our debt that has already been paid. Mary broke her alabaster box rendering it useless so that she could spend its contents (a year's salary) to anoint the head of Jesus. If we allow our most precious gift (not a year's salary but our entire life) to be broken, our life will also be poured out for him!

When Moses smote the rock and broke it open, water flowed for the children of Israel in the desert. When we allow our life to be smitten or broken, there is living water waiting to flow out to others living in their desert. Jesus' body was broken by thorns, a whip and nails, so that his life could flow as a river that never runs dry let this be our example. The brokenness in our life is not rendering us useless and leaving us of lesser value. By reason of our breaking, we are being purified. Our value is much greater broken.

Hidden Feelings

The love I feel is real,
though you could not know
I keep it inside like an unclaimed prize.
People say the eyes are the window of the soul.
My love would shine bright
with a glance in my eyes.
These secret feelings have become a
burden to carry.
I'm not sure I'm ready to let them go.
It would mean a part of me I would bury.
My feelings are safe within my heart;
Always protected so they won't show.
One day, the right day, these feelings will
be shared,
But not until I'm sure you'll care.
Until our hearts can beat as one,
I'll just be content to let my love be.
—Eric J. Conerd

Safe from the Storm

We are told that in stormy weather it is not unusual for small birds to be blown out of sight of land on the sea. They're often seen by voyagers far from the coast, hovering over the ship's mast on weary wings, as if they wanted to alight and rest themselves, but fearing to do so.

A traveler tells us that on one occasion a little lark, which followed the ship for a considerable distance, was at last compelled, through sheer weariness, to alight. He was so worn out as to be easily caught. The warmth of the hand that held him was so agreeable to him that he sat down on it and buried his cold feet in his feathers. He looked about with his bright eyes not in the least afraid, as if feeling assured that he had been cast among good, kind people whom he could trust.

The warm reception the weary little bird received at the hands of the passengers is but a faint idea of that welcome which will greet the worn-out, sin-sick souls who will commit themselves into the hands of the Savior.

—Charles Haddon Spurgeon



"Don't think of it as getting a flu shot.
Think of it as installing virus protection software."

Contributions invited

The editor of this newsletter is inviting ALL READERS to contribute articles, poetry, art work, and opinions for the newsletter. So don't be bashful.

Worship & Bible Study

FDCF Fort Dodge
7:00pm WednesdaysHoly Communion
7:00pm FridaysBible Study
NCCF Rockwell City
6:30pm TuesdaysBible Study
6:30pm ThursdaysHoly Communion