



# *Sonshine Magazine*

*January, 2009*

*My soul yearns for you  
in the night; in the  
morning my spirit  
longs for you. When  
your judgments come  
upon the earth, the  
people of the world  
learn righteousness.*

*Isaiah 26:9*

**FREE!**

PLEASE TAKE A MAGAZINE  
WITH YOU TO READ.

**Editor's Comments:** *As I sit here and contemplate how to put my thoughts into writing, our church is just over 24 hours away from putting on our first performance of our annual Christmas dinner/theater presentation. It is a tremendous amount of work and effort, and it seems like this week is one of those that "if it can go wrong, it will go wrong." Everyone is working under a lot of stress and difficulty as we try to put together the final practice and set up the church for the several hundred people that will come through our doors in the next few days.*

*This year, the weather has already been working against us. It has only been in the last couple of years that bad weather has meant trouble for us. We were supposed to have play practice on Tuesday night but it snowed and iced all day long. By the time of the practice, those coming from some distance away decided it was too risky. By 4:00 PM, we canceled the practice. Tonight will be our dress rehearsal and the weather is looking good for now. But the weather forecast is calling for freezing rain for the last night of our dinner/theater. And so we live with that pressure and realize there is nothing we can do about it. We will do our best to glorify the Lord if we have 300 people or thirty!*

*On top of that, ...! But, why am rehearsing all these problems? God is good, and He is blessing us in whatever we face and whatever we do. How about you? Has your retirement dropped off by thousands of dollars? Is life tough at home and in whatever you are doing? Is there turmoil in the church that you attend? I suspect that for many of us we can answer all those questions with an emphatic "Yes!" But, in it all we need to remember that God is in control and wants only the best for His children.*

*What I am learning can be pretty much summed up by Habakkuk 3:17 & 18. He writes, "Though the fig tree does not bud and there are no grapes on the vines, though the olive crop fails and the fields produce no food, though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will be joyful in God my Savior." God is our God! He is our rock and our refuge. In Him is our strength! If we are going through difficult times, we need to stand firm and watch the glory of the Lord take place around us! Let's stand together and put our faith first as we watch Him work what the world will call "Impossible!"*

*Glenda and I hope you enjoy the magazine this month. Let us know what you think about it by e-mail or snail mail. If you would like to contribute an article to the magazine, send it to me. We will try to work it into the mix.*

Love ya' all,

*Pastor Gary*

**Sonshine**  
MAGAZINE

# SONSHINE

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## Sonshine Magazine

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Sonshine Magazine is a free publication to anyone who would like a copy. It is our prayer that you are strengthened by the contents and that your faith grows through reading it.

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**On The Cover:** The snow covered ground is a beautiful part of God's creation. It is also a vital part of the creation process for new life in the coming spring. Without the moisture and the nutrients from the snow, the crops, flowers and trees suffer as they come alive in April and May.

I often marvel at the parallels in our lives that can be drawn from the four seasons. We have birth (spring), our early years with incredible productivity (summer) our fall years (when our colors change) and then winter, which might be compared to the last years of life. Winter can also be compared to difficult times in life when things are hard and cold. But, we must always see the beauty around us and know that there are positive character traits being built in us because of those difficulties we face. I keep reminding myself to not look at only the cold and snow, but to look at the beauty around me because of the cold and snow.



### In this issue:

#### **What Is Truth?.....4**

Pardon me for being so frank, but there are times we all make some stupid statements in the name of truth! Pastor Gary Turner writes an article about truth and how we might handle what other people believe to be the truth. We should never destroy someone over what we disagree with in truth. Love must always come first!

#### **Testimony From The Late Tony Snow .....6**

This testimony is from the internet. Tony Snow had an interesting take on the cancer that he went through and the God that he loves.

#### **Long Lost Honor.....8**

John McAlister writes about reading John Bevere's book, *Honor's Rewards*. John states that he has a new understanding of true honor and how you show that to people around you.

#### **BE AGGRESSIVE!.....9**

Pastor Tim Spickler writes about a word that he teaches to the kids that he coaches in basketball. He also teaches it in his ministry. Read this article to see how we should be AGGRESSIVE toward Jesus and the things he stands for.

#### **All My Heart, Mind And Strength .....10**

Shelly Spickler writes about an experience in her life as she was going through Henry Blackaby and Claude King's Bible study, *Experiencing God*. She shares that she had to make some heart wrenching changes in her attitude, even when she thought she had things all together.

#### **Three Things That Enhance Worship.....17**

Pastor Gary shares some lessons learned in a recent Bible study on Romans 12:1-3. Consider the text and then look deep within yourself. Ask God to show you your heart to make sure your worship isn't being blocked in some manner.

#### **Next Level Gets Amped.....11**

#### **Faith Corner.....14**

#### **From The Internet.....18**

# What Is Truth?

By Pastor Gary Turner

What is truth? Jesus said in John 8:32 that *“the truth will set you free!”* Free of what? The truth of the matter is that truth will set you free of a lot of things. Truth set me free from getting an F in math when I was in school. When I was real little, the truth was, and still is, that  $2+2=4$ . When I put that answer down, instead of 3 or 5, I got points from the teacher. But at the same time in my life, if the teacher asked me what  $3+5-6+8 \times 5$  equaled, I would undoubtedly have a red check on the page, even if I thought my answer to be true. As I got older and

more aware of my inabilities in math, I understood that I could be wrong about an answer for a number of reasons. Thus, to the best of my ability, I would check them and re-check them

before turning in the paper. I almost always found answers that I originally thought to be truth were, in fact, wrong. I saved myself a lot of failing grades because I was willing to do the checking and re-checking.

Let’s look at some of the reasons why a person might think his information is true while, in fact, it is wrong! First of all a person can be ignorant about a subject. Don’t take that as an insult! I freely admit that I am ignorant about a lot of subjects today! And, you are, too! When I used to come home with a bad grade on my report card, my Dad would say, “Choose the subjects that you want to be ignorant about and then stay that

way.” I always thought he meant it as some sort of a put down because of my inability to get a higher grade. When I was in fourth or fifth grade, some subjects like science and English got in the way of learning all the stats I needed to know about Mickey Mantle, Willie Mays or some other baseball great. I never flunked science or English. But, I never got an A in either course in all the time I was in school! Why? I had things that I thought were more important at the time. Were they? Of course not! But, let’s think about it for a moment. How much science do I use today? Am I working at discovering a cure for cancer or heart attacks? Do I spend a lot of time writing magazine arti-

**“Choose what subjects you want to be ignorant about and then stay that way.”**

cles and books? Um? I do write magazine articles, but you don’t know my secret. I married right! I write it, and Glenda fixes it before you see it.

Another reason that I might have a wrong answer is that my brain might not be able to comprehend the depth of the subject. I took a graduate college course one year. One of the assignments was to read a series of articles and then write a paper on them. I sat down, opened the magazine and read the first article. It was a lot of words, but my brain couldn’t figure out what the article was talking about. I read it again. Still nothing! Finally, I went to my brother-in-law. I figured if he couldn’t understand

it, it wasn’t understandable. He read it about three times, and then explained it to me. I wrote the paper, but then decided I didn’t need to be that smart. I haven’t taken another graduate level class since. Both my decision to stay ignorant and my inability to go deeper in that matter were a part of my going no further in that search for truth.

What else can affect our ability to define the truth? In the fifteenth century, it was accepted that the earth was flat. Many scholars taught as truth that if you went too far you would fall off the earth and never be seen again. People who built boats didn’t stop building boats for fear of someone falling off the earth. They understood water displacement and wind power

for sailing. They understood what needed to be done to build a boat and seal it so it would not sink because a knot in a board fell out. They understood the dynamics of what it took to move cargo from one port to another. The known world benefited incredibly from ships and boats of all sizes. They just didn’t dare get past that dreaded line where they would fall off the face of the earth! Did they deal in truth? Yes, they did—to an extent. Did they have the whole truth? No! Were their lives enhanced because they found that they could deal with the truth they had? Yes! Were their lives limited because they didn’t have the ability for global trading, commerce and distant travel by sea? Of course they were? I think—maybe they were better off without it! Oh well, you get my point.

What about God’s Word? Do

you have all the truth? I warn you little mouth, be careful what you say! Do you remember that Sunday school song from when we were growing up? I just heard a remake of that same song by Casting Crowns on the radio. It is called Slow Fade. Anyhow, it is good advice for all of us today. We have to be careful that we teachers of today aren't limiting what God has in store for His people. Many people have an idea of eternal life after death. Do they understand that the only way to eternal life is through a personal relationship with Jesus? Some do. Many don't! Does everyone understand that Jesus is coming back to the earth again? Many don't! Do they understand the people who make up the church are going to rule and reign with Jesus on the earth during the Millennial kingdom of God? Do they have truth about a life with God for eternity? Sure they do! Do they have a complete understanding of the whole truth? No.

I recently read an article written by a friend of mine who cautions us about hearing from God. Is he right? Partially! He has some truth, but I question if he has the whole truth. I question if I have the whole truth from one day to another. Shouldn't we all be that way? Shouldn't we check our answers and recheck them before we speak. Should we ever look down our noses at what other people believe as truth and click our tongues in disgust? Shouldn't we talk candidly and openly with people who don't believe just as we do until

we come to unity? I believe that the attitude of "I have the truth and anyone who goes against what I believe is wrong" is why there is division in what is supposed to be the united body of Christ?

I would like to share with you what the Holy Spirit has led me to understand about the issues of truth and division in the church today. Paul clearly speaks about division in the church in I Corinthians 11:17-31. The first thing we must understand is that the church, as Paul speaks about it, is bigger than we are. You may be Baptist, Catholic, Methodist or from the Church of God. It doesn't make any difference what denomination you are a part of, the universal church (Christ's church)

**For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord, eats and drinks judgment on himself.**

is bigger than you are! In this text Paul says, "*For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord, eats and drinks judgment on himself.*" What is the body of Christ? Is it the flock around you who all agree with you about "the truth?" Or, are there people in the churches across the street and down the block that have a different name than you a part of the body of Christ? If those churches have people who love God and are building a relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ, are those people not part of the body of Christ? What are we doing to the body

when we argue doctrines endlessly and then put each other down over the differences in our Christianity?

Paul also wrote in Romans 15:5-9, "*May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God. For I tell you that Christ has become a servant to the Jews on behalf of God's truth, to confirm the promises made to the patriarchs so that the Gentiles may glorify God for his mercy...*" Each one of us in our search for truth must ask the question, "When have I become

a servant to someone who believes differently than I do for the sake of seeing God glorified?" Think about this and then pray about it—or in other words, check and recheck your answers before you turn

them in. Don't make the mistake of thinking you are the only one who has the whole truth! In our differences, how many times have we driven someone away from worshipping Almighty God with us as a brother or sister in Christ?

Don't compromise what you believe. Teach with all you have in you, but don't spend anytime talking about other people's beliefs. Focus on the truth, and stay off the differences. Love people for who they are, and then share incredible worship of Almighty God and His Son, Jesus Christ. You will be surprised how fast people learn when they see the truth of God's Word.

# Testimony From The Late Tony Snow, Press Secretary for President Bush

This is an outstanding testimony from the late Tony Snow, President Bush's Press Secretary and former commentator and broadcaster, when he announced that his cancer had returned. Delivered in the White House Briefing Room, May 30, 2007.



Blessings arrive in unexpected packages, - in my case, cancer. Those of us with potentially fatal diseases - and there are millions in America today - find ourselves in the odd position of coping with our mortality while trying to fathom God's will. Although it would be the height of presumption to declare with confidence 'What It All Means,' Scripture provides powerful hints and consolations.

The first is that we shouldn't spend too much time trying to answer the 'why' questions: Why me? Why must people suffer? Why

can't someone else get sick? We can't answer such things, and the questions themselves often are designed more to express our anguish than to solicit an answer.

I don't know why I have cancer, and I don't much care. It is what it is, a plain and indisputable fact. Yet even while staring into a mirror darkly, great and stunning truths begin to take shape. Our maladies define a central feature of our existence: We are fallen. We are imperfect. Our bodies give out.

But despite this, - or because of it, - God offers the possibility of salvation and grace. We don't know how the narrative of our lives will end, but we get to choose how to use the interval between now and the moment we meet our Creator face-to-face.

Second, we need to get past the anxiety. The mere thought of dying can send adrenaline flooding through your system. A dizzy, unfocused panic seizes you. Your heart thumps; your head swims. You think of nothingness and swoon. You fear partings; you worry about the impact on family and friends. You fidget and get nowhere.

To regain footing, remember that we were born not into death, but into life - and that the journey continues after we have finished our days on this earth. We accept this on faith, but that faith is nourished by a conviction that stirs even within many non-believing hearts - an intuition that the gift of life, once given, cannot be taken away. Those who have been stricken enjoy the special privilege of being able to fight with their might, main, and faith to live fully, richly, and exuberantly - no matter

how their days may be numbered.

Third, we can open our eyes and hearts. God relishes surprise. We want lives of simple, predictable ease, smooth, even trails as far as the eye can see, - but God likes to go off-road. He provokes us with twists and turns. He places us in predicaments that seem to defy our endurance; and comprehension - and yet don't. By His love and grace, we persevere. The challenges that make our hearts leap and stomachs churn invariably strengthen our faith and grant measures of wisdom and joy we would not experience otherwise.

'You Have Been Called'. Picture yourself in a hospital bed. The fog of anesthesia has begun to wear away. A doctor stands at your feet; a loved one holds your hand at the side. 'It's cancer,' the healer announces.

The natural reaction is to turn to God and ask him to serve as a cosmic Santa. 'Dear God, make it all go away. Make everything simpler.' But another voice whispers: 'You have been called.' Your quandary has drawn you closer to God, closer to those you love, closer to the issues that matter, - and has dragged into insignificance the banal concerns that occupy our 'normal time.'

There's another kind of response, although usually short-lived an inexplicable shudder of excitement, as if a clarifying moment of calamity has swept away everything trivial and tiny, and placed before us the challenge of important questions.

The moment you enter the Valley of the Shadow of Death, things change. You discover that Christianity is not something doughy, passive, pious, and soft. Faith may

be the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. But it also draws you into a world shorn of fearful caution. The life of belief teems with thrills, boldness, danger, shocks, reversals, triumphs, and epiphanies. Think of Paul, traipsing through the known world and contemplating trips to what must have seemed the antipodes (Spain), shaking the dust from his sandals, worrying not about the morrow, but only about the moment.

There's nothing wilder than a life of humble virtue, - for it is through selflessness and service that God wrings from our bodies and spirits the most we ever could give, the most we ever could offer, and the most we ever could do.

Finally, we can let love change everything. When Jesus was faced with the prospect of crucifixion, he grieved not for himself, but for us. He cried for Jerusalem before entering the holy city. From the Cross, he took on the cumulative burden of human sin and weakness, and begged for forgiveness on our behalf.

We get repeated chances to learn that life is not about us, that we acquire purpose and satisfaction by sharing in God's love for others. Sickness gets us part way there. It reminds us of our limitations and dependence. But it also gives us a chance to serve the healthy. A minister friend of mine observes that people suffering grave afflictions often acquire the faith of two people, while loved ones accept the burden of two peoples' worries and fears.

'Learning How to Live.' Most of us have watched friends as they

drifted toward God's arms, not with resignation, but with peace and hope. In so doing, they have taught us not how to die, but how to live. They have emulated Christ by transmitting the power and authority of love.

I sat by my best friend's bedside a few years ago as a wasting cancer took him away. He kept at his table a worn Bible and a 1928 edition of the Book of Common Prayer. A shattering grief disabled

**Through such trials,  
God bids us to choose:  
Do we believe or do  
we not?**

his family, many of his old friends, and at least one priest. Here was an humble and very good guy, someone who apologized when he winced with pain because he thought it made his guest uncomfortable. He retained his equanimity and good humor literally until his last conscious moment. 'I'm going to try to beat [this cancer],' he told me several months before he died. 'But if I don't, I'll see you on the other side.'

His gift was to remind everyone around him that even though God doesn't promise us tomorrow, he does promise us eternity, - filled with life and love we cannot comprehend, - and that one can in the throes of sickness point the rest of us toward timeless truths that will help us weather future storms.

Through such trials, God bids us to choose: Do we believe, or do we not? Will we be bold enough to love, daring enough to serve, hum-

ble enough to submit, and strong enough to acknowledge our limitations? Can we surrender our concern in things that don't matter so that we might devote our remaining days to things that do?

When our faith flags, he throws reminders in our way. Think of the prayer warriors in our midst. They change things, and those of us who have been on the receiving end of their petitions and intercessions know it. It is hard to describe, but there are times when suddenly the hairs on the back of your neck stand up, and you feel a surge of the Spirit. Somehow you just know: Others have chosen, when talking to the Author of all creation, to lift us up, - to speak of us!

This is love of a very special order. But so is the ability to sit back and appreciate the wonder of every created thing. The mere thought of death somehow makes every blessing vivid, every happiness more luminous and intense. We may not know how our contest with sickness will end, but we have felt the ineluctable touch of God.

What is man that Thou art mindful of him? We don't know much, but we know this: No matter where we are, no matter what we do, no matter how bleak or frightening our prospects, each and every one of us who believe, each and every day, lies in the same safe and impregnable place, in the hollow of God's hand.' T. Snow

*Editor's Comment: This article was taken from the Internet and printed as it was written.*

# Long Lost Honor

By John McAlister

I have had the honor these past couple of weeks to spend some time at church. I do not mean just on Sunday at service either. The business I work for is a little slow right now so after work I head to the church to see if there is any work I can help with. Normally I do not ask if there is anything to do. I just sit around and give the pastors a hard time until someone gets tired of me and puts me to work. But, let me get back to my point.

I decided to do something constructive with my free time. I was going to read a book, but not just any book! I knew exactly which one. I knew what the book look liked, I knew the title and I even knew the author. I had seen this book on Pastor

Gary's bookshelf so I knew I could get my hands on it. I walked in to the church office and asked Pastor Gary if I may borrow this book. He looked briefly at his bookcase and replied "Pastor Tim must have it. Without hesitation I heard Pastor Tim's voice from across the hall, "No, I don't. You do." Pastor Gary then told me to check the library bookcases in the hallway. In doing so, I still could not find this book. By then, it became my personal mission to find the book I was after. But, I sensed that Pastor Tim and Pastor Gary did not share my urgency. Pastor Tim handed me another book

and said, "If you want to read then you should read this book." I took the book to appease Pastor Tim, but still inquired of the whereabouts of the previous book.

Now, these moments amazed me! God knew what my heart needed and He knew the answers were in the book that Pastor Tim gave me, not in the book I was searching for. Over the next couple of days I read over half the book. *Honors Reward*, written by John Bevere, is a book on how to attract God's favor and blessing through honoring God, authority and the people around you. This whole concept of Honors Reward was truly amazing. I have always tried giving people the respect they deserve, but

**We, the church body, must be a people of love, praise and honor in this day and age.**

honoring people, even though they have done nothing to earn it, caught me off guard. It is easy to honor people when they are nice to you all the time. But how do you honor your boss when he is grouchy all the time? How do you honor people you work with that always seem to come to work late and never seem to pay any consequences? I realized from reading this book that there are all kinds of situations in which *we can benefit*, if we just honor people, whether they deserve it or not. I am talking about true honor not fake smiles and hollow words, but heart-felt honor.

I could give you examples from my life on the ways I have honored

people, but I also can also give you the ways that I have dishonored them. I am not here to tell you that this is the way you should be or this is how it's done. I am not saying, "Why aren't you honoring everyone?" I am telling you, I do not do a lot of things right. I do not read my Bible enough. I do not spend enough time with God. I do not spend as much time as I should in prayer. I get in bad moods. I lose my temper and my language slips from time to time. I could go on all day. All of things are bad, and all of these things I am working on. Sometimes I wonder if I will ever come close to getting it right, but until then I will bow my head, ask for forgiveness, and seek to honor Him.

This whole idea of honoring God, authority and people for rewards and blessings sounded like a good deal to me. I mean at least I was being rewarded for my efforts. Little did I know how fast those feelings changed when God got involved. It became clear that it was not about

the reward or "it is the Christian thing to do." It became about pleasing Him. That is the reward in itself and everything else is a bonus. That is what the definition is of true honor. True honor is when we honor someone without expectation, whether they deserve it or not. It becomes a lifestyle, and I find I have honored God by honoring them. We, the church body, must be a people of love, praise and honor in this day and age. As I said before, I do not live the perfect life. I do not have the perfect plan. I just try to follow the perfect One, so when there is someone in need I can let Jesus shine through me.

# BE AGGRESSIVE!

By Pastor Tim Spickler

As many of you may know, I really like sports! In my blog ([www.timspickler.com](http://www.timspickler.com)), I have talked many times about sports. I also refer to them in my sermons from time to time. Some people just don't like athletics, and some even hate to listen to someone talk about them. If that is you, I am sorry because today I am going to talk a little about sports.

Sports come in all different styles these days. Some people call NASCAR a sport, while others call skateboarding a sport. I guess you can do that. These people are training to do their best on their field or blacktop. I have been blessed with very gifted children in the realm of athletics. Ashley is very fit and strong. She is currently in a strength and conditioning class and is doing awesome. You should see her "guns" (arm muscles for those of you who don't know). Lindsey has been very good at basketball and cheerleading. She has chosen the cheerleader route in high school. (Yes, cheerleading is a sport, just ask my wife, Shelly! The only problem with cheerleaders is this— during their sport, they meet with the opponents at half-time and have snacks with them. How weird is that?) Justin is a baseball and basketball guy. He tends to work hard and study the game to see where he can improve. That leaves Jared. He is the youngest and probably has the most natural talent of all the kids; but, when it comes to sports, he can take it or leave it. He

has a very good eye for the technical side of sports, but he would rather be working with his friend on the farm.

But one thing that all my kids are in athletics is aggressive. When they are on the field or court they are ready to go. They play hard when they are in and have fun in the process. As I think about them, I think of the book of Philippians. In Philippians 3:12-14, it says, "*Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.*"<sup>13</sup> *Brothers, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead,*<sup>14</sup> *I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.*"

My kids are not perfect in their sports! Nor are they always the best athlete on the floor. But they work hard in their sport. I compare this to our faith in Jesus Christ and the words of Paul in the Philippians verses. Paul says that he did not have it all figured out, but he was going to do all he could to move forward in his faith. Paul says he would forget what was all behind.

That meant he would forget all his failures, moments of unbelief and even the betrayal of those around him. He also mentioned that he would strain toward what is ahead. All good athletes work hard and that involves straining toward their goal. I believe the same should go in our relationship with Jesus. We are to be working in such a way in our faith as we aggressively press in to know Jesus better. We need to be working toward our goal of living a fuller and more God-centered life.

So that leaves me with this question for you. Are you aggressively moving forward in your faith in Jesus Christ? Jesus tells us "*From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing, and forceful men lay hold of it.*" Matt 11:12 (NIV). Are you forcefully advancing the Kingdom? Are you making a Kingdom difference in those around you? I encourage you today to be aggressive! I believe there is even a cheer that goes, "Be aggressive, be aggressive, B-E-A-G-G-R-E-S-S-I-V-E!" Run after God today. Study His Word and pray! Have fun, and get in shape—spiritual shape!

***...rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. I Timothy 4:7-8***

# All My Heart, Mind And Strength

By Shelly Spickler

*An article...an article...an article...where do I start? Do I start with my heart or do I start with my mind? Do I speak of where I really am or do I share something "surfacey" or light? Do I open myself to reveal my current personal struggles or do I keep this simply professional? I guess the article is supposed to be "about my ministries." Do I need to write an update about the women's ministry or something about what we're doing in Kidzone? Is that the article that would honor God the greatest right now? Where do I even start?*

I guess I'll start right here.

**I love the Lord, my God, with all my heart, and all my mind, and all my strength.**

Wow, God is good. As I wrote that sentence, He showed me where to take this article. *Lord, help me obey and to write what You want me to write.*

The words "all my heart, all my mind, and all my strength" are very important to me. You see, I base a lot of my identity on those three things.

## **Number One: My Heart**

For the sake of this article, I will define my heart as the emotion center of my being. I've studied the brain a little. I know emotions aren't really from our physical heart, but I think the word "heart"

in this verse is referring to my emotion command center. I know with all of my heart that Christ has given me a new heart and has taken my old heart. He has caused love, sympathy, compassion, mercy, kindness, peace, and other emotions to flow from my heart. If you would have asked me awhile ago, "How's the condition of your heart?", I would have answered that it was pretty good. Sure, I had the emotional roller-coaster rides that most women deal with. I knew I had places that still struggled with sinful emotions. I knew some places were still sore from past hurts, but, for the most part, I felt my heart was doing alright. I have said, "I love God with all of my heart."

## **Number Two: My Mind**

I think I will define my mind as my understanding, my thoughts, my reasoning, logic, and knowledge. I am a thinker, and I love to gain knowledge. I love research and learning, and I strive to understand things. I believe that God has gifted me, not only in the physical realm with an ability to learn easily, but that He has gifted me in the spiritual realm with gifts of wisdom and knowledge. So, if you would have asked me, "How's the condition of your mind?", I would have answered that it was pretty good. Sure, I may be having some senior moments early! That blonde streak in my hair (long turned gray) may have some affects on my common sense (LOL!), but, I'm alright. I would have said, "I love the Lord my God with all of my mind."

## **Number Three: My Strength**

You probably don't know that I held a bench press record at Winnebago High School. I benched the most of any girl in the school. I think it was

135lbs! Back in the day, they had no formal program for weight lifting in gym class, but we were allowed to go to the weight room as an option for nearly any gym period. I spent a lot of time there and loved it. Strength training helped with cheerleading (yes, it is a sport!) and it energized and excited me. I loved being strong. I've gotten away from weightlifting, but I still love to be strong. I don't want to be the kind of woman that needs help lifting something or opening a pickle jar. I highly value strength, not just physical strength, but strength of character, strength of mind, strength of self-control, etc. Strength is important to me. So, once again, if you would have asked me, "How strong are you...spiritually?" I would have said, "I'm feeling pretty strong. Sure, no where near as strong as I could be or as strong as others, but I'm doing alright." I would have said, "I love the Lord my God with all of my strength."

I know that you're expecting to read that something has changed. Something has changed, drastically, and it has challenged everything inside of me. I don't want to get into details. They aren't mine to share, but I will tell you, this has changed me. Even though it has been a very difficult and painful change, I am so thankful for this change. You see, it has been good because God is using it and our women's ministry to minister to me.

## **Monday Night Women's Ministry Overview**

Our Monday Night Women's Group has been participating in

the study “Experiencing God” this fall. In Unit 1, day 1, it says “Anything significant that happens in your life during this study will be the result of God’s activity in your life.” I was excited and ready. I agreed, “God, whatever happens during this study is of You. Show me your activity in my life.” By Unit 3, day 2, everything changed. I wasn’t so sure I wanted to go through this significant event and I sure wasn’t giving God credit that this was the result of His activity in my life. I wrote in large letters in the margin, “I surrender everything I call mine.” It was basically an “I give up, God,” but, I didn’t really know what I was giving up. I thought I did. I thought I was laying down my rights, my family, my attitudes, my money, my time, my everything. I really thought it was going to be just that easy. “It’s all Yours, God. You deal with it!” but I wasn’t prepared for how difficult it would be.

Unit 8, day 1 asks “Do you want to be someone who is wholly yielded, adjusted, and obedient to God? Answer carefully!” I chose “yes!” without hesitation. I want to yield wholly, and obey completely. Then, in that same unit, day 2 says “When you identify a place where you refuse to allow His lordship that is a place where He will go to work. He is seeking absolute surrender.” At that time, I didn’t realize it, but God was showing me areas where I wasn’t allowing His to reign and rule in my life. He was requiring me to surrender even my heart, my

mind, and my strength... EVERYTHING that I call mine.

Now, I look back and I see how much of my heart, and my mind, and my strength I wasn’t surrendering before the incident. You see, I thought I was “pretty good”. I thought I was doing alright. Well, I wasn’t. I had areas of my life that I had to surrender. I truly wish we hadn’t had to go through this significant event to learn these lessons, but I believe God is using them. He is using them to teach me, and my family, to fully surrender and to trust Him, to fully allow Him to be Lord of everything in our lives, and to prepare us for a new stage of ministry. As I think about it, I smile. You see, as we move forward in ministry, I think we lacked three things 1. a heart that emotionally connects with families in crisis, 2. a mind that knows and understands what they are going through and how to help, and 3. the strength that can only come from God. The kind of strength that gets you through when you have no strength left of your own.

I surrendered my heart, my mind, and my strength and, praise God, He is bringing us through this and helping us rely on His heart—breaking us for lost and hurting people, His mind—leaning not on our own understanding, and His strength—it is made perfect in our weaknesses. I am excited about what God is doing and I praise God that He is in control! I love Him with all of my heart, all of my mind, and all of my strength!!

## Next Level Gets Amped

By Pastor Don Knoup

We have just finished our latest series, entitled “Amped.” In this series, we explored what it means to live a life loud enough to be heard. Whether you’re the soft spoken person who feels almost invisible or if you are the type of person whose outspoken personality gets you noticed wherever you go; your life says something about you. We asked the tough question about what our lives say about us.

We are called to be witnesses of Jesus Christ. Our lives should be saying right things that bring honor to His name. How we live our lives can be the very thing that leads the people around us to committing their lives to Jesus. We have the opportunity to speak life to those around us.

Have you ever wondered what’s happening at Next Level Youth Ministries during the week? Our weekly services are now available online. Go to our website at <http://www.nxtlvlyouth.com> and click on Messages. Watch each week’s service right from your computer.

**In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. Ephesians 1:11**

**You love righteousness and hate wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy. Psalm 45:7**

**Peru Missions Trips, 2009**  
**July 2nd-11th & July 16th-25th**  
**Someone's life is about to change!**



***Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.” Mark 16:15***

# *Peru Mission Dinner Fundraiser*

## *Saturday, March 28th*

### *6:00 PM*

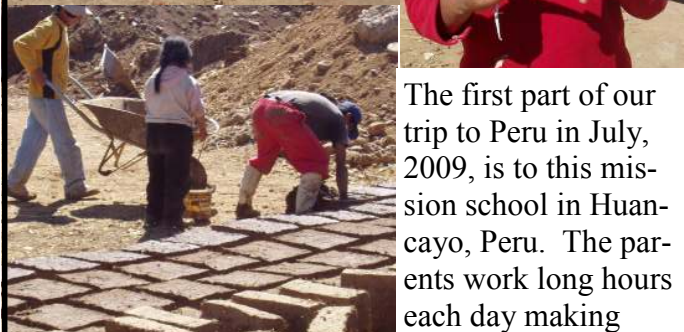
*at New Life Bible Church*

*Proceeds will go to help put a roof on a new church building in Shiringamazu, Peru*

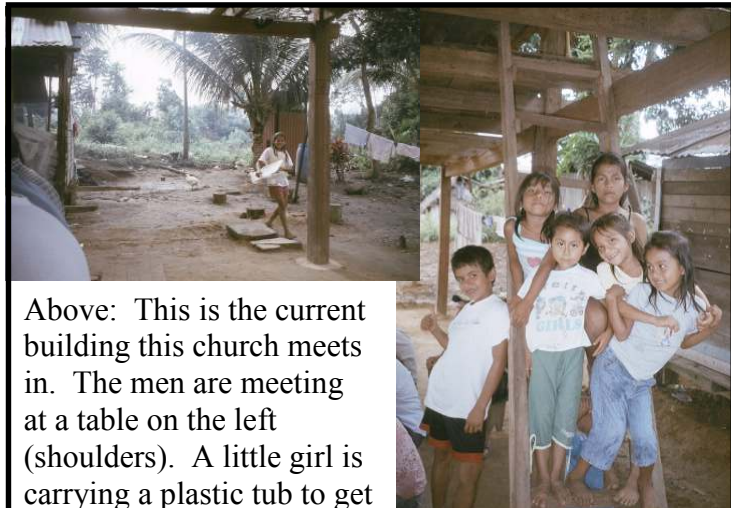
**Mark your calendars now so you can attend!**



*Pastor Huan, right, stands with member of congregation of local church in Shiringamazu. The foundation to the church was built sometime before we got there in June, 2008. They are currently building the Framing. We want to help put the roof on when we go back in July, 2009. This dinner will help raise funds to put metal panels on the roof. If you would like to give to this building project, please send funds (marked Peru Roof) to New Life Bible Church, PO Box 7, Winnebago, IL 61088*



bricks (bottom left), and their kids run the streets. This school teaches the kids like the boy (top right). One lady is working with this school by herself. She fills in with mission teams that come in and help for a week or two at a time. This is a fairly easy journey and very safe. Will you help?



Above: This is the current building this church meets in. The men are meeting at a table on the left (shoulders). A little girl is carrying a plastic tub to get water from a well near by (Operation Christmas Child suggests we send plastic shoe boxes for this purpose). Right: These are some of the kids that are a part of this local church. They were hanging around while their parents met with us. Notice the stairs, the little building to the right and the openness of the floor boards above. A family lived above this meeting area. The little building to the right is their kitchen with a wood burning stove in it. The floor boards above were so far apart that I could look up and see directly into their living space above us.



## My friend's house burned down.

It's kind of sad! He and his wife bought the property and built the house back in the mid-70's. He didn't live there anymore. They moved a number of years ago. They kept the house as a rental property. We had some great times in that house—lots of memories, both good and bad. That is what friendship is all about. For years as I drove by it, I would look to see how it was being taken care of. For a rental property, it survived well until last night.

The fire started this morning about 3:00 AM. The house was empty. The last family to rent it had moved out about a month ago. Some-

one had gotten into it and, through a chain of events that are not real clear, started a fire that got out of control. Today as I stood there and looked at its charred ruins, I felt all sorts of emotions because of special moments we had there many years ago. My heart hurts!

### Faith Corner

Faith is a difficult subject to get a handle on some times. We frequently talk about faith in our discussions at church, but do we truly understand what it is and how it works? Let me try to explain what I am discovering on the subject of faith.

Hebrews 11:6 tells us that without faith it is impossible to please God. Ephesians 2:8 tells us that we are saved by grace through faith. Faith is important to God, and to us! We can go as far as saying that the more faith we have, the better off we are. Jesus frequently measured the faith of the people he came in contact with. He was always more complimentary to those who had "great faith" over those with "little faith."

Faith is what gets things done in the kingdom of God. If we want to enter into that kingdom, we must accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior. To do that, it must be done with faith according to Romans 10:8-14. In the world around us, we usually need cash to get anything accomplished. Money is

what moves the kingdom of the world.

Again, faith is what moves the kingdom of God. A person of great faith is able to get a lot more done in the kingdom of God than a person who struggles with faith. But there is something that we must look carefully at. There is a difference in working in faith and working in natural talent. As people living in the physical realm, we often give more credit to someone who has great natural talent than someone who has great faith.

Let's talk about accomplishments in the physical and spiritual realms. Since we are human beings, each of us has been given natural abilities and talents. Some have more than others. Look at professional sports figures. They can do things on the basketball court or football field that I can only dream of. They have natural strength and talent, and they work hard to push themselves as hard as they can. In our work within the body of Christ, we are working with our natural talents and abilities. But while some of us push ourselves to

work at the upper level of our ability, others take one more step past their ability and move into the realm of faith. Remember, the Bible tells us that nothing is impossible with God. It is when we do things for the Lord that seem impossible to everyone else around us that we are actually working in the beginning steps of faith. It is when we willingly let God put His "super" on our "natural" that we begin to move deeper into the realm of faith.

We must never settle for just what we can do on our own for God. He doesn't want us to. When we do, we limit the blessings that God has in store for us in the realm of faith, or the realm of the impossible. Is your faith "great" or "little?" Determine in your mind to build it up by getting, and staying, in the Word of God. Faith comes to us by hearing the Word (Romans 10:17). We should always put ourselves into the position to hear or read God's Word every chance we get! Don't miss out on a great opportunity to increase your faith today. Pray and read God's Word. It will make a huge difference in your daily living!

# *New Life Bible Church*

## *“3rd Saturday”*

### *January 17th, 2009*

#### *Praise and Prayer*

#### *6:30 PM*

*Join us at the church for an intimate time of praise and prayer to Almighty God.*



**Another Christmas dinner/theater done!** Pictures run top left to bottom, left to right. They begin with setting up the tables, preparing and then serving the meal, a sequence of scenes in the play, the folks leaving happy and full from the ham dinner. Last picture is the cast resting after the final performance night. A picture not shown is the incredible cleanup effort afterward. Thanks to all who helped in any way!

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***Spring Schedule, 2009\****  
***Classes start Tuesday, January 13th!***

*January 13, 2009*

*Tuesday, (6:00 PM to 8:40 PM)  
\*BNT 102 New Testament Survey II  
Alan Shaw, Instructor*

*January 14th*

*Wednesday, (10:00 AM to 12:40 PM)  
MIN 301 Counseling I  
Lynda Richter, Instructor*

*January 17, 2009*

*Saturday, (9:00 AM to 11:40 AM)  
\*BNT 411/511 Life, Letter & Legacy of Paul  
Dr. William Mienert, Instructor*

*Saturday, (9:00 AM to 11:40 AM)  
\*BNT 201 Ministry Foundations  
Keith Doering, Instructor*

*Saturday, (12 noon to 2:40 PM)  
\*BNT 305 New Testament Biblical Theology  
Eugene Stilson, Instructor*

*Monday, (6:00 PM to 8:40 PM)  
\*MIN 338 Women's Ministries:  
Women Ministering To Women  
Glenda Turner & Shelly Spickler, Instructors  
This class can be taken for college credit or for a  
Certificate Of Achievement In Women's Ministry.*

*\*All classes require a minimum of five students.  
Students need to order their books from the internet.  
Schedule subject to change.*

**Want to know more  
about God?**

Mid-week Bible Study  
Wednesday morning— 10:00 AM  
@ New Life Bible Church  
Wednesday evening— 6:00 PM  
@ Pastor Gary and Glenda's home —  
12848 Westbrook Pointe,  
Westlake Village. A lite meal is  
served at 6:00 PM for those who  
would like to eat with the group.  
Bible study is 6:30 to 7:30 PM.

Starts back up on January 14, 2009

*I tell you the truth, the man who does  
not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but  
climbs in by some other way, is a thief  
and a robber. The man who enters by  
the gate is the shepherd of his sheep.  
The watchman opens the gate for him,  
and the sheep listen to his voice. He  
calls his own sheep by name and leads  
them out. When he has brought out all  
his own, he goes on ahead of them, and  
his sheep follow him because they know  
his voice. But they will never follow a  
stranger; in fact, they will run away  
from him because they do not recognize  
a stranger's voice. John 10:1-5*

# Three Things That Will Enhance Worship!

by Pastor Gary Turner

In a recent Bible study, we looked at Romans 12:1-3. We discussed what God wants us to do to develop true worship of Him. The first thing was to offer our bodies as living sacrifices. Jesus said that we should deny self and take up our cross daily. This is the idea of “living sacrifices.” In our spiritual act of worship, we can’t let our flesh dominate and live in a carnal way unpleasing to God.

The second thing we need to do is to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. Far too many people go through the actions to accept Jesus, but they never break away from the world’s way of doing things. They wonder why their Christian walk is as difficult as it is, but never figure out that it is because they have never changed their attitude toward the world. The world’s way of doing things continues to dominate in their living. I had an opportunity to talk with a friend the other day. We

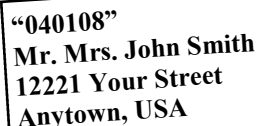
were talking about this very thing and how it affects our life. I said, “Every time the world comes between you and worshipping Almighty God, it is the same as if you took a pinch of sand and dumped it into the oil of your car. It probably won’t make a great big change right at first, but it will slowly start to wear and damage the performance of the engine.” When we knowingly let the world dominate our lives, which is the opposite of offering ourselves as living sacrifices, the wear and tear on our spiritual living will eventually destroy us.

How do we offer our bodies as living sacrifices and transform our minds? We can’t change what we don’t know. In order to incorporate the kingdom principles of God into our daily living, we must get into His Word. When we live and work to serve God through what He tells us to do in His Word, we are sacrificing ourselves, and we are entering into true spiritual worship. Our minds are transformed by getting the knowledge from His Word about what He wants and expects from His children. The transformation comes from learning about God’s love and mercy and His plan for each of us. Information about God will change our living because God’s Word is living and imperishable (I Peter 1:23).

The third thing that will enhance our worship is to always stay humble before the Lord. Paul says in verse three, “*Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment in accordance with your measure of faith God has given you.*” Over the years I have seen people become faithful in their service to God. They read their Bible, pray and hear instruction from God through the Holy Spirit. All the time they are growing and maturing in their understanding of the Word. But then something happens! All of a sudden they become the final authority, even over their church leaders. They watch everything that happens and listen to every word spoken with a spirit of criticism. Almost every time this has happened in my ministry, these people, who used to be faithful servants to the body of Christ, will split the body, or tear it apart, before they will humble themselves again. In spite of any rebuking or correcting from the Word of God, they have convinced themselves they know better.

God needs us to be living sacrifices in order to serve Him appropriately. He wants us to be transformed by renewing our minds, and He wants us to not get high-minded or haughty about our spiritual walk with Him. If we keep these things in mind and under constant control, our worship of God will be awesome.

## How do I know when my subscription is ending?



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# From The Internet

## Through The Window

A young couple moves into a new neighborhood.

The next morning while they are eating breakfast, the young woman sees her neighbor hanging the wash outside.

"That laundry is not very clean", she said. "She doesn't know how to wash correctly. Perhaps she needs better laundry soap!"

Her husband looked on, but remained silent.

Every time her neighbor would hang her wash to dry, the young woman would make the same comments.

About one month later, the woman was surprised to see a nice clean wash on the line and said to her husband: "Look, she has learned how to wash correctly. I wonder who taught her this?"

The husband said, "I got up early this morning and cleaned our windows."



**One more reason to be careful at outdoor weddings and receptions!**

...submitted by Mary Ann Kringel, Ormond Beach, FL

## Headlines By Writers Who Needed a Day Off

### Juvenile Court to Try Shooting Defendant

*See if that works any better than a fair trial!*

---

### War Dims Hope for Peace

*I can see where it might have that effect!*

---

### If Strike Isn't Settled Quickly, It May Last Awhile

*Ya think?!*

---

### Cold Wave Linked to Temperatures

*Who would have thought!*

---

### Enfield Couple Slain; Police Suspect Homicide

*They may be on to something!*

---

### Red Tape Holds Up New Bridges

*You mean there's something stronger than duct tape?*

---

### New Study Of Obesity Looks for Larger Test Group

*Weren't they big enough?!*

---

### Kids Make Nutritious Snacks

*Do they taste like chicken?*

---

### Local High School Dropouts Cut in Half

*Chainsaw Massacre all over again!*

---

### Hospitals Are Sued by 7 Foot Doctors

*Boy, are they tall!*

---

### And the winner is.... Typhoon Rips Through Cemetery; Hundreds Dead

*Did I read that right?*

...Submitted by Kent Ross, Thrive E-Devotion, Springfield, OH

## Wet Pants

Come with me to a third grade classroom.....

There is a nine-year-old kid sitting at his desk. All of a sudden, there is a puddle between his feet and the front of his pants are wet. He thinks his heart is going to stop because he cannot possibly imagine how this has happened. It's never happened before, and he knows that when the boys find out he will never hear the end of it. When the girls find out, they'll never speak to him again as long as he lives.

The boy believes his heart is going to stop; he puts his head down and prays this prayer, 'Dear God, this is an emergency! I need help now! Five minutes from now I'm dead meat.'

He looks up from his prayer and here comes the Teacher with a look in her eyes that says he has been discovered.



As the teacher is walking toward him, a classmate named Susie is carrying a goldfish bowl that is filled with water. Susie trips in front of the teacher and inexplicably dumps the bowl of water in the boy's lap.

The boy pretends to be angry, but all the while is saying to himself, 'Thank you, Lord! Thank you, Lord!'

Now all of a sudden, instead of being the object of ridicule, the boy is the object of sympathy. The teacher rushes him downstairs and gives him gym shorts to put on

while his pants dry out. All the other children are on their hands and knees cleaning up around his desk. The sympathy is wonderful. But as life would have it, the ridicule that should have been his has been transferred to someone else - Susie.

She tries to help, but they tell her, "Get out. You've done enough, you klutz!"

Finally, at the end of the day, as they are waiting for the bus, the boy walks over to Susie and whispers, 'You did that on purpose, didn't you?' Susie whispers back, 'I wet my pants once too.'

May God help us see the opportunities that are always around us to do good...

Remember.....Just going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than standing in your garage makes you a car.

Each and everyone one of us is going through tough times right now, but God is getting ready to bless you in a way that only He can. Keep the faith.



## The Law of the Garbage Truck!

One day I hopped in a taxi and we took off for the airport. We were driving in the right lane when suddenly a black car jumped out of a parking space right in front of us. My taxi driver slammed on his brakes, skidded, and missed the other car by just inches!

The driver of the other car whipped his head around and started yelling

at us. My taxi driver just smiled and waved at the guy. And I mean, he was really friendly. So I asked, 'Why did you just do that? This guy almost ruined your car and sent us to the hospital!'

This is when my taxi driver taught me what I now call, 'The Law of the Garbage Truck.' He explained that many people are like garbage trucks. They run around full of garbage, full of frustration, full of anger, and full of disappointment. As their garbage piles up, they need a place to dump it and sometimes they'll dump it on you. Don't take it personally. Just smile, wave, wish them well, and move on. Don't take their garbage and spread it to other people at work, at home, or on the streets. The bottom line is that successful people do not let garbage trucks take over their day.

Life's too short to wake up in the morning with regrets, so... love the people who treat you right. Pray for the ones who don't.

Life is ten percent what you make it and ninety percent how you take it!

Have a blessed, garbage-free day!  
...submitted by Fran Saylor, Winnebago, IL



*Always be ready to cover your friend's back. He may not be able to cover it himself!*

...Mary Ann Kringel, Ormond Beach, FL

## Older Than Dirt Quiz:

Count all the ones that you remember, not the ones you were told about Ratings at the bottom.

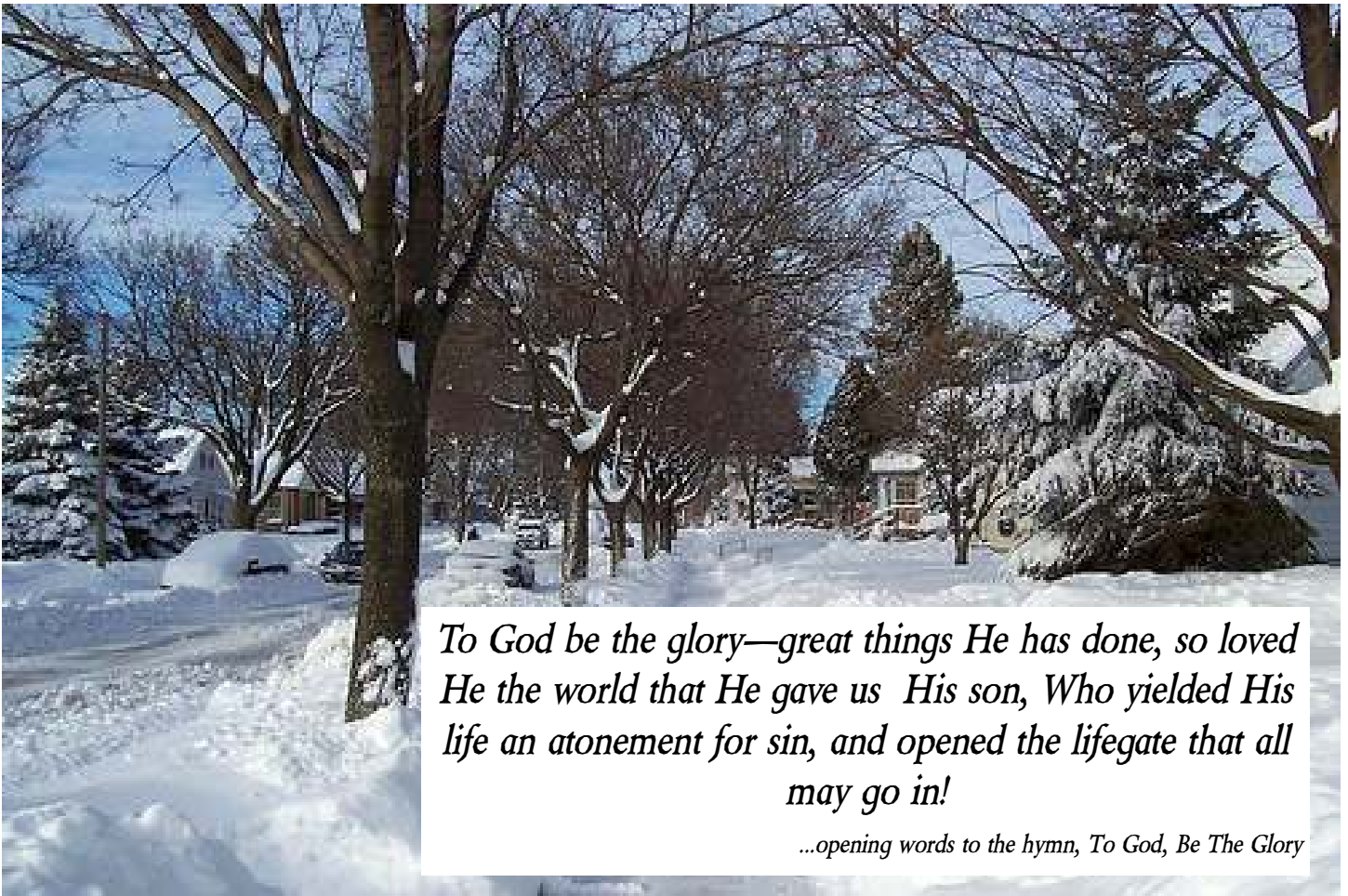
1. Blackjack chewing gum
2. Wax Coke-shaped bottles with colored sugar water
3. Candy cigarettes
4. Soda pop machines that dispensed glass bottles
5. Coffee shops or diners with table-side juke boxes
6. Home milk delivery in glass bottles with cardboard stoppers
7. Party lines
8. Newsreels before the movie
9. P.F. Flyers
10. Butch wax
11. TV test patterns that came on at night after the last show and were there until TV shows started again in the morning. (there were only 3 channels)
12. Peashooters
13. Howdy Doody
14. 45 RPM records
15. S& H greenstamps
16. Hi-fi's
17. Metal ice trays with lever
18. Mimeograph paper
19. Blue flashbulb
20. Packards
21. Roller skate keys
22. Cork popguns
23. Drive-ins
24. Studebakers
25. Wash tub wringers

If you remembered 0-5 = You're still young

If you remembered 6-10 = You are getting older

If you remembered 11-15 = Don't tell your age,

If you remembered 16-25 = You're older than dirt!



*To God be the glory—great things He has done, so loved  
He the world that He gave us His son, Who yielded His  
life an atonement for sin, and opened the lifegate that all  
may go in!*

*...opening words to the hymn, To God, Be The Glory*

  
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