

Present Truth

2 Peter 1:12

Dear Readers,

January 2015

“Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Peter 1:2, 3). God is seeking to give you the knowledge of His love for you.

The Incredible Love of God

by Lynnford Beachy

“Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us” (1 John 3:1). God calls us to behold how completely He loves us. God is aggressively pursuing a relationship with you. He is filled with love and compassion for you, regardless of what you have done. God says, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil,...” (Jeremiah 29:11). The focus of the entire Bible is on how much God loves us. He sent His Son to remove all doubt about how much He cares for us.

Any healthy relationship is based upon trust and appreciation. Distrusting God and doubting His love hinders our relationship with Him. It was a disbelief of God’s great love that started Satan on his downward path (see Ezekiel 28:14-17). It was a disbelief of God’s great love that convinced Eve to sin (see Genesis 3:1-6). It is a disbelief of God’s great love that keeps us in sin today. It is only through an understanding of God’s infinite love that we can be brought into a loving relationship with Him.

It has been Satan’s goal to deceive men regarding the true character of God. Satan would have us believe that God is not as loving as He claims to



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be, and he knows that if he can convince us on this issue we will never love God with all our heart. It is only by receiving a true picture of God's love that we can ever love Him enough to fulfill the commandment Jesus called "the first and great commandment," which is to love God with all our heart (see Matthew 22:37, 38).

The Fulfillment of the Law

Jesus said, "If ye love me, keep my commandments" (John 14:15). The same thought is expressed in verse 23. "If a man love me, he will keep my words" (John 14:23). In Green's literal translation, verse 15 says: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (Jay P. Green's *Greek Interlinear*).

This verse is a statement about a cause and effect relationship, rather than a command. Jesus said that if we love Him, the natural result of that love is that we will keep His commandments. If we do not love God, we cannot, and will not, keep His commandments. True obedience to God is based upon a loving relationship with Him.

Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

If we love God with all our heart, we will not have any other gods before Him. We will not worship any graven image, break the Sabbath, or take His name in vain (first four

Commandments). If we love our neighbors as ourselves, we won't murder, steal from them, bear false witness against them, covet their goods, commit adultery, or dishonor our parents (last six Commandments). For this reason Paul could say with certainty, these words: "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.... Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:8-10).

John wrote, "We love Him, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). The reason given for man loving God is "because He first loved us." Understanding and appreciating God's love for us is a result of Him drawing us to Himself by His Spirit (John 6:44). "...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5). As we yield to God's leading in showing us His love, He will reveal more and more until our hearts are filled with love for God and for those around us. Our love for God will be in proportion to how much we understand and appreciate His love for us. If you see that God loves you a little bit, then your love for Him will be very little. If you see that God loves you even enough to yield up that which was most precious to Him, His only-begotten Son, then your love for Him will be great.

How Can We Know God's Love?

The Bible says, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. Herein is love, not that

we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:9, 10). God has revealed His great love by yielding up His only-begotten Son.

“And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein is our love made perfect” (1 John 4:16, 17). Our love for God is made perfect by knowing, believing, and dwelling in His love for us, as expressed in the gift of His only-begotten Son. In order to believe that God loves us, and to dwell upon that fact, we must first know it, or be taught of it; this is the first step towards loving Him in return. “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His [Jesus’] life for us” (1 John 3:16). To know God’s love for us we must look at how He gave His Son to lay down His life for us.

The Sufferings of Christ

Mark wrote about the night before Christ’s death: “And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and He saith to His disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And He taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch [give strict attention to]. And He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him” (Mark 14:32-35). Jesus asked His disciples to watch what was going on because He wanted them to see everything—including His agony as He prayed, so

that their love for God might become perfected.

Let’s take a look at what happened in the garden of Gethsemane. The Greek word *εκθαμβω*, which was translated “sore amazed,” means “to be struck with terror” (*Thayer’s Greek Lexicon*). Something happened to Jesus that caused Him to be terrified so much that He prayed three times that the hour might pass from Him (Matthew 26:39-44).

The next word used to describe the condition of Jesus is the Greek word *αδημονεω*, which was translated “very heavy,” and means “to be in distress (of mind); (to be sated to loathing)” (*Strong’s Greek Dictionary*). Sated to loathing means “to satisfy totally (the appetite or a desire), so fully as to cause a sudden violent hostility or disgust of feelings, to the point of abhorring them” (*Grolier’s, New Webster’s Dictionary*). Something was happening to Jesus that caused Him to be disgusted with His feelings, and those feelings terrified Him. What were those feelings?

Isaiah prophesied, “The Lord laid on Him the iniquity [along with guilt] of us all” (Isaiah 53:6). Jesus experienced the shame that we feel when we sin, only magnified millions of times. This caused a separation between God and Himself (Isaiah 59:2).

God truly loves us enough to give up His only-begotten Son, and He wants us to behold, or to dwell upon, that precious truth. “For the love of Christ constraineth [compels or preoccupies] us” (2 Corinthians 5:14). We are to be preoccupied with the wonderful truth that God so loved the world that He allowed

His only-begotten Son to experience our guilt and death.

Isaiah wrote, “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee” (Isaiah 26:3). God knows that if we dwell upon the wonderful love that He has for us it will mold and shape us like nothing else can, and it will give us confident trust. If we allow God’s Spirit to constantly give us a realization of the love God has for us, and appreciate that love, it will draw us into a deep, personal relationship with Him. Christ in us will direct our hearts into the love of God so fully that we will finally be so disgusted with sin that we will hate it (Hebrews 1:8).

Faith Works by Love

The Bible tells us that the only thing that really counts is “...faith which worketh by love” (Galatians 5:6). Paul prayed for us that God, “...would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Ephesians 3:16-20).

Christ is able to live in our hearts by faith, which will give us a deep understanding of the greatness of God’s love for us, which, in turn, will allow us to be

filled with all the fullness of God, giving us the strength we need to live in co-operation with His kingdom. This will prepare us to live with Him for all eternity. Notice how love and faith are connected here. By faith we receive Christ into our hearts and He leads us into a deeper appreciation of God’s love, fortifying our relationship with God.

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?” (1 John 5:4, 5). There is something about believing that Jesus is the Son of God that gives us the key to overcome the world, which is to overcome sin (see 1 John 2:15-17). This victory is given to us by faith in God’s love. If you are convinced that God loves you unconditionally, you can trust Him with every decision in your life.

Since believing that Jesus is the Son of God enables us to overcome sin, do you think Satan would try to distort the fact that Jesus is the Son of God? He certainly would! If we expect to overcome the world we must believe that Jesus really is the only-begotten (born) Son of God, and that God gave Him up for us.

“He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son” (1 John 5:10). God said, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him” (Matthew 17:5). God said that Jesus Christ is His only-born Son; don’t let anyone tell you differently. Satan is so

dedicated to hide God's love that he convinced most of the translators of the newer Bible translations to delete "begotten" from John 3:16. Our ability to appreciate God's love is directly connected to how we understand the identity of Jesus Christ.

God's Gift of His Son

Jesus, speaking of Himself, said, "When there were no depths, I was brought forth [born]; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth" (Proverbs 8:24, 25). The Hebrew word that was translated here as "brought forth" means "to be born" (*Gesenius' Hebrew Lexicon*). Jesus is the literal Son of God, born in heaven before the world was.

It is only by knowing and believing that God so loved the world that He actually gave up His only-born Son, that we can truly have our love for God perfected. Therefore, only by knowing and believing that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, can we keep His commandments.

There will be a group of people in the last days who will love God with all their heart. They will know the love of God that passes knowledge. They will understand that God loves us so much that He gave up His only-begotten Son. This group of people is known as the 144,000. They are the ones who receive the seal of God (see Revelation 7:1-4). They will be without fault. "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads. ... And in

their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God" (Revelation 14:1, 5). They will not submit to the mark of the beast, and will be saved from all the plagues that come upon the earth.

These people will understand God's love to such a degree that they will not sin. "The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth: for they shall feed and lie down, and none shall make them afraid" (Zephaniah 3:13). These are a testimony for God that He can fully transform fallen man into His image. I want to be part of that number.

Friends, "The Lord is... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). God is pursuing a relationship with you because He loves you and wants to live with you forever. He loves you so much that He sent His Son "...to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). Do not despair if you think you are too filthy for the Lord to accept. The filthier you are, the more confident you can be that you are the one Jesus came to save. He loves you with an "everlasting love" (Jeremiah 31:3). Please accept His free gift of life. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11, 12). Invite and accept Jesus to live in your heart, and you will have eternal life, then He will change you into His image. »

(This article is available as a tract. It is one of the easiest tracts to give out. Contact us for more info. *Editor*)

Practical Evangelism

by Joseph Lahud

In our ministry work, my wife Kimberly and I have witnessed a multitude of rewarding experiences as a result of sharing the love of God. There is a supernatural power that attends the gospel message. It is a power with the ability to set captives free from the bondage to sin and darkness. It brings deliverance, healing, and hope to hurting souls. We have seen the joy that the Spirit of Christ brings to those who otherwise were stooping low from the burdens of life.

Anyone can share the gospel; children are not excluded! Our son Joshua created a simple sheet of paper printed in such a way that when folded, in bold type, the words shown said “Free Gift.” He cleverly placed these at tables and public locations, such as in a mall, for example. We would discreetly watch as people picked them up and read them thinking it was a product or service promotion.

Joshua had written the gospel message in the innocence of a ten-year-old. His language was simple but clear—that God loves us and He gave His only-begotten Son for our lives.



Free Gift!

He invited the reader to receive Jesus in their hearts, accept forgiveness for their sins, and to give Him their burdens. It was powerful!

Some would read the contents and then set them back down unceremoniously. Others, however, would read the contents and take them with them! You never know what seeds were planted through this effort. Never take the power of the gospel for granted!

While living in North Dakota, I had the privilege of sharing the gospel with a young man who had tried to commit suicide through a drug overdose. I met with him at the hospital recovery unit where he was and I shared with him the fact that God loved him so much that He gave His only-begotten Son for his life. To my great surprise, this young man responded that he did not know that God loved him, and that he had never had anyone declare this to him.

After several Bible studies, and further testimony regarding how God had delivered me from drugs and a life of sin, I had the privilege of baptizing this young man in the name of Christ. The last time I spoke with his mother, she indicated that her son was doing well; he had a steady job and was getting married! Praise the Lord!

Since moving back to Santa Barbara, California, the Lord has opened our eyes to the many opportunities that exist to serve Him through personal ministry. One such area of opportunity lies in those who are cast by society as “unclean”—the homeless. Interestingly

enough, on Valentine's Day twenty-nine years ago, my wife and I celebrated our honeymoon here in this city. Little did we know back then what future plans God had for us in laboring for His kingdom! It is amazing what God can do with lost and bruised hearts. He is very qualified to equip us to stop serving sin and, instead, to serve Him.

We moved back to Santa Barbara in September 2014. We did not have a home destination but simply drove here from North Dakota, trusting our loving Father to provide. In faith, I had reserved a small trailer three weeks prior, waiting for the funds to pay the trailer rental and the food and gas for the two-day journey. On the day we needed it, a dear brother provided the funds. In addition, a precious small group of brothers and sisters helped us with additional funds. Praise the Lord! We drove straight through, resting only but a few hours.

Since our arrival in California, we have been camping out in our truck, a 1989 GMC suburban. Being homeless ourselves, we spend our days either in the harbor area, or parked in front of the busy beach areas that are unique to Santa Barbara. What we discovered was that there is a large homeless community. We meet all sorts of "displaced individuals"; some with obvious mental disorders but, for the most part, many are regular people just like you and me. Seen from a distance they mostly look the same: tattered, dirty, and pushing or pulling a cart with their personal belongings. But when you meet them in person, up close, they are hurting children of the Most High God. They have hopes and

dreams, they laugh, cry, hunger, and experience joy just like you and me.

Our income consists of the ministry support that several brothers and sisters lovingly provide. Kimberly had the idea to give water and food to some of these people. We found a ninety-nine-cent store where we could purchase many food items relatively cheap. We bought packs of water bottles, fresh apples, bananas, pears, plums, easy-open food cans of beans and soups, bread rolls, and even toothbrush kits that included a toothbrush, toothpaste, and a toothbrush case. We included forks and spoons and even napkins. We made these several items into "food bags," which were simply large paper bags that only cost ten cents each. We calculated the cost of one of these "food bags" and it amounted to about \$8.50 each, but they were packed with a substantial amount of food and water. So, with a little over \$100 we were able to make up twelve food bags.

We had brought Kimberly's bicycle, which fortunately has a basket



in front and can hold up to three carefully placed food bags. We rode up and down the beach walkways and gave a food bag to those to whom we were prayerfully led.

We approached one older woman who was sitting on a grassy knoll and asked her if she could use some food. She responded in tears, saying that she had just finished praying, asking God to provide food for her as she had nothing to eat for that day!

Another woman, when I asked her if she could use some food, responded that she did not know. She was confused as to why a stranger would be offering her this large food bag. After a few seconds she reluctantly received it and I rode away. Later, when I passed by her again, I could see the open cans which she had eaten. She did not notice me ride past her, but I could see a look of joy in her face. I silently praised the Lord for His faithfulness in providing for this lost soul, a daughter of the Most High. We joyfully placed all our food bags into hungry hands.

To my great surprise, one precious man named Richard respectfully declined the food bag saying, "No thank you, I have food for today, give it to someone that has no food."

In these experiences, we share the testimony of God's great love for them, words of encouragement, and pray for them when the opportunity is possible. Some receive it with tears; others simply bow their heads in reverence. What is most noticeable is that God's Spirit touches these individuals. It is not that they are immediately delivered of all their problems and conditions, but certainly a measure of hope is

received, a seed is planted. It is God who waters and brings forth fruit.

A Demon Possessed Man

Although I have personally witnessed accounts in the realm of demonic deliverance many years ago, the following experience was very eye opening for both Kimberly and me. We had met a homeless couple in our walks near the pier. The man called himself "Israel" or "John" and would act and speak as if he were a prophet. They made their income by making sand sculptures and placed small cans and plastic cups for people to toss money into, similar to what one would do at a carnival.

One day, as we were walking past their area, the woman began confessing to us some of the terrible things "Israel" was doing. She described the lewd conduct of her husband with other men, how he was using the drug "meth," and how he had threatened to kill her by choking her in the middle of the night as she slept. He had also recently struck another man with his fist. After listening to her plight, we prayed for both her and him, for God to cast out the demonic stronghold in which he was bound and to deliver him.

Meanwhile, "Israel" had been pacing menacingly about fifty feet away, shouting and crying out loud things like "Jesus saves!" "Repent from sin!" and "Salvation in God!" All of a sudden he approached us, at which time I cautioned Kimberly to back away and continue our walk. As I began to walk away, he approached as close as he could (being on the sand while we were standing higher up on

the walk path). Raising his voice, loudly challenging me, he exclaimed, “Why is it that whenever my wife is speaking with someone and I come closer they turn and leave!”

At this, I turned around and approached him, politely saying that we were simply continuing on our walk. As I was speaking, I could sense the violent spirit and demonic presence that surrounded him. Not wanting to display fear (I must admit I did feel some fear and apprehension), I leaned down nearer to his face with careful confidence (silently praying for the Lord to give me wisdom as to what to do). I did not know if he was going to take a swing at me or worse, behave violently toward my wife.

He responded by loudly saying to me, “Fear tactics are not going to work!” Fear Tactics? are you kidding! He is the one being used to spread fear to others! Removing my sunglasses so he could see my eyes directly, I lowered my face to about twelve inches from his and said to him that we simply had a respectful conversation with his wife.

Right at that moment the most amazing thing happened! The demonic presence instantly fled and this once-belligerent-and-violent man became peaceful and gentle! His eyes changed from an aggressive to a pleading look! He spoke to me in the tone of a scared little boy, and in a pleading manner he asked if I would pray for him! I responded by declaring to him that years ago God had delivered me from alcohol and drug abuse, and that God could set him free. He immediately said, “Brother! Then you know what I am going

through! Please pray for me!” I said to him that I had already prayed for him and that God was able to deliver him if he called out to Him with all his heart.

Sensing in my spirit that we should leave, Kimberly and I then walked away, amazed at what had just taken place. We realized that what we had just witnessed was a demon possessed man coming into the presence of God’s Holy Spirit, and the demons had to flee, releasing their captive. I realized that this encounter was not over yet, and I would have to come back to see this man when I was more prayerfully prepared.

I returned to him again about a week later. I was fasting and praying as I brought a gallon of water to him, and was prepared to speak with him one-on-one and pray for him. When I found him near his “work” area, he calmly greeted me. I gave him the water I had brought and shared some things about my bondage to alcohol and drugs and how God had set me free. We spoke about things pertaining to living a life pleasing in God’s eyes, and then I asked him if I could pray for him. He bowed his head and received the offering of prayer on his behalf. I said good-bye and left.

Although I do not believe all the things that he said to me, as most alcoholics and drug addicts often deny the depth of their sickness and addiction, I do believe that he was earnest in his response to receiving God’s power to set him free. In faith, I believe God will show Himself faithful on behalf of this lost sheep, just as He was faithful to set me free.

As We Minister to Others, God Ministers to Us

Dear Brothers and Sisters, you CAN make a difference! God is looking for willing hearts. He desires our hearts to trust in Him to do things we have never imagined before. He can do it through us! I would encourage you to prayerfully consider Isaiah 42:16, which declares several of God's promises to you and me: "And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."

Sharing the love of God is not difficult. Trust in Him to do the work. All we have to do is be willing to love those whom we desire to minister to with the love God has placed in our hearts. He will give you the words to speak. A spontaneous, random act of encouragement to others is something anyone can do! As in riding a bicycle, the more you do it, the easier it gets. "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: 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" (Isaiah 55:10, 11).

I have experienced great results in the simple effort of sharing some of the many promises given to us by our heavenly Father in the Bible. It is just

amazing the powerful effect it creates in the hearts of men when you share with them God's promises.

I met a man in the harbor who is here from England on business. It did not take long for the Lord to show me that I was to encourage this man. During our conversations, he shared with me some of the details of his life, such as his desire to bring his family over from the United Kingdom, and his frustrations in the business deal he is working on. Although I have no knowledge in the field that he is in, I do know someone who does, so I pointed him to his heavenly Father and His promises. It was precious! It was as if he were a dry sponge and quickly absorbed all the promises of hope and surety that God declares in His word.

This form of evangelism is one of the most simple, but effective, means of reviving those whose faith is weak, or maybe have very little faith. As my friend Lynnford Beachy recently said to me: "Anything that brings one's heart closer to Christ is worth the effort." Very well said! These words were of refreshing encouragement to me.

There is a passage in the Bible that reveals a wonderful principle. It is found in Proverbs 11:25: "The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered also himself." What this declares is a universal principle that may be found even in nature. It refers to our giving.

The Amazon River is the largest river in the world, and it never runs dry, even though its output in volume can exceed over 300,000 cubic meters per second during the rainy season. It

is said that you can go out twenty miles from its mouth at the coast of Brazil in the Atlantic Ocean, dip a cup from the side of a boat, and you will still have fresh water! When you share the gospel, when you encourage someone, when you give from love to others, no matter what method you use, God will nourish you with more. God will provide you with more to give! Christ spoke of rivers of living water flowing from our bellies. He was referring to God's Holy Spirit flowing from us to others: "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified)" (John 7:38, 39). What a great promise is given to us! He is encouraging us to not be afraid to minister to others; He will give us His Holy Spirit to help us do His work! We are not alone in this! He will give to us that we may freely give to others. "Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8).

About eight years ago when we still had our wood-working business, we designed and built the furniture for the senior superior court judge in the new courthouse and jail facility in a nearby city. It required for me to interact with the judge to create the design and specifications custom made for his needs. It

was during this first meeting that the Lord nudged me to pray for this man—and I did! I was able to use this time to encourage him about trusting in God to give him the necessary wisdom to make the right choices, and discernment as he presides over the many court cases brought before him. He is sentencing men and women to prison terms and other very serious matters. The affect was very powerful! He humbly thanked me for my prayer and was grateful for the encouragement he received, not only for his profession but also towards his wife and children, as I had also prayed that his career would not cause him to neglect his family. As a result, I was rewarded with great encouragement to boldly pray more earnestly for others in very serious and delicate circumstances, and not to fear what words I would speak for the Lord would speak through me. Our loving heavenly Father will do the same for you, dear brothers and sisters! Trust in Him! Isaiah 26:3.

Jesus said, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). »



You don't need to be skilled or have any experience. There is a great need for followers... Jesus will train you!

-Spread Jesus-

You May Freely Eat?

by Jim Raymond

Flu season is upon us, and our friends at the Center for Disease Control (CDC) are frantically threatening us with Ebola. The most scientifically sensible advice I've heard from the official sources is that, due to the lack of a proven preventative for this potential scourge, the best defense is "extreme cleanliness." This approach involves at least three key steps that are within our spheres of control:

1. Minimize unnecessary exposure—avoid picking up the bug!
2. Scrupulous hand washing—don't get it in your mouth and don't "hand it off" to others!
3. Keeping a fastidiously clean and sanitary environment at home and the workplace, wherever you can control it, is critical to lowering the risks of perpetual recontamination.

The first part of my series on hand washing (October 2014) is an updated course on the critical skill of how to properly wash your hands.

The second part (November/December 2014) reviews the tools, pitfalls, and critical triggers for hand washing.

This final installment (January 2015) covers life-enhancing and lifesaving benefits of hand washing for the hand washer and those "downstream." Also, we'll consider our duty to be part of the solution rather than nonchalantly skipping out of the loo and right past the wash-up station.

Hand Washing for All Seasons-part 3

Bacteria are virtually everywhere and on nearly everything. Learning to live with them includes neither indifference nor obsessively washing until your hands fall off.

There are times when an extreme position is better than the middle. We read that Laodicea receives a ballistic rejection because it is neither hot nor cold but rather dead center, with thermostat stuck at "insipidly lukewarm." When it comes to hand washing, I think it's best to find a personal balance that is definitely off center toward the obsessive end while likewise definitely shy of the over-wash extreme. I never want hand washing to become merely a rote behavior; this toward-the-extreme method helps. Working by following a few simple steps, and mindfully making adjustments for new learning, will fashion a personal plan to keep your hands attached, while lowering the number of transient bacteria to levels the immune system can handle.

Outside of the medical industry and a couple of other hand-sacrificing professions, it will be difficult to hand wash too much. However, there are a few who persistently wash too vigorously, too frequently, or use harsh washing agents, and manage to extract too much of the protective cell layers and oils from the skin. This could be a problem even if using only plain water, especially if using a coarse brush. This rough treatment

often causes the skin to lose moisture, and roughen or crack and potentially bleed, providing germs a point of entry into the body where they can do more harm.

Barring any underlying skin condition, and the use of harsh agents, this should not be a concern, so use moderate friction for the requisite number of washings to cover the personalized critical “When to Wash” events (plus a few more a day for good measure). For example: assuming that your daily routine requires three dozen washing and drying bouts, if each takes thirty seconds your total hand washing time would be only eighteen minutes a day. This modest investment will contribute significantly to keeping fecal and other pathogenic contact contaminates off your hands and out of your body, and protects the community by not serving the stuff to others.

Why Wash Hands—Blessings reaped by hand washers:

- Hand washing reduces ARI (Acute Respiratory Infection) risk up to 44%, by reducing viruses like adenovirus, corona virus, Asian flu virus transmitted by the fecal-oral route.

- A study of 305 school children found that youngsters who washed their hands four times a day had 24% fewer sick days due to (ARI) and 51% fewer days due to upset stomach.

- Hand washing reduces risk of diarrheal diseases by 45%.

- Hand washing by mothers lowers incidence of childhood diarrhea.

Globally, hand washing could prevent over a million child deaths from diarrheal diseases and pneumonia.

Knowing thy Enemy—Here’s a short list of hand washing highlights to help:

- World-wide washroom studies show that up to 70% of people using washrooms wash their hands, and 30% of people who do so use soap as the cleaning agent. [As you’ll see below, many other studies show less optimistic results.] Unfortunately, even if accurate, these numbers only work for those who have access to, and use washrooms. Millions of people in the world have neither washing facilities nor clean water.

- All washing agents, including plain water, are similarly effective in reducing bacterial counts from hands.

- Physical action of scrubbing, washing and clean towel drying was more important than which washing agent was used.

- Proper washing should remove about 90% of transient bacteria with 15-30 seconds of systematic rubbing.

- Bacteria double in number in less than 20 minutes, so there is no need to worry about washing too often.

- Between 2 and 10 million bacteria live between the fingertip and elbow.

- Transient germs on hands can live up to three hours.

- Millions of germs hide under watches and bracelets, and there could be as many germs under a ring as there are people in Europe!

- Up to half of all men and a quarter of women fail to wash their hands after they use the bathroom.

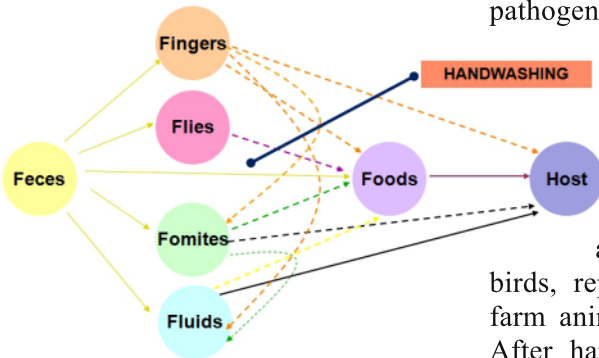
- The number of germs on fingertips doubles after toilet use.

- It is important to make sure all parts of the hands and fingers are

cleaned, especially the fingertips, which often get missed.

- Bacteria carried on pathogen contaminated hands can cause food poisoning, colds, flu, diarrhea, and death.

8 out of 10 people have fecal material under their fingernails, and in 5 of the 8 the material is not their own.



Fecal-oral Route and the Chain Breaker

Note: the top bubbles (Fingers & Flies) represent all animate vectors.

Breaking the chain—The way hands are involved in passing on pathogens is through a chain of events starting at infected fecal contamination and winding up in the mouth of some unsuspecting victim. The fecal contamination can be carried by water, soil, hands, flies and food, which become reservoirs of contamination and infection. This chain is usually called the fecal–oral route, or alternatively, the oral–fecal route or even orofecal. Of course, animate feces is not the only source of pathogens, but it is the most significant to public health around the world. This writing focuses on the fecal to hand to mouth route and using hand washing to break the orofecal chain.

As the graphic shows, hand washing can break or inhibit all chains of transmission coming from the Fingers reservoir except Flies. Fly vectors are independent vectors, moving freely from sources to deposit sites, and require use of direct fly control methods.

The most common source of pathogenic bacteria on hands is from infected human or animal feces (this same process also works with other body secretions). This can occur as far back as the field where crops or animals were contaminated by birds, reptiles, rodents, amphibians, farm animals, workers, or feed, etc. After hands touch anything that is contaminated with pathogenic bacteria, they work like rubber stamps and transfer the germs to whatever they touch. Contaminated inanimate things are called fomes or fomites. Contaminated hands (finger reservoirs) can now make new fomites by hand stamping food, utensils, counters, plastic cutting boards, sink faucet handles, banisters, door knobs and a multitude of other things and surfaces, or directly to new victims by handshaking or other forms of touching. A worse case is when the new owner/victims eat before washing and become infected germ factories. Now, as reservoirs and vectors (animate germ couriers), they can do a lot more damage unless they wash up and break the chain frequently to keep from stamping out new fomites or donating their morbid gifts to receiving victim-vectors.

Ever fly with the germs? Well hold on. It will be a quick mindful moment trip with an imaginary fulltime professional courier who unwittingly becomes a part-time vector. The victim courier just picked up the germ load from a chance meeting with a friend who stepped out of the airport toilet room—with unwashed hands. It was a quick greeting and a firm handshake, Ka-ching♪! The victim, and now a germ courier (vector), grabbing the carry-on, Ka-ching♪, stamps the handle with a share of his newly acquired germ load and zooms off to catch his plane on the last boarding call. Zipping right past the washroom, not daring to take the time now to wash, not that it is ever a top priority, stamping, Ka-ching♪, Ka-ching♪, the banister is now ready for the slower stragglers. He stows the carry-on and shuts the overhead luggage door—Ka-ching♪, and nestles into the seat, Ka-ching♪, the seat belt, Ka-ching♪, to the arms of the seat. Ka-ching♪, Ka-ching♪, Ka-ching♪, all the way to lunch. It's a sandwich! Clutching that Big Zac burger as if it were trying to get away, KA-CHING♪, swallowed in almost one bite! Finally gets washed up. Halfway around the world it's off and running again, grabbing the carry-on, Ka-ching♪, a fresh batch! Lots of Ka-ching♪-ing and some business to do in town. Back home two days and the worst case of Montezuma's revenge on record. Thinks the courier, "It must have been the water at that little restaurant in the middle of Tuikaba." The whole family gets sick by the end of the week and friends follow suit

within a few days. Wonder what happened in Tuikaba? We can only assume. We never hear.

Post-flight assignment: take a mindful moment and think of all the things the courier's hands may have touched during his Tuikaba trip. Be sure to include the opportunities to access his mouth, nose, or to rub his weary eyes. What about all the places hands have gone and what they have touched. It's a lot isn't it? They have even been to the moon.

Next assignment: go to a busy mega-market-type department store and observe what all those hands (loaded rubber stamps) are touching in the toy, housewares, tool, and, heaven help us, the fresh produce areas. Take a mindful moment to think about the implications, and don't forget that eight out of ten of those hands have something to share. Try to resist the urge to shout out, "STOP RIGHT WHERE YOU ARE and go wash those grimy hands. AND DO NOT FORGET THE FINGER-NAILS because I know what's there!"

Well that was enlightening! So, why aren't we all dead? There is a wonderful praiseworthy reason: First, thank God for the immune system! Because of this gift most fecal donors are not infected. So, even if the donor is extra generous, the donation is not infected and cannot infect the receiving victim. Sorry, but the gifted fecal debris will still belong to the receiving victim. Yucky but not deadly—so there is the silver lining behind this tarnished cloud. Say the gift does arrive infected, if the victim's immune system is healthy and robust, then

pathogenic germs on the donor's fecal debris will be killed. That's why we don't get sick every time we shake hands or go to the market. Queasy enough to wash our hands? Always! Sick? Rarely! Thank you Father!

Since the mid 1800s, the link between hand washing and contact transmission of infection has been well established in both US and Europe, and it has yet to be disputed. Centuries before such noted advocates of hand washing as Holmes and Semmelweis, the "Vishnu Purana," an ancient document from India, details wash-up instructions after latrine use. Here is a translation of those steps:

After defecation:

The generative organ is to be washed once,

The anus is to be washed three times,

The left hand to be washed ten times and

The right hand to be washed seven times.

Both feet are to be cleaned three times.

Fist full of earth is to be used for washing before use of water.

The water utensil is to be washed too.

Sharing the Woe—If knowledge were perfectly related to performance, then one would think that microbiologists would be right-on with hand washing. Not so! An observational study reported that 80% of qualified microbiologists attending a national meeting for microbiology scientists failed to wash their hands after visiting the toilet. Personal observations

have confirmed that hand washing among state health department inspectors was not much better than the general public.

Hospitals—That's it! Surely medical people have it together. Why, failure to wash up there would kill. A national healthcare safety and quality performance auditing organization recently reported that 51% failed to meet hand washing standards. Compliance to the standards for doctors was 60% and 80% for nurses. Performance standards, by the way, are not always set at 100%, so reported compliance numbers may seem higher than actual practice. If 100% compliance is set at 80%, then the actual number of proper wash-up events would be 64 out of 100 rather than 80.

The rationale for this method is to allow a way of setting targets that are attainable and not totally discouraging. It's a lot easier to face the need to eat an elephant one bite at a time than in one swallow; so, though it may not be ideal, it's not cheating. Everyone in the system knows how and why it works, but outsiders—customers or patients—need to know too so they can better calculate actual personal risk. Yes, it is fair to ask why highly paid professionals can't handle the reality of 100%. Apparently the gender gap phenomenon is working in hand washing too, just as the ubiquitous "Please Wash Your Hands" improves hand washing in women but not in men. Likewise, in hospitals, female physicians wash their hands between patient contacts much more often (but still shy of 100%) than male doctors.

Hats off to Dr. Anwar Ul Haque, MD, Chief Editor for the “International Journal of Pathology” (Published from Islamabad), for his candid disclosure and admonition: “...it is a common knowledge that doctors are reluctant to use this most efficient and effective means of curtailing infections after seeing each patient.... We have an absolute obligation on ourselves not to become a vector of transmission of infections to the patients. Simple hand washing by clean water may reduce communicable and oral-fecal route diseases by 90%. So let us make it a habit to do frequent hand washing, especially before eating, drinking and after examining each patient.”

How can any thinking, caring healthcare practitioner escape bearing the mark of Cain when consciously choosing not to wash their hands when they know that failing to do so can do mortal harm to those who are trusting that their healthcare provider will answer “Yes!” to the question: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” Jesus answered this question positively by his selfless life, and made it clear that agreement with him by our works is prerequisite to His Kingdom (see James 4:17 and Luke 9:23).

Knowing is not enough—Starting with a question: Is it true that clean, healthy hands save lives? Yes, this is a fact that has been well known for centuries, so why does it continue to be ignored or rejected? The lackluster behavior by professionals topping our modern scientific and medical professions is especially discouraging and, just as faith without works is

dead, neither understanding nor even teaching hand washing is enough to save lives. It is every person’s responsibility to be doers of what is known about hand washing. Hand washing is the most effective and inexpensive way to prevent diarrheal diseases and pneumonia, which together are responsible for the majority (36%) of child deaths. Globally, these two diseases result in 3.5 million children dying before they celebrate their 5th birthday! Effective hand washing can prevent 1.1 million of these deaths.

And the last question: Because it is true that failing to keep our hands clean kills people, dare we view hand washing as anything less than a moral obligation?

Thank God for a steadily growing number of people (worldwide) who are mindfully acting on the fact that they are accountable to break the chain of contamination, to protect their health and wellbeing and that of their families, and of the world, starting from where they wash their hands. We can also thank Him for inspiring people to help folk have access to clean water—the only essential ingredient for proper hand washing.

The following internet link will take you to one of the most innovative clean water initiatives I’ve seen to date, and it is as beautiful as it is functional. To maximize your time, first click “Story” on the front piece Menu—next click on “Design.”

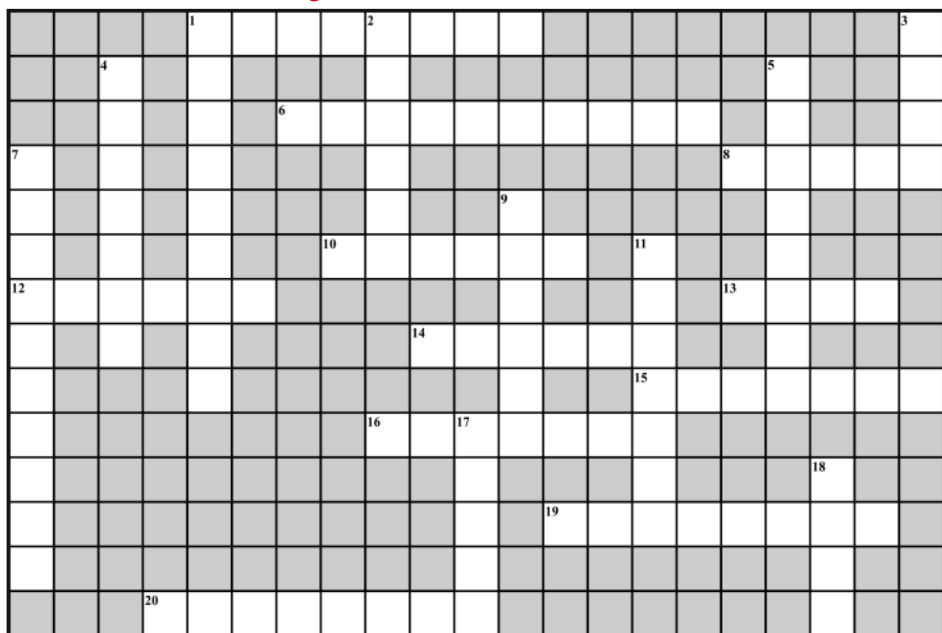
<http://warkawater.com>.

Blessings! JR

Present Truth
Something for the Young at Heart

This month we are continuing a series of studies written by my children. In order to maintain the flow of the study, this crossword puzzle is not split into Across and Down sections—Across or Down is indicated at the end of each line. (The KJV is required.)

Forgiveness - by Josiah Beachy



Answers will be printed on the back page of next month's issue.

- "...I said, I will ____ my transgressions unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah." Psalms 32:5—**11 Down**
- "But he, being full of ____, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not:..." Psalms 78:38—**6 Across**
- "Thou answeredst them, O LORD our God: thou wast a God that ____ them,..." Psalms 99:8—**1 Down**
- "To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the ____ of Christ." 2 Corinthians 2:10—**14 Across**
- "...if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ ____ you, so also do ye." Colossians 3:13—**15 Across**
- "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy ____ which thou hast written." Exodus 32:32—**18 Down**
- "But if her father ____ her in the day that he heareth; not any of her vows, or of her bonds wherewith she hath bound her soul, shall stand: and the LORD shall forgive her, because her father disallowed her." Numbers 30:5—**19 Across**

Present Truth

- "...when they shall pray toward this place: and hear thou in ____ thy dwelling place: and when thou hearest, forgive." 1 Kings 8:30—**10 Across**
- "Then hear thou in heaven thy ____ place, and forgive, and do, and give to every man according to his ways,..." 1 Kings 8:39—**5 Down**
- "And forgive thy people that have ____ against thee,..." 1 Kings 8:50—**12 Across**
- "If my people, which are called by my name, shall ____ themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14—**2 Down**
- "Look upon mine affliction and my pain; and forgive all my ____." Psalms 25:18—**3 Down**
- "For thou, Lord, art good, and ____ to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee." Psalms 86:5—**17 Down**
- "Let the wicked ____ his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isaiah 55:7—**16 Across**
- "...that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their ____ and their sin." Jeremiah 36:3—**20 Across**
- "And when ye stand ____, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses." Mark 11:25—**4 Down**
- "And forgive us our ____, as we forgive our debtors." Matthew 6:12—**8 Across**
- "For if ye forgive men their ____, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." Matthew 6:14—**7 Down**
- "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your ____ forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." Matthew 18:35—**9 Down**
- "If we confess our sins, he is ____ and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9—**1 Across**
- "And be ye ____ one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Ephesians 4:32—**13 Across**



Answers to Last Month's Crossword Puzzle

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