

Happiness Unlimited



By **Harvey Childress**

Happiness Unlimited - #1

My wife, Sue, and I have just passed our middle 80s. We have been married sixty-six and one half years. In that time we have met thousands of people. Two to three thousand of them we got to know quite well.

All of the people we have known have had one thing in common. They all wanted to be happy. Some of them reached great happiness. Others have a moderate happiness. We have seen some become very miserable while they were trying to be happy.

Our lives have had some anxiety, some sorrow, quite a bit of pain. Through it all we have been basically happy. From our experience and observing others we have found what it is that makes people really happy. Those ideas we want to share with you.

We married in 1934. I graduated from college in 1935. I worked at my calling in life for sixty-five years. Age and some health problems forced me to retire on January 1, 2000. Since then I have written my memoirs. Now I have been asked to write a weekly web page that will be inspirational to others. My aim in this effort will be to help others increase the joy and happiness in their lives. If I can do that, the joy and happiness Sue and I have will be increased also. That will be our reward.

We found early in our lives that the more we could help others enjoy their lives the happier our lives became. If I do help you have more happiness, please write, e-mail or telephone me. We will both be happier if you do. One thing we all desire! HAPPINESS!

Harvey Childress, hopefully a friend.

Purpose for Happiness Unlimited - #2

The purpose of Happiness Unlimited is to enhance the quality of happiness for those who read along with us each week. We hope to help people who have lived under a cloud of despair and disappointment to see the glories of faith that bears the fruit of peace, joy, love and hope for themselves and others.

The cost to you will be a few minutes of your time. After graduating from college, I spent the next sixty-five years sharing my experience that has enriched my life with more than 1200 people who, in turn, improved the quality of their lives.

Sue and I have lived a frugal life. Our present finances are adequate to supply our needs for what life we have left. Our joy comes from helping others. Our hope for you is that your life will be enriched in values that will upgrade your life as those values have enriched our lives.

Each week a new message will be here. The contents will be easy for you to grasp. If your happiness is increased our joy will grow. That is what we hope for. You will have the same opportunity the above 1200 had.

In 1973 I was working in San Diego, California where we became acquainted with a policeman and his wife. We shared with them why we had so much happiness in our lives. They put the same ideas to work in their lives. Occasionally they call us to tell us how happy they are. Their daughter uses the same information, and she has taught it to her children, now all three generations are enriched with the joy that fills our lives.

We hope that our relationship with you by this Web site will bring enrichment into your life, and the lives of those you love.

Harvey Childress, a hopeful friend.

Avoid This - #3

Many who try to make their lives better with the use of alcohol encounter a problem.

Alcohol is a depressant. The boost some think they enjoy when they begin the use of alcohol soon fades. Alcohol is also a drug that begins to take control of the lives of people who drink more to get the lift a small amount supplied them at first.

Without realizing it they come to depend on alcohol more and more. When that happens, alcohol controls their lives more than they are aware.

A friend of mine never took a drink of alcohol until he was 50 years old. A race riot occurred in his community. He was awake most of three days and nights. As the riot was coming to an end my friend's doctor told him if he would take a little alcohol it would help him go to sleep and rest longer. It worked for that.

My friend's job kept him under some pressure. Without realizing it he used alcohol more and more to relax.

One day he was under severe pressure all morning, and he drank more alcohol than he ever had. When he got in his car to go across the city to a luncheon he blacked out on the way. While unconscious he ran into the rear end of a car stopped for a red light, the gas tank on that car exploded, and two women in the back seat of it burned to death. My friend woke up in a hospital. The police were guarding his room. He was charged with driving while intoxicated, and involuntary manslaughter of two women.

He recovered physically, but emotionally he lived wishing he had died in the accident, he never drank again, but his regret never left him. How he wished he had never started.

Harvey Childress, a hopeful friend.

Prepare to Begin- #4

No person living on the earth avoids all of the mistakes that confront him. We all slip from time to time. But, we do not have to make those mistakes over and over until they become a habit.

Many people correct their mistakes, and live their lives committing fewer and fewer of them. They are known as honest and moral people - respected in their communities. These are the people I have found who are most successful in reaching a goal of greater peace, more joy, stronger love, and a better hope for the future. With the right information they live enriched lives!

As you contemplate upgrading the quality of your life make are sure you are honest and moral. The things that have made people honest and moral are still the same things that will give them a reputation of someone everyone can trust. Things that are right for us to do today have always been the right things in the past. Things that make you someone others can trust are the things that have always made people trustworthy.

We hear about things that are "politically correct." Nothing is correct, unless it is right - always has been right - always will be right. When we accept what is right, and what is true, then we are of a mindset to add qualities to our lives that will enrich them.

You will never regret standing for things that are right, and are true. Set your mind to want to know what is right, and what is true. With that mindset you can go a long way!

Harvey Childress, a hopeful friend.

The Promises of God- #5

Beginning with my preschool years my mother taught me about the Christian faith. I was taken to Bible classes and church worship from the time I can remember. When I was ten years old I was taught in a Bible class that if I put God first in my life God would take care of my needs, Matthew 6:25-33.

When I was thirteen years old I was baptized into Christ. I was filled with a joy that I had never known before. I wished I could feel that good the rest of my life.

When I was fifteen years old I decided to serve God by preaching his word. That filled my life with more joy. By the time I was twenty-two years old I had graduated from college, and I was ready to spend my life in the cause of God.

That was followed by sixty-five years doing the best I could to advance God's kingdom. It has been a happy sixty-five years. There have been times of frustration, and times of great sorrow, but overall they have been happy years. God has provided my needs. At age eighty-six I retired from full time work for the Lord.

In retirement I have been researching "The Promises of God" found in the Bible. I knew many of them. But I have found some I was not aware of. Those additional promises have

increased my happiness. I want to share those promises with you in the coming weeks. I believe the quality of your life will be raised as was mine. My wife and I are happier right now than we have ever been before.

Harvey Childress, a hopeful friend.

To Find God's Promises- #6

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith Jehovah," Isaiah 1:18. God invites us to a dialogue about his promises. To listen before we talk is always good advice. Let us hear what God says about his promises and then decide what we should do. When Jesus wrote to the seven churches of Asia, at the close of each message he said, "he that has ears let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches," Revelation 2 and 3. Would it not be wise to listen to God then make our decisions about his promises?

The writer of the book of Hebrews records in chapter 10:23, "He is faithful who promised." That is what men have found God to be throughout the centuries, "faithful to his promises." We like to deal with anyone who has a track record of keeping his promises.

God goes one step further: He took an oath to his promises. Read Hebrews 6:13-18 and you will find statements like these:

He swore by himself.

The oath is final for confirmation.

It is impossible for God to lie...that we may have strong encouragement.

In a lifetime of experience with God I have always found him to be faithful to his promises. In Romans 1:1, 2 we find that God makes his promises to us through his prophets IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. So to find God's promises we must read the Bible. That is where they are found. In this series about God's promises we will identify each of them in the Bible.

As we identify each promise in the Bible we can trust the promises he makes. When God expects us to meet conditions to receive the promises we will know what they are, and we can meet them. What joy they bring to us!

Harvey Childress, a friend.

To Find God's Promises- #7

In the seventy-two years that I have given my life to the service of God, I found many promises God had made in the Bible. All of those promises were fulfilled that God said he would fulfill during the lifetime of people on the earth. Sometimes it took a long time before God fulfilled a future promise.

For instance, God promised Abraham the land of Canaan, Genesis 15. He told Abraham it would be a long time before it would happen. Over 400 years later the children of Israel, Abraham's descendants, came into Canaan. They overthrew the idolatrous inhabitants and

possessed the land. Joshua who led in that conquest gathered the Israelites together before he died. He told them in Joshua 23:14:

I am going the way of all the earth, and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which Jehovah your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, not one thing hath failed thereof.

I have read many promises God made in Bible times. Later I found that God brought all of those promises to pass. So I trust him to bring to pass the promises he has made to us in the New Testament. I have never found a promise of God made to us in this lifetime but what he fulfilled it.

I have recently found some promises God has made to us in this life that I had not realized before just how God was fulfilling them, but he did. The fault was not with God, but with me. I was not observant enough. Now I have had time to study them closer and I see that God was fulfilling them all of the time.

This realization has enriched my life greatly. I believe you will find it the same. More in the next Web message.

Harvey Childress, a friend.

Unexpected Happiness - #8

God fulfilled promises to me when I was young that I did not recognize at the time. Had I realized them my life would have been more fulfilling.

From the time I was a small child, my mother taught me about God, his word, and his son, Jesus Christ. I have believed in them all of my memory span. When I entered adolescence I became aware that a few things I did and said were sins against God. Repentance was explained to me and I repented of my sins with a determination to quit them, Luke 13:3-5. To anyone who would ask me I would confess my faith in God and his son Jesus Christ, Matthew 10:32.

At home, in Bible class, and at the church services I heard Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." I was baptized at the age of thirteen, I was satisfied I was saved from my sins. That was comforting to know, but I had not expected to be as happy as I was. I wished I could feel that good always. I felt more peace, joy, love and hope than I had ever known before.

I had ordinary peace before but there was a surge of peace with everyone and with the poverty we were in. Joy that I could not believe was in my heart. Love stronger than I thought possible filled my being. Hope of a home in heaven was so real to me. Those strong feelings lasted for weeks.

It was some time before I began to notice those feelings had ebbed away. Had I understood why I had the feelings and how to keep them they would have remained with me all of my life.

During my sixty-five years of preaching I baptized a few hundred people, and every one of them experienced more happiness than they expected. Had I known then what I have

learned this year I could have explained to them why they were so happy. I am glad I have at last found the answer, and I want to share it with you in my next web page.

In the meantime keep reading your Bible daily, and you will have more blessings than you ever expected to have. You can add more joy to what you already have.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ.

Spiritual Life - #9

After a long life of service to God, I learned this year why I was so happy when I became a Christian. Though I have had my share of heartaches and sorrows, my life has been mostly one of joy and happiness. That should be true of every Christian. When Peter preached to the Jews in Acts 2, he convinced them that they had crucified the Son of God (verse 36). Then they asked Peter, "What shall we do?" Peter told them to repent and be BAPTIZED in the name of Jesus Christ for the REMISSION OF THEIR SINS, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (verse 38).

I had never connected the receiving of the Holy Spirit when people were baptized with the way I felt at that time. I knew that when the Ethiopian Nobleman was baptized (Act 8:38), he went on his way rejoicing (verse 39). I had not connected what Jesus said in John 6:63, "It is the Spirit that gives life," with the way many people felt when they were baptized.

This is confirmed by the sequence of events related in Romans 8:11 – 17. Look at this:

In verse 11 we find that the Holy Spirit gives life to our bodies. We had natural life from our natural birth. The capacity for spiritual life that was in us was activated when the Holy Spirit came into us at baptism. The birth of the Spirit that Jesus spoke of (John 3:5) happened at baptism.

The Holy Spirit has been in us since our baptism (Acts 2:38; 5:32). Paul reveals (Rom 8:14) that we are led by the Spirit. The Holy Spirit gave us God's word (Corinthians 2:10). The Psalmist said, "Send Thy light and Thy truth, let them lead me"(Psalms 43:3).

In 1946 Sue and I had a study with a couple in Minneapolis, Minnesota. We studied about what the Bible teaches us about how to be saved. As a result of our study Mr. and Mrs. Hammer asked to be baptized. We went to the church building where the baptistery was filled with warm water, and clothing was prepared for them to wear for the baptism. When I "buried" Mrs. Hammer with her Lord in baptism, and brought her up out of the water, she threw her arms up and shouted, "I never felt so good in life!" Why did she feel that way? She had been "born of the water and the Spirit."(John 3:3-5) She felt a surge of peace, joy, love, and hope. Others I have baptized showed emotion in other ways, but everyone born of the Spirit in this way feels so clean - forgiven of their sins - and so happy to be a child of God. When we believe that Jesus is God's Son, repent of our sins, and are "buried" with Christ in baptism, we receive all the spiritual blessings God has for us, because we are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3). God has other blessings we shall explore in our next Web message.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ.

Immediate Gifts of God- #10

Christ promised the Apostles that when the Holy Spirit came upon them they would be guided as they preached to all the truth, John 16:13. When Peter preached on Pentecost, Acts 2, he had received the Holy Spirit, verse 4, therefore, his preaching was truth.

Peter told those who heard him to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit, Acts 2:38.

The Apostle Paul, writing by the same Holy Spirit that guided Peter in his preaching, tells us that when we receive the Holy Spirit we have life, Romans 8:11. The people on Pentecost had natural life before their baptism. The Holy Spirit gave them spiritual life with their baptism, Romans 8:9,10.

Acts 2:41 records that 3,000 people were baptized on Pentecost day and:

Their faith become more precious than gold, 1 Peter 1:7,

They had peace that passed understanding, Philippians 4:7.

Joy came to them that was unspeakable, 1 Peter 1:8.

Love entered their hearts that was beyond knowledge, Ephesians 3:19.

Hope for the future now anchored their souls, Hebrews 6:19.

I received these same things when I was baptized into Christ. With all of these enlarged qualities I understand now why I felt so good when I was baptized. I understand why the Bible says that when the Ethiopian eunuch was baptized, Act 8:38, that he went on his way rejoicing, Acts 8:39. He went back to Ethiopia with faith, peace, joy, love, and hope! What a treasure!

Now I understand why the hundreds I baptized into Christ were joyful: they were born of the Spirit at that time, John 5:5-8.

In 1946 Sue and I had a Bible study with a couple in Minneapolis, Minnesota. After we had studied about what the Bible teaches us to be saved, Mr. and Mrs. Hammer asked to be baptized. We went to the church building where we had a baptistry filled with warm water, and clothes for them to dress in for their baptism. When I buried Mrs. Hammer with her Lord in baptism and brought her up out of the water she threw her arms up and shouted:

"I never felt so good in my life!"

Why did she feel that way? She had been born of the water and the Spirit, John 3:5-5. She felt the surge of peace, joy, love and hope that came into her. Others I baptized showed emotion in other ways, but everyone born of the Spirit in this way feels so clean - forgiven of their sins - and so happy that they are a child of God.

When we believe that Jesus is God's son, repent of our sins, and are buried with Christ in baptism we receive all of the spiritual blessings God has for us because we are in Christ, Ephesians 1:3.

God has other blessings we will explore in our next message.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ.

God's First Promises- #11

The first promises God made were in the Garden of Eden.

After Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit God promised the serpent he would go on his belly and eat dust all of his days, Genesis 3:14. God also promised the devil that the woman's seed would bruise his head, Genesis 3:15. Christ was born of woman, Galatians 4:4, and he overcame Satan, Matthew 4:1-11.

God promised Eve that she would bear children in pain, Genesis 3:16, and that her husband would rule over her, 1 Corinthians 11:3.

God promised Adam that he would eat the fruit of the ground by toil, Genesis 3:17. Thorns and thistles would be obstacles Adam and all farmers would have to overcome, Genesis 3:18. Adam would earn his bread by the sweat of his face, Genesis 3:19. Every farmer can testify to that.

We see that God can promise punishment for disobedience as well as blessings for obedience.

The promises of God to Adam and Eve have been part of the experience of man ever since. The love and grace of God have provided an escape from the punishment, Romans 6:23. The darker the night we pass through the brighter seems the day that follows.

By faith we walk with God, 2 Corinthians 5:7. Like Abraham we can walk in the unseen presence of Almighty God, Genesis 7:1.

It is wonderful to know that God still cares for us, 1 Peter 5:6,7. When Jesus told the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15 the father represented God. The joy the father showed at the return of his wayward son represents how God feels when one of his natural sons becomes one of his spiritual sons.

Harvey Childress, a friend.

God's Promises to Noah - #12

By the tenth generation of man almost everyone had become so corrupt that God determined to destroy mankind (Genesis 6:3).

However, God found Noah to be righteous (Genesis 6:8).

God told Noah that He was going to destroy all air-breathing creatures off the earth (Gen. 6:13). Then God told Noah to build an ark 450 feet long, 75 feet wide, and 45 feet high. In it, Noah and his family and some of every species that breathed air would be saved.

Noah built the ark by faith (Hebrews 11:7). There had been no purpose for such a vessel before, for it had not rained upon the earth before (Genesis 2: 5,6) Up to that time a mist

had watered the earth. Righteous people believe what God says and do what God tells them to do (Romans 10:17).

Noah was a preacher of righteousness for 120 years (2 Peter 2:5). He warned people that rain would destroy all who lived on the earth, unless they came into the ark. He converted only his family (1 Peter 3:20). Those eight souls and the species in the ark were all that lived through the flood.

After the flood God promised never again to destroy all on the earth with a flood (Genesis 9:11). He gave us a rainbow to confirm that promise (Genesis 9:19).

When God is ready to destroy this earth again it will be by fire (2 Peter 2:10-13). At that time He will give those who are saved a NEW HEAVEN and a NEW EARTH. Read Revelation 21:1-7, where that new heaven and new earth are described. All the saved will be there in the presence of God. If we have the kind of faith Noah had, we will be there!

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

God's Promises to Abraham- #13

Some promises God makes are not fulfilled for a long time. Three promises God made to Abraham are an example of this.

The first promise was that Abraham and Sarah would have a child born to them (Gen. 17:15-21). Abraham was 99 years old and Sarah was 89 – past the years of child bearing.

Isaac was born out of due season because God has the power to do what He promises (Gen. 21:1-3). The apostle Paul records that Abraham believed God was able to fulfill all of His promises. Read Romans 4:13-21.

Another promise God made to Abraham was that the land of Canaan would be given to his descendants (Gen. 15:18). This promise would be postponed for 400 years (Gen. 15:13,14). This promise was fulfilled when Joshua led Israel to conquer the land of Canaan (Joshua 23:14).

The third promise God gave to Abraham was that "in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (Gen. 12:1-3). This promise was fulfilled in Christ about 1800 years later (Acts 3:25; Galatians 3:16). That blessing comes to us through faith (Galatians 3:14, 29). We are blessed with Abraham (Galatians 3:7-9). "Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise" (Galatians 4:28).

God's promises to Abraham demonstrate to us that God fulfills all of His promises in the time He has in mind. Therefore we can trust the future promises God has given us. We have experienced the promises God gives us in this life when we are faithful to Him (Revelation 2:10,11).

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

Conditional Promises of God- #14

God has promises that He makes to us when we meet His conditions. Perhaps the clearest of these is found in Matthew 6:33. Jesus had been telling His disciples not to worry about what they would eat or wear. God feeds the birds and He clothes the flowers. His disciples are more important to Him than the birds and flowers. So He can provide for His disciples also. In this passage, Jesus gives them a condition. "But seek ye first God's kingdom and His righteousness and all of these things will be added unto you."

How do we show God that His kingdom and righteousness are first in our lives? When I wanted to make sure God knew that His kingdom and righteousness were first in my life I made four promises to Him:

- That I would live the Christian life taught in the New Testament (1 Peter 2:21).
- That I would attend every assembly of Christ's church (Hebrews 10:25).
- That I would give at least 10% of my gross income to the Lord's work (2 Corinthians 8:1-5).
- That I would do all I could to promote God's kingdom and righteousness on earth.

These promises were sometimes hard to keep, but I lived up to them the best I could. I prayed about them constantly.

Now my wife and I are near the end of our lives and we can say what David recorded in Psalms 37:25. We have not had an abundance, but we have had plenty. We have made some sacrifices that were hard to make, but we are glad we did. God has kept His promise to us. We have enough.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

Protection From Temptation- #15

God promises us that we will not be tempted to sin more than we can resist. And He will provide a way of escape from temptations (1 Corinthians 10:13). Another assurance about this is recorded in 2 Peter 2:9 – "God knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation."

Jesus resisted the devil's temptations by quoting the Bible (Matt. 4:1-12). David said he laid up God's word in his heart so he would not sin against God (Psalms 119:11). It is a great help to us in the time of temptation to know what God has said about sin. Knowing what God has said, and using it to answer the devil, will keep us from sin.

God does not force us away from temptation. He stands beside us at the time and says to our conscience – "Take this way out." Then the decision is ours to obey God or the devil.

James 1:2-4 tells us to rejoice in temptation because resisting temptation promotes Christian growth to perfection, full-grown Christians.

The Lord blesses us when we "endure" temptation without falling to it. That causes us to be approved for our crown of life (James 1:12).

In all of this we learn to "resist the devil, and he will flee from us." (James 4:7) The devil never gives up in his efforts to win us back to his service, but God's grace is there so we can resist him (2 Corinthians 12:7-9).

May we use the prayer Jesus gave us, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." (Matthew 6:13) May we pray, then uses God's way of escape!

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

God Keeps His Promises- #16

When Joshua finished leading Israel in conquering the land of Canaan he said in Joshua 23:14, "And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing has failed of all the good things which Jehovah your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, not one thing has failed thereof."

When Solomon finished his prayer of dedication for the temple that he had built for the worship of God (1 Kings 8: 56), he said " Blessed be Jehovah, that hath given rest unto His people Israel, according to all that He promised: there hath not one word failed of all His good promises, which He promised by Moses His servant."

God made many promises at different times in the Old Testament. We can read all of the history of God's dealings with His people recorded there and not one of God's promises ever failed to come to pass.

The Lord is not slack concerning His Promises (2 Peter 3:9), but is longsuffering toward us. With some promises we have to wait for God to fulfill them in His own time. Abraham had to wait until he was 100 years old for God to give him a son by Sarah (Romans 14: 16-22). Take special note of verse 21. God will always fulfill His promises. We can trust Him.

In Hebrews 6:13-15 God swore His promise to Abraham. Because Abraham patiently waited for God's time to fulfill His promise, Abraham obtained it.

God has told us that if we have patience and do His will we will receive all He has promised us (Hebrews 10:36).

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

God Is Faithful Who Promised- #17

Hebrews 10: 23 tells us "let us hold fast the confession of our hope that is waver not; for He is faithful that promised."

We have seen that God was faithful to fulfill His promises in the Old Testament. Now we are dealing with the same God in the New Testament, and we can trust God to be faithful to His promises to us.

The promises of the Old Testament were primarily for the descendants of Abraham through Isaac. Now God wants the Gentiles to know they are included in the promises of the New Testament. Ephesians 3:6 reads "that the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and fellow-members of the body, and fellow-partakers of the promises in Christ Jesus through the gospel."

Christ charged His disciples "to go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation." (Mark 16:15) All of God's promises in the New Testament are made the same to all people.

Two promises are recorded in the epistle of James. In chapter 1:12, "Blessed is the man that endures temptation; for when he has been approved he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord promised to them that love Him." We see that promise repeated in James 2:5.

When we read the whole Bible we find that God always kept His promises to whom He made them. We have confidence that He will keep his promises to us.

We will list some promises God has made to all men in our next message.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

Promises from the Father- #18

Jesus called the gift of the Holy Spirit to His disciples "the promise of my Father." (Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4)

On the next Pentecost the Holy Spirit fell on the apostles (Acts 2:4). Peter preached by the direction of the Holy Spirit and he told the large assembly that it was sent by God (Acts 2:33).

There are many other promises in the New Testament. A few examples are:

1. God promised us eternal life. (Titus 1:2; 1 John 2:25)
2. Life is promised to those who are in Jesus Christ. (2 Timothy 2:10)
3. Jesus said He came for us to have life abundantly. (John 10:10)
4. Jesus promised to those who believe in Him and are baptized that they will be saved. (Mark 16:16)
5. We are told that all salvation is in Christ. (Acts 4:12)
6. God promises a way of escape from the temptations we have. (1 Corinthians 10:13)
7. God's promises never fail or forsake us. (Hebrews 13:5)
8. Jesus said that those who put God's kingdom and righteousness first in their lives would always have the necessities of life. (Matthew 6:33) This promise is repeated to a congregation of faithful Christians in Philippians 4:19.

9. Jesus promises that those who are faithful to Him unto death will receive the crown of life. (Revelation 2:10)

10. We are promised a NEW HEAVEN and a NEW EARTH. (2 Peter 3:13) More on this in a later message.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

The Effect of God's Promises - #19

"Having therefore these promises beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Corinthians 7:1) Refer to 2 Corinthians 6:16-18 to know those promises. To keep our lives clean and holy is the purpose of those promises.

Paul says he is persuaded God will guard what he has committed to Him. (2 Timothy 1:12)

Jesus says he will be with us to the end of the world if we will teach all He has committed to us. (Matthew 28:20)

Peter told his audience if they would repent and be baptized they would receive the forgiveness of their sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). See also Acts 5:32 where God gives the Holy Spirit to those who obey Him.

We are told how God will raise us in the resurrection. (1 Corinthians 15:35-57) What a blessed promise!

We are told that godliness is profitable in this life and the life to come. (1 Timothy 4:8) The more god-likeness we have in our lives the more assurance we have that we will enjoy all of God's promises here and hereafter.

"God grants us His precious and exceeding great promises, that through these we may become partakers of the divine nature." (2 Peter 1:4)

The effect the promises of God have on us is to help us live godly, righteous lives.

In our next message, we will look at the new heaven and the new earth God has promised us.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

God Promises Us a New Heaven and New Earth- #20

In 2 Peter 3:13 we are promised a new heaven and a new earth.

In Revelation 2:1-7 we find that new heaven and new earth described. Read those verses in your Bible.

Remember Jesus said in Revelation 2:10 that if we are faithful to Him unto death He will give us a crown of life.

In Revelation 21:1-7 we find these statements:

God says it is a holy city, the New Jerusalem.

God promises to dwell with us there.

We will be God's people. See also 1 Peter 2:9, 10.

God will wipe away all tears. See Revelation 7:17.

Death will never come to that city. (1 Corinthians 15:26)

God makes all things new (2 Corinthians 5:1)

We will drink at the fountain of life. (Revelation 22:17)

For all those who have overcome, God will be our God forever and we will be His children.

In the last chapter of the Bible we are promised the tree of life that was in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 2:9 and Gen. 3:22-24) has been transplanted in heaven, and we will have access to it (Rev. 22:2, 14).

God closes his book by asking that His grace be with us.

All of these things are for those who believe God and follow His will as it is revealed in the New Testament. What precious and exceeding great promises! (2 Peter 1:4)

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

It Is Our Choice- #21

There are two ways to view life. One is that the natural life we now have is all there is.

People with this view sometimes have such hard or bad experiences they think life is not worth living. Their sufferings, or disappointments, make life hard to endure. Some of these people come to the conclusion that their pain or hard times are too much to endure.

Oftentimes, they end their lives in suicide. In fact, there are 30,575 suicides in the United States in a year, most of them as a result of this view.

There is an alternate view. It is the view that this life will be followed by a second life. In it we can be totally comfortable and joyous. Or, we may be in constant misery. What happens to us there depends on the choices we make in this life.

Future life believers have pain, suffering, heartaches, and disappointments. They sometimes struggle with hard times. But these are overshadowed by faith that gives them courage to endure those times. With faith bad times are usually short, and they are followed by times of peace, joy, love, and hope that make their lives meaningful, and to live on is worthwhile.

Each of us has a choice. Shall we live thinking this is the only life we will have? If so, then we make those choices that we think will give us the most pleasure in this life. Or, shall we live our life believing there is a better life waiting for us when this one is over? If we do, we need to know what choices to make to have that life as joyous as it can be. More on our next Web page....

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

What Is The Quality Of Your Life? - #22

Does faith in God increase the quality of our lives? Have you studied this seriously? How can we find out? There are ways we can measure what faith in God does for the quality of the one life we have to live on earth.

For sixty-five years I have observed those who have no faith in God, and those who do. What I have observed can help both those who have no faith in God and those who do have faith.

A few minutes each week reading this web page can make a significant difference in the amount of assurance, peace, joy, love, and hope each of us can live with. This will not be a difficult study of hard to understand details, but a delightful review of a possible rich experience people in all circumstances of life may have.

At the end those who do not have faith in God now, and who see no reason to change, will continue their lives as they have planned.

Those who already have faith in God will have their lives enriched with sound assurances that they are going the right way. Plus the travel will bring them more joy.

Those who find a faith they have not had will be the greatest beneficiaries of this short study. There are joys awaiting them they have not known before.

God bless each one who follows this information with a full measure of His love!

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

Is There a God? - #23

We are here on a planet we call Earth. Is this all of the life we will ever have? Or, is there another life after this? What evidence do we have to decide?

Obstetricians watch the birth of a child and call it a miracle they cannot explain. How can a male sperm invade a female egg and grow in nine months to produce a person with such potential as the baby has at birth? All new life on earth has deep questions. The most satisfactory answer is that an all-wise, all-powerful God planned it so.

In natural science there is a statement that says, "something cannot come from nothing." Since we have so many complex things on the earth they must have come from someone with the intelligence and power to make them. To the Christian that power is God. Read Revelation 4:8. He created heaven and earth. (Genesis 1:1; Psalms 33:6,9)

There is another axiom that says, "life comes only from previous life." To the Christian the eternal being who created life is God. Read Genesis 1:20-28 and Acts 17:24-28.

There are other complexities in the things we find in this life that cannot be explained without a power, who in the Bible is identified as the all-wise, all-powerful God. Our God can do all that was needed to create this universe, and create man on this planet with all of the amazing capabilities man has.

The Bible presents God as from everlasting to everlasting (Psalms 90:2). Without God we have no answer to our most complex questions. With God we have an assurance that gives us peace and hope. More next week..

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

Does Faith in God Help Us? - #24

I have read books on this question that took both the affirmative and the negative sides. I think the question can be answered by the experience people have who take each view.

Here is the view of those who do not believe we need faith to have a productive, fulfilling life. To them our natural life, beginning with birth and ending at death, is all there is. After death they believe they just cease to exist. Some people with this view live an honest, moral life. They try not to hurt anyone. They pay their debts. They hope they can be comfortable until death. They expect nothing beyond that time.

I have observed many Christians who believed in God. They tried to live the best moral and honest lives they could. Because they believe God put us here, and that He has something better for us when this life is over, they endure any hardship they have, heartaches and sorrows, with cheerfulness, believing all will be well with them in another life. Their lives are predominantly peaceful, joyous, loving and hopeful. I believe faith in God raises the quality of our lives on earth. We are predominately optimistic and pleasant.

It has been my observation that those with faith in God upgrade their earthly existence with contentment, and a more positive attitude toward life.

We have only one time to live in this world. I believe we should make it the best life possible for us. More to follow...

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

The Practical Sides - #25

Let us look at the practical sides of the two ways we may live our lives.

Suppose you are an employer looking for someone to fill a position of importance. Would you want to hire someone who did no better on the job than he had to do? Or, hire someone who would be the best he could while looking for a way to do even better? Want to hire someone who had no conscience against stealing? Someone who would take things he wanted if he saw he would not be caught. Or, hire someone who believed he had to be honest with his time, your possessions, or he would be punished forever? Want to hire someone who would lie to you if he thought that lie would serve his needs better? Or, hire someone who believed he had to tell the truth all of the time, or spend eternity in a lake of fire?

Believers have the same opportunities as unbelievers to get good training for any job. But he brings with him to his job more motivation to do the best he can. He has stronger reasons to be honest and moral than the unbeliever has.

There are some unbelievers who do well in their lives, from a secular, material point of view. These are the ones who believe that to be honest, moral and ambitious will serve them best in this life.

There are many believers who do more in every field because they have stronger motivation to do all things well. I would rather be surrounded by them in the work environment.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

What About Education? - #26

Some educators have come to the conclusion that to train the mind without training the morals is to equip people who have no real purpose for living.

The growth of our criminal population may be the result of this. The few who escape the penalty for their lives live in an environment that is destructive to their well being. How many drug dealers are murdered by other drug dealers/users?

Not only for criminals, but immoral people live a life style permeated with diseases that cripple and shorten their lives. They live with more pain while they are alive.

Nothing that increases the welfare of people is increased by dishonesty and immorality.

Everything helpful in our lives is required of those who believe in God. They are taught to be honest, moral, and ambitious in every good work. People who live clean and sober lives have clear heads to face the demands of life. The technical skills needed for success are taught to believers along with those added values.

Believers in God have every opportunity to become leaders in all areas of life. The same principle applies to those who are needed to support the efforts of leaders. Does it not seem

clear that success and happiness in this life, plus hope for another life, enriches the lives of believers in God?

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

The God We Believe In - #27

Around the world you will find many gods. There are still many pagan gods worshipped through idols.

The God of the Bible is the most believed in God. There are many differing beliefs about God. And He is worshipped in many differing ways. But He is the God most people accept.

All that we know about Jehovah God is taught in the Bible. God is mentioned by name over 11,000 times in the Bible. There are about 32,000 verses in the Bible, so God is mentioned there by name on an average of once in every three verses.

How did we get the scriptures in the Bible? The Bible teaches us that God used prophets inspired by the Holy Spirit to produce them (2 Peter 1:21). Jesus told His apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all the truth (John 16:13). Christ also said God's word was truth (John 17:17). Reading the Bible produces faith in God (Romans 10:17).

John Clayton was born to parents who were both atheists. During his growing up years he heard that there were contradictions in the Bible. In college a professor told him that also. John asked the professor where the contradictions were. The professor refused to answer. John decided he would find them for himself. He read the Bible through, and never found any. He read it through four times without finding any contradictions. He got half way through the Bible again and suddenly realized there were no contradictions in the Bible. He became a believer in God. He became a Christian, and has spent his life lecturing on his faith in God. He has turned many unbelievers to God.

The Bible is a complete book about God. Read 2 Timothy 3:16, 17. More on next essay.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

Our Perception of God - #28

Jehovah God is eternal. Isaiah 40:28 reads, "...the everlasting God Jehovah, the creator of the ends of the earth..." In Exodus 3:14, God says He is the 'I Am' from the root word for Jehovah. God is continuous.

In addition to the above, God is:

All Powerful. God spoke and the heavens and earth, and all things on earth came in to existence (Genesis 1). That power is attributed to God throughout the Bible. Read Isaiah 41:4, Acts 17:24, 25 and 1 Peter 4:19. In Genesis 1 God created everything by His word. God also upholds all things by the word of His power (Hebrews 1:3).

All Wise. Man can never learn all of God's understanding (Isaiah 40:28). He knows all that has ever been. He knows all that is now. He knows all that ever will be. And God does not change (Malachi 3:6).

Present Everywhere. "Where shall I go from thy spirit? Or flee from thy presence? If I go up into heaven Thou art there. If I make my bed in Sheol, behold, Thou are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand find me, and thy right hand shall hold me." (Psalms 139:7-10) We can never escape the observation of God! And He knows our hearts (Acts 1:24).

This God has revealed Himself to us in His son, Jesus Christ (John 14:8,9).

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

The Kind of God He Is - #29

In Isaiah 59:1, 2 we read, "Behold, Jehovah's hand is not shortened that it cannot save, neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, so that He will not hear."

In Romans 3:23 we read, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 6:23 tells us, " For the wages of sin is death." In spite of our sins we read in 2 Peter 3:9 that "the Lord is not wishing that any should perish..." John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life." God demonstrated that He has the greatest love that we have ever known.

In Isaiah 45:21 we read "and there is no God else beside me, a just God and a Savior; there is none beside me." We read in 1 John 4:14 that God's love moved Him to do this, "...the Father hath sent the Son to be the Savior of the world." Acts 4:12 records Peter saying by the Holy Spirit, "And in none other is there salvation: for neither is there any other name under heaven that is given among men, wherein we must be saved." Even though we sin God continues to love us, and through Christ He wants to save us. What a wonderful God He is! He deserves our faith.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

What Kind of God Is He? - #30

In 1 John 4:8 we read this statement, "For God is love." God is the very essence of love. Love permeates God. It is the main substance of His being. It flows from God to others. 1 John 4:19 says, "We love because God first loved us." We can be the receptacle of God's love. Love is why God is longsuffering (2 Peter 3:9). Because God is love He has balance in His dealing with men. "Behold the goodness and severity of God," Paul records in Romans 11:22. In Hebrews 12: 6-11 we read that because God is love He chastens those He loves for these purposes:

...that we may be God's sons (v. 8)

...that we will learn subjection and live (v. 9)

...that we may partake of God's holiness (v. 10)

...that we may yield the fruit of righteousness (v. 11).

Cain was the only man recorded that was chastened by God before the flood (Genesis 4:9-12). As a result the rebellion of mankind was so great God repented that He had made man (Genesis 6:5-7). God determined to destroy all but Noah, for he was righteous (Genesis 6:8).

God allows those He loves to go through the test of temptation, even his own Son (Matthew 4:1-11). God himself does not tempt us (James 1:13). We are tempted by our own lusts (James 1:14). When we endure temptation we receive the crown of life (James 1:12). Temptation proves our faith and works our patience so we will be strong Christians (James 1:2-4). Because God loves us He makes a way for us to escape temptation (1 Corinthians 10: 13).

Zechariah 8:16,17 tells us of things that God hates. God hates things that destroy men's souls. If we love God we will hate the same evil that He hates (Psalms 97:10) and love as He loves!

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

God Communicates With Us- #31

God spoke directly to a few people during the Patriarchal period recorded in the book of Genesis. He spoke to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2,3). He also talked with Noah about the flood (Genesis 6-9). God spoke to Abraham a number of times (Genesis 12-22). God appeared to Moses in Exodus 3 and spoke to him many times, revealing what is contained in the first five books of the Bible.

God spoke the ten commandments directly to all of the Israelites (Exodus 20). That scared them so they asked Moses to speak to God, and tell them what He said. From that time on God spoke to people through prophets (Hebrews 1:1). Those prophets were guided in what they said and wrote by the Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1: 19-21). David is a good example of this in 2 Samuel 23:2.

Jesus said that what He taught was what the Father had given Him (John 12:49). Jesus gave God's word to His apostles (John 17:8). Then He gave the apostles the Holy Spirit to bring to their remembrance exactly what Christ said (John 14: 26). In fact Jesus told the apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them into all the truth (John 16:13). We know by that the New Testament contains all of the truth God has for man. Jude says it was delivered once for all to the saints (Jude 3). God has said to us in the New Testament all He wants us to know about Him and His will for us. God also charges us to remember His word (Jude 17). More in our next web page...

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

What God Wants Us to Know - #32

God would like for us to be acquainted with how He dealt with people in the Old Testament (Romans 15:4). That information will support our hope for our own future. The Apostle Paul says the things written in the Old Testament are an example for us (1 Corinthians 10:6) and they were written for our admonition (1 Corinthians 10:11). In the Old Testament God had a special covenant with the Israelites. It is recorded by Moses in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. The rest is history, writings, and prophecy.

In the Old Testament God prophesied that He would make a New Covenant with people (Jeremiah 31:31-34). The writer of Hebrews in the New Testament says that Prophecy is fulfilled by the New Covenant we have with God in the New Testament (Hebrews 8:8-12). God now speaks to us by His Son (Hebrews 1:1,2).

The Apostle Paul encourages us to properly handle this word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15). By it we can be approved by God.

God wants us to have a general knowledge of the Old Testament, and an even better knowledge of the New Testament. He wants us to know how He dealt with people in the past, and to know what He expects of us today. It will take time to accomplish both. By allotting some time to the reading of the Bible, by talking with others who have studied it, and by listening to sermons and lessons by those who have made an in-depth study of the Bible, we can come to know the things God teaches in His word that prepares us to please God. It will complete our preparation to meet God (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

More on this in the [next Web page...](#)

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

WHY BELIEVE IN GOD- #33

The prophet Jeremiah gives us a good reason to believe in God. Turn to his book of prophecy, chapter 10, verse 23, "O, Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." Every time man has tried to find his own way without God he has destroyed himself.

The psalmist cried out in Psalms 43:3, "Oh send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me." Jesus is the light of the world (John 8:12) and He is the truth (John 14:6). This is whom God sent to lead us.

In Romans 3:4 we read, "Let God be found true, and every man a liar." We must accept God and His word. Every time man has attempted to function without God he has failed. In Romans 1, beginning with verse 18, see what happened to those who tried to live and function without God. They destroyed themselves. There is no alternative to God! He is the beginning, the end, and all in between. Revelation 4:8 says of God, "who was, who is, and who is to come." Those who turn to God to direct their lives have great joy in this world, and the assurance of a better world awaits them when this life is over.

In James 1:17 we find, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights..." When we believe in and follow God we can expect the best this life has to offer and better still in the next life!

Jesus says we cannot serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). We are going to follow the will of God, or the will of the devil. We have every incentive to follow God. When Joshua was closing his appeal to the Israelites (Joshua 24:15), he told them they had to choose whom they would serve. They could serve God, or idols made by men. Joshua said he and his family would serve God. He made the best choice. More in the installment.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

THE BLESSINGS OF GOD- #34

God created the natural world in which we live. He created man in His image or form with a natural life to live in the natural world. God placed the first humans in a paradise called Eden. God told Adam to dress the garden and keep it (Genesis 2:15). Man was given physical work to do in the physical world. When Adam and Eve sinned and God had to punish them He increased their labors on the earth (Genesis 3:16-19). God put plenty of everything He made that we would need on the earth, but we must work to obtain them (2 Thessalonians 3:10-12). A person who refuses to work to provide for himself and his family rebels against God.

God shows Himself impartial to all of earth's inhabitants (Matthew 5:45). God's natural blessings are available alike to all who live in His natural world. How we avail ourselves of those natural blessings, and how we use them is up to us. We reap as we sow (Galatians 6:7,8). On the same soil we can plant seed that produces food, or seed that produces nightshade, a very strong poison. God lets us make choices as to how we obtain and use His natural blessings, either for our betterment or for our destruction.

Of all living creatures that God placed on the earth only humans have the brain capacity to choose good or evil. All other creatures do what comes natural to them. Man can do good and please God, or he can do evil and displease God. The purpose of this web page is to help people make the choices that please God and bless themselves. We can make choices that make us happy or choices that ultimately destroy us.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

OUR UNIQUE CAPACITY- #35

God made man unique among all living creatures. We are made in God's image (Genesis 1:27). God made us that way for His own glory (Ephesians 1:12). God made man a free moral agent. We can obey God's commandments or reject them (Genesis 2:16,17). We can choose to do as God wants us to, or we can rebel against God. The first couple chose to do what the devil wanted them to do (Genesis 3:1-6). Man is rewarded to do God's will, or punished if he chooses not to do God's will (Genesis 3:9-19). Cain and Abel, the first two sons of Adam and Eve are a good example of this. They each offered a sacrifice to God (Genesis 4). God accepted Abel's sacrifice, but He rejected Cain's. Why? Nothing in Genesis gives us an answer, but we do have an answer in the New Testament. See Hebrews 11:4. Abel offered his sacrifice "by faith." Cain did not. What does that teach us? In Romans 10:17 we find that faith comes by hearing and following God's word. God must have told Cain and Abel to offer an animal sacrifice. Otherwise it would have been acceptable to God if

they offered the produce of Cain's fields. Abel offered the sacrifice God told them to make. That was acting by faith. Cain offered a sacrifice he wanted, of his fields, but that was not what God told them to offer. So God rejected it.

When God told Noah to build an ark He gave Noah directions how it was to be built. Noah built the ark just as God directed him to do, and Noah saved himself and his family (Genesis 6 and 7). Hebrews 11:7 said Noah built the ark by faith and by God's directions.

We can do what God tells us, or we can do something else, because we are creatures of choice. We can please God, or displease Him. But we have to take the consequences, as did Cain.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

God's Competition - #36

God created His natural world as recorded in Genesis 1. He had made man in His own image. In the next chapter God created a companion for man. The man God called Adam, and his wife He named Eve (Genesis 2). God put both of them under a prohibition (Genesis 2:16, 17).

In Genesis 3 the devil entered the paradise God made for man, and he tempted Eve to eat of the prohibited fruit. When she saw the fruit, it pleased her eye and was delicious. She believed the devil when he told her it would make her wise. She ate of the fruit and gave to Adam and he also ate of it (Genesis 3:1-6).

When God came calling on His first couple they tried to hide from Him. They were ashamed to let God see them naked. No one has been able to hide from God. See Psalms 139:7-12. Even the thoughts of our hearts are known to God (Genesis 6:5). See also Hebrews 4:12 in the New Testament.

The devil has tried to defeat God's purposes throughout history. He even tried to tempt Jesus Christ (Matthew 4:1-11). Jesus never responded to the devil then, or at any time (Hebrews 4:14,15).

When we become servants of God the devil tries to lure us back to him. We must learn to resist the devil as Jesus did (James 4:7). We will stumble (James 3:2) but we do not surrender. When we sin (1 John 1:8), if we confess them to God (1 John 1:9) and pray (Acts 8:22) then God will forgive our sins. With God's help we overcome the devil (1 Corinthians 10:13). God knows the devil is going to compete with Him for our souls. God helps us overcome the devil. With His help we will win the victory over Satan and sin. Read James 4:8-10.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

LIFE WITH GOD - #37

In Genesis 5 we have the genealogy from Adam to Noah. Enoch was the seventh generation. What is said about him is unique. Genesis 5:24 records, "and Enoch walked with God; and he was not; for God took him." Enoch is mentioned again in Hebrews 11:5, "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and he was not found, because

God translated him: for he hath had witness borne to him that before his translation he had been well-pleasing unto God." The prophecy of Enoch recorded in Jude 14,15 is all the additional information we have about this man, but obviously to walk with God, to talk for God, and then go to be with God forever is all the record we need to leave.

The apostle Paul leaves us this testimony in Romans 2:4, "or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance." What an impact God has on our lives! His person is all we need to lead us to repentance. See 2 Peter 3:9.

We believe in God by the testimony of His word (Romans 10:17). Then faith gives us assurance of what we hope for, a conviction of things not seen (Hebrews 11:1). Such faith brings these assurances:

Hebrews 11:3 – that God framed the worlds by His word

Hebrews 11:4 – that Abel offered a sacrifice that pleased God

Hebrews 11:5 - that Enoch was translated never to see death

Hebrews 11:6 – that we must have faith to please God

Hebrews 11:7 – that Noah built an ark to save his family

Hebrews 11:8 – that Abraham went to Canaan and saw the land his descendants would receive

Hebrews 11: 9 – Abraham became a sojourner in that land

Hebrews 11:10 – Abraham looked for God's city (See Revelation 21:1-7)

Hebrews 11:11 – Sarah bore a son in her old age

Hebrews 11:17-19 – Abraham's faith led him to believe in the resurrection

Faith in God can lead us to a life with God! A life with God brings us blessings comparable to the above. When we believe in God, we do what God tells us to do. Then we have every assurance from God that we will receive His blessings.

In earlier Web pages we explored "spiritual life" with God. How that life enriched our experiences while we live in God's world. God has both conditional and unconditional gifts for us when we receive the Holy Spirit at baptism. Review Acts 2:38, 5:32, and Romans 8:9-17.

There are more blessings for us as we continue to live our lives with God. God's first spiritual blessings make us rich in faith (James 2:5 and Romans 10:12). In our next few Web pages I want to explore with you how our life with God adds more riches to those we have.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

THE FAITH OF MOSES - #38

People who become very remarkable usually have someone very remarkable to inspire them very early in life.

Abraham Lincoln's mother died when he was a very small boy. When he was grown, and had begun to make his mark in the world, he wrote, "All that I am and all that I ever hope to be I owe to my angel mother." During a few short years when Abraham Lincoln was a very young boy his mother taught him things that would guide him all of his life. That is perhaps why he is remembered as "Honest Abe."

The record of Moses' birth is recorded in Exodus 2. His father and his mother were of the tribe of Levi. God picked that tribe to be His ministers to keep the tabernacle, later the temple, and help the priests in the worship services of God. Amram and Jochebed were Moses' parents (Numbers 26:59).

Moses was born at a time that Pharaoh had decreed all male children of the Israelites were to be killed. Jochebed saw that Moses was an exceptional child so she hid him for three months. When she could hide him no longer Jochebed devised a way for Moses to be found and adopted by the daughter of Pharaoh. Moses' older sister, Miriam, offered to find a Hebrew nurse for the adoptive parent. Then Miriam brought Jochebed, his natural mother, to be Moses' nurse. She had charge of Moses a very few short years, yet she instilled in him knowledge about himself so that Moses would make these decisions that were a measure of his faith. Read Hebrews 11:23-29.

Moses chose to be identified with his people who were slaves at that time rather than live as a royal person (verses 24, 25). Moses forsook the luxuries of Egypt. He did not fear the wrath of Pharaoh. He endured for he had been taught by his mother about God (verses 26, 27).

Moses dared return to Egypt forty years later (Exodus 3 & 4).

Moses had faith to confront Pharaoh with the ten plagues (Exodus 5-12).

Moses had the faith to lead over a million slaves into the wilderness. By faith they escaped Pharaoh's army by marching through the Red Sea. They began a forty-year march through a wilderness area toward their freedom. They had experiences along the way that formed them into a disciplined nation and prepared them to conquer the promised land – driving out its former inhabitants.

Moses had the faith to stand in the very presence of God (Exodus 34:5-7).

By faith Moses developed a closeness to God that would not be experienced on earth again until Jesus came into the world (John 1:1-5).

From Moses we learn this: The greater our faith the closer we get to God!

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

ADD RICHES TO RICHES - #39

In earlier lessons we brought out that the poor in material things can be rich toward God. When a person is baptized into Christ they are forgiven their sins and they receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). When we receive the Holy Spirit we are given spiritual life (Romans 8:11). This new birth makes us a child of God, and we are one of God's heirs (Romans 8:16,17). We receive spiritual treasures from God. Here is a list of some of them:

Our FAITH is now more precious than gold refined by fire (1 Peter 1:7).

We have PEACE that passes understanding (Phillipians 4:7).

We have JOY that is unspeakable and full of glory (1 Peter 1:8).

We have LOVE that is beyond knowledge (Ephesians 3:19).

We have HOPE that anchors the soul (Hebrews 6:19).

God CARES for us (1 Peter 5:7).

God will never FAIL or FORSAKE us (Hebrews 13:5).

God chose the poor in material things to be RICH in faith, HEIRS of God's kingdom (James 2:5).

Since the world belongs to God (Psalms 24:1) and we are God's heirs is it not reasonable that God will give us as much of this world as it is best for us to have?

Christians at Thessalonica were among those who had faith more precious than gold, and the Apostle Paul told them their FAITH was growing exceedingly (2 Thessalonians 1:3). They were adding riches to riches.

The Christians at Ephesus were told they had received the riches of God's grace (Ephesians 1:7). Peter tells all Christians to GROW in GRACE (2 Peter 3:18).

God richly blesses all of His children. God wants them to take what He gives them and increase it. Read the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14-30. God gives us all we have the ability to use (see verse 15 of this parable).

When we are born into this world God gives us a small body with all of its capacities. With time, food and activity our body grows to adult size.

Jesus says we come into God's kingdom by a new birth (John 3:5). As new born babes we are to feed on the milk of God's word (1 Peter 2:2). Simple things we can understand at that time. We are not to remain infants in Christ. God has given differing gifts to members of Christ's body, the church, to equip the saints to serve and build up the body (Ephesians 4:11-13). With these we become full grown, able to digest the meat of God's word (Hebrews 5:12-14). Learning God's word and using it to guide us in doing God's work will

strengthen and mature us until we are well informed, articulate, and effective in our service to God and our fellowman.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

RICH TOWARD GOD - #40

Jesus teaches a lesson about riches by putting a farmer's experience in a negative setting. The story is found in Luke 12:16-21. This farmer was already rich, and his new crop made him even richer. His harvest was greater than his storage capacity. He decided to build larger barns to store his abundance. Why? So he could store all of his bounty. Why do that? So he could take his ease. He would not have to work. He had enough to live on. He could have a good time. That night God called him into account. Many poor people could have been helped by him, but none were. He was totally selfish. His abundance would go to others, but he would receive no benefit from it. He had the opportunity to do great good. He did none.

While preaching in West Texas during the depression years I met and became friends with a rancher. This man had worked very hard all of his life. He and his wife lived frugally, but comfortably. His ranch was modest size by comparison with most ranches at that time. In time, oil was discovered on part of his land. What did he do with this extra money? His wife was discovered to have cancer. He was able to provide as good care for her as there was at the time. They had no children of their own, so they adopted two orphans that they could love and raise. He went further. He began to build cottages at different orphan homes so they could take care of more children on their premises. He had a friend who wanted to go to a mission field and plant the Lord's church where it did not exist. In time he had helped 23 preachers work for the Lord in various parts of the world.

The couple was told that cancer would finally take his wife's life. They bought 43 acres near a good size town. They planned to build a new orphan's home. She died before it was built, but he kept working on it. Before he died he paid for the last building for children and staff. The home could accommodate 96 children.

A former governor heard about this rancher's work and made a trip to see him. The rancher was in the hospital at the time. The governor went there to see him, and told him what a wonderful thing he had done. The rancher said, "Governor, everything I have is what the Lord gave me. I am trying to do what I think the Lord wants me to do with what I have."

Two weeks later I was called to preach the rancher's funeral. I made it all right emotionally until the little children from the orphans' home began filing by his open casket. They were all crying, and they wanted to touch his hand or his face. My tears joined theirs at that time. He was a rich man toward God! 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

APPRECIATE THE GIFTS OF GOD- #41

In one of the earlier web pages in this series I listed the gifts God gave us when we are baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3). I list them here so we may enlarge upon them:

The forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

The Holy Spirit brings spiritual life to us (Romans 8:11).

With spiritual life comes JOY (Acts 8:39), PEACE (Phillipians 4:7), LOVE (Ephesians 3:19), and HOPE (Colossians 1:27).

God is rich in other ways and he shares those with us:

He is rich in grace (Ephesians 1:7).

He has enough grace for everyone (Titus 2:11).

He is rich in mercy (Ephesians 2:4) and we all need that.

God gave His son for us (Romans 8:32).

God's son is the cause of our salvation (Hebrews 5:8,9).

And through HIM we have all spiritual blessings (Ephesians 1:3).

How do we show our appreciation to God for all of these?

By loving him (1 John 4:19).

By keeping His commandments (John 14:15).

By being rich in good works (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

While I was in college the local preacher at Big Spring, Texas found a young man, a few years older than me, who had fallen away from Christ. He led the young man to be restored to the Lord. On my visits home I got acquainted with this young man. After his restoration to Christ, he was one of the most intense young men I ever met about how much he appreciated Christ dying for his sins. He told me that he could not read about Christ dying for him without crying. His intensity about all of his Christian duty endeared him to all who knew him.

I cannot recall his name, but I will never forget his sincerity. This young man had grown up and had been baptized in a small congregation, in a small town in East Texas. When the members of that church heard about how dedicated he was to Christ they asked him to come home and preach for them. He had never been trained for that work, but what he lacked in skill he made up for in his sincere appreciation for what God had done for him. The first winter he was home he became ill with pneumonia, and before anything could be done for him he died. He left one memory behind that those who knew him would never forget: his love for God and Christ, and what they did to save him from his sins. I will never forget him for that quality in his life.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

FAITH THAT GROWS - #42

Look again at the scripture where we are told that our faith is more precious than gold (1 Peter 1:7). We begin our Christian life with faith that proves our love for God (1 John 5:3). God wants our faith to keep growing (2 Thessalonians 1:3). What makes our faith grow? By continuing the things that brought faith to us in the first place: reading and studying God's word (Romans 10:17) and using our faith in our lives (1 Thessalonians 1:3). We use our faith and our faith grows, just as using our physical muscles makes them grow. That is expressed in 2 Corinthians 5:7 as walking by faith.

My main goal in life was to plant churches where they did not exist, or were very small, and build them up. I used a saying to those churches - "struggle makes us strong!" We went to Minneapolis, Minnesota in June 1944 when we had one congregation of fifteen members in a Twin City population of over one million. The small church had met for 34 years in rented places. We found a small church building that we could buy for \$4,500. The small church had saved up \$2,000 and I raised \$2,500 more among my friends. We paid cash for the building. Brother Wayne Taylor was the treasurer of the small church. He was an auditor for General Mills Co. He deposited the small contributions in a bank account, and he paid bills on time. We deposited the \$2500 I raised along with the church's money and wrote a check for the purchase price of the building. We began advertising in the newspaper about our work. The Polytechnic Church of Christ in Fort Worth, Texas sent us there, and they budgeted enough to help us advertise the church and reach out to others. The church began to grow. The building seated only 75. In four years we had 95 additions, and outgrew the space in the building. I found another building that seated 150. We sold our small building, and we needed a bank loan to buy the larger building. When Brother Taylor and I approached the bank, they said, "We notice that you pay your bills on time, so we have the confidence that you will repay the loan." Acting on faith, obligating ourselves for things, and meeting those obligations builds faith. We sold the small building, bought the larger building, and in two more years we had a self-supporting congregation of over 100 members. We walked by faith. We became stronger in faith and we built up the Lord's church on faith. When we do that we gain the confidence of others.

God wants us to keep walking by faith – stretching our faith – then we grow in our faith, and the Lord's work is built up as our faith grows.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

THE RICH POOR FOLKS- #43

God had the Holy Spirit direct James in his epistle to say, "Hearken, my beloved brethren; did not God choose them that are poor as to the world to be rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those that love him." (James 2:5)

When I was a young preacher in West Texas during the 1930's, the Great Depression years, we had a saying that went, "God must love poor people, because so many of them are His children." My parents were very poor. We all worked hard to have the minimal comforts of life, but we were a happy family.

I knew we were not commanded to give ten percent of our income to the Lord in the New Testament as it was commanded in the Old Testament. I purposed to give back to the Lord ten percent of all I received if the Lord would help me get the training I needed to be a preacher. Giving ten percent was a way I had of saying 'thank you' to God for his help. I could not have made it through college had not God opened the doors for me to do so.

While I was in college I preached twice a month for a small church in a small town where most members were farmers. I often ate Sunday dinner with one farm family that was unique. This farmer had to rent the farm he worked. There were the two parents and seven children in this family. They had a very old car that they drove eleven miles to church, and as much back home. Everyone in that family was at every service of the church. They were clean, neatly dressed, and very attractive. The wife and mother was a gourmet cook. The food on their table was plain, but the best I had ever eaten.

I was visiting another family in that church and mentioned what a fine family the above mentioned was. The father of this family said, "They are a very fine family, but we have a problem with the father of that family." I asked, "How could that be?" He replied, "He believes strictly in giving ten percent to the Lord. Even when he borrows money from the bank to plant a crop he gives ten percent of the loan to the church." It is true that God never asked anyone to give ten percent of a loan to Him, but this farmer thought he should do that, and he did. I knew that family for many years. There were all hard working, and they demonstrated what David said in Psalms 37:25, "I have been young, and am no old; yet I have not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread." That family was poor in earthly assets, but they were RICH IN FAITH, and HEIRS OF GOD'S KINGDOM. The parents and two of the children have received their inheritance with the Lord, and the other children are on their way!

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH- #44

We want a faith that will sustain us all of our lives (Revelation 2:10). We know that without faith we cannot please God (Hebrews 11:6). After we come to believe in God there are a number of things that can happen to our faith. We need to know them.

There will be opportunities for us to fall away from our faith.

In the first century there were some Christians who tried to return to the law given by Moses. Paul warned them if they did that they would fall away from the faith (Galatians 5:4).

Seducing spirits and doctrines of demons were warned against (1 Timothy 4:1). When we visited the Orient in 1965 we saw people engaging in demon worship.

In every age of the world there has been those who loved money. Paul warned about this (1 Timothy 6:10). Jesus warned us about the deceitfulness of riches (Matthew 13:22). Jesus said we should never trust riches (Mark 10:23,24).

Our own lusts may turn us away from God (James 1:15; see also 1 John 2:15,16). The devil tried to divert Jesus from God by tempting Him in those three ways (Matthew 4:1-11).

David said he laid up God's word in his heart so he would not sin (Psalms 119:11). God's word is called a sword of the Spirit, and we can use it to fight the devil (Ephesians 6:17).

To survive with our faith we must live by it (Romans 1:17). Jude reminded us to keep building up ourselves in the faith (Jude 20). We can stand fast in our faith when we do (1 Corinthians 16:13). With God's word, called the sword of the Spirit, we can fight a good

fight of faith (1 Timothy 6:12). That will make it possible for us to be sound, healthful, in the faith (Titus 1:13).

Our goal for our faith is worth every effort and sacrifice we make for it. We rejoice in this (Luke 10:20). Until we are ready to receive the final rewards of faith knowing our names are written in heaven keeps us going.

I believe in God, Christ, and His word so strongly from the evidence God speaks to us.

The promises found in God's words are very real to me. For instance, Jesus said if we seek first God's kingdom and righteousness, He would supply our needs (Matthew 6:33). I have been doing that since my youth, and God has supplied all of my needs. That experience with God makes it easy for me to believe in God, and anticipate Him keeping all He has promised me.

When the Apostle Paul faced death he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have KEPT THE FAITH: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness," (2 Timothy 4:7,8). We have the same assurance. When Paul closed his physical eyes in death he opened his spiritual eyes in glory. Read 2 Peter 1:11.

Keep studying the Bible. Keep doing all you can for the Lord, and you will be prepared to live with God forever! Faithful unto death is our goal.

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

GROW IN GRACE- #45

The Apostle Peter's last statement in his epistles is for us to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). We grow in grace when God gives us more grace. God gives us more grace as we prepare ourselves to receive it. He gives us all of the grace we can handle.

Jesus is God's gift of grace. When Jesus came into the world He was full of grace (John 1:14). God transfers His grace to us through Jesus Christ (John 1:17). God tells us specifically how this is done. In Romans 6:3 we are told that we are baptized into Christ. We are then in Christ where grace is given to us (1 Corinthians 1:4). After we are baptized into Christ, God begins to make gifts to us through grace. Here is how that happens. When we are baptized we have the forgiveness of our sins, and the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). With the Holy Spirit comes spiritual life (Romans 8:11). A new quality of life that enriches our faith so it is more precious than gold (1 Peter 1:7). To that God adds peace that transcends our understanding (Philippians 4:7). Also we are filled with inexpressible joy (1 Peter 1:8). Plus love that surpasses knowledge (Ephesians 3:19) and a hope that anchors our souls (Hebrews 6:19). With all that enhancement to our lives God sends us out to share these blessings with the rest of the world (Mark 16:15,16). We retain all of this grace through our humility (1 Peter 5:5).

When we receive the grace of God there is still plenty for the rest of the world (Titus 2:11). There is no limit to God's supply of grace. Grace is evident in our speech (Colossians 4:6) and it is present when we sing (Colossians 3:16). As we do things by grace we become strong in God's grace (2 Timothy 2:1). When God's grace is connected to our faith and love for Christ it abounds in us (1 Timothy 1:14).

God warns us that we can fall from grace (Galatians 5:4) by trying to keep the law that God directed Moses to give to the children of Israel. That law was taken away by Christ (Colossians 2:14) and we have a new covenant with God (Hebrews 8:7-13). Let us give careful heed to the teaching of the New Testament (Hebrews 2:1). That will make us strong in God's grace (2 Timothy 2:1). Working together with God will make us even stronger in grace (2 Corinthians 6:1).

Our ultimate grace from God is achieved when we work with God as proposed by Peter in 2 Peter 1:10,11, "Wherefore brethren give the more diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things you shall never stumble; for thus shall be richly supplied unto you the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord an Savior Jesus Christ."

The God of grace has given us works of grace to make sure we will receive His ultimate gift of grace: a triumphal entry into heaven where God and His Son Jesus Christ await us!

Hallelujah, Amen!

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ

LIVES SAVED - #46

In Acts 8 we are told that the disciples were scattered from Jerusalem. Philip, one of the seven chosen in Acts 6:5 to feed the Grecian widows in Jerusalem, went to Samaria, a city about 40 miles north of Jerusalem, and preached there (verse 5). Jesus had promised that those preaching the gospel before the New Testament was written down could perform miracles to show God was with them, and their message came from God (Mark 16:17,18). As a result a great multitude believed Philip and were baptized (Acts 8:12).

A sorcerer by the name of Simon also believed and was baptized (Acts 8:13). The Apostles Peter and John were sent to Samaria to lay hands on people so others would receive the same power of the Holy Spirit that Philip had (verses 14-17). When Simon saw this he tried to buy the power of the Holy Spirit held only by the apostles (verses 18,19). Peter rebuked him sharply for thinking he could buy the gift of God with money (verses 20,21). Then Peter told Simon what to do (verses 22, 23) to be restored to the favor of God: repent and pray to God. Simon asked Peter to pray for him (verse 24). Here is an example of a Christian sinning, and being restored to the favor of God. He repented, turned away from his sin, and asked Peter to pray for him.

The Apostle John writes in 1 John 1:8,9, "If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Christians do not live perfect lives, but they live forgiven lives. When they sin they get the forgiveness of their sins by repenting, or turning away from their sins. By confessing them to God, and then praying to be forgiven of their sins. We need to do those things each time we sin, and we will live with all of our sins forgiven. In Hebrews 12:15 we are told, "Looking carefully lest there be any man that falls short of the grace of God." He will do that and not be acceptable to God if he fails to repent, confess the sin, and pray for God's forgiveness.

When we were baptized into Christ (Romans 6:3) God gives us His grace in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:4) at the same time He forgives us (Ephesians 2:8). Paul warns us that we can fall from grace (Galatians 5:4). The Bible warns us that some would fall away (1 Timothy 4:1). Paul mentions that Hymenaeus and Alexander were two who did (1 Timothy 1:20).

Of Christians who fall away some are restored, and some are not restored. I have tried to make sure that I repented of all the sins I have committed since I became a Christian. That way I put my sins behind me and continue my pathway to heaven (2 Peter 1:11). Great happiness continues with me until I meet my Lord face to face!

Harvey Childress, servant of Jesus Christ