



We Bow Down



**Written by
Five Christian Ladies**



**Publishing Designs, Inc.
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Contents

Foreword	5
In Memory — Cindy Colley	7
Passover	9
Lord's Supper	19
On Bended Knee — Foye Watkins	31
O Jehovah	33
Through Christ	45
Thus Saith the Lord — Sheila Butt	57
Prophesying	59
Preaching	71
Tithes and Offerings — Gloria Ingram	81
Percentage Giving.....	83
Purpose Giving	97
Fruit of Our Lips— Jane McWhorter	109
Joyful Noise	111
Heart Song	137







FOREWORD

You worship that which you do not know
We worship that which we know
God is a spirit and those that worship him
Must worship him in spirit and truth.
—John 4:23-24—

Why encourage women to study about their worship and influence? Walk into almost any Christian assembly and observe that women outnumber men. When families enter the house of worship, mothers generally determine how the children behave—visiting the bathroom and water fountain, whispering, passing notes, distracting others, or listening and participating with other worshipers. Women set standards—whether in reverence or frivolity—by their attitude during singing, praying, giving, preaching, and partaking of the Lord’s supper. Women demonstrate their attitude toward Christ by their worship demeanor and their pursuit of things spiritual—and others are influenced.

But godly women do more. They view preparation for worship as a privilege. Sunday is a special time. One husband grew weary of the weekly battle in his daughter’s room. She rebelled every Sunday morning because of the clothes her mother selected for her to wear. At last, the husband petitioned his wife: “Next week, will you and Chloe please arrange to have your Sunday morning fight on Saturday?” They did. Women who strive to please God in worship look for opportunities throughout the week to construct plans that will enhance their families’ worship. Clothes are selected, shoes are polished, meals are planned. Through detailed preparation, every effort is made to eliminate stress. One modern woman complained of never having time to prepare her family, including two children, for Sunday worship. She was habitually late. She mentioned the problem to her grandmother who



said, “I certainly do not understand. You have a washer, dryer, and every convenience. I washed clothes by hand, ironed without electricity, and prepared clothes and food for seven children and was never late for worship.” Have priorities changed?

During worship godly women refrain from visiting friends in the nursery, using it only when necessary. On special days, they bring food early, so as not to disrupt Bible classes by traipsing up and down the halls and then coming into the assembly late. In a Christlike manner, godly women can train others to show respect for the one who died for us.

God has set eternity in our hearts and has so worked that we should be in awe before him. Solomon taught that hundreds of years ago in the third chapter of Ecclesiastes. Our spirits long to bow down in submission to the all-powerful creator. Women who refuse to acknowledge “eternity in their hearts” exist in a state of confusion, continually seeking to fulfill themselves spiritually without God.

Five Christian women have set their pens to instruct and encourage true and spiritual worship. The very tenor of *We Bow Down* reminds us of our utter dependence on God while living in a society that grovels before Hollywood and offers sacrifices in sports stadiums.

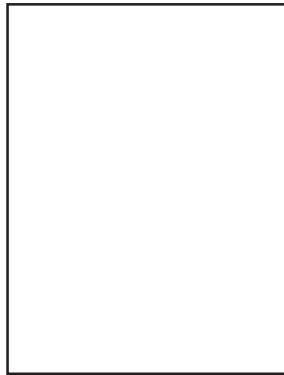
Godly women present powerful messages by bowing down before God. When women take worship seriously, the entire congregation becomes more reverential.

We commend to you *We Bow Down*.

Peggy Coulter
Huntsville, Alabama



In Memory



Cindy Colley

Cindy Colley delights in her many opportunities to serve the Lord by speaking to ladies' groups, and by teaching classes for ladies and children in the local church. She also shares her harvest of knowledge by writing poems and articles. A collection of her poetry is soon to be published as a gift calendar/planner. Her book, *Crown of Creation*, is in its third printing.

Cindy and her husband Glenn are home educators and members of *Memphis Home Educators* and the *Tennessee Home Educators Association*. They teach Bible and speech classes for home-schooled students and conduct seminars for the parents of these students. Their experiences with their children, Caleb and Hannah, influenced Cindy and Glen to write *Your Mama Don't Dance*. The Colley's have produced two cassettes of Bible verses set to music: *Hannah's Hundred I* and *Hannah's Hundred II*. A sequel is in production.

Cindy, daughter of Lee Holder and the late Johnnia Duncan Holder, is a native of Birmingham, Alabama. She holds a B.A. in communications from Freed-Hardeman College. She resigned from teaching English for the blessings of full-time parenting and assisting Glenn in his work as a minister of the gospel. They live in Collierville, Tennessee.



In Memory Old Testament

Passover

The Salvation Story

The original Passover story is a historical drama the likes of which has never been seen (Exod. 11:4-6). After almost four hundred years of Israelite slavery in Egypt, Moses the great deliverer had been sent by Jehovah, as he spoke from a flaming bush, to the house of Pharaoh to demand the release of Israel. God had equipped Moses with miraculous abilities to establish his God-given authority. By the time Moses appeared before the throne of Pharaoh, however, the king was already frightened that the Israelites were becoming so numerous that they might create an insurrection. Pharaoh was not about to let the people leave Egypt, not even for a short pilgrimage into the wilderness for worship. At the hand of Moses, God sent nine devastating plagues on the Egyptians. While the families of Egypt were subjected to insufferable afflictions, the land of Goshen where Israel dwelt was protected from harm. The plagues were so destructive that Pharaoh pledged the release of the Israelites several times during the desolation. But each time God removed the pestilence, Pharaoh immediately hardened his heart and refused to allow the Hebrew people to go.

And so it was time for God to keep a promise. Jehovah had instructed Moses to go before Pharaoh with these words:

Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn. And I say unto thee, Let my son go that he may serve me, and if thou refuse to let him go, behold I will slay thy son, even thy firstborn (Exod. 4:22-23).

And so God executed the final plague, promising Israel that as Egypt awoke to find all of its firstborn children slain, that not only would they be allowed to leave, but they would be thrust from the country (Exod. 11:1). God prepared his people for a hasty



departure by instructing them to borrow jewels of the Egyptian, jewels which were freely given by those who respected Moses (Exod. 11:2-3). These jewels were taken as spoils in the exodus

Against the children of Israel not even a dog would move his tongue.

according to the great judgment of God upon the kingdom of wicked Pharaoh.

God's second promise to Israel was that while every firstborn child in Egypt would be dead upon the morrow—and even the firstborn of the beasts would die—that against the children of Israel not even a dog would move his tongue (Exod. 11:7). God was drawing a promising portrait of stark contrast between those who were in a covenant relationship with him and those who were outside of the covenant. This was a portrait he would continually place before them as they wandered through the lands of the heathen and conquered the powerful Canaanite tribes on the other side of the Jordan.

Following the promise of safety, God issued some very specific and intelligible instructions to his people. Their safety on this night of vast Egyptian desolation was contingent on their following the commands of God. Exodus 12:3-13 details God's instructions to his people.

1. He specified a time for the instructions to be followed.
2. He instructed them to take a lamb for each household, or for two households if the households contained few people.
3. He detailed the criteria the lamb must meet (Exod. 12:5).
4. He told them to separate the lamb from the flock until the fourteenth day of the month and then kill it in the evening.
5. He demanded that they paint the blood of the lamb on the side posts and above the door of their dwellings.
6. He gave regulations for the seasoning and cooking of the lamb, and even about the discarding of any leftovers.
7. He ordered the Israelites to be dressed and to have their shoes on with staff in hand as they ate in haste.

God wanted to see their faith demonstrated, carrying out the intricate details of his instructions. He wanted them to be ready, believing his word fully, anticipating the great exodus.

Verses 12-13 of Exodus 12 are the embodiment of the Pass-over:



For I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. And the blood shall be to you for a token upon the houses where ye are: and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.

It was still dark when Pharaoh awakened to find his son, heir to the great throne of Egypt, dead. Imagine the shock and devastation that he felt as he learned first from his servants, then from the dwellings that surrounded the palace, and finally, from the darkest dungeons of his prisons that there was not a single house without a corpse. Imagine his regret as he looked into the lifeless face of his son and wished he had let them go yesterday, or better yet, when Moses first came before his throne. He didn't wait until morning to find Moses and Aaron; he sent immediately and ordered them to be gone, urging them to ask a blessing for him. Imagine his guilt as he entombed his son in the midst of nationwide mourning ceremonies, likely in a tomb constructed by the Israelites. The consequences of pride in the face of Jehovah are always much more grievous than the offenders could have imagined!

Pharaoh flung open the gates of freedom to the Israelites in the middle of the night.

Pharaoh flung open the gates of freedom to the Israelites in the middle of the night. I have been abruptly awakened on a few occasions to go on an emergency trip. My kneading trough was never among the essentials I hastily packed for such a journey! Yet observe that God had a plan for an expansive illustration using unleavened bread that would be for all generations. Notice verse 34 of Exodus 12: "And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneading troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders."

Picture a group of slaves—probably more than a million of them—gathering the jewels of the richest nation on earth and assembling their families, flocks, and herds to embark on the greatest freedom journey of history. Now picture one person in each household binding up a dough board containing a lump of flat dough in the folds of the robe she was wearing and walking several miles to safety so encumbered. When they finally stopped,



the cakes were baked over the first fires of freedom for Israel in four hundred years. As they reflected in the wilderness on the amazing events of the past twenty-four hours, the massive slaughter in Egypt, the protection of the blood, and the road to the promised land, their source of sustenance was the flat cakes, reminding them of the haste of their deliverance. God had a plan for unleavened bread!

The Memorial

It is a night to be much remembered unto the Lord for bringing them out of the land of Egypt: this is the night of the Lord to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations (Exod. 12:42).

It is interesting to notice that God planned the yearly Passover feast, also known as the Feast of Unleavened Bread, prior to the actual occurrence of the original Passover. In Exodus 12:13-20, God detailed the activities that would occur yearly to remember the passing over of the Israelite houses as the great death plague was occurring in Egypt. This detailed instruction regarding the ordinances of this feast of remembrance was given before there was actually anything to remember. This reminds us that none of the events of that dreadful night in Egypt occurred accidentally. God was always in complete control of the salvation plan.

Separation

The first instruction given regarding the feast was the discarding of all leaven from every household. The injunction was strong and the punishment for failing to comply was severe (Exod. 12:15). This casting out of the leaven was to become forever sym-

This casting out of the leaven was to become forever symbolic of the casting of sin and its impurities.

bolic of the casting of sin and its impurities from their lives. Israel left all leaven behind as she gathered her lumps of bread. Consider all of the other things they simultaneously left behind: bondage, idolatry, rebellion, and death that had characterized Egypt. From this point in history, God used the leaven to symbolize all that should be hastily removed from the lives of those who serve him.

Even in the New Testament we see the absence of leaven analogously representative of the purity required of Christians.



In 1 Corinthians 5, Paul describes a situation of gross impurity in the church. After enjoining them to put away the evil one, delivering him to Satan, he explains the necessity of keeping the church pure using the analogy of leaven.

Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ, our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore, let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth (1 Cor. 5:6-8).

Our God is serious about casting out leaven. The one who failed to do so at each observance of the feast was cut off from Israel (Exod. 12:15). Not only was the bread to be without leaven, but no leaven was to be in the house or even seen with any Israelite in all of the quarters. As the leaven was to be totally removed from the quarters, so the spiritually impure man was to be put away from the church (1 Cor. 5:13).

When Israel left the bondage of Egypt, their lump was to be a purged and new lump. The separation was to be immediate and hastily executed. So should Christians hastily and immediately cleanse themselves from the leaven of impurity, upon finding it in their spiritual lives.

Upon each yearly remembrance of the great Passover, the people of Israel were to eat unleavened bread. As they did so they were to remember the time when they sat down near the shores of the Red Sea and ate the flat cakes on the first day of their freedom. They were to reminisce and pass along to their children the story of the great deliverance and instill within their children the importance of separation from sin.

May God help parents today to remember the leaven, and work to keep their souls unleavened! The leavening agents of sin in our world today are far more enslaving and powerful than the physical coercion of the Egyptians. May we realize the dangers of this leaven of the world about us and pray to the great deliverer for his mighty arm in cleansing us constantly from it.

They were to remember the time when they sat down near the shores of the Red Sea and ate the flat cakes on the first day of their freedom.

**Salvation**

The great deliverance of Israel was orchestrated by God in such a manner that no one in the camp of Israel could take credit for any portion of it. From the inextinguishable flaming bush to the parting of the Red Sea, every day had been marked with obvious supernatural occurrences. Some ten times in Exodus chapters 3 through 13, the arm, hand, or finger of God is mentioned as the instrument of deliverance. God was intentionally giving the children of Israel a mighty tale of divine deliverance to be passed along to future generations of Hebrews. Notice these words spoken by Jehovah just before inflicting the plague of locusts on the Egyptians:

And that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son, and of thy son's son, what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know that I am the Lord (Exod. 10:2).

Although God expected them to talk of his power throughout all of their days (Deut. 6:7-13), the yearly feast of unleavened bread was a time specifically set aside to remember his great salvation. God instructed the Israelites concerning the unleavened bread in Exodus 12 and then immediately followed this instruction by telling them why:

And thou shalt show thy son in that day, saying, This is done because of that which the Lord did unto me when I came forth out of Egypt. And it shall be for a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes, that the Lord's law may be in thy mouth: for with a strong hand hath the Lord brought thee out of Egypt. Thou shalt therefore keep this ordinance in his season from year to year (Exod. 13:8-10).

Do you think for a moment that because he had killed and cooked the lamb, applied the blood, cast out the leaven, and hastened out of Egypt that any Israelite credited himself with freedom from bondage? Do you suppose as he sat in the wilderness eating the flat cake on that first day of freedom that he, for a moment, thought it was his works that had freed him? Certainly not.

But do you think for a moment that he would have been sitting on the sands of the wilderness eating his flat cake in newfound freedom if he had *not* followed the instructions of God to the letter? What if he had saved back a little leaven for the jour-



ney? What if he had eaten the meat raw? What if he had applied the blood only to the posts and failed to put it on the lintel? The answer is obvious. He would have been mourning over a new-made grave with the rest of Egypt.

It is easy for us to see the wonderful outstretched arm of the Lord (Exod. 6:6) and the glaring effects of his grace toward Israel in this deliverance. Yet we cannot overlook the fact that all of his benefits were contingent upon their faithful obedience. It is obvious that neither his grace nor man's works were working exclusively. His grace was not lessened by its demands of obedience. Man's works were not excluded for fear that any would credit himself with the miraculous exodus. Such presumption would be preposterous in light of the great salvation.

We can see this principle today. We can teach this principle to our friends who, like the vast majority of religious folks today, think that salvation requires no human activity. No one bragged that day in the wilderness, that having applied the blood to the doorposts and lintels, he had earned his family's deliverance. Yet no one would have dared leave the door unpainted, for the great mercy of God was contingent upon an obedient belief.

Baptism in water for the remission of sins is not a work of which I can boast. I cannot say that because I've complied with his conditions of pardon that I have earned his eternal deliverance. In view of the sending of his Son, such an assertion would be preposterous. But I will not escape the bondage of sin if I fail to comply with his directives, the contingencies he has placed upon my salvation.

The blood on the doorpost was the evidence of their faith. Baptism for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38) is the evidence of my faith and it is, in fact, in baptism that I access the death and blood of my Passover Lamb (Rom. 6:3-4; 1 Cor. 5:7).

Let us often stop, as we travel toward our eternal land of promise, and remember our Great Deliverer in praise and thanksgiving.

No one bragged that day in the wilderness, that having applied the blood to the doorposts and lintels, he had earned his family's deliverance.

Sacrifice



It was at the time of the original passing over, that great night of destruction, that God claimed the firstborn of all man and beast for his own. The Israelites were commanded to set apart, as a sacrifice to the Lord, all males that opened the womb (Exod. 13:12-15). Exceptions were the donkeys, which were to be redeemed with a substituted lamb and, of course, their own sons which were also redeemed by a lamb. They were to take this firstborn consecration so seriously that if a man could not substitute a lamb offering for his donkey, then he was to break the neck of the donkey (Exod. 13:13).

God expected this firstborn sanctification system to create a curiosity within the children in future generations. He prepared those who witnessed the slaughter in Egypt and the miraculous exodus to use these questions to instill faith in the hand of God.

And it shall be when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What is this? that thou shalt say unto him, By strength of hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, from the house of bondage (Exod. 13:14).

This being one of three yearly feasts of the Hebrews in which all of the males appeared before the Lord, the Passover was a time when the consecration of the firstborn symbolically reminded the entire assembly of the redemption of Israel's firstborn in that first great Passover when they applied the blood of the lamb to their houses.

The second type of sacrifice associated with the yearly Passover was the reenactment of the slaying of the lamb. This was to be done on the fourteenth day of the first month at even. In Numbers 9, there was a Passover feast in which there were some men who were defiled because they had been near a dead body. The unclean men were not even to be in the camp with God's people (Num. 5:2). Their dilemma was brought to the attention of Moses who took their question to God. How were they to participate in this holy sacrificial rite when they were unclean? God did not exclude them from keeping the Passover. Instead he gave an alternate date to be kept by anyone who found it truly impossible to keep it on the fourteenth of the first month. He enjoined on these people all of the ordinances of the original Passover (vv. 6-12). Notice verse 13 which concludes this discussion about whether the Passover sacrifice could ever be omitted:



But the man that is clean, and is not in a journey, and forbearth to keep the Passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the Lord in his appointed season, that man shall bear his sin (Num. 9:13).

Jehovah was serious about the sacrifice. This and all sacrifices were to be of the firstlings and without blemish. The sacrifices were constant reminders that it was because of the blood of the lamb, that they were released from the bondage of Egypt. What power in this symbolism for those of us who have been redeemed by Christ, our Passover! (Heb. 10:10.)

If the dead sacrifices were so critical to Jehovah, surely our living sacrifices are not optional in pleasing him.

Jehovah is still serious about sacrifice. We must contact the blood of the Lamb through baptism, but the symbolism of sacrifice doesn't stop there. Romans 12:1 calls us to present ourselves as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to him. This sacrifice is our spiritual service. If the dead sacrifices were so critical to Jehovah, surely our living sacrifices are not optional in pleasing him. Romans 12:2 completes the thought, telling us how we present ourselves unblemished as sacrifices: "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Let us never attempt to offer to God a blemished sacrifice, spotted by the world. But let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance, "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience" (Heb. 10:22).

The Passover feast, or the feast of unleavened bread, planned by God to memorialize a deliverance yet to come, was the occasion at which the Lord's supper was to be instituted by the perfect Lamb of God. This memorial, too, was planned and instituted before the shedding of the Lamb's blood in the great Calvary deliverance. Both memorials were designed to remind the children of God of the necessary separation from sin, the great salvation afforded by the grace of God when we do cast aside the leaven of sin, and the sacrifices demanded by the God we serve.

Questions

1. There are throughout scripture many passages that draw a sharp contrast between the blessings of those who are in a covenant relationship with the Lord and the fate of those who are outside this covenant. Find and list three of these passages. Key words might be *blessing* and *curse*.
2. As the Israelite people walked through their doors never to return, describe how the lamb was above them, beside them, and in them?
3. In what ways did God show that he wanted their exodus to be done in haste? What spiritual significance might this have for us?
4. How do we know that God was in complete control of the events of the Passover night? Was the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary (our deliverance) an accident as some premillennialists claim? Did the Jews thwart the purpose of God when they killed the Christ?
5. What is symbolized by leaven? According to Deuteronomy 16:4, to what extent were the children of Israel to put away leaven for a seven-day period?
6. List other New Testament passages which refer to leaven with a negative connotation.
7. What use did God expect his people to make of a child's curiosity? Discuss ways parents can make practical application of this principle today? Discuss Deuteronomy 6:4-12 and its modern application for Christian parents.
8. How did the deliverance illustrate the "salvation by grace, faith, and works" principle? Find a New Testament passage that speaks of grace combined with faith that is obedient?
9. Find ten verses in Exodus chapters 3 through 13 that speak of the arm, the hand, or the finger of God.
10. What are some practical ways today by which Christians may demonstrate their sacrificial, separated lifestyles?
 - a. How do we often fail to be separated from the world?
 - b. List several New Testament passages that demand that God's people be separated from the world.



In Memory New Testament

Lord's Supper

Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25

Luke 22:15-20

It was Thursday evening, less than twenty-four hours before the crucifixion, when Jesus and his apostles were assembled in a quiet upper room in Jerusalem to observe the Passover. Jesus faithfully observed the Passover during his years on the earth, and this final week of his life was no exception. This feast was to be the last Passover feast to memorialize the great deliverance from Egyptian bondage. A new feast was established on this occasion to memorialize a much greater deliverance—a spiritual deliverance imminent in the death and resurrection of Christ in the days immediately to follow. It is interesting that, as we noted regarding the Passover feast, the memorial was established prior to the deliverance; the remembrance was enjoined before the actuality of the event itself. This shows us that, unlike the proponents of premillennialism would have us believe, there were no foiled plans at Calvary. The events that took place at Calvary were exactly those of which God spoke first in Genesis 3:15 and continued to promise through his prophets and through the preaching of John the Baptist. The kingdom Jesus had always intended to purchase and establish was at hand as he sat around this Passover table. In fact, he told the apostles that he would not eat of the unleavened bread or drink of the cup again until he did so in the kingdom. The kingdom of Christ is not something for which we wait today.

The Bread

The unleavened bread, as discussed in the previous chapter, had always been symbolic of the casting away of the bondage of



sin. Christ gave thanks for the bread and divided it among the disciples. His words were simple: “This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19).

I am in awe of the wisdom of our God when I think of the simplicity of this memorial. The memorial is not a statue or shrine to which I must travel. It is not observed in the possession of

Every time I partake of the unleavened bread I am reminded of the malignity of sin and its disastrous consequences in my life.

some corruptible item that I might lose or break. The memorial is a simple replenishable piece of unleavened bread, readily available in all areas of the world.

The unleavened bread is symbolic of the Lord’s body. While partaking of it, we’re instructed simply to remember him. Having studied the original feast of unleavened bread and being aware of the symbolism of leaven enriches our partaking of the bread. Every time I partake of the unleavened bread I am reminded of the malignity of sin and its disastrous consequences in my life. I am reminded that just as the Israelites hastily cast the leaven from the bread, so I am to cast the leaven of sin from my life. I am reminded that it is only because of Christ, the only one ever to live upon the earth completely pure from the leaven of sin, becoming sin for me (2 Cor. 5:21), that I can be free from sin’s power in my life. So as I partake of the unleavened bread I find myself at the foot of the cross praising him for my Passover (1 Cor. 5:7), thanking him for salvation by his grace (Tit. 2:11), praying for strength for separation from the leaven of sin, and purposing to offer myself during the coming week as a living sacrifice (Rom. 12:1-2).

The Cup

Jesus gave thanks for the cup saying: “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you” (Luke 22:20).

Again we are touched by this simple memorial. The cup was defined by Jesus as the “fruit of the vine,” grape juice, a commodity readily available. We are simply told that it symbolizes the new covenant in his blood. Anyone, in any era of any culture, can observe this modest memorial.

Once again, inspiration draws us back to the original saving blood of the lamb so central to that first Passover. Recall it was only in the application of the blood that the firstborn of Israel



were spared. Their deliverance, as ours, was borne of blood, the blood of the unblemished lamb. As I drink of the cup I am reminded of the cruel slavery of sin. I reflect on its disastrous consequences occurring all around me in the lives of those who have yet to be freed. I praise him for the blood on the doorposts of my heart.

The Pattern

Christians today assemble each Sunday to partake of the Lord's supper. This follows the only example given in Scripture which includes a reference to time: "And upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them (Acts 20:7).

This verse strongly implies that the purpose for which they had come together on that particular day was to partake of the Lord's supper. Since this is the only biblical reference to the time of their partaking, we can be assured that we are pleasing the Father if we partake each first day of the week.

In following the pattern of Christ, we also give thanks for the bread and the cup, respectively, before partaking of each emblem. It is important to verbalize our thanksgiving for the bread and for the cup since this is the example Jesus gave us. Long prayers are sometimes offered at the Lord's table without even a reference to the bread or cup. Jesus' purpose in praying before the breaking of bread was thanksgiving and blessing. Such should be our purpose.

Each individual Christian is charged with solemnizing within his own heart the memory of the Savior's death.

Some have adopted a practice of singing while partaking of the Lord's supper. There is no command, example, or implication for such practice—no scriptural authority. We dare not act without authority!

Further, each individual Christian is charged with solemnizing within his own heart the memory of the Savior's death. Just as each person partakes, each person is instructed to remember. Remembering is not a group effort. It is something that takes place in each heart. When I attempt to participate in the thought pattern of a song that a group is singing, I forfeit some of the control of my own thought processes.

***A Matter of the Heart***

By the time Paul wrote the first letter to the Corinthians, the solemn feast had been allowed to deteriorate into a common meal, seemingly characterized by gluttony and drunkenness. One can imagine how this could occur in a city like Corinth, a large commercial city which claimed notoriety for its social acceptance of sin. It was the meeting place, as it were, for all the evil and shame of other nations. All other religions of the day in Corinth were characterized by licentious practices actually committed in worship to various gods and goddesses. It became difficult for the Christians, living in the midst of a New Testament Sodom, to keep their lives and worship practices pure. We should read 1 Corinthians 11 often and allow Paul's admonitions to these brethren to strengthen our defenses against the corruption of the world around us.

It is not easy to dismiss from our minds the pollution of sin with its materialism, or just to exclude the clutter of our busy schedules when we observe the supper. I don't know how many times I've been in an assembly around the Lord's table, only to be distracted by a child's sneezing, a teenager's laughing or talking, thoughts of the class I just finished teaching, or the busy afternoon schedule ahead of me. Our thoughts are difficult to harness.

It is unwise for us as parents to allow our sons and daughters to sit behind us during worship, for their conduct is our responsibility.

And yet focus is the essence of acceptable worship. Every Christian should be as still, solemn, and reverent as possible during the Lord's supper, being careful to do nothing distractive to fellow worshippers. Parents should see that their children, even teenagers, are rever-

ential during all acts of worship, but particularly during this communion. It is unwise for us as parents to allow our sons and daughters to sit behind us during worship, for their conduct is our responsibility. When young members of the body are passing notes, talking, laughing, and flirting during this time of special focus, they are certainly not discerning the Lord's body. They are thus eating and drinking damnation to themselves (1 Cor. 11:29). Verse 30 goes on to say that it is for this reason that many in the congregation at Corinth were weak and sickly.



The heart with which we approach this feast affects the whole of our spiritual health. Let's do all we can within our own hearts to provide an atmosphere that is conducive to concentration and to remembering the blessed covenant of salvation made possible through his blood.

Another dangerous practice regarding the Lord's supper is "card-punching." I saw it first when worshiping with a congregation in which the Lord's supper was observed near the end of the worship hour. As soon as the observance was completed, a number of people sitting near the back would exit the building as if they had completed the only important item of worship. Later, while worshiping with Christians who observed the supper near the beginning of the worship, I actually witnessed a young girl hurry into the nursery during a service, say hello to her Mom, and then say, "Well, I'm going into the auditorium to take the Lord's supper." Her mom informed her that she was too late. The supper had already been passed. The girl seemed very disappointed that she had missed the communion. I guess this meant she would have to come back that night.

We are not punching a ticket to heaven simply by swallowing a piece of unleavened bread and drinking some juice!

The vehicle through which we worship when eating the Lord's supper is the heart. We are not punching a ticket to heaven simply by swallowing a piece of unleavened bread and drinking some juice! Listen to the Holy Spirit:

For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body (1 Cor. 11:26-29).

I recently heard of a church that offered a drive-through communion. Really! Those traveling out of town or rushing to keep a Sunday appointment could actually drive up to a window, hear a prayer on an intercom, and receive the emblems at their car for quick observance. In this way, their worship didn't interfere with the plans of the day at all. Surely all of us see the absurdity of this blasphemous practice. How could my heart possibly be attuned



to that supreme sacrifice of Calvary, if I'm unwilling to sacrifice the pleasures of this world to pay homage to the God of my salvation by reverently assembling with the saints (Heb. 10:26), to participate in all of the commanded avenues of worship?

But aren't we guilty of a less blatant form of the same pattern of thinking when we are involved in worldly pursuits such as traveling, sports, or family gatherings during the worship hour on Sunday morning, and then partake of the supper on Sunday night? Whatever is so important to us that it draws us from the assembly on Sunday morning, has become too important. How

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can we expect God, who knows our hearts, to be impressed with the homage we pay to the dying Lamb on Calvary on Sunday night, when the cross and all of redemption was not important enough to bring us to worship on Sunday

morning? "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat" (1 Cor. 11:28).

Getting Personal and Practical

The purpose of a study of the Passover of the old covenant and the Lord's supper of our new covenant should help us be more pleasing in this important act of worship. Since the attitude with which I approach this communion is directly related to my spiritual well-being (1 Cor. 11:29-30), this study can surely establish and strengthen me in my daily life. The act of partaking of the Lord's supper is an act of the heart. But the observance, if done properly, will have far reaching positive effects on the way I practice Christianity through the week.

There are some practical lessons I have learned through the years that have helped me to reverently focus while eating the Lord's supper.

- *Closing my eyes.* If I am not reading scripture, this practice helps to filter out distractions from others in the assembly who may be moving about, tending children, or who may unwittingly just catch my eye as I am trying to remember Jesus.
- *Reading the account of the crucifixion.* This is remembering.



Have your Bible marked ahead at one of the Gospel accounts, so you can use the full time to reflect as you read.

- *Praying.* I'm quite certain that reflective private prayer during the Lord's supper is not a violation of Scripture, since it is, for those of us who been delivered by the blood from the consequences of sin, a form of reflection on that sacrifice. How can I but offer a prayer of thanksgiving for my purchase? How can I but pray for strength to cast from my life the leaven of sin as I eat the bread that is free from leaven? How can I but thank him for the application of the Lamb's blood on the lintels of my heart, when I drink the cup that is his blood? For the redeemed who pray through the events of all of their days, I can hardly imagine being able to remember the Savior and the cross without approaching the throne with praise and petition.
- *Counting.* That's right, counting. As I child I was privileged to sit at the feet of some great men of God. Among them were Bobby Duncan, Franklin Camp, and both Gus and Flavil Nichols. More than one of them shared this simple counting memory-handle. Because it is organized neatly, it calls the mind back into focus. It has helped me both in prayer and in observing the Lord's supper.
 1. *One Lord*—There indeed was only one who could bear my sin at Calvary. There is no remission without blood (Heb. 9:22). The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin (Heb. 10:4). It is only the one pure, unspotted lamb of God that can take away the sin of the world (1 Pet. 1:18-19).
 2. *Two thieves*—My Lord was crucified between two thieves. The thieves were getting what they deserved, while Christ was the propitiation for their sin and mine.
 3. *Three crosses*—The first cross was one of rebellion. The robber on this cross mocked Christ saying, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us." He was clearly an unbeliever and died in a state of rebellion.

The second cross was one of redemption. The thief hanging there rebuked the rebellious thief saying, "Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss." He even beseeched Jesus to remember him when he came

into his kingdom. He obviously had been a sinner, but having confessed that to Jesus, was commended and received a promise of Paradise from the Christ.

The third cross was that of redemption, the hope of all believers.

4. *Four partings of his garment*—(John 19:23-24). Fulfilling the prophecy of Psalm 22:18, the clothing Jesus wore to the crucifixion was divided among four soldiers. The King of kings was stripped even of his common robe, first as they put a robe of purple on him to mock him, only later to strip him and nail his body to the cross.
5. *Five wounds in his body*—As I eat the unleavened bread I remember the Passover. You will recall that the Passover lamb was to be slain and eaten, but not a bone of its body was to be broken. This was a foreshadowing of the body of Christ on the cross. The custom was to break the legs of those who were hanging on the crosses on Friday afternoon, so that their deaths would be hastened and they could be removed before the Sabbath. But in fulfillment of prophecy (Ps. 34:20), his bones were not broken because he was dead already. Upon finding Christ dead, a soldier instead pierced his side, allowing blood and water to flow from his body. This accounted for the fifth wound in his body, the others being the nail wounds in his hands and feet.
6. *Six hours of suffering*—From Mark 15:25, we learn that it was the third hour of the day when they crucified Christ. From Matthew's account we learn that he died at about the ninth hour (Matt. 27:46-50). Six hours of incredible suffering, having been forsaken by a God who could not look upon the sin he bore, ended with a cry. As Jesus yielded up the ghost, the veil of the temple was torn open in the middle; there was an earthquake and even rocks were torn asunder. Graves were opened and many bodies of the righteous were raised.
7. *Seven times Christ spoke from the cross*—I can think of no more profound words in the history of the world than those spoken by the dying Christ. I have listed them for your study and reflection as you remember him.



- a. "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34).
- b. "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43).
- c. "Woman behold thy son . . . behold thy mother" (John 19:26-27).
- d. "I thirst" (John 19:28).
- e. "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*" that is to say, "My God, My God, Why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46).
- f. "It is finished" (John 19:30).
- g. "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit" (Luke 23:46).

These are just suggestions for maintaining concentration and respect as we observe the supper of the Lord. Often I pray on Sunday morning, as I am preparing to leave for worship, that he will help me to clear from my mind the clutter of stress and scheduling and the mental pull of the things of this world, so that my worship will be to his glory. May he help us all as we pay homage to him in proclaiming his death till he comes.

Although human words or analogies can never adequately express the depth of God's love or the significance of his unspeakable gift, the following story by an unknown author stirred in me emotions of thanksgiving and a will to glorify him in worship.

Consider a modern-day parable.

The Son's Blood

The day is over and you are driving home. The radio tells about a far-away village in which three persons have died suddenly, strangely, of a flu of unknown kind and origin. It's kind of interesting.

On Sunday, coming home from church, you hear another news release. Only now it's not three villagers in some remote part of India, but thirty thousand persons in a city near to that remote village. Tonight all the major news channels carry the story.

By Monday morning mysterious death is the lead story. For it is not just India; it's Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran. And before you know it, you're hearing this story everywhere. Medical authorities are calling it the *mystery flu*. Panic strikes. The Surgeon General is advising that once the mystery flu is contracted, it lies dormant for about a week. Four days of unbelievable pain and suffering follow; then death—certain death!

Britain closes its borders but it is too late. South Hampton. Liverpool. London. All contaminated. It's Tuesday morning when the President of the United States makes the following announcement: "Because of a na-



tional security risk, all flights to and from Europe and Asia have been canceled.”

Wednesday night. You are at a church prayer meeting. Somebody runs in from the parking lot shouting, “Turn on a radio! Turn on a radio!” The church listens to a little transistor radio held to the pulpit microphone: “Two women are lying in a Long Island hospital dying from the mystery flu.”

It has come to America! Within hours it seems, this thing sweeps across the country. Medical personnel—the best we have—are working around the clock. No progress reported. No antidote found. Efforts seem futile. Oregon. California. Arizona. Texas. Florida. South Carolina. Massachusetts. It’s just sweeping in from the borders.

And then, all of a sudden, the news comes out. The code has been broken! The antibody has been isolated. A cure is imminent. An antidote can be made. But blood is needed: pure, uninfected blood of a very rare type. And so, sure enough, all through the Midwest, through all those channels of emergency broadcasting, everyone is being asked to “go to your hospital and have your blood analyzed. When you hear the sirens go off in your neighborhood, please make your way quickly to the hospitals.”

When you and your family get down there late on that Friday night, a long line of friends and neighbors are waiting to be screened. Nurses are running about in the waiting room and patient rooms taking blood, labeling it, and handing it to couriers who whisk it down the hall to the laboratory. You patiently wait with your family to get into the hospital. Then more nurses come on duty and start working frantically among those in the parking lot.

Finishing with your family at last, the attending nurse says quietly, “Wait here in the parking lot until we’ve finished the test.” She then hands the labeled vials to a courier and moves to the next family. You stand with your neighbors, staring into space, scared, wondering if this is the end of the world.

Suddenly a young man comes running out of the hospital screaming. He’s yelling a name and waving a clipboard. What? He yells it again. Your son tugs on your jacket and says, “Daddy, he’s calling me.” Before you know it, they have grabbed your boy.

“Wait a minute! Hold it!”

The young man says, “It’s okay. We want to make sure he doesn’t have the disease. He has got the right blood type.”

He leads your son away. Five tense minutes later, out come the doctors and nurses, crying and hugging one another. Some are even laughing. An old doctor walks up to you and says, “Thank your, sir. Your son’s blood type is perfect. It’s clean and it’s pure. From it we can make the vaccine.”

As the word begins to spread all over that parking lot, people are screaming and praying and laughing and crying. But then the grey-haired doctor invites you and your wife into his office where your son is lying on a gurney.



"We didn't realize that the donor would be a minor," the doctor explained. "We need—we need you to sign a consent form."

You begin to sign and then you see that the number of pints of blood to be taken is left blank. "H-h-h-how many pints?"

And that is when the old doctor's smile fades and he says, "We had no idea it would be a small child. We weren't prepared. We need it all."

"But-but—"

"You don't understand. We are talking about the world here. Please sign. We-we need it all. We need it all!"

"But can't you give him a transfusion?"

"If we had clean blood of his type, we would. Now please sign."

In numb silence you do. The doctor takes the clipboard. "I'm sorry, we-we've got to get started. People all over the world are dying."

Could you leave? Could you walk out while your son is saying, "Dad? Mom? Dad? Are you leaving me? Why are you leaving me!"

And then how would you feel the next week, when a ceremony is held to honor your son, some folks sleep through it, and some folks don't even come because they decided to go to the lake, and some folks come with a pretentious smile and just pretend to care.

Would you want to jump up and say, "My son died! Don't you even care?"

Is that how God feels? Does he say to us, "My son died! Don't you know how much I care?"

This is how much: For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, for without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.

Questions

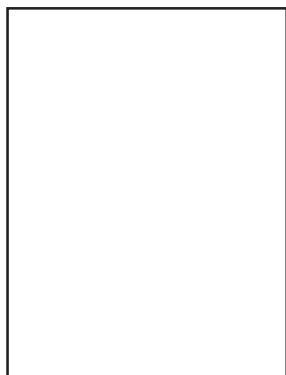
1. At the institution of the Lord's supper, Christ foretold of sin in the lives of two apostles. Who were they and what sins were to follow?
2. In what three ways are we given authority for our practices in worship? Give examples from Scripture of each.
3. How can the manner in which we partake of the Lord's supper have a direct impact on the way we live our lives during the following week? What scripture substantiates this principle?
4. Suggest some practical questions I might pose to myself while examining myself as I partake of the Lord's supper.



5. Suggest some passages that are being violated by “card-punching” observers of the Lord’s supper.
6. Offer additional practical suggestions for focus during observing the supper.
7. How can mothers help insure an atmosphere conducive to worship? Suggest ways that we can prepare ahead of worship time to insure that our children are not disruptive during the partaking of the supper.
8. Draw as many parallels as you can between the Passover feast and the Lord’s supper.
9. Discuss the part each of the following played in the Passover and how each affects our remembrance in the Lord’s supper today: separation, salvation, and sacrifice.
10. Were there ever abuses of the Passover feast similar to the abuse of the Lord’s supper that we read about in 1 Corinthians 11? (Begin by looking in Isaiah chapter 1.)



On Bended Knee



Foye Watkins

If you are paying close attention while riding on a rural highway near Lewisburg, Tennessee, you will notice a winding drive with a sign boasting *Paradise* floating above it. The adoring husband of Foye Watkins appropriately named their off-the-road rural homestead *Paradise*. As queen of *Paradise*, Foye practices biblical hospitality and sets a modern example of the worthy woman.

Foye's constant mission in the Lord's work includes service in four locations in the Southeast. Teaching preschoolers—even developing classroom material—is her passion. But in recent years, she has been in great demand as a ladies' instructor. Her talent for leading class discussions brings group knowledge to the surface. Foye also supports ladies' days and is a willing speaker.

As a graduate of Alabama Christian College, Christian education held Foye's interest. Later, she led women's associate groups in two Christian schools—Boyd Buchanan and Southern Christian University.

Foye Dooley, a native of Georgia, married James Watkins in 1948, never dreaming that one day he would be preaching on national television. Their lives have been richly blessed, not only by their work, but by their four children. Their sons, Bill and Alan, are both gospel preachers. Thirteen grandchildren and six great-grandchildren are encompassed with love from these two great leaders in the cause of Christ.

Foye hesitatingly agreed to write two chapters about prayer in *We Bow Down*, claiming inexperience as an author. But her wealth of experience and her personal dependence upon prayer have proved her to be more than qualified for the task.



On Bended Knee Old Testament

O Jehovah

Man Created to Communicate with God

How can I, a mortal of sinful flesh, approach a magnificent being who created the heavens and the earth? The psalmist said, “Let all the earth fear the Lord; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him” (Ps. 33:8).

Do you like to wear designer clothes? Gloria Vanderbilt’s name is on the outside of her creations. But when God made this earth, he did not need to put his name on the outside, for no one else can create lush meadows and beautiful sunsets. What a blessing has been bestowed on me that I can talk to my maker.

According to Webster, prayer is “an earnest request; entreaty; supplication, as to God, in praise, thanksgiving, confession.” Prayer is not a psychological state that just makes me feel better. It is not a crutch in time of trouble but a sincere talk with God. We were created to be his companions. When children come home from school, parents want to hear about fears, accomplishments, and friends. Communication is the glue of close relationships. What if children talked to their parents only once a week! God wants to hear his children’s needs, trials, joys, and desires daily.

Approaching God

In the following passages, note man’s approach to God:

- “Do not come near here; remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground . . . Then Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God” (Exod. 3:5-6).
- “And Joshua fell on his face to the earth, and bowed down, and said to him, What has my lord to say to his servant? . . .