



Seek The Old Paths

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths. . . and walk therein”
(Jeremiah 6:16)

Vol. 37, No. 5

May 2026

USE A LITTLE WINE?

Bill Boyd

Paul did not tell Timothy to drink alcohol to be sociable, or to get a buzz, or to chill.

In 1 Timothy 5:23 Paul counseled Timothy, *“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities.”* Some infer from this passage that they may drink alcohol of any kind for any reason, as long as they just drink a little. (It is interesting how some who do not believe in “inference” will readily employ inference when it suits them.) In this article, I will show why Paul’s admonition to Timothy is an inadequate proof-text for the moderate consumption of modern alcoholic beverages, and I will suggest some things Paul may have been referring to when he wrote this.

Context often helps us understand a passage, but for 1 Timothy 5:23, the immediate context does not help. Paul had been writing to Timothy about elders; their rule, their honor, and their accountability (1 Tim. 5:17-20).

Elders are not exempt from error. In the context of holding elders accountable, Paul wrote, *“doing nothing by partiality”* (1 Tim. 5:21). The “laying on of hands” was a common practice when one was appointed to a special work. When Paul admonished *“Lay hands suddenly on no man”* (1 Tim. 5:21), he did so in the context of being careful about who to appoint as elders. Paul followed saying, *“Some men’s sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after. Likewise also the good works of some are manifest beforehand; and*

they that are otherwise cannot be hid” (1 Tim. 5:24-25).

In the midst of these instructions, Paul gave Timothy some personal admonitions. *“Neither be partakers of other men’s sins, keep thyself pure”* (1 Tim. 5:22). Going along with others who sin is to be a partaker of their sins, even if they are elders. It is as John wrote in 2 John 1:11, *“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”* Then, seemingly independent of this immediate context Paul inserted: *“Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities”* (1 Tim. 5:23). Why Paul said this in this context is not readily apparent. Perhaps Timothy was avoiding all wine lest he appear to be a partaker of other men’s sins, or to keep himself pure. Paul told Timothy that a little wine for his stomach infirmity would be prudent.

The larger context in this epistle helps more than the immediate context. In 1 Timothy 3:3, Paul writes that bishops must be *“not given to wine.”* More literally, this means they are not to be “beside the wine.” In other words, they need to stay away from it. In like manner, in 1 Timothy 3:8, Paul writes that deacons are to be *“not given to much wine.”* Comparing these two passages, some have inferred

that elders are not to be given to any wine but deacons can be given to a little wine! They are missing the point of the passage. “Not much” does not justify “just a little,” any more than “superfluity of naughtiness” (James 1:21) justifies a “little naughtiness.”

When I was young my father would warn me as I left the house, “Do not get into a lot of trouble.” I never thought he was giving me permission to get into a “little trouble.” The word “given” in this passage speaks to what we call an addiction. “Not given to much wine” means not addicted to much wine. Paul is not telling Timothy that deacons can be addicted to a little wine. Paul’s admonition to Timothy, “use a little wine,” should be considered in the context of these warnings.

The word “wine” alone is not sufficient for a necessary implication of alcohol. The sugars in fresh sweet wine ferment into alcohol, and the alcohol sours into vinegar. The “wine” that was put into bottles (wineskins), fermented after it was put into the bottles (Matt. 9:17; Mark 2:22; Luke 5:37-38), yet it was called wine “on the way in.” Five times in four New Testament passages (Matt. 21:33; Rev. 14:19; 14:20; 19:15) we read of a “winepress.” The single English word, “winepress,” is used to translate two Greek

(Continued on page 39)

Use A Little Wine?...



Editorial...

KING SOLOMON #1

Garland M. Robinson

Solomon is mentioned by name 281 times in 253 verses. The first reference is found in 2 Samuel 5:14 and the last in Acts 7:47. We would be hard-pressed to find anyone who has not heard of king Solomon.

The accounts of his life are given in 2 Samuel 12:24-25; 1 Kings chapters 1-11; 1 Chronicles chapters 22-23:1; 28-29; and 2 Chronicles chapters 1-9. He was the third king of Israel (following Saul and David, his father). Sad to say, he was the last ruler of the united kingdom of the twelve tribes of Israel.

He can be described as *“the king who loved, wisdom, wealth and women.”* It became his ruin. Before he died he declared: *“Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity”* (Eccl. 1:2).

HIS BIRTH AND NAME

Little is known of Solomon before he became king. He was born in Jerusalem, the son of David and Bathsheba. The first of their sons (conceived in adultery) died. The second was Solomon — *“the peaceful”* (Chron. 22:9). Perhaps David so named him because he sought triumphs of peace for Solomon rather than the wars by which David had so long been plagued. The Lord loved him and sent by the hand of the prophet Nathan to name him Jedidiah which means *“the Divine Darling”* (2 Sam. 12:24-25). This name likely indicated the Divine favor God would bestow upon him.

It appears Solomon was greatly influenced by his mother and Nathan the prophet (1 Kings 1:11-12). He had 18 brothers mentioned by name, not counting the sons of David’s concubines and Tamar their sister (1 Chron. 3:1-9).

HIS ACCESSION TO THE THRONE

David had promised Bathsheba that Solomon would succeed him on the throne (1 Kings 1:13,17,30). But

now, while David is on his *“death bed,”* his son Adonijah, younger brother of Absalom, (1 Kings 1:6; 2:22) was conspiring to take the throne unto himself. Among his supporters were Joab (captain of the army and David’s nephew) and Abiathar the priest, great-great grandson of Eli (1 Sam. 14:3; 22:20; 1 Kings 1:7). *“But Zadok the priest, and Benaiah the son of Jehoiada, and Nathan the prophet, and Shimei, and Rei, and the mighty men which belonged to David, were not with Adonijah”* (1 Kings 1:8).

Adonijah prepared a great feast for his coronation and called together all the king’s sons and servants, except his brother Solomon, Nathan the prophet, and the others that were not with him. Adonijah sought to establish himself as king before any of the others knew it. David was made aware of this plot and gave orders that Solomon (perhaps only 18-20 years old) be placed upon the king’s mule and taken to Gihon and anointed king over Israel by Zadock the priest and Nathan the prophet (1 Kings 1:33-34). His orders were carried out. *“And Zadock the priest took an horn of oil out of the tabernacle and anointed Solomon. And they blew the trumpet; and all the people said, God save king Solomon”* (1 Kings 1:39).

The noise was so great from the cry of the people that Adonijah and his guests heard the commotion as they finished eating. As they wondered what it meant, Jonathan, the son of Abiathar the priest, came and reported that David had made Solomon king — *“They have caused him to ride upon the king’s mule”* (2:44). The mule was often used by royalty and for Solomon to ride upon David’s mule made it certain he had the royal approval of king David.

“All the guests that were with Adonijah were afraid, and rose up, and went every man his way. And Adonijah feared because of Solomon, and arose, and went, and caught hold on the horns of the altar” (2 Kings

2:49-50). Adonijah’s life was spared for the moment, but he was later executed on the suspicion that he was conspiring to take the throne (1 Kings 2:13-25). Abiathar the priest was banished to Anathoth (which was a fulfillment of prophecy, v.27) but Joab was slain (2:26-33).

“Then Solomon sat on the throne of the LORD as king instead of David his father, and prospered; and all Israel obeyed him. And all the princes, and the mighty men, and all the sons likewise of king David, submitted themselves unto Solomon the king. The LORD magnified Solomon exceedingly in the sight of all Israel, and bestowed upon him such royal majesty as had not been on any king before him in Israel” (1 Chron. 29:23-25).

HIS EARLY YEARS AS KING

Solomon *“loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places”* (1 Kings 3:3). Solomon began early in his reign to solidify his position as a great monarch of Israel by marrying a daughter of Pharaoh (1 Kings 3:1). This, no doubt, was a political move which would insure peace with neighboring nations. He was able to enjoy peace throughout his reign of 40 years, from 1013-973 B.C. (date approximate) (1 Chron. 22:9; 1 Kings 5:4; 11:42).

In the ensuing years he would love many strange (foreign) women (Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites (1 Kings 11:1). In all, *“he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines”* (1 Kings 11:3). His wives turned his heart away from the Lord just as God had said they would (1 Kings 11:2; cf. Neb. 13:26)!

It is estimated that perhaps as many as 10,000 people ate at his table: *“courtiers, guests, retainers, employees, slaves.”* The provisions necessary for one day were *“thirty measures of fine flour, and threescore measures of meal, ten fat oxen, and twenty oxen out of the pastures, and an hundred sheep, beside harts, and roebucks, and fallowdeer, and fatted fowl”* (1 Kings 4:22-23).

His kingdom extended over a vast territory. *“For he had dominion over all the region on this side the river, from Tiphshah even to Azzah, over all*

the kings on this side the river: and he had peace on all sides round about him. And Judah and Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree, from Dan even to Beer-sheba, all the days of Solomon” (1 Kings 4:24-25; cf. v.21).

HIS CHOICE FOR WISDOM

Early in Solomon’s reign God appeared to him in a dream and said, “Ask what I shall give thee.” Solomon’s reply was “Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing. And God said unto him, Because thou hast asked this thing, and hast not asked for thyself long life; neither hast asked riches for thyself; nor hast asked the life of thine enemies; but hast asked for thyself understanding to discern judgment; Behold, I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart; so that there was none like thee before thee, neither after thee shall any arise like unto thee. And I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days” (1 Kings 3:9-13).

Solomon’s choice was for wisdom! This in itself was a choice for greatness. “And Solomon’s wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men. ... And his fame was in all nations round about. ... And there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom” (1 Kings 4:30-31,34).

Solomon was responsible for 3,000 proverbs and 1,005 songs (1 Kings 4:32). He was guided by God to record many of them into a unique collection — the Book of Proverbs — comprised of 915 verses (cf. Eccl. 12:9). The whole book speaks of the moral, religious and providential aspects of life. He was able to have knowledge of, and speak such great monumental truths, that multiplied scores of “wise men” could not learn in all the years of their life.

He was the penman the Holy Spirit used to record the books of Proverbs, Song of Solomon, and Ecclesiastes. Some have also given him credit as the author of Psalm 72.

HIS WISDOM TESTED

His wisdom was tested by two women, harlots. They each gave birth to a son only three days apart. One of the infants died and his mother swapped his dead body with the other

woman’s son while she slept. They each argued before Solomon that the surviving baby was hers.

“And the king said, Bring me a sword. And they brought a sword before the king. And the king said, Divide the living child in two, and give half to the one, and half to the other. Then spake the woman whose the living child was unto the king, for her bowels yearned upon her son, and she said, O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it. But the other said, Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it. Then the king answered and said, Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof. And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged; and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment” (1 Kings 3:24-28).

Can you imagine living during the rule of such a wise man as Solomon? The holy Scriptures tell us there was never another in history as wise as he (1 Kings 3:12).

In the book of James the saints of God are told to pray for wisdom. “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him” (James 1:5).

Part 1 of 3

THE CHURCH AS GOD WOULD HAVE IT

Bob Spurlin (1945-2016)

Jesus promised to build His church: “And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock **I will build my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18). The church is a divine institution: the Lord planned it, He built it, He bought it, He heads it, and He saves it. When the church was established on that first Day of Pentecost after Jesus ascended to heaven (Acts 2), Jesus’ promise to build it was fulfilled. Jesus either built the church like He said, or else it was a fabrication. If He made this up, then He was an unfaithful witness and false prophet. To conclude that Jesus was either of

those is blasphemous.

Friends, the Christ did build the church as He promised He would. From Acts 2:47 onward, the church is spoken of as being in existence. Jesus bought the church with His blood (Acts 20:28). This fact shows that the church is important in the sight of the Godhead. Jesus is the Savior of the body, the church (Eph. 5:23; 1:22-23). He will one day deliver His kingdom/church to God the Father (1 Cor. 15:24). But what about the church before that time? What about the church right now?

The church as God would have it Recognizes The Headship Of Christ As Absolute Authority.

To refuse His authority is to place us on the level of every other religious group! Jesus is “*the way, the truth, and the life*” (John 14:6). We are to teach what He commands because that is what He charged us to do (Matt. 28:18,20)! That being the case, we serve Jesus, not the Law of Moses.

All authority is given to the risen Christ (Matt. 28:18), Who was proven to be the Son of God with power by His resurrection from the dead (Rom. 1:4). Our duty is clear: God wants us to hear His Son Jesus (Matt. 17:5). While God spoke to the fathers by the prophets in the Old Testament era, He now speaks to us through His Son (Heb. 1:1-2). We do not need

to wait for any new prophet, because Jesus is God's last Spokesman to mankind! He is the one foundation of the church (1 Cor. 3:11). Jesus is the church's only head, and thus in all things He is to have the preeminence — "first rank" (Col. 1:18). If Jesus' word is not our supreme authority, then we have no authority!

The church as God would have it Recognizes That Jesus Demands Evangelism. Every child of God, to the best of his ability, must do the best they can to teach others the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Mark 16:15). The "Great Commission" applies to every Christian. It is said that there is one group in Europe called "Glas-sites" that makes no effort to convert anyone to their cause. The reality is that a living organism must reproduce or else it will die. What about the church? It is a living organism. If we do not win souls, we will die both spiritually and numerically.

Brethren, evangelism is necessary because if one is not saved, he is lost. Every person of accountable age is in one of two classes: saved or lost. Remember these four Bible truths:

- 1) All have sinned (Rom. 3:23);
- 2) The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23);
- 3) Those who do not obey the Gospel will be lost (2 Thess. 1:7-9);
- 4) Those without Christ have no hope (Eph. 2:12).

God's only Begotten Son was a preacher, a "missionary," and Giver of the Great Commission. He is "for" the

preaching of the Gospel to every person in the world (Mark 16:15). Are you also "for" it? Do our actions support our answer?! The New Testament of the Christ demands that people hear His words of life (John 6:68; Acts 5:20).

The church of the living God Recognizes The Complete Authority Of The New Testament And The All-sufficiency Of The New Testament Church. God's word furnishes us unto every good work (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Everything relevant to our spiritual life and godliness comes through the knowledge of Christ (1 Peter 1:3).

There is only **ONE FAITH** (Eph. 4:5). It is *"the faith once delivered to the saints"* (Jude 3). Paul worked diligently to destroy the church before his conversion, and then later vigorously preached "the faith" he once destroyed (Gal. 1:23). Friends, all we need is the Bible and the Bible only — without addition or subtraction (Deut. 4:2; Prov. 30:6; Rev. 22:18-19). The Bible equips the church with all it needs to "be" and "do." The church is the fullness of the Christ: *"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all"* (Eph. 1:22-23).

The church as God would have it Demands A Distinction Between The Christian And The World. Paul writes: *"Be not conformed to the world: but be ye transformed by the renewing*

of your mind" (Rom. 12:2). Blending with the world contradicts every basic principle in the New Testament. James states, *"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that friendship with the world is enmity (hatred) with God"* (James 4:4). The incompatibility of the Christian to the world could not be clearer. We are an elect race, a chosen people (1 Peter 2:9). We need to act like it! God's children must live according to the dictates of the Spirit and not live "after the flesh" (Rom. 8:12-13).

It is a contradiction in terms to call someone a "worldly Christian." One is either worldly, or he is a Christian (one committed to following Christ). Let us never forget that our citizenship is in heaven (Phil. 3:20).

The church must uphold a position of nonconformity to the world. Serious problems exist today because the church will not keep its distance from practices foreign to the teachings of Christ. *"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son"* (2 John 9). If the church of the living God preserves its existence in the world, there can be no compromise or departure from the New Testament. Fellowship with God is dependent on following the teaching of Christ.

May each of us accept these truths and strive faithfully to apply them, not living for self, but for the Lord Jesus Christ.

CAN ELDERS AUTHORIZE WHAT GOD HAS NOT? A STUDY OF WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE CHURCH

Joshua Alexander

An increasing number of congregations of the Lord's church have begun involving women in their worship services in ways unfamiliar to earlier generations. Women have always played an essential and honorable role in service to God. In recent years, however, women have been increasingly invited to serve in roles historically filled by men. These roles may include making announcements to the congregation,

leading the congregation in public prayer, participating in praise teams that lead congregational singing, reading Scripture from the pulpit, and serving in nearly every visible leadership role in worship except preaching the sermon, though some are already doing that. [A side note to this is that some schools (colleges & universities) associated with members of the church of Christ are using women in unauthorized capacities.

It should be noted that this development is not entirely new. Variations of this practice have been present for decades. Over time, several arguments have been offered to justify these changes. Some have suggested that the apostle Paul's instructions were merely the product of a misogynistic culture [hatred or dislike of women]. Others have argued that the instructions were culturally bound to the first century and therefore not

binding today. Still others have maintained that the roles in question do not actually constitute positions of leadership.

More recently, another argument has gained attention. Some contend that if the eldership grants women the authority to serve in these capacities, then the women themselves cannot be guilty of “usurping authority,” because the authority was given to them by the elders. Frequently, when a congregation makes such adjustments, a statement is released explaining that the elders have been “restudying” the issue and have therefore decided to expand the roles women may serve within the congregation.

This reasoning raises an important question: if an eldership determines that something is authorized, does that make it so? To examine the logic of this argument, it may be helpful to apply the same reasoning to other matters. Suppose an eldership were to decide that the congregation should begin using instrumental music in worship. Would that decision grant the congregation the authority to introduce instruments into their worship of God? Some might argue that it would. Consider another example: the frequency of the Lord’s Supper. If the eldership decided the congregation should partake of the Lord’s Supper once a month rather than every week, would that decision make the practice of monthly observance scriptural? No, not at all!

The principle can be extended even further. What if an eldership were to declare that homosexual marriage is no longer sinful? Would such a declaration grant God’s approval? What if they were to claim that murder is no longer wrong in God’s sight? Clearly, no one would seriously suggest that an eldership possesses the authority to redefine morality itself.

When the principle is applied consistently, the conclusion becomes clear: an eldership does not have the authority to authorize something that God has not authorized. When Peter wrote, “*If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God*” (1 Peter 4:11), his instruction applied to every person, including elders. The authority the eldership possess is real, but it is also limited. Their responsibility is to teach and guide according to what God has revealed, not to speak as though they themselves were God.

Their job is to see to it that what the congregation does (of which they have oversight), is done in accordance to, and authorized by, God’s Word.

The question of what is scripturally authorized can ultimately be settled only by God. If an eldership possessed the power to create its own universe, design its own heaven, build and die for its own church, then perhaps it could structure that church however it wished. But since the church belongs to the One who did all of those things, our responsibility is to submit to His will.

This brings us back to the central question: is it wrong for women to lead in worship? Scripture states, “*I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression*” (1 Tim. 2:8-14). Notice verse 8, men can pray every where, that is not said of women.

If a woman stands before the congregation to lead public prayer, direct congregational singing (even by way of a so-called praise team), or guide the assembly in any other role that requires the congregation to follow her lead, then how can we honestly say she is learning in silence with all subjection? Can it truly be said that she is not exercising authority over every man present when she leads and directs them in worship? Certainly, any time someone is in front of a crowd, inviting them to follow their “lead,” it cannot reasonably be said that they are not leading.

It is also difficult to maintain a consistent distinction between leading prayer and preaching a sermon. If a woman can approach God on behalf of the congregation in prayer, why could she not approach the congregation on behalf of God in preaching? The reasoning that allows one while forbidding the other is difficult to sustain. If the principle is accepted, both

would logically follow, yet Scripture authorizes neither.

Ultimately, the issue is one of submission. Everyone, men and women, must be willing to submit to God. Rather than asking, “What do I want?” or even “What does the congregation want?” The more important question is, “What does God want?” When that question is honestly asked, the proper response is to follow His will.

Recognizing that women are not authorized to lead in public worship does not diminish their value or importance within the congregation. Scripture consistently affirms the indispensable role women play in the life of God’s people. However, in the home and in the church, God has assigned different roles to men and women. God’s people should seek to acknowledge and celebrate these distinctions rather than attempting to erase them.

Many of the pressures to redefine these roles come from the broader feminist movement, which challenges the idea that men and women have distinct responsibilities. Some modern ideologies suggest that gender is fluid and that men and women are essentially interchangeable. Christians should always measure such claims against the teaching of Scripture, clearly seeing they are false at their core.

In the end, the question is not whether God’s design aligns with modern cultural trends. The question is whether we are willing to trust that His way is best. Throughout history, God’s instructions have always proven to be far superior to man’s. For that reason, believers should humbly seek to follow them, confident that God’s way is always the right way.

1506 Roundabout Circle
Searcy, AR 72143

Joshua.alexanderr@gmail.com

AS CHILDREN OF GOD, WE SHOULD BE:
ABOUNDING in Christian Graces, 2 Peter 1:5-11

ABSTAINING from every form of evil, 1 Thessalonians 5:22

ACTIVE in the Lord’s Work, 1 Corinthians 15:58

ACCEPTING all things authorized by the Word, Col. 3:17

ADVANCING the Cause of Christ, Mat. 28:18-20; Mk 16:15-16

ALERT to the Needs of Others, Galatians 6:2,
10

Jerry Joseph

GIVE ME THE BIBLE

Marvin L. Weir

There is no substitute for the Bible. Many people today quickly turn to self-help books in search of the answers to the difficulties of life. Man, however, cannot be counted upon for proper guidance and direction as "...it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23). Jesus Christ is the **only** answer to a better tomorrow and a better life. It is the Bible, the Holy Scripture, that give us **all** the information we need regarding God, Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, the church, worship and service in the kingdom. Thus, the Bible is indeed all-sufficient regarding our spiritual needs. The apostle Paul so affirms in saying, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).

Christians are obligated to "hunger and thirst after righteousness" (Matt. 5:6). Without constantly feeding upon the Word of God, one will become malnourished and spiritually weak. It was the apostle Peter who said, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter 2:2).

Why is it that many who profess to be members of the Lord's church come to Bible study without a Bible? Is it possible they have instant recall of *all* the Bible contains? Could it be their attitude is the opposite of the noble Bereans who "...received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11)? Let us not forget that the Bible is our sole source of spiritual food!

The Bible is a tremendous blessing to those who believe and obey it. Many people today speak of their faith and desire to testify as to *how* they attained such faith. But Bible faith, the only faith that matters, comes to everyone in exactly the same way! The apostle Paul taught, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Thus, we see that Bible faith (belief) comes from hearing the Word of God!

Biblical faith will move a person

to action. It is as James challenged, "Yea, a man may say, *Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works*" (James 2:18). It is absolutely impossible for one to *show* or *demonstrate* his faith without works! Yet, the majority of the religious world chooses to believe that a person is saved by "faith only" in spite of the Bible forth-rightly declaring, "Ye see then how that **by works a man is justified, and not by faith only**" (James 2:24).

James continues to show that faith PLUS works equals salvation in stating, "Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God" (James 2:21-23).

The Bible, God's Word or truth, is our guide in religious (spiritual) matters. The Psalmist said, "With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments" (Psalm 119:10). Let us contemplate the commands of God and how important they are to our spiritual well being.

The Word Of God Reminds Us Not To Sin! "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). A person who chooses not to study the Bible will not be familiar with God's message to mankind. John Gill, in his Exposition of the Old and New Testaments, expounded on the above verse of Scripture as follows:

[Thy word have I hid in mine heart] Not only heard and read it, but received it into his affections; mixed it with faith, laid it up in his mind and memory for future use; preserved it in his heart as a choice treasure, where it might dwell richly, and be of service to him on many occasions; and particularly be of the following use:

[that I might not sin against thee] the word of God is a most powerful antidote against sin,

when it has a place in the heart; not only the precepts of it forbid sin, but the promises of it influence and engage to purity of heart and life, and to the perfecting of holiness in the fear of the Lord; and all the doctrines of grace in it effectually teach the saints to deny all sin and worldly lusts, and to live a holy life and conversation; see 2 Cor 7:1; Titus 2:11,12.

Our Souls Are Made Pure In Our Obedience To The Truth! Peter proclaimed, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:22). Without the precious Word of God, one could never be made free from his sins (John 8:32).

The Gospel (God's Word Or Truth) Is The Only Power Unto Salvation! Paul stated, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter 1:22). Thus, it is the Gospel that saves men from sin, and all who are called according to God are called by the glorious Gospel (2 Thess. 2:14).

Obedience To God's Word Edifies And Sanctifies The Christian! Paul, to the Ephesian elders admonished, "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). A lack of study of the Bible will not build one up in the faith!

The pressing need of today is for all elders, teachers and preachers to be guided by a "thus saith the Lord." If such were a reality in the Lord's church, all modernism, liberalism and denominationalism would be quickly cast aside.

There is no substitute for Bible study. May all faithful children of God proclaim, "Give me the Bible, Holy message shining." Indeed, it is a beacon of light to all who refuse to be overcome by darkness!

484 CR 44700, Blossom, TX 75416
countryboy357@hughes.net

Use A Little Wine?...

(Continued from page 33)

words that can be more literally translated, “the press of the wine.” This is the “wine” that flows from freshly pressed grapes.

The above references are seven places in the New Testament where the word “wine” is not referring to fermented wine. Add to that Isaiah 65:8 where “*new wine is found in the cluster.*” When the Jewish translators of Alexandria, Egypt, translated the Hebrew scriptures into Greek, they used the same word for “wine” in this passage as the word that is later used for “wine” in the New Testament. Again, add to that Mark 15:23. The “wine” they gave Jesus to drink is called “vinegar” in Matthew 27:34. In the Bible, the juice from the fruit of the vine is called “wine” whether it be fresh, preserved, fermented, or soured.

Without giving much thought to what they are saying, some have used the words of the mockers in Acts 2:13 as a proof-text that people could get drunk on “new wine.” (It is interesting how some, who do not believe in proof-texts, will use proof-texts when it suits them.) The mockers said, “*These men are full of new wine.*” Context should be considered when reading “new wine.” The vintage is harvested in late summer and early fall. Pentecost comes in the spring. There would be no fresh new wine available on the day of Pentecost, but there could have been fermented wine newly taken from jars or wineskins. Those who were mocking the apostles may have been speaking of newly opened wine that had fermented.

The wine Paul admonished Timothy to use may not have been alcoholic at all. A work from about the year AD 200 prescribes fresh sweet wine that has been warmed or mixed with water as “very good for the stomach” (Patton, William, “Bible Wines,” Star Bible Publications, Inc., Fort Worth, TX., p.94). Some have suggested that Timothy needed the acid in “sour wine” for his stomach. Without knowing just what the stomach condition was, we cannot assume the wine was intoxicating.

It is not enough to say the wine Paul told Timothy to drink must have been alcoholic or Timothy would not have been avoiding it. Wine, like meat,

was often in the markets after it had been offered to an idol. Timothy may have been practicing Paul’s admonition in Romans 14:21, “*It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak.*” Wine drinkers tend to avoid the idolatry context of these verses and assume Paul was discussing alcohol.

It has been suggested that Timothy’s stomach problems may have been because of bad water, and that a little alcohol would treat the water enough to diminish its ill effects. Perhaps. Paul is not forbidding Timothy to drink water. Supply the missing words to Paul’s elliptical statement and it reads, “Drink no longer water (only), but use a little wine (also).” To paraphrase: “put a little wine in your water.” That may be a water treatment practice, but it does not sound like an intoxicating drink. People who drink wine now are not using a little to treat bad water.

We need to remember that the alcoholic content of wine in the days of Paul and Timothy, even when at peak fermentation, was low and its intoxicating strength lowered even more as it soured. For most of the common wine, the strength was very low. Take a glass of modern wine, cut it in half with water, and you will be getting close to the alcoholic strength of straight Bible wines at their peak. Cut it in half again and you will be getting into the range in which it was commonly drunk. In the Greek and Roman cultures of Bible times, it was common for people to drink soured wine that was diluted with water, sometimes at a ratio of one part wine to five parts water. That is not the kind of wine people drink today.

First Timothy 5:23, by itself, does not call for absolute abstinence, but neither is it an adequate proof-text to infer a justification for the reasons people drink modern wines. I asked my now departed father about this passage when I was a young man. He answered, “Before anyone uses this to justify their drinking, they need to make sure they are drinking what Timothy drank, and they need to be drinking it for the reason he drank it.”

Paul admonished Timothy to drink a little wine as a remedy for his stomach infirmity. He did not tell him to drink alcohol to be sociable, or to get

a buzz, or to chill. Motive makes a difference. The historical and cultural context also makes a difference. Paul’s counsel, “*drink no longer water, but use a little wine*” was well enough for Timothy for his situation and for the kind of wine he drank in his culture.

Considering the wines and cultures of our day, many would improve their situations if they would DRINK NO LONGER WINE, BUT USE A LITTLE WATER. He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear.

wmhboyd@aol.com

CONTRIBUTIONS

Jean Ware	\$25
Ed Waggoner	\$100
Jeffrey Marlin (in honor of Herbert Marlin)	\$100
C/C Walling, TN	\$100
Jean Ware	\$25
Chuck & Nancy Verkist.....	\$50
Midway C/C, Murfreesboro, TN.....	\$100
Wendell & Wanda Ragsdale.....	\$20
Royce & Linda Goza	\$300
Allen & Irene Tate	\$100
Onedia Smith	\$100
Baker C/C, Baker, FL.....	\$25
Sharon Cudo.....	\$25
Jesse & Linda Nash.....	\$50
Smyrna C/C, Cookeville, TN.....	\$100
Bethlehem C/C, Baxter, TN	\$100
Dunlap C/C, Dunlap, TN.....	\$1,000
Arlington C/C, McMinnville, TN	\$50
Mt. Olivet C/C, Greeneville, TN	\$100
Bradford C/C, Bradford, TN	\$150
Pine St. C/C, Vivian, LA	\$100
Del Brantley	\$50
Neelys Bend C/C, Madison, TN.....	\$100
Anonymous.....	\$25
C/C, Fort Gibson, OK.....	\$750
Anonymous.....	\$100
Beginning Balance	\$24,091.15
Contributions	\$3,745.00
Debits	
Postage	\$2,426.68
Paper.....	\$3,092.00
Supplies	\$178.23
Ending Balance.....	\$22,139.24



SEEK THE OLD PATHS

“Bob Brinkman has passed away” ...**Gates Mills, OH.** “I enjoy your paper and pray you are blessed for your efforts with *Seek The Old Paths*” ...**Garry & Barbara Hoyt, Paducah, KY.** “Please cancel, thank you” ...**Don Whatley, Fruitvale, TX.** “Thank you for the *Old Paths*” ...**Billy Free, Houston, MS.** “Thank you. I love reading spiritual articles from the church” ...**Elsa Anderson, Columbus, OH.** “I was born in McMinnville, TN almost 91 years ago. My grandmother and grandfather lived in Mt. Leo. His name was Pegg. I had an uncle Alvin who preached at a small church around there. Also, my other grand daughter lived in Irving College. Her maiden name was Barnes and there are a lot of Barnes’ there. Her name was Susie Thaxton. Her first husband died when my dad was a little boy and his name was Stubblefield. Thank you for your publication of *Seek The Old Paths*. I enjoy it very much and look forward to receiving it. I will try to send in a donation more often. I am 90 years old and it isn’t always easy for me to get out, but God is good and watches over me” ...**Shirley Hopper, Nashville, TN.** “I am enclosing a check for your publication. This is a private donation. My husband passed away recently so I am a bit behind on my donations. Thank you for all that you do. God bless you all” ...**name withheld, Rochester, NY.** “Thank you” ...**Beverly Barnett, Hiram, GA.** “Thanks for your good work” ...**J. K. Gossett, Oakland, TN.** “Love your publication. Please add me to your list. Thank you!” ...**Debra Woolbert, San Juan, Capistrano, CA.** “Would love to receive your publication” ...**Margie Wright, San Juan, Capistrano, CA.** “We enjoy the paper very much and the copies we have received through the years” ...**Oak Ridge C/C, Baldwin, MS.** “I have just become acquainted with you. Would like to start receiving issues of STOP” ...**Jim Smith, Robinson, TX.** “I would like to receive *Seek The Old Paths* for free” ...**Chris Trapp, Navasota, TX.** [NOTE: STOP is always FREE]. “STOP has helped me grow so much” ...**Barbara Markham, Greenwood Springs, MS.** “Thank you so much for all the papers you have sent Billy Lewis. He has passed away” ...**Charlotte, TN.** “I just read an article in STOP at a friend’s house. Very good article. I would like to start receiving the publication” ...**Cheryl Flores, Columbus, TX.** “I was receiving these and then they stopped. Is it possible to receive them again?” ...**Joan Greer, Chesapeake Beach, MD.** [NOTE: You are still on our mailing list and should be getting each issue around the first of every month.] “John & Ann Elms have passed away” ...**Joaquin, TX.** “I love our Lord Jesus Christ and receiving the truth printed brings my soul joy. May you please add these names to your mailing list for *Seek The Old Paths*? May our Lord Jesus Christ bless you abundantly and continually as you print the truth” ...**Jonathan Chrysler, Jr., Federal Bureau of Prisons, Butner, NC.** “How thankful we are for your stand for the Truth and sound teaching. Please take us off the mailing list for the paper copy as we enjoy the articles online that the Word may be spread more and money saved for your work” ...**Scott & LeeBeth DeGraeve, Athens, AL.** “Please cancel my subscription to STOP” ...**Ken Davis, Lebanon, TN.** “Your articles are the best scripturally and are doctrinal Truth!! In fact, one of our members obeyed the truth of these articles. May Christ Jesus bless your family and your ministry” ...**Paul Lemon, Bardwell, KY.** “I would like to receive *Seek The Old Paths* and any old issues you have in print” ...**Aidan Klingler,**

Vienna, WV. “My dad, **Herbert Marlin**, passed away on March 19, 2026. He read and studied *Seek The Old Paths* regularly. I know he would want your congregation to have this check. My cousin, Roda and (Charlie) Yates gave it to me at his funeral to do with as I wish. I know my dad would be honored for you all to have it. He was an elder and a faithful follower of Christ” ...**Jeff Marlin, Thompson’s Station, TN.** “I have gotten to the point that I can’t read very much so please remove me from the mailing list of *Seek The Old Paths*. Thank you” ...**Wayne Burger, Littleton, NH.** “Please cancel Mark’s subscription. He passed away. Thank you” ...**Mark Parsons, Rock Springs, WV.** “We are newlyweds who want to grow our faith stronger together. Please add us to your mailing list” ...**Alexander & Anastasia Jivojn, Fairfield Township, MI.** “I am from Singapore, Jurong C/C. I would like to subscribe to *Seek The Old Paths*” ...**Peter Wong, Singapore.** [NOTE: We have added you to our “email list” that will notify you when each new issue has been posted to the internet. Sorry, but we do not mail paper copies overseas. Anyone who would like to be added to our email list can do so by sending your name and email address to: mail@seektheoldpaths.com

Jeremiah 6:16 “*Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk therein.*” Why would anyone not want to learn and follow God’s Word? Denominations have convinced people they can’t understand the Bible without their help! That is a lie! **All back issues of STOP are online at: www.seektheoldpaths.com/stop.html**

Seek The Old Paths is a monthly publication of the **Leoni Church of Christ** and is under the oversight of its elders. It is FREE, being supported by the contributions of both individuals and congregations. Its primary purpose and goal in publication can be found in Jude 3, 2 Tim. 4:2, Titus 1:13, Titus 2:1 and 2 Peter 1:12. All mail received may be published unless it is marked “not for publication.” The church building is located at: 2132 Old McMinnville Hwy, Woodbury, TN 37190.

Editor: **Garland M. Robinson** – seektheoldpaths.com

LEONI CHURCH OF CHRIST
PO BOX 7506
MCMINNVILLE, TN 37111
ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
WOODBURY TN
PERMIT NO. 17

Scan this code for access to
ALL BACK ISSUES of *Seek The Old Paths*

