

The BEREAN SEARCHLIGHT™

Studying God's Word, Rightly Divided

May 2026



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This month’s cover features West Point Lighthouse located on Prince Edward Island, Canada.

The **Purpose** of the *Berean Bible Society* is to help you understand, enjoy, and apply the Bible. The **Mission** of BBS is to exalt the Lord Jesus Christ by proclaiming the whole counsel of God according to the revelation of the Mystery. Our **Goals** are to *evangelize* the lost, to *educate* the saved in “rightly dividing the Word of truth” (2 Tim. 2:15), to *energize* the transformation of the Christian life, and to *encourage* the local church.

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A Note from the President

Dear Friends in Christ,

Dr. W. Edward Bedore (1944–2024), first executive director of *Berean Bible Institute*, often told me, “The Reformation is still ongoing.” We tend to think of the Protestant Reformation as having taken place back in the 16th Century, when reformers such as Luther, Zwingli, Knox, and Tyndale protested various unbiblical practices of the Roman Catholic Church, promoting reform and a return to sound biblical doctrine.

However, the Protestant Church today needs its doctrine and practices reformed so that they conform to the truth of God’s Word—or, as the 16th-Century reformers put it, *sola scriptura*: only Scripture. We see this in Protestant teachings about water baptism, tithing, speaking in tongues, Lordship salvation, and confession of sins. A failure to acknowledge Paul’s apostleship and message of grace for the Church today is the core reason for its confusion.

I’m currently working on an eight-part series about the seven churches of Revelation for *Transformed by Grace*. These churches and the Lord’s messages to them have been commonly misapplied to the Body of Christ under grace. How often have we heard, “Behold, I stand at the door, and knock” (Rev. 3:20) used in evangelism, with Christ pictured knocking on the door of the unbeliever’s heart? However, the Lord is knocking at a *believer’s* door, desiring a closer relationship. The challenges to these churches—to overcome, endure patiently, be watchful, refuse to deny Christ’s name, repent of her fornication, etc.—all concern the future Tribulation. These churches are seven Jewish assemblies that will be established after the Rapture of the Church in the early Tribulation.

The Body of Christ has not yet come to “the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man” (Eph. 4:13). There is reforming and refining work to do in light of the revelation given to Paul (Eph. 3:9). As we make that our earnest endeavor, let us do so in the gracious manner told to us by the Apostle Paul:

“And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth” (2 Tim. 2:24-25).

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Kevin J. Sadler, President



Pastor Kevin J. Sadler has been serving as president since 2016. He appears on *Transformed by Grace*, a daily television program that airs nationally. In addition, he is the editor of the *Berean Searchlight*, authors grace literature, and is a Bible conference speaker.

Who's Who

The *Berean Bible Society* (BBS), *Berean Bible Fellowship* (BBF), and the *Berean Bible Institute* (BBI) are often called sister organizations because our doctrinal statements mirror one another. While this is true, it is important to remember that we are three distinct organizations, each of which is served by its own board of directors. The following is a brief synopsis of each ministry:



Berean Bible Society (BBS) was established in 1940. Our main goal is to help believers understand and enjoy the Bible. This is accomplished through the publication of the *Berean Searchlight*, (our monthly magazine), the *Transformed by Grace* TV program, our Grace Study Bible, commentaries on the Bible, grace literature, Sunday school curriculum, gospel tracts, MP3, CD, and DVD messages, *Two Minutes with the Bible*, *Daily Transformation*, *More Minutes with the Bible*; and our conference ministry. Pastor Kevin Sadler is the president of this organization. We can be reached at *Berean Bible Society*, N112 W17761 Mequon Rd., Germantown, WI 53022. Our website is www.bereanbiblesociety.org. You can reach us by phone at 262-255-4750 or email at berean@bereanbiblesociety.org.



Berean Bible Fellowship (BBF) was established in 1968. The *Berean Bible Fellowship* is a fellowship of individual believers in Christ who come together to promote the gospel of the grace of God and the Word of God, rightly divided. The BBF holds two national conferences annually. Pastor Ken Lawson is the president of this organization. You can reach them at *Berean Bible Fellowship*, PO Box 145, Shawano, WI 54166. Their website is www.bbfnews.org. You can reach them by phone at 217-820-7098 or email at bereanbiblefellow68@gmail.com.

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE

Berean Bible Institute (BBI) was established in 1996. *Berean Bible Institute* is a school of college-level adult education that provides sound biblical and doctrinal courses of study. They provide training in ministry and leadership skills to help individuals become prepared to do the work of the ministry. Dr. Robert Nix is the president of this organization. They can be reached at *Berean Bible Institute*, 204 South 7th Ave., PO Box 735, West Bend, WI 53095. Their website is www.bereanbibleinstitute.org. You can reach them by phone at 262-644-5504 or email at bbi@bereanbibleinstitute.org.

Freedom's RELATIONSHIP



(An excerpt from
episode #391 of
Transformed by Grace)

PASTOR KEVIN J. **SADLER**
BBS President/Editor

Under grace, the believer's life is not about keeping the law. Instead, for members of the Church, the Body of Christ, life is lived in a personal relationship with our living Head, Jesus Christ, and in the freedom we have in Him.

CHASING SHADOWS

“Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

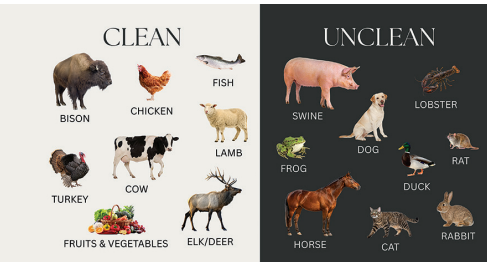
“Which are a shadow of things to come...” (Col. 2:16-17a).

“Therefore” introduces a conclusion that stems from the context of believers being “complete in Him” (v. 10), and Christ “Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross” (v. 14).

In light of these truths, Paul teaches the church under grace to “Let no man therefore judge you.” Since the Colossians were complete in Christ and free from the law, they were to let no one sit in judgment of them for living by grace and in their freedom from the law. They were not to allow anyone to have power over them concerning keeping the law, nor permit such mistaken opinions and beliefs to influence their conduct.

Paul was reminding the church that we are not responsible to man for our conduct but to the Lord. No person has a right to impose the law on us as a burden when Christ has made us free from it. Our salvation is all Christ by grace, and so is our spiritual growth and walk. Our salvation, spiritual growth, and walk are not by Christ and the law, but in Christ alone by grace.

When Paul told the Colossians not to let any person judge them “in meat, or in drink,” he was referring to the prohibitions concerning food and drink within the dietary regulations of the law of Moses. Under Jewish law, God declared certain foods to be clean or unclean (Lev. 11:1-47).



Under grace, however, there are no such prohibitions on food. We are free from the law’s restrictions concerning food. God has cleansed all food today (Acts 10:9-16), and the dietary regulations of the law are no longer in force under grace. We should “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink” today, because “every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused” (1 Tim. 4:4).

Paul continued, “Let no man therefore judge you...in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days.” Here Paul refers to the annual, monthly, and weekly observances and celebrations commanded under the law.

“An holyday” refers to the festivals of Israel, one of the seven annual feasts of the Lord under the law (Lev. 23:1-44): the

Passover, Unleavened Bread, Firstfruits, Weeks or Wave-Offering (Pentecost), Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah), Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur), and Tabernacles (Sukkot). These feasts are still observed by those who practice Judaism today, and the days are noted on some calendars.

“The new moon” refers to the observances and sacrifices on the first day of each month in accordance with the law (Num. 28:11-14). “The sabbath days” refers to the weekly observance of the seventh day, in which they refrained from all work (Ex. 20:8-11), plus the special sabbath days associated with the feast celebrations.

Christ has blotted out all these observances that were once mandatory under the law and has taken them out of the way. It is unnecessary and even wrong for us to observe these things under grace.

These things of the law “are a shadow of things to come” (Col. 2:17), and, as the writer of Hebrews notes, “For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things” (Heb. 10:1). A shadow is not the real thing and has no substance. It is an image cast by a real object of the same form. The reality is what makes the shadow.

David Dykes told the following: “When I was growing up in L.A. (Lower Alabama), we usually had four or five dogs and



cats to claim as our pets. By virtue of being the oldest child, my older sister, Judy, demanded the right to name all our pets...We had a dog that was part German Shepherd which Judy named Rex. While Rex was a ferocious looking dog, he was a big chicken at heart. He was scared of everything. None of our pets ever came inside; they were 'yard pets.' But once when it thundered, Rex was so frightened he broke through the screen door and came in and hid under the table!

"His bark wasn't worse than his bite, because he seldom barked...and he never bit. However, there was one thing that could make Rex bark. Sometimes when a bird or a flock of birds flew over on a sunny day, Rex often chased their shadows on the ground. I can recall watching as one bird flew around in a circle with Rex chasing the circling shadow on the ground, barking the whole time. Poor Rex—he never figured out the shadow wasn't real.

"Sadly, there are many well-meaning Christians who are

doing the same thing. They are chasing shadows."¹

Paul didn't want the Colossian believers chasing the shadows of the law or to be influenced to prefer Jewish observances over Christ. For both the believing and the unbelieving, it is a tragedy to substitute the shadows of ritual and religion for Christ while missing Christ Himself. Paul did not want believers, under grace, complete in Christ, and delivered from the law, to be influenced to live by the past observances and ordinances of the law. These things were merely "a shadow of things to come," when we have the reality.

"...but the body is of Christ" (Col. 2:17b).

Christ is the "body" (Col. 2:17) or the substance of the shadow; He is the reality casting the shadow. Christ is the One to Whom the shadows pointed. The shadow of the law and its ceremonies prophesied, by way of type, many things about Christ's person and work before His first coming, and He fulfilled those things perfectly

as the body, substance, and reality of the shadow.

Having Christ, our walk under grace is not in keeping the external rules of the law, which were a shadow of Christ, but having an inner relationship with Christ Himself by grace. That relationship is carried out in our freedom from the law, being guided and led by Christ's grace instruction for the church, which is found in Paul's epistles. The law has been taken out of the way, and Christ alone is sufficient for our Christian lives.

HOLD YOUR HEAD UP!

“Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

“And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God” (Col. 2:18-19).

The first problem Paul dealt with was preferring the shadow of the law over the reality of Christ. The second problem was preferring inferior beings over the Head.

In Colosse, men who had a “voluntary humility” were leading believers astray and away from Christ. Voluntary humility refers to humility in an ironic sense—an artificial, self-imposed form of modesty. Their false humility was expressed in

the “worshipping of angels.” In other words, in their feigning humility, believing themselves unworthy to appeal directly to God, they were instead worshipping angels and appealing to God through them.



In their attempts to establish support and authority for themselves, it seems clear that these men claimed to have seen visions of angels or from angels. However, Paul set the record straight by writing that they were “intruding into those things which he hath not seen” (Col. 2:18), meaning that they had not really seen anything. Like they faked their humility, they had fabricated the accounts of their visions. And while they made a show of humility, Paul says, they were actually “vainly puffed up” by their fleshly minds, engaging in self-aggrandizement.

In their pride and false teaching concerning the worship of angels, these false teachers were “not holding the Head” (v. 19). Christ is the Creator and Lord over all angelic ranks and orders (1:16-18). He “is the Head of all principality and power” (2:10).

Christ is supremely worthy of our worship, not angels.

Previously in this epistle, Paul wrote, “And He is the Head of the body, the church” (1:18). To worship angels is to misunderstand the Headship of Christ over the church. We must not substitute anything for Him. As our Head, Christ is Lord over the church. He alone is the One we worship, serve, and hold fast to in the Body of Christ. He is held in His rightful place when He is held supremely above all. We are in our rightful place when our relationship is directly with Him.

We cannot live the Christian life without the Head. If we do not hold fast or cling to the Lord in our personal relationship with Him, we will lack what Christ supplies in our Christian lives. But as we do hold fast to Christ, we cling to the One, “In Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (2:3), the One in Whom “dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (2:9).

Paul tells us the Head is that “from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit

together, increaseth with the increase of God” (2:19).

God the Son supplies His Body, the church, with spiritual nourishment, life, and strength. He knits together and nourishes the bonds between members of the whole Body. Paul’s mention of “the joints and bands [ligaments]” demonstrates the connection of the members of the Body to one another and how the members work and move together in coordination and depend on each other.

It is through Christ that the Body “increaseth with the increase of God.” Spiritual nourishment and growth come to the church, not from the law, but from our Head and our connection with Him. As we hold fast to Him, and the closer our walk and relationship is with Him by faith, the greater will be our increase and growth in becoming more like Him.

ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR WATSON

“Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,



“Our freedom under grace today is about living in the glory and blessing of our personal relationship with Jesus Christ.”

“(Touch not; taste not; handle not;

“Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?”

“Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh” (Col. 2:20-23).

“Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world,” being “dead with Christ” refers to our spiritual baptism (Rom. 6:3-4) and that we were crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20), while “the rudiments of the world” refers to the law of Moses. In Galatians 4:3, Paul wrote, “Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.” The word “elements” in Galatians and “rudiments” in Colossians 2:20 are translated from the same Greek word, and both usages refer to rule- and ceremony-based religion. The Mosaic law is definitely that and is rudimentary and elementary compared to living for Christ under grace.

The law governed Israel through a system of commandments, rules, rituals, observances, and requirements that she attempted to keep through her own efforts but continually failed to uphold. Under grace, our lives are governed by grace, faith in Christ, our freedom in Him, the internal strength of the Holy Spirit, and the written Word of God, rightly divided.

In Colossians 2:20, Paul reminds the church that, when we died with Christ, we died to the law (Rom. 7:4,6). We are free from the law, and that being so, Paul wondered, “why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances...?” To submit to the ordinances of the law does not sanctify our Christian lives under grace; Christ does that. We should not go back to the law when we are dead to it in Christ. Holding fast to Christ in our relationship with Him is how we increase and grow spiritually under grace.

Speaking of the ordinances, Paul wrote that these ordinances of the law say, “Touch not; taste not; handle not” (Col. 2:21). This sounds like a parent’s refrain with young children! *Don’t touch that. Don’t put that in your mouth. Don’t handle that.* “Do not, do not, do not” is the refrain of legalism.



It’s been said well that “The essence of legalism is trusting in the religious activity rather than trusting in God. It is putting our confidence in a practice rather than in a Person. And without fail, this will lead us

to love the practice more than the Person.”² This is the true danger of legalism.

Some of the Colossian believers were following the law and applying its restrictions to what they should eat, touch, or handle. But Paul said that these things, under grace, “all are to perish with the using,” or they fail in their purpose, even as we try to comply with them. To deny ourselves things in accordance with the law does not restrain the flesh and does not have the value it might appear to have for one’s sanctification.

The Colossians were being persuaded to subject themselves to the ordinances of the law “after the commandments and doctrines of men.” Bad teaching was leading the Colossians astray, causing them to follow the law when they were under grace. To live by the law is to operate completely contrary to the grace of God that is the rule of life during the dispensation of grace.

There is a lot of bad teaching today that puts people under the law, but we need to take our stand on the fact that, having died with Christ, we are free from the law. And in our freedom from the law, we are to live by grace through faith in Christ.

Paul then gave a strong indictment against legalism in verse 23: “Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in

any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.”

INDICTMENT


As to one who tries to follow the law and practices rigid self-denial, Paul wrote, “Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom,” meaning that they have an outward appearance of wisdom and spirituality. But it is just the appearance of wisdom and not real wisdom. They do this through their “will worship.” Will worship is self-imposed, fleshly worship and the attempt to serve God through one’s own willpower in an attempt to keep the law. It is not worship of God in Spirit and in truth (John 4:23-24), according to God’s truth for today.

In their “will worship” and in the “neglecting of the body,” they have “a shew of...humility.” People who deny themselves in this way give the appearance that they are humble and pious. They have a show of humility, but it is only a show. It is not genuine humility. It’s pride.

Lastly, Paul says that all of this is “not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh,” meaning that it has no value in truly controlling the flesh. Believers

often try to be spiritual or to appear spiritual through outward things. The thought process is that the more they deny themselves, the more they impress God and other believers.

However, spiritual growth and maturity come through faith in Christ and living by grace in the power of the Spirit. As we keep our focus on the Lord and the grace of God, the ways of legalism fall away. Our

freedom under grace today is about living in the glory and blessing of our personal relationship with Jesus Christ. 

1. David Dykes, “When I Was Growing Up In L.A. (Lower Alabama) We...” Sermon Central, October 9, 2006, <https://sermon-central.com/sermon-illustrations/29263/when-i-was-growing-up-in-l-a-lower-alabama-we-by-david-dykes>.

2. Jack Deer, *Surprised by the Power of the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1993), p. 151. <https://sermons.logos.com/sermons/286273-the-heresy-of-legalism>.



Amazing Creation

Joel Achenbach writes: “There aren’t many people who are particularly fond of flies. Most of us probably wonder why God even made them in the first place. But have you ever thought about God’s creative genius in how he made them?”

“According to British scientists, the ‘fly is the most talented aerodynamicist on the planet—superior to any bird, bat, or bee. A housefly can make six turns a second, hover, fly straight up, fly straight down, fly backwards, do somersaults, land on the ceiling, and perform various other show-off maneuvers. And it has a brain smaller than a sesame seed.’

“The scientists also note that ‘flies are loaded with sensors. In addition to their compound eyes, which permit panoramic imagery and are excellent at detecting motion, they have wind-sensitive hairs and antennae. They also have three light sensors, called ocelli, on the tops of their heads, which tell them which way is up. Roughly two-thirds of a fly’s entire nervous system is devoted to processing visual images.’

“If God put so much wisdom into ordinary houseflies, imagine what it means to know that we are ‘fearfully and wonderfully made.’”¹

1. Joel Achenbach, “Fly Like a Fly,” accessed 3/24/2026, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/pastors/preaching/sermon-illustrations/flies-are-miracles-of-creation/>





Should Persecution Arise

From the *May, 1971* edition
of the *Berean Searchlight*

PASTOR C. R. **STAM** (1908-2003)
Berean Bible Society Founder

How instructive are God’s ways with His people!

Israel demands a king “like all the nations” (1 Sam. 8:5), so God gives them the most handsome, imposing man in Israel: Saul, the son of Kish, a full foot taller than anyone around him (1 Sam. 9:2).

But—God allows the Philistines to challenge Israel in the person of Goliath, a giant still much taller than Saul. Saul is perhaps seven feet tall, but Goliath is nine! Day after day Goliath chides Israel: “Why should our armies fight each other? Why not send one man to do battle with me? If he wins, we will be your servants; if I win, you will be ours” (see 1 Sam. 17:8,9).

But the one to whom Israel’s army looks for leadership, powerful, handsome King Saul, is no match for the pagan giant. Though the chosen representative of God and His people, Saul cowers in the background while Israel’s armies fret and worry.

To break the stalemate and teach a much-needed lesson, God now sends to the scene a mere “stripling,” David, the son of Jesse, a young lad with no training whatsoever in warfare. Upon arriving at the scene the lad is indignant that this Philistine should be allowed to “defy the armies of the living God,” and goes to Saul, declaring that he will fight the giant.

“GOD HATH CHOSEN
THE WEAK THINGS OF THE
WORLD TO CONFOUND
THE THINGS WHICH ARE
MIGHTY....”

I CORINTHIANS 1:27



This is humiliating to Saul, the great king who was to have led Israel in victorious battle against all her enemies. Under the circumstances, however, Saul is persuaded to let David face the giant, and provides him with a suit of armor (1 Sam. 17:38), but feeling that the armor will prove a hindrance rather than a help, David declines to wear it. Armed only with a staff and a sling, he goes to a nearby brook and, choosing “five smooth stones,” goes forth to meet the giant (v. 40).

There they stand, facing each other! The giant, nine feet tall, has a helmet of brass, a heavy coat of armor, a spear “like a weaver’s beam” and a shield to protect himself, while little David has only a staff, a sling—and God! Result: God uses young David to bring the great Goliath down—and to show all that He, the God of Israel, is “mighty to save.”


“So David prevailed over the Philistine with a sling and with a stone, and smote the Philistine, and slew him....And when the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they fled” (vv. 50,51).

Thus, God would teach us again the age-old lesson that since He is not impressed with human greatness, neither should we, His children, be overawed by it. Should persecution arise against God’s people, even here in America, it will prove a great encouragement to us to remember that “God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty...that no flesh should glory [boast] in His presence” (1 Cor. 1:27-29).

How prone we are to forget this! Indeed, while searching among Jesse’s sons for a successor to Saul, as Israel’s king, even the godly Samuel had looked at Jesse’s noble-looking firstborn and said: “Surely the Lord’s anointed is before Him” (1 Sam. 16:6). But the Lord reproved Samuel, saying:

“Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (v. 7).

And who was the Lord’s choice to succeed Saul as king of Israel? None other than Jesse’s youngest son, a mere lad, called a “stripling” by Saul, and overlooked and left out in the field as the other sons of Jesse were being considered for the position! The Bible is full of this: God choosing “nobodies” to accomplish His work, while setting aside those who are acclaimed by all as “somebodies.”

This is both a warning and an encouragement to us. Those who are “great,” humanly speaking, may always be overcome by those who are still “greater,” while those who are nothing, but find their all in God, have help that cannot fail. 

Question Box



"I really don't know what to make of these phrases: 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us' (3:13); 'we were kept under the law' (3:23); 'the law was our schoolmaster' (3:24); 'we are no longer under a schoolmaster' (3:25); 'turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements' (4:9); 'and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage' (5:1). 'Would you be able to help with clarification?'"

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us..." (Gal. 3:13). Galatians was written to Gentiles who placed themselves under the law of Moses. This took place when Judaizers joined the assembly (cf. Acts 15:5). Paul is just reminding them that as members of the Body of Christ, they were redeemed from the law's curse (through Christ), just like we are today. The law, though spiritual (Rom. 7:14), is a curse for everyone because it's impossible to keep it. We should thank God that the Lord Jesus Christ paid the penalty the law demanded for sin.

"...we were kept under the law..." (Gal. 3:23). Backing up to verse 22 helps. Scripture has concluded **all under sin—both Jew and Gentile.** *"But before faith came"* (v. 23), both Jew and Gentile were kept under the law. In other words, both (Jews and Gentiles [as proselytes]) would have to keep the law in faith, like the parents of John the Baptist (Luke 1:6) and as the Pentecostal believers in Acts 2.

"...the law was our schoolmaster..." (Gal. 3:24). Before the revelation of the mystery, the law itself could never save because it was (and is) impossible for anyone to keep it perfectly. Its purpose was to show, even under the prophetic program, that no one could keep it. The same is true today; the only purpose of the law is to show our need to trust in Christ alone for salvation.

"...we are no longer under a schoolmaster" (Gal. 3:25). Paul was just reminding the Galatians (and us), that we're not under the law, as Paul writes in Romans 6:14-15.

"...turn ye again..." and "...be not entangled again..." (Gal. 4:9; 5:1). Before they were saved, the law pronounced them guilty before God. Once saved, though, Paul is asking them why they would *"turn ye again"* to the law that condemns and then commands them to *"stand fast"* in the liberty that's in the Lord Jesus Christ.

—Pastor Jim Tollar




Spiritual Maturity

DR. W. EDWARD BEDORE
Guest Writer

The idea of spiritual growth, or spiritual maturity, is closely related to the doctrine of sanctification. *Positional sanctification* takes place instantly at the time of salvation when, having placed their trust in Jesus Christ and His finished work of redemption alone (i.e. His death, burial, and resurrection), believers are identified with Christ in God's sight and "*set apart*" (i.e. sanctified) according to God's will and purpose.

Practical sanctification, however, is a process that takes time. As new believers begin their new life "*in Christ*" they grow spiritually as they learn God's Word and properly apply it to their lives. Having called on believers to "*present your bodies a living sacrifice*," the Apostle Paul explains that this is accomplished through "*the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God*" (Rom. 12:1-2).

The believer's mind is "*renewed*" as they put off the values, philosophies, and thought patterns of the world and replace them with *grace thinking* which includes a new values system and pattern of conduct. You see the system by which we think will set the standard by which we conduct ourselves. We are admonished to "*Let this mind [way of thinking] be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*" (Phil. 2:5). The point Paul is making is that Christ gave Himself wholly to do the Father's will and so should we. True spiritual growth is marked, not by how much Scripture we know or how precisely we have honed our doctrine, but rather by how much we actually apply the Word of God, rightly divided, to our own life. Another way to put it is that the more we learn to trust God, and reflect that trust in every aspect of our life, the more spiritually mature we are. The evidence of spiritual maturity is not simply knowledge of the Scriptures, but the demonstration of that knowledge through love (see 1 Cor. 13:1-13; Eph. 3:16-19; 4:15-16; 5:1-2; Phil. 2:1-4). The knowledge of Christ's love for us should cause us to love Him in such a way that it is demonstrated in our attitude, conduct, and commitment to serve God. Spiritual maturity is marked by spiritual knowledge being put into action. 

57th Annual

Berean Bible Fellowship Conference

June 21-25, 2026

Theme: *Foundational Truths* (1 Cor. 3:10-11)

Location: *Community Bible Church*
1427 W. Main Street, Tipp City, Ohio

Guest speakers from around the country will be present to proclaim the riches of God's grace!

Bible Hour: Pastor Andy Kern

Classes and Events:

Nursery (3 and under): Provided for the morning and evening meetings

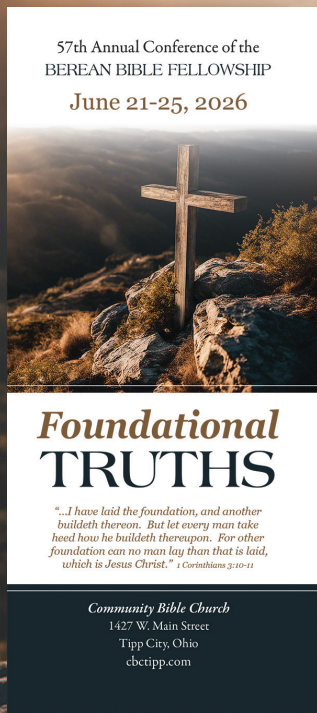
Children (4-12): 9:00 a.m. to Noon
(program Wednesday night)

Teenagers (13-18): 9:00 a.m. to Noon
(Bonfire Sunday night—Daily afternoon activities)

Monday 8:30 p.m. Singles Get-together (16+)

Tuesday 8:30 p.m. Ice Cream Social
(hosted by Word of Grace Mission)

Wednesday 8:30 p.m. Campfire/S'mores
(All are welcome)



For more information, please contact:

Community Bible Church at 937.667.2710/cbctipp@gmail.com,
or Pastor Ken Lawson (BBF President) at kandblawson@sbcglobal.net,
or visit the BBF website at www.bbfnews.org



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Comfort from Above
(8 episodes)



Delivered from Darkness
(4 episodes)



The Seven Churches of Revelation
(8 episodes)

In these 28-minute programs, Pastor Kevin Sadler gives clear and practical teaching from the Word of God in light of the message which was committed to the Apostle Paul for today.

Why Run to Win?

An excerpt from
So Run That You May Win

PASTOR ROLLIN **WILSON**
Guest Writer

The only two direct New Testament references to the Judgment Seat of Christ, Romans 14:10 and 2 Corinthians 5:10, are written by Paul. This event is also called by the Greek word *Bema* (judgment seat) of Christ, and is connected with His Rapture return for the Church,

“For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

“Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thes. 4:16,17).

“For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ *at His coming?*” (1 Thes. 2:19). Only Paul writes about that coming and to it he attributes the word

mystery, “Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed” (1 Cor. 15:51).

The teaching of Christ’s Rapture return for the Church is distinctly Pauline. And the teaching of the Judgment Seat of Christ is found only in Paul’s writings.

It is of major importance that the Church prepare itself for the final accounting that it must give to the Lord at this Bema of Christ, “...for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ....So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God” (Rom. 14:10,12).

There is no doubt in Paul’s mind that every believer is running in this race of life which will be evaluated at the Bema of Christ. Each believer will be well served to follow Paul’s example as he daily fought the good fight, stayed his course, and kept the faith. Thus, he wrote:

“Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing” (2 Tim. 4:8).

We have posed the question, Why Run to Win? The answer is inferred from the question itself, i.e. “Why Run?” (of course, one runs) “To Win!” Three reasons present themselves as direct answers to our question, from the following text.

“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

“And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

“I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

“But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway” (1 Cor. 9:24-27).

WHY RUN TO WIN?

Because It Is a Command of Grace

The grammatical construction of the phrase “so run” (9:24b) is noteworthy. The verb *run* is in the imperative mood, “of or relating to or constituting the grammatical mood that expresses the will to influence the behavior of another. 2: not to be avoided or evaded: URGENT!”¹

“The imperative is the mood of command, or entreaty—the mood of *volition*. It is the genius of the imperative to express the appeal of will to will. In ordinary linguistic communication, the primary appeal is from intellect to intellect; but in the imperative, one will addresses another. It expresses neither probability nor possibility, but only intention, and is, therefore, the furthest removed from reality.”²

Does Paul desire “to influence the behavior” of these Corinthians by commanding them to “so run”? It is obvious that he does! In the final



“Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize?”

—1 Corinthians 9:24—

analysis, it is the grace of God which teaches “us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, *we should live* soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:12). Paul uses the imperative “so *run*” to command, influence, and entreat believers to godly activity for Christ.

Remember Paul’s teachings are grace teachings, and therefore, grace commands, entreats, and influences behavior.

Another grammatical observation in the phrase “so run” is that the verb is present tense. Therefore, it is continuous action, the believer does not cease *running*.

Paul uses the race of 1 Corinthians 9:24a to illustrate the believer’s contest in his service for Christ. *Strong’s Concordance* sees this word *race*, the Greek *stadion*: “a stade or certain measure of distance; by implication a stadium or race-course (furlong, race).”

In the *race*, the prize was not received until the runner had completed his course. In 2 Timothy, Paul realized that his martyrdom was near, “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand” (2 Tim. 4:6). He saw his life of service completed, “...I have finished my course” (2 Tim. 4:7). He successfully crossed the finish line, and expectantly awaits the Judge’s verdict, i.e. “a crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:8).

Because God Has No Cheap Rewards

The issue at stake in the Greek games was a *crown*: “a wreath; a chaplet, as a badge of royalty; a prize in the public games or a symbol of honor.”³ Paul describes this crown at the public games as *corruptible*.

However, the crown for which the believer *runs* is called *incorruptible*. This word “incorruptible” (immortal) describes the glorified, resurrection body promised to the believer at Christ’s Rapture return, “For this corruptible must put on incorruption...” (1 Cor. 15:53).



What have we experienced that has been incorruptible? Yet, Paul says the crown (reward) that Christ has for the faithful runner of His race is incorruptible. Therefore, it is associated with glory, heaven, and eternity, as is the resurrection body, “...It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption....It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory.... It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body” (1 Cor. 15:42-44).



“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, *temperance*: against such there is no law.” Galatians 5:22-23

Remember the crowns that Paul named:

“...my brethren dearly beloved...my joy and crown...” (Phil. 4:1).

“...crown of rejoicing...” (1 Thes. 2:19).

“...a crown of righteousness” (2 Tim. 4:8).

The runner must finish his course, and he must compete according to the rules, “And if a man also strive for masteries [i.e. the athletic competition], yet is he not crowned, *except he strive lawfully*” (2 Tim. 2:5). Yes, even under grace teaching, there are rules!

A major rule in this race is *temperance*, “And every man that striveth for the mastery is *temperate* in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible” (1 Cor. 9:25). Temperance is self-control. The attribute of *temperance* is part of the fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:23. Every runner needs this virtue. Note how encompassing is temperance, “temperate *in all things*”! What a training rule! If the Greeks in their public games needed temperance to

win a corruptible crown, the believer needs that fruit of the Spirit to obtain an incorruptible one. “Incidentally, the crowns are not merely tokens of recognition, though they are that also, but eternal realities worth living for—worth dying for!”⁴

Because It Is Exemplified in Paul, Our Pattern

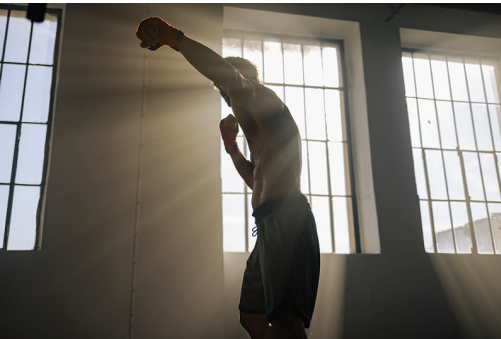
“I therefore so run...” (1 Cor. 9:26). Paul lived by his own teachings. He practiced what he preached.

Hardly has the ink of verses 24 and 25 dried before Paul writes, “I therefore so run...”! He exhibits no delay, nor hesitation here. He puts his life into the race. He was no mere spectator. Grace has commanded, “So run” (9:24). Paul’s response, “I *therefore* so run.” He had commanded others: “So run,” where the verb was present tense. Now, in his response, “I therefore so run” (9:26), he uses no less than the same present tense!

Obviously, Paul’s clear response is set in Scripture by the Holy Spirit’s inspiration, to challenge the Church to

imitation. We grace believers who revel in following Paul's doctrine need to equally follow him in 1 Corinthians 9:26!

Paul sees this race to be *run*. This thought is seen in 2 Thessalonians 3:1, "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the Word of the Lord *may have free course* [i.e., run, or move hastily], and be glorified, even as it is with you." Paul did not compete "uncertainly" (1 Cor. 9:26). This word is also used in 1 Corinthians 14:8 of an uncertain sound of the trumpet when summoning troops to battle. There are definite times when certainty is necessary, and Paul exhibited it as he so ran!



The figure of fighting (to box, or fight as a boxer) is used by Paul to illustrate that he knew how to give a telling blow (lit., to blacken the eye). This was no mere "shadow boxing" with Paul, "so fight I, *not as one that beateth the air*" (9:26).

Paul held his body captive; actually, he *reduced it to slavery*, "But I keep under my body, and *bring it into subjection...*"

(9:27). Is this a mark of legalism by Paul? Had he retreated back under Moses' performance system? Or does he not demonstrate the same grace which causes one to yield one's body according to Romans 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service"?

The believer knows that his "body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:19,20).

Remember, it is at the Judgment Seat of Christ that the believer "may receive *the things done in his body, according to that he hath done*, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:10).

Paul understood that by grace what was taught here (1 Cor. 9:24-27) must be lived *by grace*. If it were possible for Paul to become a *castaway* (disapproved), is it not also possible for the rest of the Church?

Therefore, Why Run? Dare any believer not to run? Paul permits no option nor choice here—rather he commands, "So run." And even beyond that, he says, "So run that ye may obtain"! Permit your faith to rise to the challenge of God's Word, and so run that you may win!

WHEN I SEE CHRIST

What a challenge
for our best
Our every talent
to invest!

Not on earth,
our treasures hoard,
But as He said,
in heaven stored.


Then He'll prove
what here He taught
That no man e'er
served God for nought.

So as for me
whate'er the cost,
I want to count
no day as lost.

I want not temporal
things to dim
my heavenly vision
and sight of Him,

But day by day
to serve my Lord
And wait His time
for my reward.

—J.C. O'Hair

1. *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Tenth Edition*; Merriam-Webster, Incorporated, Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A., 1993, p.582.
2. H. E. Dana, Th.D., and Julius R. Mantey, Th.D., D.D., *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, The Macmillan Company, Toronto, Canada, 1957, p. 174.
3. *GodSpeed*, by N. Blaine Morgan, Brian G. Moore, Copyright (C) 1987-1990 Brian G. Moore, Kingdom Age Software, Strong's #4735.
4. William P. Heath, from personal correspondence. 

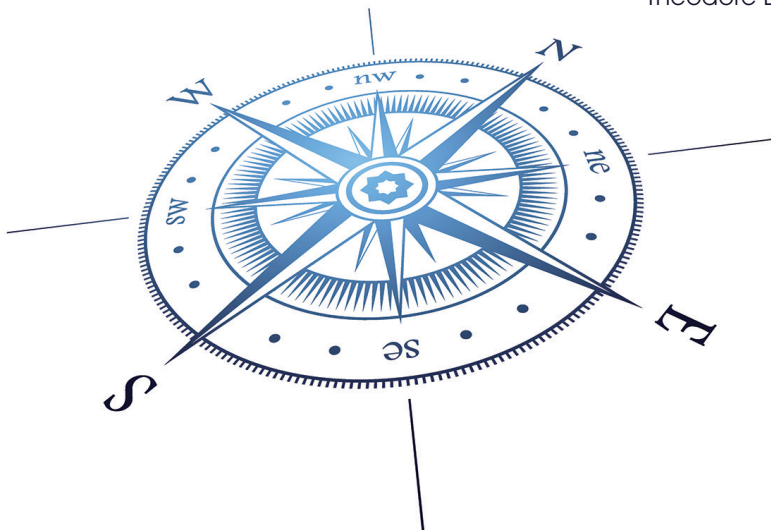


SO RUN THAT YOU MAY WIN

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“As you think of the gospel’s extending in all directions, have you ever considered the fact that the gospel is the Good **News** and that the word ‘**NEWS**’ contains the letters of all four directions? We must not restrict the gospel to any area but must take it in every direction to a world that desperately needs to hear about Jesus Christ.”

—Theodore Epp





Husband to Wife

Steven James writes, “I’ll never understand my wife. The day she moved in with me after we were married, she started opening and closing my kitchen cabinets, gasping, ‘You don’t have any shelf paper! We’re going to have to get some shelf paper in here before I move my dishes in here.’ ‘But why?’ I asked innocently. ‘To keep the dishes clean,’ she answered matter-of-factly. I didn’t understand how the dust would magically migrate off the dishes if they had sticky blue paper under them, but I knew when to be quiet.

“Then came the day when I left the toilet seat up. ‘We never left the toilet seat up in my family,’ she scolded. ‘It’s impolite.’ ‘It wasn’t impolite in my family,’ I said. But I started putting it down from then on.

“In addition to these lessons, I also learned how I was supposed to squeeze the toothpaste tube, which towel to use after a shower, and where the spoons are supposed to go when I set the table. I had no idea. I was so uneducated. Nope, I’ll never understand my wife. She washes dishes before sending them through the dishwasher, and sorts laundry into different piles before throwing it into the washing machine. Can you imagine?

“Then, after we had kids, she acted even stranger. She began carrying around a diaper bag the size of a minivan, talking in one-syllable paragraphs, singing nursery rhymes at all hours of the day, and taking pictures constantly. She carried our baby everywhere—on her back, on her front, in her arms, over her shoulder. She got up at all hours to calm the kids, she cleaned up spills, changed dirty diapers, hardly without complaint. One day, a friend of mine snickered at the bumper sticker my wife had put on the back of our van: ‘Being a Mom Is a Work of Heart.’ But I didn’t mind.

“On another day, in a thoughtless moment, I said something that sent her fleeing to the bedroom in tears. I went in to apologize, knowing what I said was hurtful. ‘I forgive you,’ she said. And you know what? She did. She never brought it up again. Not even when she got angry and could have hauled out the heavy artillery. She forgave, and she forgot.

“Nope, I’ll never understand my wife. And you know what? Our daughter is acting more and more like her mother every day. And if she turns out to be anything like her mom, someday there’s going to be another luckiest guy in this world, who is thankful for the shelf paper in his cupboard.”

“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil” (Prov. 31:10-11).

BBS

Letter Excerpts



From Arkansas:

“Some years back my grandparents brought your organization to my knowledge, and ever since, your *Searchlight* has brought enlightenment and understanding to me...I also pass it along to other brothers who I hope get the same out of it as I do.”

From South Carolina:

“My husband and I really love and enjoy Kevin’s teaching that comes on right after Les [Feldick]. You make a great team. Surely the Lord will come soon for His church...P.S. I have been “TRANSFORMED BY GRACE.”

From Texas:

“I found your TBG channel and I have been so blessed. Ministries and messages like this (rightly dividing) are so hard to find. I’m so glad I did!”

From Our Inbox:

“I so appreciate your ‘Why Paul’ article in the October *Searchlight*. I have seen in 40 years a movement in evangelical circles to Reformed Theology which of course with its Neo Calvinist Lordship nonsense leaves many unsure of their salvation. You comment hit home that salvation has always been by faith but only under Paul has it been faith alone was a nice clarification.”

From Our Inbox:

“I’ve just finished the March edition of the *Searchlight* and was thrilled to see the article ‘Amazing Creation.’ What a fabulous addition. I don’t know if it’s permanent or not, but it certainly should be. I didn’t think this magazine could get any better. Proven wrong, I’m glad! Devoted fan.”

From Our Inbox:

“Sirs, today I received the *Searchlight*. It was, and is a blessing. I really loved the teaching on Bible contrasts. I’ll never stop reading the magazine. Truly a blessing.”

From Oregon:

“I rejoice and thank God for you all, for your great endeavors of ministering the true Word of God...Would be a wonder[ful] gift to have a minister of the gospel of grace here. Please pray about that. I also would like to thank you for your faithfulness....You’ve been a steady ship which makes me love and appreciate you all the more. Will continue to pray for all...Thank you for all you do and continue to do until we go home.”

From Northern Ireland:

“I so benefit spiritually from this daily devotional to my inbox; may God bless you in your labors for Him. I look forward to receiving it each day.”

From Florida:

“I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your reply to me. I read it through, and I’m going to read it again. Thank you very much. Blessings on you. I enjoy your style of teaching.”

From Uganda:

“Thank you so much Pastor Cornelius Stam, I have been greatly blessed by this article [“The Accomplishments of Calvary”], Jesus loved us in our weakness, our sinfulness, and in our rebellion...thus Romans 5:10 declares that when we were still enemies of God, Jesus gave His life to reconcile mankind with God...this is awesome. May God bless your ministry at the *Berean Bible Society*.”

From Our Inbox:

(Responding to Pastor Paul Sadler’s article “Christ and Him Crucified”) “My heart is overflowing with gratitude of God’s love, which is beyond comprehension! Thank you for reminding us of our own existence of blessings and the realities of how much our Lord suffered and died an excruciating death and separation from God the Father.... This article brought me closer than ever to our Savior that bled, died and rose victorious over sin. The cross of Christ in all its horrific forms brought an outcome so magnificent, it’s impossible to put into words. They hated Him without a cause. Therefore, we should not be surprised when the world hates us without a cause for standing for the truth of the gospel.”

From Our Inbox:

(Responding to Pastor Kevin’s Sadler’s article “One More Year”) “This was the best explanation of this parable we have ever read. Thank you for sharing this with all your readers. We never understood the ‘one more year’ until reading this article. You made this parable come alive for us today. Thank you, thank you, thank you.”

From Minnesota:

“Thank you for helping me to understand and study the truth, rightly divided.”

From YouTube:

(Responding to *Transformed by Grace* “I Am the Way, the Truth and the Life”) “You answered a question that I have had concerning John 14:1-3. Thank you for this great teaching. We met you at the Ohio Bible Conference....Wonderful time!”

From Colorado:

“So happy to hear things are coming along for the Grace Study Bible....I pray donations from us all will meet the costs for BBS.”

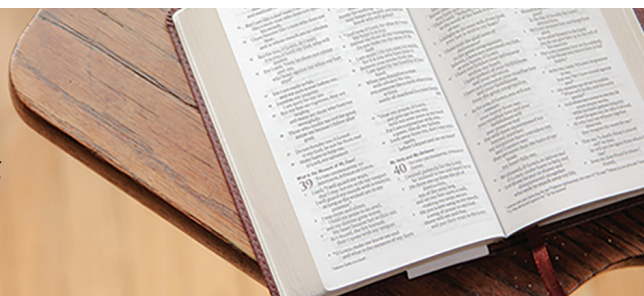
From Indiana:

(Responding to *Grace Study Bible*) “I can’t wait for the dispensational Grace Study Bible...Thank you for the diligence in your careful and persistent work in completing the Bible.”

From Our Mailbox:

“Thank you for your godly writing! God bless!”

“Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth.”

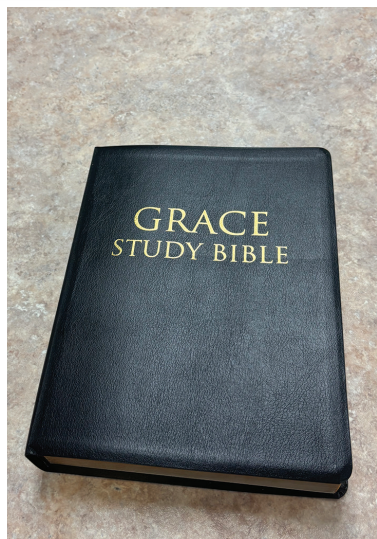


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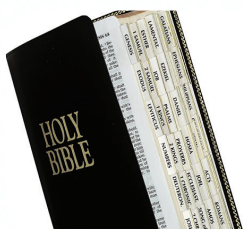
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Estate planning: If you are planning to draw up or update a will this year or update one that's outdated, please consider including *Berean Bible Society* in your estate planning. You might also consider speaking with a Christian financial advisor about other creative ways to help support the needs of the Lord's work, such as establishing a charitable trust or naming *Berean Bible Society* as the beneficiary of your life insurance policy or retirement account. These are just a few ways to ensure your legacy is used for the glory of God.

Hawkeye State Meetings: This month, BBS President Kevin Sadler will join Pastor Barney Bornhoft to hold a conference at his assembly, *Wall Lake Grace Church*, 3527 Needham Avenue, Wall Lake, Iowa. The dates are Saturday and Sunday, May 16-17. There will be four sessions on Saturday and two on Sunday. The theme is "How Did the Church Get Here?" For additional information, please call 712-664-2087 or 712-790-1831 or email walllakegracechurch@gmail.com.

Sooner State Meetings: On Saturday, July 25, BBS will host a Transformed by Grace Regional Conference to bring together and encourage believers around central Oklahoma. It will be held at Embassy Suites, 2501 Conference Drive, Norman, Oklahoma. For questions or more information about this conference, you can contact BBS or Ron Rogers at 405-408-1865, ronrogersic321@gmail.com.

Upcoming Conferences to put on your calendar!

Hawkeye State Meetings
May 16-17, Wall Lake, IA

BBF Summer Conference
June 21-25, Tipp City, OH

Sooner State Meetings
July 25, Norman, OK



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- Priceless Treasure

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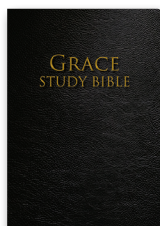
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and if it does, we won’t need
to tell anybody it does.

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to call attention to their shining—
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—Dwight L. Moody



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