

Breaking the Chains

Remember the prisoners, as though in prison with them...

Hebrews 13:3

Our hope is that as you read through the articles and exercises, you will follow along in your own Bible learning God's truth and how it applies to you and your life.



We want you to be able to see beyond your past, and look to the future - to what God has in store for you as you come to a better understanding of the hope that is within your reach and the love that has been offered to all.

Since this is a monthly news letter being sent to as many inmates and their families as possible, we will be going over various topics. If you would like to have a more personalized study, enroll in the World Bible School or even if you have questions about something that you have been studying, please feel free to write to us. It would be our pleasure to study with you.

Thank you for your love for God, your search for truth and your hope of better things to come!

Stand Firm

By Phil Sanders

Ephes. 6:10-13 "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm

against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, so that you will be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. "



We are in a war we cannot afford to lose. We are not battling for our lives or our homes; we are battling for our souls and the souls of those we love. If we lose we lose everything. This is not the time for hesitation or for apathy. We must win.

We are not fighting physically against flesh and blood. We are fighting spiritually against the forces of evil that tempt us in order to enslave us in sin and finally destroy. The weapons of our adversary come in the forms of lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). The adversary is a deceiver (John 8:44) and has no qualms about pretense and telling lies to get the advantage (2 Corinthians 11:13-15). He will not play fair.

Your adversary has been deceiving and fighting for the souls of men and women for a long time. He knows human weakness (Job 1:6-12). He will do everything in his power to trip you and trap you and destroy you (1 Peter 5:8).

"Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm" (Ephesians 6:13). If you are not prepared in heart to fight, you will lose. If you are not willing to fight, you will surely lose. If you do not give it your all, being strengthened with the might of God, you will lose.

Arise and fight! Fight for your soul, fight for your children's souls, and fight for your friends' souls. If you give up, they might give up too. Fight on, make every sacrifice, strain every nerve to stand! Only one of you will be standing at the end of the battle, either you or the devil. Stand firm, stand strong, and win!

Holy Words By Fay Loyd

God's words are for our profit. Over and over again, He cries this out in His message (read 2 Timothy 3:16-17, Hebrews 4:12, Psalms 119:105). Proverbs 3:5-6 is another that rings out the message - "Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight."

We sometimes get so tangled up in justifying our own ways, that we fail to allow God's Holy Words to explain the better way, His way. Going through life trying to convince ourselves and others that we have or will get it together by ourselves grieves our Creator. God knows that it is not good for us to work toward our own goodness without His love directing us.

We tend to measure ourselves by the world's standards or by other people's shortcomings. Many times we either look at people's sins, saying in our own heart, "well at least I'm not as bad as they are", or we have a holier than thou attitude.

This is a sad way to live. Our true measuring stick should be Jesus, who came to earth and lived a perfect life. He spoke the beautiful words of God, the only words that can justify our ways and lead us to peaceful paths. Jesus' life, death and resurrection was a demonstration of His love for us and proved God's divine power in life over death and His victory over Satan's works (1John 3:8).

God's greatest gift is Jesus. It is through Him that we can be reconciled to God - to be born again. Christians are born twice, but only die once. Our second birth is a lifetime process, motivated by faith in growing to reflect Jesus' life. This is a perfect, good gift. It simplifies our choices. Why would anyone not want to receive it? There is not a better way.

Galatians 6:3 - "For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself". 1 Cor. 10:12 - "Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall". There is no peace in relying on self. Jesus came to give us peace. He is a gift that we can brag to others about. A gift that carries no shame or regret. A gift that sets us free from Satan's lies. Without God's truths, the only thing left is Satan's lies.

Jesus said in John 8:32, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. In Acts 2, three thousand souls gladly accepted every word that Peter spoke in obedient faith, becoming new creatures, born again into spiritual life, a life worth living.

2 Cor. 5:17 "Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come". Reflecting Christ is a life that keeps growing as we give back to others the highest form of love, an unselfish love.

The gospel is a message of love. By God's powerful Holy words, He can be alive and active, working in us. We can become more like Christ and less like self. By following His example, we learn to put others first.

1 John 2:10 - The one who loves his brother abides in the Light and there is no cause for stumbling in him.

Awesome! There is the freedom. A way to avoid stumbling, by loving as He first loved us. We owe love to everyone, but it doesn't feel like a burdensome debt, and we can never harm anyone by loving them (Romans 13:10).

Love profits all; it is a perfect gift. Let us all pray one for another, that we grow closer to God and each other in love, giving Him all praise through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Keep looking up! (Titus 2:11-14, Colossians 3:1-4)

A bad day at the tattoo parlor

Dan O'Connor was a huge fan of Notre Dame. To show his loyalty to the team, he had the university's mascot, a boxing leprechaun, tattooed to his arm with the inscription, "Fighting Irish." When he took off the bandage from the \$125 drawing, his girlfriend started laughing. The twenty-two-year-old's upper arm didn't show much fight because the tattoo artist left out the "t" in "fighting". O'Connor sued the Tattoo Shop in Carlstadt, New Jersey, for misspelling "Fighting Irish".

Sometimes Christians appear more like O'Connor's tattoo than the spiritual warriors God has called us to be. When we neglect the Lord's Holy Word and start putting our loyalty in anything else but Him, we lose the "t" in our fight and reap nothing more than laughter from Satan and his crew. As believers we've been "sealed" (tattooed) with the Holy Spirit. Know the truth, love the Lord and let Him put the "t" back in your spiritual fight against darkness.

Questions and Quotes

Who Said It?

1. "Much learning is driving you mad."
 2. "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!"
 3. "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"
 4. "All these things I will give You if You will fall down and worship me."
 5. "Am I my brother's keeper?"
 6. "If they bind me with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried, then I shall become weak, and be like any other man."
 7. "Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!"
 8. "Be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might."
 9. "I am the good shepherd; and I know My Sheep"
- Answers on last page

Study questions for Ephesians 6:10-17

1. Re-read the description of our Spiritual armor. Which pieces of armor do you need to shine up, sharpen or strengthen?
2. Why doesn't it say anything about armor for our backs?
3. How does each piece of armor help us stand?
4. Whose responsibility is it to put the armor on?
5. Is it possible to only put on part of the armor that God has given to us? What happens when we do?
6. How has Satan taken advantage of the weaknesses in your life?
7. Why are there so many pieces of armor, but only one weapon?
8. (Verse 12) If we know that our struggle is not with flesh and blood, why do we spend so much time fighting against each other, and not enough time fighting against the true enemy?

The Fellowship of the Unashamed

I am part of the Fellowship of the Unashamed. I am strengthened in the Lord and by the Power of His might. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I am a disciple and a soldier of Jesus Christ.

I won't look up, let up, slow down, back away, or be still. I'm not all I ought to be, all I want to be, or all I am going to be; but, thank God, I am not all I used to be.

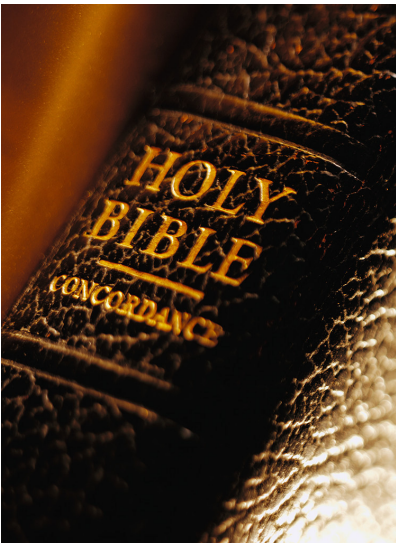
My past is forgiven, my present makes sense, and my future is everlasting. I am finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tame service, mundane talking, chintzy giving, and dwarfed goals.

I no longer need preeminence, prosperity, position, promotions, plaudits, or popularity. I don't have to be first, tops, recognized, praised or rewarded, because I now live knowing God is present, leaning by faith, loving with patience, lifting others in prayer, laboring with God's strength.

My pace is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way is rough, my companions are few, but my Guide IS reliable, and my mission is clear.

I cannot be bought, compromised, deterred, lured away, turned back, diluted, or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversity, negotiate at the table of the enemy, ponder at the polls of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity. I won't give up, back up, let up, or shut up until I have preached up, prayed up, stored up, and stayed up the cause of Christ!

I am a disciple of Jesus Christ! I must go until Heaven returns, give until I drop, preach until everyone knows, and work until He comes! And when He comes to get His own, He will have no problem recognizing me. My colors will be clear. -Anonymous



Breaking the Chains is a publication whose sole purpose is to encourage men and women who have made some bad choices in life, to break the chains that are holding you back from eternal peace.

Romans 3:23 tells us that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Because of that, we all are in need of salvation which only comes through Jesus Christ and His Blood. No one is beyond its saving power. No one is so good that they don't need it and no one has sinned so bad that New Life can't be breathed into their soul.

Hopefully, as you read the articles you will be encouraged to study your Bible and either come closer to God, or maybe even to come to know Him for the first time.

This publication is free through the churches of Christ and is available upon request. The only thing we ask in return is for you to write us and tell us what topics you would like to read about and even submit your own articles. Who knows, you might open the pages and see your name.

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Answers: Section 1: 1. Festus - Acts 26:24 2. Legion - Luke 8:28 3. The tax collector - Luke 18:13 4. Satan - Matthew 4:9
5. Cain - Genesis 4:9 6. Samson - Judges 16:7 7. Stephen - Acts 7:56 8. Paul - Ephesians 6:10 9. Jesus - John 10:14