THE BANNER-HERALD

JULY 2026

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF PROGRESSIVE PRIMITIVE BAPTISTS

THE BANNER-HERALD

www.bannerherald.org

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ALL ITEMS submitted to The Banner-Herald ***must be typed*** and received by the 1st of the month prior to publication. Church news must be limited to 250 words. All materials received are subject to editing.

Banner Publications Trust is the new name for the corporation that prints The Banner-Herald. As of January 26, 2015, Banner Publications Trust was granted 5013c tax status with the IRS.

All contributions above the subscription price are now tax deductible.

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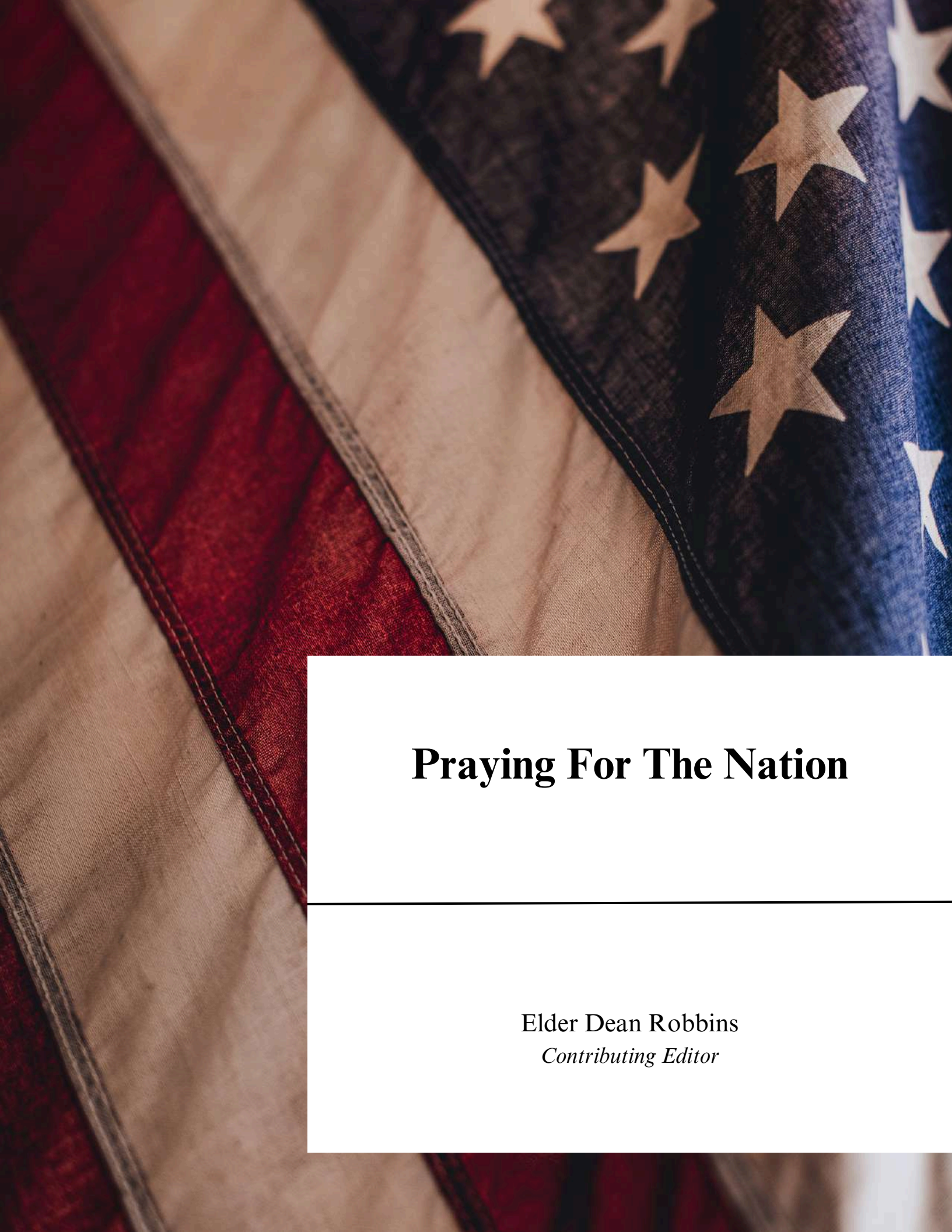


Praying For The Nation

Elder Dean Robbins
Contributing Editor

As we approach the 250th anniversary of the founding of our country, it would be good for us to gather as the body of Christ to ask, in the words of Irving Berlin, "God bless America." Now we recognize for God to bless our country, we must, as a country repent of our rebellion against Him. We must remember the words of Solomon in Proverbs 14, verse 34: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people." Sin is not only a "reproach (or a disgrace) to any people," but it must be judged by a thrice holy God.

As a nation, our sinful rebellion includes the allowing of the murder of babies in the womb. Since abortion was given as a right for women in the Roe verses Wade Supreme Court decision in 1973, some 68 million babies have been sacrificed. The recent Dobb's decision overturned Roe, but it did not outlaw it. It only put the issue in the realm of State governments. Abortion continues to exist.

Our nation's leaders have also sanctioned the redefining of God's creative order with respect the marriage relationship by the Supreme Court case of Obergefell verse Hodges (in 2015) where now the covenant of marriage must be recognized by the State to include same-sex couples.

There is also the acceptance by governing officials and State institutions of a further act of rebellion of God's creative order as it pertains to human sexuality. It is the issue of transgenderism in which biological males may now claim they are really females and biological females claiming they are biological males. School officials in many states allow biological males to enter female bathrooms and dressing rooms. They have allowed for biological males to participate in female athletic events. There is also the sanctioning of the mutilation of children through what is known as gender affirming care. God, have mercy upon us!!!

So, we should gather to pray for our nation. Pray God would be gracious, and good in leading us to repentance, remembering the words of Paul in Romans 2, verse 4: Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? With repentance, we may then pray for God to bless our country.

The Founding Fathers understood the necessity for the blessings of God's providence to be upon our country. This is seen in the Declaration of Independence. After the listing of the abuses of the King of England, in that final paragraph of the document are these words:

> *We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.*

With this conviction of the need for "divine Providence," came also the call for prayer. Many of the Founders believed in prayer. Men like George Washington and John Adams were men of prayer. There exists today George Washington's prayer journal. The following is an excerpt of one of his written prayers,

> "*Almighty God, and most merciful father, who didst command the children of Israel to offer a daily sacrifice to thee, that thereby they might glorify and praise thee for thy protection both night and day, receive, O Lord, my morning sacrifice which I now offer up to thee; I yield thee humble and hearty thanks that thou has preserved me from the danger of the night past*."

Here's another one of his prayers that was supposedly circulated among the states:

> "I now make it my earnest prayer, that God would have the United States in his holy protection, that he would incline the hearts of the Citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to Government, to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another... and finally, that he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all, to do Justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that Charity, humility and pacific temper of mind, which were the Characteristicks of the Devine Author of our blessed Religion. Amen."

The First Continental Congress opened with prayer on September 7, 1774, led by Rev. Jacob Duché at the request of delegates including John Adams and Samuel Adams. This is an Excerpt from that prayer:

> "*O Lord our Heavenly Father, high and mighty King of kings, and Lord of lords, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers on earth... look down in mercy, we beseech Thee, on these our American States, who have fled to Thee from the rod of the oppressor... Take them, therefore, Heavenly Father, under Thy nurturing care; give them wisdom in Council and valor in the field; defeat the malicious designs of our cruel adversaries. Be Thou present, O God of wisdom, and direct the councils of this honorable assembly."*

John Adams, the second president of the United States, supported public prayer and issued proclamations for days of fasting and prayer during national difficulties. He also wrote a famous blessing upon moving into the White House (then President's House) in 1800. He said,

> "*I pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this house and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof.*"

James Madison, the 4th President of the United States and key contributor to the writing of the Constitution issued similar proclamations during the War of 1812. Abraham Lincoln issued several notable calls for prayer during the Civil War. He Designated April 30, 1863, as a National Day of Humiliation, fasting, and prayer in response to a Senate resolution. He called for acknowledgment of God's hand in the war, calling for national repentance for sins (including those tied to slavery). He asked for people to pray for mercy, a restored peace, and liberty. Lincoln would make other proclamations throughout the civil war for times of fasting, prayer, and thanksgiving.

Presidents have continued with occasional proclamations for thanksgiving, prayer during times of crises. In 1952, Congress formalized an annual National Day of Prayer (observed on the first Thursday in May), and every president since then has issued a proclamation for it. Examples include responses to events like 9/11 (under George W. Bush) or other national challenges.

Overall, there have been over 150 such national calls to prayer, fasting, humiliation, or thanksgiving by presidents from 1789 onward. The local body of believers need no such proclamations to encourage times of prayer. When you do come to pray, it would be good to remember certain things. Things like God's Sovereignty over all the nations of the earth. Consider such passages as the following when praying:

Psalm 33:12

Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people He has chosen as His own inheritance.

Psalm 22:28

For the kingdom is the LORD's, And He rules over the nations.

Daniel 2:20-21

Daniel answered and said: "Blessed be the name of God forever and ever, for wisdom and might are His. And He changes the times and the seasons;

He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding.

Pray for unity, justice and righteousness. Consider these passages as you pray for these things:

Psalm133:1
How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

Proverbs 14:34
Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.

Jeremiah 29:7 *(to the exiles in Babylon)*
Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.

Finally, we always should pray for all those in positions of authority. Consider the following passages when you pray:

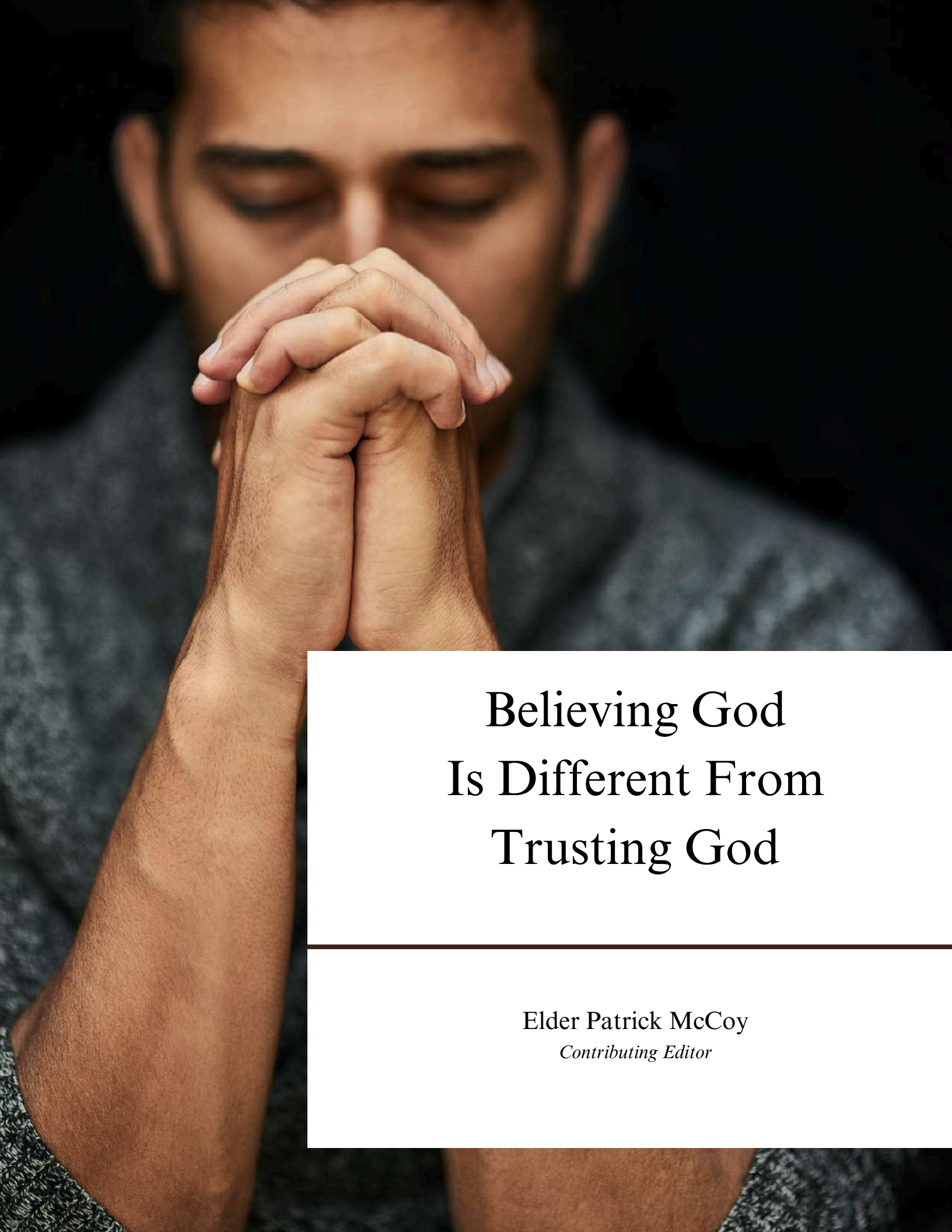
Romans 13:1
Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

1 Timothy 2:1-2
Therefore I exhort first of all those supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.

God has certainly blessed our nation in its founding and HIs hand of providence has continually been upon us through the past 250 years. But we cannot take for granted his hand of providence being upon us in the future. We must pray for a spirit of repentance that would sweep over our country.

Remembering these familiar words, “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

May God once again bless America!



Believing God Is Different From Trusting God

Elder Patrick McCoy
Contributing Editor

Trusting God Goes Beyond Believing God

Psalm 91:2

I will say of the Lord, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust."

Life is not predictable. There are ups and downs along the way. Many of us want to trust God. When times are good, it can feel easier. But when times feel difficult, it is even more important to trust God. God's unchanging character can give us a firm foundation when things feel unsteady and uncertain.

Life can be going along smoothly for a season. Your job is satisfying. Your friends and family are enjoyable. Your goals, finances, health and outlook seem bright. Then, all of a sudden, life throws a curveball. Someone you know gets sick. You lose your job. A friend or family member betrays you. The things you felt secure in all of a sudden feel shaky and uncertain.

How do you trust that God is good in these circumstances? How do you trust Him when you do not understand what is happening? When you cannot see a resolution! How do you trust Him when you do not agree with what is happening or do not understand what He is doing? These are valid questions, and God wants to help you navigate them.

What Does It Mean To Trust God?

To trust is to believe in the reliability, truth, ability or strength of something. So, when it comes to trusting God, that means believing in His reliability, His Word, His ability, and His strength. In our message last week on a Christian World View we said at the very beginning we believe that "AN ABSOLUTE GOD EXISTS. In trusting God we believe the Bible says that God cannot lie. That He always keeps His promises. That He loves you and has good in store for you. Trusting in Him means believing what He says about Himself, about the world and about you is true.

Trusting God is more than a feeling; it's a choice to have faith in what He says even when your feelings or circumstances would have you believe something different. Your feelings and circumstances matter and are very much worth paying attention to. God cares about them both. But those things alone are not reliable enough to base your life on. Feelings and circumstances can change at any moment, even in an instant. God, on the other hand, does not change. He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow and therefore is worthy of your trust.

Trusting God is not about ignoring your feelings or reality. It is not pretending that everything is OK when it isn't. Trusting God is living a life of belief in an obedience to God even when it's difficult.

It is easy to believe that God exists based on what is recorded in Hebrews 11:6 – "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." It is also easy to believe that God is the Creator of the heavens and the earth because that's what Genesis 1:1 reveals – "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Most people believe God's promises will be fulfilled, according to Joshua 21:45 – "Not a word failed of any good thing which the LORD had spoken to the house of Israel. All came to pass." Also, most people believe God is love because that's what 1 John 4:16b says – "God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God in him."

However, it is much easier to believe God than it is to trust God. You might think the two emotions are the same, but they are not. It is good to believe, but it is better to trust. Trusting God goes beyond just believing God. In fact, trusting God goes so much deeper. Unfortunately, it is harder to trust God than it is to merely believe God.

The Difference In Believing And Trusting God

You've heard the quote, "Going to church doesn't make you a Christian any more than being in a garage makes you a car." Have you ever thought about what

that really meant? Have you ever asked yourself if that quote pertains to you? What does being a Christian even mean?

Growing up I never doubted God's existence. I knew he created the universe; He sent His only perfect son to die on the cross for my sins. I knew that sentence and I labeled myself as a believer because I knew who God was and I went to church on Sundays. I prayed to him when I needed help, I thanked him for my life and everything in it, I didn't do drugs or drink and I was a pretty good person.

Yeah, I did some bad things and may not have seemed like a Christian during the week, but since I went to church and I believed that everything was in His plan, I could just pray for forgiveness, and I'd be good to go... The bible says He loves me, right? That belief was what I ran with.

What I didn't realize was that believing in God wasn't all it takes to be a Christian. Believing in God didn't make me a Christian. Believing that He has a plan didn't mean that I trusted His plan. Which brings me to the question I for today; what is the difference between believing and trusting in God?

A person's belief is based on well-known facts, traditions, habits, rituals, and religion. A person's trust is based on one's relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit.

Belief is intellectual, according to what a person knows for sure. Trust is mental and spiritual, according to what a person doesn't know but is willing to accept.

To believe is to have some control over the circumstances and situations. To trust is to surrender all because there is no safety net below or a soft place to land.

Belief is based on something else happening along with what a person expects. Trust is all you have when nothing else is available.

Belief is based on previous examples and past track records. Trust is based on being completely confident about something new that you have never experienced before.

Believing God is accepting what others tell you. Believing God is relying on what you had seen happening to others. Believing God is comparing what you are expecting with past results.

Trusting God means not having a Plan B in case God's plan fails. Trusting God means having no "What if's." Trusting God means moving your burdens from your own shoulders and giving them to God who can handle them immediately, effectively, and efficiently.

Biblical People Who Trusted God

Abraham

God told Abraham to "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1). Abraham was a pagan at the time, but he trusted God. He did exactly what God told him to do. He left everything behind and went to an unknown place that God showed him as he went;

Genesis 12:1-9

(1) Now the LORD had said to Abram: "Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you. (2) I will make you a great nation; I will bless you And make your name great; And you shall be a blessing. (3) I will bless those who bless you, And I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (4) So Abram departed as the LORD had spoken to him, and Lot went with him. And Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed from Haran. (5) Then Abram took Sarai his wife and Lot his brother's son, and all their possessions that they had gathered, and the

people whom they had acquired in Haran, and they departed to go to the land of Canaan. So they came to the land of Canaan. (6) Abram passed through the land to the place of Shechem, as far as the terebinth tree of Moreh. And the Canaanites were then in the land. (7) Then the LORD appeared to Abram and said, "To your descendants I will give this land." And there he built an altar to the LORD, who had appeared to him. (8) And he moved from there to the mountain east of Bethel, and he pitched his tent with Bethel on the west and Ai on the east; there he built an altar to the LORD and called on the name of the LORD. (9) So Abram journeyed, going on still toward the South. Because Abraham trusted God, he proved he was faithful, and God made him "father of many nations."

Jacob

Trusting God means allowing God to come into your sensitive situations. Earlier Jacob tricked his twin brother Esau out of his birthright.

Genesis 33:1

Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants.

Many years later, he went back home to confront Esau because he trusted God to enable them to reconcile and be restored.

Job

Job admitted that most of his life he believed God. Job lost everything, including his ten children. He suffered from sores all over his body before he realized that he believed God without trusting him. Close to the end of the book, Job said, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, But now my eye sees You" (Job 42:5). In other words, Job began to trust God spiritually.

Peter

No doubt Peter loved Jesus. However, he had to grow into trusting Him the way Jesus wanted Peter to trust Him. Peter grew spiritually to trust Jesus on a deeper level and stepped out of a boat to get to Jesus.

> **Matthew 14:29**
> *So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus.*

Peter was crucified upside down because he did not think he was worthy enough to be crucified the same way as Jesus.

CONCLUSION

Trusting God goes beyond believing God. You might love God. You might serve God. However, it is not just a matter of loving God or worshipping God or serving in the Kingdom of God. It is a matter of trusting God beyond just believing God.

Don't ever think it is wrong to believe God. You should believe God, and you should also trust God.

Adultery:

How To 'Affair-Proof' Your Marriage

Lesson #11 - A Study In Christian Ethics

Matthew 5:28-29

Elder Patrick McCoy

Produced by:
Primitive Baptist Foundation

Adultery

Truly we are living in an "adulterous generation." I hate to start a Sunday morning this way, but the Seventh Commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," (Exodus 20:12) has a lot of press. What are we to make of it? I guess that all depends on whom you ask.

Peggy Vaughn, author of "The Monogamy Myth" and founder of a secular support system for spouses in adultery recovery has worked in this area for over 30 years: She cites 60% of marriages will experience adultery.

Dr. Shirley Glass, author of "Not Just Friends" and recognized expert on infidelity having hundreds of clinical cases and more than 2 decades of research: "after reviewing 25 studies – 25% of wives and 44% of husbands have had extramarital intercourse." Not Just Friends, Shirley P. Glass, Ph.D., 2003, pg 3

"60% of men and 40% of women" -Michele Weiner-Davis, The Divorce Busting Center, Smart Marriages presentation, July 2007.

These are disturbing statistics. Whom do you believe? In a sense, it doesn't really matter. Regardless of the statistics concerning adultery, as Christians we know that it is a grievous sin. It is a sin which God calls us to avoid. Best of all, it is a sin which God shows us how to avoid.

Let's define adultery before we go any further. Easton dictionary says: Conjugal infidelity. An adulterer was a man who had illicit intercourse with a married or a betrothed woman, and such a woman was an adulteress. Intercourse between a married man and an unmarried woman was fornication. Adultery was regarded as a great social wrong, as well as a great sin.

How and where does adultery begin? How can it be avoided? These are questions we hope to answer in our study today.

Lust: Another Name for Adultery

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus shocked the people of His day when He equated lust to ADULTERY! His actual words are: Matthew 5:28-29. The chief aim of this study is to provide the facts regarding adultery (mental and physical) as used in Matthew 5:28. While some downplay the serious consequences of lust, others wrongly think the slightest and quickest visual contact on another's body is always adultery. Similarly, remember this: Temptation in itself is not a sin. Jesus was tempted, yet Jesus never sinned. Therefore, temptation is not a sin. It only becomes a sin when you yield to it.

The Greek word rendered "lust" (Matthew 5:28) is found elsewhere and translated in such a way as to help us know what the Lord equated to mental adultery. This same exact word is found in Luke 15:16 and Luke 16:21. It's also significant to note that Jesus gave us these other usages. Hence, he chose to use the same exact word in these other teachings as he chose to use in Matt. 5:28! Respectfully, those verses say:

> Luke 15:16
> (16) And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

> Luke 16:21
> (21) And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores.

Point Of Discussion:

The two words in these Luke passages are fain and desiring. In the context of each verse how do they help us understand Matthew 5:28?

Regarding its usage by the Lord in Luke's gospel, it seems evident that this word carries a meaning with it that makes it much deeper than just a casual glance

at a woman, as some wrongly think. To substantiate this, Strong's Concordance defines this word as "(to set the *heart upon*, that is, *long* for (rightfully or otherwise): – covet, desire, would fain, lust (after)" (emphasis his, Greek Dictionary, p.31, no. 1937).

Again, a casual glance at the opposite sex is not being referred to in Matthew 5:28. However, when actual lust does occur, that is, when one "longs for" another, then adultery is actually committed! To deny this teaching is to indirectly doubt the Lordship of Jesus Christ! This also clearly refutes the statement I've often heard – "It's okay to look [meaning lust], but not to touch." Jesus never taught lust was okay! Nowhere is this form of adultery, though solely mental, less serious than other forms, although many treat it as such!

Pornography, TV, Internet

How awesome to ponder this fact in regard to all of the pornographic literature that can be found in this country. It may surprise you to learn that one can indulge in pornography by way of their personal computer using internet, CD-Rom or modem! Mental adultery is rampant! Truly, this is an "adulterous generation," as Jesus said.

Men committing mental adultery should also be a sobering thought for women who profess to be Christian and desire to please their Lord.

Point Of Discussion:

Read 1 Timothy 2:9 and discuss dress code.

Does your dress have an effect on another? With that read Jesus word in Matthew 18:6 and discuss the two together. What is the lesson?

In our generation, TV and the internet are the prime ways people commit mental adultery. Even while watching the news report sometimes one is exposed

to spiritually unwholesome scenes which the devil is pleased to present. These spiritual pollutants flood into homes across our land, then people wonder why they are having trouble with lust! I personally believe that more adultery is committed before the TV set than anywhere else!

What To Do?

If you are having trouble with lust or know someone who is, the remedy, in part, is to cut off the source of temptation! It's that simple. If literature is the temptation, then stop going near it. If it's TV or movies, stop watching them. If it is the internet, block it or leave it alone. This is what you are to STOP doing. Paul wrote: "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof. " (Romans 13:14).

Furthermore, to get victory over lust, you should START spending more time in the Bible meditating on and memorizing certain verses! Hiding God's word in your heart will stop those mental temptations. The unnamed writer of Psalm 119 both prayed and hid God's word in his heart so he would not sin against God.

Point Of Discussion:

Read Psalm 119:10-11.

We all need to humbly follow this example.

In summary, victory over sin is not just what you do but also what you don't do! In other words, starve your sinful nature (by not thinking about how to gratify it) and feed your spirit with God's word (by meditating in Scripture). Your voluntary thoughts, that is, the thoughts you choose to ponder when free to think about anything you want, are extremely important. Relevantly, Romans 8:5 says, "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."

The following poem states it beautifully.

Two natures beat within my breast.
The one is cursed, the other is blessed.
The one I love, the other I hate.
The one I feed will dominate!

Point Of Discussion:

Read the following scriptures and discuss their implications.
Galatians 6:8
Proverbs 6:25-26

Again, lust leads to disaster! Therefore, do not take this sin lightly. By the way, the word rendered "lust" in Matthew 5:28 is used in a good sense in 1 Timothy 3:1 and Hebrews 6:11. Paul wrote, "Keep yourself pure" (1 Timothy 5:22). Undoubtedly, many will have to make MAJOR TV changes to obey this command! Victory over TV will benefit you and others but get ready for the battle regarding it! Job was the most unique man on earth in his day –

Point Of Discussion:

Read Job 1:8 and describe Job.
Read Job 31:1 and describe his covenant and commitment.

This is also very important in our day in light of Matthew 5:28,29 and the rampancy of pornographic literature, movies and commercials in our vile country.

Paul wrote Colossians 3:5 and gave us good instruction. Read this verse. Please note: it's your responsibility coupled with the power of God (Romans 8:13) that is the victory over lust.

Avoiding An Affair

Another passage, Proverbs 7:24-27, provides several warnings about how to resist the temptation to extra-marital affairs.

First, you must guard your heart.

Do not let your heart turn to her ways. (v. 25a)

In other words, catch wandering thoughts early on. Martin Luther reportedly quipped: "You can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair!" Guard your heart. Don't let it run away from you. Keep it on a short emotional leash.

Second, watch your step.

Do not stray into her paths. (v. 25b)

Watching your step begins with being careful and wise about where and when you are alone without your husband or wife. The world is full of times and places that won't help you keep your marriage vows: watch where your feet go! Do whatever you need to keep them on the right path. Make adjustments in your personal life, whether it means changing the magazines you read, changing the television shows and movies you watch, changing the traffic routes you take, changing the friends you spend time with, or even changing the job you go to daily.

Third, consider the cost.

Many are the victims she has brought down; her slain are a mighty throng.
Her house is a highway to the grave, leading down to the chambers of death.
(v. 26-27)

Few decisions you make can ruin more aspects of your life more quickly than an affair.

The message is loud and clear: adultery is playing with fire! You will always get burned! As the Apostle Paul declared in Galatians 6:7, "A man reaps what he sows." (The same is true for a woman.)

Fourth, keep the home fires burning.

Drink water from your own cistern, running water from your own well. May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth. (5:15, 18)

To paraphrase the old Country-Western song, "Don't look for love in all the wrong places!" Look for romance in your own home. Look for joy in the person who is your lawfully wedded husband or wife. Reserve sexual intimacy for your own spouse and for no one else.

Since before the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai over three thousand years ago, adultery has been a grievous sin before God. Won't you follow God's teachings that will help you to avoid it?

Life, Liberty, And The Pursuit Of Happiness

Elder Dean Robbins

Written & Published in the
July 2015 Banner-Herald

This July 4th, our country celebrates the 239th anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. Thomas Jefferson was appointed to write the draft. John Adams and Ben Franklin helped to edit the document that was officially ratified by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, just two days after they had officially declared the thirteen colonies to be independent from Great Britain. Among the many notable sentences composing the Declaration is the following one: "*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.*" Let us consider these thoughts for a moment.

First, these principles were indeed revolutionary (pun intended!). No country before had such a principle that stated that its citizens had 'unalienable Rights' that were bestowed by their Creator. The phrase, 'unalienable Rights' means that these are rights that no one (i.e. the King of England), or no government can take away. Citizens could not have these rights taken by any government, because the government did not give these rights. These rights came from the 'Creator.' Three of these rights are then stated as being 'unalienable'; the right to Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. The belief of Jefferson and others were that the primary purpose for Government was to insure that these rights, given by the Creator, were protected.

Citizens of the United States are said to be guaranteed the right to 'Life.' Since 'Life' is given by the Creator, the individual becomes more important than government. Along with the sanctity of Life, comes 'Liberty.' The one who has 'Life' has the freedom to do what is needful and good for living. He has the freedom to do what is necessary for the pursuit of their 'Happiness.' It is important to note here that one has not the right to Happiness,' but one has the right to pursue 'Happiness.' This is a very brief (and simplistic) explanation of this famous sentence of the Declaration of Independence. This ideal best explains what makes this country great.

In thinking about these unalienable rights of 'Life', 'Liberty' and 'the pursuit of 'Happiness,' the Christian cannot help but rejoice in the fact that these

three principles are also rights given by God to the Redeemed. These rights given by God are also 'unalienable.' These are rights that cannot be taken away. The Redeemed have 'Life.' This 'Life' is in Christ, Jesus. Jesus said, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly (John 10:10). The 'Life' of the Christian is a life that shall never end.

The Christian has 'Liberty.' This liberty is the freedom to do that which he could not do while under bondage to sin. This is the freedom to seek after God; the freedom to serve God. Paul, writing to the Galatian church, said – "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage (Galatians 5:1). John Gill, commenting on this passage from Galatians said, "*There is the liberty of grace, and the liberty of glory; the former of these is here meant, and lies in a freedom from sin; not from the indwelling of it, but from the dominion, guilt, and damning power of it; from the captivity and tyranny of Satan…*"

The Christian, who has the 'unalienable rights' of 'Life' and 'Liberty,' also has the right of pursuing 'Happiness.' In fact, 'Happiness' for the Christian is the consequence of having 'Life' and having 'Liberty.' Paul, writing to the church at Rome, quotes David's words in Psalm 32:1, 2; doing so in the context of the believer being justified by faith in Jesus and not by doing the works of the law. Paul writes: "Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Romans 4:7, 8). The word "Blessed" can also be interpreted as 'Happy.' Happy is the one whose sins are forgiven and covered. Happy is one whose sins are not imputed by the Lord. The pursing of happiness, by the Christian, is the result of the righteousness of Jesus being imputed to the forgiven sinner.

As we come to celebrate our nation's Independence from Great Britain on this July 4th, let us remember as a holy nation our absolute dependence upon Jesus; for He has endowed us with the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Let us rejoice in Him for His preserving grace that makes these principles eternal!

News & Updates

Progressive
Primitive
Baptists

SOUTHERN STATES BIBLE CONFERENCE 2026

Theme:
How To Be A Christian

Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

– 1 Peter 4:16

July 6-9, 2026

Epworth By The Sea
St. Simons Island, GA

Click Here To Visit Our Website

Elder Jason Solomon

Topic:
Let Your Light Shine

Elder Scott Riner

Topic:
The Law Of Christ

Elder Kurt Bacon

Topic:
Communication

Elder Darren Carter

Topic:
Going The Extra Mile

Elder Steve Taylor

Topic:
Humility Is Greatness

Elder David Summerford

Topic:
Prayer

Elder Lee Chambers

Topic:
Mind Your Treasures

Elder Dean Robbins

Topic:
Judge Righteous Judgement

Elder Pat McCoy

Topic:
Ask

For Registration Information:
Contact: Pat Flowers, Treasurer
726 Ogeechee Dr. E, Statesboro, GA 30461
Phone: (912)-601-9925 (C)
Email: spflowers690@gmail.com

Registration Forms

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CENTRAL STATES BIBLE CONFERENCE

JULY 21 - 23, 2026

VINCENNES, INDIANA

COST OF CONFERENCE:
ADULT – $80 / UNDER 18 - $55

Housing:
Due to renovations of Clark Hall on the Vincennes University Campus which has housed our attendees in the past, housing this year will be off campus in local hotels. We have contracted with Hampton Inn and Comfort Suites for very reasonable rates, and also received rates from Holiday Inn Express. Please make your own reservations at a hotel of your choice, noting reservation deadlines for contracted hotels.

Hampton Inn, 2863 Ford Rd., Vincennes, IN
Rate: $119 plus taxes
Phone: 812-316-0999 Group Name: Central States Primitive Baptist Bible Conference
Reservations must be received by Saturday, June 20, 2026 for guaranteed rate.

Comfort Suites, 2555 Hart St., Vincennes, IN
Rate: $100 plus taxes
Phone: 812-882-2244 Group Name: Central States Bible Conference, Account: 5266453
Reservations must be received by Monday, July 13, 2026 for guaranteed rate.

Holiday Inn Express, 2720 Battery Rd., Vincennes, IN
Rate: $144-154 plus taxes
Phone: 812-886-6333

This is a one-year change as housing will be back on the campus next year.

Social Gatherings:
It has been a tradition to arrive on Monday evening (July 20) for a musical 'jam' session of hymns and fellowship following supper. In the past, we have also gathered on Wednesday evening for a social time. We are trying to secure an area at one of the hotels to continue these traditions, and will pass along the information as soon as details are finalized!

Conference Schedule will be similar to previous years, but may change slightly due to housing off campus and not having the luxury of going to our dorm rooms to relax as in the past! The Program Committee is working hard to put together a group of great speakers to feed your hearts with inspiration through the word of God!

Services will be held in the Fort Sackville rooms of the Beckes Student Union on the Vincennes University campus (unless otherwise noted on the program). Parking while on campus will be in the lot behind Beckes Student Union. Shuttle carts will be available to shuttle attendees from Beckes Student Union to the dining hall for Tuesday and Wednesday lunch and dinner (breakfast on your own at hotel or before arriving on campus).

To register, please contact Sister Bonita Lenger by July 10, 2026
lengerb55@gmail.com – (573)-808-1186

CHURCH NEWS

First Church – Augusta, GA

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

After many months of prayer and discussion, members of the First Primitive Baptist Church in Augusta, GA, unanimously voted in conference on Sunday February 8, 2026, to contact a local Realtor and pursue selling the building at 2020 Highland Avenue. The church has been meeting there for 65 years. The building requires several significant upgrades and repairs, and our declining membership and financial budget has made this necessary. Our final worship service and conference were held June 7, 2026, and the closing on the Church building took place with the Realtor on June 8, 2026. While the future is still uncertain, our small group asks for you to please pray for us as we navigate through this difficult transition and continue to try to do the Lord's work in whatever capacity He wills for us. It is my personal prayer and desire that I can continue to supply for any of our churches that are in need, as I have for the last 15 years.

Mark Dengate, Deacon and Licentiate
Edwin D. Groover, Deacon and Treasurer
Diane Lee, Clerk

OBITUARIES

Burnsed, Martha Nell (Godbee) –
May 7, 1945 to June 25, 2026.
Statesboro Primitive Baptist Church,
Statesboro, Georgia.

STATEMENT OF FAITH

In accord with the historical position of the Primitive Baptists, the editors of The Banner-Herald subscribe to the scriptural principles stated in the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. The following is an abbreviated statement upon that confession.

- We Believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be the Word of God, inspired and inerrant, and the only rule of faith and practice.

- We Believe in the only true and living God. That there are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that these three agree in one, are coequal, coeternal, and coexistent.

- We Believe in the total depravity of the entire human family; that is, sin pollutes man's faculties - his heart, mind, and will - and he is unable to recover himself from his lost and ruined estate.

- We Believe in particular, eternal, and unconditional election, the effectual calling of the elect, and the final perseverance of the saints.

- We Believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God, the only Savior and Redeemer, and that Salvation is by His grace alone.

- We Believe that believer's Baptism and the Lord's Supper are the ordinances of the church of Jesus Christ. We Believe the only baptism taught and recognized in the Bible is immersion. We Believe the Lord's Supper is a memorial of our Lord's death and should be regularly observed in the church. We Believe that the washing of the saint's feet is an example of humility and service to be observed by the church.

- We Believe that no minister has the right to administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper but such as are called by God and come under the imposition of hands by a presbytery.

- We Believe in the resurrection of the just and the unjust; that the just shall be raised, changed, and fashioned like unto the glorious body of the Son of God, to dwell in heaven forever, soul and body reunited; and, that the unjust shall be raised, soul, and body reunited, and consigned to punishment in hell forever.