

From the Editor's Desk



കുടുംബ ജീവിതം

ദൈവമാണ് കുടുംബം എന്ന സംവിധാനത്തിന്റെ സ്ഥാപകൻ. മനുഷ്യൻ ഏകനായിരിക്കുന്നത് നന്നല്ല എന്ന അറിവിനോടുള്ള ദൈവിക പ്രതികരണമായാണ് കുടുംബം സ്ഥാപിക്കപ്പെട്ടത്.



Pastor K. A. Mathew

വളരെയധികം സുഷ്മതയോടെ പരിപാലിക്കപ്പെടേണ്ട ഒന്നാണ് കുടുംബം. പുരുഷനും സ്ത്രീയും ജനനം മുതൽ ശരീരഘടനയിലും, ശരീരത്തിന്റെ ബാഹ്യവും ആന്തരികവുമായ പ്രവർത്തനത്തിലും അവയവങ്ങളിലും, ചിന്താതീതിയിലും, പെരുമാറ്റത്തിലും സ്വരത്തിലും വികാരങ്ങളിലും അങ്ങനെ എല്ലാറ്റിലും വ്യത്യസ്തരായിരിക്കുന്നു. ദൈവമാണ് കുടുംബം എന്ന സംവിധാനത്തിന്റെ സ്ഥാപകൻ. മനുഷ്യൻ ഏകനായിരിക്കുന്നത് നന്നല്ല എന്ന അറിവിനോടുള്ള ദൈവിക പ്രതികരണമായാണ് കുടുംബം സ്ഥാപിക്കപ്പെട്ടത്.

രണ്ട് ഭവനങ്ങളിൽ ജനിച്ച് വിഭിന്ന സാഹചര്യങ്ങളിൽ വളർന്നുവന്ന ഒരാളും പെണ്ണും വിവാഹിതരാകുമ്പോൾ പെരുമാറ്റത്തിലും ഇഷ്ടാനിഷ്ടങ്ങളിലും വികാരപ്രകടനങ്ങളിലും ഏറ്റക്കുറച്ചിലുകൾ ഉണ്ടാകുന്നത് സ്വാഭാവികമാണ്. കുടുംബത്തെക്കുറിച്ചും കുടുംബ ബന്ധങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ചും എത്ര തന്നെ ആവർത്തിച്ചെഴുതിയാലും അധികമാവുകയില്ല. കാരണം അത് അത്രമാത്രം പ്രധാനവും പ്രസക്തവുമായ വിഷയമാണ്. 'മൂന്നു വിഷയങ്ങളെക്കുറിച്ച് മുൻഗണനാ ക്രമം അനുസരിച്ച് ചൂണ്ടിക്കാണിക്കുക' എന്ന് ഒരു അഭിപ്രായവോട്ടെടുപ്പ്, ഒരു പ്രസിദ്ധീകരണം നടത്തിയപ്പോൾ അതിൽ പങ്കെടുത്ത തൊണ്ണൂറ്റിയഞ്ചു ശതമാനം പേരും കുടുംബം അല്ലെങ്കിൽ കുടുംബ ബന്ധങ്ങൾ എന്നതിനാണ് ഒന്നാമത്തെ സ്ഥാനം നൽകിയത്. ഏത് സമൂഹത്തിലും സ്ഥിതി ഇതുതന്നെ.

ഏതു മനുഷ്യന്റെയും പരിശ്രമം അവന്റെ കുടുംബജീവിതം ക്ഷേമമായിരിക്കാനാണ്, അത് ആവശ്യമാണ്, നല്ലതാണ്. എന്നാൽ ആ കുടുംബം ഏത് നിലയിലാണ്

മുമ്പോട്ടു പോകേണ്ടതെന്ന് ദൈവസന്നിധിയിൽ തീരുമാനിക്കേണ്ടതാണ്. ദൈവദാസനായ യോഗ്യവ പഠഞ്ഞത് നാം എല്ലാവരും ഓർക്കുന്നതാണ്. "ഞാൻ യഹോവയെ സേവിക്കും എന്നുമാത്രമല്ല, എനിക്ക് ഒരു കുടുംബം ഉണ്ട്, ഞങ്ങൾ എല്ലാവരും യഹോവയെ സേവിക്കും. പല കുടുംബങ്ങളെ സംബന്ധിച്ചും ഇത് അന്വർത്ഥമായിട്ടില്ലെന്ന് ഖേദത്തോടെ പറയേണ്ടിയിരിക്കുന്നു. മേൽ ഉദ്ധരിച്ച വാക്യം എഴുതിയിരിക്കുന്ന വീടുകൾ പലതുണ്ട്. പക്ഷേ ശരിയായ കുടുംബ പ്രാർത്ഥനയ്ക്ക് പോലും അങ്ങനെയുള്ള വീടുകളിൽ അവസരം ഉണ്ടാകുന്നില്ല. നോഹയുടെ പെട്ടകത്തിൽ കഴിഞ്ഞ ജീവികളെപ്പോലെ, ഒരു വീട്ടിനുള്ളിൽ കഴിയുന്നുവെങ്കിലും അന്യോന്യം ഒരു ബന്ധവുമില്ല. ഓരോരുത്തരും താന്താന്റെ വഴിക്ക്.

ദൈവവചനത്തിൽ കൊർന്നല്യോസിനെക്കുറിച്ച് വായിക്കുന്നു. "അവൻ ഭക്തനും തന്റെ സകലഗൃഹത്തോടും കൂടെ ദൈവത്തെ ഭയപ്പെടുന്നവനുമായി ജനത്തിന് വളരെ ധർമ്മം കൊടുത്തും എപ്പോഴും ദൈവത്തോട് പ്രാർത്ഥിച്ചും പോന്നു". അനുഗ്രഹീതമായ ഒരു കുടുംബം, മാതൃക, യോഗ്യമായ കുടുംബ ജീവിതം. എല്ലാറ്റിലും ഉപരി കുടുംബമായി ദൈവത്തെ ഭയപ്പെടുന്നു. നമ്മുടെ സമൂഹത്തിൽ മനുഷ്യരെ നാം ഭയപ്പെടുന്നുണ്ട്. അവർ അറിയും അവർ കാണും എന്ന നിലയിൽ. എന്നാലോ നാം ഇരിക്കുന്നതും എഴുന്നേൽക്കുന്നതും നടപ്പും കിടപ്പും അറിയുന്ന ദൈവത്തെ പലർക്കും ഭയമില്ലായെന്നത് ഒരു സത്യം മാത്രമാണ്.

Lessons from 'Downsizing'

"Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us"
(Hebrews 12:1, KJV).

As I stepped down from the deanship at Oral Roberts University College of Theology and Ministry to return to life as a seminary professor, my wife and I decided to downsize from a house we built seventeen years ago where our two daughters spent the final stages of their adolescence. This was a house with plenty of space for all members of the family and guests and a built-in indoor storage that was climate controlled. Having two daughters go to college and graduate schools from this house meant that the storage space was fully utilized. Having had the opportunity to travel in ministry across many nations meant that there were many gifts and other meaningful mementos from various parts of the world displayed or stored all over the house.

Assuming that the task would be difficult, months before we began the process, we took an evening course on downsizing at the nearby School of Community Education. The experienced instructors there told us that the process will be difficult and emotionally challenging. Since then we have learned that they were right.

We soon realized the degree of emotional attachment we had to gifts received, photos preserved in volumes of albums, and everything to do with our daughters' learning and development. We made numerous trips to the Goodwill collection center. We had the Habitat for Humanity donation collectors fill their truck to overflowing twice with furniture and other items we donated. We received extra bills from our public works department for additional

garbage collection. We paid a hauling company to take out the rest of our surplus "possessions".

We made the move finally to a relatively smaller house, but possibly still with more things than we should keep! But we learned several spiritual lessons through this experience.

First, we human beings like to own and possess things. We do not take an inventory often enough to know how much we have or how much we own. It is a good practice to take an inventory of our total life – spiritual and physical - from time to time.

Secondly, relationships are more important than ownership. We must do more to maintain

relationships than keeping things. I relearned the lesson I have taught in the past: Use things to build up people; don't use people to build things.

Next, things of this world have a way of attaching to us. These can interfere with our "space" and freedom. Downsizing has given us more freedom to move, travel and minister.

Finally, the attachment of things can be seen as a parable. Un-repentant sins can also attach themselves to us and become a weight in our lives. As the Apostle Paul said, we must "examine ourselves" and get rid of these weights. We need to listen to the author of Hebrews: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1, KJV). ■



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"I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 3:14)

What is the doctrine of 'The TRINITY'?



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The doctrine of the Trinity means that there is one God who eternally exists as three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as stated in the New Testament. In another sense, God is one in essence and three in persons.

There is no such word, "Trinity" found in the Scriptures and there is no specific statement suggesting that God is a triune God. But it does state that God is one (*Deut. 6:4, Isa. 44:6, 1Tim. 1:17, 2:5*). At the same time, we read that no one has seen God and no one can see God and live (*Exo. 33:20 and John 1:18*). However, we also read in the Old Testament that the Lord Jehovah walked with Adam and Eve and visited the tent of Abraham (*Gen. 3; Gen. 18*). This makes it clear that God and Lord are not the same person, but two persons of the Godhead. There are also verses saying, "Let us make man in our own image" (*Gen. 1:26*) and "Come, let us go down and confuse their language" (*Gen. 11:6*). In these two instances, it is evident that the conversation is between more than one person. In *Psalms 139*, the Psalmist asks, "Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?" Further in his writings, the Psalmist explains that the Spirit of God is omnipresent and omniscient like God Himself. Therefore, we see God, the Lord and the Holy Spirit as God Himself - all three are equally presented as God the Almighty throughout the scriptures. Since the scriptures clearly state that we only have one God, yet describes the three persons, it is either a contradiction or there are three persons in the Godhead known as Trinity or the triune God.

The doctrine of the Trinity means that there is one God who eternally exists as three persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as stated in the New Testament. In another sense, God is one in essence and three in persons. That same one God: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct persons and each person is fully God and at the same

time our God remains one and indivisible.

Since we have nothing in our world that has a corresponding existence like the triune Godhead, it is impossible to comprehend and explain to the extent that it becomes crystal clear. For example, a human, the most complex being we know of in existence as a single person, does not exist as unified multiples as well. Therefore, the Trinity may be considered

as a mystery, which no finite human being can fully or perfectly understand or explain. Even though the Trinity raises many difficult questions, such as how can God be both one and three, it is still a foundational doctrine to the Christian faith and practice.

The biblical Trinity is not a belief in three Gods as polytheistic individuals believe or in one God like Modalism, which believes that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are different names for the same God acting in different roles or manifestations like water, vapor and ice. This is not the case because at all times, any two of these three forms

cannot exist when the other form is actually present.

The Bible also does not agree with the teaching of one God where the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are three parts of the same one God. This teaching implies that the Father is one third of God, Jesus is the other one third and the Holy Spirit is another one third similar to an egg shell, egg white and the yolk. Also, we do not believe in one God with three personalities because that belief would be equivalent to having a multiple personality disorder.

Since the Father is described as being fully God within the scriptures (*John 6:27, Titus 1:4, Mat. 6:9, Eph. 1:3*), it is not

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commonly debated. However, when Christ is spoken about as being fully God, many people question the equality of divinity between Christ and God. **But the Bible clearly talks about the divinity of Christ and describes that He is also fully God.** This is thoroughly affirmed in the scriptures, especially when:

- (1) Jesus is called "God" in *John 1:1-2*,
- (2) in *Col. 2: 9*, where it is stated, "In Christ, all fullness of deity lives in bodily form",
- (3) in *Heb. 1:3*, where it states that Christ is the "exact imprint of God's being",
- (4) in *Titus 2:13*, where it is stated, "Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ",
- (5) in *John 1:18*, where it is translated in ASV as "the begotten God" and finally
- (6) in *Acts 20:28*, where it says, "the church of God, which He purchased with His blood".

Although Jesus called Himself as the "Son of God" and the "Son of Man", He believed Himself as God and acted like God throughout His life. For example:

- a) He told the devil that "you shall worship the Lord your God and serve him alone" (*Mat. 4:10*); yet He received worship on so many occasions (*Mat. 8:2, Mark 5:22*) and acknowledged that He can also receive worship like God.
- b) Jewish people believed that only God can forgive sins but Christ forgave sins of many people before His critics (*Mark 2:10, Luke 7:47*).
- c) Jewish people believed that the Lord Jehovah gave them the Ten Commandments through Moses. But when He was dealing with the disputes about how to keep the Sabbath, Jesus told them that He is the Lord of the Sabbath and declared He is the Lord that gave the Laws (*Mark 2:28*).

In a similar way, scripture affirms the

deity of the Holy Spirit too.

- a) By calling the Holy Spirit an "eternal Spirit" in *Heb. 9:14*,
 - b) by using "God" interchangeably with the Holy Spirit in *1 Cor. 3:16, 6:19* and
 - c) when we see Peter calling the Holy Spirit as God Himself in *Acts 5:3-4*,
- thus, throughout the scriptures, the Holy Spirit is referred to as God Himself and stated to possess all the attributes of God.

When John the Baptist baptized Jesus, we see that all three persons are actively involved and manifested as three distinct persons during that occasion. Another passage which brings all three persons together is in *Mat. 28:19* where it is stated to "make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit".

On the occasion when John the Baptist baptized Jesus, it is evident that all three persons are actively involved and they manifested as three distinct persons (*Mark 1:10-12*). Another passage which brings all three persons together is in *Mat. 28:19* where it is stated to "make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit". Here also the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinguished as three different persons but all three are seen to be equal. Although, there is the mention of three persons, individuals are baptized under

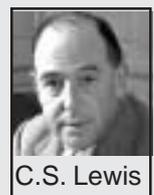
a singular NAME, not plural names. This could only be possible if they share one essence.

While giving benediction, Apostle Paul uses the phrase, 'the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit' (*2 Cor. 13:14*). All these scriptures, very clearly explain that the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are not just one person, but three distinct persons. Neither the Father is the Son nor the Holy Spirit, just as the Son is neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit and vice versa. *Therefore, it is wise and logical, according to the Bible, to believe we only have one God, but He remains as three persons - hence He is a triune God and as a result we believe in the Trinity* ■

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Quotable quote

"All sorts of people are fond of repeating the Christian statement that "God is love". But they seem not to notice that the words 'God is love' have no real meaning unless God contains at least two persons. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God was a single person, then before the world was made, He was not love".



Moral Issues

Facing Churches Today!

- Part III -



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The value and dignity of human life is well-connected to this unalterable truth of the divine word. Moreover the Scripture vehemently declares that human being is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Consequently a person taking the life of another will be held as accountable and punishable (Gen. 9:5,6; Rom. 13:1-7).

We already have seen a few relevant issues in the last two instalments. Now we turn to some other issues facing churches today. They are abortion, suicide and euthanasia. The purpose of these articles is to open the eyes of the young generation, the parents and the churches regarding the grave danger of these moral evils.

Abortion:

The discussion of abortion is very involved as it is a complex topic - it has medical, legal, theological, ethical, social and personal implications. To many, this is an emotional subject and to some others a medical problem and to others a family matter. Here, the aspects of divine and human concerns are explicit. All Christians believe that the creator Almighty is the originator, giver and sustainer of human life. Apostle Paul stated it in his famous sermon in the ancient city, Athens: *"He gives to all life and breath and all things. In him we all live and move and have our being"* (Acts 17:25,28).

The value and dignity of human life is well-connected to this unalterable truth of the divine word. Moreover the Scripture vehemently declares that human being is created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Consequently a person taking the life of another will be held as accountable and punishable (Gen. 9:5,6; Rom. 13:1-7). The sixth commandment in the Decalogue ("Ten Commandments"): *"you shall not kill or murder"* is still relevant. It seems the Hebrew word used for murder (*ratsakh*) indicates in exodus not only the intentional killing but also human death caused by carelessness and negligence - can be medical and personal. It is doubtlessly proven that a human embryo possess human life or in other

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words, human life begins at conception. The medical field never denied this fact. David describes this in Psalms 139 too.

In the case of abortion, there is a question of human right. At least there are two aspects to be considered, the right of mother of the child and the right of unborn child. Neither one can compel the mother nor one can deliberately abort even if it is a doctor. If any one does it, it is a violation of human right and freedom. It also reflects the negative side of human ethics. Some argue that the fetus is an inanimate object - to argue in favour of abortion. Therefore it can be

extracted and destroyed like a limb or teeth or tumour.

However this argument is absolutely meaningless because the day the conception takes place, it is not the physical body that is formed but rather a life is being reproduced and formed.

There is another argument existing among people, such as, the mother can choose this act in the case of rape and the issue of quality of life.

However this choice is destroying the right of living of the unborn baby. Further the mother becomes the murderer of another's life and consequently she is the culprit of such a heinous act before God. Rather than pushing her into taking the life, we have to give moral support. Regarding the quality of life, if the baby is born into poverty or even deformed, the society has to handle this case tenderly. It has been understood that an abortion is probably legitimate in the event of an ectopic pregnancy: This is pregnancy somewhere outside of uterus, usually in the fallopian tube. In this case the baby cannot survive. If allowed, it is dangerous to both child and mother. Hence, choose the lesser evil and allow one to live.

Biblically, the act of abortion is a crime and against the law of God. The Lord is the generator and giver of life. We have no absolute ownership and authority over life. The creation view is the clear evidence of this truth. Human beings are fashioned and made by Almighty (Psa. 139:13, Job 10:8). Human beings are created wonderfully and fearfully. We have to consider the sanctity of life and so respect life. If abortion is being done due to some physical ailments, naturally we cannot help the situation. Suppose if any abnormality is found out and reported, being a Christian one has to leave that matter to God to deal with this issue. Let His will be done. Otherwise if there is possibility for medical treatment one can go ahead with that prayerfully. The holy book reminds us: *“Children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward”* (Psa. 127:3). Modern Christianity may not support anti-abortion stand point, but one cannot break the divine law of life. Therefore we must not become murderers or neither support this heinous act of abortion. Everyone is accountable before the creator God.

Suicide and Euthanasia:

Both these issues are now getting more acceptance in the Christendom. The act of suicide was not familiar to Christians especially to Pentecostals in the earlier days. But recently the attitude is changed. Many

are committing suicide without any hesitation. This is to be addressed immediately. Otherwise we will lose many precious lives. What is actually suicide?

Suicide is murder of oneself and it is prohibited by the sixth command, you shall not murder. Killing oneself is equal to killing another. Of course physical death is inevitable but nobody is given any permission to kill oneself. It is both violation of divine law and family bond. It is a serious sin against God and leaving the family members in prolonged grief. As we have seen earlier, here too the question of value and dignity of life arises. If any one argues this is the personal right and freedom, then he/she is earning the ticket to a terrible end, that is hell!

This is definitely an unforgivable sin because no human being is allotted the permission to take away his or her life by the creator. Sin brought death indeed, but dying oneself is another serious sin.

Our view: One's life is the property of God and a gift given on earth. Therefore destroying life is not only wrong but also trespassing God's own property and dominion over life. It is doubtless that suicide is contrary to the love for God and against His purpose and also disturbance to human relationships. There are six instances of people who committed suicide as recorded in the Bible: Abimelech (Jud. 9:54), King Saul (1 Sam. 31:4) (According to 2 Sam. 1:8,9 Saul asked an Amalekite to kill him), Ahithophel (2 Sam. 17:23), Zimri (1 Kings 16:18), Saul's armour bearer (1 Sam. 31:4-6) and Judas (Math. 27:5). Except Saul's armor bearer, rest of them were wicked people. They all lost their lives. Bible views suicide as equal to murder,

self-murder. Life being the gift of God, it is ungodly to take away life. Many of the people in the Bible went through deep depression, such as Job, Elijah, Jonah, David, even Paul, but none of them committed suicide. They all knew that their times are in the hands of God (Psa. 31:15). When there is great pressure we need to seek the face of God. Suicide does not help one to avoid the eternal destiny.

Finally, suicide brings a deep and long lasting impact, some times fear, upon people who are left behind. The pain and scars do not get healed immediately. Therefore Christians need to develop a deep relation with God and strong standing on the Word. Prayer, sound relation with His word, trust, faith in His promises and hope are the basic elements in the midst of trials and despairing situations. No doubt, suicide is a sin and contrary to the love of God and violating God's command and definitely destroying the human value of life.

Euthanasia is almost parallel to abortion and suicide. The simple meaning of it, is mercy killing. Physical death is unavoidable. It may happen through illness, suffering, accident or due to age factor. But deliberate taking of one's

Suicide brings a deep and long lasting impact, some times fear, upon people who are left behind. The pain and scars do not get healed immediately. Therefore Christians need to develop a deep relation with God and strong standing on the Word. Prayer, sound relation with His word, trust, faith in His promises and hope are the basic elements in the midst of trials and despairing situations.

Today's Christian culture and modern approaches may oppose the views expressed here. Nevertheless, in all these issues, God (His unchanging Word) is the final answer - not culture nor medical science nor politics nor courts. The Scripture emphasizes the significance of human life and the sweet taste of human relationship. A Christian cannot avoid God and develop a life concept and philosophy.

life cannot be justified. Terminating life without willingness is violation of human right and interference into the authority of God. This act is also called "assisted suicide". Whether the killing is voluntarily or involuntary it is intentional killing. Surprisingly, in many parts of the globe it is legally sanctioned.

In any attempt, the act of euthanasia raises the question of human value. Medical doctors have no authority over the life of a patient. In fact, suffering and pain are the result of sin and part of every human life. If a patient is asking doctors to kill him through medication it is passive euthanasia. On the other hand if a patient willingly takes over-dose of pills to kill himself then it is counted as active euthanasia equal to suicide. Or, if the relatives and family members ask hospital to do so, it is again murder and they all would become the partakers of sin. Hence the act of euthanasia somehow is the effect of both murder and suicide. Both are serious sins before God.

In such a situation, Christians should be able to seek the will of God concerning the suffering people. We can plead to God not to give severe pain and deliver them. Here the deliverance can be either complete healing or the final breath. Mercy killing is a contradictory term because killing cannot be merciful! Surely killing is merciless. To a Christian or a Bible believing person, in everything he or she has to seek the will of God. because man's life is not his own (Jer. 10:23). It is a gift of God. Life and death are in the hands of Supreme God who is the giver and sustainer of our life. Only the creator has authority to extend life as He did with King Hezekiah (Isa. 38) or to put an end to life. We are also the guardians of our life with God, meaning, we are joint guardians. We are answerable to God about our life. So, both suicide and euthanasia

are serious crimes and sins before the Lord.

Conclusion:

In this brief study, I have tried to bring a conviction into the minds of readers regarding the moral issues that we are facing, like marriage and divorce, cohabitation and same sex relationship, abortion, suicide and euthanasia. Of course there are many more things to be added. But by recognizing the limitations of space and time, I am closing the discussion here. I believe that at least to a certain extent, the study has helped all of us to think and take a decision. Today's Christian culture and modern approaches may oppose the views expressed here. Nevertheless, in all these issues, God (His unchanging Word) is the final answer - not culture nor medical science nor

politics nor courts. The Scripture emphasizes the significance of human life and the sweet taste of human relationship. A Christian cannot avoid God and develop a life concept and philosophy. He is not only a loving and merciful One but a consuming fire and zealous God too. Humanity is accountable to God in all matters. Hence, we need to fear God and also remember that there

Mercy killing is a contradictory term because killing cannot be merciful! Surely killing is merciless. To a Christian or a Bible believing person, in everything he or she has to seek the will of God. because man's life is not his own (Jer. 10:23). It is a gift of God. Life and death are in the hands of Supreme God.

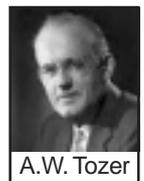
will be a judgment for every sinner. I conclude this study with Solomon's words: "Fear God and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil" (Ecc. 12:13,14).

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"I am beyond the realms of God's mercy – in my opinion. But praise Jesus that my opinion doesn't matter, and that His does. Where judgement once stood, mercy now stands, taller and stronger"

"To receive mercy we must first know that God is merciful. And it is not enough to believe that He once showed mercy to Noah or Abraham or David and will again show mercy in some happy future day. We must believe that God's mercy is boundless, free and, through Jesus Christ our Lord, available to us now in our present situation"



A.W. Tozer

Our God is Greater Than Our Greatest Problem!

New Series:
Meditations from
"1 John" - 4

"Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world. You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." (1 John 4:1-4)



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Apostle John gives us clear parameters about how we can discern if a person is led by the Spirit of God, for "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Rom. 8:14). The way we can clearly infer that a person is a child of God is that this person will freely confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh on this earth. In other words, the person must accept Jesus Christ as God who took on a human form, came into this



world as a baby born to a virgin in Bethlehem, died a lowly death on the cross, and was resurrected on the third day. It is true that as the children of God we have the power and authority to overcome all evil forces for the God who dwells in us is greater than Satan who is in the world. The Spirit of God calls on us to acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord and to commit our lives to Him.

that they may have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).
The powers of evil under Satan including principalities, powers, rulers of the darkness of this age, and spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places (Eph. 6:12) thus are of no match to the power of God within us, for our God is greater: "Whatever the Lord pleases He does, in heaven and in earth, in the seas and in all deep places" (Ps. 135:6). In fact, the power of Satan

is limited to what God allows, and he plays by the rules set by God, as in the case of Job (Job 1:12; 2:6). Since God is in charge over everything, as His children, we do not need to be afraid or fearful as we have the authority (Matt. 28:19-20) and power (Acts 1:8) from God over demons, sickness (Mark 16:17-18) and even death (1 Cor. 15:55).

Let us remember that our God is greater than the greatest problem we face today for He is the Almighty God (Ed-Shaddai). There is no one on this earth or outside it who can match His strength and power. Our God is stronger than anything or anybody who will come against us, and we "can do all things through Christ who strengthens" us (Phil. 4:13). Jesus Christ indwells believers; Satan is likewise the lord of his own followers. But Christ is greater than he who wreaks havoc in the world, and God's power can turn even the worst situation into something good, and God's power to restore is greater than Satan's power to destroy! It was our Lord Jesus who stated: "The thief (Satan) does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I (Jesus) have come that they may have life, and

is limited to what God allows, and he plays by the rules set by God, as in the case of Job (Job 1:12; 2:6). Since God is in charge over everything, as His children, we do not need to be afraid or fearful as we have the authority (Matt. 28:19-20) and power (Acts 1:8) from God over demons, sickness (Mark 16:17-18) and even death (1 Cor. 15:55).

In its hostility to God, the world is pervaded by the purposes of the devil, who has captured the human race through temptation. "We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies under the sway of the wicked one" (1 John 5:19). One way we can overcome by recognizing false teachers and refusing to follow them. By the illumination of the Holy Spirit, who is greater than Satan (the spirit of error), we can overcome deceiving teachers. Since our God is greater than our greatest problem, let us abide under His shadow (Ps. 91:1), and not be afraid of the terror by night or the arrow that flies by day (v. 5). Let us be rest assured that victory is already ours in Jesus Christ!

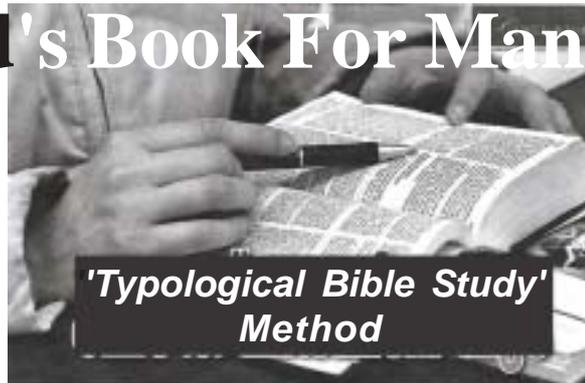
"But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:57). ■



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Of course the people, places, events, institutions, actions, offices and things in the Old Testament are real historical facts, and they have worth, value and significance in itself.



Typological Bible study method is a scriptural way of interpreting the Bible. This method is based on the understanding that many of the people, places, events, institutions, actions, offices, and things prefigure or foreshadow a greater revelation in the New Testament. Thus typological Bible study deals with the study of the many Old Testament people, places, events, institutions, actions, offices and things in the light of the New Testament with greater fulfillment. It is very clear as we study the whole Bible that there is a fundamental theological unity between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

According to Webster's dictionary typology is the doctrine or study of pre-figurative symbols especially in scriptural literature.

Types and Antitypes.

The English word 'Type' comes from the Greek term "tupos." Many of the Old Testament people, places, events, institutions, actions, offices, and things are called biblical types and the fulfillments in the New Testament are called the biblical or theological antitypes.

Historical Reality of Types.

Of course the people, places, events, institutions, actions, offices and things in the Old Testament are real historical facts, and they have worth, value and significance in itself. They are not fairy tales, folklores, fables, fantasies or mythology. Those people are actual people, places are geographical locations, offices, institutions, and events have their God appointed significance. Each has his / it's prominence in the redemptive history which is appointed / allowed by the eternal God. God of the Old Testament and New Testament is the God of history. At the same time many of them represent greater spiritual meaning and future fulfillment in the antitypes found the New Testament. God in his infinite wisdom planned

and presented it in this manner. The fullness of the wisdom, plans purposes or God is beyond human comprehension.

Unity and Continuity of the Old and New Testaments:

Liberal theologians do not want to admit the historicity of many of the people, places and institutions. Generally speaking liberals do not see that the God of Old Testament is the God of the New Testament and that both are inspired by Jehovah God. So they do not admit that God who planned the redemption of man before the foundation of the world revealed his plan through types and prophecies through the history of mankind. We know that God of the Bible revealed himself through progressive revelation. So there is perfect unity and continuity in the Holy Scriptures. Nothing is an after thought of God. He planned it in the eternity past. Evangelical Bible scholars say that, the New Testament is concealed in the Old Testament and the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament. St. Augustine wrote that, 'for the New Testament is hidden in the Old and the Old is fulfilled in the New....' Jesus said according to the Gospel of Luke, 24:27 that Moses and all the prophets spoke concerning Himself in the Scriptures. Thus Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 11:33-36, *the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge God are unsearchable. His ways are past finding out. Who has known the mind of God? Yet He has revealed Himself to mankind to accept Him and his ways by faith.*

Greek and English Words that mean Biblical Types:

Tupos: In the King James Version of the Bible, in the New Testament, the Greek word 'tupos' is translated into several English words according to International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. According to Greek Scholars

other Greek words used in the New Testament which shows the idea of type are:

(1) 'Skia' in Colossians 2:17 and Hebrews 10:1; It is translated 'shadow'.

(2) 'Hupodeigma' in Hebrew 9:23 is translated 'patterns';

(3) 'parabole' in Hebrews 9:9 and 11:19 is translated 'figures'.

(4) 'Antitupos' used in Hebrews 9:24; is translated 'figures' and in 1 Peter.3:21, it is translated 'like figure'.

'Figure' is a word that describes a 'type'. 'Pattern' is another word used in Hebrews 8:4-5 which means 'types'. The word 'manner' is used in Acts 23:25 which also means 'type'.

'Fashion' is the word used in Acts 7:44 which means 'type'. The word 'form' is used in Romans 6:17 and 'example' in 1 Corinthians 10:6,11; Phillippians 3:17; 1 Thessalonians 1:7; 2 Thessalonians 3:9; 1 Timothy 4:12; and 1 Peter 5:3. All of these words describe the idea of biblical 'types'.

Shadows are made when light is shed upon something. The shadow represents and shows the fact that there is a real person, place, object or event. So we can say a type is a prefigure or a foreshadowing of someone greater yet to come. Types are physical, earthly pictures of spiritual realities.

Thus we can see from these verses that the general idea of type is "likeness". Many a person, place, event, institution, action, office, or thing in the Old Testament resembles someone / event greater yet to come in the New Testament. In a way types are like prophecy. Types give us an early view of what is to come in the New Testament. Some types have been fulfilled like some prophecies are fulfilled and others will be fulfilled in God's time according to God's plan.

Different Views of Typology:

Extreme Rejection of Typology: Some completely reject the idea and use of studying and interpreting the Bible typologically. They do not see such relationship between the Old and New Testament. This is an extremely dangerous position. This is a very liberal radical view contrary to the teaching of the word of God. We cannot accept this view since it is not

according to the teaching of the Word of God.

Extreme Acceptance of Typology: This group finds just about everything, every event, every person, place, institution, and every detail in the Old Testament as a type of something or someone in the New Testament. Some call it an extravagant speculation. This is the opposite of extreme rejection. We cannot accept this position either, because it does not handle the word of God properly.

Limited Acceptance of Typology: This position accepts types and antitypes only in the instances where the New Testament clearly and specifically designates and identifies types and antitype. We know that such instances are limited to few persons, places, events institutions etc. This is a safe position but extremely narrow view of typology. It is like saying that, "I accept Old Testament prophecies as prophecies only if the New Testament clearly says so." But we know and believe that there

are so many prophecies in the Old Testament that are not at all mentioned in the New Testament, but we accept those as prophecies.

Some Types and Anti-Types as it is clearly stated in the Scriptures:

Adam is a type of Christ. Apostle Paul shows the comparisons and contrasts between Adam and Christ

and calls Christ the last Adam (Romans 5:14-21; 1 Cori. 15:45-49).

Old Testament sacrifices instituted by God were types of the final perfect sacrifice of Christ (Leviticus, Hebrews 9:8,9 and Hebrews 10).

Passover Lamb was a type of Christ (Exodus 12, 1 Corinthians 5:7).

Passing through the Red Sea was a type of Baptism (Exodus 14, 1 Cori. 10:1,2).

Rock is a type of Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4; Numbers 20:8, Psalms 18:2, Isaiah 32:2, Matthew 16:18).

Manna is a type of Christ (Deuteronomy 8:3, John 6:48-51).

Sabbath is a type of the rest that Christ gives to every believer (Exodus 20:8-11; Colossians 2:16, Hebrews 4:9).

(God willing, we will continue the study of Typological Bible Study Method in the next issue). ■

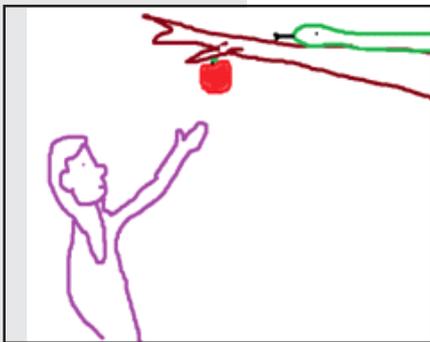
We know that God of the Bible revealed himself through progressive revelation. So there is perfect unity and continuity in the Holy Scriptures. Nothing is an after thought of God. He planned it in the eternity past. Evangelical Bible scholars say that, the New Testament is concealed in the Old Testament and the Old Testament is revealed in the New Testament.

"Way of Holiness"

Jesus breathed on the disciples and told them "Receive the Holy Spirit", and on the day of Pentecost, while the disciples were gathered together in a room praying, there was a sound of a rushing wind and flames of fire appeared on their heads and they began to declare God's praises in new tongues (languages). The disciples were filled with power and they started to boldly preach the good news of salvation far and near. Many miraculous signs accompanied them. The lame walked, the blind saw and the dead were raised to life. They faced opposition from many but they were willing to lay down their lives rather than deny the truth of the gospel. **We too have the opportunity to receive this gift of the Holy Spirit and partner with God in His work of reconciling mankind to Himself.**

Sin and separation from God

When God created Adam and Eve in His own image, they enjoyed fellowship with God. God gave man the freedom to



eat of any fruit in the Garden of Eden. But warned them not to eat of the fruit of 'Knowledge of good and evil'. But man decided that he wanted to be wise and decide for himself what was right and what was wrong. So they ate of that fruit. And sure enough man died spiritually that day. He lost the glorious presence of God. Man's sin separated him from the HOLY GOD.

Temporary restitution for sin

But God the Father made provision for man to have forgiveness from sins.



Susan John
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Christian Medical College, Ludhiana

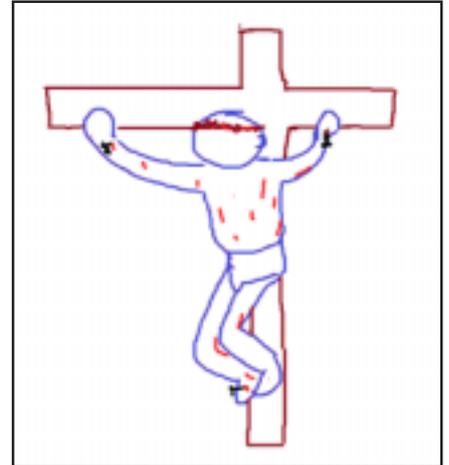
Each time man sinned he would have to offer a sacrifice. The tabernacle and the temple in Jerusalem in the Old Testament were the places where God would dwell. These were the Holy places. The High Priest had to undergo



cleansing when he had to enter the Most holy place once a year to offer sacrifice for the sins of the Israelites. However, no sacrifice cleansed the conscience and it was only a temporary measure.

The permanent solution for sin

But in the fullness of time God gave a permanent solution by sending His only Son, Jesus Christ to die for our sins. He taught, healed and asked people to repent of their sins and accept the kingdom (rule) of God in their lives. The creator of the whole universe became the Lamb and shed His blood on the cross for restoring the relationship between God and man. He died and rose again. Now He is seated at the right hand of God and will one day come back to



take us with Him to our heavenly homes. Between our redemption and glorification he has promised us the help of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God to lead holy and acceptable lives.

The confidence to live Holy lives**

The Father is willing to give the Holy Spirit to all who ask. Jesus has a pitcher filled with the living water waiting to fill your cup to the overflowing. The only condition is that your cup needs to be clean.

And how do you keep your cup clean?

Every act of sin needs repentance and cleansing. With brokenness of heart, come humbly to the foot of the cross to be washed in the blood of Jesus. The door at the foot of the cross is very low, and there is no option but to bend down and walk on your hands and knees if you want to go through (no stiff necked person can pass through). And as you do, the blood of Jesus will wash you of your sins.

How do you recognize sin?

Anything that disturbs your peace is sin. "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts" (Col. 3:15). The Holy Spirit will blow a whistle like a referee in a game to tell you that sin has come in. Be quick to listen to His leading.

(- continued next page)

** Excerpts from the book:
'The Calvary Road' by Roy Hession



&
JKS



Ex-Pres. Jimmy Carter - 93 year old Sunday School Teacher!

A large number of tourists arrive every Sunday at Maranatha Baptist Church in Plains, Georgia, USA, to see 93-year-old Jimmy Carter, the 39th president of the United States, conduct Bible study. Visitors begin lining up outside the church from 5 am.



Jimmy Carter

The sanctuary fills quickly, as does an overflow room with video screens. At 9:50 a.m., Rosalynn Carter, who turned 90 in August,

takes a seat in the fifth row. A few minutes later, Jimmy walks in, microphone in hand. His topic for the day is the book of Ezekiel and he begins by saying, "Today, we'll be reviewing one of the most difficult sections of the Bible". He continues, "Ezekiel was 'the bearer of bad news', sent by God to tell the Israelites that their disloyalty was responsible for their tribulations". Personal accountability is the theme of Carter's 30-minute talk, delivered without notes. Carter concludes with the message that the

acceptance of Jesus "is the key to a full and fruitful and happy and peaceful life".

Both the Carters take third-row seats among members of Maranatha Baptist church. You might take them to be any elderly couple attending church. The church service begins with singing and ends with benediction by 11 a.m. after a sermon by the Pastor of the church.

Then starts the picture taking session. The Carters sit on stools and have their picture taken with every visitor, a line that snakes through the sanctuary and into the overflow room. *Every one is amazed by the fact that a 93 year old ex-president of USA teaches in church on numerous Sundays before hundreds of visitors!*

Church replaced by social media!

A new Pew Research Center study has found that people in the age group 20 to 40 years are finding spiritual fulfillment in social media, fitness clubs, etc. rather than traditional church services. For example, Madison Blank, a 27-year-old youth often wakes up at dawn to attend a fitness class. She explains: "Coming together with a class forms an unbreakable unity. Fitness has allowed me to connect to my inner self more - than sitting through a religious service". Some others seek spiritual fulfillment through social media.

Facebook founder, Mark Zuckerberg, has even described the community found on Facebook as a type of church, a place where "people find a sense of purpose and support". Courtney Ferrucci shared how Facebook allows her to connect with others in her profession: "We're dealing with the same struggles, the same life events. We give advice to each other and support each other. If there's a problem, there will immediately be 30 girls trying to help".

Food and restaurants are another substitute that youths are pursuing in place of church. It is sad that the church has failed in its duty!

Weekly Bible study for US Cabinet members!

Ralph Drollinger of Capitol Ministries is conducting a weekly Bible study in which a dozen members of the US cabinet attend regularly. Among those who regularly attend are the Education Secretary, the Agriculture Secretary, the Energy Secretary, the CIA Director and the Attorney General. Vice President attends whenever he can make it.



Ralph Drollinger

It is, indeed, reassuring to know that the US is led by a few God fearing people!

"Way of Holiness" ... (Continuation from previous page)

At the baptism of Jesus, John the Baptist recognized Jesus and said: "Behold the lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world". And as Jesus rose up from the water, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him like a dove and God declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased". The dove is a very gentle bird; it wouldn't alight on anyone less gentle than a lamb. Likewise only if Jesus is in us and when we have His lamb like nature, His purity and His humbleness, the Holy Spirit will alight upon us.

Persistent Holy lives

So if we want God's presence in our lives, if we want our bodies to be His temple, if we want Him to dwell in us and have fellowship with us, we need to also recognize that:

1. We have been chosen in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy (Eph. 1: 4).
2. We need to lead sanctified lives (by the Word and Spirit of God) (I Thes. 4:3, 7, 8; John 17:17)
3. We need to be holy as God is holy (1 Pet. 1:16).

4. We need to follow peace with all men and holiness (without which no man shall see the Lord) (Heb. 12:14).

5. We should put on Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof' (Rom. 13:14).

God will help us to abide and grow in Him, through His word and through the Holy Spirit. He will lead us from glory to glory, till we all come "in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ".



Our God answers prayers!

A 10-year old girl Amy lived in a small town with her father, her younger brother and a baby sister. She and her brother walked to the nearby school each day and helped with chores around the house after school. When Amy was younger, her grandmother lived with them and told her many stories from the Bible. Amy learned to pray from her grandmother.

Amy's father rode the bus to work each day. He had a small job and earned just enough money to pay the rent on the apartment they lived in, and buy essentials for the family. One day the landlord said to Amy's father that he is expecting a big construction crew to rent the entire apartment complex and pay

high rent for their stay. The landlord was asking most of his tenants to vacate their apartments as soon as possible. Amy's father tried to reason with the landlord to change his mind. Amy and her family had no other place to go since her father could not afford the high rents in other places.

Amy heard what the landlord wanted. She told her father how grandma used to pray with her whenever Amy was feeling sad or

worried about something. She and her father prayed for their problem. Suddenly there was a knock on the door. When they opened the door, there was their Pastor. The Pastor was visiting different families. When the Pastor came inside the house, Amy's father sadly said that his family had to vacate the apartment they were living in and he could not afford another apartment.

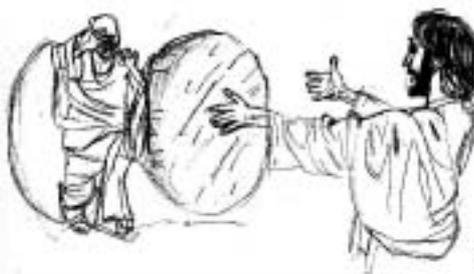
The Pastor made some telephone calls. He found that an elderly lady in his church was willing to rent a room in her house, for Amy's family, for much less money than their current rent.

As we read in Philippians 4:19, "and my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus".



Beena Aunty

Free Lazarus, and let him go



Alvin K. Varghese
Mumbai

Your are no longer a slave but a son



Evelyn Cherian
Banglore

Good Shepherd



Banage P.K.

Jacob's Well

