
January 01
ANGER OR HATRED?
Bill Griffin
10-06-2001

The events of September 11, 2001 have caused most of us to have mixed feelings. What was our first reaction? Anger? Hated? We were definitely angered because we were personally involved in the United States. Terrorism had been brought to our doorstep. We could tolerate it as long as it was in a foreign country, even when it was against our Embassies and Americans. The more we sat and stewed with the pictures being shown in the news media, a lot of our anger began to turn to hatred. I hope you have been able to tender your hatred and keep it to anger only.

We have seen the news media try to explain "Why do they hate us?" They have been quick to explain the 'Islam religion against the rest of the world' theory. It is not Islam but the radicals who hate Americans and call us the 'Great Satan'.

We need to be careful that we are not consumed with the same hatred toward them that is being exhibited toward us. We have had some instances already where people of the Muslim faith in our country have been attacked by some displaying the same type hatred. We are quick to stereotype people when we want to - all Muslims are terrorists - when they are peace loving people for the most part. The rest of the world did not say we were all red necks like Timothy McVey when he bombed the buildings in Oklahoma City.

I don't think it has a thing to do with religion. President Bush described it well when he said we were attacked by 'evil.' Was it just us? No! Evil has been attacking around the world since the beginning of time and terrorism is still very active in Northern Ireland and the

Arabic states around Israel. Evil knows no boundaries; if it did, all evil would come from one country or area or group and it could be dealt with.

Good vs Evil: God vs Satan, a hatred born in the beginning of time (when Satan was thrown out of heaven) that will only be resolved permanently when Christ returns after the millennium and casts Satan into the Lake of Fire forever. Until then, we need to look at the words of Christ and the way He handled what could have been hatred for Him.

- John 15:18-19... [18] If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. [19] If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.
- 1 Pet 2:21-23 ... [21] For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: [22] Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: [23] Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:
No retaliation
No Threats
Entrusted Himself to the Father that judges righteously.
Healed us by His wounds
He received a robe of purple that we may receive a robe of white.

January 02
BLUE EARTH
Bill Griffin
11-10-2001

South of Minneapolis and almost into Iowa is a little town called Blue Earth, Minnesota. As I drove along Highway 169, I began to notice the farms and how 'black' the earth was and thought to myself that even I could grow something here. I also wondered how the town could be named Blue Earth when all I saw was black. It is no wonder this area is called the 'Corn Belt'. The huge farms and fields attested to this with the remnants of the corn crops still in the fields.

As I passed one of these farms and fields with the windows half cracked, it hit me. Wheeeew! The stench was terrible and now I had a car full. It smelled just like I had driven through one of those barns and right through the manure pile. I knew one of the farmers had spread the manure on a field for fertilizer. There was no reason to roll the windows up now - it was in the car with me and now I had to let the wind push it out as I drove along.

I thought about how my sins are a stench, like this manure, in the nostrils of God.

I then thought about how this stench on the field would become something useful. As fertilizer, it helps the crops to bear a more abundant yield. God uses this stench big time; how about my stench? Can He use it?

I truly believe God can use the sins in my life that produces trials to His benefit. I must recognize the sin for what it is and turn from the sin to God. As I do, I have to ask God what He wants me to learn from the sin or trial? By using the lessons learned, God has now given me a new instruction to share with someone. [I should be a genius by now, not still in the dumb-dumb class.] Look at how James states it:

Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. [James 1:2-4]

John 15:2 says: He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.

Through my turning to God, He is able to prune this little branch so that it may be even more fruitful. God's fertilizer - now if I will only get on by the stench and let it do its thing - Grow more and bigger fruit.

January 03
A PROMISE FOR THE FUTURE
Bill Griffin
06-26-2000

I keep telling myself to be patient in this job; it can't last forever. When I started July 5th, 1999, I was 'guaranteed' two months and if USWest bought the program, maybe three more months if I wanted to help in the deployment. I keep looking forward to the end of those three months. I sometimes have to step back and see that I am not the only one that has had to wait on promises and live by faith.

Noah was promised rain for 120 years before the first drop fell.

God promised Abraham land for his descendants but the only land he ever owned was the burial plot for his wife Sara. Even Abraham's immediate children and grandchildren never occupied the cities in the land God said would be theirs.

Moses led God's people on a forty-year trip to the Promised Land but was only allowed to look from the mountaintop before he died.

David was promised a descendant on the throne forever but never saw it.

Sometimes we think God has asked us to take on an impossible task by obeying His will. We fail to take into account that God has not asked us to accomplish His will by our own power only. Many of God's tasks are too large for us, but they are nothing to God. He wants to do things through us with His awesome power.

We are not promised to always see the end result either. We never know what seed we sow will lead someone to Christ later or what word of encouragement lifts someone's spirits for the day. We live by faith that God is who He says He is and He will do what He has promised.

Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.
[Hebrews 1:1]

If we believe this, we can claim the same promise God made to Joshua.

As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee. I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. What promise has God made to you that has given you courage to face a great task?

January 04
ACCESSORIES
Bill Griffin
5/20/2000

When I bought this bike a couple of weeks ago, it came as a basic package. Tires, wheels, handlebars, seat and cables. No frills. Just the basics.

As I began to think about riding I noticed there were a couple of items I consider a must -- safety helmet [I know, you think with my hard head why do I need a helmet], water bottle and carrying case, and a cable with lock in case I had to leave it near a tree and walk back.

After riding a couple of times I discovered another item I needed -- a pad for the seat. Have you noticed those little seats that come on bicycles? Why do they assume one size fits all? Like bucket seats in cars, they make it easy to build all the same but not all of us have the same size buckets.

When I think of these items, it reminds me that my salvation comes as a package like the bicycle. Included in this package is the Holy Spirit. If I do nothing else, this package will suffice for all my needs but there are a few 'accessories' that make the package even better.

- Joy that comes from the Lord makes me face every day with a song in my heart and praise on my lips for Him.
- Peace which passes all understanding here on earth is mine to allow my heart to be still before the Lord.
- Patience which I had to learn but now allows me to 'wait' upon the Lord.

Like accessories in an auto shop or the bicycle store, there just seems to be no end. Some are readily available on the shelf of any variety store and others have to be sought out. There is also no end to the 'accessories' the Lord has in store for His people, some easily found and others take some effort to find. Not the least of these is an inheritance for the future. I will share in all the riches of heaven with His Son, Jesus Christ.

Gal 4:6-7... And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

January 05
BLESSINGS AMID THE CHAOS
Bill Griffin
7-12-2000

We all know about the 'beatitudes' Jesus declared from the mountainside but did you realize there are also seven beatitudes in the book of Revelation. That's right! Revelation; Not exactly the book one would think of for "Blessed". We think of Revelation too often as a book of gloom and doom because of the judgement and destruction described within its pages. Most casual Christians are afraid to even try to read the book. We shouldn't be. It is really the Revelation of Christ and the Completion of the Mystery of God. Following the sixth trumpet judgment, an angel has just declared "there will be time no more". Look what the seventh trumpet angel brings.

Rev 11:15... And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven,

saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

For those who belong to Christ, it is a time of blessing and a blessed hope for us who are watching and waiting for His return.

Now, lets see what the other "blesseds" declare.

* Rev 1:3... Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

* Rev 14:13... And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

* Rev 16:15... Behold, I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.
* Rev 19:9... And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.
* Rev 20:6... Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.
* Rev 22:7... Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

* Rev 22:14... Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

There is not enough time in a short note to detail all these blessings entail. Suffice it to say that the same God who is bringing judgment against an unrepentant world is the One who can make such promises amid the chaos. Notice these promises are not to all, but only to those who have repented and turned to God for their hope and salvation.

Like a rose hidden in the thorns, God's blessings are hidden throughout His Word. We have to look for them. Sometimes the thorns may even stick us, but the prize is worth it.

January 06
CLEAN UP AFTER THE STORM
Bill Griffin
11-11-2000

When I arrived in Denver last Monday, I was given a bright red Chevrolet Impala as a rental car. The beauty was temporary because Monday night and Tuesday, we had one of those dirty rain/snow storms. You know the kind. The mixture of moisture streaks the windshield in spite of the wipers going full speed. The side and rear windows became dirty due to the road moisture thrown up by other vehicles. By the time I returned to the motel Tuesday, the car was filthy on the outside. Even the snow on the ground was dirty instead of the usual fluffy white blanket.

Last Thursday when I filled up with gas, I ran the car through the car wash and washed the dirt away. Once again I had a shiny beautiful car.

The car wash did not last long though. Friday night, we once again had snow. When I went out Saturday, the road grime once again took over. The car now looks like it has never been cleaned.

Life and sin is comparable to this situation. We start out beautiful and then we seem to be in the middle of a sin storm. We only have to look at the scriptures, especially the book of Judges to see this same situation over

and over. The people of Israel would be on a high when a judge was appointed and they turned back to God [went through the car wash]. It was only a few years later though when they would return to their old ways [dirty storms]. This cycle was repeated many times just in this book. Today we are no better or worse than these people. We do the very same thing. We run clean for a while and then run smack into Satan's temptations [storms].

There is something about the storm though. We ALL were in the storm. In other words, the temptations or sins are there all around each of us. Like the car, it is up to me to determine when I will wash it. Do I linger in sin or clean up as soon as I determine I have been in the storm. God tells us not to wait. There are many reasons to clean up quickly.

If I regard iniquity in my heart, the LORD will not hear me. [Ps. 66:18]

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. [1 John 1:9]

I don't know about you but I want God to hear me at all times. Like the car, I need to be cleansed often. How about you?

January 07
DAILY EXERCISE
Bill Griffin
5-16-2000

The past two weeks have been rough for an old fat man. I made up my mind last week to shed a few of these two hundred and plenty pounds. I started walking before work in the morning by getting up at 4:15 a.m. and meeting a co-worker at 4:45. We walk for about 45 minutes each morning. After work, we have been walking for about 45 minutes before we decide where and what is for supper. I'm not talking about a leisurely stroll. Larry is about 6'3" and appears to have been walking all his life. My little short legs have to hustle to keep up. Up until last Monday, I had not broken a sweat since I have been in Denver but I can no longer say that.

If that was not enough punishment for my chunky little self, we went to Wal-Mart last Saturday and bought two cheap BICYCLES. Sunday we put them on the road and it was not long before the other muscles not used for walking were screaming, "what did we ever do to you to deserve this?" We only rode about 3 miles but I had to get off and walk the bike up the last few hills to get back to the motel. I now ache in places I had forgotten about since --- oh well, I cannot remember that far back now either.

We all understand physical exercise and dieting [oh yes, did I mention that?] What about

spiritual exercise and dieting though which is more important? Fat will not keep a person out of heaven but a Spiritual deficiency will. Without the Holy Spirit inside us, Christ says we are "none of His". Well, how do we exercise and diet spiritually? Galatians 5: 19-25 gives us a real good guide.

[19] Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, [20] Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, [21] Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. [22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, [23] Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. [24] And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. [25] If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Our spiritual diet should be just like a physical diet - getting rid of unwanted excess

weight. Those things listed in verses 19-21 should be on our diet list the same as 'ice cream, chocolate cake, fatty foods, mashed potatoes, gravy, FRIED CHICKEN, etc. Just as being overweight is unhealthy, these listed items affect our spiritual well being. They separate us from God.

Our spiritual exercise should be exercising in our lives those things listed in 22-24. As the

Spirit helps me exercise and grow with this list, my spiritual life becomes healthy again and my relationship with God is restored.

Notice verse 25, the final daily exercise required of each of us. If you are not exercising and dieting spiritually, don't you think it is time to start?

January 08
DIFFERENCES
Bill Griffin
10-29-2000

Do you ever find yourself listening or watching a program and you tell yourself "I don't like this"? I had never watched Sarah Brighton before but thought I would watch a concert by her on PBS here in Denver. She is one of either Ireland or England's most popular sopranos. As she started singing some of the classics by Puccini and Gershwin, I almost turned back to the ballgame but I was tired of it too.

I must admit that my biggest problem is that I cannot understand what she is singing when she gets up on the high notes. I do know that she has a beautiful voice and it is not just a problem with her, I also have the problem with anyone singing soprano. It didn't help that she was singing opera in Italian too.

As I watched more of the program, I began to change my first impression and began to enjoy the concert. The lady is very talented and she is singing to those who want to listen to her type of music.

I think of how God has gifted each of us in different ways. We all do not have the same

talents nor do we enjoy the same things from others. We would be nothing but robots if this was true and we were all alike. I have to remember this in God's church also. We do not all enjoy the same type of music from the choir. I have to enjoy when the songs are not my favorites because I know someone in the congregation is hearing their favorite music.

I also have to remember that even our worship is different. If someone lifts their hands in praise and I don't, I should not deny them their right. I look and see another with tears flowing down their cheeks and I know that God is touching their hearts too. How can we ever forget that God created us to have a choice and then He confirmed that gift by dying on a cross for us?

Psalm 139: 13-14 For you created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

January 09
EYES BIGGER THAN MY STOMACH
Bill Griffin
11-11-2000

Yesterday I had brunch about 11 a.m. due to the snow storm from the night before. Since I did not know if I would be able to get out later, I ate heartily. Last night, I walked to a restaurant next door to the motel. I really wasn't hungry but I felt I should eat just because it was supertime. After viewing the menu, I ordered a meal and also asked for a salad.

You have heard of the old expression "eyes bigger than my stomach" haven't you? I had a full dose last night. Not only did I not finish the salad; I could not finish the meal. I was stuffed.

As I sat there thinking about too much food, I thought of how our "eyes get bigger than our stomachs" in our church work. In our desire to work for God we often take on more chores than we can possibly do efficiently. In affect, we are stuffed!

Just as the waitress did not force all that food on me, God does not force all those jobs on us. We are often prone after taking on all these jobs to complain that we don't have time to do anything. We fuss and fume constantly about how

overworked we are. God never intended us to be overworked to the point that there is no joy in our serving. He wants to work through us to accomplish His will and to make our joy complete, not the other way around. We need to be patient and wait upon the LORD instead of ordering all the things from the church menu and then not being able to complete them.

My advice to all people is that if God only gives you one job to do, do it and leave the rest of the menu alone. If I force myself to take on another job, I deprive God from working through some one else to bring joy to their life. God desires our availability and obedience more than our work. By these He can move us about daily to reach out to a lost race or to comfort those in distress.

Micah 6:8 gives us a real view of what God expects from our lives.

He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

By following these precepts, we will willingly go where God leads and do what He asks.

January 10
FIGHTING EACH OTHER
Bill Griffin
10-03-2000

We are living in a day and age where it seems no one has any respect for individual lives and rights anymore. I know North Carolina is no different from Colorado. It is not something that is particular to an area, it particular to a human race. We do not trust anyone anymore.

Case in point is the rash of 'Road Rage' beatings and killings. A young man was enticed to pull over to the side of the Interstate here in Denver by a motorist blinking his headlights at him. The young man thought maybe something was wrong with his car but when he stopped, the other

driver attacked and beat him. Finally the other driver ran over the man's leg when he pulled off, breaking the leg. Most of us try to drive reasonable but are fearful of doing something that irritates someone to the point they pull a gun and shoot at us or follow and attack us. This is just one of the examples where man is waging war against man. I could list all night and never get them all. Some we may not consider war, but they are an attack against our values and morals.

It is a shame we cannot realize where the real war is originating. Our real war is spiritual and it is for the souls of man. Paul tells us this in Ephesians.

Eph 6:12 -- For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of

this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

Even though it appears that men cause the evil, we need to look back to the beginning to see the roots. A snake, in a garden, with a lie. From that day forward, man has found evil in his heart because of Satan. Satan is still the deceiver. Still the liar. Still the cause of dissension and turmoil. Until man can see this problem in himself, it is like a drug addiction, man will never admit he needs help and request a change.

For those who have opted for change, God's Word gives us a sword to combat the real cause.

Eph 6:13 -- Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

January 11
FINISHING TOUCHES
Bill Griffin
7-12-2000

There are several stories concerning finishes and rests in the Bible. As I studied my Sunday school lesson, these thoughts seemed to emerge in my mind as I thought of the finishes and the rest associated with them.

The Creation Story: It took God six days to create the world. He looked at all He had done and called it good. Then He rested.

* Gen 2:2... And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

The Redemption Story: From the beginning, God knew we would need to be redeemed. Fallen man could not redeem himself so God sent His Son to be that payment for sin. God laid upon Him "the iniquity of us all". After three years of ministry, Christ declared "It is finished". He then rested from His labors of carrying those sins.

* John 19:30... When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

The Judgment Story: Mankind has continued to stray from the decrees and statutes of his

Creator. God has done everything He can to bring us back to a right relationship with Him. The day is fast approaching when He will say "No more" and all creation will have to face judgment. Only then will earth and nature gain rest since they too will face consequences caused by man.

* Rev 16:17... And the seventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

The Final Story: Mankind deserves no reward. Neither does he deserve rest. But the merciful God who created us also prepared a place for us to rest. He knew we would fall. He knew we would turn from Him and worship other gods. He knew it would cost Him His Son. BUT HE DID IT ANYWAY! And it is free!

* Rev 21:5-6... And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely.

January 12
GIVE THANKS
Bill Griffin
11-12-2000

Nothing thrills me more than to be in a public restaurant and see someone, a couple, or a group, bow their heads and give thanks for their meal. Too often we are afraid of what people will think but I have never had anyone say anything when I pause briefly. One thing I do not do is force anyone with me to return thanks. I feel this is an individual choice.

I ask myself how I can not give thanks. Even if it is not what I consider a good situation for me, I know I am to give thanks in "ALL" things. Paul stated it well when he said:

In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.

We must be aware that it is the will of God for us as Paul states. To be ashamed here to be seen doing something that brings glory to God is nothing compared to what will come.

Luke 9:26 - For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

I for one do not want to be ashamed at His appearing.

Is there something in your life that causes you to be ashamed to glorify God in public? Are you willing to give up your shame in front of many to avoid the shame in front of ONE?

January 13
GOD'S FAVORITE WORD
Bill Griffin
01-23-2000

The big game [Super Bowl] is coming up and four teams are battling today for the opportunity to play in it. All of us start out the year with our favorite teams and as they dwindle down to

this time of the year, we pick up one of the others as 'our favorite'. Some we choose because we like the coach or a player, some we choose because we dislike personnel on the other team.

Somehow, we can find a favorite for everything. Favorite color. Favorite car. Favorite sibling and on and on.

What about God's favorites? We know of Christ, His 'beloved'. We also know David was the 'apple of His eye.' Paul was special. In fact, ALL mankind was special enough for God to send His Son to save.

What about God's favorite word? Word? Think about it. One word appears 600 times in scripture. That word is "COME". From God's first call to come in Genesis 7:1, [And the LORD said unto Noah, COME thou and all thy house into the ark] to His final appeal in Revelation 22:17, [And the Spirit and the bride say, COME. And let him that heareth say, COME And let him that is athirst Come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.], God calls His people to safety.

The word come was spoken with frequency, over 600 times. It was spoken with clemency, an offer of mercy. The invitation to the Ark was a call to salvation, not justice. His call today is also a call to salvation.

It was spoken with urgency. Luke 18:22... Now when Jesus heard these things, he said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and COME, follow

me. Scripture tells us the young man went away saddened. The circumstances were different in the next town over, Jericho. There He met a blind man and a man named Zacchaeus. Jesus gave an invitation for both to come and they responded.

Luke 18:43... And immediately he received his sight, and followed him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God.

Luke 19:2-6... And, behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus... and when Jesus came to the place, he looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchaeus, make haste, and COME down; for to day I must abide at thy house. And he made haste, and came down, and received him joyfully.

Jesus never passed by Jericho again. The urgent message to come was answered by those two but how about today? Jesus continues to pass our way offering salvation, God's Mercy and Grace, that we may escape the final call for all the ages, the call to Justice at the Great White Throne.

The people in the Baptist Church in Texas last year had no idea it would be their last moments on earth. None of us have any insight into the length of our days. We have to be ready to answer the call to COME when the offer is made.

January 14
HIDDEN VALUE
Bill Griffin
11-12-2000

Isn't it funny how we attach a value to almost everything now? Junkyards and stores are now classified as "antique" dealers. As the old expression goes - "One man's junk is another man's treasure." We manage to attach a value to anything: old coke bottles, old milk jugs, old beat up furniture or storage trunks. Some places even try to duplicate old furniture by beating new furniture with a chain to get dents and dings and by a process of finishes.

One guy even stated, "I used to be a millionaire until my mom threw out my baseball cards."

Our perception of value is "supply and demand". If a product is wanted and supplies are short, the value is high. If the market is flooded with a product, then the value is lowered.

God does not place values the way you and I do though. We know the value He placed on humanity but it does not fit our pattern. With the number of people since Adam and Eve, we should have been bought for a dime a dozen. God did not use our system. With only One item to use to purchase all of man, it should have been priceless, but look at the value Christ put on Himself:

Philippians 2:5-8 - Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in

the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

The Father would not let Him remain cheap though. After the cross, there is still the same number of people past, present and future but now God has established His value for His Son. This is not a cheap imitation being passed off as the real thing or something that has our value system applied. God alone set the value.

2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 2:11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

There is a hidden value in all of us that only God could see. I am glad He applied His value system. Look at how we value a Mickey Mantle baseball card or the salary of a pro sports player or movie star. Our value system is totally distorted.

January 15
INCREASED KNOWLEDGE
Bill Griffin
7-8-2000

In today's technical and scientific world, it seems that fewer and fewer things are impossible. From test tube babies to actual cloning animals, how far behind can Adolph Hitler's dream of a perfect race be? Maybe he was born before his time; perish the thought. We also have the ability to send people into space to the moon. Since we can send Hubbell telescopes to Mars, how long before we attempt to send some one to a distant planet? With the invention we call the

"computer", we can search and advance knowledge beyond our wildest imagination.

We think this knowledge explosion is just man getting smarter on his own as each day passes. Scientists and techno-nerds will tell you it is all their own doing and understanding and years of hard work. I have news for them. It was foretold many years ago. God was giving instructions for Daniel to write for a record when He gave him these words:

"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased. [Dan 12:4]

For almost two thousand years, man walked or road a beast of burden every where he went with very little knowledge increase except fire and the wheel. In the past fifty years, knowledge has exploded. Notice the other part of this verse also. "Even to the time of the end". Could we be living in the time of the end? With all the pre-rapture prophecies being fulfilled and all creation now waiting on the Creator, it is very possible.

A friend of mine sent me the following story and I now share it with you. It emphasizes that God is the Creator and He will have the last word.

God And The Scientist

One day a group of scientists got together and decided that man had come a long way and no longer needed God. So they picked one scientist to go and tell Him that they were done with Him. The scientist walked up to God and said, "God, we've decided that we no longer need you. We're to the point that we can clone people and do many miraculous things, so why don't you just go on and get lost."

God listened very patiently and kindly to the man and after the scientist was done talking, God said, "Very well, how about this, let's say we have a man making contest."

To which the scientist replied, "OK, great!" But God added, "Now, we're going to do this just like I did back in the old days with Adam."

The scientist said, "Sure, no problem" and bent down and grabbed himself a handful of dirt. God just looked at him and said, "No, No, No, you get your own dirt".

January 16
IT'S STILL OUR GOVERNMENT
Bill Griffin
12-13-2000

WHEW! It is about to finally be over. This past month has been a media paradise not seen since the O.J. trial. I think we have heard and seen every politician and person who wanted to voice an opinion. Each side has its view and nothing is going to change it. Shake all of it up and then throw in the USA Supreme Court and it has been a real fiasco. I do not envy those court justices! They were in a no-win situation also - one they did not seek- no matter how they ruled, one side would feel cheated.

No matter who you voted for, and the way the country voted almost equally, maybe there is not really a nickel's worth of difference in the two. There is not that much that one person, even the President, can do to influence the country as a whole. Congress rules us more than the elected President. And in today's environment, the Supreme Court is making more laws than the legislature due to the interpretations they make concerning both old and new laws.

Neither of these two individuals can put GOD back in our schools thereby at least exposing our children to some semblance of right and wrong. The Ten Commandments are not Ten Choices. How do our children learn of a loving God if they are only taught that their forefathers were tadpoles? Neither of these two individuals alone can stop the killing of countless unborn children in our country every day. Where do our children learn about prayer and a trust in God to work in lives

when there is very little prayer in our homes today?

Even with all said and done now, it is time for the people of America to pick up the pieces left over from the Florida war and rebuild. No one said it was perfect but it is the only government we have and it is a government 'of the people, for the people, and by the people'. God knew and approved of the governmental system for the peoples of the world.

2 Pet 2:9-10 -- The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, AND DESPISE GOVERNMENT.

Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

As you can see, we are to work with and not despise our laws and our government. Look at the next verse and see how we are to act.

1 Tim 2:1-2 -- I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and FOR ALL THAT ARE IN AUTHORITY; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. Did you notice the reward mentioned for upholding our government? That we may lead a 'quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honest.' It is time now to quiet our hearts and begin to restore our trust in each other.

January 17
JERUSALEM IN CONFLICT
Bill Griffin
May 2000

What's it all about, this fighting for Jerusalem? The real war today is between Arabs and Jews and has been going on for a long time. While the Arabs CAN NOT trace their lineage back to Abraham as they claim, there are two instances in the Old Testament that sheds some light on the Arabian origin and the origin of the conflict.

Gen 17:20... And as for Ishmael, I have heard thee: Behold, I have blessed him, and will make him fruitful, and will multiply him exceedingly; twelve princes shall he beget, and I will make him a great nation.

Most Arabs claim their heritage to Abraham through this route and believe the promises of God were rightfully theirs and not Isaac's.

The other incident is equally as mysterious.

Gen 25:21-23... And Isaac intreated the LORD for his wife, because she was barren: and the LORD was intreated of him, and Rebekah his wife conceived. And the children struggled together within her; and she said, If it be so, why am I thus? And she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said unto her, Two nations are in thy womb, and two manner of people shall be separated from thy bowels; and the one people shall be stronger than the other people; and the elder shall serve the younger.

While neither of these incidents point directly to the ancestry of the Arab nations, some of the offspring of each can be traced to tribes and current nations in the Middle East.

God promised to "bless those who blessed Abraham and Isaac and to curse those who cursed them". Since the early days, there has always been enmity between the tribes. When Moses led the Israelites to the Promised Land, guess who was living there? The Arabs have always felt the land belonged to them. After the Israelites were taken into captivity and later returned to Jerusalem and Israel, they never really possessed the land. There was never a kingdom reestablished in Israel with a king - fulfilling the promise God made to one of the kings just before captivity that none of his descendants would occupy the throne. Even the time of the Crusades was a bloody war trying to retake the land from the Arabs but also it was a time of driving out the "Christ killers" - the Jews in the name of Christianity.

True to His Word, God dispersed the Jews to the four corners of the world and started bringing them home in His own time. In 1948, the United Nations decided to settle the conflict in the Middle East and offered both the Palestinians and the Israelites a land settlement for a sovereign nation. Israel accepted the proposal and became a nation in May 1948. Palestine rejected the offer and continued to be a thorn in everyone's side. Even with today's peace accords, Palestine is not satisfied. They want Jerusalem as their capital. Israel refuses.

Into this fray, comes the Christian community because of the ties with Jerusalem and the death of our LORD. Today, the Roman Catholic Church wants to control Jerusalem and offer this city as a major worship center for all three religions. No matter what man tries to do in the City of Zion, God will still have the last say. He has

set Israel [people] and Jerusalem [city] up for tribulation and trials for a while. Today, Jerusalem is that "cup of trembling", a boiling cauldron that could erupt at any time due to any of the religions.

Zech 12:2-3... Behold, I will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling unto all the people round about, when they shall be in the siege both against Judah and against Jerusalem. And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it.

But God has a plan for the future good of Jerusalem also. In His time.

Zech 14:12... And this shall be the plague wherewith the LORD will smite all the people that have fought against Jerusalem; Their flesh shall consume away while they stand upon their feet, and their eyes shall consume away in their holes, and their tongue shall consume away in their mouth.

Jer 33:14-17... Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will perform that good thing which I have promised unto the house of Israel and to the house of Judah. In those days, and at that time, will I cause the Branch of righteousness to grow up unto David; and he shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land. In those days shall Judah be saved, and Jerusalem shall dwell safely: and this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness. For thus saith the LORD; David shall never want a man to sit upon the throne of the house of Israel;

January 18
LIFE AT THE TOP
Bill Griffin
6-24-2000

The Sunday School class I attend in Denver planned a mountain trip and picnic for today and I was able to attend. 14,264 feet is the advertised height and I believe every foot of it. Mt. Evans stands tall among the peaks near Idaho Springs 50 miles west of Denver. Never have my feet been so high up and still on the ground. To reach the summit, we drove on the highest paved road in America. Like the Rocky Mountain National Park road, this one also lacked guardrails. A narrow two lane [I think it is really a lane and a half] highway winds its way fourteen miles up through a series of switchbacks and ridges. Not only did we have to contend with opposite direction traffic but also there were numerous mountain bikers pedaling along on their way to the top. [I envied every one of them. They seemed to be pedaling effortlessly and I have to huff and puff just for my short trip around the motel].

At the summit, there is an Observatory used by the University of Denver. There are also rock ruins of an old restaurant once billed as the highest snack bar in the world. Fire destroyed it and now the remains are used for observation points. To reach the very pinnacle though, a walking path leads up a quarter of a mile through the rocks to the very top. Yeah! My walking has paid off. I made it without huffing and having to stop and rest every few feet. The walk and the view were worth it. Looking toward the plains, if you could distinguish it, was the state of Kansas. The metropolitan area around Denver was visible. Looking in all other directions were mountaintops and valleys below us, even Pikes Peak could be distinguished 70 miles away. Other snow-capped peaks could be seen all around us. A

small band of about five mountain goats were hanging around the old ruins and other small critters could also be seen dashing in and out of the rocks.

One of the first things I thought of was John on the Island of Patmos when the door to Heaven opened and the voice cried, "Come on up here" [Revelation 4:1]. I felt as if I was standing at the base of Heaven and if the voice called me, I would not have far to go. When John entered Heaven he saw beauty and tried to describe it for the rest of us. As I stood on the mountaintop, I too saw beauty I can not describe. High above the tree line, there were small patches of flowers blooming in the crevices of the rocks. Small layers of snow continued to cover the shaded areas and the north faces. Loose rocks every where on top of the granite cliffs. Why they don't all roll when the wind blows is a mystery. Wildlife that climbs up and down the mountains with no thought of where they are placing their feet and at speeds that we consider reckless. Mountain lakes formed by the melting snow in pockets or depressions in the ridge tops or valleys. One I could see was still completely frozen. It was green everywhere below us where the trees and grasses were taking advantage of the short growing season.

I know it was no surprise to God when He did it and I thank Him for making it available to us. Gen. 1:9-11... And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. And God said, Let the earth bring forth

grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

Gen. 2:1-2... Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

January 19
LIKE A GAME OF CHECKERS
Bill Griffin
11-09-2000

All of us have played the game of checkers at one time or other in our youth. Probably owned a checkerboard when we were a youngster. There are some restaurants that keep large wooden or burlap checkerboards for customers to use while waiting for a table or just to play. The game is really a simple game but does require some concentration to plan a move for offense and to keep from being wiped out by your opponent. One of the highlights comes when we can maneuver one of our pieces across the board and proudly announce "CROWN ME" or "KING ME". Once we receive this crown, we receive certain privileges we did not have before. Now we can move in any direction, not just forward.

We play the game of life like checkers sometimes. We plan our moves to receive material or monetary gains. We plot or plan our careers to move up a corporate ladder without getting ourselves trapped in a job or location with no way out. We maneuver our family lives to be a part of society and to use society as a social stepladder by getting to know the right people in the right places. Why? To reach a place in life where we can say we are successful. We have

arrived. If this life would award a crown, we would proudly claim it.

As we go along our way though, we have to make choices about the moves we are about to make. Do I move left; or right? Will I be able to move in safety or be removed from the board?

One of these choices will sooner or later concern our spiritual direction and it too will lead to safety or destruction.

Proverbs 14:12 -- There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

Satan's traps and dead ends will lead to destruction if we choose his way. If we choose the way of Christ, then the cross will lead us around and through Satan's snares.

To choose Satan's way leads to the lake of fire and total destruction when the game of life is over.

To choose Christ leads to a crown and life eternal with Him in all the riches of glory.

Just like checkers, there can be only one winner. Unlike checkers, there are no ties.

Have you chosen Christ and victory? You can choose today before the game is concluded and you realize you have lost it all!

January 20
CHANGING OF THE GUARD
Bill Griffin
01-20-2001

Today is the day we say farewell to our present President and say hello to the new one. The changing of the guard as we used to say in military lingo. The old guard has had control for eight years. Good years economically. With the exception of peace keeping forces sent to Somalia and Bosnia, peaceful years too. We can only hope the new regime can continue to be as economically successful. We also pray that our new leadership can make decisions and relate peace to the entire world.

Just as there is a changing of the guard for the United States every few years, there is soon coming a changing of the guard for the world. Christ Himself called Satan the 'Prince' of this world. With possession, Satan was able to offer Christ all the kingdoms of the world when tempting Him in the desert.

Matt 4:8-9 -- Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith to him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

At that time, Christ did not dispute his ownership and Satan's right to offer them. How could Satan know that Christ would redeem the world with one cross and three rusty nails?

1 CROSS + 3 NAILS = 4 GIVEN.

Like the election determined who the new guard would be before the change took place, the coming change has been determined -- from the foundation of the world.

The inauguration gala will usher in our new president.

Christ's gala will be His return, robed in Glory on a white horse with all His saints.

Rev 19:11-14 -- And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies, which were in heaven, followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

Will you be part of the old guard or the new one to come? There is still time for changing now but we are not promised a tomorrow.

January 21
MEDALS AND REWARDS
Bill Griffin
10-01-2000

As the Olympic Games come to a close in Australia this week, we applaud the hard work and sacrifice that each of the athletes had to make just to be there. Some of these youngsters have never really been allowed to have a normal

childhood since they started when they were very young. They willingly gave it up and trained long and hard for the one chance at glory, a MEDAL in the big games.

The culmination of all their sacrificing and toil comes if they are fortunate enough to stand on the platform and have the officials place a MEDAL around their neck. Through the tears and smiles, overwhelming joy can be seen in their faces. This joy says it all. It was worth it.

The life of a Christian can be compared somewhat to the Olympian. To be active in the faith means that we must sacrifice what we want sometimes and work for the good of the body as a whole. While our training may not be as physical, studying the Word and doing the things we must be to mature in Christ can be time consuming. Sometimes it seems that we toil in vain, no one recognizes the work we do. There is no medal for doing good and even though we have joy, it seems that our joy is never totally complete.

When we as Christians feel this way, we need to understand how we are to play the game. We are to toil until Jesus comes. We are to accept His joy, not our own. We are not to look for a medal or reward here. Our reward, like the Olympics,

will come when we have run the race and finished. The difference is that there will be more than just a Gold Silver, and Bronze medal. Everyone who participates will receive a reward.

Gal 6:9-10 --- And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

As Christians, we are to put aside our own wills and continue to do what the Lord asks of each of us. I am not to worry about what others are doing or not doing. God has a plan and a purpose for me alone. If I do as He asks me to do, I will find all the joy and happiness I could ever want when I stand before the Lord and hear Him say, "Well done, my good and faithful servant.?"

Rev 22:12 --- And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

January 22

MAKING HIS DEEDS KNOWN

Bill Griffin

10-06-2001

It has been easy for the news media and our government to dig into the life and times of Osama bin Laden and come up with a list of his deeds or accomplishments; Embassy bombings that took innocent American lives in Africa; USS Cole ship bombing and more American lives lost. These deeds got him on our most wanted list with a huge reward for his capture.

September 11 saw terrorist attacks upon American soil that cost thousands of lives in New York, Washington, and Pennsylvania.

We have been deluged with news and deeds of bin Laden - evil deeds one and all.

Since the attacks, we have seen the name of God, prayers and songs again from the lowest to the highest officials in our land - even back in schools where such things had been outlawed. Is it superficial window dressing that will wear off when we get back into our comfort zone? I

sincerely hope not. I hope these attacks have awakened Americans from their lethargic worship. I truly hope we can be a people who turns to the God that first blessed this land. Can we not get a listing of the great deeds of God as He guided this country in it's infancy? When will the news media give Him equal press?

Ps 105:1-5 ... [1] O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people. [2] Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works. [3] Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the LORD. [4] Seek the LORD, and his strength: seek his face evermore. [5] Remember his marvelous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth

January 23

MOUNTAIN ROADS AND HEAVY LOADS

Bill Griffin

10-09-2001

As the bus travels along I-26 toward Asheville with the load of 'Old Folks' [guess who was amongst them?], the inclines begin to take their toll. We begin to slow down almost to a crawl up the mountain. I would have been embarrassed to offer a turtle a ride but occasionally we would pass one of the semis that were really at a crawl. When we would come to a short flat spot, we would pick up speed again just to make a run at the next hill.

I thought about how our spiritual lives are similar to this mountain trip. As we travel in the flat areas we feel all is going well and we go all out. It is those times when hardship and trouble come that we begin to loose speed and

struggle up our mountains. Sometimes we even see others struggling along with their own load but we can only think of our own until we happen to look and someone is loaded even worse than we are.

As we reach the flats, or times when we think our problem is being solved, we relax and begin to go full steam ahead again. Guess What? The next hill is right around the bend and we are in the struggle again.

Jesus never promised us we would not have mountains. He told us we would have tribulation even though He encouraged our hearts with the words "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

January 24

PREPARING TO GO TO CHURCH

Bill Griffin

01-07-2001

Most of us get up on Sunday and we start getting ready for church. If we have a family, we begin to get them up. Waking children on Sunday morning can tax the patience of the very best parent but after yelling and threatening, they finally move.

We begin to clean and prepare our bodies physically. We shower or bathe. We brush our teeth. We fix our hair [some of you]. We pick out our Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes and get dressed. At last, we are as physically appealing as we can make ourselves. What have we forgotten? What have we missed?

In our hubba-hubba rush, we have forgotten to prepare our spiritual self. How did I prepare as I threatened or yelled at the children? Did arguing with the spouse prepare my heart for worship? I think not. More likely my heart has been hardened and now my time in service will probably be on all these outside circumstances in my family.

How can I overcome the Sunday morning escapades and prepare spiritually? First we must remember why we are using our off day to go to church. We are going to WORSHIP GOD. Who? GOD! My CREATOR, my REDEEMER, my LORD. If I do not have an attitude of worshiping every day, it is hard to gear up my heart for an hour or so on Sunday.

January 25

TIMING

Bill Griffin

One of the recreations we had growing up in the country was climbing pine or maple saplings until they would bend over almost to the ground. Most of the time we could just step onto the ground and let go but occasionally, we would misjudge the strength of one. You could climb up almost to the tip of the tree and then swing out into space, but the sapling would only lower you half-way to the ground. You could be ten to twenty feet into the air.

It was at this time that brothers and sisters became beloved. If you could talk them into getting into the tree with you, most of the time the combined weight would lower you on to the ground. The sibling could easily be persuaded to perform this service for nothing more than an expression of simple thanks and the immediate transfer to them of all your worldly possessions. Eventually, all the saplings within a half mile would be bent in the shape of a horseshoe and we had to run the risk of even stronger trees.

One day I found myself about twenty feet in the air with no way to turn loose. I frantically

Why can I not worship at home alone? Because we miss the encouragement and fellowship of God's people. Do you realize that where two or more are gathered, Christ is there? We must prepare our hearts and minds to "meet God".

Ps 122:1 -- I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD. Hebrews 10:24-25 -- And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

worked out the negotiations with my brother Fred, who climbed up beside me. The tree leaned further but still left both of us about ten feet in the air. Barbara was pressed into service. The combined weight of all three of us bent the tree into a straining bow, leaving us with about a four or five foot drop. It was decided that all of us would have to let go of the tree at the count of three. We chanted in unison: "One! Two!"

Because neither Fred or I trusted each other, we both let go at the count of "Two." I can still hear Barbara: "THREEEEEEEEEEE-e-e-e!" Nowadays, anyone in the air that long is served a snack and a soft drink. She told us later she would have enjoyed the flight more if she hadn't been so worried about the landing. The takeoff was sudden and violent. Fortunately, she was plucked out of the air by a crab-apple bush and suffered no injuries beyond moderate shredding.

Some time later, I asked her what she had learned from the incident.

"Timing," she replied. "Never trust anyone when it comes to timing."

January 26

WHERE WAS GOD?

Bill Griffin

09-29-2001

Many thoughts have run through my mind since the tragedy of September 11, 2001. Like all of America, I can not help but be affected. My thoughts run from sorrow to despair to anger and to hatred. I have many thoughts jotted down on paper and note pads but have not been able to put any of them together. Somehow I just could not bring myself to think about them because I could not find a way to put many of them in words without seeming to take away from what appears to be the most unified spirit this country has had since December 7, 1941.

Have you noticed though how many Christians seemed to appear after the attack? For a country that seemed to be trying to push Christianity into a closet so other groups could 'come out', we got real interested all of a sudden. Groups that could not say 'God' were now singing 'GOD Bless America' to the top of their lungs. Our congress lined up to openly sing together along with the people from the Supreme Court that has been making decisions to separate God from all public places.

With all our Christianity showing, we started asking, "Where was God"? Let me share with you what I think.

God was in the same place HE was when:

- We cheated on our income taxes or cheated or deceived someone.
- We committed adultery.

- We secretly sipped our alcohol or dipped into our drugs.
- Pearl Harbor was attacked and 2,000 people died.
- Hitler [proclaiming to be a Christian] had 6 million Jews [God's chosen people] gassed to death.
- The atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and 200,000 people died.
- Plagues wiped out half of Europe years ago.
- Christians decided to drive the Muslims out of Jerusalem during the Crusades by killing them all. If a Jew happened to get in the way, they died also since they were the 'Christ killers'.
- Christians of the early church were persecuted and fed to lions as someone's entertainment. Even the persecution of those around the world today who are trying to share the love of God in countries that do not want a different religion spoken.
- HIS SON HUNG ON THE CROSS AND DIED FOR YOU AND ME THAT WE MAY ESCAPE A MORE TERRIBLE HELL THAN THE TEMPORARY ONE WE FACE TODAY; THE ETERNAL HELL OF SEPARATION FROM OUR LOVING GOD.

No matter what fate had befallen us here in America in the past few weeks or what may be

still to come, God is still there beside us. He has never failed us and He does not change.

Mal 3:6-7 - [6] For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed. [7] Even from the days of your fathers ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them. Return

unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the LORD of hosts. But ye said, Wherein shall we return?

God has not consumed us but He is issuing a call for America to return to Him.

I hope we listen.

January 27

WHY SHOULD GOD BLESS AMERICA?

Bill Griffin

10-07-2001

In the wake of the terrorist attacks, we have seen people all across our country singing 'God Bless America', even our congressmen and women the day after it happened. I know it is not just a craze or fad; it is people singing from their hearts looking for any kind of answers to why this atrocity happened to us.

God has blessed America, more than we deserve. Like the Israelites who were given the promised land of Canaan, a small rag tag group of pilgrims were given this great land. There is no other answer for why the native Indians did not run them back where they came from. They greatly outnumbered the little 120-member group - but this group had come looking for freedom to worship God. As this group grew, we spread out across this land from 'sea to shining sea' and God prospered us.

Our first Congress met in prayer daily and looked to God for answers in the decisions they made. Our Constitution was written to guarantee our freedom to worship. For about 200 years we looked to God and worshiped Him 'in freedom and in truth' and the church was the focal point of most communities.

Then a strange thing happened. We let one woman mount a campaign to have prayer removed from school and it happened. The ACLU then became a proponent of removing God from everything that touched our government or the general public. The 10 Commandments can no longer be displayed on the walls of our courtrooms. Christmas displays of the Christ child can no longer be on public properties at courthouses, schools or city halls. I can not display anything relating to Christianity or God in my workplace if it offends

anyone of another or no religion. Our country has tried to put God on a back burner where we can keep Him warm just in case we need Him - such as now.

Think about the song we are singing:

God bless America

Why should He? We have ceased to bless God by our lifestyles and sin that we try to keep covered.

Land that I love

We have become so involved with self that we no longer give thought to the land that God created and entrusted to us.

Stand beside her and guide her

God did this until we pushed Him aside and said we can do it on our own. We no longer look to see if God is walking with us. We no longer look to Him for guidance on a daily basis. We only look for Him when things are in despair.

Through the night with the light from above

Just as the torch for the statue of liberty was supposed to be a beacon and a light to guide immigrants to this great land of ours, the light of God from above should be guiding people to Him. We have let this light go out or it has become very dim.

I hope the people of America truly begin to trust God again and stand beside Him again as we rekindle the light of freedom, both physically and spiritually. Otherwise, **WHY SHOULD GOD BLESS AMERICA?**

January 28

WILLING TO RISK IT ALL

Bill Griffin

08-29-2003

One of the memories I have from my teenage days is of the kinfolks gathering at my Uncle Clay's house on the week-end and a poker game going on in the living room. It was mostly nickel-dime stuff but I learned one thing about playing - 'you never win if you are afraid to lose what you have'. This same lesson was carried with me when I went into the Army and there was always some type of betting games going on - from nickel-dime to big money games. If I sat in on one of the games and worried about losing what was to last me for the rest of the month, I usually lost it. If I had a certain amount that I figured I could lose and then walk away if necessary, I could usually hang in and even win some of the time.

While those games were considered gambling, we gamble other ways in today's world. Consider the stock market and those that have invested and gambled on the hope there would be enough to retire or become rich. Those who invest a small amount and play it close to the vest may eventually reap some benefits but will never strike the big deal.

To find that big score we must be "WILLING TO RISK IT ALL". Think of those that invested all

they had in a dream or vision of Alexander Graham Bell, IBM, the Wright Brothers, Xerox, and many recently that invested all they had in some of the new technology stocks that boomed and they sold out before the crash.

There was a dedication to their risk. They were not going to turn tail and run at the first sign of failure. They demonstrated their dedication by sticking it out and even investing more if they had it.

Being a Christian requires this same willingness to risk it all. We must be *willing* to risk it all if that is the direction God chooses for us. Jesus had just told his disciples that He was about to be delivered up for death -- [Luke 9:22 -- And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."] - when He turned and told them the cost of being His disciple.

Luke 9:23-25 -- Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life

for me will save it. 25 What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?

These followers very recognized the significance of the 'cross'. They knew it was the cruel instrument of death used by the Romans for all other peoples but this is the first time the Lord used it in His teachings. They knew the cross meant rejection and suffering but now Jesus was telling them it also meant self-denial and serving. It meant "risking everything".

Today Christians are quick to jump on the bandwagon of following Christ as long as we can

put a limit on what we are called to do. If we feel God is asking too much, we begin to back off and think God is going too far in what He expects. Being a disciple is glamorous as long as it is popular but often we find ourselves in unpopular situations. It is at these times we must be willing to pay the price.

In our country today, we are fortunate that God does not call all of us to the same types of circumstances that faced the early disciples. That does not exclude us from having the faith and attitude that if He did place me there, I would be willing to "risk it all".

January 29
TAKING ON A NEW BOSS
Bill Griffin
2004

Sooooo... After 25 years with BellSouth as your taskmaster, you have decided to pull the plug, huh? I congratulate you and wish you the very best for the future. I recommend it for everybody.

I know you have plans now to continue a career in piddling. Now you have to understand something of piddling - you must keep up your skills or the piddling will go by the wayside. Poof! Disappear! The good thing is you get to be your own supervisor - or so I thought. It took me a few weeks to learn that isn't entirely true. Let me explain.

We both listened for many years to what we thought were our bosses at BellSouth. When I retired, I listened to another boss for a short time and then decided to be my own boss. God reminded me that He was the BOSS - always. Like some of the BellSouth bosses, I didn't always listen, but they were always the boss. I have learned that God was directing my path all along. He was directing yours too.

Now HE has a chance to use you in other directions. Jeremiah 29:11 gives you a glimpse of this - "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you". Now some of the things HE directs you to do will seem insignificant in the eyes of the world but remember, there are no small assignments with God. If the God who created the universe, the heavenly hosts, the sun, and the moon speaks to you, what could HE do? Isaiah 14:24 gives you the answer - "As I have thought, so shall it come to pass".

God is saying to you, "My thoughts are of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope" per Jeremiah 29:11. The enemy of God has convinced many of God's people that there is too much against God's plan to happen in their lives. Settle in your heart that God's Word is true and walk with him. HE will direct your path, even in your piddling.

God Bless and keep you always.
Your friend
Bill Willie-Gee Griffin

January 30
LEAVE YOUR BAGS AT THE DOOR
Bill Griffin
11-13-2002

A few weeks ago, I had to travel to Sioux Falls, South Dakota for a short work stint. My flight had been prearranged by the company there and I was to fly from Charlotte to Chicago to Sioux Falls on United Airlines. Well! Guess what! We had anchored down in our seats, the doors were closed and the pilot notified us that we were about to pull away from the gate when there came a knock on the door from the outside. The attendant opened the door, and in walks a United Airlines representative and announces, "When we have a report of alcohol involving a pilot, we must do tests. Everyone please gather your personal belongings and deplane."

As we disembarked, people began to line up at the service desk to get information or rerouted. Soon the announcement was made that those going to Chicago as a final destination, remain seated in the waiting area. Those with connections, please come to the service counter. I was finally rebooked on American Airlines through St. Louis to Sioux Falls and the attendant said my luggage was being transferred.

The times of arrival were different so the folks that were to pick me up in Sioux Falls would be there for the United Flight two hours before I arrived. I tried to call from Charlotte when I found the flight and time differences but since it was Saturday afternoon, I only got an answering set. I left word. When I arrived, there was no one and I began to call in earnest then. To go with no greeter was the fact that my luggage

DID NOT get transferred in Charlotte. There I stand at the counter with just what I was wearing and carrying in my carryon case. They filed a claim and gave me a complimentary kit containing toothbrush and razor. When I finally made contact and my ride arrived, I had to walk away from the airport and leave it all behind.

I thought today of how it is going to be this way when I get ready to enter my Father's house. No matter how many bags I pack and bring, I will have to leave them all at the door. My bag of sinful thoughts, my bag of sinful actions, my bag of sinful attitudes, my bag of sinful harsh words, my bag of sinful feelings... none of these can be carried inside. I will receive a new kit... complete with a white robe.

Rev 3:5 --- He who overcomes shall be clothed in white garments, and I will not blot out his name from the Book of Life; but I will confess his name before My Father and before His angels.

When my bag still had not arrived by 6:00 p.m. Sunday, I found my way to a K-Mart to get a change of undergarments. When I get to my Father's house, I will not be looking for a K-Mart or Wal-Mart. Everything will have already been planned and prepared for me.

January 31
KEEPING APPOINTMENTS
Bill Griffin
06-17-2003

All of us have had appointments made for us at various functions at some time in our life. In fact, I have an appointment to see my doctor in a couple of weeks so he can keep me tuned up like an old car. Like old cars, we need constant maintenance as we get older with more miles on us.

Like oil and water pressure in the car, the doctor is now trying to keep my blood pressure regulated by getting it lowered. I am now on the pill and just trying to keep the doc from taking away all my "salt" and "pork chops".

Anyway, back to appointments. I can keep this appointment or I can choose to ignore it. It may cost me a monetary amount if I am a no-show.

There are more appointments to come in each of our lives - two at least. We are 'appointed once to die' and 'then the judgment'. I can not choose to skip these two appointments but I can choose where to face the judgment.

God gave each of us an appointment with Him at Calvary. He made this appointment at great cost to Himself - His Son. Now we have the choice to keep or not to keep this appointment when it is made available to us. The choice we make determines our judgment destiny.

If I keep this appointment, when my death appointment comes, I will face my judgment at the Bema seat of the LORD Jesus Christ - not for hell or heaven - but for the judgment and reward for my works since the Calvary appointment. Everything before this appointment has been wiped clean, like an eraser over a school blackboard, only cleaner.

If I choose not to keep the Calvary appointment, then my judgment will come at the Great White Throne when all unbelievers will pass before the righteous judge. Books will be opened and if I missed the Calvary appointment, I will be sent to the Lake of Fire with all the other people since time began that chose to skip it.

There will be no opportunity to reschedule. I will not be able to pay for the appointment I missed. Christ alone could pay for that appointment and since I missed it, He is no longer available. There will be no agency or court for appeals.

I won't even have to worry about getting put on hold because the doctor has another emergency. We will all be there at the same time.

Rev 20:12-15 -- 12 And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books.¹³ The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works.¹⁴ Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. ¹⁵ And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Have you kept your Calvary appointment? It is not too late.
