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May 01  
AN INVITATION  
Bill Griffin  
01-25-97

Rev 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.

John must have written these verses with the image of the wedding in his mind. What wedding? The wedding of Christ and His church [bride]. The groom is willing, and as was customary in ancient Israel, the price has been paid. Is the bride willing? It has cost her nothing. All the expense has been borne by the groom.

This invitation is open to those who hear. The Scriptures say that no one comes to the groom except the Father draws him. This means that we must be open and receptive to the voice of the Holy Spirit when we are called. We must be willing to hear and heed that calling.

The invitation also has another stipulation. We must be 'thirsty'. To be thirsty means there

is a need in our life and we are looking for that which will satisfy the need. We must have a way of forgiveness for sins. We must be thirsty for the 'LIVING WATER' that only the Master can supply.

God cannot ignore sin; He must judge it. In His mercy though, He provided a way for man and woman to be forgiven and cleansed that they may one day stand in His presence. The cost of this wedding was His Son. Christ came to earth as a man almost 2000 years ago to live a perfect life and die on a cross as the payment required: 'For the wages of sin is death'.

In order for mankind to receive the gift of salvation offered freely in Christ, he must first 'hear' and establish a personal relationship with Him. He must also recognize that 'thirst' in his life and take of the 'living' water freely.

Do you hear God calling you? Are you thirsty? Then come as John invited.

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May 02  
FACE TO FACE  
Bill Griffin  
06-01-1997

Love hurts!

I just finished reading a little article that speaks to the issue of how we view our fathers at different stages of our lives. From 'My Daddy can do anything' at age four to 'I wish I could talk it over with Dad once more' at sixty. How our views change. I understand more each day the old expression 'My parents get smarter as I get older'.

As Father's Day approaches for another year, I can not help but think of the times I had with my Dad before the stroke took him from us.

Working in the garage. Deer hunting. [I don't think he ever left the campfire, but he enjoyed the time with us]. Family outings [11 children with spouses and grandchildren]. Lifetimes are filled with the little memories that make up who we are. But even with the memories, there are the

regrets for those things we did not do. Spend more time together. Have more quiet one on one talks. Say I love you.

There is a time in the future when I shall see my father again. But as much as I want to see him, there is another Father that my heart longs to see. My Dad gave me earthly life but this Father gave me eternal life. What my earthly father could never do for me, my Heavenly Father did. He saved me forever. Not because of anything I did, but because He loves me. This meeting has been promised. How blessed to see both of them in one place.

*1 Cor 13:12: For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.*

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May 03  
HOLDING ON  
Bill Griffin  
01-11-97

Rev 14:12... *Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.*

Here in the waning verses of God's word, we see a challenge to all of us: To keep the commandments of God. We have been entrusted with them. We are expected to still have them with us when God calls us home.

In every aspect of our lives, it is God who has given us everything. God gives us grace, His unmerited favor; His everlasting protection; His unchanging love.

Christ gives us faith. It is His faith, not just faith in Him, and we must hold it dear in our hearts and protect it always. "By GRACE are you SAVED through FAITH".

Just as a small child will hang on to a toy or a piece of candy, we must hang on to the grace, faith and commandments of God. There is a particular type of monkey in Africa who will stick its hands through a net to get to the fruit inside. Once they have the fruit in their hand, they can not bring their hand back through the net. They will absolutely not turn loose of the fruit, therefore they are trapped and become easy prey to those wishing to capture them.

We must hang on and persevere to the end with those things entrusted to us by our God. Like the monkey, I hope to be hanging on to the fruit [grace, faith, commandments] when God comes to collect me from the net.

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May 04  
IT IS FINISHED  
Bill Griffin  
6/11/97

Seven times He spoke from the cross. Each occasion was a message in itself carrying either joy or sorrow as the Master hung suspended between heaven and earth.

'It is finished...' , His final words, reminds us that this is one of the darkest days in history. Good Friday has always been the epitome of sadness and suffering. A day to dwell

on the death of Christ the Savior while reserving the joy for the Easter Resurrection. In our mind, we think of these words being whispered since our Lord is near the time of death and total exhaustion. The final gasp of a man in great pain.

But... !!! it was not a whisper. It was more of a shout of joy per the original manuscripts. 'COMPLETED'. My task is complete, and it has been done well!

We should identify with the joy of the Lord's words. A job which had taken 33 earthly years to complete. To pay the debt of sin. To redeem mankind from the clutches of Satan. Through pain; deserted by His closest friends; through doubting and betrayals. And most of all, the people He had come to save rejected Him.

A joy similar to a woman who goes through pregnancy and finally delivers. She goes through nine months of preparation, knowing that the final delivery will not be without pain. The reward though would be worth the effort. The few hours of labor that saps physical strength, using every ounce of energy, and finally the strain and eventual release. Joy fills the soul as the baby's cry echos through the delivery room. It signals life! In that moment, suffering and pain are blotted out. The job is finished, and it is finished well. The child is alive!

How much more must have been the joy of Christ when at that moment, He knew His labor on earth was not in vain, but FINISHED and because of it, all mankind would forever have life.

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May 05  
Memories of Mother  
Author: Unknown

She carried me under her heart and loved me before I was born. She took God's hand and walked me through the 'valley of the shadows' that I might live.

She bathed me when I was helpless, clothed me when I was naked, fed me when I was hungry, rocked me to sleep when I was weary, and sang to me with the voice of an Angel.

She held my hand when I learned to walk, suffered with my sorrow, laughed with my joy, glowed with my triumph and while I knelt at her side, she taught me to pray.

She was a loyal friend when others failed. Through all the days of my youth, she gave me

strength for my weakness, courage for my despair, and hope for my hopeless heart.

She prayed for me whether the days were flooded with sunshine or saddened by shadows.

I can never repay the debt I owe my Mother. Friends, I have said it before and I'll say it again. Next to the love of Jesus Christ, there is no love like a mother's love.

Be sure you remember your mother on her special day, and if she has gone on to her Heavenly reward, then be thankful for the life she lived.

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

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May 06  
MOTHER'S DAY - 2000  
Bill Griffin  
5/14/2000

As far as I can remember, I have never been apart from Sarah on Mother's Day in all of our 35 1/2 years of marriage. I can tell you now that I don't want to be apart for another one. Words can not express the feelings and the love I have for this lady who is the Mother of my two sons. She is also the Mother of two whom God did not allow us to hold and to nurture. There is something in a Mother though that does not allow any forgetting. I know this because even though it was over thirty years ago, sometimes I see the longing look in her eyes and we talk about the time one day when we will get to see them for the first time.

No one can know what our lives would have been like if the first two babies had been born into this world alive. Would we have ceased because we had planned for two children and that would have made our two? Only God knows, but we

would not take anything for the two boys [young men] we now have.

What would it have been like watching this mother nurturing, guiding and loving all four. She is the one who starts them as a baby learning the ideas and building the character that will shape their lives for the future.

We can not know now but one day all things will become known. Until then, we have to trust God that all things work "together for good for those that love the Lord". We know by His promises that we shall meet face to face with those loved ones who have already made their way into His presence.

For now, I want all to know that I LOVE this lady that has been called Mother in our home for almost 31 years [David] now. Not only is she a Mother, she is my BEST FRIEND.

SHE IS CLOTHED WITH STRENGTH AND DIGNITY.  
[Proverbs 31:25a]

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May 07  
OBEDIENT CHILDREN  
Bill Griffin  
06-01-1997

*1 Pet 1:14: As obedient children, ...*

When my boys were just babies, they became inquisitive. At about nine months, they were crawling or toddling around the house with their little fingers exploring everything they could touch. The carpet. The furniture. Scattered toys. Electrical outlets! How interesting! Fireplace! Oh boy!

Either Sarah or I would simply say 'No'. The boys would turn away and we would take them up

into our arms and try to explain that it would 'hurt the baby'.

David and Joe learned to respond to our voice and the word 'no'. They did not understand what electricity was. They could not see it. Neither could they understand what 'hot' meant. They did learn to respond to 'No', and they earned our praise and affection when they obeyed.

Isn't this what our Heavenly Father expects of us in our relationship? From the Garden until

now, we did not understand all of God's commands. We still have difficulty understanding some of them even in this day and age of education that can explain anything.

Even when we do not understand, we still respond when God says no, or tells us not to do

something. He does not always expect us to understand why. He only asks us to obey. And then like children who are protected by parents from possible danger, we will find that God's commands are only for our own good.

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May 08  
SAVING LIVES  
Bill Griffin  
01-11-97

One of the things headlining our news programs in recent years has been the protests at various abortion clinics across our country. We have witnessed, by the power of television, people laying down in the path of those trying to enter the clinics. To this cause, they have even become violent and started riots. Some have even killed those that oppose them. Their reasoning is "to save the life of the unborn child". I think their actions are noble, to try to save a life that God alone has created. Not by rioting or murder, but by making their feelings known.

But! When was the last time you saw someone lay down in the path of a sinner on the way to hell. This too, is a life that has to be saved but we place such a small priority on telling the living how they, too, can be saved.

We need to remember that every life, born and unborn, belongs to God and each needs just as much attention to saving. Give thought to the

cross and cause of Christ. He came to *SAVE* sinners, of which we are all included.

Today, the Cross and the broken body of Christ lies at the gates of hell and man must step over His redemptive work to get through. Why are we not as charged to tell the living as we are those not born yet? Have we lost sight of that redemptive work in our own lives. We need to wake up and return to the cause of the Gospel and turn people away from the gates of hell before they have to step across the Savior.

Rom 10:14-15... [14] How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? [15] And how can they preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!"

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May 09  
TORTURED FOREVER  
Bill Griffin  
01-25-97

Most of us have seen movies involving torture tactics of some kind. From hoodlums to soldiers; all think torture is the best method to extract some type of information from someone.

There is mental torture and physical torture. There are people who know how to manipulate both kinds well.

During the Viet Nam war, there were some extreme instances by both sides. We were not just the good guy over there. Some of the things used by both sides included:

- A pistol with one bullet placed against a head and the trigger pulled. Either death or mental anguish followed. A day or two later, the same trick again. The purpose was to break a prisoner down to the point he would talk or sign papers denouncing his countries actions.
- Hanging suspended by the thumbs, or maybe the thumbs and the toes hooked over a coffee can or small rim bucket. The physical torture took its toll on the body. Soon the bucket would be turned over and the thumbs jerked out of joint

but still suspended.

- No sleep. Being hounded and the eyelids taped back. Water thrown on the body to keep it awake.
- Beatings. Burnings. Knifings. Skinning alive. Rats. Snakes. The list could go on and on and even more made up as the imagination became vivid if no one was going to be accountable or responsible.

Life had no meaning; only information or making an example of someone.

As bad as the above seem in our society today, look at what God says is in store for those who will be separated from Him in eternity:

*Rev 14:11... And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

All the torture and torment we can think of here is going to be mild in comparison. Are you in this group? I hope not.

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May 10  
A GENTLE TOUCH  
Bill Griffin  
1996

Have you ever noticed how a cat is not happy unless they are touching you in some way? Most of them will rub up against your leg or curl up in the lap, rubbing their head against whatever part of you they can touch. The contact is their way of saying, "I like you." Notice I said 'most'. The old cat at our house falls into the category of 'scaredie cat', she is so skiddish. But even she will start her purring engine when we begin

to rub her head or scratch her back. Touch. It doesn't take much.

People need the security of a touch, too. If I visit a sick friend in the hospital, they may be glad to have company; but if I hold their hand, the bond of friendship is much stronger. Some of my strength may flow through the touch and help them to feel better. I can stand up straight and tell my sons that I love them, but

if I reach out and put my arms around them, they know I mean it. Sometimes a simple touch can heal hurt feelings or straighten out a misunderstanding without a word.

Jesus went from town to town touching people -- healing them, encouraging them, loving them.

*Matt 8:3 . . . And Jesus put forth his hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.*

One woman found new life by merely touching the hem of His garment. His arms are ever

outstretched to you and me. Take His hand today, and that of someone near you, and let His love flow through. Draw near enough that your love can be felt in your touch. The songwriter, Thomas Dorsey, states it well:

Through the storm, through the night

Lead me on to the light.

Take my hand, precious Lord,

Lead me home.

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May 11

A TIME TO BE BORN

Bill Griffin

1996

Solomon names no less than fourteen contrasts in life in the third chapter of Ecclesiastes. All of them are familiar scenes ... almost like a cross section of life. Of course, not everything could be included in these contrasts, but it's remarkable how extensive these opposites are. Here is one of them.

[2] a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,

You can not hurry either one. You have no control over them. I tried to hurry the birth of my first child along but it was not my timing that made him appear. They are given by God; you are the recipient of birth and you are the recipient of death -- in God's own timing.

Depressed people have a tendency to ask: Why was I born? Why can't I die. It seems as though when life boils itself down to the basics, we go back to birth and death. Life carries with it a lot of those symbols, doesn't it? Even Job in all his wisdom asked these same questions.

Most of us are not farmers but we're still smart enough to know that there is a time to plant and there is a time to harvest or uproot. You don't mess around with Mother Nature. You cooperate with the seasons. It's the only way to get a crop. You don't plant when its time to harvest. You don't harvest at the wrong time either. You don't even prune a tree whenever you feel like it. Whether it's a little fruit tree in your yard or a vast, commercial orchard, you must prune at precisely the right time. Timing is everything when it comes to the field.

By the way, it's also true on a personal level. There are times when you feel you should move on, and you try to uproot yourself; but you can't because things don't fall into place. And there are other times when you are convinced that you'll be there forever and, lo and behold, two months later you are hundreds of miles away. God has a way of uprooting us and planting us, and He does it in His time.

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May 12

A TIME TO LAUGH

Bill Griffin

1996

*Ecc 3:4...A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;*

C. S. Lewis probably put it best when he said, "Pain is God's megaphone. He whispers to us in our pleasure [when we laugh], but He shouts to us in our pain [when we weep]."

Grady Nutt, the Hee Haw star, said, "Laughter is the hand of God on a troubled world."

Are you weeping? Have you been weeping long? Do you long to laugh because it is much more enjoyable? Though I do not believe laughter teaches us as much as tears, I love to laugh. I love to make others laugh.

*I heard about a pastor who left the pastorate after twenty years. He decided to become a funeral director. Somebody asked, "Why?"*

*He replied: "Well, I spent about twelve years trying to straighten out John. He never did get straightened out. I spent fourteen months trying to straighten out the marriage of the Smith's, and it never did get straightened out.*

*I spent three years trying to straighten out Susan, and she never did get straightened out. Now when I straighten them out, they stay straight."*

There are times to smile, a time to laugh -- how we need those times! I am not so concerned

that my family remember me as a profound person, but rather as a husband and father who was fun to live with. I really do not care if they're able to repeat rules and regulations that came from my lips, but I hope they never forget the sound of my laughter. I hope it is absorbed into the walls of my home and my office at work. I hope that contribution from me is permanent.

We must remember though, each of us finds humor in different ways. What may seem humorous to one may not to another. Humor is like music or worship. We all have our own favorites and we tend to look askew at anyone who does not see as we do.

What difference does it make!? If any type of music or humor reaches people for Jesus Christ, is God's Word not accomplishing it's appointed task? If I do not agree, I do not have to participate. If it is presented when I am present, I try to be objective and let the Holy Spirit have His way, not mine.

If God had made all of us the same, it would have been a laughing mess. I would hate to put up with a world full of me's.

Does God have a sense of humor? I think so. We do, and we are made in His image. We have no attributes that God did not give us, so lift up your heart and laugh a little. It does not cost a penny more to smile than it does to frown.

May 13  
A TORN UP WORLD  
Bill Griffin  
1996

One day at a chapel service, a pastor gave the following illustration. A small boy was attempting to reassemble a torn-up picture of the world. When asked how he had put the world back together again, he replied, "There was a picture of Jesus on the other side. I knew that when I had gotten everything right with Jesus on the other side, I'd have everything right with the world."

What a statement!

When our lives are falling apart or seem to be torn apart, we need to get back to Jesus.

Getting our relationship with Him right should be our first priority. Jesus meets a multitude of needs, whether repairing our lives or changing us to suite Him.

There are no quick and easy solutions to our problems in life, but I know that hope and new direction can be found in giving God complete control.

*John 14:27 says... "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*

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May 14  
BE READY  
Bill Griffin  
1996

We don't like to talk about hell, do we? In intellectual circles the topic of hell is regarded as primitive and foolish. It's not logical. "A loving God wouldn't send people to hell." So we dismiss hell as a myth.

But to dismiss hell is to dismiss a core of the teachings of Christ. The doctrine of hell was not taught by others, but by our Lord Himself. He spoke more about hell than He did heaven in His short life span. We also dismiss much more. It is to dismiss the presence of a loving God and the privilege of a free choice.

We are free to love God. It is MY choice. He invites us to love Him. He urges us to love Him. He came that we might love Him. But, in the end, the choice is yours and mine. To take that choice from each of us, for Him to force us to love Him, would be less than love.

God explains the benefits, outlines the promises, and explains very clearly the consequences. And then, He leaves the choice to us.

Hell was not prepared for people. Hell "was prepared for the devil and his angels." For a person to go to hell, then, is for a person to go against God's intended destiny. "God has not destined us to the terrors of judgment, but to the full attainment of salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ."..... 1 Thessalonians 5:9.

Hell is man's choice, not God's choice.

Consider, then, this explanation of hell: Hell is the chosen place of the person who loves self more than God, who loves sin more than His Savior, who loves this world more than God's world. Judgment is that moment when God looks at the rebellious and says, "Your choice will be honored."

To reject the idea of hell leaves gaping holes in any banner of a just God. To say there

is no hell is to say God condones the rebellious, unrepentant heart. It portrays God with eyes blind to the hunger and evil in the world. It says God doesn't care that people are beaten and massacred, that He doesn't care that women are raped or families wrecked. To say there is no hell is to say God has no justice, no sense of right and wrong, and eventually to say God has no love. For true love hates what is evil.

Many choices we make can be the wrong choice and we will still survive. The choice of eternity comes but once and then judgment is coming. The choice must be made correctly, and then we must be ready.

While on one of his expeditions to the Antarctic, Sir Ernest Shackleton left some of his men on Elephant Island with the intent of returning for them and carrying them back to England. But he was delayed. By the time he could go back for them the sea had frozen and he had no access to the island. Three times he tried to reach them, but was prevented by the ice. Finally, on his fourth try, he broke through and found a narrow channel.

Much to his surprise, he found the crewmen waiting for him, supplies packed and ready to board. They were soon on their way back to England. He asked them how they knew to be ready for him. They told him they didn't know when he would return, but they were sure he would. So every morning, the leader rolled up his bag and packed his gear and told the crew to do the same saying, "Get your things ready, boys. The boss may come today."

The crew leader did his crew a favor by keeping them prepared. Jesus has done us a service by urging us to do the same: Be ready.

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May 15  
BETTER THAN SACRIFICE  
Bill Griffin  
1996

As a rule, we do not sacrifice farm animals on church altars in America even though there is a rise in the church of Satan and sacrifice is a part of their ritual. Most of us have never seen such a sacrifice, but this form of worship is still followed in many areas of the world today and will return to the Jews in Jerusalem in the final seven years of history as we know it.

I heard a story the other day of one sacrifice I would like to share with you. True, even as gruesome as we think it to be.

*A gentleman visited a house that had a dripping blood sacrifice under the eaves of the roof near the front door. A dog had been killed that morning and the blood had been mixed with other substances and put into a gourd. The gourd was hung by the door and the bloody material dripped slowly to the ground. The family that*

lived in the house believed that their god would bless the house as long as the blood dripped from the gourd, hopefully all day.

That is the problem with sacrifice. Rather than a gift to God it becomes a means by which someone tries to manipulate God. The worshiper believes that God must bless him because he has

performed this sacrifice. How much greater worship it is to seek to know God's will and allow Him to use us for His purpose. How much more worshipful to seek to avoid temptation and to obey God's laws.  
*Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.1 Samuel 15:22*

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May 16  
BLESSED TRINITY  
Bill Griffin  
1996

There are a lot of things that I know, but that I don't understand. One of them is the Trinity. How can God be three separate beings and yet remain a single entity? It staggers my mind! In fact, it still does -- trying to comprehend how the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit -- completely different -- can be God, Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient.

I heard a story about the Irish Saint Patrick which helps to understand. It seems his students expressed the same concern. In explanation he plucked a shamrock and said, "The Trinity is like this shamrock." He pointed to its three leaves, each one distinct and separate yet all growing from a single stem.

This simplicity of nature gives me faith to believe in the mysterious complexity of the Trinity -- something I know, but don't understand.

Thank God, He never said we had to understand His ways -- which are too much for our human comprehension. All He asked us to do is to faithfully believe His Word and leave the rest up to Him.

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY,  
MERCIFUL AND MIGHTY!  
GOD IN THREE PERSONS,  
BLESSED TRINITY.

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May 17  
BLESSING GOD  
Bill Griffin  
1996

How can we, the created, bless God? Can the bread be hungry? Can the fountain thirst? Can the way grow tired? Can the God who blesses us so graciously every day be in need of our blessings?

Think about it. Jesus claimed to be the Bread of Life, yet He hungered. He claimed to be the Living Water, yet He thirsted. He claimed to be the Way, the Truth, and the Life, yet He grew weary.

On the day Christ ascended into Heaven, His last act was to raise His arms and bless those who were there. This act had a continuing affect on them. Look at how Luke describes it in 24:53....

*And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God.*

God is the source of all of our blessings day by day. I am sure we all know how to praise Him for His graciousness, but how do we bless God? If we really want to be a blessing to God we must behave in a Christlike manner. We must love the unlovely, we must give of our means to help those who are in need. We must witness to those around us about the goodness and graciousness of His Son, Jesus Christ, who is our Savior. We need to join the Psalmist in saying:

Bless the Lord, O my soul:  
and all that is within me, bless his holy name  
(Psalm 103:1)

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May 18  
BLISTERS  
Bill Griffin  
1996

To: Martha Owens

Martha, when I was in the Army, we were constantly marching to and from somewhere. When we were on maneuvers in the woods somewhere, we walked. The outfit I was with was one that would be on one side of a mountain and have an objective twenty miles away on the other side. We walked. Most of the time, our feet fared okay, but occasionally, if the weather was wet, we would develop blisters. Oh, how they hurt. It was a wonderful relief when we would get to our camp and rip off our boots. Careful removal of the socks and then apply a salve to help the healing process.

Our lives are somewhat like those marches. We can not walk through time without developing a few blisters. Worry for family and jobs. Nights

of worry when a child's fever will not go down. Heartaches when our children stray from the standards we set for them. Sickness, some that heals quickly, some that lingers. Each of these is a hindrance and a pain to our daily walk.

Thank goodness, each test is like the blisters. They will heal somehow. As we look at the blisters of life, we need to apply the salve that heals the soul.

*Mal 4:2..... But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings;*

There is and forever shall be a "balm in Gilead" for God's people.

God Bless.  
Note 02/20/96

Martha went home to be with the Lord.

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May 19  
CALL HOME  
Bill Griffin  
1996

When my boys were little, one of the movies released was "E T". After all the previews and advertising, it was finally here. Nothing would

do except pack them in the car and head to the theater. They just had to see ET. (Along with a hundred others as they came.)

One of the most touching scenes in the movie was when ET became homesick and wanted to "call home." This little extra terrestrial had become separated from his family and now wanted to reach them; to hear their voice. To make a long story short, he finally managed to make his call home.

As the boys grew and began to drive, I tried to convey to them that if they were in trouble, "call home." No matter how late, day or night, I tried to get them to realize I was there for them. I would be there to help.

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May 20  
CLEAVING LOVE  
Bill Griffin  
1996

God protects those who cleave to Him in love. He promises deliverance, protection, the divine presence, honor, and the hope of long life to all who cleave in love and know His name.

God is offering no immunity from hardship, danger, or even death. He is giving assurance of His presence even through those times so that such experiences hold no defeat for the believer who clings to Him in love.

A Christian lady was sharing with a friend about her sister's struggle with cancer. The battle was in its final stages. "Recently", she said, "my sister told her husband that she was ready to go". My friend continued, "That declaration from her has given our mother peace and is making the experience bearable for me".

Some time ago, I saw a sign somewhere that stated:

"GOD IS YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER. CALL HOME."

No matter how late. No matter the circumstance. Our children flee the nest. Life moves on -- as it should be. Isn't it comforting to know though, that no matter what point we arrive in life, our Heavenly Father is already there.

Was the declaration of readiness the surrender of a defeated person? No, it was the expression of confidence of one who was cleaving to the Lord in love. The years she had known the Savior had given her freedom from fear of dying. She was not afraid. She was going home. Heaven had begun when she gave her life to Jesus. Death could only make it better.

*Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him; I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. Psalm 91:14*

Could you say as this lady did, "I am ready to go"? God does not promise us another moment of time and life. It is His to claim at any time, therefore, we must be ready at all times.

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May 21  
DADDY  
Bill Griffin  
1996

When I was a child, one of the first words I probably learned to say was "Daddy." It was the term used to indicate my close loving relationship with my father at that time. No matter what happened later, somehow, there was a bond formed that would stand the test of hardship and time. This relationship grew very special before my father died in 1985.

When I had children of my own, it thrilled me when one of them would climb onto my lap and say, "I love you Daddy." It is that type relationship which bonds us together.

"ABBA" is one of the few Aramaic words known to have been actually spoken by Jesus Christ.

That Jesus addressed God directly at all must have been shocking to His Jewish contemporaries, who held the name of the Lord so sacred and awesome as to be unspeakable. To use the word ABBA, a Jesus did, was unthinkable!

Abba is the familiar term used by Jewish sons and daughters in addressing their father, corresponding more to "daddy" than to the more formal "father". In addressing God as Abba, therefore, Jesus not only claimed His Sonship with God, but did so in the most intimate way! As children in Christ, it is our wonderful privilege -- and obligation -- to follow His example.

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May 22  
ENJOY AND BE CONTENT  
Bill Griffin  
1996

[24] A man can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in his work. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, ...Ecc. 2:24

After looking at all the world had to offer, Solomon came to this conclusion: enjoy to the fullest the life that God has given, recognize it as His gift. God has not revealed the solution to all of life's inconsistencies but has given a man a life to enjoy while living in obedience to Him. It is not the "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die" do nothing solution. One's life must be regulated by an awareness of future divine judgment.

[25] for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment?

Isn't that the truth! Unless God is in the middle of it, lasting enjoyment is impossible. We have the idea that the world is the one that gives enjoyment and God's the One who clubs us when we have fun. But the fact is, it's the other way around. As God's people, we're the ones who

ought to be having the time of our lives! Look around you though. Do far too many of the Christians you know look like they have been baptized in lemon juice?

[26] To the man who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God. This too is meaningless, a chasing after the wind.

Those who are right with God ultimately derive benefit from everyone's labor. So guess what? If you don't have the living Lord in the right perspective, if you don't have Jesus Christ in the middle of your plans, you are facing endless miles of bad road. If you remove God, then you remove enjoyment, purpose, direction, meaning, and anything eternal connected with life. And you are left with twenty, thirty, forty years of sleepless nights and nothing to show for it when they put you in the box.

I could easily leave the impression that once you become a Christian it is a downhill slide. It is not. Indeed, even a Christian can get strangely mixed up in his perspective. Bad roads and futile dead-end streets aren't limited to non-Christians. But the difference comes in being

able to persevere in spite of the difficulty. Without Christ, there is no way through. With Him, more miles of bad road only mean you're closer than ever to God's ultimate destination for you -- His greater glory!

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May 23  
FOREIGN SOIL  
Bill Griffin  
1996

The news making the most headlines today is the sending of U.S. troops to the country of Bosnia. From our point of view, they are being sent to 'foreign soil'.

There was a sorrow in parting because their future is uncertain. Will there continue to be conflict? Will some lose their lives? Will some be wounded or maimed? Mothers crying for sons and daughters. Spouses weeping, children hugging and hanging on until pried loose by parents.

We, as Christians, are a lot like these soldiers. The Scriptures call us 'soldiers of Christ'.

*2 Tim 2:3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.*

As soldiers of the cross, we are on foreign soil. There is One in heaven that awaits our return. Even though He knows our future, He still waits. Most of Scripture speaks of Christ sitting at the right hand of the Father, but we see that when one of His is coming home, He stands to

greet him. Look at the words of Stephen, just before He was stoned to death outside Jerusalem.

*Acts 7:55-56. . . But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, And said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God.*

Just as the soldiers of the U.S. will be coming home one day, we as soldiers of Christ will be going home. The order will be issued to pack all the gear they carried over and catch the plane home. We will not have to pack a thing. In fact, when we leave here we will be given a complete new issue of everything. Christ, the Commander in Chief of our faith, will be awaiting our arrival. In our Army though, He will not lose a single soldier.

Are you a soldier of the cross? Are you prepared for the orders to take you away from this foreign soil?

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May 24  
GREAT IN COUNSEL  
Bill Griffin  
1996

*Great in counsel, and mighty in work.  
Jeremiah 32:19a*

A young man was visiting on a farm with his Pennsylvania Dutch grandmother. She showed him around the farm and gave him instructions about what he could and could not do. Then she escorted him into the living room.

*"Your grandmother has the privilege of having the two greatest books in the world in her house," said the wise old lady. She then showed her grandson the mail order catalog and the Bible.*

Concerning the catalog she said, "From this book you will pick and choose." Pointing to the

*Bible she observed, "This book teaches you how to worship." Then she admonished, "Be certain you never get the two books and their purposes confused."*

Some persons are confused. They regard the Bible as a book of options, and they build the worship and value system of their lives around the things and gadgets in the market place. The results are tragic. The Bible is God's Word. He is the one who is great in counsel and mighty in work. To seek our counsel elsewhere is to settle for that which is inferior, at best, and destructive, at worst. To choose that course is to miss His mighty works.

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May 25  
BLOODBUGHT FREEDOM  
Bill Griffin  
May 31, 1999

MEMORIAL DAY: A day first set aside to honor the veterans who died during the Civil War by decorating their graves. In fact it was first called DECORATION DAY. Since we have been involved in a few wars since then though, Congress changed it to be a Memorial Day for all the dead of any American war. It is only fitting that it is a nationally observed holiday also. We need to remember what it cost.

For you and me to be enjoying the freedom we have today in this country, the blood of our ancestors has been shed both at home in this country and abroad in foreign lands. Almost every one of us can chase a family tree and find a relative that gave their life in one or the other of our many wars. Many friends are counted in this number too. My best friend in High School never made it back from Viet Nam.

We have another freedom today and its cost also was the blood of an individual -- Our

freedom from sin and death. No, I don't mean we will live forever in these bodies or never sin again. I mean being set free from the stranglehold that each seems to have on us. When Christ died on the cross and His blood dripped from His body, the bonds of Satan were broken for all who believe.

Veteran's blood paid for our physical freedom and safekeeping in this country. They fought and died for ALL Americans. Christ's blood paid for the spiritual freedom we enjoy by belonging to Him. He came to die for ALL people everywhere.

Memorial Day was set apart by man's government to remember the dead that died because men can not live in harmony on earth.

Christ, the LORD, gave us a command to remember Him also. Almost all believing churches celebrate the LORD's Supper in some way and fashion. The next time you partake, pause to

remember, and to celebrate. Tears of sorrow? No! Tears of joy! If He hadn't, we couldn't.

1 Cor 11:25... After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, this

cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

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May 26  
ICY ROADS  
Bill Griffin  
1996

As I was driving to work the other morning in the wee hours, I was being very careful to watch out for the icy spots. The winter storm had created havoc with the streets. Even though the streets were drivable, they were dangerous.

I began to reflect on the life of a Christian as I drove along. Our lives encounter icy roads. Dangerous spots where we allow ourselves to slip. Satan gets us deceived into believing everything is okay in our life and then, BOOM! We did not even see it coming. Just like the icy patches that appear to be pavement.

There are two parallels I thought about.

[1] We are distracted. Distracted. Deceived into thinking all is okay. We drive along and everything is going great so we drive a little faster. We begin to think of other things and take our mind off the road. It is then that we are most vulnerable.

As Christians, we go along in life so well we soon forget about God. We begin to see or want other things in our life. We become targets for Satan's wiles. Vulnerable. Caught in his trap.

[2] We do not recognize the dangers. Drivers look at the pavement and think it all looks alike so it must be the same and be okay. It isn't. Icy

spots can look just like the wet asphalt or concrete. It isn't recognized until we are on it and we are in a spin or slide.

Christians do not always recognize the dangers Satan lays out before them. So subtle. So deceptive. He knows we would rebel and kick and scream if he showed it all at once. We drift away from church and worship. The person over there begins to look better than our spouse. It don't hurt to look. One look turns to two, then three, then before you know it, a family is torn apart. We become more attached to our things. They begin to possess us, not the other way around. A new boat can't sit in the driveway. A new car must be driven for Sunday drives. So many things are in our path. It is hard to recognize them all.

Just as a driver must concentrate on the icy road to recognize and avoid hidden dangers, the Christian must concentrate on God and His ways and purposes. We can not allow our guard to be let down for a moment because that is all Satan needs to begin to tempt and deceive us.

*1 Pet 5:8 -- Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:*

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May 27  
JESUS IS MY LAWYER  
Bill Griffin  
1996

When my youngest son was about 15, he managed to get himself in trouble with the law. He was allowed to spend the night with a friend and they both slipped out of the house about midnight and found trouble in the dark lurking and waiting.

Needless to say, they were both arrested and placed in jail. A lawyer had to be hired to defend and assist in the due process. We had to engage a lawyer because we did not know all the law nor did we know all the language and ins and outs of the legal system. In other words, we had to have someone to speak on our behalf.

As a result of these foolish actions, Joe had to pay a fine, the lawyer's fee, and spend 100 hours doing community service work.

As we all go through life breaking God's law, we too, have to have someone to be our spokesman. In the Old Testament, it was a Priest who spoke for the people and offered sacrifices for their sins. Since the Cross, Christ has been our High Priest and advocate.

Rom 8:34 ... Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died-- more than that, who was raised to life-- is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.

There are huge differences though!

Joe had to pay the penalty man's law demanded for his crimes.

Jesus paid the penalty for my sins against God's law.

Joe had to pay a fee for his lawyer.

Jesus paid it all for me.

The lawyer was able to get the charges dropped after a year and the community hours due to the "Youthful Offender" program..

Jesus forgave my debt completely and cast it in the sea of forgetfulness the minute I accepted Him as Lord.

The lawyer spoke the language of the courts and protected Joe from any errors or injustice but his interceding quit when the year was over.

Jesus continues now and forever to intercede for me when the evil one, Satan, accuses me before the Father in heaven.

IS CHRIST YOUR LAWYER TODAY? HE CAN BE AND THE RETAINER FEE IS REASONABLE.

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May 28  
LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE  
Bill Griffin  
1996

Several years ago Sarah and I vacationed in Chattanooga, Tennessee. One of the places we visited was Ruby Falls on Lookout Mountain. After taking the elevator deep into the heart of the mountain, we had to follow a guide down a long narrow cave to reach the falls --- inside the

mountain. After we had all circled around the pool at the base of the falls, the guide surprised us all by turning out the lights. WOOWEEEE! I have been in some dark places, but nothing like this. This was the darkest dark I have ever seen.

The guide then struck a match -- an ordinary match. With this one little light, I could see everyone in the group. The darkness of the entire cave could not destroy the presence of this one tiny light.

Spiritual light works like this also. There is a song that children are taught in church that goes something like this:

"This little light of mine,  
I'm gonna let it shine".

Another stanza says:

"shine all over [singers fill in the name of their town or church],  
I'm gonna let it shine".

When you think "What difference can one person make"?, think of the match. It did not light all of the cavern and the cave, but it did light the area where it was shining. We should be the same. If God was willing to give us His light, we should be willing to share it. Wherever we go, our light of Christ should light the area around us. Those who do not know Him may be drawn to Him by the light you give.

2 Cor 4:6 . . . For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

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May 29  
LOVE FOR THE LEAST  
Bill Griffin  
1996

What is the sign of the saved? Their intellect? Their willingness to work in the local church? Their ability to teach or to preach? Their skillful pens and volumes? Their great miracles? No.

The sign of the saved is their love for the least. Christ told us this when He gave us the words of Matthew 25:32-34... *And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:*

Who are those that will be put on the right hand of God? Christ tells us who in Matt 25:40... *And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

It will be those who gave food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, friendship to the lonely, clothes to the naked, comfort to the sick, and visitors to the imprisoned.

Did you notice how simple? He does not say "sick and you healed" ... "Lonely and you built a

retirement home for me"... "in prison and you liberated me"....

Nothing extraordinary. No fanfare. Just good people doing good things for others. When we do good things for others, we do good things for God.

*When Francis of Assisi turned his back on wealth to seek God in simplicity, he stripped naked and walked out of the city. He soon encountered a leper on the side of the road. He passed him, then stopped and went back and embraced the diseased man. Francis then continued on his journey. After a few steps he turned to look again at the leper, but no one was there. For the rest of his life, he believed the leper was Jesus Christ. He may have been right.*

Jesus lives in the forgotten, the downtrodden, and the lonely. He has a residence in the ignored. He built a mansion amidst the ill. If we want to see God we must go among the broken and beaten and there we will find Him.

"He rewards those who truly seek to find him," is the promise. "Anything you did for even the least of my people here, you also did for me," is the plan.

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May 30  
LOVE GOD WHOLEHEARTEDLY  
Bill Griffin  
1996

*Deuteronomy 8:5. . . And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart and soul and strength.*

You can tell what means a lot to you. It is that thing or person you give the most time and attention. Your commitment to a person, a hobby, or a project may be measured by how much you devote yourself to it.

Your commitment to God may be measured in the same way. If He is not important to you, you will respond to Him as little as possible. But if He is your top priority, you will respond to Him every way you can -- with proper motives, with

your mind, with your abilities, and with your worship.

The Hebrew people often thought that they could worship God when it was convenient. When the Hebrews learned of different gods worshiped by other people, they sometimes would worship those gods. Later, the people would remember the true God. God reminded them that He wanted their total commitment. Worship is meaningless if it is halfhearted.

Worshiping God with your total being is a joy you can have in no other experience.

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May 31  
MAGNIFY THE LORD  
Bill Griffin  
1996

When we are in pain or turmoil, it is sometimes hard to remember to give thanks to the Lord our God. Most of the time, we can not look through our circumstances. We stay surrounded in our suffering and think no one cares anymore.

*There is a story of a lady, who, after a long absence attended the women's prayer group of her church. She had been in two different hospitals, receiving first radium and then chemotherapy. She had endured much pain and had been given a*

*frightening prognosis. When the time came for the sharing of prayer requests or praise, she could hardly wait. "I just want to thank the Lord for all He has done for me," she smiled. "We have prayed for healing; and I know God is giving it to me, whether here and now or in heaven. I know that when I go to be with Him, the healing will be complete."*

When Mary was told she would bear a child, she was very young and was not married. Can you imagine the stir in the community? It was sufficient to arouse the people to stone her. It was a serious difficulty for her. Even if that

was not enough, her soon to be husband wanted to put her away privately. Her life was a wreck. There did not appear to be anyone who could possibly understand what was happening to her, and she faced enduring all the frightening potentials of her condition in loneliness and misunderstanding if not actual personal danger. In what has to be a most amazing response to all that, Mary cries, "O magnify the Lord."

*Luke 1:46 ... And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord,*

How the praises of one in despair or pain must be sweet in the ears of God.

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