

# F. Y. C.

**For Your Consideration**

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## FENCED IN OR FENCED OUT?

There was a playground for children surrounded by a secure fence with only one gate. The children loved to play there. One day someone said, "They are penned in—like animals, like prisoners. That's not good. Let's remove the fence and free them from such confines."

The fence was removed. No more confinement. No more prison-like barriers.

Then a parent noticed that the children were only playing near the center of the playground. Why weren't they using all of the space. In questioning the children, they found out that the children didn't feel secure without the fence. It became apparent that the fence was protective and restrictive. It kept them inside where it was safe, and kept out what was harmful.

## BURDENSOME OR WHOLESOME?

A similar misconception is held by some when it comes to God's children. They believe the restrictions and prohibitions of the Lord's commandments keep them penned up, taking the joy out of living. Some say, "All the fun is taken away."

The truth is, His commands are not burdensome; they are wholesome. They protect His followers from harm from without, and keep them from harming themselves by wandering off.

*For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.*

1 John 5:3

*But the Lord is faithful, and He will strengthen and protect you from the evil one.*

2 Thessalonians 3:3

*Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy.*

Jude 1:24

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## TEMPORARY OR ETERNAL?

One who is always occupied with the desire and ambition for what this life has to offer does not have his affections set on things eternal.

*Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.*

1 John 2:15-16

*Therefore if you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.*

Colossians 3:1-2

# THE HEART

The heart is central to the physical life. By an easy transition the word came to stand for man's entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements, including one's feelings and affections: "Heart-felt." "My heart just isn't in it." "With all my heart." "From the bottom of my heart." "Heartless." It should not be surprising that the New Testament word "heart" (*kardia*), is found 118 times in 112 verses.

**"Heart" is used figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life.**

*Your adornment must not be merely external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God.* 1 Peter 3:3-4

**"Heart" the real you. Your true character, the seat of all actions.**

*"Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."* Matthew 15:17-20

## FROM THE HEART

*But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient **from the heart** to that form of teaching to which you were committed.* Romans 6:17

**The heart is involved in becoming a Christian.** It's more than mentally accepting facts ("I believe..."). More than a change in actions. It's obeying the Gospel from the heart (inner person).

*Not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God **from the heart.*** Ephesians 6:6

**The heart is involved in daily living as a Christian.** It's more than being called a Christian. More than assembling regularly with other Christians. It's knowing and daily doing the will of God.

*Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ ...* Philippians 1:27

*But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.* James 1:22

**The heart is involved in interacting with brethren.** It's more than saying you love one another. More than associating with other Christians. It's loving the brethren from the heart (the easy to love and the not so easy to love).

*Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another **from the heart.*** 1 Peter 1:22

*If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen.* 1 John 4:20

**Is Your Heart Right With God and With Other Christians?**

[bold emphasis mine]



## WORD STUDY

enhance your  
Bible knowledge

### PURSUE

Defined: To strive to gain or accomplish, to be engaged in (as one would a calling).

Christians are to pursue:

#### EDIFICATION AND PEACE

*So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another.*

Romans 14:19

#### RIGHTEOUSNESS, FAITH, LOVE, AND PEACE

*Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.*

2 Timothy 2:22

#### SANCTIFICATION AND PEACE

*Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord.*

Hebrews 12:14

#### ‘PEACE’

In each passage where we are encouraged to pursue something, peace is included. These pursuits need to be accompanied by a striving to maintain peace with God, peace with our brethren, and peace within.

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#### PEACE DEFINED

The absence of hostilities; freedom from quarrels and disagreement; harmonious relations: inner contentment.

**Peace** (Greek: *eirene*) is so much a part of the Gospel message that it's a theme found throughout the New Testament.

## The ‘Gospel’

*Now I make known unto you brethren,*

#### **the gospel**

*which I preached unto you,  
which also ye received,  
wherein also ye stand,  
by which also ye are saved  
if ye hold fast the word  
which I preached unto you,  
except ye believed in vain.*

1 Corinthians 15:1-2

### GOSPEL

A word of Anglo-Saxon origin, and meaning “God’s spell”, i.e., word of God, or rather, according to others, “good spell”, i.e., good news. It is the rendering of the Greek *euangelion*, i.e., “good message.”

It denotes the welcome intelligence of salvation to man as preached by our Lord and his followers.

It is termed “the gospel of the grace of God” (Acts 20:24), “the gospel of the kingdom” (Matthew 4:23), “the gospel of Christ” (Romans 1:16), “the gospel of peace” (Ephesians 6:15), “the glorious gospel,” “the everlasting gospel,” “the gospel of salvation” (Ephesians 1:13).

– Easton Bible Dictionary

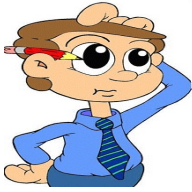
### The Good News

*For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve.*

1 Corinthians 15:3-5

*But now Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who are asleep. For since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.*

1 Corinthians 15:20-21



## Ponder This

### Rich Christians

One definition of “rich” is having great abundance. One can be a rich Christian without having material riches, by having an abundance of what constitutes true riches.

#### **RICH IN MERCY by being merciful.**

*But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us.*

Ephesians 2:4

*Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*

Luke 6:26

#### **RICH IN FAITH**

##### **by obeying from the heart.**

*Listen, my beloved brethren: did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?*

James 2:5

#### **RICH IN THE WORD OF CHRIST**

##### **by searching the Scriptures.**

*Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

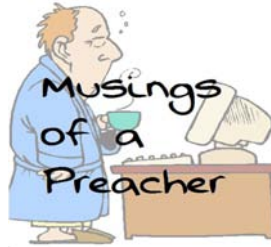
Colossians 3:16

#### **RICH IN GOOD WORKS**

##### **by using one’s abilities.**

*Instruct them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share.*

1 Timothy 6:18



### Talebearing (Gossip)

*Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people: neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor: I am the Lord.*

Leviticus 19:16

*The words of a talebearer are as wounds, and they go down into the innermost parts of the belly.*

Proverbs 18:8

Even the casual Bible reader notices that gossip (talebearing) is spoken against in the Bible. However, some do not recognize that often their sharing of “news” is really gossip. Most of us can recall when some bit of “news” was shared about us and it caused much hurt.

Here is a true account (the church and the individual’s names are omitted).

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One Sunday morning many parents refused to send their children to the Pre-School class. Their stated reason: “We don’t want that woman teaching our children. She was seen at an Adult book store.”

(One member had seen her and busied herself informing everyone she knew.)

This indeed was a problem, if it really happened. I met with the teacher to find out if it was true. Well, she told me that she and her husband (who was not a Christian) were shopping. As they walked by an adult bookstore, he decided to go in. She chided him for wanting to go in and said she would not go in with him. It was while she was waiting for her husband that the church member saw her and jumped to a conclusion (better, *confusion*).

Suffice it to say, a few members had to apologize and seek forgiveness, especially the one who witnessed the supposed misdeed and became a talebearer.

***But the damage could not be undone!***

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Bible references are from the NASB except where another translation is referenced.

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