A Newsletter of the Amy Foundation

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Wisdom for a Christian Worker

By Oswald Chambers

"Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you." — Luke 10:20

As Christian workers, world-liness is not our snare, sin is not our snare, but spiritual wantoning is, viz.: taking the pattern and print of the religious age we live in, making eyes at spiritual success.

is of more value to God than one hundred lives simply awakened by His Spirit.

As workers for God we must reproduce our own kind spiritually, and that will be God's witness to us as workers. God

brings
us to a
s t a n dard of
life by
H i s
grace,
and we
are res p o n -

Never court anything other than the approval of God, go "without the camp,

Our work begins where God's grace has laid the foundation; we are not to save souls, but to disciple them.

bearing His reproach." Jesus told the disciples not to rejoice in successful service, and yet this seems to be the one thing in which most of us do rejoice.

We have the commercial view — so many souls saved and sanctified, thank God, now it is all right. Our work begins where God's grace has laid the foundation; we are not to save souls, but to disciple them.

Salvation and sanctification are the work of God's sovereign grace; our work as His disciples is to disciple lives until they are wholly yielded to God. One life wholly devoted to God sible for reproducing that standard in others.

Unless the worker lives a life hidden with Christ in God, he is apt to become an irritating dictator instead of an indwelling disciple. Many of us are dictators, we dictate to people and to meetings. Jesus never dictates to us in that way.

Whenever Our Lord talked about discipleship, He always prefaced it with an "IF," never with an emphatic assertion — "You must." Discipleship carries an option with it.

Prayer Requests

We believe that "The prayers of the righteous availeth much." We invite you to pray with us about various aspects of The Amy Foundation Ministry.

Please join us in asking for God's direction and for the leading of the Holy Spirit as we work to help Christians obey Christ's mandate to make disciples by teaching obedience of all His commandments.

Amy Prayer List:

- Amy Writing Awards increased number of submissions in 2006.
- Christian writers mobilized and equipped to use their skills in obedience to Christ's call to make disciples.
- Amy Internet Syndicate—new users by year end.

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Writer's roadblock: finding a detour

by Shaunna Howat

An empty page or blank computer screen can seem daunting when you have a deadline, either self-imposed or assigned by an editor. Finding other activities to distract, such as washing the dog or dusting the top of the refrigerator, might be much easier than putting some words down. So what do you do?

Brainstorm. List the ideas or thoughts you know you should cover. Don't worry about form; just get the words down. Read books or articles related to your topic.

Search. Go to Google.com and type in the key words of your topic. Surround a phrase with quotation marks in order to narrow your search. You'll probably find more information than you thought existed. You might find commentaries on your topic by a variety of pointsof-view. Look for news articles the same way by narrowing the search to news engines (an option on Google). Note: if you do find information you want to use, copy and paste the information to a separate page in your word processing program, and copy and paste the web address right below the text you used. This does two things: it helps in case you need to return to that website later, and it provides you with the source for a quote you might reprint, so you avoid plagia-

rism.

Ask. Depending on the subject you are writing about, you can interview an expert in the field for comments you might use. Ask your pastor for a comment. Call the mayor's office or the school board to verify information. Interview your neighbor about his experience as a soldier. That kind of first-person information can give

just the right spice to your writing and help blast writer's block out of the way.

Experiment. List the thesis of your article, if you have one. Don't stop there, though; write a different version of that thesis, and then another one. Then list the possible points you could make under each one. Vary the order of your points. It's like fitting a puzzle together. Which works best? Which makes the most sense?

Pray. Why didn't I remember to do this first? Time and time again my writer's block has sent me to my knees. God is the author of all, and He knows what I should be writing. If my writing is to disciple readers, shouldn't I ask God for the words? He has never failed to direct me to the right words,

thoughts, sources of information. And interestingly enough, when I ask, I usually find that even before I asked, He had already been telling me what to say, by directing a sermon or Sunday School class, a friend's conversation, a message on the radio directly toward my topic. It just takes getting on my knees to jog that memory.

Attend a writer's conference. On page 3 you'll find one popular conference set at a beautiful center on Lake Michigan. Find other writer's conferences in your area or around the nation by typing "Writer's Conference" in a search engine on the web.

Try a few of these roadblock fixers to navigate around the block. Happy driving!

Pen & Sword

Editors: Shaunna Howat Linda Wacyk

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email: amyfoundtn@ aol.com

517.323.6233

Winning strategies

Simple tips for turning your writing into more powerful discipling experiences.

- Document thoroughly. Don't just state opinion and analysis. Present strong research. Let facts speak for themselves.
- Christian writers must biblically re-think all of their assumptions concerning their craft. A "biblical world view" is the most crucial element in any kind of salt and light to the darkness.
- Learn to write for both Christian and a secular audience in an acceptable style.
- BE the message you proclaim.
- Acquire knowledge of history and philosophy. Both inspire the intellect.
- · Be non-threatening. Use a sense of humor.

Discipled Nation

continued from page 8

- 9. "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." (Proverbs 22:6 KJV)
- **10.** "Go now and leave your life of sin." (John 8:11)
- **11.** "I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for the harvest." (John 4:35)

You can read the entire Discipled Nation Plan at www.amyfound.org

Writers' Conference inspires, jumpstarts

by Verna Kok, conference planner

Okay, I admit it. I had ulterior motives my first year at Maranatha Christian Writer's Conference in Muskegon, Michigan. First, there was the pool. Then, there were the sumptuous buffets prepared for me, not by me. I wanted to walk the beach, and as a mother I looked forward to adult conversations for five days in a row. I also wanted to write but had no idea where to begin. That was years ago, with half day sessions and a limited number of choices.

Fifteen years later, some things have not changed. Maranatha Writer's Conference remains distinctively Christian. The goal is enabling writers to serve their Lord more effectively. Sessions remain practical and interactive, with one-on-one workshops available. The conference still helps beginners get started and challenges experienced authors.

This year, five full days are packed with information, inspiration and opportunities. Sally Stuart, marketing expert, is the 2006 Guest Staff Member. Group sessions and electives give exposure to a variety of writing genres and publishing opportunities. Staff, special guests and editors cover a wide range of topics including fiction, non-fiction, devotions, articles, poetry, and writing for children. Practical assignments

are suggested with specific publishers in mind, so it is possible to complete the conference with manuscripts ready to submit. Participants are better prepared to serve in church or non-profit ministries. They also leave with new friends to network and pray with.

Interested writers may call Maranatha for a brochure at 231-798-2161 or visit VacationWithPurpose.org.

Attended an inspiring writer's conference? Send a 200-word description, plus contact info for the conference, to amyfoundtn@aol.com. We might include it in a future issue!

Popular writing conferences

- Mt. Hermon Annual Christian Writers Conference near Santa Cruz, CA. mounthermon. org/writers
- American
 Christian
 Writers
 Conference
 in 27
 locations
 throughout
 the U.S.
 ACWriters.
 com.
- Blue Ridge Mountains Christian Writers Conference, Ridgecrest, NC. lifeway.com/ christianwriters.
- Write to
 Publish
 Conference,
 Chicago, IL.
 writeto
 publish.com
- Write!
 Canada
 Guelph, ON,
 Canada.
 theword
 guild.com/
 writecanada/
- Glorieta
 Christian
 Writers
 Conference,
 Glorieta, NM
 glorieta
 cwc.com

God, here is my question...

Editor's note:

In past issues our late publisher, James Russell, expressed the desire to begin a new column titled "God, here is my question..."

We received a few responses, and this one struck a chord.

God, here is my question...

As a birth mother I have been stuck in "GRIEF" for more than 30 YEARS. The years have run together in one long seemingly endless string of pain, frustration and sadness. I'm sure there are thousands who feel the same. Silently suffering. . .

Dear "bio" Mom,

You are in every sense a mother – you have given birth, and you have sacrificed your very self for your birth-child. It is normal to experience some doubts and grief as you look back to a decision you may regret. Rather than wonder why you can't forget your child, try

"embracing" the child you have somewhere on this earth for whom you made a valuable sacrifice - you gave away the right to know him, to hug him in the morning, to tuck him in at night, to help him celebrate the "firsts" - first tooth, first step, first school day, first date. But in sacrificing these opportunities for yourself, you gave so much to your child - parents who could support and love your child in ways you could not, perhaps the financial security you weren't able to supply.

If you have, until now, kept this information to yourself, perhaps God is nudging you to share about your "bio" child with someone you trust. Allow yourself to imagine what he looks like, how old he would be by now. What would you expect his interests to be? What kind of talents might he have inherited? These questions are normal and should be experienced and explored. You may want to talk with your pastor

or a trusted Bible study leader.

Certainly don't neglect to talk with God about him. God knows exactly where your child is and how he is doing. God will lead you to exactly how to be praying for him. He can grow and mature your faith as you depend on Him to show you what your child's current needs are. If you are never reconnected here on earth, cling to the assurance that you will be some day in heaven.

When that day comes, how wonderful to know and recognize this beloved child for whom you have prayed and to know that he wasn't ignored or hidden as something shameful, but embraced and loved – by his birth Mom, who never stopped thinking of and praying for him.

With thanks to Rebecca Buckalew, Associate Director of Caring Ministries, Faith Church, Milford, OH.

Youth Haven Ranch

For many children in today's society, abuse, neglect, violence, and poverty are normal aspects of everyday life. America's youth are desperately seeking someplace to belong, where they will be cared for, loved, and valued. Sadly, when they do not feel their needs are being met, many turn to unwholesome substitutes such as gangs, sexual promiscuity, and drugs.

Since 1968, Youth Haven has been faithfully meeting the needs of disadvantaged boys and girls without ever charging a child one penny to attend their programs. By allowing children to come to their Ranches in Michigan and Arizona free of charge, they are able to reach out to a special group of youth who would never be able to experience a place like Youth Haven if they were required to pay for it. At the same time, this fact makes them even more depen-

Since 1968, Youth Haven has been faithfully meeting the needs of disadvantaged boys and girls without ever charging a child one penny to attend their programs.

dent upon the financial assistance of faithful friends like the Amy Foundation, which contributes regularly to the ministry.

The Youth Haven experience can be life-changing for hurting boys and girls. By caring for their physical needs and offer-

ing a variety of games and activities, children discover there is love, hope and healing—and a better alternative to gang involvement or life on the streets. To learn more about Youth Haven ministries, go to

www.youthhaven.org or call 517-569-3328.

Adapted from the Youth Haven Summer 2006 newsletter.





Submit Today!

15 writers will receive \$34,000 in cash prizes

The Amy Foundation Writing Awards program recognizes writers who skillfully and creatively present the biblical position on issues affecting the world today in a sensitive and thought-provoking manner. Qualifying non-fiction entries must have been published in a mainstream non-religious publication.

Winning entries will be re-published in an annual collection of prize-winning entries.

For rules, sample articles and submission forms, visit **www.amyfound.org** or call 877-727-4262.



Superman Returns: Superhero still needed?

By Rusty Wright

oes the world still need a superhero? Watch out, bad guys, as *Superman Returns* ... fighting movie villains, rescuing the imperiled, desiring Lois Lane (now a single mom), saving the world.

The guy is everywhere. Superman's promotional ties include Burger King, Duracell, got milk?, even a dating website. NBA star Shaquille O'Neal has a Superman logo tattooed on his arm. Archvillain Lex Luthor hacked Superman's website, linking to his own MySpace.com webpage. Marketers work every angle.

Why has the Superman story remained so popular? What is it about the Man of Steel that captures the public imagination?

In the 1930s, the Great Depression had the world slumping. Fascist and Nazi menaces haunted Europe. Two Cleveland teenagers dreamed up a hero who would rescue the troubled, inspire hope, and set things right. The story was born.

In the new film, *Daily Planet* editor Perry White instructs his staff to cover everything they can about Superman's return. He especially wants to know, "Does he still stand for truth, justice, all that stuff?"

He does, and that's one reason Superman's appeal endures. Some – probably many – want to identify with someone bigger than themselves who embodies what's honorable, a hero to admire or emulate.

Lots of people need rescuing these days from crime on the streets and in the boardrooms, troubled relationships, terrorism, war, disease, nuclear threats. Superman has power. He cares for distressed people. And he's humble.

Plain, ordinary Clark Kent could be everyhuman. His mild mannered disguise hides phenomenal abilities. Ever dream of your peers, your foes, or the world glimpsing the real you, the one with more to offer than ever gets appreciated?

My childhood heroes included Superman, the Lone Ranger, and Zorro. I wore their costumes as I watched their television programs. Their struggles for good energized my youthful imagination.

Of course, not everyone believes the world needs saving. The new Lois Lane says, "The world doesn't need a savior; neither do I." Superman tells her, "But every day I hear people crying for one."

Superman's biological father, Jor-El (voiced by the late Marlon Brando), prepared counsel for his child, Kal-El, whom he launched into space as their planet, Krypton, exploded. Of earthlings: "They can be a great people, Kal-El. They wish to be. They only lack the light to show the way. For this reason above all – their capacity for good – I have sent them you ... my only son."

Spiritual parallels have not been lost on media observers. *Rolling Stone* feels Brando's

words "establish ... (Superman) as a Christ figure." Jesus, of course, referred to himself as God's "only Son" sent to rescue the world: "I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the darkness."

Superman creators Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster were Jewish. "El" is a Hebrew word for "God." The biblical Moses' mother hid him in a basket in the Nile River to save his life.

Superman Returns director Bryan Singer, who is Jewish, acknowledges that biblical imagery – both messianic and Mosaic – have influenced the Superman saga. An adopted only child, picked on in his youth, Singer says he's often felt like an outcast.

How does Superman inspire him? "I think most people do believe in that kind of integrity and virtue," Singer observed in a documentary. "They want to see goodness. People have a deep need to believe that it exists out there."

Superhero – a real one – is still needed.

Anyone out there "still stand for truth, justice, all that stuff?" Anyone qualify as "the Light of the world"?

Rusty Wright is an author and lecturer with Probe.org who has spoken on six continents. He holds Bachelor of Science (psychology) and Master of Theology degrees from Duke and Oxford universities, respec-

tively.

This article is an example of the Amy Foundation Syndicate, Real Answers. $^{\text{TM}}$ Each month, Real Answers offers several new articles, free of charge, editors across America. For more information, contact Don Lindman at amyfoundtn @aol.com

Read more at our website at amyfound.org.

Amy Syndicate Update



The Amy Syndicate is up and running again after almost a year layoff. It has a newer, simpler address—amysyndicate.org— and the columnists are producing some very good writing. Here are three ways in which you can be involved:

- 1. Let your local newspaper editor know of us and know of your interest in having our columns in your newspaper;
- 2. Pray for the ministry of the Syndicate; and
- 3. Check out the website yourself from time to time and note what good Christian journalism is like.

Most columns are under 600 words and can serve as a model for your own writing in letters to the editor or in an occasional column for your local paper.

Award Wi

Brother of Murder Victim Overcomes Anger

Second Prize Award of \$5,000

Excerpt By Jimmy Tomlin

It's not that Zach Osborne doesn't fully understand the horror of what happened to his younger sister in 1992. Sure, he was only 6 when his 4-yearold sister, Natalie, was brutally raped and murdered. And yes, his family largely shielded him from the gory details. But Osborne, of Jamestown, is 19 now - a grown man - and he knows the truth. He's read newspaper stories and court transcripts describing how their mother's then-boyfriend, Jeff Kandies, abducted Natalie from her Asheboro home and raped her. How he killed her by striking her head repeatedly with a blunt object. How he stuffed her limp body into a couple of trash bags and put her in a closet, like some worthless rag doll bound for the thrift shop.

And yet a couple of years ago – during the height of the usually angst-ridden teenage years, no less – Osborne found in his heart something he never expected to find. Something his and Natalie's parents have not found. Something the state of North Carolina – which has every intention of executing Kandies – has not found. Osborne found the power to forgive his sister's murderer.

TRAGIC DISCOVERY

Osborne, a rising sophomore at East Carolina University, made national headlines this past week when he won a \$5,000 college scholarship sponsored by a group of deathrow inmates from around the country.

As he discussed the scholarship, which he'll use to pursue a criminal-justice degree, Osborne spoke candidly about Natalie, the cheerful, brownhaired girl whose photo he carries in his wallet to this day.

The day Natalie died – April 20, 1992 – she had been sent to her room all day for eating her brother's Easter candy. That evening, Osborne's mother, Patricia Craven, told him to call Natalie for supper.

"I go in the room and she's not in there," Osborne said, "and the sliding door's open."

Three days later, Kandies finally admitted killing Natalie – accidentally, he said – and led police to her body in a closet at his Randleman home. He denied raping her. Police, a grand jury and a trial jury decided otherwise, however, and on April 20, 1994 – the two-year anniversary of Natalie's death – the same jury that convicted Kandies sentenced him to die.

"When I found out Jeff killed her, I was thinking, 'You need to die,'" he said. "I was really angry at him."

AN EASTER EPIPHANY

For years, that bitterness festered inside Osborne. It wasn't until a few years ago, when he became active at Enterprise Moravian Church in Lexington, that Osborne began to deal with his anger toward Kandies.

"I started going to church often and started reading the Bible more," Osborne said, "and God's love is what helped me forgive him."

Obviously, it wasn't that simple. Osborne said it took him about a year to reach the point of forgiveness.

"For a long time, I tried to forget about (Natalie's murder) and act like it never happened," he said. "But every Easter – that's when she was killed – that would remind me."

One Easter Sunday, in particular, a sermon that focused

entirely on forgiveness was too poignant to ignore, Osborne said.

"(The pastor) was talking about forgiveness and Jesus dying on the cross to forgive our sins, and us forgiving others, and it all just tied in together," he said. "That's when I really started thinking."

Meanwhile, Osborne felt influence from an unlikely source – his high-school track and crosscountry career. Before every meet, he said, his team would recite "The Lord's Prayer," and the words became more than a mere ritual. One passage, in particular, spoke to Osborne: "...as we forgive those who trespass against us."

The passage, which appears in Mark 6 in the Bible, goes on to say, "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins." Those words weighed heavy on Osborne's heart, he said, and he decided to forgive Kandies.

"God doesn't want you to be bitter and hold grudges against people," he said. "He wants you to be loving and caring and show compassion, and to always forgive."

Even if that means forgiving a convicted rapist and murderer on death row.

"I've already got closure," he said. "That's what forgiveness gives you."

Read the entire story at www.amyfound.org.

Jimmy Tomlin is a feature writer and columnist for the High Point (NC) Enterprise. As a freelance writer, he has had more than 200 articles published in regional and national publications, and he has participated in several book projects.

Healing Prayers

Third Prize Award of \$4,000

Excerpt By Jennifer Hawes

It's 3:00 in the afternoon. Caroline's two younger boys, 3-year-old Charlie and 11-monthold Sam, play outside. Nina pulls into the driveway to turn around. Suddenly, Caroline shrieks. A car tire runs over Sam's head.

Caroline gasps at her baby, face down, blood dripping from his mouth. She races over, gathers him up and jumps into Nina's car. They race toward an emergency room, horn blaring.

HOUR BY HOUR

Nobody ever said, "Sam might die." But everyone knew it. Instead, his doctors said things like, "Let's take it hour by hour."

Once doctors stabilized Sam, they moved him to the pediatric ICU, where he lay restrained, sedated, on morphine and a ventilator. He didn't move.

Doctors explained that over the next 72 hours, their main concern was that pressure could build inside Sam's skull.

SITTING VIGIL

Greg Banks, a former coworker of Caroline's, hurried to the hospital when he heard about Sam. Banks arrived in the darkness and sat, silent, in a corner. All night.

He opened his Bible to a letter the Apostle Paul wrote to the Philippians, a group of the earliest Christians trying to figure out how to live in this new faith. "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

The next afternoon, Dean and Caroline went home to change clothes. Their housekeeper,

Delores, came in. "You've got to have faith," she said gently.

Caroline groaned. "I don't know what that is."

"You've got to close your eyes and see that boy crawl across this room. That's faith!"

Caroline closed her eyes. The darkness left, the image of the car and Sam left, and she saw Sam crawling across the floor. She saw him walking. She saw him playing with his brothers.

Caroline knew what to pray for. She wasn't alone. The prayers of her church rose. So, too, rose the prayers of a community as word got out about a terrible accident involving a little boy most folks had never met.

THE POWER OF PRAYER

The prayers, it seemed, were working. Four days after the accident, Sam got off the ventilator. They felt hope. They'd seen a miracle.

But late into the night, Sam had a seizure. They prayed hard. A scan showed no bleeding. Soon he was doing well again. In fact, Sam was well enough to undergo major reconstructive surgery.

The surgery had gone smoothly. Sam's prognosis looked good. Four days later, Sam left the pediatric ICU for a standard hospital room.

A GOLDEN RING

The next day, when Sam woke from a nap, a ring of clear golden fluid had pooled on the pillow under his nose. On Monday, another ring. It was cerebrospinal fluid. The jagged edge of a broken bone probably had poked a hole in the dura, a thick protective membrane between his brain and skull. Sam might need a craniotomy, a major surgery in which his neurosurgeon would remove a piece of skull and find the hole to repair it.

An old college friend, Lauren Tin-

der, offered to sit with Sam. "Tell me what you need," Lauren said.

It took Caroline a second to realize that Lauren was asking what she should pray for while she sat with Sam. "We need his dura to seal up and stop leaking."

THE HEALING

Later Caroline checked the sheet under his head. Where she had seen golden spinal fluid hours earlier, now she saw none. And through the night, as nurses checked Sam's sheet every hour, no fluid.

Early the next morning, nurses got Sam ready for surgery. When the anesthesiologist came in, Dean and Caroline told him that no fluid had drained from Sam's nose in 18 hours.

He called the neuro-surgeon. "There's no more fluid!"

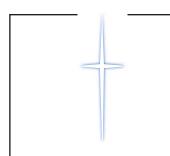
"Are you kidding me?" the doctor asked. He checked Sam but didn't see any sign of fluid. He sent Sam back to his room. Two more days passed, and still no fluid. Less than three weeks had passed since the accident, and he saw no reason for Sam to stay in the hospital. "Let's get him out of here!"

Read the entire story at www.amyfound.org.

Jennifer Berry Hawes is a senior writer who focuses on the Faith and Values section of The Post and Courier in Charleston, SC. Hawes is the current Religion Writer of the Year for mid-sized newspapers, an honor presented by the Religion Newswriters Association. She lives with her husband and two children in Mount Pleasant, SC.

Watch for more excerpted 2005 Prize-Winners in future issues of Pen & Sword.

You can read the full text of these articles and all 15 winning entries at www.amyfound.org



THE AMY FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2006



3798 Capital City Blvd. P.O. Box 16091 Lansing, Michigan 48901

OUR WEB SITE:

www.amyFound.org

EMAIL US AT

AMYFOUNDTN@AOL.COM

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The United States—A Discipled Nation

A Call To -The Authority of Truth

Truth is the mind of God revealed in His Holy Word.

Truth is the mind of God revealed in the obedient life of His son Jesus Christ. Truth is the mind of God revealed by the spirit of truth who is the Holy Spirit.

Truth is the mind of God reflected in the life of an obedient Christian.

Obedience of Jesus' Commandments

- 1. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." (Mark 12:30)
- 2. "The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:31)
- 3. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

 (Matthew 28:19)
- **4.** "This is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven,

- hallowed be your name. Your Kingdom come your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. Forgive us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one." (Matthew 6:9-13)
- 5. "If you continue in my word then you are my disciples indeed and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free." (John 8:31)
- 6. "Give and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For

- with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." (Luke 6:38)
- 7. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. All men will know that you are my disciples if you love one another." (John 13:34-35)
- 8. "Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives submit to your husbands as to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:21-22)
- "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her." (Ephesians 5:25)