

THE GREENWOOD BULLETIN

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VOLUME 8 NO. 38

November 20, 2011

"I DON'T LOVE HER ANYMORE"

By Greg Gwin

A forty year old man, suffering through the classic "midlife crisis," sat down to talk to a preacher about his problems. He explained how his marriage of 20 years was no longer satisfying or fulfilling. Finally, he reached the "bottom line." "I just don't love her anymore," he said. "What can I do?"

After a brief moment of reflection, the preacher said decisively, "As I see it, you have only one option." The man perked up with anticipation. Was the preacher going to suggest a divorce? Would he be free to pursue the thrilling lifestyle of the younger generation that he had come to admire? Would this be his chance to regain his fleeting youth? What was the preacher's advice? ... "Seems to me that the only thing left for you to do is REPENT and start loving her again."

So often we hear of married couples who complain that they have "fallen out of love." That's sad -- but it happens. The real issue is: What do you do when you realize that such a situation exists? The Bible still says the same thing that it has always said. Husbands are to "love your wives" (**Ephesians 5:24**), and wives are to "love their husbands" (**Titus 2:4**).

Please note that these are not just suggestions -- they are commands. To fail to love your mate is to commit sin! And sin always requires repentance if there is to be forgiveness. Be careful. Do not confuse commanded love with the gooey, silly infatuation of a teenager. It is far more than that. It is a sacrificial love that seeks the interest of the one loved more than self. It is the kind of love that Jesus has shown us (**Ephesians 5:25**).

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A GODLY MAN IN WICKED SURROUNDINGS

By Bill Hall

Elijah was a man who reached true greatness in the Lord's service. He was always ready to go where God would send him (**I Kings 18:1; 19:15**); to pray whenever prayer was needed (**I Kings 17:20, 21; 18:36, 37**), and to confront evil whenever confrontation was necessary (**I Kings 18:17-24; 21:17-19**). He was translated without seeing death, and he, along with Moses, was chosen to appear with the Lord on the mount of transfiguration.

The remarkable thing about Elijah is that he attained this greatness while living in a wicked and hostile environment. Had he lived in Judah during the righteous reign of Hezekiah or Josiah, we might not be surprised at Elijah's attainments. But he lived instead in Israel during the wicked reign of Ahab. He was subjected to the cruel intents of Jezebel. He was under constant harassment and threat of death. He became so discouraged at one point that he asked to die, but he never denied his God.

In this wicked environment Elijah was able to influence others. The widow of Zarephath was blessed through Elijah (**I Kings 17:8-24**). The multitudes on Mount Carmel were led to cry, "The Lord, He is God!" through his courageous efforts (**I Kings 18:39**). Elisha, his successor, must have been greatly influenced by him. And even Ahab was brought to humility on one occasion, clothing himself in sackcloth as a result of Elijah's rebuke (**I Kings 21:27-29**). The message of Elijah is clear. You can live a godly life and influence others for good in a wicked and hostile environment.

When one hears the excuses people make today, it is obvious that Elijah's message is badly needed in this generation. People excuse their failure to teach others the gospel with, "People are so prejudiced around here they just won't listen"; when the truth is, little effort has been made. If they are approached about their ungodly conduct, they explain that "You just don't know how terrible the people are that I have to work around every day". If their children go astray their explanation is, "Our children are faced with pressures that we

didn't have growing up". Such statements, repeated often enough, become to many a "license" to do wrong and a salve to soothe their troubled consciences.

We must throw aside our excuses and make up our minds to do right. Elijah could serve God in wicked surroundings. **And so can we.**

ON TAKING SIDES

By Guthrie Dean

When issues arise to trouble the churches some will say, "I don't believe in taking sides." Of course it is always easier to straddle a fence than it is to take a stand for truth.

Reminds me of an elderly lady who make a suggestion to the new preacher at the church. "Now, Sonny, don't you be saying too much about heaven and hell. I feel like I've got husbands in both places." I've seen statues over the South of great men sitting straddle some mighty handsome looking horses but I've never yet seem a statue anyplace, of a man sitting straddle a fence.

It don't take a very big person to carry a grudge.

HYMNS FOR THE "SORTA" COMMITTED

1. I Surrender Some
2. It Is Fairly Well With My Soul
3. Fill My Spoon, Lord
4. Oh, How I Like Jesus
5. He's Quite a Bit to Me
6. I Like to Tell the Story
7. Take My Life and Let Me Be
8. Where He Leads Me, I'll Consider Following
9. Just As I Pretend to Be
10. Onward Christian Reserves
11. When the Saints Go Sneaking In
12. Sit Down, Sit Down for Jesus
13. My Hope is Built On Somewhat Less

—Via *Centerview Tidings*—

Breath of Life

Author Unknown

It is a temptation to see our empty billfolds and purses and think that we have received nothing from God. Yet think on this: God has given us the ability to breathe and so maintain our life on earth!

The Lord gives us the opportunity to breathe (on average) 18 times per minute, day and night. What we breathe is His gift to us. Every day we breathe 26,000 times. Multiply this figure by the number of days you have lived.

You will be surprised by the large number of times that God has permitted you to even breathe.

Job 12:10 tells us that we are in the hand of God. In that divine resting place is "the life of every living thing and the breath of all mankind."

The prophet Daniel rebuked foolish King Belshazzar, telling him that he had not humbled himself before God...*and the God who holds your breath in His hand and owns all your ways, you have not glorified* (Daniel 5:23).

KEEP THYSELF PURE

The lies I told when I was young
slid oiled and painless off my
tongue;

What seemed then coy, and
archly bold - -
Creeps back, haunts, hurts, now
that I'm old.

—Copied—

Personal Application

Selected Thought

**I preached a sermon to a man,
concerning him; no other.
When he heard it how he
laughed,
He thought I meant his
brother.**

Brother W. W. Otey once
said that it takes good
listening as well as good
preaching to make a
good sermon. Let's learn to
make application to
self!

**The best helping
hand you will
ever find is at the
end of
your own arm.**