

Knowing the Certainty

One reason given by Luke for his writing Theophilus was that he might "know the certainty of the things" that he had been taught (Lk. 1: 3-4). Safety is another word given in lexicons for certainty.

By Lowell Blasingame

There are some realms in which one may be taught that which is not certain and it not materially affect him, but there are others in which certainty is a matter of utmost importance. It is not enough for one just to think that he is right; he needs to be certain. I worked for a short time for a business that installed plate glass windows. One of the things about the man in charge of installation that impressed me was his carefulness for certainty. I've often held the measuring tape while he measured the window, then measured and marked the glass with a chalk line, and then back we would go and recheck the measurements of the window before he would mark the glass with the cutting instrument. Knowing the certainty of the measurements was essential to a properly fitted window and insurance against ruining a valuable piece of glass.

Many in religion are not overly concerned about the certainty of the things which they are being taught. I once asked a man who was attending services where I was preaching, and who was not a member of the church, if his convictions were different from what he had heard me preach, and if they were, for the opportunity to discuss them with him. His reply was that he did differ with me on

some things but that he was afraid to discuss them for fear that I'd show him that he was wrong. There are many like this, but not as honest as this man in admitting it. They have been taught that just so long as one is honest and sincere, what he believes and practices in religion is not important. This is not so.

We should be concerned about the certainty of the things that we are being taught in religion. The Bible warns against our being spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit (Col. 2:8), our minds being corrupted from the simplicity which is in Christ (2 Cor. 11:3) and our being deceived by false teachers (Matt. 7:15).

Have you been taught that one church is as good as another, that salvation is by faith only, that a child of God cannot fall from grace or that one does not have to be baptized in order to be saved? Did you measure these things by what the Bible teaches to determine the certainty of them or were you content to accept them as true just because you heard some preacher say that they are taught in the Bible?



Our soul is our most precious possession and for that reason we need to be concerned about the certainty of the things that we believe. – Truth Magazine, Feb. 4, 1971.

Lisa Carter (Luke's mother)	Jesse Godwin (Troy's father and Mac's grandfather)	Nell Holcomb (Ben's grandmother, Joannetta's aunt)	Louise Pack (Anna and Christopher's grandmother)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Bill Simmons (Jessica Anderson's gdad)
Madeline Morton (Greg Lanier's g'daughter)	Alexander Locke (Jeremiah's cousin's son)	Betty Bradford	Hazel Gilliland and Sherry Carroll (Toni's relatives)
Jean Buchanan (Abbie Harrison's grandmother)	Ermogene Laxson (Sara Lail's grandmother)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	William Smith (Ken Sullivan's brother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Arabelle Rich (Joannetta's aunt)	Sasha Rozier (Makenzie Reynolds' cousin)	Charles Hunt, chuck Hunt's dad
Bonnie Rhodes Kirkley (Toni Herd's family)	Howard Vaughan (Mary Ann's Granddad)	Aubrey Meeks (Toni Herd's Nephew)	James Palmer (Rachel Hobbard's grandfather)

December Birthdays

- 2-Katelyn Sullivanne
- 5-Rusty Weldon
- 5-Charlie Johnson
- 5-Allie Hosey
- 5-Grace Green
- 8-Macy Johnson
- 9-Anna Acuff
- 9-Kayla Reid
- 9-Anna Cagle
- 11-Alex Nguyen
- 13-Dave Hosey
- 13-Will Bruce Harris
- 14-Beth Zeannah
- 15-Sabelis Moreno
- 17-Joseph Miller
- 18-Tin-Yau Tam
- 19-Chase Sanders
- 20-Chris Zeannah
- 20-Brandon Walker
- 20-Meredith Reid
- 20-Micah Waters
- 21-Holly Johnson
- 21-Andrew Dunaway
- 22-William Herd
- 22-Carter Burns
- 24-Jessica Yates
- 24-Dustin Marsh
- 27-Jacob Neeley
- 28-Turner Stephens
- 28-Gabby Borden
- 30-Douglas Bethea

News and Notes

- Ruth Addison was able to come home this week!
- Please pray for the family of Matt Cavender whose grandmother, Eva Jean Cavender, died recently.
- Please remember the family of Susan Sullivanne whose uncle, Grover Gardner, passed away last week.
- Congratulations to the newly wed couples: Clint and Emily Davis, Brandon and Megan Hester!
- Please remember the family of Carroll Sutton who passed away this week. Morgan Cavender and Dustin Marsh are relatives.
- Tonight is singing night.
- Please remember the family of Sarah Norman whose grandmother, Virginia Box, died last week.
- Please pray for our expectant mothers: Amanda Stephens, Brooke Perkins, Fallon Hartsell and Jenna Vaughn.
- Please pray for the family of Terri Sams who passed away on Friday.
- Please keep those in your prayers who are in the adoption process: Kevin and Jessica Anderson.
- Please pray for the Anderson's who have been matched with a baby girl due Jan 31st!

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Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

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Selfishness and Marriage

By J.R. Bronger



Thoughts to Ponder

Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; (1 Corinthians 13:4)

Divorce! This word used to call to mind "breaking up a home," and with it trauma, unhappiness and all manner of problems. Today, however, it is so commonplace that it rarely raises an eyebrow. There is no need to overwhelm you with statistics in order to prove that nearly half of all marriages end in divorce. Personal evidence may be sufficient. It is probably safe to assume that you have in some manner been touched by divorce, whether friends, family or perhaps yourself.

Despite the Lord's teaching that marriage is permanent and man is NOT to separate what God has joined together (Matthew 19:6) divorce continues unabated. The only exception to the Lord's no divorce policy is sexual immorality (fornication) according to Matthew 19:9. But, did you know that adultery is NOT the reason most couples divorce? Surveys indicate that incompatibility, financial problems, sexual inadequacy, mental and/or physical abuse, no

Love your mate unconditionally and with an unselfish heart. Look out for the well-being of your partner and not yourself. Take time to enjoy every minute together, you may not have tomorrow. You are one flesh, so become one every day.

longer in-love, or loving someone else are the leading factors resulting in divorce. Regardless of the name put on the reason for seeking a divorce, the real incentive is selfishness. People divorce for selfish reasons.

A 40-year-old school administrator walked out of her 19-year marriage because she felt her husband was "boring, uneducated, and unmotivated." Now she wanted someone who was "an intellectual dynamo, and successful in his career." Her divorce was

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Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

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about her, not her husband. She acted out of selfishness!

Even incompatibility and sexual inadequacy are code words for selfishness. Incompatibility says, "YOU are not like ME." Or, "Our love life is the pits because YOU don't know how to please ME." How we see our partners often depends more on how WE are than how THEY are. For example, before they married she thought he was unselfish, considerate and smelled of cologne. But after marriage all he wants to do is watch TV and he smells like Doritos. In her view, he has gone from Stud to Dud. Before they married he thought she was a knockout, now to him she looks like she has been knocked-out. Self-centeredness is slowly suffocating this marriage. Selfishness is about commitment to ME, love of ME, serving ME and it will destroy any marriage despite God's prohibitions against divorce.

For years, members of churches of Christ lagged far behind the general population in the number of divorces sought. Still behind, the gap is shrinking. Preachers, elders, deacons and bible class teachers are joining the ranks of the divorced. Men and women are walking away from the vows they exchanged even though they know full well the bible forbids divorce. Selfishness is driving men and women to solve their perceived problems by divorcing. Change partners, like changing a shirt one no longer likes.

When a man ceases making marriage about him, and begins to make it about his wife – his marriage will less likely end in divorce. When a woman stops demanding her marriage center on her and begins to focus on her husband, her marriage will less likely be ended by divorce. Paul said,

"Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others." (Philippians 2:4). This is excellent medicine for any marriage, including yours.

Love is doing just that. "Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up . . ." (1 Cor 13 4). Love is not something that you find, fall in or fall out of. Love is in you, and you can learn to love another human being, if you take the time to do it, and if you have the desire to do it. If people would stop dwelling on themselves and begin to dwell on the spouse, soon they could rekindle the love that was once there, or always wish had been there.

Do everything possible to keep your marriage together and keep it happy. Always have the intention of being together for life. Do not let anything or anyone change that determination. Also, give yourself completely to your partner, body, mind and being. If your marriage bed is unfulfilling this is something that can and must be corrected (the bible calls this sin in 1 Cor 7:1-5). Talk about it with your husband/wife. Solve it the way God says solve it.

Love your mate unconditionally and with an unselfish heart. Look out for the well-being of your partner and not yourself. Take time to enjoy every minute together, you may not have tomorrow. You are one flesh, so become one every day.

I've witnessed men and women pour themselves into caring for a disabled or dying partner. No task is too great, no chore too disgusting. No complaining, no moaning and no regrets – just complete serving. This doesn't just happen. Those who care for a dying spouse with patience, love and tenderness do so with the same devotion they had before the illness invaded. This fidelity comes from selflessness and not selfishness.



The Life That I Now Live

By Aubrey C. Belue

In my mind, one of the more significant passages in the N.T. is the one where Paul says:

Gal 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

Paul was "dead" – yet Paul "lived"!

Without trying to dissect the theological distinctions some are prone to emphasize at such times, consider the extremes that inhere in those words: "death" – "life"....

"death" – it's before and after implies finality and completeness. His immediate context speaks to the law of Moses; to it he was completely and finally "dead" (this has been his argument in Gal 2 and 3). For him, it had served its purpose, and he was "no longer under" it (Gal 3:24-25). In a broader sense, as is shown in many other places (Rom 6; Col 2 and 3; Eph 4:17-24, etc.) he looked at ALL of his old "life" as one to which he was now "dead". It had lost its appeal, and was now to be totally and finally abandoned, that he might "live" unto God. He was no longer attached to it, and had turned to a "new life" (Rom 6:4; 2 Cor 5:17). He now purposed to "set (his) affections on things above, and not on things of the earth" (Col 3:1-3).

"NEVERTHELESS I LIVE.. This expression is added, as in Gal 2:19, to prevent the possibility of mistake. Paul, though he was crucified with Christ, did not wish to be understood that he felt himself to be dead. He was not inactive; not insensible, as the dead are, to the appeals which are made from God, or to the great objects

I hope and pray that this "death" and "life" is not just a matter of words to us – but of deeds, and even more, of a mind set upon a new direction, an all – consuming interest in a life given over to the One to whom it belongs (Phil 3:10-11).

which ought to interest an immortal mind. He was still actively employed, and the more so from the fact that he was crucified with Christ. The object of all such expressions as this is to show that it was no design of the gospel to make men inactive, or to annihilate their energies. It was not to cause men to do nothing. It was not to paralyze their powers, or stifle their own efforts. Paul therefore says, "I am not dead. I am truly alive; and I live a better life than I did before." Paul

was as active after conversion as he was before. Before, he was engaged in persecution; now, he devoted his great talents with as much energy, and with as untiring zeal, to the cause of the great Redeemer. Indeed, the whole narrative would lead us to suppose that he was more active and zealous after his conversion than he was before. The effect of religion is not to make one dead in regard to the putting forth of the energies of the soul. True religion never made one lazy man; it has converted many a man of indolence, and effeminacy, and self-indulgence, to a man actively engaged in doing good. If a professor of religion is less active in the service of God than he was in the service of the world—less laborious, and zealous, and ardent than he was before his supposed conversion—he ought to set it down as full proof that he is an utter stranger to true religion." (Albert Barnes, on Gal 2:20)

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