



## Paths Of Righteousness

BY BECKY COMBEE

I have been in church services all my life, and I love the House of God. Because my father was a church musician and my mother taught Sunday School, we never missed anything. We were at every service, every choir practice, and every staff and committee meeting. We were always there.

We were taught to read our Bible every day – a habit that stands tall in my life today. Through my reading and also the teaching of the church, I learned a lot about the Bible characters and events. Yet, as an adult I found out there was much I didn't know. I was gifted to remember facts and data, but I knew very little about essential doctrines.

As I began to grow in foundational teachings of the Scripture, I discovered some magnificent truths that captivated my heart. I did not know that man was a tri-part being or that through the great plan of redemption, he was God's temple, inhabited by the Holy Spirit. Discovering that the Holy Spirit was our Teacher and Guide was tremendous. It was also great to know that He would come upon us in power. What a privilege it is to walk arm

in arm with God by the Spirit!

Because of my upbringing, I also failed to comprehend the love and forgiveness of God. Raised under the strongest tenets of legalistic Christianity, I was certain God swiftly judged my wrong behavior. I believed every broken rule (many of them man-made) brought an overwhelming penalty, perhaps one beyond recovery. I thought I must "toe the line" or else.

Now, it is important to understand that God expects the character and deportment of Christians to be exemplary. We cannot

## A Big Turn Off

BY SUZANNE D. WILLIAMS

For **as he thinks** in his heart, so is he.  
(Pr 23:7 NKJ)

**Thinks** no evil (1Co 13:5 NKJ)

I despair of a world where black becomes white and white becomes gray.

Where all it takes to make what used to be wrong, correct is a few years' time and the persuasion of men. Where fear and depression are allowed to run rampant, celebrated even.

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eliminate the do's and don'ts of God's Word. Yet, we must remember that our every action is guided by God's love, not by a long list of rules and regulations. God does say "yes" and "no" to some of our ideas, but each yes and no is wrapped in His great love for us.

Because God loves us, He leads us in paths of righteousness. The prophet Isaiah says that He teaches us what is good for us and leads us along the path we should follow.<sup>2</sup> According to

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the writer, Jeremiah, God's plans are always good, giving us hope and a future.<sup>3</sup> What a comfort to know that God has our best interest at heart. He is not trying to be harsh or hard, overbearing or disgruntled.

Because God's plan is always right and good, we do not hesitate to obey His command. When He says "yes," we promptly take action. If He says "no," we come to a complete stop. We will live a full and profitable life if we heed His voice. We will bear fruit in His kingdom and partake of His holiness.

Today, the final line of an old hymn is our confession. With the songwriter we say, "His faithful follower I would be, for by His hand He leadeth me."<sup>4</sup> We make this bold declaration because **God is a LOVING Father and His leadership is always GOOD!** He is always GOOD to those that depend on Him.<sup>5</sup>

King Solomon writes, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."<sup>6</sup> What a great promise! There is a good day – a perfect day – in the light of God. So, keep walking with God! Live in expectation! God's plan is GOOD and PERFECT!

(Continued from A BIG TURN OFF)

Where deception and falsehood are okay as long as that's what you believe.

**I want a line in the sand**, a barrier I cannot cross, a book of rules that keep me from straying. I want to know that no matter what I do, A and B will still be A and B and not C or D or E or F.

I want nothing to shift from its ordered place and everything to be fixed and solid. Concrete. Definite. Precise. I want to be able to do something wrong and it actually BE wrong, not simply my opinion of how things ought to go.

And I want Someone Higher than me to pull me aside and say, "Whoa. Stop that. Now, say you're sorry." And to feel relief knowing I'm on the right path now because there IS a right path.

**It doesn't really matter what the forces around me say about this age**, this time, the God I serve. Because He was and is and is to come. He's the same, unchanging, and nothing they do or say or feel or write or alter or shift will move Him.

He's unshakeable. Inflexible. Unwavering. Abiding. Lasting. Permanent.

He's bigger than you or me or the United States or North America or the Atlantic Ocean. He's above all and in all and through all. He created it all, and He'll out last it all.

Think of that next time you turn on your TV and some yahoo in a business suit tells you how things are going to be from now on. And I have a suggestion. Then turn it off, and meditate instead on things that are lovely and of good report.<sup>1</sup>

You'll feel better.

<sup>1</sup>Php 4:8 <sup>2</sup>Is 48:17 <sup>3</sup>Jer 29:11 <sup>4</sup>"He leadeth me! O blessed thought" Lyrics by Joseph Henry Gilmore (1834-1918) <sup>5</sup>Lam 3:25 NLT <sup>6</sup>Pr 4:18