

MT. 16:18 "I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it."



The Basis of True Liberty

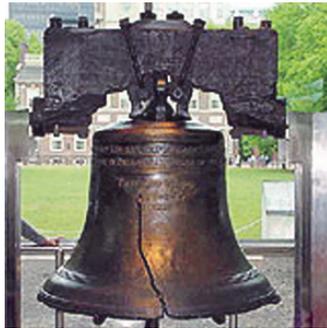
On the side of the Liberty Bell is a quote from Leviticus 25:10: "Proclaim Liberty throughout the land, unto all the inhabitants thereof."

The American forefathers put a scripture on the side of the bell because they knew that our liberty and freedom are interconnected to a Judeo-Christian heritage. The crack in the Liberty Bell stands to remind us that liberty is fragile and must be protected.

As modern Americans become concerned about the erosion of civil liberties, it is prudent to consider the exhortations from the patriots of the American Revolution. For them, freedom was linked to a reliance upon Christianity.

President George Washington was a devout believer in Jesus Christ, as demonstrated in his private prayer journal. As a general, he exhorted the soldiers under his command to act morally "as becomes a Christian Soldier defending the dearest Rights and Liberties of his country." As president, he said, "It is impossible to govern . . . without God and the Bible." He further said, "While just government protects all in their religious rights, true religion affords to government its surest support."¹

Washington's view was widely held, as evidenced by the fact that most, if not all, colonies required elected officials to sign a proclamation stating that they were Christians who believed in the Bible.



The Liberty Bell is on display in Philadelphia at the Liberty Bell Center across from Independence Hall

As an example, Delaware's constitution, Article 22 stated the following:

Every person, who shall be chosen a member of either house, or appointed to any office or place of trust . . . shall . . . make and subscribe the following declaration, to wit: "I, _____, do profess faith in God the Father, and in Jesus Christ, His

"In proportion as the genuine effects of Christianity are diminished in any nation . . . in the same proportion will the people of that nation recede from blessings of genuine freedom" - Jedediah Morse

only Son, and in the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for evermore; and I do acknowledge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testament to be by divine revelation."²

John Adams, our second president, said: "Statesmen . . . may plan and speculate for liberty, but it is religion and morality alone, which can establish the principles upon
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Responding to God: Two Examples

The articles below, "Finding Time" and "The Hitchhiker" are on the website at Gatebreakers.com. They are written in present tense.

As a Christian, the most important question is not when, or how God will use you, but rather how you will respond when He asks. Consider two very different responses.

Finding Time By Phil Van de Veer

— Philip Van de Veer is a former elementary school teacher, lawyer, and law school professor. He currently serves as the district court judge for Pend Oreille County, Washington. He and his wife, Bobbie, are Gideons and members of the Spring Valley Mennonite Church.

The Clark Fork River empties into Pend Oreille Lake near the town of Hope, Idaho. Every year, spring runoff washes logs and debris down the river into the lake creating hazards for boaters.

To correct the problem, the U.S. Corps of Engineers constructed wooden booms, actually long docks, stretching across the mouth of the river. The booms deflect driftwood away from the lake into a back-water containment area. The booms must be maintained, or grass and weeds will grow between the boards, eventually breaking up the booms.

In the spring of 1976, I land a temporary job with the



Phil, with his dog, Luke, in the early 1980's

U.S. Corps of Engineers. For the last several days, six to eight of us have driven daily from the Albeni Falls Dam out to the Clark Fork and boated out to the docks.
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The Basis of True Liberty (Continued)

which freedom can securely stand." This wise forefather understood the vital link between Christianity and liberty. In another place he said, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."³

Our fourth president, James Madison said, "We have staked the whole future of all our political institutions . . . upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves according to the Ten Commandments of God." Madison understood that these commandments would give foundation to our government and without them it would fall.⁴

Many other founders could be quoted to illustrate their belief that our civil liberty and freedom are dependent upon the continuing influence of Christianity.

Finally, consider the words of a patriot and the Father of American Geography, Jedediah Morse: "To the kindly influence of Christianity we owe that degree of civil freedom, and political and social happiness which mankind now enjoys. In proportion as the genuine effects of Christianity are diminished in any nation . . . in the same proportion will the people of that nation recede from blessings of genuine freedom . . . All efforts to destroy the foundations of our holy religion, ultimately tend to the subversion also of our political freedom and happiness. Whenever the pillars of Christianity shall be overthrown, our present forms of government and all the blessings which flow from them, must fall with them."⁵

Today, American people could use a good dose of common sense. Many want to forsake our Christian roots and heritage by following other gods or no god at all. Yet, this country cannot remain free without the virtues of Christianity.

The Liberty Bell should remind us of the many who sacrificed that we might remain free. The very freedom that we boast of and cherish depends upon our openness to the Lord Jesus Christ and His commandments.

Our continued liberty will not be due to our dependence upon government but rather it will be due to our dependence upon God Almighty. As the Bible says, "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty" (2nd Corinthians 3:17).

Endnotes

1 Tim LaHaye, *Faith of Our Founding Fathers* (Colorado Springs, CO: Master Books, 1994), 104-113. Also, see David Barton, *The Myth of Separation* (Aledo, TX: Wallbuilder Press, 1992) 113, quoting from Washington, *The Writings of Washington*, Vol. XXX, p. 432, May 10, 1789, and Henry Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1927, 1965), 18.

2 *Church of the Holy Trinity v. U.S.*; 143 U.S. 457, 469-470 (1892).

3 John Adams, *The Works of John Adams, Second President of the United States*, Charles Francis Adams, ed. (Boston: Little Brown, 1854), Vol. IX, p. 229, 401, June 21, 1776.

4 Barton, p. 246, quoting Harold K. Lane, *Liberty! Cry Liberty!* (Boston: Lamb and Lamb Tractarian Society, 1939) 32-33.

5 Jedediah Morse's Election Sermon given at Charleston, MA on April 25, 1799, taken from Evan's collection compiled by the American Antiquarian Society.

Responding to God: Two Examples (Continued)

Yesterday, a fellow worker lost his wrist-watch overboard. It could've fallen into the water next to the booms or in a several hundred square yard radius. Gary, a fellow worker, volunteered to bring his wet suit, mask and snorkel to see if he can find the watch.

Next morning, as soon as we reach the booms, Gary puts on his wet suit and prepares to dive. The current is fairly swift around the booms, and the water is still clouded from the spring runoff. Silt, sand, and snags cover the bottom. As far as I'm concerned, that watch is long gone, but watching this show sure beats pulling weeds.

Gary starts a series of dives at the edge of the boom where we usually disembark. I don't remember how many times Gary dove into the milky water, only to come up out of breath and empty handed. I do, however, remember the last dive.

Three of us are standing together on the dock. I am standing far left. John B. stands to my immediate right, and to his right stands Jim Z. John attends the Assembly of God in Newport. Jim and I attend House of the Lord in Furport. The rest of the people standing around the dock and sitting in the boat aren't Christians.

What happened next takes about forty seconds, the length of Gary's dive.

Just as Gary submerges, a hand comes to rest on the top of my head. There is nobody standing behind me, and John's hands are still at his side. No doubt about it, though, someone just put his hand on my head. I can feel the palm and splayed fingers.

At the same instant, I hear a voice in my head state clearly and matter-of-factly, "I know who can find the watch." God has spoken simply and directly into my mind, and in such a manner that I am not surprised or frightened.

How do I respond? I have the Lord casually informing me that He can find the lost watch. That's like Fred Astaire telling me he can dance.

Now, I don't want to say anything stupid to God or, worse, tick him off, so I decide to play it safe and respond mentally, "Yes, Lord, I know you can . . ."

To which He replies simultaneously, "Why don't you say something about it?"

This is no vague mental impression where I wonder whether God has asked me to do something, or whether I am just imagining things. In other words, there is no way I can ignore this "request," and He is not going to back off. It is a command, politely framed, like when Dad used to "ask" me when I was planning to mow the overgrown lawn. And just to personalize the request, I can STILL FEEL HIS HAND resting on my head.

But I am embarrassed. Embarrassed at the prospect of telling the people standing around that God can find the lost watch, worried I'll come off looking like a fool. What if I pipe up and God doesn't find it? My co-workers will think I'm a religious loony and, as an extra-added bonus, I'll look like a perfect idiot in front of my fellow believers.

The bottom line is I don't want to do it, which means I am now in the impossible position of concocting some semblance of an excuse to serve up to God in order to avoid doing what He has directly asked me to do.

I half form my response, "I don't think . . ." just as His hand slides off my head to my right. It is positively unnerving just how real that hand feels, even though I know it isn't flesh and blood.

At just that moment, John to my immediate right pipes up, declaring in a loud voice "I know who can find that watch!" He rolls right on to answer his own question. "Jesus can find that watch!" John announces to all present, then turns to Jim and me and says, "Let's pray that God will find the watch!"

Ah, just blooming wonderful! I screwed up . . . and I am still going to wind up looking like a flaming loony. John, Jim and I turn, face each other, and start praying. John LOUDLY asks the Lord Jesus Christ to please help Gary find that watch. I'm praying and mumbling along with the others while thinking, "God, I hope you find the watch."

John finishes with a loud "Amen!" He couldn't speak softly if his life depended on it!

As if on cue, Gary surfaces, holding the watch up for all to see.

My jaw drops, a real Neanderthal jaw drop.

One of the guys sitting in the boat exclaims, "They just prayed!" He's impressed, like there may be some sort of connection between God, prayer, and finding the watch.

If John hadn't stepped up to the plate, I am certain God would have tapped Jim for the task. God was looking for a bit of help. He asked until He got it.

God allowed me to witness the inside workings of His selection process. If nothing else, my response to God provides comparison and contrast to the response of my good friend, Stan Fleming, to the prompting of God a few years later.

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Website😊

Please visit the website for updates, articles, donation options, book orders, calendar, email, and other terrific things. May God bless you!

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The Grace Space

What would we do without God's grace?

Imagine if your whole life were to be permanently characterized by only one photograph of you doing something. What would that be?

No doubt, most people would choose a really good moment, maybe even an heroic instance. Yet, what if you don't get to choose the photo opportunity? What if it is random? Or, what if the photographer wants to investigate the stupid things you have done, or worse: what if he wants to peruse through the darker phases or sinful activities of your life? What if he wants to capture the most shameful or embarrassing incident?

There you are on the nightly news! In your brief 15 minutes of fame the whole world suddenly has a skewed, unbalanced idea of who you really are, based upon a slice of your life. That could be depressing!

However, those who know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior can rejoice in the free gift of God. For we will be justified, sanctified, and glorified by God's grace. Oh, and by the way, He deletes all the bad photos!

Justification and Grace

Salvation or justification is the beginning of the process. We are "being justified [saved] freely by His grace" (Romans 3:24). We are saved not by our own works, no matter how good they are, but we are saved by God's grace through faith. "It is the gift of God" (Ephesians 2:8-9). We are saved to do the "good works" of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:10). Thank God for His grace!

Sanctification and Grace

Sanctification is the on-going process in this life, in which God cleans us and teaches us to live righteously before Him. Christ sanctifies His people by washing them with the word of God (Ephesians 5:26; John 17:17). We get to help in this process by going along with God in the sanctification process (1 Peter 3:15). Yet, it is through the death of Christ for our sins that we can be sanctified: "For by one offering He is perfecting forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14). Where does grace come in? It is through "the word of His grace" that we are built up and given an "inheritance among all those who are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). Thank God for His grace!

Glorification and Grace

Glorification is the future glorified and resurrected state of the believer with Christ. We will be glorified by God (Romans 8:30). God will be glorified in our hearts (2 Thessalonians 1:10, 12; Romans 15:16). We will be glorified in Jesus Christ, "according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:12). Thank God for His grace!

Have you ever played the game *Monopoly*? There are opportunities and potential setbacks. One of those setbacks is being thrown into jail. While in jail, you cannot collect rent from

players who land on your properties, nor can you buy potential investment real estate.

In order to get out of jail, money must usually be paid. However, there is a "get-out-of-jail-free card" for the person fortunate enough to have collected it on a previous turn. It is kind of like landing on the grace space. You are supposed to go to jail but you have a special card - a grace card, like a little gift - that gets you off the hook. Another way to look at it is that someone else has paid the player's debt to get out of jail.

Of course, I am not really talking about a board game, but I am illustrating that someone else paid our debt so that we don't have to go into an eternity of death and suffering. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me though he may die he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25-26).

Jesus came to offer us the gift of eternal life. "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

If you are a Christ-follower then there is a grace on your life that will justify, sanctify, and eventually glorify you. You need never worry that God will expose your shameful acts. He loves you and will protect you. That being said, He will also act like a loving father to chastise and correct you when it is needed (Proverbs 3:11-12). Though it may be painful, know that it is always done in love and for your own good.

If you are not yet following Christ, then you have an opportunity to also receive His grace. Jesus shed His blood for you. Pray, and ask Jesus to be your Savior and Lord. He always stands ready to receive any who will turn to Him. It is not about your strength to receive; it is about His grace. God said to the apostle Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

There you are on the nightly news! In your brief 15 minutes of fame the whole world suddenly has a skewed, unbalanced idea of who you really are, based upon a slice of your life. That could be depressing!

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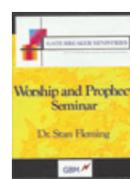
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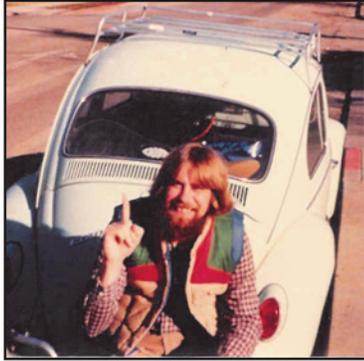
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Responding to God: Two Examples (Continued)

The Hitchhiker
By Stan Fleming

In the early 1980s, I am a teacher and administrator at the House of the Lord Christian Academy in Oldtown, Idaho. Normally, I would be at school, but this morning I am driving in my Volkswagen to Sandpoint for an administrative meeting when I come upon a hitchhiker.

The young man looks a lot like I did a few years back in my hippie days: long hair, full beard, mellow, groovy clothes. I like to pick up hitchhikers and share about the Lord Je-



Me with my VW Bug in 1978

sus, just like people had done to me in my earlier years when I was searching for truth.

This morning, however, I am in a hurry and would have probably passed him by, except that I am driving on a back road with few other cars. So, I stop.

"Thanks for stopping," the man says as he gets in and tells me he is heading about eight miles down the road.

"Okay," I respond, as I accelerate back onto the roadway. Neither of us wants to chat, and so we drive on in silence. As I am driving, it occurs to me that the Lord just might want me to say something to the hitchhiker. Based on the way he looks, and his demeanor, I doubt that he is a Christian.

As I continue driving, I comprehend a simple vision, like a parable that Jesus might tell. In the vision, I see the two of us arriving at the hitchhiker's destination. My rider gets out of the car, and goes on to live his life; yet, because he never comes to know the Lord, he dies and goes to hell. I, on the other hand, drive on, know the Lord, live my life for Him. So, when I die, I go to heaven.

The lesson of the vision convicts me, as I realize that I do not care anything about this man, and knowing what I know, I should! My passenger is unaware that the Lord Jesus died on the cross in atonement for his sins, just as He did for me. Then Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, defeating death and the devil and ascending into heaven until the day that He returns for His people.

With the revelation that I do not care about this man as I should, I begin crying out

The thing to keep in mind is that we as believers in Christ are in His school of training. He tests our faith level at times. In some sense, it is not a pass or fail type of test; it is about training.

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Prayer requests: Send us your need and we will pray for it.

Board Members: Cary Chrisman, Stan Fleming, Ron Hamel, Larry Starke



Dr. Stan Fleming

in my heart to the Lord and praying that God will give me His compassion for this stranger. God knows everything about him and loves him more than anyone. The man has no idea that I am silently crying out in my heart for God's compassion.

As I am praying, I have a second vision. I see a young, attractive woman in a white dress, standing in the middle of a green, grassy field and holding a single red rose in her hand.

When I see this, I get a bit perturbed. Why am I seeing this? Here I am asking God for compassion, and I wind up seeing a lady in a field with a rose. It makes no sense.

For a moment, I question and doubt what is happening. Then it occurs to me that I had been praying when I saw the vision. Perhaps, the vision actually has something to do with this stranger sitting next to me. I decide to take a step of faith, knowing that I will never see the guy again if I am wrong.

I look over at the hitchhiker and say, "This may sound like the craziest thing that you have ever heard, but does this mean anything to you at all, a woman in a white dress, standing in a grassy field with a red rose in her hand."

The guy does two or three double-takes in my direction. Catching his thoughts and breath, he finally says to me, "Well! Yesterday, I was down in Boise. I went into a field with my girlfriend, who was wearing a white dress. I gave her a red rose, and I asked her to marry me."

I don't know who is more shocked, the hitchhiker or me; but I quickly gain my strength and wits, responding, "Sir, there is a God in heaven who revealed that to me about you, so that you will know that the next words I say are from Him."

For the next six miles I tell him everything I can about the Lord and His love for this man, the plan of salvation, and his need to be serious with God. I sense that I should simply share the Gospel without pushing him to pray and accept the Lord.

The man is visibly impressed when we arrive at his stop. He shakes my hand, twice for good measure, as he gets out the car. Then he turns and watches me drive into the distance. I never see him again.

I don't know if the man will ever accept the Lord, or if he will marry the lady with the red rose. I do know, however, that he will remember that ride for the rest of His life.

Phil is like family to me, a life time friend. While some might contrast the two experiences, thinking that he responded poorly while

MINISTRY EVENTS

CHECK ON WEBSITE FOR UPDATES

November, 2009 - February, 2010

- 10/13-15: Spokane, WA - Christian Life Fellowship. *Christianity and Islam* conference.
- 10/18-20: Meridian, ID - Capital Christian Interns. *Early Church History*.
- 1/4-8: Kenya - tentative trip to teach at Kenya College of Ministry.
- 1/16-17: El Paso, TX - Shalom Christian Church. *Prophecy and the Prophetic*.
- 1/20-22: Meridian, ID - Capital Christian Interns. *Prayer and Prophecy*.
- 1/24-25: Jefferson, OR - Abundant Life Center. *Topic to be determined*.
- 2/3-5: Meridian, ID - Capital Christian interns. *Eschatology and the Third Watch*.
- 2/7-8: Liberty Lake, WA - Lakeside Church. *Gate Breaker Conference*.
- 2/12-22: Dublin, Ireland - Chinese Gospel Church. *Topic and trip details to be arranged*.

I responded well, it is important to recognize the similarities and differences.

They were similar because in both of these instances God gave us revelation about something that was hidden yet true. We were given the opportunity to respond, bring glory to God, and gain the reward of obedience.

However, the experiences were different in several ways. First, I was alone with a stranger; Phil was with friends. I would never see the hitchhiker again, but Phil would have to live with these guys. Second, I was simply asking the hitchhiker if the vision meant anything to him. When I discovered that it did, I gave glory to God and witnessed to the man. Phil was being pressured by the Holy Spirit to ask the group to believe ("test") God in advance. Could God find the watch in the water? Third, finding God's compassion for the hitchhiker was an important part of my story. I have since come to believe that there is a connection between God's compassion and the miraculous (Matthew 14:14). Regardless, it is not easy to take such steps of faith and all of us may falter at times.

However, the thing to keep in mind is that believers in Christ are in His school of training. He tests our faith. It is not a pass or fail type of test; it is about training. As in Phil's story, God may use the guy next to us to show us that indeed it was God who was speaking to us. This can grow our confidence for the next test. Regardless of how one responds, God will continue to work with us because He loves us, wanting to transform us into His image (2nd Corinthians 3:18).