

# THE QBC DAILY NUGGET

*The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold (Psalm 19:9b-10a)*



**May 2010  
Archive**



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## The QBC Daily Nugget May 1, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**PSALM 142:4** – Look to the right and see: there is none who takes notice of me; no refuge remains to me; no one cares for my soul.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: CARING FOR SOULS.** The Bible pulls no punches. It does not hide the heinousness of human depravity. Graphically pictured is our blatant rebellion against a holy, loving, and good God. The Bible also does not hide the challenges the believer faces such as the battle of submission to the Lord of all to be Lord of all (**LUKE 14:33**) and the ease of losing first love (**REVELATION 2:4**). Another thing the Bible does not shy away from is the ugliness of selfishness. One thing we know by experience, receiving Christ does not remove selfishness. Conversion awakens us with the call to battle this foe of true Christlikeness (**MATTHEW 16:24**). A prime area attacked by selfishness is our love for people – all people. I am referring to love for their eternal souls. I am very uncomfortable with today's scripture reference. Uncomfortable because it forces me to evaluate how I see people and my involvement with people. Oh, I can ignore it. Not good. A day of accounting looms (**1 CORINTHIANS 3:11-13**). Please do not think I am creating a climate of slavish fear in meeting the Lord. This judgment is not about the penalty of sin, but it is a judgment of a serious nature. Paul thought so (**1 CORINTHIANS 5:9-11**).

The Christian life is a serious life. I did not say it lacks fun, but the exhortation throughout the scriptures is to be sober-minded (**1 PETER 1:13**). Again, I am not being a kill joy. Someone recently said to me, “Life is a game.” I responded, “If so, we play it only once. No replays.” We may agree with the seriousness of life, but it will be mere words of agreement if our lives do not show a serious and measurable involvement in the lives of what is eternal – people. All we have is now to invest in eternity. Yesterday is spent and tomorrow may not come. This verse may be one of the saddest in the scriptures. **PSALM 142** is not a “huge” psalm. However, a stick of dynamite is not huge either. David is in a cave and feeling quite low. No one pens verse four without being deep in the depths of loneliness bordering despair. David looks all around and makes the sad statement, “there is none who takes notice of me; no one cares for my soul.” Let David's sadness get uncomfortably close. Could David's words be said of us by the people in our spheres of influence? Think of the two types of people in the world – unbelieving and believing. First, unbelievers. God has placed each of us in tailor-made spots with the Gospel; neighbors, unsaved friends, associates, family. . . do they KNOW by our personal and visible involvement we take notice and care for their souls? Second type of people – believing; do we have relationships with other believers (excluding immediate family) where it could be said, “He or she cares for my soul, he or she takes notice. He or she is investing in my eternal soul?” What did Jesus invest in while on earth? PEOPLE. He did not invest part of Himself or fit people into a schedule of personal convenience. He gave in total to people. I find this nugget hard to write and want to end it with a prayer plea for me. You may borrow and personalize it if you like. “Lord, may the people You have placed in my life never be able to take the psalmist's words and say, ‘Jim took no notice of me, Jim cared not for my soul.’ Oh, Lord free me from myself and my own selfish agendas.”

**PRAYER:** “Father, may we live each day with eyes fixed on what is eternal - people - and help us to invest in their souls.”

**QUOTE:** JONATHAN EDWARDS, “O God, stamp eternity on my eyeballs!”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 2, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**PROVERBS 8:30b** – And I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: **LOST IN THE IMMENSITY.** I want to stretch us today. Pull very hard on our spiritual muscles. Let's begin. Start focusing on the past. Way back. Not when you met the Lord Jesus Christ. Go back further. A lot further. Stop at the manger scene where Jesus was born (**LUKE 2:7**). Rest for a moment at the Incarnation – God became man. Be lost in the wonder. Okay. Go further back in your mind's eye. Back even before **GENESIS 1:1**. To do so, refer to **PROVERBS 8**. Proverbs 8 describes the excellency of wisdom. Many believe it portrays the Lord Jesus Christ who is our wisdom (**1 CORINTHIANS 1:30**) and the relationship He had with His Father before time. If so, ponder the intimacy of verse 30 between the Father and His Son. Solomon says, “And I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always” (**PROVERBS 8:30b**). Who was delighting in whom? It was the Father showing immeasurable and incomprehensible pleasure in His Son. Stretch your heart to contemplate the unbroken and pure delight the Father and Son enjoyed. This was long before Jesus was known as “the Man of sorrows, acquainted with grief” (**ISAIAH 53:3b**). The Puritan John Flavel says of the Eternal Son prior to becoming the God-man, “His holy heart was never offended with an impure suggestion or temptation of the Devil. He never knew what it was to be assaulted with temptations, to be besieged and battered upon by unclean spirits.” Meditate on the fellowship God the Father and Son had before Jesus entered our cursed world, before He would forever take on our form, and make Himself our Sacrifice. Think of the Father's heart for His Son. Think hard, think long and think prayerfully.

Now read the most popular verse in the Bible, **JOHN 3:16**, with the backdrop just provided of the Father's delight in His Son. Again, from the insightful pen of John Flavel, “What an astonishing act of love was this then, for the Father to give the delight, the darling of His soul, out of His very bosom for poor sinners.” We should never be able to read **JOHN 3:16** again without being lost in the immensity of the Father's love for us. Walk through this verse with me thinking on the Father's love. First, the intensity of His love – “For God so loved.” Not a passing affection, not an on-again, off-again emotion. The word “so” may be the most powerful word in the verse. Second, the costliness of His love – “that He gave His only Son.” No second best from God. We did not get “cheap grace.” It immediately makes the sensitive soul respond, “Am I giving my best in return for Him?” Finally, the privilege given by His love – “may have eternal life.” Don't fall prey into thinking eternal life is just a never-ending existence. That is true but lacks a full understanding. Jesus defined eternal life as “And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent” (**JOHN 17:3**). If we just slow down, take the time to be lost in the immensity of such love from all eternity, our desire to please Him will only grow until we are filled with the fullness of God (**EPHESIANS 3:19**) and then, only then, will the deceptive attraction of sin be seen for what it truly is!

PRAYER: “Father, stretch our hearts to see the immensity of Your love and to respond with worship so pleasing to Your heart.”

QUOTE: MAURICE ROBERTS, “There is no higher priority in the believer's life than to delight himself in the love of Christ.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 3, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

EPHESIANS 6:10-12 – Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: **THE CHRISTIAN IN CONFLICT**. What came to mind when you read the topic? People conflict? A challenging co-worker? A difficult neighbor? Perhaps a little “tension” in a family relationship? No doubt, those types of conflicts exist and more dealing with people. Reality is reality. Sin causes conflict. Sinners sin. Saints sin. Conflict results, but there is another type of conflict. This type of conflict needs no sparring partner. All it needs is a genuine conversion experience. Every child of God is in conflict. A real, personal, and constant conflict in the inner being. When we define the Christian life do words like “wrestle” (**EPHESIANS 6:12**), “war” (**1 PETER 2:11-12**), “opposition” (**GALATIANS 5:16-17**), and “our warfare” (**2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-6**) get included with love, joy, and peace (**GALATIANS 5:22a**)?

J. I. Packer gives us good insight to the whole understanding of the Christian life not just the “good” part. He said, “Regeneration has made our hearts a battlefield.” Failure to daily realize we are in spiritual conflict with real spiritual foes will deaden the soul to the realities of the unseen world. Life will be consumed by the temporal and the seen resulting in becoming a spiritual casualty unable to answer the call to duty as a good soldier of Jesus Christ (**2 TIMOTHY 2:1-4**). Paul’s letter to the Ephesians is a magnificent and detailed work on the church; the bride of Christ. I think one could consider it a “manual for church operations.” In the last chapter beginning in verse 10, he reveals the truth of spiritual conflict. It is a conflict between the forces of evil bent toward the destruction of both the church of the Lord Jesus as a body and every individual believer in the Lord Jesus. The conflict is intense, relentless, and one which must be in the forefront of the Christian’s daily thinking. Prior to the Lord Jesus commencing His life-giving ministry, what occurred? Read **MATTHEW 4**. Intense warfare with Satan. Now read Luke’s account (**LUKE 4:1-13**). Pay attention to the last verse when the battle scene closes, “And when the devil had ended every temptation, he departed from him until an opportune time” (**LUKE 4:13**). The devil left Jesus for a short time to regather his troops, to have another strategy meeting, and get ready to re-engage the Son of God, which he did. One reattack is recorded for us. It was in the Garden of Gethsemane (**MATTHEW 26:36-46; LUKE 22:39-46**). The point is the devil never rests. He roams around like a roaring lion all the time (**1 PETER 5:8**).

I believe an area of great challenge is to constantly remind ourselves of the presence of an active and personal devil. Without this belief, we are not able to interpret the world and its chaotic state properly. Nor are we able to see the personal battles in our souls properly. The question becomes simply this, is today’s scripture reference a very real and personal experience? It must be so. It is the Christian life.

PRAYER: “Father, keep us alert to the reality of spiritual conflict. Protect us from being lulled into a sleep when called to fight.”

QUOTE: J. C. RYLE, “The believer may be known by his inward warfare as well as by his inward peace.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 4, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**JOHN 10:3-4** – To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: **SHEEP EARS.** To get to my grandma’s house, the journey went through a pasture. The road was “iffy” at best. Some trips the road was impassable due to weather. The mode of travel became foot. In the pasture lived sheep. I remember certain things about these animals. First, they wouldn’t give me the time of day. I could yell, “Here sheep, here sheep” and it was like yelling to the wind. Another thing irked me about these sheep; I couldn’t get close to them. Even sneaking up close and whispering, “here sheep, here sheep” was met with a “sheep shrug” and off they went. All I wanted to do was pet them, but, nope, into their little flocks and down the path they scurried. A third thing I remember; sheep wander. I saw a few of those little fellows drifting away from the flock. It was like they needed to check out pastures outside their own. Finally, when the sheep were close to Mr. Paul, their shepherd, they didn’t hesitate to heed his voice.

The Bible calls God’s people “sheep.” I saw firsthand some good reasons why. Yet my shallow lessons don’t even touch the tip of the iceberg when plunging the depths of what it means to be a sheep in the fold of the Lord Jesus. J.C. Ryle wrote, “God’s children, His real believing people, are compared to sheep, because they are gentle, quiet, harmless, and inoffensive; because they are useful and do good to all around them; because they love to be together, and dislike separation; and because they are very helpless and wandering and liable to stray.” Pretty good, huh? Do we find those very characteristics in our lives? Were we able to read Ryle’s description and nod, “Yep, that’s me. Yep, that one too?” In today’s reference, twice the Lord Jesus reminds us of what distinguishes His sheep – “they hear and know His voice.” As a result, they follow Him (**JOHN 10:4**). With that guidance, let’s do a “check-up” on our “sheep ears.” In order to hear, one must be within range of the voice of the Shepherd. When I saw a wandering sheep, it was far away from its buddies acting independently. If the shepherd called, this wandering one would have not been able to hear. What about our sheep ears for hearing the Shepherd? Are we so close to the Lord Jesus we hear and respond immediately when the whisper of His Spirit says, “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up” (**EPHESIANS 4:29**)? What about when the Shepherd says, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me (**MATTHEW 16:24**)? If the so called “green pastures” of the world (the pastures of self-interest, self-service, ease, materialism, or complacency to name a few) are sought by wandering sheep, the voice of the Shepherd goes quiet. However, that does not mean the Shepherd is disinterested. On the contrary. Wander outside the range of His voice and we may not hear Him, but it won’t be long until we FEEL Him. It will be His rod. His rod of correction (**HEBREWS 12:7-11**). So, how are the ears today, fellow sheep? Are we hearing His voice or feeling His rod? Both are love actions by the Shepherd of our souls designed to keep us close to His Side!

PRAYER: “Good Shepherd, thank you for being such to us! And thank you for bringing us back when we go to pastures of our own choosing.”

QUOTE: J.C. RYLE, “Christ’s sheep hear His voice, they take His Word for their rule and guide.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 5, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**LUKE 22:32a** - “But I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail.”

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: THE ONE PRAYING.** It was mid-afternoon, but the thick dark clouds betrayed the clock. Surely evening had arrived. It looked like rain. It smelled like rain. It felt like rain. I had no doubt the heavens were about to open. I didn't need any meteorologists to confirm it. My feelings were dead on! I felt the inevitable. I went for my umbrella. However, just for the sake of confirming my infallibility, I decided to check-out the local radar picture. Just a formality until I saw the image revealing no pockets of rain anywhere near. But I FELT rain, I SMELLED rain, I SAW the clouds. Something or someone was wrong and it wasn't the radar. The radar felt nothing just gave out the truth. It was me. My feelings betrayed me into a flawed evaluation of circumstances. And it did not rain. Not a drop.

The Christian experience includes the battle between feelings and faith. To win consistently in this battle, we need to remember a few things. First, the direction and focus of feelings and faith. Failure to distinguish the two results in living like “amateur meteorologists” in the spiritual realm. The up and down experience between feeling interpreting life and faith interpreting life will be like a ride on a playground seesaw. Feelings direct us inwardly toward self and focus on comfort. Faith directs us upward toward Christ and focuses on conformity. Without a clear understanding and fight to keep these separate, we head to the playground and the seesaw. A second way to deal with this battle is prayer. Please don't assume I am unleashing an attempt to guilt us into more commitment to private prayer and prayer meetings. However, that wouldn't be a bad exhortation to receive, not from me, but to all of us!

Consider prayer from a different angle. Before we pray to help in the battle between feelings and faith, what if we took the time in the war to ponder the prayer life of the Lord Jesus for us? Just meditate on Him praying for us. And particularly, notice what the Lord prayed for in Peter's life, “but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail” (**LUKE 22:32**). The petition we know was answered because Peter did not fail. He had failures in the life of faith, but did not fail in the life of faith. Failures mature us; to fail points to abandonment or giving up. A great man of faith, George Muller once said, “God delights to increase the faith of his children. We ought, instead of wanting no trials before victory, no exercise for patience, to be willing to take them from God's hand as a means. Trials, obstacles, difficulties, and sometimes defeats, are the very food of faith.” In the raging battle between feeling and faith we are to develop the spiritual ability to control our feelings under the power of God-given faith instead of being controlled by our feelings voiding the power of God-given faith. A great place to begin this process toward spiritual ability is to remember who is praying for us – praying as He did for Peter that “our faith may not fail.” When we begin to let faith interpret circumstances instead of feelings, we will no longer be victimized by a see-sawing life or wearing the title of “amateur meteorologists.”

**PRAYER:** Father, we are a “feeling” people and we thank-you for making us so. Just keep us from reliance upon them instead of faith in Your Word.

**QUOTE:** W.H. HEWITSON, “Faith is the soul's outward, not inward, look. The object on which faith fixes its eye is, not the heart's ever-varying frames, but the never-varying Christ.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 6, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**2 TIMOTHY 1:7** - For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: **WHEN I AM AFRAID.** “The sky is falling! The sky is falling!” said Chicken Little. With a little imagination, I can see it so vividly; a little chicken running around in a barnyard frantically crying out its famous words, “the sky is falling, the sky is falling.” The phrase from this old fable has passed into the English language as a common idiom indicating a hysterical or mistaken belief that disaster is imminent. In the book of Hebrews, the inspired text reads, “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us” (**HEBREWS 12:1a**). I want to acknowledge the reality of the passage. The part, which says “lay aside every weight, and the sin which clings so closely.” I sometimes feel like a Chicken Little. I am not proud of this sin, but the reality of life as a redeemed sinner is that I still get afraid. So do you. So did a host of godly people in the Bible. One was Timothy. We are not alone when it comes to feeling like Chicken Little. Some would say being afraid is just human. Fair enough, but Jesus gives us the command “do not be afraid” (**MATTHEW 28:10**). That takes us out of the self-justifying statement of “I am just human” to an act of disobedience. However, we do accept that a right kind of being afraid is okay and not sinful. If we find ourselves in a sudden perilous situation, then being afraid is natural. Such fear causes us to avoid potential hazards. It protects. However, the wrong type of being afraid is the Chicken Little-type. It is premeditated based on the debilitating mindset of “what if.” Chicken Little had no cause to be afraid. The fear was perceived not actual. This type of unhealthy fear is characterized by self-absorption and the desire for control. When we are afraid, wrong kind, it is predominantly because of situations and circumstances that are out of our control and “what if” scenarios flood the mind. The “what if” mentality, like Chicken Little, always views worse case results and completely disregards God’s loving sovereignty.

Timothy probably suffered a little Chicken Little syndrome. Paul tells the young pastor, “God has not given you a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” The characteristics of a being a Chicken Little are the exact opposites of what Paul told Timothy he possessed. First, being a Chicken Little makes one feel helpless not powerful. “What if” produces an emotional and mental paralysis. The feeling of being void of strength dominates. Second, being a Chicken Little means life revolves around self. Who are the prime recipients of Biblical love? God and others. Where does fear or being afraid center? Oneself and that toward self-preservation. Whom was the sky falling on? Chicken Little. It was first about number one chicken. Third, being a Chicken Little means irrational thinking. Falling into a “what if” mentality creates a false discernment of reality. If persistent, reality becomes so distorted and very difficult to sort out because God is missing out of our thinking. So, how do we shed the Chicken Little title? Follow Paul’s advice to Timothy – constantly remind ourselves what God HAS ALREADY GIVEN us – The Spirit of power, love and a sound mind. Remembering what we possess in Christ keeps the Chicken Little from running around the yard of our thinking.

PRAYER: “Father, remind us of the riches we have in Christ Jesus to conquer all unwarranted fears.”

QUOTE: GEORGE MACDONALD, “Fear is faithlessness.”

**The QBC Daily Nugget**  
**May 7, 2010**

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**TITUS 2:11-13** - For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: NO DRIVE-THRU MATURITY.** I got stuck in traffic today. I normally do one of three things when that happens. If I am having a real spiritual day, I listen to preaching and look at this as a great opportunity for growth. If I am getting pressured by an already too full schedule, I may not be so spiritual and sprout a little fruit of the flesh – impatience. Not outwardly. Don't want other cars to see me. A third option is rest in the sovereignty of God and do some thinking. Number three won today and here is a thought for you. Have you realized how our society attempts to condition us toward an “I must have everything now” mindset? One may wake up in the morning, back out of the driveway and proceed to a drive-thru food place for breakfast, rush over to a drive-thru bank for some cash, head over to a drive-thru pharmacy to pick up a prescription and even go to a drive-thru market and get some groceries! However, I'm still driving around looking for the “Drive-thru spiritual maturity” window. We do live in a “drive-thru, fast food, quick fix, sound bite” culture. Everything must be obtained nearly instantaneously. Harry Blamires wrote a “must read” book in 1963 entitled, “The Christian Mind: How Should A Christian Think?” He penned this profound statement, “There is no longer a Christian mind. There is still, of course, a Christian ethic, a Christian practice, and a Christian spirituality. But as a thinking being, the modern Christian has succumbed to secularization. He accepts religion – its morality, its worship, its spiritual culture; but he rejects the religious view of life, the view which sets all earthly issues within the context of the eternal, the view which relates all human problems – social, political, cultural – to the doctrinal foundations of the Christian faith, the view which sees all things here below in terms of God's supremacy and earth's transitoriness, in terms of Heaven and Hell.” Blamires identifies our problem. It is living in the transitory instead of the eternal. Our “must have it now” mentality goes contrary to Paul's instruction in today's reference (**TITUS 2:11-13**). Paul's words to Titus reveal two powers inherent with salvation and freeing us from a lifestyle of drive-thru Christianity. First, salvation brings to us the power to simply say “no” when the flesh screams “yes” – “training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions” (**TITUS 2:12**). We are not victims of cultural influence. We are conquerors over culture influence (**JOHN 16:33**). One of the great “revelations” we receive in the Gospel is to know the world does not have to conform us. We are freed. Second, salvation brings to us the power to wait on the coming of Jesus – “waiting for our blessed hope” (**TITUS 2:13**).

Want to be free from the vain attempt of instant spiritual maturity? Think daily about the coming of Christ. His delay is our maturing. When we eagerly wait, it produces patience – a virtue absent in a world which waits for nothing. Remember, the fruit of the Spirit is from an eternal source not available at a drive-thru window. It's nurtured by working out a salvation which provides the power of personal restraint and self-control living for eternity.

**PRAYER:** Father, develop in us, by Your Spirit, lives of self-control and patient waiting on Jesus.

**QUOTE:** THOMAS CARLYLE, “He who has no vision of eternity will never get a true hold of time.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 8, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**LUKE 9:18-20** - Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, “Who do the crowds say that I am?” And they answered, “John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen.” Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered, “The Christ of God.”

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: ANSWERING THE HARD QUESTION.** While in school, did you ever receive advice on how to deal with hard questions on exams? Maybe something like this – “When coming to a difficult question, don’t dwell on it. Move on and as time permits, come back to it.” Jesus doesn’t give that type of advice when confronting hard questions. In the scripture of the day, our Lord asks His disciples two questions. The first one was pretty safe. I say “safe” because it had no impact on them. It was about others. No problem answering for others. We can easily look around and get the attention off ourselves. And to see how safe it was look at the easy response – “And they answered.” This was one happy non-threatened band of disciples just ready to give out different answers received from a little public survey. Then the second question is given by the Master and the temperature rises a little. The room might need a thermostat check. It appears a little uncomfortable. Jesus, scanning the room as the Great Communicator, says, “But who do you say that I am?” Where are the ready to respond disciples from question one? Silence. Did you ever wonder why? Because the answer is life altering, if answered honestly. And how could the response not be honest when the One asking it has eyes like flaming fire (**REVELATION 1:14**) meeting you eye-to-eye knowing your answer before a word is spoken? Well, we can always count on Peter. He answered, “The Christ of God” (**LUKE 9:20**). This is a serious profession and requires some serious pondering. To respond like Peter has radical implications for life if what we say is what we mean. What Jesus says next puts “teeth” into the profession and actually helps define the Christian life. Christianity is not a profession of faith lived out in a lifestyle of morality linked to a Christian ethic. Christianity is a profession of faith putting us in union with the resurrected Lord Jesus to learn the life of “Christ in us, the hope of glory” (**COLOSSIANS 1:27**).

In the continuation of this dialogue, Jesus draws His disciples and us to an indispensable and evidential truth about belonging to Him – the reality of the resurrection. Luke writes, “And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised” (**LUKE 9:21-22**). The resurrection of our Lord and our identity with Him must be visited daily. It is the power of the Christian life. Without being appropriated, we lose sight of a RISEN Lord leading to a loss of awareness of His Presence in life. Take some time and read the first four chapters of Acts as the church was in the infant stage of growth and pay attention to a dominant theme in the first sermons of the Apostles – the resurrection. Paul’s personal testimony to the Philippians was to “know the power of His resurrection” (**PHILIPPIANS 3:10**). Take away the resurrection and we have no hope. We are dead in sins. Take away living the resurrection and we have no power. We are defeated by self, sin, the devil and the world. As we answer the hard question correctly, let’s ensure we live its implications fully!

**PRAYER:** Lord, Your resurrection is not just history but the power of our lives. Help us live that power.

**QUOTE: JAMES S. STEWART,** “Christianity is essentially a religion of resurrection.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 9, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**GALATIANS 6:2** - Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: SPIRITUAL HIDE AND SEEK.** “One thousand one, one thousand two, one thousand three. . . . ready or not, here I come!” I can still remember that count like it was yesterday. You might also. The timeless game of hide and seek. I was good at it. Good enough where after a gallant effort by the seeker, the word of resignation would ring out, “Alright, come out. Open up, everybody!” I do not think the game of hide and seek is a memory relegated to when we were kids. I think the game is alive and well today. I know. I have played it and not just as a youngster. Oh, I am not talking about hiding behind a tree. I am referring to spiritual hide and seek. It is played when we come together and the courtesy question is asked, “How are you?” And the most common and expected answer we give or receive is “pretty good” or “fine” or maybe a more revealing “okay”, but deep inside we or the person sharing those shallow words is just the opposite. Inside is an aching heart knowing all is not “pretty good”, or “fine”, or even “okay.” Welcome to spiritual hide and seek!

How do you think we would react if we asked the same “Hi, how are you doing?” question and instead of the usual and expected answer of “pretty good”, “fine”, or “okay”, the response was, “Not good. In fact, I am not doing well at all. I am struggling in my parenting, I feel my marriage needs some revitalizing, I don't like my job, my Bible lays dusty after three days of neglect, my prayer life is about eight foot tall reaching the ceiling only, and I am just flat out exhausted! And to top it off, I really don't feel like being here today!” OUCH!!! Those types of real conversations do not happen when we are like ships passing in the night on a Sunday morning between worship and Sunday school or rushing to the morning service seconds before the prelude. These conversations occur when the body of Christ takes seriously the call of Paul to the Galatians – “bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” This instruction is not the idea of merely tolerating or putting up with each other. It literally means to “jointly shoulder each other's load.” The idea is to put one's shoulder under a sister or brother with the purpose to help carry their heavy burdens.

So what does it take to be a burden-carrier? Paul gives it – “living the law of Christ.” What is that? Check out **JOHN 13:34-35**, but we cannot rest with merely knowing the answer. We need to go beyond knowledge to practicality in being a burden-carrier. Here it is. It is risky. Risky because being a burden carrier means the game of spiritual hide seek is history. No more playing it. The number one requirement to be a burden-carrier is genuine, spiritual transparency. This type of transparency does not mean we come alongside a burdened brother and sister quoting a Bible verse and saying, “trust God” and think we have fulfilled the law of Christ. That might be good in its place and time. Transparency means we come alongside WITH the Bible verse saying, “I know where you are. I have been there. Let me tell you about it and let me share how the Word got me through. May I pray with you?” Burden-carriers engage in word and deed not just word (**I JOHN 3:18**) and it is word and deed which puts the game of spiritual hide and seek away for good and thus fulfills the law of love!

**PRAYER:** Father, Your Son is our burden-carrier. Let His love so control us to be burden-carriers too.

**QUOTE: ROBERT COOK,** “Love rolls up its sleeve.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 10, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**1 TIMOTHY 4:15** – Practice and cultivate and meditate upon these duties; throw yourself wholly into them, so that your progress may be evident to everybody.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: KEEP THE QUIET TIME ALIVE.** The morning started out great. We rolled out of bed from a nice night of sleep feeling refreshed, early enough to ensure no frantic rushing into the day, and the stillness allowed for unhurried time in the Word and prayer. Fellowship with the living God was so enjoyed. Then the world came alive around us. As a sleeping giant awakened, it started to bark out its demands. This giant has a host of “friends” ready to take the confidence of a quiet time with the Lord and drive into the land of forgetfulness. Some of the giant’s friends might be insensitive people on either the home front or workplace. Or the giant might use a difficult co-worker or boss to shred any resemblance of what the quiet time was like. The giant could just send “good” but not best things our way. Whatever means the giant employs, his aim is to make what we enjoyed with the Lord seem like it never happened! If we are not on guard, he may eat us up before lunch! Keeping a daily time with the Lord is not optional for spiritual health. Our relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ demands diligent cultivation marked by consistency and discipline. Hit and miss times in the Word and prayer only make our hearts fodder for the world to consume. And it will. Take a moment and ponder how frazzled, stressed out, and exhausted we become when our spiritual lives are neglected? When I allow things of the world, not sinful, but just “busy, demanding things” steal away the best times of the day when I am most alert, it is often prayer and the Word, which get the “leftovers” at the end of the day. When our times in the Word and prayer are served leftovers, it easily just becomes a dry and lifeless routine. Robert Murray M’Cheyne said, “I ought to spend the best hours of the day in communion with God. It is my noblest and most fruitful employment, and is not to be thrust into any corner.”

But the quiet time is not the end goal. It is keeping the quiet time alive throughout the day which is the goal. Time with the Lord is not a learning experience separated from daily living. We strive to know Him in private to live for Him in public. In today’s reference, I used the Amplified Bible translation. It provides an accurate and thorough call to spiritual diligence. Let me provide a “Jim commentary” to apply in our daily prayer and Bible times - “Give the time spent with the Lord your absolute best part of the day. Don’t let the distractions of good things and demands from others cause you to rush through the Word. Refuse to give in. Persevere. Don’t walk away until your heart is warmed and your mind settled on the truth so it sticks and is able to go with you into the day. Ensure you leave your Bible with a better understanding of who Jesus is and a practical application to put into your life that very day.” That is how I translate the verse of the day for me! If we would commit to this type of disciplined approach to our daily times in the Word, when the world’s giant awakens and seeks to gobble us up, we will be able to slay him and any of his friends with the Sword of the Spirit (**EPHESIANS 6:17**) keeping the quiet time alive throughout the day!

**PRAYER:** Father, guard our times of needed and unhurried fellowship with You. Prevent us from neglecting such sacred times.

**QUOTE:** THOMAS WATSON, “Those who do not thirst for righteousness shall be in perpetual hunger and thirst.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 11, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**LUKE 10:17-20** - The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: LIVING A PRIVILEGED LIFE.** J.I. Packer in his classic book, **KNOWING GOD**, proposed five questions and with each one he gave an answer. Two of the questions are God-centered while three point directly to our hearts. I want us to focus on the three about us. Here is the plan. I am going to give his questions without his answer initially. As we read each one, pause, and answer it based not on what we think the answer should be, but on what the answer truly is as revealed in our priorities, actions, and attitudes observable in our lives. Here are the three staring us down. Question one - “What were we made for?” Question two – “What aim should we set ourselves in life?” Question three – “What is the best thing in life?” Got your answers? Take a moment, go back, and make sure. Okay. Packer’s answers follow – to question one, it is to know God; to question two, it is to know God; and to question three, it is knowledge of God. How did we do? No changing answers. Remember we are not seeking to provide answers to those life-defining questions based on what we know is right, but based on what we know is true about us. If we were able to answer as Packer answered, we are well on our way to not only understanding the Christian life, but to understand and live a privileged life.

In today’s reference, Jesus is responding to the exuberance of His disciples. They just returned overflowing with the joy experienced in serving the Lord and seeing His awesome power on display. Obeying His commission and fighting victoriously in the realm of spiritual warfare, it was quite natural for these disciples to be excited. All of us have experienced this great privilege. God takes us, jars of clay (**2 CORINTHIANS 4:7**), and pours forth His power impacting those around us with His Son. Yes, such joy is understandable and unable to be contained. Yet, in the midst of this exciting time, our Lord provides some correction in their thinking. It is well-timed and needed. For them and for us. What was the topic of the disciples’ excitement? Look at the end of verse 17 – “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name.” Why didn’t they say, “Lord, even the demons are subject to your name.” Where was the John the Baptist posture of “He must increase, but I must decrease” (**JOHN 3:30**)? I am not being hard on these guys. They acknowledged dependency on Christ, but if not careful, the emphasis while serving the Lord may subtly shift from the Master to the servant. Jesus tells them and us, “Don’t concentrate on the privilege of service as blessed as that is, instead concentrate on the privilege of relationship – “Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” The Christian life includes privileged service but its supreme privilege is knowing God. With our names written in heaven, we have a reservation not just for a room, but for the completed union of a privileged relationship. Let’s go back and revisit Packer’s probing questions. Knowing God is the reason for our creation, the aim of life, and the best thing in life!

**PRAYER:** Father, grant us not mere knowledge of You, but a living relationship out of knowledge of You.

**QUOTE: SINCLAIR FERGUSON,** “Knowing God is your single greatest privilege as a Christian.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 12, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**2 CHRONICLES 7:1-3** – As soon as Solomon finished his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. And the priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because the glory of the Lord filled the Lord’s house. When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.”

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: **THE MAKING OF A WORSHIPPER.** I wonder how long Solomon prayed. It really doesn’t matter. Most of the prayers in the Bible are brief and probably a good rule of thumb to follow in public prayer. John Newton said, “It is better that the hearers should wish the prayer had been longer, than spend half or a considerable part of the time in wishing it was over.” It isn’t the length of time in Solomon’s prayer which stirs the heart. It is the passion of the prayer, the response of God to the prayer, and the impact on the people.

Let us make our way to the front of the crowd to get a close-up of Solomon praying. “Then Solomon stood before the altar of the Lord in the presence of all the assembly of Israel and spread out his hands. Solomon had made a bronze platform five cubits long, five cubits wide, and three cubits high, and had set it in the court, and he stood on it. Then he knelt on his knees in the presence of all the assembly of Israel, and spread out his hands toward heaven, and said . . . (**2 CHRONICLES 6:12-14a**). Picture the man of God standing before the altar of the Lord in front of all the people with hands spread out. He then drops to his knees, lifts his hands toward heaven and pours out his soul in a very moving display of spiritual leadership and example. Today’s reference shows the response from the Lord to Solomon’s prayer and the impact on the people. It is in God’s response and the way the people reacted we see the making of a worshipper, or in this case, the making of a worshipping people.

First the response from the Lord, “fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple” (**2 CHRONICLES 7:1b**). God came. He manifested Himself. This had already occurred in **2 CHRONICLES 5:13-14** when “the house of the Lord was filled with a cloud” symbolic of God’s majestic presence. And the people noticed. How could they not? They saw the glory of the Lord (**2 CHRONICLES 7:3a**). How does one “see” the glory of God? We don’t have clouds like in the Old Testament. We “see” the Lord Jesus (**HEBREWS 1:3**). But how do we “see” the unseen Christ? It is through the supernaturally illuminated Word of God. Jesus tells us He would manifest Himself to us (**JOHN 14:21**) and that isn’t just in heaven. It is for this life. A. W. Pink comments, “No, it is not in visions or dreams that the Lord promises to come to His people. It is a spiritual revelation of Himself to the soul! It is a vivid realization of the Saviour’s being and nearness, in a deep and abiding sense of His favour and love. By the power of the Spirit, He makes His Word so luminous, that as we read it, He Himself seems to draw near.” It is then a worshipper is created. Note how the people responded to the glory of the Lord after Solomon prayed and the Lord came, “they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord” (**2 CHRONICLES 7:3a**). Is this our experience today? The past Lord’s Day? Have we seen the glory of Jesus recently in the Spirit-illuminated Word? To do so requires a humble and unhurried setting at the feet of Jesus with open hearts and open Bibles. If we seek, He will reveal Himself to the searching soul!

PRAYER: Father, grant us to see the making of a worshipper is a divine work not a human activity.

QUOTE: DONALD S. WHITNEY, “To worship God in spirit is to worship from the inside out.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 13, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**PSALM 13:1-2** - How long, O Lord? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all the day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me?

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: WAITING ON A SILENT GOD.** It was early in the morning. While driving to my office, I saw only two signs of life. One living and one mechanical. The living was a dog in a yard just sniffing around doing what dogs do. The mechanical was the red light that just so happened to turn red when I pulled up. As the light stayed red convincing me it had eternal life, I thought, “There is not a car anywhere. Wouldn’t hurt to just drive through. I’m in a hurry.” However, I remembered that Great Day and quickly knew breaking the law, even traffic laws, is not something I want to put on my daily DVD before the Lord. Though I waited with the appearance of patience, inside that unsettled “impatient stew” was simmering. Waiting is a significant discipline in the Christian life and a tool greatly used by our God to progress us in the spiritual fruit of patience.

David might have struggled some with impatience, but his impatience displayed in today’s reference was a spiritual one not a fleshly “my agenda is delayed-type.” Sure, he was in pain and his impatience shows forth with the repeated words “How long” appearing four times in two verses. It reminded me of long trips in a car and the often repeated voices from impatient little ones in the backseat asking, “How long till we get there?” David’s impatience was a longing for deliverance, but it was also more. It was longing for the God of deliverance. I think there might be two types of impatience. The type David illustrates is an impatience stretching the soul and produces good spiritual fruit. The other type is of the flesh and is not soul-maturing. All it wants is out of the way of the event, person, or situation causing the stirring inside of impatience. It isn’t interested in developing the Fruit of the Spirit. When the circumstance is gone, all is well and we move on . . . until another circumstance arrives and we find ourselves again responding with fleshly-impatience revealing we never got the lesson the first time. What may we take away from David in his trial of impatience? Let’s consider two attitudes to have when the Lord is teaching us patience. The first attitude, when experiencing the silence of God and impatience seeks to sit on the throne of our hearts, is be persistent with the Lord. Get David’s childlike approach toward God. I don’t think it is a stretch to say David was nagging. What if someone came to you and in four sentences repeated two words four times? Talk about getting on one’s nerves! Here is the height of nagging – “how long, how long, how long, how long” – okay, David, we get it. You are impatient! But behind the scenes, David’s soul is learning to wait and is learning importunity. The Lord tells us this is a major and necessary part of prayer (**LUKE 18:1-8**). A second attitude when patience is being developed is the power of personal choice. We do not have to stew in a simmering pot of impatience. When God saved us, He gave us His Spirit to meet all the challenges of life including impatience. And with the indwelling Spirit, we have the power of choice. Either surrender to fleshly impatience and remain stalled in our growth or develop spiritual maturity by waiting with patience. David exercised this power of choice – “But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because he has dealt bountifully with me” (**PSALM 13:5-6**). Yes, we shall cry out like David, “How long, O Lord?” but let’s not forget God’s silence is the silence of a wise Teacher not a disinterested Deity. His goal is to develop patience by putting us in circumstances of potential impatience! It is a matter of personal choice.

**PRAYER:** Father, help us to see Your silence has our best interest at hand, teaching us to be patient while waiting.

**QUOTE:** WILLIAM GURNALL, “The Christian must trust in a withdrawing God.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 14, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**PHILIPPIANS 2:9-11** – Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: WHO HAS THE KEYS?** Most of the time when we read today's reference we think futuristic. Nothing wrong with that. Everyone person who has ever lived will bow the knee to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and confess His supremacy. However, what about right now? Looking around the world, it appears the Lord Jesus is not exercising sovereign control. Sin and Satan seem to be running free without any divine restraint. Fortunately, our Bibles tell us otherwise.

From Paul's sure-fire prophecy, we look forward to the time of our Savior's establishment of His righteous reign; yet, the wise Christian doesn't just look ahead. He or she sees the Lordship of Jesus Christ now. We may, without much effort, look outside of ourselves and see total resistance to Christ's rightful authority and cry out against such rebellion while failing to see the personal application inside our own hearts. It might be a good time to stop what we are doing right now, look down inside our hearts, and ponder, “Are the attitudes, actions, and activities of our present lives giving evidence of “bowing their knees” confessing Jesus is Lord? It is those three things – attitudes, actions, and activities - which define us far more accurately in who we are and what we believe than what we say we are and say we believe (**LUKE 6:46**). I realize how uncomfortable that might appear, but the Lordship of Christ in our lives is not optional. We are bought with a price and belong to another (**ROMANS 7:4**).

A great example of total surrender is F. B. Meyer. He was a Baptist preacher and pastor of Christ Church in the heart of London in the nineteenth century. In the midst of a successful ministry, F. B. Meyer confessed that something was lacking in his life and ministry. J.H. Jowett recounts the following story: “Dr. Meyer has told us that his early Christian life was marred and his ministry paralyzed just because he had kept back one thing from the bunch of keys he had given to the Lord. Every key save one! The key of one room was kept for personal use, and the Lord shut out. The effect of the incomplete consecration was found in lack of power, lack of assurance, lack of joy and peace.” I read a further account of Meyer's struggle with surrendering all to Jesus. Meyer dreamed Jesus appeared to him one night and asked for the remaining key to his life. Meyer resisted. The Lord, with disappointment in His face, turned to leave the room saying, “If I am not Lord of all, then, I am not Lord at all.” Meyers cried out, “No, Lord, please don't leave” and in humble brokenness and surrender gave the remaining key to the Lord Jesus. Right then, the future certainty of proclaiming Jesus is Lord became a present reality in Meyer's life. Is Jesus Christ Lord? Not one of us would deny that truth. We would even in unity of voices sing the song, “He is Lord, He is Lord, He is risen from the dead and He is Lord. Every knee shall bow, every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.” We would be right to do so, but what about that key ring in the “pocket” or “purse” of our hearts? The ring holding the keys to the rooms in our lives such as the rooms of our time, talent, and treasures? Has that ring be given to Jesus as Lord? It is one thing to SAY Jesus is Lord in life and yet another to LIVE Jesus is Lord in life. May we not hold on to the key ring. I don't know about you, but I sometimes forget where my keys are located. It would be far better to give them to the One who owns them anyway!

**PRAYER:** Father, may our lives now say the message “Jesus is Lord” not just the Great Day in the future.

**QUOTE:** WILLIAM MACDONALD, “The legitimate courtesies of life become positively sinful when they take priority over the interests of the Lord Jesus.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 15, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**ROMANS 12:4-6b** – For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: **WHAT IS THE CHURCH TO YOU?** Imagine us having a one-on-one conversation and I ask the question, “How would you define the term ‘church’?” You might give a range of definitions. First, a dictionary answer - “A building for public worship.” Another could be – “A specific denomination such as the Presbyterian Church.” Then an answer like – “A spiritual body of believers in Jesus Christ forming His Body.” As we continue our conversation, I would then say, “Good, let me toss out two more questions about church. These questions are designed to reveal both our understanding of the church and where we fit into her.

Here are the two follow up questions. Question one - Do you see the church primarily existing for what you get from her or what you give to her?” The final question would be, “Are you functioning as God would have you in the local church?” Unlike the first question when we discussed just a definition, the other two questions make us look in a mirror. The first question requires no accountability and commitment. The others make us look long and hard to see if we are “doing church” right. As we sat in silence pondering our answers, I would end the conversation with this, “It is okay. We don’t need to discuss our answers. We will see them week in and week out in the body of Christ.” The New Testament teaches the indispensable role of the church in God’s plan (**EPHESIANS 3:8-10**), but not only in God’s plan. The church is indispensable to God’s plan for His people. Pastor Philip Ryken in his book, “City on a Hill” wrote, “Every member not only belongs to the body, but is necessary to its health and welfare. There is no appendix in the body of Christ. Every member is important. No one is superfluous. This means that every Christian has a job to do. The body only functions properly “as each part does its work” (**EPHESIANS 4:16**).

In today’s reference, Paul gives us at least two things to consider when we look into the mirror and ask the one looking back, “What is the church to you?” First is the inseparable union we have with one another – “so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another” (**ROMANS 12:5**). Don’t blow past that verse thinking, “Yeah, I know I am in union with other believers” and just move on. No, let the realization of what that truly means get a grip on your heart. Here is a very silly question, “Would any of us neglect meeting the needs of our physical family?” Of course not. We are flesh and blood and nothing stops us from taking care of our loved ones or those in whom we are “one of another.” What does Paul say about our brothers and sisters in Christ? We are “one of another.” So, what about meeting the spiritual and physical needs in the body of Christ? Being “one of another” goes far, far, far beyond just sitting beside “one another” in a pew. Second, we are naturally to be in each others’ lives in specific ways – “Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them” (**ROMANS 12:6a**). Paul matter-of-factly expects spiritual gifts in believers to be used in other believers’ lives. It is a given, not an option. Back to the follow up questions about our understanding of church and our functioning in her. I said, “We don’t need to discuss our answers. We will see them week in and week out in the body of Christ.” Take a moment and think what those answers will look like to your brothers and sisters this week.

PRAYER: “Father, thank You for the church, the Body of Your Son. What a grace gift!”

QUOTE: FRED CATHERWOOD, “The church should be a community of encouragement.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 16, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**PROVERBS 24:16a** - For the righteous falls seven times and rises again.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: KEEP GETTING UP.** Ask any honest, fighting the good fight of faith Christian what they can do, in and of themselves, when it comes to obeying any of God’s commands and especially this one, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (**MATTHEW 22:37**), and the answer will be, “Nothing. I can do absolutely nothing.” That might be a sign of true humility as we remember the words of our Lord, “I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing” (**JOHN 15:5**). Or the words, “Nothing. I can do absolutely nothing” might come forth from a discouraged saint struggling with areas of sin that just seem to cling to them like smoke from a campfire on a jacket or shirt. Their cry of “Nothing. I can do absolutely nothing” might really be a false humility and simply a raising of the white flag of surrender in the daily and excruciating spiritual conflict we are called to engage. It might just be a spirit of resignation of not wanting to fight anymore. We do admit the Christian life isn’t for the faint of heart. At times, we just feel so beaten down in the spiritual war, we just want to quit. However, it cannot be. A believer recently talked to me and said, “I just want to give up. I feel so defeated. God seems so distant, but “something” inside of me just won’t let me.” Well, that “something” is really a “Someone” and has to do with the glorious doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. The true believer, though often beaten and battered by sin, the world, and the devil, cannot give up. The Spirit of God won’t allow such a complete apostasy.

In today’s reference, we get much encouragement to get up when we get knocked down. It is a sure thing we are going to fall when it comes to our walk with the Lord. That isn’t a license to go out and sin that grace may abound. Paul makes that quite clear – “What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it?” (**ROMANS 6:1-2**). If sinning is easy, not hated, and an habitual and tolerated lifestyle, I urge you to read **1 JOHN**, the entire epistle, over and over, asking God to show you the incompatibility of such a lifestyle with being His child. However, failure is reality in the Christian life and it is one of the mysterious ways God uses to wean us from sin and move us into more vigorous pursuits of holiness. And be very careful that we don’t build our theology of God out of our failures instead of out of His character. I know the ease of looking at me first, which is never good and often discouraging, instead of looking at God first, which is always good and encouraging. Jerry Bridges said, “Deep down in our souls we must get hold of the wonderful truth that our spiritual failures do not affect God’s love for us one tenth – that His love for us does not fluctuate according to our experience.” The evidence we are getting that wonderful truth is how quickly we get up after falling.

There is a great Biblical example of a man who practiced today’s reference. His name is Micah. He is becoming a dear friend of mine and as you go through the ups and downs of your obedience, let him become your friend and example also - “But as for me, I will look to the Lord; I will wait for the God of my salvation; my God will hear me. Rejoice not over me, O my enemy; when I fall, I shall rise; when I sit in darkness, the Lord will be a light to me. I will bear the indignation of the Lord because I have sinned against him, until he pleads my cause and executes judgment for me. He will bring me out to the light; I shall look upon his vindication.” (**MICAH 7:7-9**).

**PRAYER:** “Lord, help me believe in my head AND heart that everything really does work for my good.”

**QUOTE:** “One clear mark of being a true disciple of Christ is we don’t stay down when we fall.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 17, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**2 CHRONICLES 20:3b** – And set his face to seek the Lord

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: LIVING ABOVE CIRCUMSTANCES.** If I were to ask what area of spiritual life gives us the most difficulty and often seems so ineffective, what would our response be? I am first. My answer without hesitation is “prayer.” I believe prayer gets the most attention from the evil one, the world, and our “good” busyness effectively keeping us away from praying together and praying individually. Prayer is the most important thing we do. It is also a tremendous struggle. We struggle with time to pray, we struggle with desire to pray, we struggle with how to pray . . . there are probably more struggles with prayer. However, the struggles I just mentioned have a “surface” feel to them. What I mean by “surface” is they have a sense of shallowness. They don’t go deep enough into areas of what really hinders us in prayer. I can make time to pray. That doesn’t mean it will be effective. I can read books on prayer to help me learn how to pray. That doesn’t mean it will be effective. There is one hindrance deep in our hearts competing relentlessly against the development of an effective prayer life. I call it “circumstantial living.” Basically, it is living life subordinate to our circumstances. To determine if we are living “circumstantial” instead of prayerfully, think how we respond when circumstances are fearful. If we live consistently in states of anxiety, fear, with emotional and physical exhaustion preventing true prayer, we are living circumstantial. And if we are doing so, I would venture to say if we met and talked about our prayer lives, we might say, “Needs serious work.”

In today’s reference (consider reading **2 CHRONICLES 20**), King Jehoshaphat faced some tough circumstances. I wouldn’t fault him for a little “circumstantial living” and neglect of prayer. I mean who has time to pray? I need to worry about my “impossible” circumstances. I need time to discuss my options, pace the floor, toss and turn during the night, right? Not the king. Notice his humanness first, “Then Jehoshaphat was afraid” (**2 CHRONICLES 20:3a**). The king wasn’t immune to that “sickening of the stomach” feeling of being afraid. He had two choices. Either “fret” away the hours or “pray” away the fear. Those are the only two choices we have also. What did Jehoshaphat do? He “set his face to seek the Lord” (**2 CHRONICLES 20:3b**). He didn’t recluse into mental anguish. The king ran to the One who calms fears. Good job, king! But that doesn’t mean the temptation to fear simply vanishes never to return. We don’t slay that beast once and think he never returns. In this life, no perfect circumstance exists. To think so and pursue peace, comfort, and ease in a sinful world void of fearful temptations is self-deceiving. Jehoshaphat knew prayer was the answer, but he also knew it was not “go to a prayer meeting” or whip up a quick petition and all is well. No, he knew that fear caused by circumstantial living needed constant prayer against. If not, then this fear would produce a greater struggle in prayer - confusion, “We do not know what to do” (**2 CHRONICLES 20:12b**). When circumstances control us, get ready. Confusion is knocking at the door. And a “hit and miss” prayer life won’t overcome it. For Jehoshaphat, his circumstances didn’t immediately change, but the one praying did. First he set his face to seek the Lord, now he is determining to stay upon the Lord, “but our eyes are on you” (**2 CHRONICLES 20:12c**). Prayer isn’t always about talking to God. It includes a “looking” upon God. It means we sit with teachable and quiet spirits before Him who is all wisdom and sees everything crystal clear. That doesn’t mean instant, “I have all the answers” type of clarity occurs, but an unmistakable glad submission to sovereignty occurs calming the fearful heart. Without a true prayer life, circumstantial living will be ruling masters in our lives.

**PRAYER:** Lord, show us the path to maturity is not primarily study or activity, but prayer.

**QUOTE:** J. C. RYLE, “Prayer is the very life-breath of true Christianity or the righteous falls seven times and rises again.

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 18, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**LUKE 11:37-52** – While Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee asked Him to dine with Him, so He went in and reclined at table.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: JESUS COMES TO DINNER.** The Pharisee thought it was a great opportunity. Ask Jesus to dinner. It would provide an intimate setting to converse with the One who is stirring up the city. So the invitation was given and our Lord accepted. The evening didn't quite unfold as planned. In the conversation, Jesus used words like, “You fools” (**LUKE 11:40**), “Woe to you Pharisees (**LUKE 11:42-44**), and the same words to the lawyers in verse 45. I am not advocating this method for evangelism. Don't ask our neighbors over for dinner, call them fools, pronounce woes upon them, and then commence to read their hearts. That authority rests with Jesus. He has not commissioned us to read hearts, but to love people.

So we know what the dinner is not, let's consider what it is. The Pharisee and invited lawyers had no clue. This wasn't a friendly “ask a few questions-type of conversation” around food. They were not settling around a dinner table. They were being placed on an operating table. This was surgery – heart surgery. The One reclining at table was about to let the attendees see their true insides. He was to reveal what lies inside of every man and woman – the corruption of the human heart. Yes, the Lord pinpointed specific areas at dinner. The Pharisees? It was self-righteousness. For the lawyers? It was the oppression of religiosity. The point is Jesus searches all hearts. Constantly. Imagine dinner with the Son of God. We really don't have to imagine it. He has a standing invitation and is present always. The only thing lacking may be our awareness of Him. But it is dinner time and Jesus is at the table. What would the conversation sound like? Let's keep the setting exactly as it was at the home of the Pharisee. In reading the account, catch how much talking the Pharisee does. Luke records NO words from the astonished Pharisee. Makes sense, doesn't it? If the One who knows everything including our heart starts to reveal it to us face-to-face, what does one say? Exactly. Luke does record a response from a lawyer, but it is the sting resulting from the revelation by Jesus, “One of the lawyers answered Him, ‘Teacher, in saying these things you insult us also’” (**LUKE 11:45**). Our dinner with the Master would include a lot of probing. The Lord, in His earthly ministry, asked people a lot of questions. I think at least three questions make the dinner table. First the question of sincerity, “Do you love me?” (**JOHN 21:15-19**) and our answer must be like Peter's, “Lord, You know everything” (**JOHN 21:17**). We would not be able to get away in a Christian setting merely saying, “I love the Lord” without thinking of the level of obedience in our lives making that true (**JOHN 14:21**). The dinner time becomes sincerity time. After the sincerity question, we may hear, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” (**LUKE 6:46**). Question two from the Lord addresses commitment. This is healthy, as all the Lord's dealings with us are, and points us to measure our growth in following His Word (**JOHN 8:31**). As dinner gave way to dessert, we may catch the last question from Jesus, “Why did you doubt?” (**MATTHEW 14:31**). It might be that broad, forcing us to recall all those times we struggled with faith in difficult circumstances where God appeared nowhere on the scene. It would be a question piercing the soul when we realize the sadness doubt brings into the heart of the One who promises us His help and His presence always. The Pharisee probably wished he didn't invite Jesus to dinner. How about us? Is He a welcomed guest where His probing questions are met by us with confident answers?

**PRAYER:** Father, graciously let us truly see ourselves and then stand amazed at such redeeming grace!

**QUOTE:** SINCLAIR FERGUSON, “Grace often grows strongest where conviction of sin pierced deepest.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 19, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**LUKE 12:3** - Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: NO CONVERSATION IS PRIVATE.** The most powerful force in the world of humanity does not lie in sophisticated military weaponry or the mind-boggling advances in modern technology. It is actually pretty small. The average length is four inches. Its destructive power is beyond measure, but also it has tremendous power for good. James identifies the force, “So also **the tongue** is a small member, yet it boasts of great things. How great a forest is set ablaze by such a small fire! And **the tongue** is a fire, a world of unrighteousness. **The tongue** is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell. For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame **the tongue**. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. With it we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God” (**JAMES 3:5-9**).

To ensure no mistaken identity, James mentioned the tongue four times in five verses. In the journey of the Christian pilgrimage, Paul rightly defines it as “the good fight” (**2 TIMOTHY 4:7**). There are many areas of the “good fight” of a Christian. We fight against fleshly passions. We fight against worldly conformity. We fight against spiritual laziness. We fight against an inner pull to independence. The fight is on and will be on until Jesus says, “Fight is over.” Until then, the fight is on and one of the most important battlegrounds of warfare for the Christian is the tongue. James reveals the intensity of the war of words. He describes the tongue as able to burn, untamable, a sleepless evil, full of venom, and with great ease speaks hypocrisy with the contradiction of “blessing our Lord and Father” while ‘slicing and dicing’ people made in God’s image (**JAMES 3:9-10**). When we grasp the ugly potential of the tongue, it almost makes one want to take a vow of silence for life. However, we need not be so hard on that little membrane known as the tongue. It is really just a servant to the heart. That is the culprit. It sends the orders to the tongue. In good Navy terminology, the tongue simply acts out the words, “Aye, aye, sir or ma’am” in response to the “skipper” known as the heart. When we consider the instruction of James, we are awakened to the need for verbal restraint which is good, but the words of Jesus in today’s reference put supreme and Divine icing on the cake. Jesus makes it quite clear – not a single conversation we have had or ever will have is private. There is no possibility for us to look around and say, “Excuse me, but this is private.” Nope. That option does not exist in the human experience. Taking the “cake” of James and the “icing” of the Lord Jesus, I want us to consider just one aspect of our conversations. The aspect of how we talk not primarily TO PEOPLE, but ABOUT PEOPLE. When talking ABOUT people does it meet the criteria of this passage of scripture? – “Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear” (**EPHESIANS 4:29**). Would the conversation at dinner, late last night, after church . . . when and where really doesn’t matter . . . be one we would be pleased to share with Jesus? Did or does it build up His people as Paul instructs? It is a serious matter but it is also a matter where grace comes to the rescue! And the grace that saves is the grace that enables us to control the tongue. Appropriating amazing grace ensure words today ABOUT people will pass the Great Day of Judgment as trophies of what grace accomplished through sanctified speech!

**PRAYER:** Father, let our tongues be controlled by Your Spirit. Unless so, we will harm, not help, people.

**QUOTE:** JOHN LYLY, “The tongue is the ambassador of the heart.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 20, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**JOHN 13:6-7** – He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, do you wash my feet?” Jesus answered him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand.”

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: **DON'T TRY TO FIGURE IT OUT.** Here is a two question survey. Question one – Do we desire to be in control of circumstances and situations in life? Question two – Do we desire to have “things” figured out before we take action? You don't need to email me your answers. I will give you mine and see if they fit yours. My answer to question one is a very loud YES. Question two gets the same treatment. Collectively, we may not have the same level of intensity in these desires, but we share them because we are in the same family. That family is the family of sinners. When we think about the creation order for us, we were not created for either of these two things. First the control issue. If the layers were peeled back on the “onion” of control it would be exposed for what it really is - the desire to “call the shots” in life or a maverick spirit of independence apart from God. Not in the original blueprint. The second desire is that nagging sense everything must be covered before we act. That is not to dismiss discernment (**PHILIPPIANS 1:9-11**). But if we find submission to God's sovereignty just a theological truth logged in the head but rarely making it to the heart in love and trust, we are living by sight not faith. When we have to see everything on the table before we act upon His Word in obedience, this is the antithesis of faith. And without faith, forget pleasing God (**HEBREWS 11:6**).

Peter is one of us. He battles desires for control and the need to figure everything out. The latter is seen in **JOHN 13**. Let's take a seat with Peter at supper. Supper wasn't even finished. When sitting around the family table and someone gets up, it isn't a big distraction, but it is a distraction. Whether it is a “May I be excused?” or an “Excuse me, I will be back”, it is noticeable. In the middle of the meal, Jesus gets up (**JOHN 13:3-4**). The disciples likely looked at each other wondering where He was going. He wasn't going anywhere but He was going to take them a long, long way. What our Lord is about to do in washing their feet would show these disciples-in-the-making how far they needed to go in understanding Who He was and what they lacked. We don't know who was first, but Peter seems to be the only one questioning what Jesus was doing (**JOHN 13:6-8**). In response to Peter's question, the Lord says, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand” (**JOHN 13:7**). Jesus' words help us who suffer from the “gotta-be-in-control” and “need-it-all-figured out” syndromes. If we thought it through, we would realize both “conditions” of control and wanting things figured out are one in the same. The words of the Master apply to both. First, understanding is based on God's timing not ours. This is tough to swallow. Jesus said, “Not now, Peter.” And that puts us in a box – a good box – a “box” of faith. Trust is the only option. And getting cornered in life, to where faith is the only way to go, is exactly the place God desires for us. A second application from Jesus when futilely trying to figure out all the angles is to remember in due time we shall understand. Jesus doesn't leave Peter hanging with uncertainty, “Peter, now is not the time. Wait. You will know.” Waiting on understanding produces a spiritual maturity that endures. If we got all the answers from Jesus instantaneously, we might be spoiled children but instead, He nurtures us into solid disciples by teaching valuable lessons of faith-living when it doesn't “feel” right to obey and the spiritual light bulb appears burned out. We really don't need to have control or have everything figured out. It isn't good for the soul needing to be weaned from both!

PRAYER: Lord, let us rest in Your timing in our desire for understanding of Your ways.

QUOTE: ROBERT LEIGHTON, “We lie to God in prayer if we do not rely on Him afterwards.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 21, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**1 TIMOTHY 3:14-15** - I hope to come to you soon, but I am writing these things to you so that, if I delay, you may know how one ought to behave in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: **A HUGE BIG DEAL.** I haven't always been a big fan of the church. For a few years my thoughts on the church consisted of three things. One, the church wasn't that important to my spiritual life. I read my Bible, fellowshiped with a select group, and prayed. What's the big deal about church? A second thing about the church was it didn't seem to care too much about me. I don't recall the church seeking me out. Maybe a letter thanking me for my visit, but I sensed no hot pursuit loving me into its fold. Finally, the church didn't seem to fit high in my desires on Sunday and especially "having" to come back on Sunday night. Along the way, I did discover it is not the Lord's morning, it is the Lord's Day, but it seemed more duty than delight. The typical Sunday found me arriving in the building, offering a "hello, how are you?" and sitting in a pew with people I saw once a week. As for these people, did I know them? Well, if "know them" means I recall their names, then, I did, at least some of them. For the most part, church just seemed a necessary thing to do and pretty much a mechanical routine.

What images do you have of the church? No, not how the church functions. Images. Mine were, "an irrelevant institution, a gathering of unknown people, and a necessary place I have to attend." Please don't say, "Why is this guy a pastor?" That was the old me. When it comes to images, the images we have of the church determine our commitment. My images of church produced a shallow commitment. Let me define my term - "A shallow commitment is an attitude of 'it is no big deal' if I miss opportunities to hear the Word, observe the Lord's Table, and fellowship with other believers." When the soul does not long for these experiences and feels no disappointment of being absent from them, something is not right in our spiritual lives. We have failed to value the church as God intends. In his book, Images of the Church in the New Testament, Paul S. Minear estimates the number of New Testament images referring to the church at more than 80. Think about that – over 80 images painting us the pictures of Christ's church! God makes the church a huge big deal. If He so loved the world that He gave His Son to die to for the church, would it be a serious offense to God to make light of His church by sporadic attendance without spiritual hunger or faithful attendance without sacrificial service? To see the church as a big deal, consider two images of her. The first image is the pillar of the truth – "which is the church of the living God, a pillar and buttress of the truth" (**1 TIMOTHY 3:15**). A pillar holds something up. Paul tells Timothy the church holds up the truth. If the pillar of the truth lacks being a big deal in our lives, does it not send the message in a subtle way that "truth is really no big deal?" A second image for the church is family or household – "the household of God, which is the church of the living God" (**1 TIMOTHY 3:15**). Do we guard family time with our physical families? Absolutely. We love to spend time with each other. How about our eternal family? Does the family which will last forever get the same type of attention as our earthly families? But to really grasp the "big deal" God makes of His church, consider the image at Calvary – spend time at the foot of the cross looking up into the bleeding face, hands, side and feet of the Lord Jesus. We cannot walk away without seeing how big a deal the church is – The Head of the Church is hanging there making the church possible. Does His cross not move us to make His Church a big deal in our lives? It is His Body.

PRAYER: Father, show us Your delight in Your church and make it our delight too.

QUOTE: THOMAS FULLER, "It is best to be with those in time we hope to be with in eternity."

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 22, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**2 CHRONICLES 31:20-21, 25** – Thus Hezekiah did throughout all Judah, and he did what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God. And every work that he undertook in the service of the house of God and in accordance with the law and the commandments, seeking his God, he did with all his heart, and prospered. But Hezekiah did not make return according to the benefit done to him, for his heart was proud.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: **REAL ROLE MODELS**. The reading of Christian biographies is a great blessing. Their examples of persevering faith, godly influence, and spiritual discipline serve us well as role models. But reading of saints in the past can also be a little demoralizing. Who doesn't feel like a second class Christian when reading of a D.L. Moody who shared the Gospel with someone EVERY DAY? Or an E. M. Bounds who rose at 4:00 a.m. each morning for hours of prayer? Or a George Mueller who the last twenty years of his life read the Bible through approximately four to five times a year. When we read Christian biographies we may find ourselves doing one of three things. One . . . become encouraged and thank God for such a life of grace. Good response. Two . . . be discouraged and attempt to be like Bounds, Mueller, or Moody. Partially good. The principles of their lives are great, but trying to be exactly like them is not. Three . . . be discouraged and just give up saying, “I'll never make any progress like that toward the Christian life.” Before we opt for response two or three we must remember every godly example of a man or woman from the past was in need of the same Savior and the same grace as us. As we read of them, don't miss the parts of their struggles. Don't assume unreal expectations of them. Real role models are just that – real. They have the good and the ugly in their lives.

The Bible is full of mini-biographies or real role models for us. And they were real because the scriptures don't paint them as “super saints” on a different level of spirituality than us. Today's reference gives us an excellent role model in Hezekiah. A real role model because he gives us both the good and the ugly. **First the good**. It was said of this good king, “he did what was good and right and faithful before the Lord his God” (**2 CHRONICLES 31:20**). If we were to reduce what a healthy Christian life would look like in three traits, here we have it – doing good, doing right, and doing it faithfully. But the last part is most important. We can do good and do right without it pleasing God. A lot of people in the world do those things, yet, don't know God. A real role model lives in the conscious presence of God – “faithful before the Lord his God” (**2 CHRONICLES 31:20**). Do we live life committed to wholesome deeds (good), uncompromising integrity (right), AND living both as evidences of faith in God? If so, all our good works will be done for His glory. Take away faith and it merely becomes being a nice person who does good and right things. Hezekiah gives us a great role model of godly character, **but we also see the ugly** – “But Hezekiah did not make return according to the benefit done to him, for his heart was proud” (**2 CHRONICLES 32:25**). Hezekiah had a dark side – a prideful heart and guess who else has a dark side? All of us. When looking at role models, even those we regularly fellowship with in the body of Christ, let's not forget we are each jars of clay (**2 CORINTHIANS 4:7**). I would have a tendency to do Hezekiah an injustice by placing him on a pedestal of spirituality. Unfair to him and myself for when, not if, he is exposed, as he was, my expectations would be disappointed. The result is a hurting Hezekiah and a disillusioned me. Remember role models are good, but not to be elevated to the stratosphere of unrealistic expectations. We are what we are by grace alone. So, the next time we read a Christian biography, don't forget real role models have both the good and the ugly.

PRAYER: Father, we thank you that our failings do not alter Your faithfulness

QUOTE: WILLIAM S. PLUMER, “What God is to one saint He is to all saints.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 23, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**MATTHEW 25:21** – His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: WORDS FOR THE WEARY.** Are you tired? I am not referring to just the physical side. Some of us might go as far as to say, “I live tired.” What about being “dog-tired” in serving others to include physical, emotional, and spiritual weariness? I like the picture of being “dog-tired.” It causes me to think of a dog exhausted from hunting or playing coming in and collapsing on the floor somewhere for a long rest. No cares. No responsibilities. I watched my dog recently just lying around and thought, “What a life! Get fed, get loved, get walked, get snacks, get petted . . . a dog’s life is pretty much all about the dog. Oh, it isn’t without pleasure for us, but my dog’s living on easy street!

In the daily call to serve the Lord Jesus, it is not difficult to simply feel “dog-tired.” Paul knew this was the case and encourages the Galatians with these words, “And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up” (**GALATIANS 6:9**). He reveals the potential of growing weary. Why? Because “doing good” is all about others. And when serving others who has not grown weary? The things that make us “dog-tired” in “doing good” are first, it is a call to put one’s own interests aside (**PHILIPPIANS 2:4**). Don’t ever underestimate the tiredness produced by the inward struggle of keeping “self on a shelf.” The hardest and most exhausting toil in the world is to die to one’s own interests and desires. One of the main hindrances to living abundant lives with consistent joy is allowing our “doing good” for the Lord to fall under the category “when convenient for me.” That is situational obedience which is really disobedience quenching our joy in the Lord. The paradox of the Christian life is simply this – die to self to discover one’s true self in Christ.

Consistently suppressing “self” to do good for others is an eternal investment, but not without temporal cost. The cost is growing weary. Another area “doing good” producing the condition of being “dog-tired” is the responses from those we serve. These aren’t always the responses, but they “occasionally” find themselves coming to us. When “doing good,” whether in our spiritual gifting or consistent acts of kindness in the world, it is not uncommon for the following to occur – be taken for granted by those we love, be unappreciated by those benefiting from our doing good, and be called upon for more by those who do the first two things. It is like that television commercial with the “Energizer Bunny.” The one advertising Energizer Batteries. Some little rabbit with big ears beating a drum to the tune, “They just keep going and going and going . . .” It often feels that is the expectation placed upon us to keep going and going and going in our sacrificial acts of “doing good.” Let me qualify that statement. It is certainly the call of the Lord to do so, but that doesn’t mean being “dog-tired” doesn’t creep up on us nudging us with the words, “Time to take the backpack of life off and rest. Time to be served instead of constantly serving.” How do we avoid getting “dog-tired” and find ourselves tempted to tone down our acts of “doing good?” Well, it is important to note Paul doesn’t authorize “time off” from living lives of sacrificial service. He says, “do not give up” and “in due season we will reap.” The “due season” needs an eternal perspective. We are not to look for our rest or rewards in this life. This is a time of toil for Jesus. The opportunities for serving Him are today. Yesterday is history and tomorrow may not come. The greatest way to avoid becoming “dog-tired” in our service to others is to ponder the words in today’s reference. Meditate on them and we will find strength for yet another day of sacrificial service. We won’t envy a dog’s life on easy street!

**PRAYER:** Father, refresh us with the longing to hear the words, “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

**QUOTE:** CHRYSOSTOM, “Faithfulness in little things is a big thing.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 24, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**JOHN 1:40-42a** - One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which means Christ). He brought him to Jesus.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: **SEEING JESUS**. I stumbled across a book a few years ago entitled THE INNER SANCTUARY. The title alone perked my interest for it seemed to imply a quiet place of sacred solitude for a time of unhurried spiritual development. I thought, “That is what I need. A retreat! An inner sanctuary to offset my fast-paced life ever putting the pressure on my intimacy with the Lord Jesus.” But what sold me on the book was the subtitle. It made ownership non-optional in my mind and budget. The subtitle read, “An exposition of John Chapters 13-17.” It is 247 pages rich in exposition of five chapters in John's Gospel. Just what I needed – to see Jesus in the Gospels.

We need a heavy dose of the Gospels. Often. Like maybe daily. I am not suggesting we stop a consistent reading of the whole counsel of God (**ACTS 20:27**), but if one pursues my suggestion, read the Gospels with one goal to guide you. Don't dive into them to gain factual knowledge alone. Go with this as a prayer – “So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, ‘Sir, we wish to see Jesus’” (**JOHN 12:21**). Enter into the inner sanctuary with the personalized plea of the Greeks, “I would see Jesus.” Read devotionally not theoretically or mechanically. As we read and study the scriptures, we need devotional reading times too! I may know a ton of theology, which is vital, but not be intimate with the Person behind the theology. Paul's letter to the Philippians is full of great doctrine and great affection. In the opening chapter, Paul is committed to defending the truth of the Gospel (**PHILIPPIANS 1:16**). In chapter 3, he pursues knowing Him who is the Gospel (**PHILIPPIANS 3:10**).

If our reading of the Bible or other books is just to get “Biblically-smart” instead of a single passionate focus to know God and love Him, we are in danger of developing a mind of right doctrine or orthodoxy, but hearts cold and unfeeling toward the God who is both light and love. The indictment to the Ephesians church was not lack of doctrine. It was lack of love for the Head of the Church (**REVELATION 2:1-4**). In the book, which caught my interest and rests on my shelf, the author takes us to a portion of scripture which gives us a very intimate look at Jesus. Invited into the “inner sanctuary” of the Person of our Lord, we will encounter the humble service of our Creator washing feet in **JOHN 13**, be lifted out of discouragement in **JOHN 14**, warmed by the promise of abiding in **JOHN 15**, strengthened by the Spirit in **JOHN 16**, and overwhelmed with Jesus' prayer in **JOHN 17**. If allowed to properly “soak in”, these scriptures will be food and drink for the soul beyond description. Today's nugget is a little different. There will be no practical applications or exhortations to do something, just a special encouragement for us. Special like what Andrew did for his brother Peter. What did Andrew do which was so special? He brought his brother to Jesus (**JOHN 1:42a**). The greatest thing we can do for each other is bring one another to Jesus in prayer and to encourage one another to Jesus in the scriptures. Let's consider adding a daily dose of the Gospels into our lives. Carve out an “inner sanctuary” time each day with an open Bible and pray, “Father, I would see Jesus.”

PRAYER: Father, give us great hunger for the fellowship promised with You, Your Son, and Spirit!

QUOTE: THOMAS BROOKS, “Christ is the most sparkling diamond in the ring of glory.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 25, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**1 TIMOTHY 3:16** - Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of godliness: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated by the Spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: THE REALITY OF CHRISTIANITY.** The individual standing before me was sincere. I knew the depth of her sincerity both in her profession of faith in the Lord Jesus and honesty. When the question proposed came, I wasn't surprised. "What if what we believe is not true?" she said. As I pondered the question, I realized it revealed something every true believer encounters – the real presence of doubt. John Calvin wrote, "Every one of us knows only too well, from his own experiences our difficulty in believing. Everyone's weakness certainly witnesses to many the doubts that steal upon us. The saints frequently stagger in unbelief. Faith is never without its combats for the devil constantly suggests many occasions to incredulity (doubt)." And it wasn't just this great man of God who admitted struggles with doubt. Martin Luther describes graphically his experience with doubt. This account occurred ten years after his celebrated Ninety-five Theses were nailed to the church door in Wittenberg. He was paralyzed by depression and doubt saying, "I was close to the gates of death and hell. I trembled in all my members. Christ was wholly lost. I was shaken by desperation and blasphemy of God." We may not plunge to the depths like Luther. Yet, the reality is we doubt. Saints in the past like Calvin, Luther, Bunyan, Spurgeon, and many others struggled too. Even those close to Jesus experienced this painful trial – "Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. And when they saw Him they worshipped Him, but some doubted" (**MATTHEW 28:16-17**).

Today's reference helps to combat the attacks in our hearts when our Christianity drifts into the realm of "not being real." Our spiritual foes seek to make our relationship with the Lord "not real" by muddling our lives by sight and sense instead of trust and truth. The first thing from Paul's instruction to Timothy is a confession. Be honest with ourselves. The greatest Christian who ever lived didn't hesitate to be so! We don't have the corner on godliness. Paul confesses it is a mystery. Yes, the mystery is unveiled in Christ, but His ways are mysterious. We are headed into spiritual trouble when we think we've got it all down pat! A second help to combat the insinuations by the evil one to doubt is to engage the mind by the spiritual discipline of thinking on Jesus. Not looking inside your heart to find Jesus. I have learned looking inside for evidence is not a good place. The heart is never to be trusted (**JEREMIAH 17:9**). Keep looking inside when doubt comes and that is adding fuel to a fire. We must get outside ourselves, look upward and backward. W. H. Hewitson said, "Faith is the soul's outward, not inward, look. The object on which faith fixes its eyes is, not the heart's ever-varying frames, but the never-varying Christ." Good advice and I would add a backward look – a backward look to the historical reality of our Savior. Notice six "backward looks" Paul gives Timothy and us – 1. Jesus was a real person (**LUKE 2:10-11**). 2. Jesus was justified by the Spirit raising Him from the dead (**ROMANS 1:4**). 3. Jesus was seen by many post-resurrection (**1 CORINTHIANS 15:3-8**). 4. Jesus was shared everywhere (**ACTS 1:8**). 5. Jesus was trusted and lives changed (**1 THESSALONIANS 1:9-10**). 6. Jesus was seen going back to heaven (**ACTS 1:10-11**). Building our faith and thus defeating the attack on the reality of Christianity is greatly enhanced by getting out of ourselves and revisiting the historical reality of our Lord. Yes, we have the witness of these truths in our heart, but it is the objective truth personalized by the Spirit which strengthens the heart and defeats the attacks of doubts. Let's remember to look up and look back when doubts arise!

**PRAYER:** Father, help us to see reality in the unseen world more and more each day.

**QUOTE:** MARTIN LUTHER, "The art of doubting is easy, for it is an ability that is born with us."

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 26, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**LUKE 15:20** - And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: THE PRODIGAL WITHIN.** For everyone fitting the following criteria, today's nugget has absolutely no relevance in your life. Here's the criteria - If you have never stayed awake at night haunted over a bad decision, if you have never ignored sound advice resulting in a painful consequence, if you have never severely grieved a loved one through selfishness, if you have never tarnished a reputation by self-centered living, or if you have never felt completely worthless because of a foolish past, then you are excused. Please put today's nugget in your trash folder. For the rest of us who admit that criteria was shattered and is shattered many times over, read on . . . there is hope.

Speaking of hope, as you read the account of the prodigal son (**LUKE 15:11-32**), notice the boy failed in every point of our criteria to be excused from today's nugget and he found hope. No clicking the delete button by him. I am confident few of us did either. Why so confident? Because the human heart hasn't changed since that ill-fated day Adam and Eve chose self over God. Within every human heart is a prodigal son or daughter. We may say, “Oh, no. I love the Lord. I would never do what he did!” Really? Be very careful using the word “never” in life and especially the spiritual life. Never is a cousin to pride and pride always invites a fall (**PROVERBS 16:18**). Back to the possible whisper, “I would never be a prodigal.” Maybe not physically, but what about spiritually? Ever abuse the grace of your Heavenly Father like the boy did in the parable with his earthly father? We abuse grace when we take for granted God's goodness by lacking a continual spirit of thanksgiving. We also abuse grace by not walking daily with a dependent and resilient spirit to obey His Word. Grace is given in salvation to reconcile us to God and grace is given in sanctification to aid us in obeying God. The prodigal lies within each of our hearts and is always ready to take flight to where he or she thinks is best. Just like the foolish boy in the parable. What do we do when we wake up one day, like the boy in the parable, and realize we have become a prodigal? There may be different levels of being a prodigal, but the reality of life is that at some point, we will all likely be one drifting away from a healthy relationship with our Heavenly Father. Our prodigal experience will be known by an inconsistency of prayer, a lack of diligence in the Word, indifference toward lost souls, and an abandoning of first love for Jesus where He is not THE PRIORITY of life. Being a spiritual prodigal is not difficult to see if we simply take regular inventory, but what do we do when the Spirit makes it painfully clear we are on the prodigal trail and need to come home? Let's not consider the process of coming home. Instead look at the reception by the Father when we do come home. Too often when we are awakened to our spiritual failures we allow guilt and even the feeling of condemnation to question the heart of the Father toward receiving us back. We must dismiss such blasphemous thoughts and, like the boy, allow the Father to be the Father. And how will our Heavenly Father be our Heavenly Father as we race home? Two great responses for our hearts. First the father didn't hold the past against his boy. No mention of it. Imagine how the son felt walking up the street. I wonder how many times he felt lecture after lecture was coming. God doesn't hold past failures against us (**HEBREWS 10:15-17**). A second truth about the father's reception – it was with unconditional love AND rejoicing. He was so glad to see his boy! And when we come home, we get the same treatment (**ZEPHANIAH 3:17**). There is more in the parable, but for now, remember our Father is looking down the road and ready to welcome us when our prodigal inside says, “Enough of this foolishness. I'm going home.”

**PRAYER:** Father, thank you for being an always receiving Father when we come home!

**QUOTE:** JIM ELLIFF, “All true believers are lifelong repenters.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 27, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**PSALM 85:6** - Will you not revive us again, that your people may rejoice in you?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: **WHEN REVIVAL IS NEEDED.** Each of us has favorite authors. It is those writers we gravitate toward who provide spiritual instruction and strong encouragement in our walk with the Lord. And one of the best things we may do for each other is to share those gifted individuals. Remember Paul's personal instructions to Timothy as he anticipated his visit? *“When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, also the books, and above all the parchments” (2 TIMOTHY 4:13).* Can't one just hear Paul, “Hey, Tim. As you pack for the trip, don't forget my coat. I am a tad chilly. And don't forget the books. Gotta have books. And most importantly, ensure you bring the writing paper. I might have a few thoughts I need to jot down.” One of my favorite authors was a 19th century pastor named Octavius Winslow. He was a descendant of one of the leading New England Puritans, Edward Winslow, and ministered extensively in England. He was a gifted preacher and writer producing books which are deeply spiritual and Biblical. By the way, if you want a short list of his books and where to get them, let me know. I would love to share my “friend” with you, but you cannot have my books!

In one of his books, Winslow addresses personal revival. Chapter One is built off **PROVERBS 14:14a** – “The backslider in heart will be filled with the fruit of his ways.” It is the backsliding person in need of personal revival. As we think on the “backslider”, it is prudent to ask the question, “Is it I?” The disciples did so when Jesus announced one of them would betray Him (**MATTHEW 26:20-22**). For the backslider, there will be the “shell” of Christian profession lived in outward faithfulness, morality, even consistency in prayer and Bible reading, but to the honest heart, it isn't difficult to feel the condition, when present, and say, “It is I. I am backslidden.” Winslow identifies some marks indicating when personal revival is needed.

Allow the Lord to use His servant's words from another era to penetrate our souls with revealing power. Winslow identifies this mark in a life needing to be revived, “When the believer has but few dealings with Christ. His blood but seldom traveled to, His fullness but little lived upon, His love and glory scarcely mentioned, the symptoms of declension in the soul are palpable. Perhaps nothing forms a more certain criterion of the state of the soul than this. We will be willing to test a man's or woman's religion, both as to its nature and its growth, by his or her reply to the question, ‘What think you of Christ?’ Does His blood daily moisten the root of your profession? Is His righteousness that which exalts you out of and above yourself, and daily gives you free and near access to God? Is the sweetness of His love much in your heart, and the fragrance of His name much on your lips? Are your corruptions daily carried to His grace, your guilt to His blood, your trials to His heart? In a word, is Jesus the substance of your life, the source of your sanctification, the spring-head of your joys, the theme of your song, the one glorious object on which your eye is ever resting, the mark towards which you are ever pressing?” As we think on Winslow's soul-penetrating words, and in whatever measure they reveal the need for personal revival, incorporate the psalmist's instruction. First, revival is sought not generated – Will You not revive us again? We go to God for revival not a scheduled revival service. And we wait on Him to deliver. A second point of instruction is when God gives revival, there will always be genuine, God focused worship – that Your people may rejoice in You. It is the revived soul that makes for the truly worshipping soul. Do we need revival? Let's answer that question in the prayer closet and maybe my friend Octavius Winslow will help you answer it.

PRAYER: “Father, grant us what we cannot generate – personal and national revival.”

QUOTE: ARTHUR WOOD, “The greatest hindrance to revival is pride amongst the Lord's people.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 28, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**GALATIANS 5:24** - And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT: THE ROOT OR THE FRUIT?** A portion of my front yard turned to dusty dirt replacing the green grass. It looked okay to me. I just viewed it as an opportunity to go down memory lane and those days of playing baseball. It did look like a pitcher's mound on a baseball diamond. I guess for a baseball fanatic it would be okay, but probably not so for a front yard and probably not so for someone else who lives with me. I suggested, “How about a little grass seed? That should do it.” Well, that didn't do it. Our neighbor who has a “green thumb” and knowledge of grass, plants, flowers . . . all that stuff that grows, immediately diagnosed the problem. It was diseased. Cure the disease and then take care of growing grass. My problem was dealing with the “fruit” of the problem and not “the root” of the problem. I could have put a ton of grass seed down and it would not have made one bit of difference. I was treating the symptom not the cause.

We can do that in dealing with sin. Unless we get this right, it will be like throwing down good grass seed on a diseased brown spot. Without the cure, don't expect any good result. So, let's consider sin from the standpoints of the root and the fruit. First, how do we really look at sin in our lives? Not how bad it is, but with the spiritual insight to distinguish between the practice of sins and the principle of sin. Learning this truth is so essential to living the Christian life. We are called, as the Puritan John Owen writes, “to mortify” or put to death sin daily (**ROMANS 8:12-14**). But in order to apply this truth, we need to get a grip on the principle (root) of sin distinguished from the practice (fruit) of sin. This requires us to think because we are prone to deal with the outward acts of sin instead of the root cause of sin. When we commit sin, that is the fruit, but that isn't the source of the fruit. Sins committed flow from our remaining corruption in the heart. And if we don't consistently deal with the root instead of the fruit, we are not going to enjoy freedom in Christ. What happens so often in the defeated Christian is the constant confessing of acts of sin or fruit without addressing the core issue, the root. And without addressing the root, we may become dangerously close to behavioral modification or moral transformation in the strength of self failing to practice today's scriptural truth – dead to sin no longer under its power. My dealing with acts of sin instead of the cause of the acts is like riding an exercise bike – expending a lot of energy, log a lot of miles, and get nowhere. The bike hasn't moved. If I am not dealing with the heart of the issue, but only the fruit of the issue, I will find myself confessing the same sinful actions over and over. This demoralizing experience for the believer is due to a failure to grasp that the Gospel not only pays the penalty of sin, but releases from the power of sin. Paul's instruction to the Galatians helps us attack the root, not the fruit. The verse in today's nugget follows immediately the listing of the Fruit of the Spirit. In order to get the right fruit in life, I need to ensure the wrong root is not taking over the garden of my heart. Paul states we who are owned by Jesus have died to what produces sinful fruit – the flesh. The simple application is this . . . when in the course of the day when the root of sinfulness which remains in us seeks to grow the ugly fruit of sinful acts, do we tell ourselves, “No fruit from you corrupt heart. You died a few thousands years ago with my Lord Jesus. The principle of holiness controls me now not the principle of corruption” (**1 JOHN 3:6, 9**). That is attacking the root, not picking at the fruit, and the result will be the good Fruit of His Spirit!

**PRAYER:** “Father, let us see the whole of life is about the heart. Purify it for Your Glory!”

**QUOTE:** JOHN BLANCHARD, “Sin is not a toy, it is a tyrant.”

## The QBC Daily Nugget May 31, 2010

“The Rules of the Lord are true and righteous. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold” (Psalm 19:9b-10a)

**JOHN 10:1-5** – “Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: **DO WE HEAR HIM?** I didn’t get a long look at them. I wish I could have pulled over to the side of the road and watched them walking up the beaten path. They were a bunch of sheep, in single file, calmly, but purposefully, proceeding to their pen. It appeared they just came out of an open pasture and were heading into the safe haven of the shepherd’s care. As they left my view, I started thinking about how orderly they behaved. It was like they were following orders. Like someone was directing them and the path was well beaten. They had been there before. A shepherd certainly beckoned his sheep home and they followed.

In the Parable of the Good Shepherd, our Lord distinguishes between what His sheep will do and what they will not do. First, the negative or what they won’t do – “A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers” (**JOHN 10:5**). Jesus’ sheep won’t listen to the voice of another so called “shepherd” when it comes to receiving direction or instruction. One of the distinguishing marks of true Christians is the ability to discern “wrong voices” or error over truth. The Apostle John affirms this God-given ability in his first epistle, “We are from God. Whoever knows God listens to us; whosoever is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the Spirit of truth and the spirit of error” (**1 JOHN 4:6**). By virtue of God giving us His Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth (**JOHN 14:16**), His sheep know when a teaching just doesn’t “feel right” in the heart. They won’t be deceived. Another distinguishing truth our good Shepherd says marks His sheep is the positive or what they will do – “The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice” (**JOHN 10:3b-4**). What does it mean to “hear” Jesus’ voice? This isn’t some mystical experience or audible voice coming out of heaven. No, it is the “voice” of scripture, but we must ensure we really know the difference between “hearing” our Good Shepherd and “really hearing” our Good Shepherd. Think about a conversation between two people, maybe a husband and a wife. One party is talking; the other one is “hearing” and may even occasionally nod in agreement. The talking party, to verify if what is being said is actually being paid attention to, may ask for a response. If we are not really “hearing” but give the appearance of hearing, there might be the need for a little forgiveness and re-engagement in the conversation. One can “hear” but not really hear. And it can be like that with the “voice” of our Good Shepherd. Here is the difference – to “hear” the voice of Jesus is to “hear” with an obedient heart and subsequent life. Notice what the sheep do when they hear their Shepherd – they are led by the Shepherd and they follow the Shepherd. These are actions and properly hearing the words of Jesus will lead to obedience. Jesus gives us a very penetrating question in Luke’s gospel, “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?” (**LUKE 6:46**). To hear the Good Shepherd, to really hear the Good Shepherd, is to be like those sheep I observed. They heard and obeyed the voice. The path of their obedience was beaten and clear. Is our path of obedience just as worn and clear?

PRAYER: “Lord, help me to hear Your voice in a world of many voices.”

QUOTE: “To hear the voice of Jesus is to obey the words of Jesus.”