

YOUNG



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PRECIOUS SEED

Edited by
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YOUNG PRECIOUS SEED is a supplement of *Precious Seed International* designed for those young in faith. Its purpose is to restate timeless truths from the word of God for a new generation of Christians and to kindle a biblical approach to current issues in the world in which we live. YPS is published by *Precious Seed International*, Pitcot Farm, Pitcot Lane, Stratton-on-the-Fosse, Radstock BA3 4SX, UK, and is also available separately from the main magazine.

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Editor's Introduction

It doesn't seem long since I wrote the introduction for the February issue of YPS, but here we go again. What delights have we for you in this issue?

Stephen Grant has written an excellent article for us on the life of Moses – he made me think about some aspects of Moses' life that I had not seen before. It makes interesting reading.

I have been persuading some new writers to write for us. I hope you find it helpful. Paul Coxall of Aberdeen talks about how to enjoy eternal life. Do you enjoy it or endure it? – have a read. David Coles of Bath give us a very interesting overview of Paul's letter to the Thessalonians while reminding us of things that should be true in our lives as believers. Paul Robinson of Manchester challenges us about serving God, and Steven Buckeridge adds another article to his current series 'What can I do for God?' This month it's quite simple – read your Bible more. Do we? How often? Every day? Quite a challenge really!

Enjoy,

Stephen



How to enjoy eternal life

By **PAUL COXALL** Aberdeen, Scotland

When we receive a gift, one of the most important questions that we could ask is, 'How can I get the most enjoyment out of this gift?' Hopefully, instructions will come from the manufacturer about how we can enjoy our new possession. The book of Deuteronomy records how the nation of Israel was to possess and enjoy the land that was given to them by God. They had been delivered from cruel slavery, and it was vital for them to know how they could enjoy all that God had given them, so that it might be well with them, Deut. 6. 3.

Although the Christian has not been promised a plot of land, we are the possessors of the greatest gift that could ever be given, eternal life. It will benefit us immensely if we apply three of the principles that are given in Deuteronomy chapter 6 to our lives so that we fully enjoy the precious possession that God has given us.

No 1 – Confession

'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord', Deut. 6. 4, were words of great importance to the Jew. This statement reminded them about the relationship they had with God, and the nature of God. As they were about to enter a land where the current inhabitants worshipped many gods, it was important that they had a firm understanding of the true and living God.

It is also of vital importance that young Christians have a true and accurate view of the Lord Jesus Christ. They go into a world where the Lord Jesus Christ is seen as one of many options. In order to be saved the young believer will have confessed, to God, that Jesus Christ is Lord and that He is the Saviour, Rom. 10. 9. Sadly, they will experience various attacks on the Person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The confession 'Jesus Christ is Lord and Saviour' must be constantly strengthened. The young



believer who engages in the prayerful reading and memorization of scripture will develop a strong confession which cannot be swayed.

No 2 - Command

The command to love, Deut. 6. 5, seems strange to some people. Can we choose to love? Is it not just an emotion? While love certainly is an emotion it is also an act of the will. The nation of Israel had experienced God’s love in rescuing them from the tyranny of slavery. They learned that God had not chosen them because they were the biggest or best, Deut. 7. 7. This knowledge about God would cause them to love Him and enjoy His presence. The believer knows that God is love and that He has shown His love towards them, Rom. 5. 8. A knowledge and appreciation of this love will result in love for God, 1 John 4. 19.

How do we know and show that we love God? By obeying Him! Obedience to the Lord’s words results in the enjoyment of His presence. The Lord Jesus said, ‘If a man love me, he will keep my words and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him’, John 14. 23. The nearness and enjoyment of the divine presence is promised to all who obey the Lord out of love for Him. If we are not enjoying eternal life it could be due

to a lack of obedience, stemming from a lack of love. An increasing love for the Lord will result in obedience and enjoyment of eternal life.

No 3 - Conversation

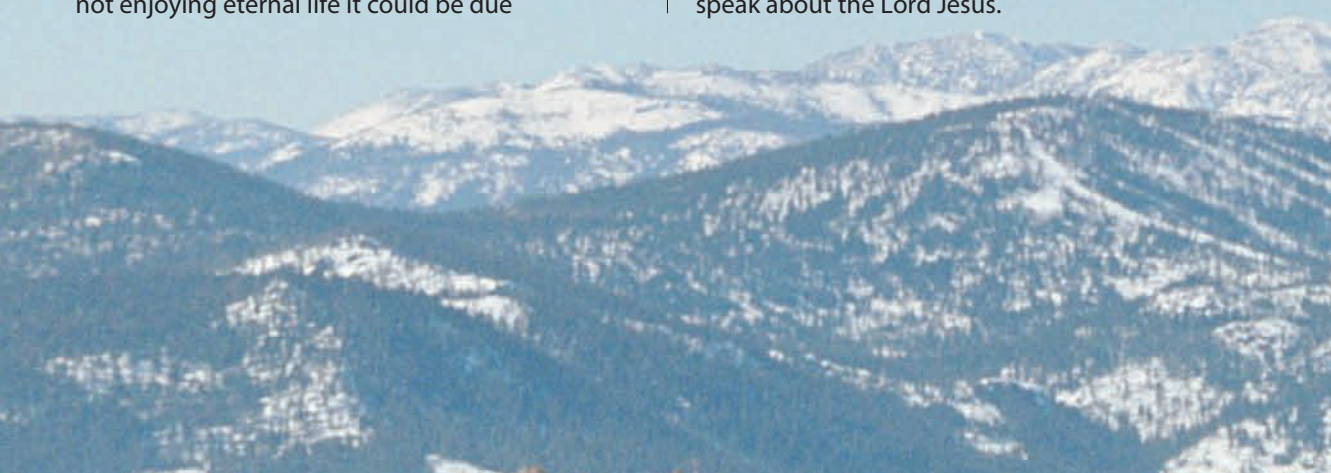
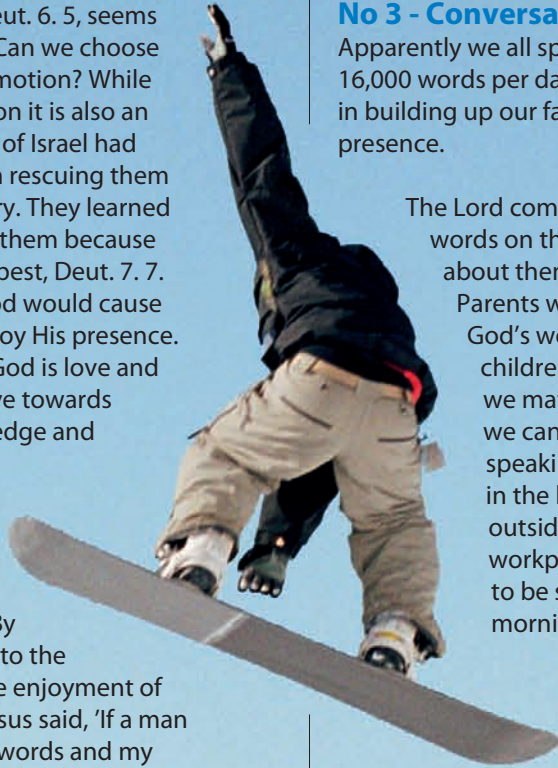
Apparently we all speak, on average, about 16,000 words per day. Speech can be helpful in building up our faith and enjoying God’s presence.

The Lord commanded Israel to have His words on their heart, and to speak about them to others, Deut. 6. 6-7.

Parents were commanded to teach God’s word diligently to their children in the home. Although we may not all be parents, we can follow the principle of speaking about God’s word in the home and when we are outside, in school, college or the workplace. God’s word was also to be spoken about in the early morning and in the late evening.

How many of our 16,000 words are used in speaking about God’s word? If we want to enjoy

God’s gift of eternal life then we should speak to everyone about the Lord Jesus, believers and unbelievers. Experience proves that our words echo back to us, and we are blessed when we speak about the Lord Jesus.



What can I do for God? KNOW YOUR BIBLE

By **STEVEN BUCKERIDGE** London, England

Knowing your Bible is not just something for preachers and academics! God has provided His word for all of us to be fully equipped to live for Him, 2 Tim. 3. 17. He has also given us His word so that we will be like Him, 2 Pet. 1. 4.

What to do?

- Listen to the voice of God speaking though His word - 2 Tim. 3. 16
- Understand God’s will for our lives - Ps. 119. 105
- Eat spiritual food that is essential for growth - 1 Pet. 2. 2
- Have a firm foundation for faith - Rom. 10. 17
- Learn the truth - John 17. 17

Why do it?

- To listen and obey are key things God requires - 1 Sam. 15. 22
- To learn about the one we love most - John 5. 39
- It will help to keep us pure - Ps. 119. 9
- It is vital to be able to explain why we do what we do - 1 Pet. 3. 15
- It’s promises and comfort will keep us going in times of difficulty - 1 Thess. 4. 18
- It will enable us to share what has been a help to us - 2 Cor. 1. 4
- We are privileged to have the whole Bible in our own language, with the ability and freedom to read it. We will have to account for how we have used that opportunity.

How to do it?

Use your hand to remember 7 important ways to get to know the Bible.

- [Hands together as if in prayer] Ask the Lord for help - Ps. 119. 18
- [Thumb, most important] Read it!
- [1st finger] Meditate and think about it - Josh. 1. 8
- [2nd finger] Study it - 2 Tim. 2. 15
- [3rd finger] Memorize it - Ps. 119. 11
- [4th finger] Listen to good teaching - Acts 17. 11
- [Wrist, with vein to heart] Apply it to our lives - Matt. 7. 24

Some practical advice

- I strongly recommend reading the Bible through each year (takes about 15 minutes per day)
- If you don’t think you have time, assess how long you spend reading other things – messages on phone, email, internet, etc
- Access free applications for listening on mobile devices
- Put verses where you often look – a verse on your mobile phone or computer ‘home’ screen is a modern application of Deuteronomy chapter 6 verses 7-9
- If we memorised one verse per week we would still learn only about 10% of the Bible by heart
- Note something each day (be it a question, verse, an encouragement, or challenge)
- Always be asking the question “What is God saying to me today?”

Moses

By **STEPHEN GRANT** Bridge of Weir, Scotland

He was the man that God chose to lead a slave nation from Egyptian captivity through a wilderness to a promised land. He was the Prince of Egypt who became a shepherd, prophet, leader and so much more.

Moses had a spectacular beginning and end to his life. His life ended when God buried him away from the gaze of men, and hid his grave. He was also hidden at the beginning of his life as the precious boy born to Hebrew slaves in Egyptian captivity. The Bible records his family protecting him by putting him in an ark, and placing it in the river Nile. Pharaoh's soldiers were killing Hebrew male children at that time in a genocide aimed at destroying the increasing numbers of the Hebrew slave nation. In a remarkable incident, his life took a dramatic turn when Pharaoh's daughter discovered him in his ark. She made a decision that would change the course of history; she adopted the child.

Adoption

The kindness shown to Moses by his adoption is a lovely early Bible picture of the work of God in salvation. He was a helpless baby under the sentence of death, floating in a river with no one to help. There appears to be no reason for Pharaoh's daughter to act as she did other than compassion. With full knowledge of the racial identity of the child, and the consequences at that time in Egypt, she acted to preserve his life. He was brought into the Royal family of Egypt, and given status and privilege which he could never have attained other than through his adoption. From a baby facing death, he became a son of the King.

Moses was not the only person in the Old Testament to be adopted. Mordecai adopted Esther, and Mephibosheth sat at King David's table as one of his sons.

In the New Testament the apostle Paul wrote, 'For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by

whom we cry out, "Abba, Father". The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God', Rom. 8. 14-16 NKJV.

The Roman Christians to whom Paul wrote were familiar with the concept of adoption in their culture. It was their understanding of adoption that Paul references as he explains the work of God in their salvation. If a father of a household had no son to carry on his name, or was dissatisfied with the sons he had, he could adopt a son from another family. He would choose a son whom he considered to be suitable to inherit his name and estate.

In the Roman culture, it wasn't easy to do this because they had a rule called 'Patria Potestas', which meant 'the rule of the father', and, as long as you were the son of your father, he had total control over you for your whole life until he died. This meant that you had to go through a big process to adopt another man's son.

They had an elaborate system where they would attempt to emancipate one of the children from 'Patria Potestas'. They would then go through a process called 'Vindicatio', where legal status was given to that new adoption, and the son could move from one family to the other to bear the name and the title of that new father. As an adopted son in Roman culture, your father had chosen you. Your adoption cut all links with your previous family and any debts you had were cancelled. You were brought into your new family, with the name and wealth of your new family.

As a Christian you have been chosen by God to be in His family. It was not easy for God to take you from your natural family association, as a son of Adam, but He loved you when you had nothing and has given you His name, wealth and security.

Just as Moses was taken from bondage and fear to become a son of the King, God has taken you out of the bondage of sin and made you a Son of God.



How to have a good testimony by the Thessalonians

By **DAVID COLES** Bath, England

Every committed Christian wants to please the Lord by having a good testimony. But how do we do it? What are the characteristics of a good testimony? How do we keep going with a consistent testimony? These are just some of the questions we might be asking.

1st Thessalonians is a story of new converts who quickly establish themselves as godly witnesses in a wicked world. Paul spends a lot of effort in this book commending them for their faithful witness and encouraging them to grow in their godly testimony.

Life was tough for these Christians, and they weren't perfect, yet, in spite of this, they were on fire for the Lord! As we read about their testimony we must challenge our hearts and ask ourselves the question: What is our Christian testimony like?

There are at least five aspects of the Thessalonian testimony that we can look at:

Chapter 1 They were Faithful

In chapter 1 verses 7-8, we read that they were 'ensamples'. The word means that they were a pattern or model for other Christians to follow. If you were a Christian living in that day and you wanted to know how to live before God you wouldn't go far wrong in following their example! What a testimony they had! I wonder what Christians we would produce if others followed our example?

1 Thess. 1. 7-8, 'So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad'.

Chapter 1 verse 8 tells us that they preached the gospel over a vast area with no tracts, emails,

internet or any other means of communication. They were limited to walking for miles with a burden for souls. But they had a very powerful tool to help them in their gospel endeavours, the 'word of the Lord'. In boldness they 'sounded out the word of the Lord' and many were saved. Sometimes we have trouble getting beyond our own street with the gospel! Let us be encouraged to speak the word of the Lord amongst the unsaved and to be bold in our declaration of the gospel.

Chapter 2 They were Effective

In chapter 2 verse 13, we discover that their testimony was effective because the word of God was effectually working in them. They lived and breathed the word of God, and it resulted in an effective testimony. Unless we read the Bible, study, and labour in the word then our testimony will not be as effective as it could be. Reading and studying the Bible regularly will help us have a more effective testimony.

1 Thess. 2. 13, 'For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe'.

Chapter 3 They were Continuing

In chapter 3 verse 8, we read that Paul was encouraged because they were standing fast in the Lord. Notice, they were not standing still, nor were they going backwards! They were living by faith and they had a great love for those around. Loving others is a mark of true discipleship and a tremendous testimony, John. 13. 35. They were to 'abound in love', 3. 12, and prove that they were committed to a continuing faithful witness. This would make them attractive and give them the opportunity to attract others to Christ.

Chapter 4 They were Holy

At the beginning of chapter 4, Paul writes about pleasing God by walking a godly path. He encourages them to have a sanctified life. Holiness and sanctification are the aim and process of setting us apart to God in contrast to going after the sinful things of the world. In the day and age that we live in there are many things in the world that can spoil our relationship with God and our testimony. Chapter 4 verse 7 teaches that God has not called us to go after the unclean things around us, but He has called us to live holy lives.

1 Thess. 4. 7, *'For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness'.*

Chapters 4 and 5 They were Encouraged

The Thessalonians were undergoing extreme persecution at times, see 2. 14. Some were even being martyred. They needed encouragement, and it came in

1 Thess. 5. 23, *'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ'.*

two ways. Firstly, Paul reminded them that the Lord would be with them in their lives of faithful testimony, 1 Thess. 5. 23. Secondly, they could always have in

mind that one day they would be with the Lord Jesus in a perfect place for all eternity. With these two things in mind they had the encouragement to carry on. It is good to remind ourselves that no matter how difficult life can get, the Lord Jesus can

1 Thess. 4. 17, *'Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord'.*

preserve us. *'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee'*, Heb. 13. 5. It is also good to be aware of the amazing hope that one day we will be taken out of this failing world of sin and be forever with the Lord Jesus. There is no other hope like it in the world!

So, in conclusion, from this challenging book we have every reason and encouragement to live out a good and faithful testimony before others and before God. So what's stopping us?



Serving the Lord in the local assembly

By **PAUL ROBINSON** Manchester, Scotland

Introduction

Serving the Lord is the privilege and responsibility of every born-again believer. When Paul wrote in 1st Thessalonians chapter 1 verses 9-10, he referred to a past, present, and future event in their lives. He reminded them of their past, when they were saved, *'you turned to God from idols'*. He directed their gaze to their future hope, *'to wait for His Son from heaven'*. Sandwiched in between the past, when they turned to God, and the future, when they would be with God, was their life here upon the earth. This life, says Paul, represents a wonderful opportunity for every believer *'to serve the living and true God'*.

The local assembly

An obvious place for all believers, including young believers, to serve the Lord is the sphere of the local assembly. It provides the opportunity to serve the Lord along with other believers, which is an important aspect of service.

When the Lord sent out His disciples to preach the gospel, He did not send them out one by one, but two by two, Mark 6. 7. When the Holy Spirit called Paul to serve God, He did not call Paul alone but Barnabus as well, Acts 13. 2. In his letter to the Philippians, Paul expressed his gratitude for those in the assembly, male and female, who laboured alongside him in the proclamation of the gospel, Phil. 4. 3. Serving together provides mutual encouragement, shares the burden of the work, gives opportunity for learning, and strengthens fellowship.

Each individual assembly is different, but all will offer some opportunities for service. There are the obvious areas, such as various forms of gospel outreach, for example, working with children, leaflet distribution, coffee mornings, Parent and Toddlers, working with ladies, and praying for the work. There are also less obvious areas, such as cleaning the church premises, maintenance of the

building, providing and preparing refreshments for particular occasions, etc. Serving the Lord is certainly not all about preaching.

Young people are the future of the local assembly

The 'natural cycle of life' means that as time goes on the saints in an assembly get older. With this aging process comes a gradual reduction in the ability of aged saints to undertake the work that they have previously done. Without the input from young believers, the testimony of the assembly in the future will suffer. It is the responsibility of younger believers to consider, before the Lord, how they can best serve Him in the assembly, and to be willing to offer to do so. It is the responsibility of the older believers to be willing to share these opportunities with the young, to train them and guide them, and to encourage them to take a greater share of the work.



The rewards of service

As if it were not enough that God has saved us, and has prepared for us an eternal home in heaven, in His grace He has fitted us for divine service, Heb. 9. 14. In addition to this, it also pleases Him to reward us for any service that we do for Him. In the parable of the talents, Matt. 25. 14-30, the Lord assessed the value of His servants work on His return from the far country, and His commendation for those who had used the talents entrusted to them in His absence was *'well done thou good and faithful servant'*.

From this and other passages we learn that everything that we do in service for the Lord will be rewarded at the Judgement Seat of Christ. Any effort that we put in, any time that we spend, any loss that we suffer, is an investment in the Bank of Heaven. This investment will pay dividends for all eternity, Matt. 6. 19-20. How awesome is that!