



Christian Ambassadors, Inc.

# My Brother's Keeper

Volume 13, Number 1, January-March, 2008

## GROWING on the WORD

A scripture study

The Word of God is the source of light, truth, and power, for those who seek it's meaning and apply it to their life. Jesus Christ is the word made flesh, and we seek to follow him.

**John 8:12 (NIV)** – *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

Each issue of “My Brother’s Keeper” features a WORD study. This issue’s Word Study is from Sharon K. Griffiee, Co-founder of CA and Director of Spiritual Growth Ministries.

### Jesus Stands At The Door Knocking

By Sharon K. Griffiee

**Revelation 3:19-20 (KJV)** - *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man*

*hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.*

Through these scriptures the Spirit of God is speaking to the church in every generation bringing discipline and instruction. That means He is speaking to us. The risen Christ is on an urgent quest. He is seeking those who are *zealous*, those who are passionately desirous to repent.

He is on the hunt for those who have come to the end of their rope, and are ready to admit their life is out of control and are in need of His help. Whether someone is imprisoned by physical bars, or by imaginary bars of their own making, it makes no difference. Jesus stands at the door waiting for those *eager* to repent, with the promise,

**Revelation 3:20** - *“...if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.”*

“If any man *hear* my voice,” tells us not only that God wants to communicate with us, but also that He wants to make sure we are listening. If we are not listening

to Him, the relationship will never get off the ground. And our deepest needs will never be met.

### I Will Sup With Him

What exactly is Jesus offering when he says, *“I will come in to him, and will sup with him?”*

To properly answer that question, it is helpful to understand the customs of Jesus’ day.<sup>(1)</sup> The word translated *sup* is *deipnein* and its corresponding noun is *deipnon*. The Greeks had three meals in the day. There was *akratisma*, breakfast, which consisted of no more than a piece of dried bread dipped in wine. There was *ariston*, the midday meal. A man did not go home for this meal. It was simply a picnic snack quickly eaten by the side of the pavement, or in some colonnade, or in the city square.

Then there was *deipnon*, the evening meal. Oh yes - the evening meal. This was the main meal of the day. It was the *deipnon* that Jesus would share with the one who answered His knock. This was the meal to be cherished. What was so special about this meal? It was the one meal of the day that was not hurried in any

way. This was the meal that could be lingered over and enjoyed after the long day's work had been done. This was the meal that Jesus could share with the one who was *listening* to Him; the one who was responding to His voice.

### A Spiritual Meal

Much more than a physical meal, it was a spiritual meal intended to minister spiritual bread. The *deipnon* provided the perfect setting to build a relationship based entirely on the mutual decision of sharing with one another.

*"I...will sup with him and he with me!" (Revelation 3:20)*

Jesus stands outside the door of hearts closed to Him, and gently knocks asking for entrance. At His knock a decision is placed upon us. We can answer the door and let Him in, or we can refuse to answer.

### The Condition of the Heart

Throughout the ages Jesus has been dealing with people about the condition of their heart. Such was the case with an artist by the name of William Holman Hunt. In 1853-54 Mr. Hunt was inspired to paint a symbolic picture of Jesus standing at the door knocking. You may have seen a picture of this famous painting called *"The Light of the World"*. In his painting, we see the figure of Jesus, with lantern in hand, preparing to knock on an overgrown and long unopened door.

According to William Holman Hunt, *"I painted the picture with*

*what I thought, unworthy though I was, to be by Divine command, and not simply as a good subject."*

By his own testimony, Mr. Hunt did not paint Jesus simply because he was a good subject. It was under *divine command* that William Holman Hunt expressed on canvas the significance of Christ's words in Revelation 3:20.



What was so different about this particular painting? People say when he painted it, he asked friends to stop by, take a look at the painting and let him know what *they* thought of it. One of those friends didn't hesitate to speak up and tell him what he thought. After seeing the painting, he told Mr. Hunt that he had left something very important out

of the painting, the *door handle!* He could not conceive of Jesus knocking on a door with no door handle!

I can imagine the scene that must have followed. And the joy that must have crept into William Holman Hunt's voice when he replied to his friend with such conviction,

*"This door is a picture of the human heart, and the handle is on the inside!"*

Jesus stands at the door of the *human heart* and knocks. But, handle or no handle, you might say, He's God! Why doesn't He just come on in?

Because Jesus is a gentleman! There is no way that Jesus would break into our space and take over our lives against our will; He must be invited in. A thief on the other hand, wouldn't give it a second thought. A thief wouldn't bother with knocking, he would simply force his way in, bullying, throwing his weight around, violating our space.

Jesus teaches us the difference,

*John 10:10 (KJV) - "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."*

### Zealous to repent?

The abundant life Jesus wants us to have, can only be received if we open the door of our heart and let Him in; not temporarily, but permanently.

**John 15:4 (NIV)** – “Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.”

As long as Christ is standing on the outside, separated from us by a wall of human pride, anger, rebellion, coldness, indifference - there can be no fellowship, no intimacy. No relationship.

Granted, there are people who want Jesus to come in and change everything around in their life and get them back on track. That is goodness as far as it goes. The problem is; they will only give Him a few minutes, a few hours, a few days at most to do it in! And if their life hasn't changed immediately they will go back to living their life the way they were before, shutting Jesus out.

Consider again the symbolism of the three types of meals people had in Jesus' day. The one that Jesus wants to share is the *deipnon* or main meal of the day. The one that could be lingered over, not with temporary, but lasting joy. The promise that Christ “will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me” is symbolic of His loving response to the one who is zealous to repent. This supper is intended to be a celebration of the restoration of fellowship.

### Where is your heart?

As Christians, can we honestly say we are zealous to open the door of our heart; to share the *deipnon* meal with Jesus? Can we honestly say we are eager to take whatever time it will take to confess our sins,

receive God's instruction, cleansing, and healing?

Unfortunately, in our instant society, too many of us take on the hurried mentality of the world. We don't want to bother with the main meal. We prefer that Jesus meet us on the run for a quick midday meal, so we can hurry back to *our* schedules; do what we want to do. We don't want to spend any more time than we have to, to get some quick answers from Him. There is one thing seriously wrong with that attitude. Jesus is King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Holy, spotless Son of God, the Savior of the world. He is not a genie, a magic spirit who takes on human form to serve our every whim, at our beckon call.

**In summary:** The exalted, risen Christ is on a quest. He stands at the door knocking, seeking the hearts of those who are *zealous* to repent. Jesus is not going to come in and force us to be what He wants us to be. The door handle is on our side. It is up to us to *hear* His voice, open the door, and invite Him in to receive His blessed promise;

*“If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.” Revelation 3:20 (KJV)*

*Ref. Note (1): Daily Bible Study Series, The Revelation of John, Volume 1, William Barclay, 1976*



## Cycle of Destruction and How to Break It

By – Eva Fry

Many of us get caught up in the tragedy of our lives. We get full of anger, hatred, resentment, pity and all of the other negative emotions because of what people or life has done to us. We then often seek for ways to comfort our pain; alcohol, drugs, food, pornography, gambling, sex, etc. We find we're in a cycle of destruction.

It's as if Satan gets a chain around our neck and will pull us down to hell.

Before we are utterly destroyed, we must create for ourselves a “life-changing event!” We must become an observer of what is happening to us. We must stand back from our life, as if watching a movie, and see what is happening and where we are going. We must then muster up every ounce of strength we have left, to humble ourselves enough, to ask God to help us.

**Hebrews 4:16 (NIV)** – *Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.*

We need God to help us break that cycle of destruction and create that life-changing event.

We must make commitments to him and to ourselves and to do

everything we can to get back to the life Our Father In Heaven intended for us. We must then start a new healthy and happy cycle, so we can have the joy and happiness of reaching the potential God created inside of us.

**John 10:10b (NIV)** – “...I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.”

Satan will tell us all kinds of lies. He will tell us we are not worthy, we are nothing, that we deserved what happened to us and worst of all, that no one loves us and that even God doesn't love us.

These are all lies so Satan can get control of you.

The truth is that you are a child of God and GOD LOVES YOU!  
YOU MUST LEARN TO LOVE YOURSELVES, AS HE LOVES YOU!

The reality of this life is that God has allowed us each our own FREE AGENCY to choose what we will, in life. He never forces us to do anything, and often we have to live the consequences of the bad choices others make, as well as the bad choices we make.

**Deuteronomy 30:19-20a (KJV)**  
“...I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life...”

We can allow the bad experiences to destroy us or use them as motivation for a better life.

God blessed us with amazing gifts, talents, abilities and potential. He has a plan for each of us, and a mission for us each to fulfill. He expects us to use what we have learned to help save ourselves and to help save his other children, our brothers and sisters.

**Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV)** – “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Each experience we have in life, good or bad will help us reach that potential.

**I Corinthians 10:13 (NIV)** – No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

The evil force in life will destroy us, if we allow it, but God is always there for us to give us the strength, help and inspiration to survive, to overcome and to win! It is all up to us.

With God's help all things are possible! Be A Winner In Life!

*Note: Scripture references added by the editor.*



## ***What Do I Do...?***

By Larry Thompson

... when I find myself surrounded by an overwhelming feeling of helplessness?

I still myself in the assurance that I am not alone, and, that GOD is in Control.

... when I think that the pain of my present trials & tribulations are too much for me to bear?

I humble myself in the knowledge that The Son of God endured pain immeasurable on my behalf when He allowed himself to be, “...sin for us, ...that we might be made the righteousness of GOD in Him.” (2 Cor. 5:21)

... when I find myself crying in the still of the night, praying that tomorrow will bring peace and freedom from all of my fears?

I rejoice in the knowledge that my prayers are not only heard, but they are answered. I rejoice in the understanding that, “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear...” (1John 4:18). I rejoice in the promise of GOD, Who, has said from the time of old, “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy GOD: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.” (Is. 41:10 & 43:1b)

... when I have a burning desire to fulfill the law of Christ?

I call to mind His commandment; for it is written: "*This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you.*" (**John 15:12**). I recall the wisdom of the Apostle Paul, who taught, "*Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.*" (**Romans 13:8**); and also, "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*" (**Gal. 6:2**)

... when I can't see beyond my own limited understanding of the vastness of GOD?

I stop looking for answers with the eyes of my flesh and allow myself to truly see HIM through the eyes of my soul. I appreciate all the more that as Christians, as the children of GOD, "*For we walk by Faith, not by sight.*" (**2 Cor. 5:7**)

... when I need to be reminded of what my self-worth is?

I remember this, above all else; "*For GOD so loved the world, that HE gave HIS only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*" (**John 3:16**). That's what I do when I need to know just how truly loved I am.

... when I need the answers to life's proverbs?

I look to The WORD, where I find comfort in The Truth; for it is written: "*For we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth.*" (**2 Cor. 13:8**)

Amen.

### *I am a Soldier in the Army of God*

By - Ellis Chen, Vacaville CA

I used to be a soldier in the army of human. Now I am a soldier in the army of God. Jesus Christ is my commander-in-chief. The Holy Bible is my code of conduct. Faith, prayer, and the Word are my weapons of warfare. I was trained by the Holy Spirit, tried by adversity, and tested by fire. I am a volunteer in this army and I am enlisted for eternity. That means I will not get out, sellout, be talked out or pushed out.

I am a soldier in the army of God. I am faithful, reliable, capable, and dependable. If my God needs me, I am there 24/7.

I am a soldier in the army of God, not a baby. That means I do not need to be pampered, petted, powdered, pumped up, picked up, or pepped up.

I am a soldier in the army of God. No one has to call me, remind me, write me, visit me, entice me, or lure me.

I am a soldier in the army of God, not a wimp. No one has to send me flowers, gifts, food, cards, candy, or give me handouts. I do not need to be cuddled, cradled, cared for, or catered to.

I am a soldier in the army of God and I am committed. Nothing can hurt my feelings bad enough to turn me around; nothing can discourage me bad enough to turn me aside; nothing can pressure me bad enough to cause me to quit. When Jesus called me into this army I had nothing. If I end up with nothing I still come out ahead. I will win because my God has and will continue to supply all my needs.

I am more than a conqueror. I will always triumph. I can do all things through Christ. Devil cannot defeat me; people cannot disillusion me; weather cannot weary me; sickness cannot stop me; battles cannot beat me; money cannot buy me; government cannot silence me; and hell cannot handle me.

I am a soldier in the army of God. Death cannot destroy me, for when my Commander God calls me from this battlefield; He will promote me and then allow me to be a ruler in His Kingdom.

I am a soldier in God's army marching and claiming victory. I will not give up or turn around, because I am a soldier marching Heaven bound.

*Always Remember...Jesus is in Your Boat*

Written by - Merissa Lee Kelley, September 10, 2006

Imagine your life as a boat on the water...you're sailing along just fine  
Rhythmic waves...a gentle breeze...and the sun does nothing but shine  
Clear blue skies that go on forever...no agendas or schedules to meet  
Yep, you're a winner...no doubt about it...but wait! Hold on to your seat!

Out of nowhere, the wind picks up and the waves begin to churn  
You grip the sides and hang on tight, till your muscles start to burn  
Rain is pelting...lightening strikes...and the sky has changed it's hue  
It seems as if the storm's alive and intent on drowning you

Everything you thought would hold you...is coming up quite short  
And you don't have the strength it takes to make it back to port  
Ankle deep in chilly water...you struggle to stay afloat  
But you were never going to sink...for Jesus is in the boat

How quick we forget, that he's nearby and aware of the storms we face  
He isn't standing on the shore...he's on board to give you grace  
When you're frantic...he is calm...when you're fearful...he brings peace  
And at his voice, the wind and waves can do nothing else but cease

Even the disciples started to panic as the storm intensified  
"Teacher, please save us...we're going to perish!" is what they fearfully cried  
Jesus was sleeping, but they were so scared, they simply forgot to take note  
That the very one who could master the sea...was right there in the boat!

Three of the gospels tell this story and each one makes it clear  
When you're focused on your "raging storm"...the end result is fear  
Jesus Christ will be your anchor...so remember where he stands  
He's by your side and in control and will lead you to dry land

Faith in the midst of stormy skies isn't learned in just one day  
It matures as you grow stronger and trust him...come what may  
So when the enemy starts his junk, so he can sit and gloat  
Just remind him that you are sailing...with Jesus in your boat!

Inspired by a sermon, by Pastor John Mroz  
Mark 4:37-41

### *Sharing the Good News*

“We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

*II Corinthians 5:20-21*

**From: Frank M.  
Calipatria State Prison  
Calipatria, California**

Dear Sharon, I just wanted to say your teachings are so on track and are helping me mature! Thanks for being here for us. I love your newsletter.

Love you guys, Frank

**From: Richard J.  
Corcoran State Prison  
Corcoran, California**

Dear Christian Ambassadors, Please add me to your mailing list! I was sent Lesson 38 [of your] Spiritual Growth Lessons, “Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?” and My Brother's Keeper, October-December 2007 [issue]. I much enjoyed both of the above mentioned items. May God Bless you in your ministry!

Thank you!  
Sincerely yours, Richard

**From: Israel C.  
Red Onion State Prison  
Pound, Virginia**

Dear Sister Griffiee, Greetings in the matchless name of Christ Jesus. I pray this reaches you, finding you and your staff walking in His Grace and love. Amen!

I'm writing, having read one of your lessons passed on to me by my best friend and brother, Jeffro and would like to be on your mailing list if this is possible. It would be a blessing for me.

I was blessed to have the unmitigable privilege to come to Christ about 7 months ago, and since then the Lord has blessed me to write 195 songs of worship, unique in every way. Praise Him!

You will be on my prayer list and I ask that you pray for me as well. God Bless you all!

In Christ's eternal love, Israel.

**From: Mark D.  
Fishkill Correctional Facility,  
Beacon, New York**

Dear Brothers and Sisters, I'm going to tell everyone about God's glory. And I will show the love that God has given me. Sin may have brought us down, but it can't keep us down. Someone paid the price for what we all did. His name is Jesus. The most wonderful friend I've ever had. No one could ever do what He has done. Thank you sister

Sharon for allowing us to share our love for our Savior. I pray that God blesses each and everyone who reads this. Don't give up, because He didn't give up on us.

Note: I saw how you put the articles on-line. That was a blessing. My family has started reading your on-line Newsletter.

Thank you.  
Your Brother in Christ, Mark.

**From: Ira B.  
State Correctional Smithfield,  
Huntingdon, Pennsylvania**

Dear Christian Ambassadors, It is through this letter that I want to thank you for your continued prayers and timely Scriptural Lessons. They have been a great help and inspiration to me as I fight the temptations surrounding me here every day in prison.

I would ask for your continued prayers. Your prayers will help me on my way, knowing all things work together for good for those who love God.

I wanted to send something to show my appreciation at this time of year when God gave us the greatest gift of all, His Son Jesus. I'm sending a poem I've written. I hope God showers the ambassadors with many blessings though out the year.

In His love, Ira.

**From: Sharon and Alan Griffiee,  
Christian Ambassadors,  
Colorado Springs, Colorado**

Dear Brothers and Sisters, We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your prayers and continued support of Christian Ambassador's ministry to the imprisoned. We also want to thank you for submitting your gospel centered articles, inspirational writings, poems, and testimonies. They have generously served to bring honor and glory to Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit we look forward to realizing the plans God has for all of us in the New Year of 2008. His works must be exalted!

*Great are the works of the LORD, they are pondered by all who delight in them. Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever. Psalm 111:2-3 (NIV)*

In Gospel Bonds,

*Alan and Sharon*

**My Brother's Keeper**  
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Inspirational articles, especially from current or former prison inmates, are invited and will be prayerfully considered for publication. Please write to request a copy of the publication guidelines before submitting an article for consideration.

**Vision Statement** - Christian Ambassadors exists to bring the ministry of Jesus Christ into the lives of people, demonstrating how the gospel teachings can help a person live a more abundant life, filled with joy, hope, and purpose.

If you, any member of your family, or a friend, are imprisoned, wanting to find new hope, purpose, and direction in life, please contact us at Christian Ambassadors. Our website can be visited at: <http://www.christian-ambassadors.org>.