



Christian Ambassadors, Inc.

My Brother's Keeper

Volume 23, Number 1, First Quarter, 2018

GROWING on the WORD

A Scripture Study

The Word of God is the source of light, truth and power, for those who seek its 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.”*

John 12:46 (NIV) – *“...No one who believes in me should stay in darkness.”*

Each issue of “My Brother’s Keeper” features a WORD study. This issue’s Word Study comes to us from Sharon K. Griffiee, Co-founder of Christian Ambassadors, Inc.

Value Your Life, God Does!

By: Sharon K. Griffiee

In the December “Spiritual Growth Lesson”, *Jesus, the Long-awaited Messiah*, we shared the great joy of the people who had waited expectantly for the prophecies of the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, to be fulfilled. Precious Jesus, God’s only begotten Son, was sent directly from heaven that he might demonstrate through his life-blood, the extreme value he places on human life. Without doubt, the reason Jesus left all of his

heavenly privileges, to come to earth in the form of a man, was because he saw the human suffering and desired above all else to bring spiritual release to those he loved.

After years of preparation, growing in wisdom and stature, the time had finally come for Jesus to begin his earthly ministry. On the Sabbath day, without hesitation, he went to the synagogue in Nazareth and stood up to proclaim his rightful mission. He stood and read from the book of the prophet Isaiah.

Luke 4:18-19 (NKJV) – *“The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”*

After closing the book and giving it back to the attendant, he sat down. While all eyes in the synagogue were fixed on Jesus he said,

Luke 4:21 (NKJV) – *“Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”*

Although the people in his hometown of Nazareth marveled at his gracious words, they began to question Jesus’ authority.

Luke 4:22 (NKJV) – *“Is this not Joseph’s son?”*

Jesus responded to their accusation by saying,

Luke 4:24 (NKJV) – *“Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own country.”*

Filled with wrath, the people rose up against Jesus and led him out to the brow of a hill, so that they could throw him off the cliff. Though

they attempted to kill Jesus, he miraculously escaped and walked right through the angry crowd and went his way. See: Luke 4:28-30

The accusers could not stop Jesus from fulfilling his mission, though his authority continued to be questioned, especially by the Pharisees, the religious rulers of Jesus' day.

The Pharisees' Teaching or Jesus' Teaching

It is no small thing to say that the Rabbis were put out with Jesus and his method of teaching. It angered them to the core, that people who showed contempt for them and would not set foot in the synagogues, flocked to be near Jesus, listening intently to every word he spoke.

The Pharisees believed Jesus should follow *their methods* of teaching. After all, they viewed themselves as the educated, refined, and preeminently religious. The truth is, they were stuck in their religion. They were trapped in the carnal letter of the law, in the outward show of religious conviction. They looked upon anyone who did not keep the petty details of the law as rank outsiders, as people to be avoided at all costs. They even believed that a person could become defiled if they were found to be in contact with those outsiders, those sinners.

Jesus denounced their false religion as utterly detestable to God. Jesus severely condemned their deceit, pronouncing *woe* upon them.

Matthew 23:27 (NKJV) – *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.”*

The Pharisees may have appeared beautiful on the outside with their strict religious conformity, but they were corrupt and decaying on the inside. Certainly, it offended the Pharisees that *Jesus' method* of teaching was to seek sinners out, not to avoid them like the plague. With his great love, Jesus longed for sinners to be saved. The Pharisees, filled with malice, choked at the thought of sinners being saved. They did not want sinners to be saved, but to be destroyed!

They believed sinners should get what they deserved for breaking the law. It was the Pharisees sick thinking and deceitful religious practices that drove people to Jesus, hungering for the spiritual nourishment they craved.

Jesus Outshines the Pharisees

- Instead of feeling they were worthless and unredeemable, in Jesus' sweet presence sinners sensed escape from the chains of sin.
- Jesus welcomed sinners with open arms, acknowledging that even though they had strayed, they had not been forgotten by the Heavenly Father.
- In Jesus' presence sinners comprehended His great love and compassion for them. This was totally opposite from the cold treatment they had received from the Pharisees.

As Christians, whether we are out in society or incarcerated behind prison walls, we should never forget the value Jesus places on each of our lives. Every soul is precious to God. We at CA are reminded of this truth, time and time again. We were blessed when Clark, a former inmate from Washington State wrote and said,

“I have and will continue to take time every day to pray for those who are still inside. I cannot pray for them by name, but I know them by their concerns...As you know many people think the worst of those of us that have done time to any degree. I’m glad to see that you recognize our value and have dedicated so much effort to us. God bless you and your ministry.”

Jesus Speaks Truth, Aimed at His Opposers

On a certain occasion the tax collectors and sinners had drawn near to Jesus to hear his teaching. They felt welcomed in His presence. The Pharisees and scribes, however, were up to their usual complaining, because Jesus was receiving sinners and tax collectors. They were disgusted because Jesus was even seen eating with them. So, Jesus took the opportunity to speak to them.

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

Luke 15:4-7 (NKJV) – *“What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost! I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”*

The situation Jesus described in this parable was a common one. One hundred sheep was considered to be a normal-sized flock. Considerable care was taken to count the sheep every night to make sure they were all safe.

Jesus is always concerned about the lost sheep. If the lost sheep is not brought back to the fold, it will wander aimlessly until it perishes.

II Peter 3:9 (NKJV) – *The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.*

When the shepherd discovers that a sheep is lost, he is anxious and grieved, because sheep that have strayed from the fold are the most helpless. Nervously, he recounts the flock to see if he may have miscounted the first time. Confirming the count to be accurate, the shepherd then senses the urgency to go in search of the lost sheep, for he knows the sheep cannot find its way back on its own.

Likewise, when a soul wanders away from God, it is divine love that comes to his rescue, for he could never find his way back to God without His merciful guidance.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, always takes the initiative in seeking out the lost. Jesus, our Savior, desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (See: I Timothy 2:4)

I know without a doubt, that Jesus enjoyed sharing this parable with his listeners when he ministered to them in person. Hearing the truth, many in the crowd gratefully accepted Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Of course, Jesus was overjoyed for the souls who were heaven bound.

Luke 15:7 (NKJV) – *I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.*

Rejoicing breaks out in heaven when one sinner repents and is saved. In the same way, brothers and sisters, God's people on earth should rejoice when one lost person turns to Christ! Amen.



A Gentleman

By: Kathryn Clement
FMWC, North Las Vegas, Nevada

I have found a gentleman.
One who walks beside me, holds
my right hand, talks with me along
the way as I travel through the day.

He is my defender, shelter in the
storms, a protector, puts angels in
charge of me and encamps me
through the day.

He tells me I am His own,
He rejoices gladness over me,
He smiles and finds favor over me.

I am blessed, blessed, blessed, going
in and going out, blessings are chasing
me and will overtake me. He showers
blessing of the fruit of the Spirit.

This gentleman is my Husband, Maker,
Creator, Adonai, Master, Ownership of
me. I am His. He is mine. Signed,
sealed, delivered. I am His. Ephesians
4:30. His name is Jesus Christ,
Holy Spirit, my “Daddy” Abba Father.

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: Thomas M.
Federal Correctional
Estill, South Carolina**

Dear Sister Sharon,

It is my hope and prayer that this letter finds you all at Christian Ambassadors well and blessed. I want to express my appreciation to you for the encouraging letters and “Spiritual Growth Lessons” that you have provided to me throughout the last 5 years of this incarceration. I do pray that the Lord will reward you abundantly.

This last lesson, “*Recidivism – A Revolving Door*” really touched me, as I am to be released in less than 2 months, December 13, 2017. Praise God!

Just like the brother or sister who wrote you in the letter, I too am sick of being in and out of jails and prisons. I’m even more sick of falling into the enemy’s traps, and your lesson has reminded me that there will be traps, but my Lord and Savior has made it possible to overcome them.

I humbly ask that you and all of my brothers and sisters of Christian Ambassadors, would please keep me in your prayers, asking the Father to give me wisdom and strength to overcome sin and temptation, and to help me to live a life of obedience to Him on the other side of these walls and fences.

Your ministry is a blessing and I praise God for you! Thanks for your time and prayers. May our Father richly bless you all.

In our Savior’s Love, Thomas

**From: Jeffrey M.
Wallens Ridge State Prison
Big Stone Gap, Virginia**

Dear Alan and Sharon,

It has been awhile since I’ve written to you, my fellow Christian Ambassadors!

In a separate envelope, please find a money order that I’ve sent to help cover my tithe and offering for the year. I usually send postage stamps, but I figured you could use some money to help buy paper and envelopes.

I pray for your ministry often as your mailing list continues to grow! Several of us that I know, really look forward to “My Brother’s Keeper” and your letters with the “Spiritual Growth Lessons”!

Keep up the good fight soldiers! To hear King Jesus, say, “Well Done...” will make it all worth it! See: Acts 20:24 (NKJV)

Until next time,

God Bless you! Jeffro

**From: Jason W.
Five Points Correctional
Romulus, New York**

Dear Sharon,

I got a peek at your newsletter, “My Brother’s Keeper”, and loved it! It was easy to read, understand, and had a powerful message.

I would like to be put on your mailing list to receive your publication. Keep up the good work of the Lord. Thank you.

God Bless! Jason

**From: John T.
RJ Donovan State Prison
San Diego, California**

Dear Alan and Sharon,

Greetings from our blessed Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Peace I leave you as He gives it to me.

I got your publication [My Brother's Keeper, 4th Quarter, 2017] and I was surprised to see I [my testimony] was in there.

I love your publication, all the people sharing, etc. I found the article, "*What Choice Do I have?*" by Alan Griffiee, to be especially enlightening. Keep up with the essays, etc. on Christ's love for us.

Take care and I'll be looking forward to the new year and new publications.

Love, John

**From: Alexander G.
TDCJ, Larry Gist Unit
Beaumont, Texas**

Dear Brother, Alan Griffiee,

Hi, how are you doing? I hope and pray this letter finds that you and Sharon are in very good health in Jesus' name. The same goes with everyone who is there at Christian Ambassadors, Inc. As for me, well, I'm doing just fine thanks to God.

I'm writing to thank you for "My Brother's Keeper", Volume 22, number 4. I really liked and enjoyed Alan's piece, "*What Choice Do I Have?*"

I'm afraid people don't see God as Sovereign anymore.... too many people have gotten off the wrong path.... [People in] today's world has made too many bad choices.... we all need to change before Jesus comes to reclaim the earth. We need to become more like God and stop living like the evil one wants us to live.

May God bless you. Keep up the good work you are doing in Jesus name.

Faithful reader, Alexander

**From: Ronald G.
Colorado DOC
Canon City, Colorado**

Dear Christian Ambassadors,

I have a new address. Thanks for all the newsletters and for sending them to me. The one person that started [me] with [receiving] the Christian Ambassadors newsletters was Lois Wise. I was happy to get them without asking [her for them]. Lois and Jim Wise have [since] passed away. They lived on the same street I did. My mom, Clara, passed away in June 2016, one month short of her 94th birthday.

Thanks a lot, Ronald

**From: William O.
California DOC
Tehachapi, California**

Dear Sharon,

Thank you for your dedication on continuing to send [Christian] literature to me. My faith is strong and is without question.

I see a constant problem in prison, people preach a real strong message and turn around and not walk the talk. So, I stand alone in my faith. I live by my deeds and nothing else.

Will you please continue to send me your messages? Thank you.

Your loyal friend, Willy



Dreams

By: Guy Baker
California State Medical,
Vacaville California

This dream came into existence from meditation and prayer. It started with a vision of a mural being painted in Heaven. I saw someone with a painter's palette full of different colors. That person was mixing colors by dipping a brush from one color to the next to create the perfect hue for the mural in Heaven. The picture was a picture of mankind. The colors being mixed to a perfect hue were individual people. The painter was our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who takes His paintbrush and mixes each and every person with others that we meet, in order to blend us to that perfect character-tone to be Christ-like. Some character-tones are stronger than others, like being strong in faith, while others are fragile, like being humble. As we are being mixed, hanging onto the bristles of His paintbrush to be blended to His perfect hue, I saw some people not wanting to be mixed with others, having no desire to be Christ-like in the empyrean (Highest Heaven) of God's Glory.

The effect of the dream was so realistic; it changed my whole outlook on life; on how others have affected my life, soul and spirit; and on what effect I may have had on others. Knowing that my life is being mixed with others around me, I now ask myself, "What perfect character-tone is He using from others, for me to become more Christ-like?" or, "What will He use from me to illuminate others to become more Christ-like?" In this way He gives us the perfect hue (character-tone) to be put in the right spot in the mural in Heaven.

The dream was overwhelming. I daily feel more compassionate towards others, knowing that we may be side by side in the mural in Heaven, complementing each other with our perfect hues.

As God says, "Well done, my good and faithful servant." I now know what a saint is! They are people who let the light shine through. In other words, saints are people like us who have the high calling of serving God, while reflecting our relationship with Him wherever we are and in whatever we do. If we are fulfilling our calling, we will look like people who, maybe without even realizing it, are letting the rich colors of the love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control of God, shine through. So, what then do you see in your mirror? And how and what are the character-tones that you are reflecting?

Prayer: Lord, You are the light of the world. Thank You for wanting to shine Your light in our lives. Cleanse us today, so that we may let Your light shine through us. Amen.



Publication Update

Sharon and I send our greetings in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We love sharing the gospel of Hope and Peace with each of you, and over the past 23 years we have striven to make the newsletters and lessons a little brighter by adding color.

Unfortunately, the color has to go. We send the lessons and newsletters to inmates in more than 300 prisons across the United States. Many prisons are now prohibiting colored paper or colored ink on the material we mail to you. We cannot selectively choose who gets color and who doesn't, so we must change our mailings to black and white only.

Alan Griffee

The Solution to a "Brown Bag day"

By: Merissa Lee Kelley
September 8, 2003

Have you ever had one of those days, when everything's a drag?
And you feel about as colorful as an "ol' brown paper bag"?
When deep inside, you yearn to fly...to soar among the stars,
But doubt sets in and keeps you grounded exactly where you are?

You don't fit in...you stand way out...you feel so out of place
Those are times you need to look in the mirror of His grace
You've lost your way...you don't belong...you don't have strength to stand
Those are times you need to hold onto God's mighty hand

God is waiting with arms outstretched...for a leap of faith from you
While you may see an "old brown bag", God sees what is true
Designed...created...fearfully made...unique in every way
Loved so deep...loved so strong...more than words can say

Crafted by God's loving hand, we were meant to shine His light
But we must change the way we think, to truly do it right
The peace He gives, unlocks the chains that try to keep us bound
It's only by complete surrender that we'll ever leave the ground

"Not my will...but yours be done", is a "flesh burner" through and through
But it will get the "old brown bag" mentality out of you
It's not His will for us to view ourselves as worthless junk
It's not His way to keep us down or set us up to "flunk"

When we place our trust in Him, our potential will increase
Free to be what He intended...surrounded by His peace
In His word, He reveals His plans for each and every one
If love could be described by color...then it's the color of the Son

So, when you have a "brown bag day", remember what to do
Just close your eyes in prayer to see God's awesome point of view
And if a rainbow is a splendid sight in the heavens up above
Then an "old brown bag" ...just can't stay drab...when it's colored by God's Love

"But the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love...May your unfailing love rest upon us, O Lord, even as we put our hope in you." Psalm 33: 18 & 22

Give it to Jesus

by: Ronald McClary
Maury Correctional, Maury, NC

Cast your cares upon him because he does care,
every burden you are carrying he is aware.
There is no need to be stressed or to worry,
or filled with anxiety, foreboding, in a hurry.

Give it to Jesus, his yoke is easy and burden light,
for he is strong in power and in might.
Surely, he is able to lighten your load,
an empty cart going down the road.

Freed from trepidation, a sense of relief,
an undoing of the moor, a release.
He is ready, willing and able to shoulder it all,
every worry, burden, fear, be it big or small.

Jesus, the caretaker and keeper of our soul,
we are worth much more to Him than fine gold.



My Brother's Keeper

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Sharon K. Griffee, Senior Editor

Alan W. Griffee, Production Manager

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Inspirational articles and poems, especially from current or former prison inmates, are invited and will be prayerfully considered for publication. **Please 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, a 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>