

A vintage-style silver condenser microphone is mounted on a black boom arm. The microphone has a cylindrical body with a mesh grille at the top. On the side of the body, there is a control panel with several knobs and switches, including a gain knob with markings for 80, 0, and 40, and a pad switch with markings for -10 and 0. The background is a solid dark blue color.

**Think
About It!**

James L. Barton

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INTRODUCTION

While I was minister of First Christian Church, 4800 Franklin Road, Nashville, Tennessee I wrote these “Think About It” articles for our weekly newsletter. I used them as a three minute spot on WIZO radio station in Franklin, Tennessee. It was sponsored by the Sandlin Drug Company of Franklin and played four times daily, at 6:00a.m./ 12:00 noon, again at 6:00 p.m. and at the station’s sign-off time which was usually around 12 midnight.

I would read the first sentence. It would be followed by a commercial announcement. I would say, “I’m Jim Barton, minister of First Christian Church, 4800 Franklin Road in Nashville, Tennessee. I’ll be back to talk with you again after this word from the Sandlin Drug Company.”

The Announcer would sign-off with the final commercial at the close of my final words, “THINK ABOUT IT”. Notice: I am not necessarily asking the audience to agree with me. I am just asking them to THINK ABOUT IT.

If you can use any of these “THINK ABOUT IT”, I would be honored that you used them.

ACHIEVING GREATNESS

“True greatness is achieved by faithful service to the benefit of mankind.”

Many people have the idea that achieving certain high positions in life automatically make those who occupy these positions great people. Some sober thinking will remind us that this is not true. Adolph Hitler occupied a great position as Chancellor of Germany. But, today no one will stand up to declare him a great man. When he occupied a great position he misused and abused his power and influence to the peril of a nation that sat passively by until it was too late for them to stem the tide. The destruction wrought by the man who occupied this high position had occurred.

The disciples of Jesus, James and John, came to Him seeking positions of greatness. They were perceptive enough to realize they had aligned themselves with a person who was great. But, they were blinded to the reasons for His greatness. Though, He had told them many times He came to serve and not to be served.

It does take us mortals a long time to learn a very simple lesson. “Let him that would be greatest among you be the servant of all.”
THINK ABOUT IT.

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS

“The resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead is one of the most significant facts of history.”

Everything that Jesus said or did stands or falls with the facts about His resurrection.

The Apostle Paul declared that if Christ be not risen, both preaching and a Christian's faith is empty and meaningless. The disciples of Jesus were guilty of perpetrating the greatest hoax in history, if Christ was not raised. If there is no truth to the resurrection story, those dead and those still living having placed their faith and confidence in Christ are to be pitied.

The enemies of Christianity claim the story of Christ's empty tomb and His resurrection was a hoax cunningly devised by the disciples of Jesus in order to save face. Peter emphatically denied this in his second letter, chapter one, verse sixteen. He said, “We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty.”

Nothing but the truth of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead could account for the undeniable influence that these men had upon the world. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

“Spiritual growth like physical growth is the result of living in harmony with the love of God.”

Many Christians struggle so-so-hard to live a “good Christian” life. They want to do the “right” thing. They feel so discouraged when progress toward Christian maturity seems non-existent. Frustrations and anxieties often drive them to the point of severing connection with the spiritual power supply. Death is the result.

Let’s learn a lesson from the fruit trees. Did you ever see an apple, pear, or a cherry tree out there in the orchard straining, grunting and groaning all over the place saying, “I’m growing apples”, or “I’m growing pears”, or “I’m growing cherries?”

No, of course you haven’t. They just “hang-loose” and the fruit just seems to grow all by itself. An invisible source of power permeates the tree and the fruit is evidence of this power.

Christians who strain, grunt and groan about how hard it is to live the Christian life would do well to realize that the secret of a productive life lies in “hanging loose” but connected to the life giving power that produces in us the fruits of the Spirit. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

ROLLING THE STONE AWAY

“To roll a stone away is not too much of a problem for God.”

As Mary Magdalene, Salome, and Mary, the mother of James, approached the garden tomb early on the resurrection morning their question was “Who shall roll away the stone?” Though they realized they were not physically capable of rolling it away themselves, they did not become discouraged or turn back in a pessimistic attitude. They kept on going, not having the answer to their own question. That is faith.

As we make our journey through life, we are going to encounter many problems and difficulties. Many times we will ask, “Who shall roll the stone away?” The fact that we don’t have all the answers is no reason to quit going forward. If we have to have all the answers before we venture out, we’ll never go anywhere. Our problems may prove to be the building blocks of our life if we don’t despair, give up, turn back or quit. Someone said, “Stumbling blocks can become ‘stepping-stones’ if used rightly.”

Let us not forget what God has done for us when the crisis is past, the problem solved, and our stone rolled away. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

THE BREAD OF LIFE

“To eat The Bread of Life is the greatest privilege ever given to man.”

One day Jesus had been invited to a feast. During the meal a man seated next to Him remarked how great it would be to “eat bread in the Kingdom of God.” It was obvious that this man did not understand what it meant to “eat bread in the Kingdom.”

To help him understand, Jesus told a short story about a man that prepared a feast. When it was ready he sent servants to say, “Come, the feast is ready!” People began making excuses and begged to be excused. The master was angry. He sent his servants to invite the social outcasts, and still there was room. Finally, he sent his servants into the highways with instructions to compel them to come in, so his house would be full.

The meaning of this story is quite obvious. God is the Master who extended the invitation for all mankind to become Christians by accepting Jesus, The Bread of Life, regardless of who we are, what we have done. God wants His house to be full. Have you accepted His gracious invitation or are you still making excuses? **THINK ABOUT IT.**

THE DESIGNER OF LIFE

“The Designer of life made life a challenge to strengthen us
and not to defeat us.”

Temptations, struggles and trials of life can challenge the best in us or they can ruin us. It all depends upon our attitude toward them. Fortunate indeed is the person who meets life's challenges with a faith and determination to win.

A poet has written, “For every hill I've had to climb, For every stone that bruised my feet, For all the blood and sweat and grime, For blinding storms and burning heat, My heart sings with grateful song---These are the things that made me strong:

For all the heartaches and the tears, For all the anguish and the pain, For gloomy days and fruitless years and for the hopes that live in vain, I do give thanks, for now I know, these were the things that helped me grow.

‘Tis not the softer things of life which stimulate man's will to strive, But bleak adversity and strife do most to keep man's will alive. O're rose-strewn paths the weaklings creep, but brave hearts dare to climb the steps!” THINK ABOUT IT.

SEEKING TO UNDERSTAND

“Seeking to understand and extending a helping hand is the alternative since the Divine right to judge was not given to men.”

Mary Clements wrote: “Pray don’t find fault with the man that limps or stumbles along the road, unless you have worn the shoes he wears, or struggled beneath his load. There may be tacks in his shoes that hurt, tho’ hidden away from view. Or, the burden he bears placed on your back, might cause you to stumble too.

Don’t sneer at the man who is down unless you have felt the blows that caused his fall---or felt the shame that only the fallen know. You may be strong; but, still the blows that were his, if dealt to you in the selfsame way at the selfsame time, might cause you to fall too. Don’t be too harsh with the man that sins, or pelt him with words or stones, unless you are sure, yea, doubly sure that you have no sins of your own. For you know perhaps if the tempter’s voice should whisper as softly to you as it did to him when he went astray, it might cause you to falter, too.” THINK ABOUT IT.

UNCLE REMUS SAID

Uncle Remus is credited with the saying, “If you can’t say something good about someone, then don’t say anything at all.”

The writer of the proverbs said, “Words fitly spoken are like apples of gold in baskets of silver.” He was simply saying words of encouragement and appreciation are more valuable than gold to a person who needs them.

“How it would help in the work of the day, as we pass by, on the busy highway, to have someone say, without much ado: ‘You know, I heard something good about you!’

When you’ve bestowed comfort to those in pain, or cheered one who’s lost, to take heart again, it helps when you’re weary, to hear someone say---‘I heard something good about you today.’

When you have suffered the undeserved luck, and harsh words around you fall fast and thick, a friend comes and says when you’re feeling so blue: ‘You know, I heard something good about you!’

And when I have traveled the last rugged mile, I know there is One who will give me a smile, and say from a heart so kindly and true: ‘Come in!’ I know something good about you!” **THINK ABOUT IT.**

HELPING THOSE IN NEED

“Helping those in need is the responsibility of every Christian.”

Almost everyone at some time or another finds himself in need of help. Perhaps the burdens of life have become too heavy to carry and he has fallen beneath the load. Maybe it is a situation in which he suddenly and unexpectedly stumbled along life’s way. When this does happen, it is the responsibility of other Christians to do what we can to help.

The temptation to “pass-by-on-the-other-side”, or excuse ourselves by pleading, “We don’t want to get involved,” will be very great. As Christians we are under Divine obligation to “Bear one another’s burden, and so fulfill the law of Christ.” That law is the ‘Law of Love.’ Like the song says, “What the world needs now is love, love, and love.” The kind of LOVE that looks for ways of being constructive.

One purpose of the church is to strengthen, encourage, and help each other as the need arises. The strong must help the weak. To condemn or judge is not our prerogative. When a man is down he needs a helping hand, not a kick in the teeth, especially not from those who claim to be Christian. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

MOUNTAIN-TOP EXPERIENCES

Our “Mountain-top” experiences provide inspiration and encouragement that are helpful in meeting the challenges of life.

Like Peter, we have all had our “Mountain-top” experiences that prove to be “moments to remember”. Our lives may take some strange and unexpected twists and turns before they are over. Woven into the fabric of life are joys and sorrows, successes and failures, ups and downs.

The poet wrote: “My life is but a weaving between my God and me; I may not choose the colors, He knows what they should be; for He can view the pattern upon the upper side, while I can see it only on this,---the underside.

Sometimes He weaveth sorrow which seemeth strange to me; but, I will trust His judgment, and work on faithfully; ‘Tis He who fills the shuttle, He knows just what is best, so I shall weave in earnest and leave with Him the rest.

At last, when life is ended, with Him I shall abide, then I shall view the pattern upon the upper side; then I shall know the reason why pain, with joy entwined, was woven in the fabric of life, ---that God designed.” THINK ABOUT IT.

JESUS WAS MORE THAN A MAN

To believe that Jesus of Nazareth was just a man is more difficult than...

To accept the fact that He was the Only Begotten Son of God and the Savior of man. “He was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. He grew up in another village. He worked in a carpenter shop until He was thirty, and then for three years He was an itinerant preacher. He never wrote a book, held an office, or owned a home. He never had a family, or went to college, or, put His foot inside a large city. He never traveled two-hundred miles from the place where He was born. He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness.

He had no credentials but Himself. While He was still a young man, the tide of public opinion turned against Him. His friends ran away. He was turned over to His enemies. He went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed to a cross, between two thieves. While He was dying, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth; and, that was His coat.

When He was dead, he was laid in a borrowed tomb, through the pity of a friend. He rose from the dead, making it possible for others to have eternal life. I am well within the mark when I say, Of all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the Kings that ever reigned, all the parliaments that ever sat, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as has this One Solitary Life.” THINK ABOUT IT.

KEEP ON, KEEPING ON

Those who excel and succeed in life are those who “Keep on,
Keeping on.”

Someone wrote these words of wisdom, “Measure a man by the opposition it takes to discourage him.” The difference between success and failure is often the determination and faith to “stick-it-out” and “hand-in-there.”

“When things go wrong - as they sometimes will. When the road you’re trudging seems all up hill. When the funds are low and the debts are high, and you want to smile; but, you have to sigh; when cares are pressing you down a bit, rest if you must---but, don’t you quit.

Life is strange with its twists and turns as every one of us sometime learns, and many a failure turns about, when he might have won had he stuck it out. So, don’t give up, though the pace seems slow. You may succeed with just another blow.

Success is failure turned inside out---the silver tint of the clouds of doubt; and, you never can tell how close you are; it may be near when it seems afar. So stick to the fight when you’re hardest hit --- it’s when things seem worst that you- must- not- quit.” THINK ABOUT IT.

MATHEMATICAL PROOF OF CREATION

“By an unwavering mathematical law it can be proven that our universe was designed and created by a great engineering Intelligence.”

In his book entitled, “Man Does Not Stand Alone”, A. Cressey Morrison, former president of the New York Academy of Science writes, “Suppose you put ten pennies, marked from one to ten, into your pocket and give them a good shuffle. You try to take them out in sequence from one to ten, putting back the coin each time and shaking them all again. Mathematically we know that your chance of first drawing number one is one in ten; of drawing one and two in succession, one in one-hundred; of drawing one, two and three in succession, one in one-thousand, and so on. Your chances of drawing them all, from number one to number ten in succession, would reach the unbelievable figure of one in ten-billion.

By the same reasoning, so many exacting conditions are necessary for life on the earth that it could not possibly exist in proper relationship by chance.”

The Psalmist was perceptive when he observed that, “Only the fool would say, in his heart, there is no God.” THINK ABOUT IT.

FORGIVENESS

“Forgiveness is a grace of which the person forgiven should not be too presumptuous.”

Just because a person is willing to forgive another person a wrong is no reason that the one forgiven should take advantage of the graciousness of the forgiver.

Certainly, Jesus taught that a person should forgive seventy times seven, meaning an unlimited number of times. Refusal to forgive destroys the person refusing to forgive and not the person in need of forgiveness. The person in need of forgiveness has already opened the flood gates of personal destruction upon himself by his foolish actions.

King David of Israel committed the terrible sins of covetousness, adultery and murder. Later, he cried out to God for mercy and forgiveness. We have every reason to believe that the Lord answered his pleading and forgave him. But, the Lord's forgiveness did not undo the damage already done or erase the consequences of the chain reaction his former conduct had inevitably set in motion.

Though the Lord, in His infinite grace and mercy, is willing to forgive the most heinous crime, the scars of that sin may always remain. THINK ABOUT IT.

THINK AND BE THANKFUL

“The reason most people do not express THANKS is because they do not THINK.”

When Jesus healed the ten lepers only one returned to express his thanks. Certainly, the other nine must have been as grateful for the healing that had come to them. They, too, were privileged to return to their families and begin living again. The difference is that the one stopped to THINK and then express THANKS. The nine made the same mistake then that the majority of people are still making today, not THINKING and not THANKING.

We have so much for which to be thankful that we should give a few moments each day to stop and count our blessings. The subtle temptation that comes to us all , in this hustle, bustle world we live in today, as we rush and push to get things done, is that we don't take time to think. Little wonder, we have as much, and seem so ungrateful.

With eyes to see the sunset glow, with legs to take us where we would go, with ears to hear what we would know, why, oh why, are we so slow to express our praise to God from whom all blessings flow? THINK ABOUT IT.

IT'S NOT WHAT YOU EAT

“It’s not what you eat---it’s what eats you---that may be causing many of your aches and pains.”

Centuries before modern psychiatry discovered that carnal emotions were important factors in the causation of many psychosomatic diseases, the Bible condemned these emotions and provided a cure for them: “The activities of the lower nature are obvious. Here is a list: “sexual immorality...hatred...quarreling...jealousy...bad-temper... rivalry...factions...party...spirit...envy...drunkenness...orgies and things like that...” “Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its emotions and passions.” Galatians 5:24.

Dr. William Sadler, impressed by the close connection between “sinful activities of the lower nature” and many diseases wrote: “No one can appreciate so fully as a doctor the amazingly large percentage of human diseases and suffering which is directly traceable to worry, fear, conflict, immorality, dissipation, and ignorance-to-unwholesome thinking and unclean living. The sincere acceptance of the principles and teachings of Christ with respect to the life of mental peace and joy, the life of unselfish thought and clean living, would at once wipe out more than half the difficulties, diseases, and sorrows of the human race.” THINK ABOUT IT.

BROTHERLY LOVE

“Brotherly love can do more to strengthen the Christian Community than anything else in the world.”

The Hebrew writer admonished, “Let brotherly love continue...” This phrase suggests two things: First, that brotherly love existed. Secondly, that there was danger it would fail if not encouraged.

Brotherly love was to be the identification badge of the Christian Community. Jesus said, “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” Criticism, resentment, jealousy, and such like within the Christian Community can snowball if we become careless in our love for one another.

Certainly, the church is weakened when members don't measure-up; but, excommunication or the cold-shoulder is not the solution. Jesus gave a warning in the parable of the wheat and tares to this point. “Let both grow together...lest while you gather up the tares, you root up also the wheat with them.”

I once knew a man who seemed so concerned that the church be kept pure that he organized a “witch-hunt”. His method of purifying the church became more destructive to the fellowship than the problem he imagined existed. Brotherly love always purifies and strengthens. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

SELF-IMAGE IS IMPORTANT

“A person’s self-image is extremely important toward achieving success in life.”

Someone wrote: “When you get what you want in the struggle for self and the world makes you king for a day, go to the mirror and look at yourself and see what that GUY has to say.

For it isn’t your father or mother or wife whose judgment upon you must pass; the fellow whose verdict counts most in your life is the one staring back from the glass.

He’s the fellow to please, never mind all the rest, for he’s with you clear up to the end; and you’ve passed your most dangerous and difficult test if the man in the glass is your friend.

Oh, you may be like Jack Horner and chisel a plum, and think you are a wonderful guy; but, the man in the glass says you’re only a bum if you can’t look him straight in the eye.

You can fool the whole world down the pathway of years, and even get pats on the back as you pass; but, your final reward will be heartaches and tears, if you’ve cheated the man in the glass.”
THINK ABOUT IT.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE IS A BATTLE

“The Christian Life is a battle to fight.”

The death shadows lengthened over the Apostle Paul as Nero, the Roman Emperor, initiated his persecution against the Christians. As one of the most prominent spokesmen for Christianity, Paul knew his earthly time was short. With a confident sense of satisfaction he wrote: “I have fought a good fight...” The Greek word he used for “fight” was “agon,” from which we get the English word “agony”. The idea is that the Christian Life is a fight, a struggle or a contest in an arena.

The Christian’s fight takes place in the arena called “LIFE”. It is not to be a physical struggle, one man against another; but, a spiritual contest against the forces of evil.

If you are nothing more than a “Sunday-Go-To-Meetin” Christian you really don’t know what it’s all about; or, “Where-It’s-At.” The real contest takes place, not in the sanctity of the sanctuary; but, in the toil and sweat of the market place, and in the stress and strain of the home. The Christian’s struggle is not just on Sunday at church, but twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. Church attendance aims at keeping us ‘fit-to-fight.’ THINK ABOUT IT.

CHRISTIANITY: A RELIGION OF JOY

“Christianity, properly understood is a religion of Joy.”

Many times people get the idea that becoming a Christian is to decide to quit living. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Jesus came that we might have life abundantly.

Some people think Christians can't have any fun. They contend the Bible is full of "Thou Shalt Nots". All the minus living in this world doesn't add up to the kind of plus living that Jesus demands. Salvation is not a matter of what we don't do. It is what God has done for us through Jesus.

Some worship services often give the impression that Christians are just sitting around waiting to die so they can go to heaven. Dying and going to heaven is a worthy idea. But, there is a lot of living to do between now and then for most of us. To fail to live with a sense of joy could be a denial of the faith.

Christians have reasons for rejoicing. God loved us and set His Son to save us. He invited us to share in His work. Nothing can separate us from His love. Why shouldn't we keep on rejoicing?
THINK ABOUT IT.

A SMILE IS AN ASSET

“A smile is one of the most valuable assets we possess.”

“Give and it shall be given unto you,” Is a Divine principle that is true in every area of life. It is true of the tangibles and intangibles. Try giving a smile away just to test the proof of this universal principle. Have you ever thought about the value of a smile? It enriches those who receive, without making poorer those who give. None is so rich or so mighty that he can get along without it. A smile creates happiness in the home, fosters good will in business, and is the countersign of friendship. It brings rest to the weary, cheer to the dis-couraged, sunshine to the sad.

Nobody ever added up the value of a smile. We know how much a dollar is worth, and how much is a mile. We know the distance to the sun, the size and weight of the earth. But, no one has ever told us yet how much a smile is worth.

Some people are too tired or troubled to give you a smile. Give them one of yours as none needs a smile so much as he who has no more to give. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

HEARER OR SPEAKER?

“The effectiveness of any sermon depends upon the hearer as much as the speaker.”

To be critical of a speaker is the prerogative of every individual. It is an occupational hazard that every speaker must accept. As the late President Truman put it, “If a man can’t stand the heat he ought to get out of the kitchen.” This is one reason why the scriptures give this warning. “Be not many of you teachers.”

From any measurement, Jesus was the greatest Preacher-Teacher ever known. People were astonished at His teachings. At the height of His fame as a healer and miracle worker, multitudes traveled for miles to hear Him. But, the time came when these crowds turned away, shaking their heads as they left, muttering to themselves, “This is hard to understand. He doesn’t turn me on!”

The criticism against Him and His teachings revealed more about the listeners than it did the speaker. These critics would have been wiser had they listened a little harder.

When living water is being poured out, no matter how poor the pitcher, to be pitied is the person dying from thirst because he scornfully refuses to drink from such a disdainful pitcher. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

THE BIBLE'S INDESTRUCTIBILITY

“The Bible is the only Book that man has never been able to destroy though he has often tried.”

What other, than the fact that the Bible is the written Word of God and has enjoyed the protection of Divine Providence, could explain its existence?

No other book in all the world has been the object of such vitriolic hatred as has the Bible. Men have tried to ignore it, and even destroy it. Yet, its influence on society cannot be denied. Jesus declared that heaven and earth would pass away but His Word would never pass away.

“Last eve, I passed beside a Blacksmith’s door, and heard the anvil ring the vesper chimes; then looking in upon the floor, I saw old hammers worn with beating years of time. “How many anvils have you had?” said I. “to wear and batter all those hammers so?” “Just one,” he said, with twinkling eye. “The anvil wears the hammers, don’t you know.”

And so thought I, The Anvil of God’s Word for ages skeptic’s blows have beat upon. Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard, the Anvil is unharmed --- the hammers gone.” THINK ABOUT IT.

LAYING ASIDE THE WEIGHTS

“Laying aside the weights, running the race of life with patience and keeping our faith firmly established in Jesus will guarantee success in Christian living.”

The Hebrew writer admonished, “...lay aside the weight and the sin that so easily besets us...” Hebrews 12:1-2 Past accomplishments can be weights that hold us back. The great temptation is to rest upon past achievements and say, “Look what I have done!” To allow personal failures and feelings of guilt can also be a retardant to our spiritual growth.

Life is not a “Bed of Roses” or a “Disneyland.” It has been described as a RACE to be run. Hebrews 12:1 says, “...run with patience...” Often, the difference between success and failure is steadfast endurance or the ability to “stick-in-there” when the road is rough and the going gets tough. There are many mountains to climb in our journey through life. God allows them for our development and good. Climbing the mountains can make us strong. Human beings may disappoint us because we are creatures limited by time and the flesh. We must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. THINK ABOUT IT.

JESUS: GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

“Jesus, the Christ, is God’s plan of salvation.”

Man’s salvation is an act of God’s grace, a free and undeserved gift from God. God is not willing that any should perish, but He will not force man to accept His gift of eternal life. Man must respond in faith. Thus, it is necessary for someone to proclaim the good news of God’s grace. When it is preached, man is confronted with the challenge to respond in faith. There are facts to be believed, commands to be obeyed, before promises can be enjoyed. There are no racial, political or economic restrictions. Jesus said, “Whosoever WILL may come.”

An affirmative response to the grace of God will manifest itself in acceptance of the facts of Christ’s atoning death on the cross, and His resurrection from the grave. It will cause the respondent to change his direction and follow Christ, confessing His name, being immersed in water according to His command, that he might be raised from the waters of baptism to walk in a newness of life. The faith that responds to the grace of God remains the daily motivating power in the Christian’s journey throughout life. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

LIFE'S BEST DEAL

“Being a Christian is the best deal a person can ever make.”

Jesus gave the keys to successful living in words and by demonstrating these principles in His own life.

First, He recognized God as the source of supply. From Genesis to Revelation the Bible declares God is the giver of every good and perfect gift. Paul wrote, “My God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in Glory in Christ Jesus.” God often uses men as the means or channels through whom He supplies these needs. But, God is **THE SOURCE**.

The second key to success is to give. We must give before we can expect to get, just as the farmer must give seed to the ground before he can expect to get a harvest. The seed he gives to the earth will be multiplied back to him. This is the inevitable law of the harvest.

The third key to success is to expect a miracle. We are inclined to think of miracles as only those things that happen for which we have no rational explanation. God wants to help us succeed. He is in the business of working miracles every day. **THINK ABOUT IT**.

COMMUNION: A DIVINE MEMORIAL

“Communion is a Divine memorial instituted by our Lord and was to last until His return.”

Memorials honor the persons for whom they were erected. Jesus said, “This is my body which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me.” He took the cup and instructed, “This do ye...in remembrance of me.” There is no magic, mystery or absolution from sin in the Lord’s Supper. It is a memorial that pays tribute and honor to the Lord. When our manner of observing the communion fails to pay tribute and honor, it loses its spiritual significance.

Memorials perpetuate the memory of significant and historical events. Each time I take communion I think of Jesus dying for me, in my place, for my sins, that I might be justified. I rejoice that God looked beyond my faults and saw my need. I pray, Lord help me to BE better so I can DO better.

Memorials guarantee that those living and those yet unborn shall have cause to learn, and contemplate events that are considered worthy of remembering. Communion properly observed causes us to remember the sinfulness of men, God’s love, and the sacrifice of Jesus. THINK ABOUT IT.

MINISTRY: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY MEMBER

“The ministry of the church is the responsibility of every member.”

Often, when we talk about the church today, people think in terms of a building or a denomination. The church existed 300 years before buildings or denominations such as we know today. The church described in the Scriptures was composed of people who had committed themselves to Jesus, as the Christ. They were empowered by the Holy Spirit. The responsibility of each Christian was determined by the special gift that he possessed. Certainly, no one was expected to teach who did not possess the gift or ability to teach. No one was expected to give who did not have the ability to give. But, each member was expected to function in the church according to his ability.

The Christian concept of the church was that of a body, and was referred to as the Body of Christ. Each member had a specific function. When each member did his particular job the church was performing its ministry in the world. God was glorified. The members were experiencing the joy of being alive in Christ.

When Christians begin assuming the role of spectators instead of participators the performance of the body is proportionately affected. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

WORRYING: AN EXERCISE IN FUTILITY

“Worrying is an exercise in futility.”

People worry today about a lot of things. Just name it, and somebody will worry about it.

There is a thin line between concern and worry. We should be concerned; but, we are urged by our Lord not to worry. Just as a lack of concern is wrong, so it is wrong to be overly concerned beyond the point of being able to do anything about the problem. This degree of concern is what I classify as worry. We might compare it to the extreme tension on a piano wire. When it is too tight or too loose it is out of tune. When the proper tension is applied, it is on pitch.

Worrying is needless because it cannot erase the past or unlock the future. It is injurious because it adversely affects the whole man.

Dr. Barclay wrote: “The worry which wears out the mind wears out the body along with it. Worry affects a man’s judgment, lessens his powers of decision, and renders him progressively incapable of dealing with life. Let a man give his best to every situation --- he cannot give more --- and let him leave the rest to God.” **THINK ABOUT IT.**

PROBLEMS COULD BE STEPPING STONES

“Your problems may turn out to be stepping stones to a more abundant life.”

Anyone with any awareness of life in our times will admit that we are plagued with problems on every hand. A pessimistic attitude prevails, and many people are convinced that it doesn't matter what we do. “nothin's gone to turn out right.” There never has been a generation, since the beginning of time that has been free from problems. Beginning with Adam and Eve to this present day, problems have presented themselves, demanding that we reckon with them. Job declared in his day that, “man is of few days and full of troubles.”

To say, there will always be problems, is not being pessimistic. Experience has taught us that we solve one problem only to turn around and face another. Many a man has learned, too late, that changing one wife for another was only changing one set of problems for another set.

How we deal with the problems of life is more significant than the problems themselves. Are we going to face them squarely and defeat them or are we going to let them defeat us. Take courage, if God be for us who can be against us. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

TRUE GREATNESS

“True greatness is achieved by being rather having.”

It is unfortunate but true; the world tends to measure greatness by what a person possesses. Though I know better, I must confess, I am still caught up in the aura that is impressed by the house a person lives in, the car driven, the clothes or jewelry worn, or the position held. Material possessions neither make a person great nor keep him from being truly great.

Our moral and spiritual character is God’s measuring stick for true greatness. Jesus said, “Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man’s life consists not in the abundance of the things he possesses.” We tend to feel that if we could be so fortunate so as to accumulate valuable possessions, such as houses, cars, wealth and social position, we could automatically become great. Not so!

I was impressed with President Nixon’s statement to the audience assembled at the new Grand Ole Opry opening Saturday, March 16, 1974, when he said: “The greatness of America is not only in her military power and wealth, but particularly in her moral and spiritual character.”

Individuals of high moral and spiritual character make nations great.
THINK ABOUT IT.

IMPRESSIONABLE WORDS

“The most impressionable words that a person speaks are often his last words.”

Do you remember the last words spoken by a close friend or relative that left a lasting impression upon you?

The final words of Jesus, recorded by Matthew are extremely significant and worthy of our close attention. These words are recorded in the last five verses of his gospel. First, Jesus assured them of His power. It had been demonstrated by His works and miracles during His earthly ministry. His power was acknowledged by many.

Secondly, Jesus gave them the great commission. He told them to preach, baptize and teach. They were told to share the message of salvation in Christ. Christian baptism was an expression of commitment and surrender to the Lordship of Jesus. They were to teach the believers to observe all that Christ had instructed them. Thus, the perpetuity of the church was insured.

Thirdly, Jesus promised them His presence. He said, “Lo, I am with you always...” It is comforting to know His presence when we are weak, when we are strong, when we are right and when we are wrong, in our joy and in our pain, when we lose and when we gain. THINK ABOUT IT.

HARVEST IS COMING

“Harvest time is coming and the Lord has a job for each
of us.”

Jesus gave a parable about a land owner who went to the market place and hired laborers to work in his vineyard. The question he asked them was “Why stand ye...idle?” This is a question we all should consider.

We stand, as it were, in the market-place of life. For some, who are young, it may be early in the morning. For those who are older, it may be the eleventh hour.

The question comes to each of us, “Why stand ye...idle?” Is it because no one has told us that God has work for us? The message of the Bible is that God has a job for each of us. The call comes to young and old alike. The call of God is not just a call to salvation; it is also a call to service. **NOW!!!**

Why Stand Ye...Idle? Is it because we don't want to work? If so, consider the personal joy and satisfaction that doing the Lord's work brings. Properly understood, working for the Lord brings the greatest joy and satisfaction one can experience in life. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

ETERNAL LIFE

“Eternal Life” is ours only when we surrender completely to the will of God.

The Rich Young Ruler came running to Jesus in quest of eternal life. He already possessed so many admirable qualities that no one would have suspected the emptiness and restlessness within him. His life was out of tune and he knew it even though no one else did.

His question, “What must I do that I might inherit eternal life?” was more than a desire to go to heaven when he died. He was asking, “Good Master, what must I do to find meaning and purpose to life NOW in time as well as ETERNITY. Like so many church goers, this young man was forced, by Jesus’ question; to realize that there is more to “eternal life” than not doing certain things or ritualistically observing commandments. How easy it is to know about God and yet not know God, to have a form of godliness but deny the power of God in our daily living.

Jesus’ love for him made communication possible. Jesus leveled with him to tell him that he was selfish, egocentric and that to have “eternal life” he must become God-centered. THINK ABOUT IT.

GETTING RID OF EVIL

“It is not enough just to get rid of evil in our lives; we must fill our lives with Christ.”

Some people think that all that is necessary to make them “good” is just not do anything “bad.” They assume, “Since I don’t smoke, drink, cuss, chew or go with girls that do, I am automatically a good person.” The Pharisees’ concept of goodness was based upon the negative perspective of life. Jesus denounced them time and time again. He told about the prayers of a Pharisee and a Publican. The self-righteous Pharisee prayed, “I thank you that I am not like other men, extortionists, swindlers, adulterers, or even like this Publican...” But the Publican prayed, “God, be merciful to me a sinner.” Jesus declared the Publican went away justified more than the Pharisee.

The purpose of the law was to show man how crooked he was in order to drive him into the arms of Jesus who ALONE is able to save.

So long as we see ourselves as “good” we will probably not recognize our need for Jesus to save us and fill our lives. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

RELIGIOUS OR CHRISTIAN

“Being religious is no guarantee that you are a Christian.”

The dictionary defines a religious person as one who is: “A member of a religious order; one who is pious; devout; exact; scrupulous.” With this broad definition, it is easily seen that it is entirely possible to be religious and yet not be a Christian.

Before Paul’s conversion to Christ, he was a prime example of a religious man, (a Pharisee of the Pharisees) but, he was not a Christian. Later, when he was preaching Christ in Athens he saw that they, too, were a very religious people. Historians report that there were more idols in the sophisticated-cultured-intellectual city of Athens than there were people. Paul said to them, “I perceive that you are very religious.” ... But, they were not Christian, not saved. He urged them to repent and accept Jesus as the way to God and eternal life.

In most other religions men seek to find God and appease Him by their own works of righteousness. In Christianity, the gospel reveals that God loved the unlovely and sent His Son, Jesus, to seek and to save the lost. God may be using this message to find you. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

AN AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY

“Teaching is an awesome responsibility.”

The admonition give by James, chapter 3, verse 1, “My brethren, be not many teachers, knowing we shall receive the greater condemnation...,” is not intended to discourage Christians from aspiring to teach. A close examination of this text reveals that James is concerned that Christians recognize that teaching is an awesome responsibility.

Those of us who teach should seek to communicate truth. Jesus declared that He was The Truth. Our task as teachers of the Word is more than a matter of getting people to accept correct doctrines about Jesus. Our task is to lead people to walk in a personal relationship with Jesus. There is always the temptation presented to the teacher to insist that people conform to his opinions or personal prejudices.

Those of us who teach should be an example of that which we teach. This is not always easy. Teachers are human too. James insists that we all stumble, even teachers. No, James was not discouraging Christians from being teachers. He was intent that those who were recognize their awesome responsibility.

There is a real sense in which every Christian is a teacher whether we accept this responsibility or not. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

THE HUMAN TONGUE

“The human tongue is a little instrument but its potential as a powerful force for destruction or edification is equally great.”

Negatively speaking, the human tongue can become an instrument of destruction. It can spread malicious gossip. It can speak words that cut, wound and discourage. How many times we have all been guilty of putting our tongue into gear while our brain was idling and said the wrong thing. Choosing the proper time, place, and set of circumstances to speak, lest our words seem caustic, is extremely important. Babcock wrote, “When I want to speak let me THINK first: Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary? If not, let it be left unsaid.”

Positively speaking, the human tongue can become an instrument for edification. People can be challenged, inspired, and encouraged when words are fitly spoken. God can be praised. Using the tongue to challenge, inspire and encourage a fellow human being along life’s way is a positive way in which every Christian can praise God and fulfill, The Royal Law of Love.

By the spoken Word, God ordained that men should hear the gospel and be saved. THINK ABOUT IT.

PARTICIPATOR OR SPECTATOR

“Being a participator in the work of the Lord is much more rewarding than merely being a spectator.”

Jesus warned that those who simply listened to his saying but refused to become actively involved were building their house (lives) on a sandy foundation that would not endure when the storms of life began to rage.

It would be good for each of us if we would take the time to consider the question, “What kind of a church member am I?”

“Are you an active member, the kind that would be missed; or, are you content that your name is on the list? Do you attend the meetings and mingle with the flock; or, do you stay home and criticize and knock? Do you take an active part to help the work along? Or. Are you quite content, only to belong? Do you stand for things you think are right? Or. Do you leave the work to just a few and talk instead of fight? Think it over, member; you know the right and wrong. Think now; are you an active member, or do you just belong?”

The church that grows and glows is a church blessed with participators, not just spectators. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

SYNCHRONIZATION

“When God’s will is ascertained in a person’s life there will be a synchronization of the human spirit with God’s Holy Spirit.”

Determining God’s will for one’s life is not always easy. Paul declared that he was not disobedient to “the heavenly vision.” This referred to his confrontation with the Living Christ on the Damascus Road. Once he understood what the Lord’s will was for his life, and surrendered to it, he came to experience the peace that passes all understanding. It is like finally getting your radio tuned into the proper station.

The heavenly vision comes to all of us. It comes in various ways. To some it may come dramatically; to most of us it comes as a “still-small-voice” that nudges us into the flowing stream of God’s will. I believe God’s will comes to us when we are relatively young. It may take us some time to respond. The more stubborn, bull-headed, proud, self-righteous, ego-centric we are the more difficult it is for God to get through to us.

The heavenly vision illuminates our life to our journey’s end. Jesus promised, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.”
THINK ABOUT IT.

MEANINGFUL COMMUNICATION

“Meaningful communication requires respect for the person talking by the person listening.”

A soldier on guard duty on the field of battle calls out, “Halt! Who goes there?” Even though the guard may be considered an enemy by the individual approaching, communication has taken place because he respects the consequences if he should refuse to halt.

A highway patrolman turns on his siren, summons a speeding motorist to pull over; communication has taken place because of respect for his authority.

A politician, teacher, preacher, or parent speaks out on a given issue, subject, theme, or situation. But, unless there is respect or LOVE for the one speaking, by the one listening, meaningful communication may never take place.

The failure in meaningful communication may rest with the attitude of the hearer toward the speaker. The greatest teacher who ever lived failed to communicate with people from His own community because they considered Him as “just one of the boys around town,” the son of Joseph, the carpenter. When people did listen to Jesus, without their bias and prejudice, they were astonished at His teaching because He taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes. THINK ABOUT IT.

CROWDS

“Crowds do not always indicate the capability of a speaker or the truth of what he says.”

I am convinced that a greater teacher than Jesus never taught. His teachings were true. But, there came a time when the crowds ceased to follow Him. One of the saddest verses in the Bible says, “From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with him.”

During the first one and one-half years of His ministry great crowds thronged the Stranger of Galilee. It looked as if all men would flock to Him.

The last few months of His ministry were fraught with a decline in His popularity. Organized religionists threw their social and political weight against Him. A smear campaign was unleashed. He was accused of being a glutton and a drinking man, and hanging around the worse of sinners.

Public opinion about Him changed. On a Sunday they shouted, “Hosannas”, by Thursday many were crying, “Crucify-Him!” Art Linkletter became a millionaire proving “people are funny”.

Crowds or the lack of crowds never altered the truth of the message Jesus preached. Let us be careful lest we judge truth on the basis of popular acceptance. THINK ABOUT IT.

MEANING OF BIBLICAL FAITH

“Many words must be used if one is to adequately define the meaning of Biblical Faith.”

There is no way that the faith spoken of in the Bible can be completely and satisfactorily explained by substituting only one other word. To say that faith is “believing” is simply to explain one aspect of faith.

Faith, like a diamond, has many facets. If a diamond were simply one smooth cut it would not be valuable or beautiful. It is the many facets, angles, cuts, that make it both beautiful and valuable. Likewise, faith’s many facets make it both beautiful and valuable. Failure to appreciate this fact has caused many people to misunderstand many passages of Scriptures.

Some people have concluded that certain Biblical Writers were contradicting each other with regard to the significance of faith. For example, Paul wrote about salvation by faith. James wrote about justification by works. A proper understanding of faith will reveal that Paul and James were in agreement and not contradicting each other.

Biblical faith means accepting certain facts, but it means much more. It has the facets of trust, confidence, hope, expectation, anticipation, obedience, etc. In two words, “Faith Works.” THINK ABOUT IT.

ACHIEVING PERFECTION IN LIFE

“To achieve perfection in life is humanly impossible; but, to reach for it and fall short is better than not to have reached at all.”

If becoming a Christian automatically made us perfect, the Biblical writers would not have spent so much time reminding us what we should be. Someone has pointed out that the first four books of the New Testament tell about Christ; Acts tells how we get into Christ; twenty-one books tell how to grow in Christ.

The fact that Christians do not always measure up to the ideal has been a source of discouragement. Consequently, many have deliberately dropped out of the race. This is the real tragedy.

Paul confessed he was not perfect. He did things he didn't want to do. He didn't do things he knew he should. He admitted he had not achieved the ideal in Christian virtues and vowed, “This one thing I do, forgetting the past, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

The determination to stay in the race, despite the hurdles and pitfalls, and keep on running, is the real test of faith. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

POSITION AUTHORITY

The world's concept of leadership is "Position Authority"; but,

Jesus said, "It shall not be so among you." Matthew 20:26

Position Authority is that authority which seeks to dominate, 'Lord it over others'. This kind of authority is basically the way our world operates whether we are in the military, business, politics or government. Position authority is exercised by people in positions telling others what to do. It gets its strength or power from position. Example, the sergeant orders his men to march. They march because they have to, not necessarily because they want to. Position has the power to order. The order has to be obeyed or the one refusing has to suffer the consequences.

The church gets into trouble when it tries to operate according to Positional Authority. Jesus said, "...it shall not be among you." The Christian's concept of leadership is "PATTERN AUTHORITY."

Leadership in the church gets its power to motivate people from example (PATTERN). More is caught than taught. The key to a great church is members motivated from within to be great. Greatness is achieved by serving most, not because we have to, but because we want to. THINK ABOUT IT.

STICK-TO-IT-TIVE-NESS

To build something worthwhile takes time, patience and a lot of “STICK-TO-IT-TIVE-NESS.”

Often times the single most important ingredient in success has been discovered to be steadfast endurance. Almost anyone can, with little effort, destroy in a short time what it has taken others much time to build.

“I watched them tearing a building down, a gang of men in a busy town, with a ho-heave-ho and a lusty yell, they swung a beam and the side wall fell.

I asked the foreman, ‘Are those men skilled, and the men you’d hire if you had to build?’ He gave a laugh and said, ‘no indeed. Just common labor is all I need. I can easily wreck in a day or two what builders have taken a year to do.’

I thought to myself as I went my way, which of these roles have I tried to play? Am I a builder who works with care, measuring life by the rule and square? Am I shaping my deeds to a well-made plan, patiently doing the best I can? Or, am I a wrecker who walks to town, content with the labor of tearing down?” THINK ABOUT IT.

GETTING INVOLVED

“Really getting involved in the work of the Lord produces a satisfaction and joy incomparable.”

Unfortunately, many Christians have just enough religious conviction to make them miserable. They're not really in or out. They are like the person who decides to go swimming, but keeps sticking his toe into the water, testing – hesitating – wondering if he dare take the plunge. Until he takes the plunge he will never discover the refreshing joy and satisfaction of the water.

Every job in life is the work of the Lord. Too often, we get the idea that the work of the Lord only takes place in a church building or by preachers. This is not so. Whatever we do should be done with the awareness that it is the work of the Lord. The Scriptures says, “Whatsoever you do in word or in deed, do all to the glory of Christ.” i.e. do what you do in such a way that the Lord is glorified, honored, and pleased.

The work of the church is of supreme importance because it includes carrying out the great commission and upholding the truth of God as we go about our daily tasks. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

EXTREMELY UNIQUE & VALUABLE

“In God’s sight every person is unique, extremely valuable and has a significant place in life.”

The disciples of Jesus were discussing with lively contention who would be considered the greatest among them. Jesus told them that true greatness was not a matter of occupying a position, but was achieved as the result of rendering service. “Let him that would be greatest among you be the servant of all.”

This truth is still difficult for many people to grasp because we are constantly being impressed with the idea that rank and recognition always indicate worth and significance.

The engine of an automobile presents a good example of the significance of every part performing at peak efficiency. No matter how small or invisible a part, when it is not functioning properly it affects the entire performance of the engine. The smallest, least expensive piece may suddenly be recognized as an extremely valuable part if it should fail to function properly.

God created every person for a specific purpose. Performance, not position, determines worth. There is no insignificant, or worthless, person until that person so renders himself by refusing to function in the unique way for which he was created by God.
THINK ABOUT IT.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

“Privilege demands personal responsibility.”

Wisdom dictates that before privileges are granted to people, these people must have demonstrated that they are personally responsible. Whenever a person in our society demonstrates that he cannot be trusted to conduct himself responsibly, and by his actions threatens the safety and security of others, he must be legally forced to forfeit his freedom and restricted in his personal privileges.

One of the desires of the average American boy is to be old enough to ride a motorcycle or drive an automobile. Wise parents will withhold the privilege of riding a motorcycle or driving an automobile until their son demonstrates that he is responsible and mature enough to be trusted with these privileges. A motorcycle or automobile in the hands of an irresponsible person, young or old, can be an instrument of destruction.

In the parable of the talents, the Master gave talents to each of the servants “according to his several abilities.” In other words, responsibilities were given to each man in proportion to his ability to assume responsibility. As each man demonstrated his ability to be responsible for what privileges and opportunities were already given him he was rewarded by being given additional privileges and responsibilities. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

SAVED FOR WORKS

“Although a person is saved by grace through faith and not by works, there is work for a Christian to do.”

Salvation is a free gift from God. He will not force this gift upon us against our will. This gift is ours when we reach out in faithful obedience to the person of Jesus. Certainly faithful-obedience includes accepting facts about Jesus, repentance, confession and baptism into Christ.

Now that we have been born again and are living in Christ, saved by grace, we can give ourselves to the joyful experience of doing the work for which God created us. It is in this context that Paul admonishes Christians to work out our own salvation. Working out our salvation requires knowing the will of God. His will is revealed in the Bible and by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit promised at our baptism.

It is not enough just to know God’s will, we must do it. Working at yielding our will to God and accepting our personal responsibility gives God his opportunity to work through us. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

CHRISTIANS WHO CARE

“A Christian who really cares brings honor to the name he wears.”

Paul wrote to Timothy about a fellow Christian who had meant so much to him. He said, “May the Lord bless Onesiphorus...because he visited me and encouraged me often. His visits revived me like a breath of fresh air, and he was never ashamed of my being in jail.”

What kind of a Christian are you? Are you one who visits and encourages, one who is understanding? We have all been around people who take everything out of us, leaving us dry and exhausted. Their presence and manner sap our strength. They moan and groan because of their problems, and could care less about ours.

Encountering such Christians left Paul drained. How refreshing to have a brother like Onesiphorus! He was like a drink of cool, refreshing water on a hot, dusty day, after a long trip.

This type of a Christian is easily recognized, because he is so rare. He thinks of others. His witness is not forced, not fearful, but spontaneous. Concern, with a genuine desire to help, marks him.

Are you the type Christian who refreshes and encourages? **THINK ABOUT IT.**

STRIKING A BLOW AGAINST JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

“The parents of America can strike a most effective blow against the forces which contribute to juvenile delinquency by taking their children to Bible School and Church regularly.”

Speaking about the importance of the church’s teaching program, the late J. Edgar Hoover had this to say, “Shall I force my child to go to Bible School and Church? Yes! And with no further discussion about the matter! Startled! Why? How do you answer Junior when he comes to the breakfast table on Monday morning and announces rebelliously, “I’m not going to school today.” You know, Junior goes! How do you answer when Junior in very much smudged and says, “I’m not going to take a bath!” You know, he takes it. Why all the timidity, then, in the realm of his spiritual guidance and growth? Going to let him wait and decide what church he’ll go to when he’s old enough? Quit kidding! You didn’t wait until he was old enough to decide whether or not he wished to go to school, be a clean person, or take medicine that would make him well...What shall we say when Junior announces he doesn’t like Bible School or church? That’s easy! Just be consistent! THINK ABOUT IT.

LIVING OR MERELY EXISTING?

“There is a tremendous difference between really living and merely existing.”

Do you recall that bed-time prayer we use to repeat? “Now, I lay me down to sleep. I pray the Lord my soul to keep. If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take. This I ask for Jesus’ sake. Amen”

One sentence in that prayer is a priceless gem for thought. “If I should die before I “Wake-Up!” And really live. What a pity. What a tragedy!

Yet, the unvarnished truth is, that tens of thousands just exist day after day and not really living life as God meant us to live it.

The Prophet Ezekiel delivered God’s message to ancient Israel in these words,...”As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his wicked ways and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”

How tragic indeed to die before we wake-up and live, especially when Jesus earnestly pleads for us to follow Him, declaring, “I am come that they might have life, more abundantly...” THINK ABOUT IT.

MOST IMPORTANT EVENT IN HISTORY

“The resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is the single most important event in history.”

Without the bodily resurrection of Jesus from the grave His birth would most likely never have been celebrated. His teachings would have been relegated to a shelf of questionable value. His death would have proved that hate is stronger than love, wrong triumphs over right, and death has the last hideous laugh. Most significantly of all is the fact that the foundation stone of Christianity will have been destroyed should it ever be proved that the resurrection story is a hoax.

Peter declared that he and his fellow disciples had not been telling fairy tales when they explained the power of the Lord Jesus Christ and His coming again. He said he was an eyewitness of the splendor and glory of the resurrected Lord.

Many over-zealous, religious fanatics will die for a cause they believe to be true.

It is inconceivable that twelve men who had nothing personally to gain and everything to lose would forfeit their lives for a lie. Herein lies the strongest evidence for accepting the Biblical accounts of the resurrection of Jesus as fact. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

COMMITTING SPIRITUAL SUICIDE

“Christians who intentionally neglect the fellowship of other Christians are in danger of committing spiritual suicide.”

The Holy Spirit inspired writer of the Hebrew letter wrote, “Let us not neglect our church meetings, as some people do...” A Christian is tempted to relax in the false security of feeling that salvation by grace requires no responsibility on the part of the recipient. The problem of some Christians carelessly neglecting the fellowship of other Christians has always plagued the Church, beginning with the first century to our present day.

There is something about God’s people coming together that is vital, necessary, and basic to spiritual growth and development. God never demands the unimportant or the insignificant.

Though much of the real work of the Church is not done within the walls of a church building, the community tends to judge a Church by the number of members who attend a given service.

I don’t believe a person can be a Christian long who disassociates himself from other Christians. He soon becomes like a piece of coal removed from other coals in the fire. By himself, he quickly loses his glow and soon becomes cold. **THINK ABOUT IT.**

I would read the first sentence. It would be followed by a commercial announcement. I would say, "I'm Jim Barton, minister of First Christian Church, 4800 Franklin Road in Nashville, Tennessee. I'll be back to talk with you again after this word from the Sandlin Drug Company."

The Announcer would sign-off with the final commercial at the close of my final words, "Think About It."

Notice: I am not necessarily asking the audience to agree with me. I am just asking them to THINK ABOUT IT.