

# Bible Witness

Before

**destruction**

the heart of man is **haughty**,

and before

**honour**

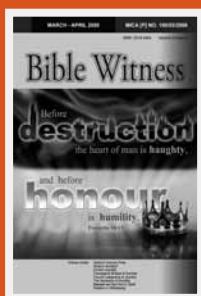
is **humility**.

Proverbs 18:12



Articles Inside:

- Wisdom Decries Pride
- What is Humility?
- Christ's Humility
- Theological Studies & Humility
- Church Leadership & Humility
- The Necessity of Humility
- Blessed are the Poor in Spirit
- Wisdom in Witnessing



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#### SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

The magazine is distributed free from 2006 onwards. "Freely ye have received, freely give" (Matthew 10:8).  
Postage and handling charges for 2 years (12 issues)

<b>SURFACE MAIL</b>	<b>Singapore/Malaysia</b> S\$10.00	<b>Other Countries</b> S\$14.00
<b>AIR MAIL</b>	<b>Asia</b> S\$26.00	<b>Other Countries</b> S\$34.00

International bank draft, money order or postal order drawn on a Singapore bank in Singapore dollars may be made payable to "Bible Witness".

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# P wisdom decries PRIDE

PRABHUDAS KOSHY

In chapter 8 of Proverbs, wisdom is personified as a lady who gives wise counsel to those who seek her. In verse 13, she lists those things which she hates, and one of them is pride. The Hebrew word for “hate” expresses a strong feeling of revulsion that is determined to exterminate. Why does wisdom chase away pride? To understand the reason for wisdom’s hatred for pride, we will pursue wisdom’s perspective and handling of pride.

## Wisdom views pride as evil

In the list of evils mentioned in Proverbs 8:13, the first is “pride”. A study of various Hebrew words, translated as “pride” in the book of Proverbs, provides us with the following understanding of pride.

### The evil nature of pride

Pride is a preoccupation with self-glory. It turns one’s heart away from giving glory to God. In a prideful heart, self-pleasure and self-glory take precedence over God’s glory (cf. Psalm 10:4).

Pride thrives on the idea of self-importance. A proud man will be so preoccupied with himself that he would not be concerned about others and their needs (cf. Proverbs 21:4).

Pride also entails self-confidence that is unwilling to submit to the good counsel of God and man. Pride is unyielding (cf. Hosea 7:10). For his own satisfaction and glory, a

proud person will not hesitate to pursue evil ways.

Pride seeks to promote an exalted view of self at the expense of proper and moral conduct. Such an inflated view deceives a man into expressing defiance and rebellion unashamedly.

Pride may also take the ugly form of contemptible treatment of others. Inconsiderate, unkind, intimidating and cruel words will flow out of a proud person’s mouth.



Pride involves a “high look” or a haughty appearance and attitude (cf. Proverbs 21:4). Pride rejoices in an inflated opinion of oneself. An inflated view of one’s own opinion cannot help but causes trouble.

Pride also involves boasting. Psalm 73:8-9 casts some light on the words of the proud - “They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression: they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth.” He has a “tongue that speaketh proud things” (Psalm 12:3).

### **The evil outcome of pride**

A prideful person will lay bare the ugliness of pride in his attitude, words and actions. Three evils are mentioned in Proverbs 8:13 as following pride: arrogance, the evil way and the froward mouth. Certainly, a conceited heart will be full of such evil. Seldom will a prideful man repent of his stubbornness, cruelty and evil ways.

Being quarrelsome is one of the evil fruits of pride. Proverbs 13:10 states, “Only by pride cometh contention.” Proverbs 28:25 affirms this fact when it says, “He that is of a proud heart stirreth up strife.” A proud person’s desire for prominence would make him a quarrelsome person. He would revolt against authority either to assert his own ideas or to gain material prosperity, position or popularity (cf. James 4:1). Pride also makes one impatient of competition and rivalry, impatient of contempt, or anything that looks like a slight. Prideful men will not forgive but take revenge.

Proverbs 21:24 describes a proud man as a scorner - “Proud and haughty scorner is his name.” A proud man is a mocker. Proverbs 9:7-8 describes how an arrogant scoffer will behave. Even those who lovingly correct him

will be scorned. “He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee” (cf. Proverbs 13:1; 15:12; 19:25).

### **Wisdom’s reason for hating pride**

Why does true wisdom command us to hate or chase away pride (cf. Proverbs 8:13)? Because God warns against it.

### **Pride is ‘an abomination to the LORD’**

Proverbs 16:5 cautions us that “every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD”. The word “abomination” means a thing that is strongly disliked or hated. God’s wrath kindles against every abominable thing. Pride is an evil thing that the Lord hates. In Proverbs 6:16-19, we see a list of things that are abominable to God, and pride stands first on that list. Proverbs 21:4 identifies pride as a sin, “An high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked, is sin.”

### **Pride leads to shame and destruction**

In Proverbs 11:2, we read, “When pride cometh, then cometh shame.” The Hebrew word for “shame” (*salon*) denotes a lowering of state from what he presently occupies (See Proverbs 29:23a). This shame is something that a person brings upon himself. Because of pride, he would find it difficult to remain at his current place of work or social activity. It is very likely that he himself would leave the place because of the shame that he had brought on himself.

Proverbs 16:18 warns that “pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” Again, it is said, “Before destruction the heart of man is haughty” (Proverbs 18:12). Some put on a humble appearance before



others while prideful thoughts and ambitions fill their hearts. Even to them, the Scripture warns, “An haughty spirit” is “before a fall” (Proverbs 16:18). Pride-filled thoughts will only lead them to destruction.

## Wisdom’s advice on overcoming pride

Since the LORD hates pride, we must learn to subdue and eradicate the pride within our hearts. Otherwise, it will destroy our lives. To keep pride out of our hearts, the wisdom of Proverbs gives us the following instructions:

### Cultivate “the fear of the LORD” in your hearts

Proverbs 8:13 says, “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy . . .” According to this verse, every heart that fears the Lord will not entertain any prideful thought or attitude. Whereas pride teaches one to take glory for himself, the fear of the Lord instructs us to give due honour to the LORD. To avoid any prideful behaviour, we must give glory to God for every progress and achievement in our lives. It is an absurd thing to rob God of His glory.

### Cultivate humility in your hearts

Often the book of Proverbs places the spirit of pride antithetically to the spirit of humility. For instance, Proverbs 18:12 says, “Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility.” To be “haughty” is to be proud or to behave in a puffed-up manner. A haughty person thinks that he is better than others, and tries to show off his abilities for self-glory. On the other hand, a humble person will behave in a non-self-promoting manner, and be submissive to God and others.

When a person is not self-centred, pride will not be able to take root in his heart. Likewise, when a person is submissive in his attitude towards others, he will not speak arrogantly or attempt to promote himself.

### Cultivate friendship with humble people

Walking with the lowly in heart is far better than sharing the wealth or fame of the proud. In other words, friendship with the lowly is to be desired above friendship with the proud ones. Proverbs 16:19 says, “Better it is to be of an humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud.”

When your friends are humble people, you will learn to behave like them. But if your close friends are those who deal arrogantly, you will soon learn their proud ways and behave like them. When you keep company with the proud ones, you will be compelled to adjust your language, mannerism and actions to suit theirs, lest you become a misfit in their company. So you must not develop friendship with proud people. Instead, you must choose humble people as your friends. Then you will be encouraged to behave like them. It may look fascinating to talk and act like the arrogant ones, because it may make you feel that you are better than others. But remember that the proud ones will be brought low by God.



### Proverb 21:4

**An high look, and a proud heart,  
and the plowing of the wicked, is  
SIN.**

# what is HUMILITY?

TAN KIAN SING

Some say humility is a prominent Christian grace which every man and woman should possess. Edward M. Bounds writes, "Humility is a rare Christian grace...it takes many descriptions to describe it, and many definitions to define it. It is a rare and retiring grace." The epistle of James declares, "But he (God) giveth more grace...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6).

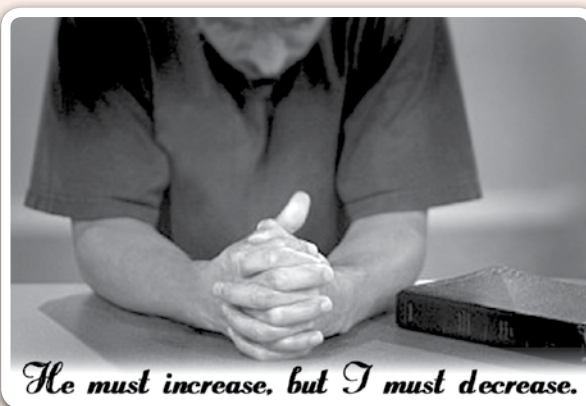
God is against one who is proud but He loves the humble, and blesses him with His abounding grace. He helps and shows kindness to him who acknowledges his insufficiency and complete dependence on God.

The Holy Spirit also speaks through Peter on the topic of humility in 1 Peter 5:5-6, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." Here, Peter was speaking from experience.

He learned his lesson on what it means to be humble before his Lord and Master, to put away pride and to depend upon God for grace.

Dear child of God, if you long for more grace from God, then learn to be humble and put away pride. But how do we learn humility? What does it mean to be truly humble? What is the evidence of true humility in us? God gives ten imperatives which we are to obey to ensure that we are really humble before Him. Each of these imperatives suggests various aspects of true humility.

These commands are found in James 4:7-12: "Submit yourselves therefore to God." "Resist the devil." "Draw nigh to God." "Cleanse your hands." "Purify your hearts." "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness." "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord." "Speak not evil one of another."



**First lesson on what is true humility:** "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

To “submit” is to subject oneself to, to be subordinate to, or to be obedient to someone. James instructs us to subject ourselves to God and obey Him. To do so is an act of humility before God.

Are you yielding yourself completely to God and His will for your life? Are you totally obeying what God wants you to do? Or are you running your own life? We must be like a soldier who obeys the commands of his commander. Are we good Christian soldiers who obey our Great Commander’s orders fully at all times, and unconditionally?

Submission is the most visible sign of humility. In order to be submissive, one needs to think of the other person as worthier, greater or better than oneself.

James uses the illustration of the devil to teach us that humility means submission. The devil was the most beautiful archangel of God, the “bearer of light”. However, because of his pride, he became the first of God’s creation to sin against God. So the first sin ever committed was the sin of pride. Out of pride, he rebelled against his Creator. He wanted to be like his Maker. He refused to submit and obey God. He did not want to regard God as being greater and worthier than him. As a result, he was cast down from heaven (cf. Isaiah 14:12-14).

James is urging us not to follow the example of the devil and so, he commands us to resist him. Yes, we should oppose the devil and turn to God in submission and obedience. Then the devil will flee from us. Do not draw close to the devil. Do not be his friend, lest you become like him. He will deceive you to think, “I am able; I do not have to depend on God, I will ascend, I will exalt and be the best, I will be high up, and I will not need God.” Instead, we must learn from John the Baptist

who said, as he humbled himself, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). This is true humility.

### **Second lesson on what is true humility:**

“Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded” (James 4:8).

To draw near to God is to humble ourselves before God, recognising that we need Him to help us to manage our lives in holiness. We cannot live a pure life if we manage on our own. We need to depend upon God, while admitting that we are inadequate and unworthy to serve Him. We must come near to the Lord to draw strength and grace to cope with temptations and trials of life. Let us be quick to admit our weaknesses before the Almighty and to trust Him to help us overcome them.

**Third lesson on what is true humility:** “Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness” (James 4:9).

James is not saying that Christians cannot put on a wide smile or that they must carry a sad countenance all the time. But God demands that believers are to be truly sorry or deeply sorrowful for their sins which they have committed against Him. We must be repentant of our sins. This is one true mark of genuine humility.

In teaching true humility before God, the Lord Jesus told a parable in Luke 18:9-14, “Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give

tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.”

When we come to God, do we feel remorseful for our sins? David was immediately remorseful when the prophet Nathan revealed his sin to him. Let us learn from King David, to come to God with a broken spirit and a contrite heart. Humble yourself before the thrice-holy God and plead with Him like David (cf. Psalm 51:1-4).

### **Fourth lesson on what is true humility:**

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up” (James 4:10).

To humble ourselves is to abase ourselves before others. And in this context, James commands that we must self-abase before the Almighty. We must recognise our inability, incapability, weaknesses and acknowledge His greatness and power to help us. We must prostrate before Him, and say to Him that we are undone, that we need Him to help and direct us, and to take control of our lives.

The Apostle Peter exhorts in 1 Peter 5:6-7, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.” Yes, when we cast all our cares upon Him, we are acknowledging that He is able to care for us. Such an attitude shows humility before the Lord. Not to come to Him with our cares, but to keep them to ourselves, is to disregard God’s care for us, and thus dishonour Him who is able to help us.

**Fifth lesson on what is true humility:** “Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another” (James 4:11-12)?

The word “judge” used in this context refers to condemning, criticising or finding fault with another brother or sister.

Watch what you say, think or feel concerning another brother or sister. Do you slander, have evil thoughts, or bear an envious heart against a brother or sister? If you do, you are not humble. You are proud! You are in fact saying and thinking that you are worthier or can do the work better than him or her.

Let us humble ourselves and not judge, slander, or condemn one another. Let us realise that we are just as unable to do anything for the service of the Lord, if it is not the Lord Himself who has enabled us. Humble ourselves like Paul who proclaimed in 1 Timothy 1:12, “And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry.”

## **Conclusion**

Dear brethren, the big problem facing many of us is the problem of pride. Let us put it away and learn to be humble. May the Lord help us to apply the above lessons on true humility in our lives.





# 2010 ETHIOPIAN Assignment

**For the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.  
Revelation 1:9**



*Rev Ephrem & family*

The Gospel work began by Rev Ephrem Chiracho Ouchula and family in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, is now 2 years old. The Lord is adding souls such as those who are saved.

There is a great need to train godly men to preach the Word of God in their own native language (Amharic).



Starting a Bible college

of the Reformed, Premillennial tradition for the propagation and defence of God's inspired and preserved Word has become a burden of Rev Ephrem and his co-labourers.



*Co-labourers: Engida and Imane*

They hope to raise \$5400,000 to obtain a piece of land for building a church and a Bible college by the year 2010.

Bible Witness Media Ministry together with Gethsemane Bible-Presbyterian Church would like to covet the prayers and generous support of all our readers.

(Cheque may be issued to 'Gethsemane B-P Church'. Please indicate on the reverse, 'For 2010 Ethiopian Assignment'.)



# Christ's HUMILITY

LEE KIM SHONG

When we talk of the humility of Christ, it seems like it is something very unnatural to our mind because the Lord Jesus Christ is none other than God Himself and yet He humbled Himself. Usually those who are at the top would not humble themselves. Our society tends to view humility as belonging to the generations of yesteryears. Today, in order to survive and command the respect of others, it is as though we must stay clear of humility. Otherwise, we are at the mercy of others. But the truth is that Christ, the Son of God, did humble Himself. Owing to the person and the work of Christ, we are taught to emulate His supreme example of humility.

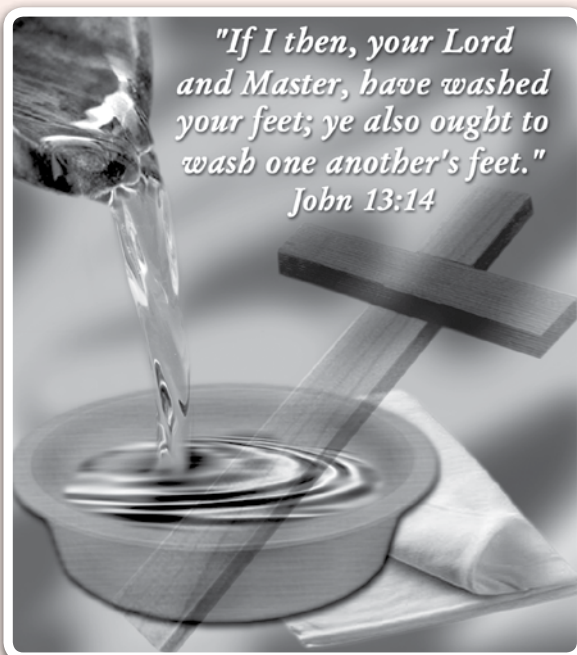
The word "humility" comes from the Latin word "humus" which is a vital organic material that makes soil fertile. In the same way, humility nourishes the spiritual growth of a Christian. If Christ humbled Himself, why should His followers do otherwise? "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8). Our Lord Jesus Christ

did not ask His disciples to do something which He had not done. His person and life demonstrated great humility. He is the leader of humility. He went ahead in the way of humility before His disciples. Think of His act of washing His disciples' feet before He told them to wash one another's feet.

Many of us learn a fragment of humility after having to eat humble pie through the providence of God. But because of our old nature, we keep a distance from actively humbling ourselves. How can a somebody become a nobody willingly? That person must be insane. Usually small people aspire to become bigwigs, by hook or by crook.

The Lord Jesus has a humble attitude. He is the Son of God, yet He became a babe on earth. How can the majestic God humble Himself willingly? It baffles our finite minds. It looks foolish. But the fact is that Jesus' humility is demonstrated in His

life, which was recorded in the gospels. Let us take a look at the evidence.





**His birth:** Jesus was born in lowly circumstances—in a dirty, inconspicuous stable where He was wrapped in swaddling clothes, and without servants to wait on Him. There was also no glorious celebration thrown for Him.

**He ministered to the outcasts of society:**

He personally waited at Jacob's well to minister to a notorious Samaritan woman. For a rabbi, this was a taboo. Nevertheless, He saw the preciousness of this lost soul and reached out to her. He also showed concern to such ones like Matthew and Zacchaeus whom the people despised because of their dishonesty and greed. Did Jesus not earn Himself the title "the friend of sinners"?

**He followed the guidance of God the Father and God the Spirit:**

As the Son of God, He is equal with God the Father and God the Spirit. In no way is He inferior. Nevertheless in His earthly ministry, He always sought to do the will of the Father and followed the guidance of the Spirit. He drove out those who abused the temple for merchandise. He rebuked the religious leaders who abused His Father's house by turning it into a den of thieves. Is this not another demonstration of His humility? Humility does not mean keeping silent towards blatant sins.

**He obeyed earthly authority:**

Though He is the Lord of the temple of the Jews, when the temple officer came to collect tax, He did not refuse to pay the tax. He also yielded to the Roman authority when they came to arrest Him in the garden of Gethsemane. In fact, He rebuked the Apostle Peter who drew the sword to save Him. The judge who tried Him with fair method found that He was guiltless.

**He was despised and rejected by the community:**

He had done so much good

to the community but the community did not recognise Him as the Messiah sent by God. The people despised Him because He was only a son of a carpenter. He was not trained at the feet of renowned rabbis. He was from the despised town of Nazareth. The religious leadership in His days did not give Him any accreditation.

**He became obedient unto death of the cross:**

Natural thinking teaches us to preserve our lives at all cost. How is it that the Almighty who humbled Himself did not know how to save His own life? The Bible says in Romans 5:19, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Our ancestor, the first Adam, fell into sin by his disobedience. But the second Adam, our Lord Jesus, humbled Himself to become obedient unto death, to be the perfect substitute for our sins.

Truly, we are saved by His obedience. Such obedience causes us to wonder regularly: how can it be that Jesus suffered at the cross, a cruel punishment for criminals during the Roman times? It is a slow process of dying. Besides, it is a very shameful way of dying. Everybody could see Jesus being hung on the cross. He bore the reputation of a criminal at the end of His earthly life.

The demonstration of Christ's humility should cause us to put the interests of others above our own. Christ must increase and we must decrease.



# Theological Studies & HUMILITY

**TIMOTHY TOW & JEFFREY KHOO**

## What is theology?

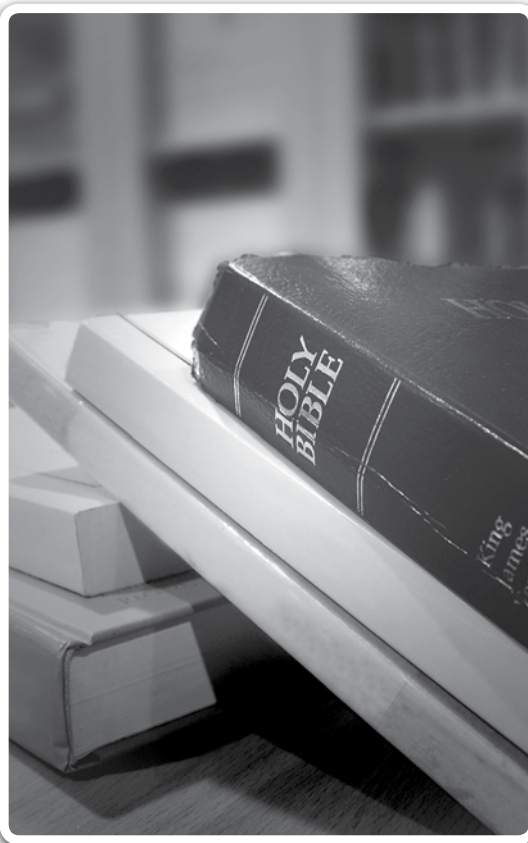
Theology is the study of God. It is the study of God's dealing with man whom He has created, but fallen into sin. The study of God and the study of man which is inseparable from the study of God is true wisdom, says Calvin. We would add to the statement that they are the apex of all knowledge. They are the two highest strata of learning, way beyond "mosquitology", though that is important in the quelling of malaria and dengue. The study of God and the study of man lead us to God's only begotten Son Jesus Christ, Mediator between God and man, by whom we are saved (cf. 1 Timothy 2:5). The Bible is God's book for man, the textbook of our salvation (cf. 2 Timothy 3:14, 17). Unless we humble ourselves to trust in God's inspired and preserved words, and not man's fallible and corrupt opinions, we can never enter the kingdom of heaven.

## Faith or reason?

Charles Hodge says theology is like any other science. It is to be studied like any branch of scientific learning. We beg to differ, for theology falls a great deal into the realms of the metaphysical. It cannot be put under a microscope for the seeing eye to examine. Rather, it is to be studied by putting on the eyeglasses of faith. Not "seeing is believing" but

"believing is seeing" is the theological method (cf. John 20:29). Unless we humble ourselves before the Almighty God that He should examine us by His Holy Spirit and His Holy Scripture, and not we examine Him by our puny intellect and wretched rationale, we can never know Him and have a personal relationship with Him.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. For by it the elders obtained a good report. Through faith we understand





that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear" (Hebrews 11:1–3). By faith, the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* ("out of nothing"), not evolution, is to be received. By faith, the doctrine of the Holy Trinity transcends the principles of mathematics. The doctrine of the virgin birth of Christ cannot be taught by human reasoning but by faith and worshipful reverence. Theology is not only a science, but also a "metascience", if we may coin a new word.

## Spiritual birth

Nor can any man intrude into the study of theology without becoming a Christian, a born-again Christian. "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3). "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14). "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). Faith is taking God at His Word; a complete trust in what God says without doubt or question.

Nominal Christians can go through a liberal and modernistic seminary and obtain a PhD in theology. But they will come out preaching themselves, not Jesus Christ the Lord. They will lord over their congregations with their own conceited ideas, "even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction" (2 Peter 2:1). "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake" (2 Corinthians 4:5) is our devout emphasis. So, it is of the utmost importance that we examine the credentials of the teacher of theology. Not only must he be born-again but he must

also have received a mandate to teach, like Timothy from Paul, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Timothy 2:2). It is of the utmost importance for a teacher of theology to be thoroughly scrutinised before he can be taken on by the faculty of any fundamental Bible college or seminary. "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?" (1 Corinthians 5:6). Fuller Seminary which was founded in 1947 by Charles Fuller of the Old-fashioned Revival Hour succumbed to liberalism in a matter of years. Princeton Seminary, though a proven stalwart of the faith from its founding in 1812, finally fell in 1929, J Gresham Machen notwithstanding.

## Spiritual unction

What makes theology far above any brand of scientific learning is the higher teaching of the Holy Spirit. "But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things" (1 John 2:20). "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (1 John 2:27).


How do we receive the unction of the Holy One? How do we get the anointing that we need, not that any man teaches us? It is by being a devout student of the Bible; by being a regular reader of the Bible, day and night, and by meditating therein, that we might be enabled to compare "spiritual things with spiritual" (1 Corinthians 2:13). Dr John Sung, the great Chinese revivalist, read his Bible 11 chapters a day and 13 chapters on the Lord's Day. Hence the power of his preaching that brought several hundred thousands to Christ. So testifies the Psalmist, "O how love I thy law!

it is my meditation all the day. Thou through thy commandments hast made me wiser than mine enemies: for they are ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers: for thy testimonies are my meditation" (Psalm 119:97–99).

### Calvin's humility

How does Calvin surpass all other students of theology? By the superior knowledge of the Bible that shines throughout his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. He outshines all other theologians because he is a Biblical theologian. "Humility, humility, humility" were Calvin's three rules of theology.

The main aim of theological studies is to instruct man in the mysteries of God and His saving plan for lost sinners; how they can find that new and living way to heaven (cf. Hebrews 10:20). Dr William Lyon Phelps of Yale University said, "A knowledge of the Bible without a college education is better than a college education without the Bible." We would, therefore, encourage everyone, though not having a college degree, to launch

right into the study of theology. In Paul's words of encouragement to young Timothy, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (2 Timothy 3:15). Theological studies thus require everyone to become a child, yea, even a babe. Matthew 11:25–26 says, "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." Humility is therefore an important key to knowing God. 



**Is not pride the sin of devils, the first-born of hell?  
Is it not that wherein Satan's image doth much consist?  
And is it to be tolerated in men who are so engaged  
against him and his kingdom as we are?  
The very design of the gospel is to abase us,  
and the work of grace is begun and carried on in humiliation.  
Humility is not a mere ornament of a Christian,  
but an essential part of the new creature.**

– Richard Baxter –

# Church Leadership & HUMILITY

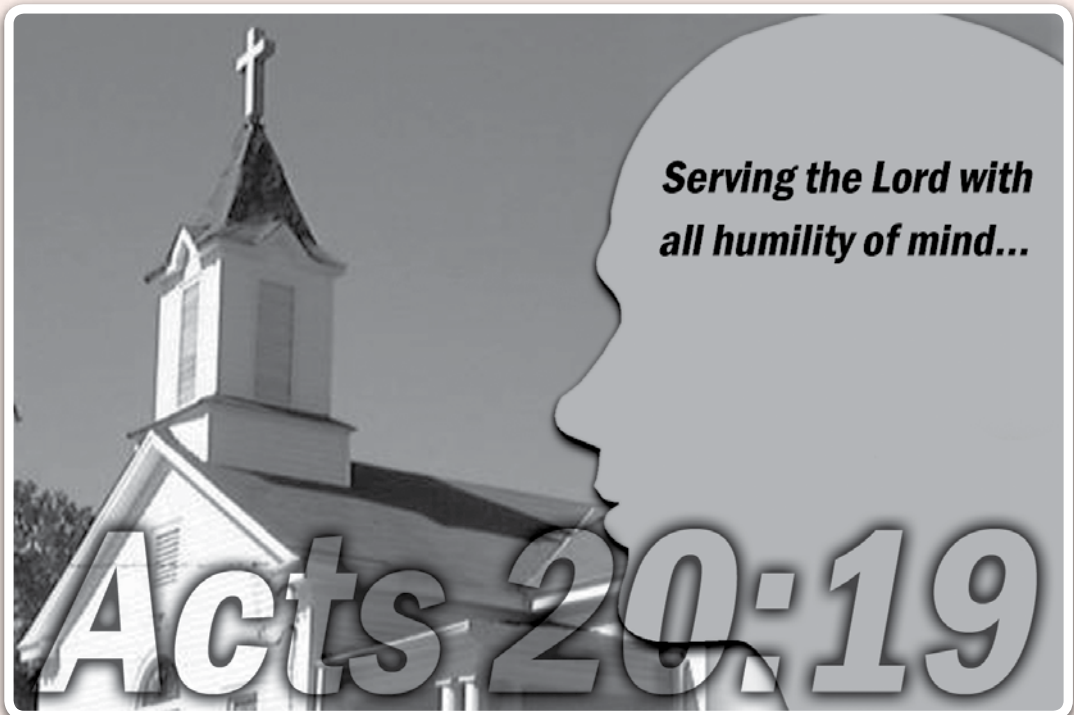
QUEK SUAN YEW

When asked what the three greatest Christian virtues are, Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (November 13, 354 – August 28, 430), answered, “Humility, humility, humility”. Augustine was right! This means that before there can be true humility, one ought to be doubly humble. This emphasizes the point that the path en route to true humility is very difficult. Humility is one of the most difficult Christian virtues to attain in the believer’s life. Just when he thinks he has it, he loses it! How much more so when this is applied to Christian leaders! They, being in the forefront of ministries, will come under

the incessant attacks of Satan. So the warning in the Scripture is that a novice must not be made a leader “lest being lifted up with pride he falls into the condemnation of the devil” (1 Timothy 3:6). Any damage done to the ministry by a novice in the leadership would be enormous, hence the warning.

## A leader without humility

A leader without humility is unteachable and unreasonable. He shouts and hits at the table during meetings because his views are



not accepted. He demands total submission and anyone who opposes him becomes his enemies. He surrounds himself with 'yes men'! He rules like a carnal, worldly lord of which Jesus categorically warns every servant of God against. He behaves like a buffoon and is beyond reason. He is tight-fisted and lords over the members as if they were his servants or slaves.

When a leader falls into the sin of pride, the fall would be great indeed. His arrogance and dictatorial attitude will transform the ministry of help and consolation into a ministry of hell and condemnation! When he falls, he drags many others down with him.

### **Leaders with no humility kill churches:**

Leaders in God's church cannot function without humility. The church dies when leaders are filled with pride, regardless of how knowledgeable they are in the Word of God. In fact, when they possess head knowledge but are void of humility, they do more harm than good. They will destroy the church by their carnal ways of lording over their members. They will inevitably drive members away by their high and mighty attitude. The church shrivels and the name of Christ becomes a byword used by the proud leader to threaten the people into submission! It ceases to be Christ's church but the leader's!

### **A leader with humility**

**What a leader with humility is not:** To possess humility does not mean that the leader is a yes man. It does not mean that he panders to all the whims and fancies of his congregation. It does not mean that he has no mind of his own. A humble leader is not expected to please all men as though he has no convictions. He is not to be unstable as water which has no form of its own except the

vessel which contains it. He is not a spineless jellyfish.

**What a leader with humility is:** The Apostle Paul said in Acts 20:19 about his ministry, "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews." What exactly does it mean to serve God with all humility of mind? It is a "mental" or "mind" issue. It begins with the estimation the servant has of himself. How does he see himself and his office is where the issue begins and ends. A leader with humility sees himself as a servant of God and that means he ministers to God's people only according to God's will. He is doing God's work. He does not look down on others or take advantage of them. He treats everyone the same without partiality or prejudice. He serves sacrificially and gives his very best, expecting nothing in return from the congregation. If no word of thanks follows, he does not mind and will continue to serve faithfully, for he seeks only to please his Master, the Lord Jesus Christ, and not man. He has a balanced evaluation of himself, including his strengths and weaknesses. He knows his gifts and uses them for the blessing of his congregation and to the glory of God. He also accepts commendation by giving all praises to his Lord. He admits he is wrong when he has done wrong. He is teachable. He constantly examines himself, his conduct and his ministry so that he may continually improve.

### **Christ, our example par excellence**


As far as conduct is concerned, the Lord Jesus Christ has given us the example. We know from Philippians 2 that the Bible's example of humility par excellence is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. To be humble is to have the mind of Christ. Christ was firm in His dealings with His



enemies when they tried to trap Him with all their evil tactics. He answered all of their apparently “impossible” questions. He was also very stern when He dealt with the people who turned His Father’s house into a den of thieves. He overturned their tables and drove them out. Jesus always rebuked liars and hypocrites and He even called some of them “whited sepulchres” and “hypocrites”. In other words, Christ was always truthful and knew when to be firm and when to be gentle. He always had time for sinners who were the outcasts of society. He also had time for the leaders who came to Him, such as the rich young ruler, Nicodemus. He treated all of them the same, for He received them without prejudice. But when His enemies tried to get Him into trouble, He dealt with them firmly but always

truthfully and biblically. Christ called Himself God and yet He was most humble.

## Conclusion

Humility is essential in leaders in order to provide good leadership in the church. With leaders who possess the mind of Christ, the church will surely flourish. Coupled with godly knowledge, the practice of humility will enable the congregation to see Christ in the leaders and glorify God who is in heaven. 



## YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT IS URGENTLY NEEDED!

*This year, Bible Witness Media Ministry has embarked on producing the following:*

- *Gospels tracts in English, Burmese, Tagalog, etc.*
- *Children’s Gospel tracts, Sunday School materials*
- *Children’s animation and video DVD*
- *Bible study materials and books for youths and adults*

*Funds are urgently required for:*

- (i) the above projects,*
- (ii) acquiring the necessary audio and video equipment, and*
- (iii) the support of full-time staff.*

*BWMM is praying for God’s provision of S\$30,000.*

# The Necessity of HUMILITY

**PRABHUDAS KOSHY**

Humility is a necessary virtue that all Christians ought to put on. God's Word commands everyone to "be clothed with humility" (1 Peter 5:5). But why is humility such a necessity for Christians ?

## **That we may be more like our Master**

Humility of heart is the chief mark by which the followers of the meek and lowly Lamb of God are to be known. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:3-5). May we conscientiously follow our Lord, who is meek and lowly, by denying the pride of this world and putting on the beauty of His lowliness.

## **That we may provide no ground for sin to grow**

As people increasingly take pride in affluence, status and appearance, all forms of sin are abounding. Self-centredness, pride and worldliness have already crept into the church and into the hearts of many a Christian. How sad it is that lowliness and godliness are hardly the distinguishing marks of Christianity nowadays! We are exhorted, "Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Galatians 5:26; cf. 1

Timothy 6:3-5). Humility is the only soil in which virtues and graces will grow.

## **That we may joyfully serve God and our fellow men with all diligence**

It is the humility within the heart that prepares and motivates a man to serve God and fellow men. That is why Paul said, "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind" (Acts 20:19). None who stretches his hand to labour without humility can be a true servant of the Lord.

Church leaders are to be humble servants of the Lord. But many leaders take pleasure in being in charge, making decisions that affect the church, delegating implementation of those decisions to others, "running the show", having others defer to them in meetings and the like. As one gets ahead, it is hard not to be big-headed! But to be a faithful leader of the church, one ought to be humble.

The proper attitude in leadership is best reflected in Paul's words found in 2 Corinthians 4:5, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." Such a humble, servant-like spirit helped Paul always to serve for the joy of others rather than his own. So he wrote to the Corinthian church, saying, "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy. . ." (2 Corinthians 1:24).

*(continued on page 20)*

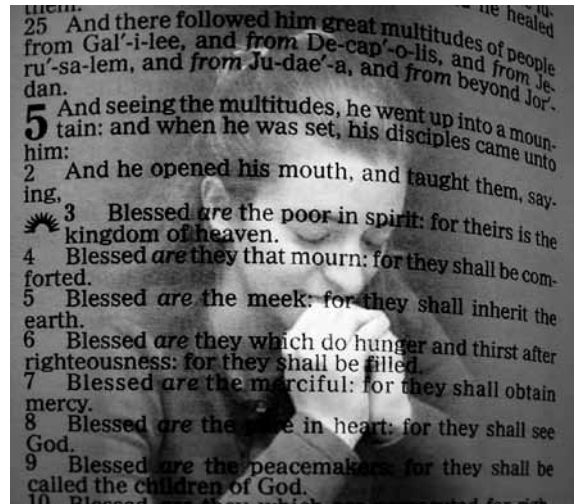
# Blessed are the POOR IN SPIRIT

PRABHUDAS KOSHY

Christ, our Lord, said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:3). Being poor in spirit is not quite the same as being poor in things. Then what is it like to be poor in spirit? In a nutshell, it is the spiritual humility in us that acknowledges our spiritual poverty.

**Firstly, to be poor in spirit means to acknowledge one's spiritual bankruptcy, being totally lost in sin.** In other words, we admit that we do not have any resources of our own to save ourselves from sin. Every Christian admits that all his personal goodness is not good enough to measure up to God's standards, even if he can prove that he is many times better than the best person alive today. True Christians would quickly admit, "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6). If anyone were to be saved, it can only be by God's grace. As the Apostle Paul wrote in his letter to the Ephesians, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

**Secondly, to be poor in spirit means the mortification of all spiritual pride.** Through the story of the tax collector and the Pharisee (Luke 18:10-14), Jesus taught the necessity of getting rid of spiritual pride that God may bless us. According to Jesus' story, both men



came to the temple to pray. Like so many respectable religious people, the Pharisee stood before God, thanking Him that he was not a nasty sinner like the publican who stood at a distance from him in the same temple. The tax collector, on the other hand, hung his head because of his awareness of sins in his life. He simply cried out, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He was poor in spirit; he recognised who he was before God and so, according to Jesus, he was the one who went away, justified. He came not to claim his deserved blessings, for there was none, but to beg for God's mercy and His gracious blessings.

The Pharisee received no forgiveness. In fact, he did not even ask for any. His problem was pride. He was righteous in his own eyes because he stood, comparing himself with


other sinners. He counted himself deserving of God's blessings because he claimed that his performance was better than those around him. He made himself appear rich, and did not request for mercy from God. So he went away, unforgiven and accursed. To be poor in spirit, however, means the death of all such pride.

**Thirdly, to be poor in spirit also means to acknowledge one's spiritual inability to live the Christian life.** There is more to being poor in spirit than simply knowing that we cannot save ourselves. It also points to our inability, even though we have been saved, to live the Christian life by our own strength.

This is the reason why Jesus said, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Jesus was simply saying there can be no genuine progress in the Christian life without dependence on

Him. He wants us to bear fruit for Him. But that can only happen if we remain in Him, believing and obeying His Word. Otherwise, we will be like a branch that has fallen off the vine, dried-up and good-for-nothing except for the fire.

## Conclusion

If we are truly poor in spirit, our lives, not just our lips, would express total dependence on God. We would be eager to pray always. We would also start to show that we really believed. We would give priority to obeying His Word. Our attitude will be always humble and self-emptying like that of a willing servant. When the Lord calls a Christian to service, there will be no wages too small, no place too lowly or undeserving. He counts it a blessing to be a servant under His charge. 



*(continued from page 18)*


## That we may be kept from stumbling because of pride

The book of Proverbs warns us repeatedly that pride would bring about one's fall. For instance, Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." This is so because God has set Himself against those who are proud. "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble" (1 Peter 5:5b; cf. James 4:6). The way to prevent ourselves from falling because of the sin of pride is to be humble. Proverbs 29:23 declares, "A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold the humble in spirit."

## That we may live unto the glory of God

Micah the prophet wrote, "O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of

thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8).

Those who are proud have an improper, inflated view of themselves. They attribute their accomplishments to their own efforts and fail to acknowledge that everything they are and have comes directly from God's hand. The modern notion of the "self-made" man, pulling himself up by his own bootstraps, and by the sweat of his brow, climbing to the pinnacle of success is so deeply embedded in our consciousness that any other possibility seems foreign. It is humbling to recognize that God is more responsible for the achievements of our lives than we are; that we are people who have only been given abilities, time and opportunities. These things are not our possession; they are gifts from God and ultimately, we will have to give an account for what we have done with them. 



# Wisdom in Witnessing

A real incident from the life of  
Jonathan Goforth,  
a Canadian missionary to China.

Bibliography: "Goforth of China" by Rosalind Goforth.  
The stories are written by Sis Ruth Low.  
Illustrations are done by Sis Sharon Ng.

Sometimes, students from outside China would come to Changte city in China to take their examinations.



Jonathan Goforth found it very difficult to handle them because they were proud people. They would come into the chapel of Goforth's mission station during the message, look around and refuse to be seated although Goforth repeatedly asked them to do so. In fact, they would laugh at him before finally leaving.



In all these, they disturbed those who were willing to listen to the preaching.

Goforth was determined to be ready for the students when they returned. In preparation, he bought several maps, charts on outer space and a large globe.

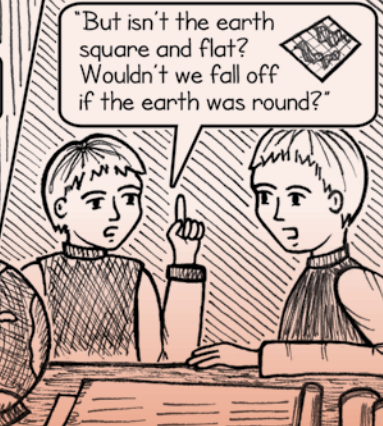


When the students arrived again, Goforth invited them into his study. The first thing that caught their eye was the globe. One student asked,



When Goforth explained that it represented the earth, some students exclaimed,

"But isn't the earth square and flat? Wouldn't we fall off if the earth was round?"



Goforth taught them the law of gravity and so on.



The maps and charts also gave opportunities for the students to ask questions, as well as for Goforth to answer and explain.



The students' attitude was now much different from the last time they came. They were less proud and more willing to listen and learn. They knew that Goforth had something worth listening to.

It was then that Goforth took the chance to tell the students about Jesus Christ.



It was through this method of first capturing the students' interest that Goforth managed to share the Gospel with them. Over time, hundreds of students came to know Christ!

Children, do not be discouraged when people do not want to listen to the Gospel. If it is God's will, He will soften their hearts in His own special time and way.



On your part, can you think of some methods you can use to get their attention so that they will listen to you when you share about Jesus Christ?



Pray and ask God for wisdom to reach out to them.

James 1:5 says,

"If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."



## Children's DVD Projects

Two special programmes are now being developed for children by the Bible Witness Media Ministry. They are:

- (1) The Scripture in Song - 2
- (2) Animated Bible Lessons 1

We covet your ardent prayers and generous support so that these projects may be completed this year.



# BIBLE TRIVIA - GENESIS 38

Sarah Yong

**READ THE PASSAGE AND THEN CIRCLE ONE OPTION TO COMPLETE EACH SENTENCE.**

\* E.g. Judah took a/an **(H)Adullamite (U)Israelite ((O)Canaaanite)** woman as his wife.

1. She bore him **(M)one (B)two (T)three** children.
2. His firstborn was named **(D)Er (L)Esau (E)Edom**.
3. He was given **(T)Timnath (B)Tamar (H)Terah** for a wife.
4. He was slain by God because he was **(H)sinful (I)dishonest (S)wicked**.
5. **(J)Onan (M)Omar (S)Othniel** also displeased the Lord and the Lord slew him too.
6. Tamar was told to remain a widow till **(E)Shuah (L)Samlah (G)Shelah** be grown.
7. After Judah's wife died, he went up unto his sheepshearers to **(F)Shechem (U)Timnath (E)Dothan**.
8. There he went into a harlot and promised to send her a young **(X)sheep (A)deer (T)goat** from his flock.
9. As a pledge, he gave her his signet, **(P)bracelets (L)necklace (T)chain** and staff.
10. Tamar, who had played the harlot, conceived and bore twins who were named Pharez and **(H)Zerah (E)Zibeon (D)Zepho**.

**USE THE REMAINING LETTERS IN THE BRACKETS TO COMPLETE THE MESSAGE BELOW.** (Hint: See example at the top)

"He that H U \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ shall be \_ \_ \_ \_ \_."

## Answers to Vol. 8, Issue 1 - Bible Trivia - Genesis 36 & 37

p. 23 - ACROSS: (1) Canaan; (2) Seir; (3) seventeen; (4) eleven; (6) dreamer; (7) pit; (9) twenty; (11) goat; (12) rent.

DOWN: (1) coat; (3) sheaves; (5) Shechem; (6) Dothan; (8) Reuben; (10) Ishmeelites; (13) Egypt.

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### FEEDBACK FROM OUR LISTENERS

*Praise God for the sound fundamental exposition of God's Word from the Bible Witness website.*

*During the past weeks, when I have been struggling to find the strength to read God's Word as diligently as I should, it has been a blessing to be able to log on and listen to the devotions and the blessed hymns, which have comforted and encouraged me in the early morning and stimulated me to go on to further study the passages and apply God's Word. The availability of such biblical encouragement and teaching worldwide 24/7 is truly a blessing from God in these last of the last days.*

*May the Lord continue to bless every aspect of your ministry that souls may be saved and the weary encouraged to continue to trust in God and walk in faithful obedience.*

*We continue to pray for you.*

Georgina Watkins  
Australia

*We praise the LORD for the BWWR ministry. We give thanks to God for the encouraging and eye-opening messages.*

*May the kind of music aired be carefully discerned with prayer to avoid the snares of contemporary "Christian" music invading today even in fundamental and conservative radio stations.*

*We are praying that the LORD will continue to bless your work for His glory and honor!*

Jose Trinipil G. Lagapa  
Japan

*The Bible Witness Web Radio has been a blessing to me especially on weekdays when I work late most of the time.*

*The messages and music keep me tuned to the Lord's words and no matter how stressful the situation, I can stay calm and have inner peace. Thank God for such a wonderful ministry and I have been telling all my friends and colleagues about it. Praise the Lord!*

Sally Lum  
Singapore