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Lighted Lamp Magazine

From the Editor

What are the attributes of your ideal church? Take a minute to think of three to five things.

If your list is like mine, it might include following the doctrines of the Bible, having conversations about spiritual things, and reaching out to others. If your local church has all these aspects, that's great! On the other hand, it's easy to be discouraged when a church doesn't live up to our ideals, and especially when it doesn't live up to God's standards. Even in spite of our own efforts, we may not see a change for the better.

Does that mean we can't make a difference in how Christ is portrayed to the world? Absolutely not! 1 Corinthians 6:19 (NKJV) says, "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?"

Our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and it is each of us individually that really has the opportunity to be close to God and to reach others for Him. Think back on the list you made and *be* that church to the people you encounter.

God bless,

Priscilla

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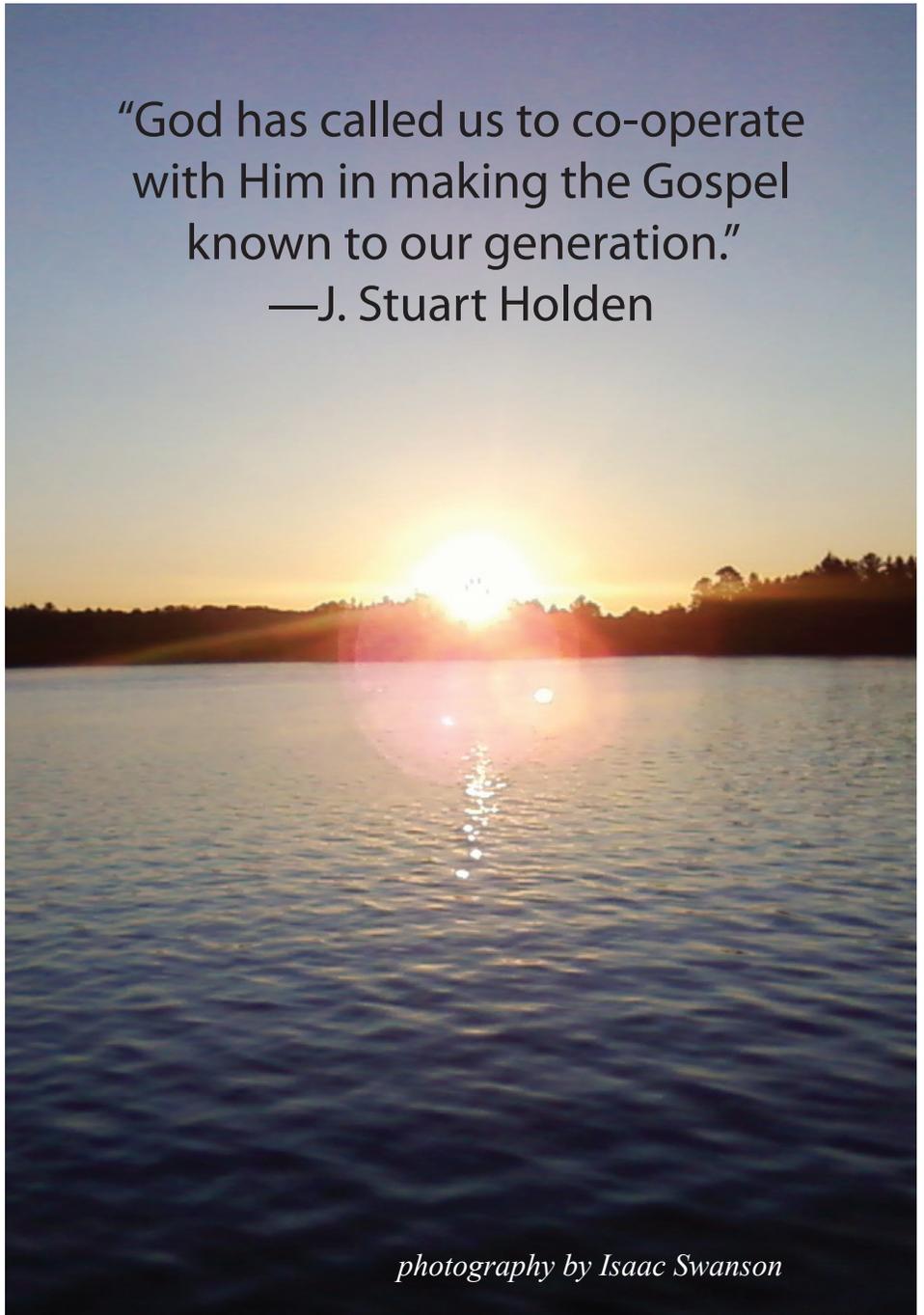
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Editor's Note: I'm sorry that there was no May issue. I had a couple of unusually busy months and didn't have one ready.



photography by Katie Prescott

“God has called us to co-operate
with Him in making the Gospel
known to our generation.”
—J. Stuart Holden



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THE SEVENTY SEVENS

by Timothy Gonzales

featuring photography by Timothy Gonzales

“Seventy sevens are decreed for your people and your holy city to finish transgression, to put an end to sin, to atone for wickedness, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal up vision and prophecy and to anoint the most holy.

“Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven sevens, and sixty-two sevens. It will be rebuilt with streets and a trench, but in times of trouble. After the sixty-two sevens, the Anointed One will be cut off and will have nothing. The people of the ruler who will come

will destroy the city and the sanctuary. The end will come like a flood: War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed. He will confirm a covenant with many for one seven. In the middle of the seven he will put an end to sacrifice and offering. And on a wing of the temple he will set up an abomination that causes desolation, until the end that is decreed is poured out on him.”

Daniel 9:24-27 (NIV 1984)

Most of us know Daniel from the countless retellings of his devotion and trust in God while held captive in Babylon, his adventures in the lion’s den, and maybe even the story of the writing on the wall. What most of us don’t



know is that those Sunday School tales are only part of Daniel's story. The last four chapters of the book of Daniel contain prophecies concerning Israel's future, and that's where we find the prophecy of the Seventy Sevens. Given by the angel Gabriel, it foretells the restoration and destruction of Israel, the coming of the Messiah, and the Antichrist's arrival, deception and eventual destruction.

The first thing to know is what the word sevens means in Hebrew. The actual Hebrew word is תויעיבש, or heptads, meaning a unit of seven, similar to our word dozen. Some translations of the bible interpret it as weeks, but don't get confused! Gabriel is speaking about seventy sets of seven years. He then goes on to tell Daniel of six acts that will be completed by the end of the seventy sevens. The first three deal with putting an end to Israel's sin. The next act, "bringing in everlasting righteousness", is a little tricky. I interpret to mean salvation, but some say it concerns the future Holy Kingdom. Sealing vision and prophecy means the completion of every foretelling recorded in the bible. This includes the sixth act, the anointing of the Most Holy, that is the Holy of Holies in the millennial temple.

Now we get to the fun parts. I'm going to talk about Jerusalem's restoration first even though it comes later in the verse, simply because it happens first. So, "decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" what does that mean? Well, for the last 180 years, the Israelites had been passed around from empire to empire, captured and freed and captured again. Almost a century after the prophecy, in 445 BC, the Persian (yes, they were moved again) King, Artaxerxes, issued an order for the entire city of Jerusalem to be rebuilt and for the people of Israel to return

to their homeland. Many people disagreed with this idea and waged war against the Israelites. This fulfills the troublous times the prophecy mentions. Now, we actually have the specific day the decree was announced and if you follow the pattern of sevens, one seven to rebuild and sixty-two until the Messiah, you arrive at a very interesting date, Palm Sunday, the day Christ first arrived in Jerusalem as the anointed Messiah! Isn't that an amazing display of God's timing? He never ceases to amaze me...

The next verse deals with a time between the last seven and its predecessors. The first sixty-nine sevens have passed, but the last seven is still far off. The verse foretells Christ's crucifixion, the destruction of Jerusalem, and the coming wars. Unfortunately, this is the last time the Israelites are all together as one people. At the hands of the Roman Empire, they're scattered across the globe. The next time God's people will be assembled will be during the last seven. The NIV names the destroyers of Jerusalem as "the people of the ruler to come." Now, this is a bit tricky. The Roman Emperor Titus and his armies are the ones who ultimately destroyed the city, however he is not 'the ruler to come'. This is a direct reference to the Antichrist, who plays a major role in the last seven. But, before we jump to that, I'd like to mention an interesting fact. The prophecy says, "War will continue until the end, and desolations have been decreed." Now, isn't most of the Common Era characterized by civil wars, crusades, jihads, revolts, and world wars? Interesting, huh? God has been fulfilling this prophecy for centuries, and we didn't even realize it.

Alright, now comes the last seven, where the Antichrist dominates. It begins with his signing a covenant with many countries. Now, if you've



studied the Antichrist you might remember a few prophecies foretelling that he will appear in troublous times. Therefore, I propose that it's a peace treaty among warring countries, promising his protection and leadership. The world falls for it, hook, line and sinker, yes, even Israel. In the middle of the seven, he puts an end to sacrifice and offering, prayer and worship to you and me. Somehow, he doesn't invalidate his treaty and there's no mention of a revolt. Also, notice that the next thing the prophecy mentions is an abomination being placed in the temple. One of Satan's trademarks is twisting the truth for his own purposes. In just three and a half years, the Antichrist has taken over the world and set up a new world religion. Now, I know it looks a little dreary right now, but take a look at the last phrase of this chapter, "until the end that is decreed is poured out on him." The

end that is decreed. He doesn't have a choice! He will come to ruin. God already wrote the history book about it!

So let's recap. Daniel received a prophecy from the angel Gabriel foretelling the future of God's people. The first verse of the prophecy is history, the restoration of Jerusalem and Christ's arrival have already happened. The second is part history, part present. Christ's crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem is history too, but we're still in the in-between time of war and desolations. The last verse is the future of the world: lies, tyranny, destruction, and redemption. Well, I hope you learned a little from this and remember, don't be upset about the future. Like Daniel, we'll always be safe in God's arms. ☺

The Storm

-Based on Psalm 77

by Priscilla Carsten, photography by Scetty

Troubled thoughts oppress me
And though I know God hears,
I think of all that has gone wrong,
And nothing calms my fears.

I cannot sleep or talk,
Recalling how things were.
Your presence with me all the time
Each step I took was sure.

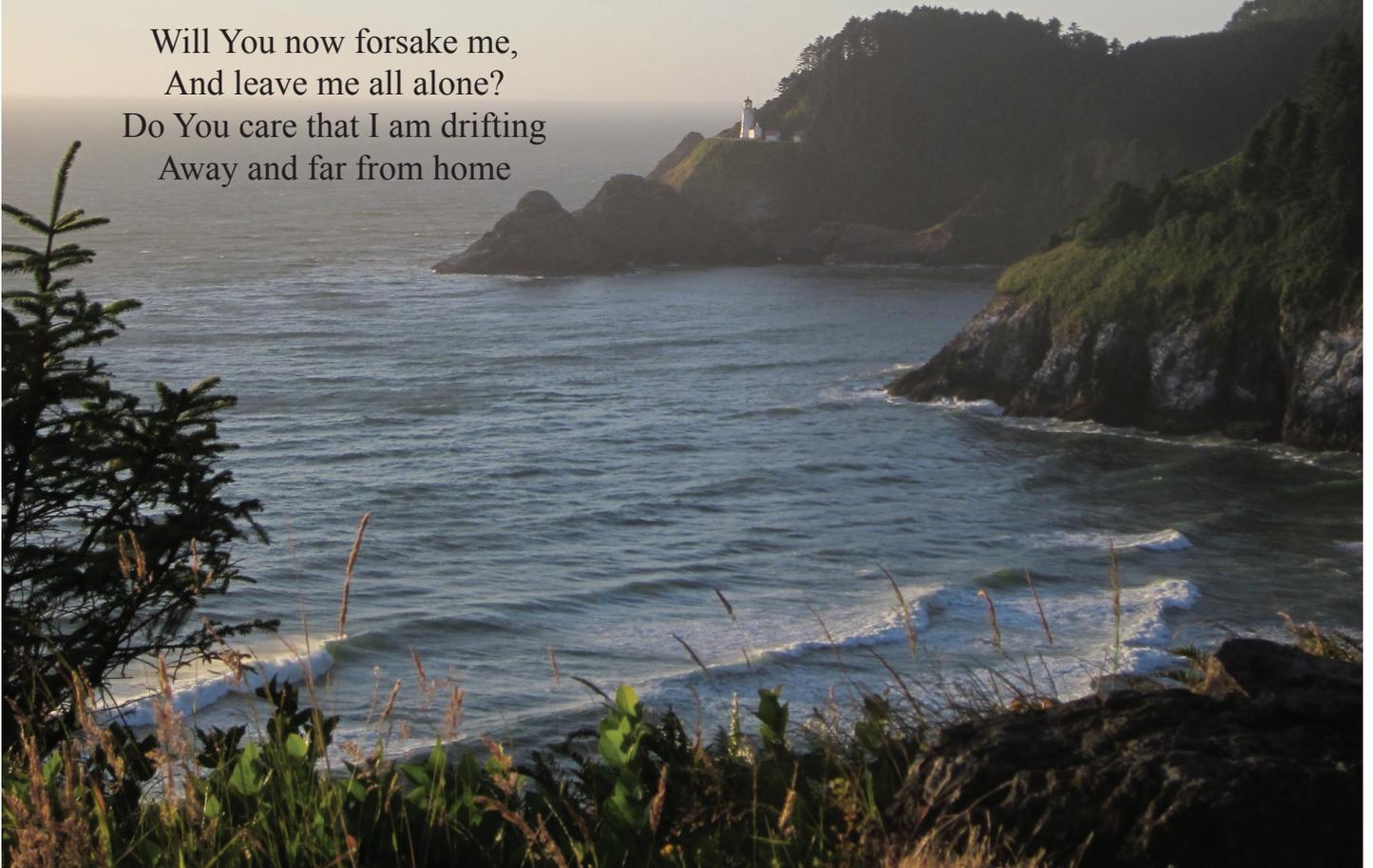
I think of Your great love.
You always kept me safe;
Forgiving me and caring for
A lone and helpless waif.

Will You now forsake me,
And leave me all alone?
Do You care that I am drifting
Away and far from home

I can't live without You,
So now I will recall
The way I tried to follow You.
You helped me through it all.

You lead me through oceans,
The great and roaring seas.
Across all the troubled waters,
You lead me at my pleas.

Though the storm would shake me,
Though thunder crash and roll,
Whenever I would cry for help
You would protect my soul.





Molly's Problem

by Elizabeth Scherer, photography by Rebekah M. One day as Molly got off the bus and saw her friends talking, she immediately charged in and started talking. Her friends rolled their eyes at her self-centeredness as Molly said, "My brothers are, like, so annoying! They told me that I'm too selfish and I need to think about others and not be so self-centered. Can you believe they said that?"

Hillary couldn't stop herself before the words came out, "Yeah Molly. Not to be mean, but I know why they would say that, because you are."

Molly was sad and upset that her best friend would say this, but also that she was telling the truth. Molly did know she was selfish, but she didn't care to change herself. "Hillary, why did you say that? I thought you were my best friend."

"Molly, I'm sorry. I really didn't want to say it, but it's true. I've tried to be nice about it, but

you get worse every day." Hillary's heart was crushed that she was telling her best friend this.

"Hillary, I am taking you off my list of friends. I don't think you're cool anymore, so just find another friend," Molly fumed.

Molly walked off in a huff, leaving Hillary feeling guilty and hurt. Hillary whispered to herself "Why did I do that? I'm so sorry Molly, really I am." As Hillary walked to her class, she didn't know whether she should follow Molly and apologize or just wait for Molly to come out.

That night as Molly slipped in to bed, she saw the Bible on her desk in front of her, and remembered how Hillary would find a verse to encourage her with when she didn't know what to do. Molly started to tear up and wish she had told Hillary she was right and she would fix her selfishness. Molly wanted to change- she really did- but she didn't know how, and she was still being held back by her own wants. She cried herself to sleep, dreading tomorrow.

The next morning, the first thing Molly noticed when she hopped on the bus was that Hillary was looking down at the floor. Molly remembered yesterday and wanted to go and sit with her, but she became stubborn again and thought, “She should come and apologize to me. She started it.” Molly found a spot with Sarah instead.

As the bus came to a stop at school Hillary just stared out the window as Molly and Sarah walked past her. Sarah saw Hillary’s sadness, stopped next to her and said sassily, “Hillary, really! You’re the one that caused pain to Molly. Quit acting childish and get over it.”

Molly jerked her head up and snapped at Sarah, “Leave her alone!”

Sarah stared at Molly, confused, but shrugged her shoulders. “Whatever,” she said, and walked out of the bus.

Molly stopped, wanting to apologize but she couldn’t. “Hillary, I....I’ll see you later, I guess.” She sped off the bus feeling embarrassed.

Hillary ran to catch up with Molly. “Wait, Molly. I want to say that I’m sorry. Please let’s fix this. I don’t want you to be like this and crush our relationship and ruin others.”

Molly tried to ignore Hillary, but instead she stopped and said, “I, ...oh I don’t know, Hillary. I’m confused. I wish I could really want to change, but I don’t. I would love to be friends like before, but I don’t know if I can do it. I’m just really confused.” Molly started to get worked up. She didn’t understand why she was feeling like this.

“Molly, I can help,” said Hillary. “We can go through it together just like we’ve done before. After school lets go to your house and read the Bible.”

Molly sighed with relief. “I would like that, I really would.” Hillary and Molly both smiled and hugged. Then they started to walk to the school, holding hands.

Sarah walked over to Molly and looked at her in disgust. “Molly, what are you doing with the freak that hurt you yesterday?”

“Hillary and I were best friends, and still are in fact, and I don’t appreciate the way you’re treating her.”

Sarah rolled her eyes and made an “L” shape with her fingers for “loser” at Hillary before she turned away.

“Molly, I am very proud of you for saying that, and I’m glad nothing made you say otherwise.” Hillary smiled and felt a leap of joy in her heart.

“Oh trust me I almost did, but you are more of a friend than she is, she leaves me more than you did” she paused and thought, then said “well you have never left me, You’ve always been there for me- to text, talk to and call, she never has done that to me, I always did that to you, how did you put up with me Hillary”

Hillary looked at the ground. “God helped me overcome my anger and turn it into love and forgiveness. You’re not the only one that has had a selfishness problem. In fact I had it bad a few years ago.”

Molly stopped. “Wait, you did and you never told me?”

“No, I just didn’t think to tell you. I guess that’s why I know how to help.”

Molly’s eyes were hopeful. “How did you fix it?”

Hillary smiled. “I read the Bible and asked God to help me overcome it, and when I was tempted to be selfish I did the opposite. It really helped me, and in one month I wasn’t half as selfish as before. My whole family was so proud of me and I had friends who were so happy that I changed.”

Molly looked happy even though it wasn’t her that had changed yet, but she had hope that God could actually help her, and that it would work if she stayed at it.

After school Molly and Hillary went to Molly’s house to study her Bible and pray. Soon they got Molly working on a schedule of how she could fix her attitude.

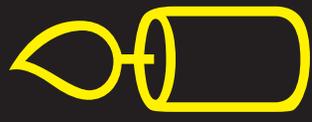
Two months passed and Molly was improving. She was so excited and happy that she now was gaining back the friends that she had lost. Molly actually felt better knowing that she was sweet and kind to others instead of only thinking of herself. For the rest of her life, every time she looked back, she thanked God for helping her change.

by Nicole Garcia, photography by Scetty

Daylight comes
With the rising of the sun
The night has run its course
We rise from slumber
From nightmares, and dreams
Of great untold numbers
But here we are
A brand new day
A gift of God
And a brand new morning
To light the way.



Daylight



LL Magazine

Matthew 5:16