



Portland Observer

RELIGION

Scripture of the Week

SCRIPTURE OF THE WEEK:
II TIMOTHY 3

Heaven within these walls The Personal Nature Of Evil

Often I awake at night in the middle of a dream in which I am battling against evil in some way. These nocturnal wrestling matches are not with flesh-and-blood persons, but with undefined, mysterious forces. I realize that, as my spiritual journey deepens, evil forces within me are striving to reverse the process. It's as if Satan himself is jealous that I am drawing closer to God. I don't want to put too much stock in these dreams because I suspect they often mirror the conscious concerns of my soul. Yet they alert me to the very real spiritual battle which is in process over my spiritual life.

The image of being gradually pulled away from communion with God is an appropriate way to describe the influence of evil. We can be distracted in our pursuit of God in the most subtle ways. Rarely are we confronted directly with proposals to renounce God. Rather we are seduced by appeals to our pride, our insecurity or our guilt for past failures, almost daily we meet the adversary of our souls in one of his innumerable disguises.

Talking about Satan can be problematic because we know so little about him. We often dismiss him as an imaginary cartoon character dressed in red carrying a pitchfork. But denying Satan's existence leads to a shallow view of sin. We erroneously explain our sin as human error or ignorance rather than defiant rebellion against God's authority which began with Satan and spread to all of humanity. If we don't take the devil and sin seriously, we won't take God seriously either. We wrongly assume that God will simply close His eyes to our repeated acts of selfishness. We must stand in awe of His holiness, which Satan's dominion over our world violates.

The Distraction of pride and pleasure

Kenneth Leech notes that the im-

portant element in understanding sin is "not the precise structure of demonology, but rather the existence of false spiritual directions, false paths, idols which can become the focus of attention and divert the soul towards a destructive and death-inducing spirituality." Take, for example, the temptation to pride.

The effect of pride, even in the smallest matters, is to cut us off from others whose honesty we need in order to keep growing.

There may be no deadlier trap for any of us. We are constantly tempted to think we have arrived at some state of advanced spirituality. We look around at others and smugly think we have progressed farther than they have. It's the same mistake made by the Pharisee in Jesus' parable in Luke 18:9-14. The self-righteous ruler thought God would be pleased with him in comparison to the tax collector standing nearby. But the sinful tax collector was throwing his entire life on the mercy of God. His act of total surrender made a sham of the Pharisee's diligent efforts to appear religiously respectable.

A news analyst once observed that, in his opinion, the president of the United States is the most isolated, lonely person in the world. Everyone he meets is inferior to him in rank or position. He has more power than anyone else on earth. He is "Mr. President" to all except those in his family. As a result of his elevated stature, the president tends to lose touch with reality because no one addresses him as an equal. His advisors and staff members tell him what he wants to hear instead of honestly confronting him with what he needs to hear. The president's perspective on the world eventually becomes distorted. His life on the pedestal slowly becomes unreal and fabricated, especially as his thoughts gravitate toward "my place in history."

A similar process can occur with us. The effect of pride, even in the smallest matters, is to cut us off from others whose honesty we need in order to keep growing. By elevating ourselves above another person, we take a step toward a distorted perspective of ourselves. We begin to forget our status as redeemed sinners. We are beggars who have experienced unbelievable charity. But we pass up the opportunity to be enriched by any person over whom we have pridefully exalted ourselves. Even worse, we begin to think that we have reached our position because of our own efforts. At that point we deny the grace of God which is the very source of our spirituality.

I find the face of pride lurking around every corner. It tempts me to take credit for my career, my achievements and my role as a man, a husband, a father, and a leader. It praises me for any success I enjoy on my spiritual journey. These are dangerous thoughts, for they divert my eyes from God to myself and prompt me to measure myself against others.

Along with pride, pleasure is one of the Satan's most obvious distractions from spirituality. But we can be easily fooled by the concept of pleasure. We are quick to identify certain evil desires for pleasure and reject them. But we succumb to other pleasurable desires which are no more holy, but which appear to be innocent or morally neutral. For example, we know that illicit sexual activity is wrong, so we keep up our guard when we are alone with other women or men lest we slip into compromising relationships. But we have no qualms about furnishing our homes extravagantly while limiting our giving to others. We must guard ourselves as diligently against subtle overindulgence to pleasure as against the most obvious.

"Save the Center"



WHAT: FESTIVE MUSICAL
WHEN: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1990
WHERE: DR. O.B. WILLIAMS CENTER 22 NE BEECH TO HELP SAVE THE "MISS GRACE COLLINS" DAY CARE CENTER
WHY: FREE WILL OFFERING
TIME: 7:00 P.M.

Make check payable to: "Miss Grace Collins Center"

Sponsored by Concerned Citizens, Parents, Friends, Community, and Day Care Center Staff.

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"12TH ANNUAL" THANKSGIVING CRUSADE

conducted by
Eld Leon Brewer Jr.
pastor of The New Testament Church

Service will be held at
Highland United Church of Christ
4635 N.E. 9th
(corner of 9th and Going St.)
Rev. C. Prescol Host Pastor
November 22-25, 1990
7:30 p.m. nightly
Sunday Service 3:30 p.m.

Special Guest from California
Bro. James Robins with his guitar
Crusade choir singing nightly

"The public is invited"



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4222 N.E. 12th Avenue
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Sunday Services

Sunday School
9:00 A.M.

Morning Worship
10:30 A.M.

Maranatha School of Ministry
6:30 P.M.

Mid-Week Services - Wednesday
7:30 P.M.



Rev. Wendell H. Wallace Senior Pastor

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MT OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH

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Worship Services 8:00 A.M. & 11:00 A.M.
Church School 9:30 A.M. to 10:30 A.M.
Bible Study, Wednesdays, 116 N.E. Schuyler
10:30 A.M. and 6:30 P.M.

Radio Ministry each Sunday, 8:00 A.M. - KBMS

A Teaching Church With A Reaching Ministry
Dr. James E. Martin, Senior Pastor

Church Office 116 N.E. Schuyler,



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5 - 6:30 p.m.

Portland Community College
Cascade Campus
705 N. Killingsworth Street
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RECRUITING YOUNG LADIES AND GENTLEMEN
7TH TO 11TH GRADES.



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TO ATTEND

"ARTS & CRAFTS FAIR"

AT
MT. OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH

116 NE Schuyler (at Broadway)
Portland, Oregon

Friday, November 23, 1990

Saturday, November 24, 1990

10 - 6 PM

Door Prizes

Roasties

Ceramics

Souvenirs

Christmas Ornaments

Dolls

116 NE Schuyler (at Broadway)

Portland, Oregon

Friday, November 23, 1990

Saturday, November 24, 1990

10 - 6 PM

Roasties

Ceramics

Souvenirs

Hats

Scarfs

Wreaths

INTERIOR DECORATIONS

Household Items Only

Hot Dogs, Chili, Etc.

Beautiful Crafts

Knit & Crocheted Items

Refreshments

Beautiful Crafts

Wreaths

INTERIOR DECORATIONS

Household Items Only

Hot Dogs, Chili, Etc.

Beautiful Crafts

Knit & Crocheted Items

Refreshments

Beautiful Crafts