



"We are workers together with Him..." (2 Cor. 6:1)

### A PROUD LOOK

Kevin W. Rhodes

The book of Proverbs contains page after page of powerful wisdom, contrasting the wisdom of listening to God with the foolishness that ignores Him. While the bulk of the writing consists of memorable pithy sayings, some subjects receive greater elaboration. The series found in Proverbs 6:16-19 falls somewhere between these two, connected in thought with the previous section. The opening numeric formula establishes both that the list contains seven items and that the list is not intended to be exhaustive. However, the evocative words used are of even greater importance. The LORD does indeed hate sin, and so should we. These repulse Him, and they should repulse us. Therefore, His holiness establishes the moral standard by which such iniquity should be rejected, and our desire to be holy like Him (1 Pet. 1:16) should prove sufficient motivation for us to view these sins as unacceptable in our own lives or in the lives of others. These sins as a collective show how temptation challenges the flesh at every turn: the eyes, the mouth, the hands, the heart, and the feet—all of which can be used to tear down both individuals and relationships. That he chose to place “a proud look” at the top of this list shows how pervasive, destructive, and oppressive the LORD considers this sin.

The description “a proud look” does not describe a particular facial expression but rather how a person sees himself. Pride primarily consists of a concentration, reflection, and promotion of self. The proud think of themselves first, expect others to think of them first, and act so as to draw attention to themselves so that others must think of them first (1 Cor. 13:4). Such an

attitude becomes so self-absorbed that it takes on an air of superiority (1 Cor. 4:6, 18-19), fails to consider God and His will (Prov. 16:18) and forgets the inevitability of judgment (Rom. 11:20-22; 1 Tim. 3:6). Pride causes people to treat their speculation as if established doctrine (Col. 2:18). It enjoys prominence so much that it leads people to dominate the spiritually weak rather than to love them enough to strengthen them (1 Cor. 8:1). Pride convinces people that they are loving when they ignore sin (1 Cor. 5:2), strong when they are weak (Isa. 10:33), and spiritual when they are carnal (1 Cor. 3:1). Pride sees the world and self by worldly comparisons rather than by the realities of eternity

*continued on page 7*

#### THINGS THE LORD HATES

A Proud Look	
<i>Kevin Rhodes</i> .....	1
A Lying Tongue	
<i>Cody Westbrook</i> .....	2
Hands that Shed Innocent Blood	
<i>Allen Webster</i> .....	3
A Heart that Devises Wickedness	
<i>Phanat Ouch</i> .....	4
Feet that Run to Evil	
<i>Bryan Hodge</i> .....	5
A False Witness	
<i>Ross Haffner</i> .....	6
One Who Sows Discord	
<i>Johnie Scaggs, Jr.</i> .....	6



"We are workers together with Him..." (2 Cor. 6:1)

### A LYING TONGUE

Cody Westbrook

The first sin was predicated on a lie. God instructed Adam and Eve to eat of every tree of the garden save one, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. He said, "you shall not eat it, nor shall you touch it, lest you die" (Gen. 3:3). The Devil lied to Eve and changed God's instructions, saying, "You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:4-5). Since that day, many have followed in the footsteps of the "father of lies" (John 8:44).

Generally, people recognize the reality of lying. In The Day America Told the Truth it is said that 91 percent of those surveyed lie routinely about matters they consider trivial, 36 percent lie about important matters, 86 percent lie regularly to parents, 75 percent to friends, 73 percent to siblings, and 69 percent to spouses.<sup>1</sup> Dr. Michael Lewis of the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Jersey said, "In a single day, most of us lie...a minimum of 25 times."<sup>2</sup> USC psychologist Jerald Jellison said, Human beings are lied to about 200 times a day, roughly one untruth every five minutes.<sup>3</sup>

Scripture also testifies to the sad reality that lying is a plague within humanity. Consider the number of lies that are recorded in the Bible. Cain denied knowledge of his brother; Abel (Gen. 4:9), Abraham and Sarah lied to Pharaoh about their marriage (Gen. 12:11-13), and Potiphar's wife falsely accused Joseph (Gen. 39:14-17). Saul lied about obeying Jehovah's commands (1 Sam. 15:1-26). Gehazi lied to Naaman (2 Kings 5:20-24), Herod lied to the wise men (Matt. 2:8), Ananias and Sapphira lied to the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:1-10), and Stephen's accusers lied about his

1 Allen Webster, *Seven Things A Loving God Hates* (Jacksonville: Heart to Heart Publications, 2006), 25.

2 Ibid

3 Webster, 26.

message (Acts 6:11-14). Lying is a universal problem. Even those who strive for righteousness like Abraham, David, and Peter fall prey to the temptation to lie. Lying is destructive (Prov. 26:28) and it is an abomination to the Lord (Prov. 12:22). God hates a "lying tongue" (Prov. 6:16) and thus we should be keenly aware what lying is all about, and conscientious to avoid it.

Simply stated, a lie is an untruth. In regard to the "lying tongue" of Proverbs 6:17, one commentator said,

A "lying tongue" is metonymy for a person who has no regard for truth. To lie is to distort reality for one's own purposes and bespeaks a refusal to submit to norms of right and wrong; by lying, one seeks to rearrange not just individual facts but one's just place in the world and so avoid having to live by the normal rules of life. Habitual lying thus leads to the psychological distortions described as "psychopathic personality."<sup>4</sup>

The lying lips that God hates are those that intentionally seek to deceive. This deception is accomplished in a number of ways. Consider the following examples:

- Twisting words to make a person say something they actually did not.
- Half-truths disguised as the whole truth.
- Intentional misstatement of fact.
- Slanderous language that damages a reputation. Gossip.
- Evil surmising which places guilt on little to no evidence.

4 Duane A. Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, vol. 14, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1993), 98.

### CHRISTIAN WORKER

(UPS 109-700)

Third-Class Postage Paid at Manchaca, Texas

Published on a Non-Profit basis by the

Southwest church of Christ, 8900 Manchaca Rd., Austin, TX 78748

E-mail: office@swcofc.org

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Editorial Address: 8900 Manchaca Rd., Austin, TX 78748

Single Subscriptions ----- \$6.00 per year

In Clubs of five or more ----- \$5.50 per year

Per family on the Congregation Plan ----- \$5.00 yearly

In a bundle to a congregation or individual ----- \$0.75 each

Foreign (Air Mail postage) ----- \$17.00 per year

FREE online subscription at [www.swcofc.org](http://www.swcofc.org)

<sup>5</sup>Whatever form lying takes, God hates it, and His people must avoid it.

Consider two ways that Christians can shun lying. First, put it away. In Ephesians 4:17-24 Paul discussed the importance of putting off the old man and putting on the new. The new man is “created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (Eph. 4:24) and can be identified by concrete actions such as those listed in verses 25-32. The first thing listed is lying. Paul said, “Therefore, putting away lying, let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another” (Eph. 4:25). “Putting away” is the same Greek word translated “put off” in verse 22. The idea is simply “to cease.” Christians are called to stop lying—to take the habit off and throw it away like old garbage. Second, learn to love the truth. Solomon said, “Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding” (Prov. 23:23). He said, “Let not mercy and truth forsake you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart, and so find favor and high esteem in the sight of God and man (Prov. 3:3-4). Many in our society embrace only what makes them feel good regardless of whether or not it is true. Christians must be different. We must love and value the truth above all because it has the power to set us free (John 8:31-32).

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<sup>5</sup> Taken from Webster 26-27.

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## HANDS THAT SHED INNOCENT BLOOD

Allen Webster

**W**hen God selected ten commands to be the foundation of all human responsibility, He included four weighty words: “You shall not murder” (Exod. 20:13). Yet we live in a violent world. One would be hard pressed to find any day of any year when newscasts did not report a murder. In the last 3,500 years, there have only been 230 years of peace. In the last century, 170 million people were murdered by their own governments or another.<sup>1</sup>

### Murder in the Old Testament

Satan “was a murderer from the beginning”

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<sup>1</sup> “Statistics of Democide,” Rudy J. Rummel.

(John 8:44). It did not take him long to tempt man to shed blood. Murder was the first recorded sin outside of Eden, as the world’s first baby grew up to murder his brother (Gen. 4:8). The first person to die on this planet was murdered. Earth’s first funeral was not for an aged father but for a young son.

The world turned violent in Noah’s day (Gen. 6:11). It was dangerous in the days of Abraham (Gen. 12:12), and Isaac (Gen. 26:7). Esau was angry enough to murder his twin but thankfully did not (Gen. 27:41). Joseph’s brothers were jealous enough to premeditate murder (Gen. 37:20–21). The Egyptians murdered babies (Exod. 1:16). Moses killed an Egyptian (Exod. 2:11–12). Philistines plotted Samson’s murder (Judg. 16:2).

Samuel feared Saul would kill him (1 Sam. 16:2). Saul tried to get David killed (1 Sam. 19:1), and attempted murder with a javelin (1 Sam. 18:10–11). David orchestrated Uriah’s murder (2 Sam. 11:15). Absalom murdered his brother (2 Sam. 13:28–29). Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam (1 Kings 11:40). Jezebel had Naboth murdered (1 Kings 21:7–14).

### Murder in the New Testament

Jesus, the chief character of the New Testament, was the victim of a murder plot (Matt. 26:4). A murderer named Barabbas played a minor role in that great tragedy, too (Luke 23:18–25). Earlier, Herodias had John the Baptist killed (Matt. 14). Israel killed prophets sent to them (Matt. 23:31). Saul consented to Stephen’s murder (Acts 7:58–60) and later was targeted for murder (Acts 9:23–24). Herod killed James with the sword (Acts 12:1–2).

### Murder and the Christian

Jesus said His kingdom would be different from others: “My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight” (John 18:36). Jesus said, “You shall not murder” (Matt. 19:18). Murder is a sin of the Gentiles (Rom. 1:29) and one reason society has laws (1 Tim. 1:9).

Murder is wrong because life is sacred (Gen. 9:6). Since man is made in God’s image, taking a man’s life destroys something precious. Murder steals God’s right to control His world. Murder is a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19–21).

Most of us do not fear we will commit murder, but neither did others who did. Avoiding murder involves more than just avoiding pulling a trigger. We must avoid what leads to murder. Why do people murder?

- To take another's wife (Gen. 12:12; 26:7; 2 Sam. 11).
- To take another's property (1 Kings 21:19).
- To take revenge (Gen. 27:41).
- To gain power (2 Kings 15:25).
- For hire (Deut. 27:25).
- Anger (Gen. 4:23).
- Hatred (John 5:18).

Consider the last two in more detail. We must guard the heart against hatred. We do not have to physically end a life for God to take eternal life from us. As God considers lust the prelude to adultery (Matt. 5:28), so He considers hatred the precursor to murder. John wrote, "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:15). To avoid adultery, avoid lust. To avoid murder, avoid hatred.

Control anger (Prov. 14:17; 19:11; Ecc. 7:9). "Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (Jas. 1:19). Paul wrote, "Be angry, and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your wrath" (Eph. 4:26). Remove opportunities. Jesus told Peter, "Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword" (Matt. 26:52). Instead of shedding blood, may we lift up our hands unto God's commandments (Ps. 119:48).

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## A HEART THAT DEVISES WICKEDNESS

Phanat Ouch

**D**o you remember, as a teenager, finding a tree and carving your initials with your girlfriend or boyfriend's initials, then encompassing it with a huge heart? Maybe you did it on the wet sand of the seashore or scribbled it on your notebook to remind you of your dedication and love for one another. It is interesting that society uses a picture of a heart to symbolize love, compassion, and goodness, yet the word of God paints a different picture of the heart. When the scribes and Pharisees accused Jesus' disciples

of breaking the tradition of the elders by not washing their hands before eating, thus defiling themselves, Jesus responded first by pointing out their hypocrisy in violating God's sixth commandment of the law of Moses in order to keep their traditions (Matt. 15:3-7). Then He elaborated to His disciples to make sure they understood that they had not done anything wrong and informed them that what goes into a person's mouth does not defile a person, but what proceeds from the **heart** does. "For out of the **heart** come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander" (Matt. 15:18-19). The prophet Jeremiah said the "**heart** is deceitful above all things" (Jer. 17:9). Could this be the reason why Solomon exhorted us to guard our hearts diligently (Prov. 4:23)? It is important for us to understand what the Bible says about the heart so that we can guard it from devising wickedness, one of the seven things that God detests (Prov. 6:16-19).

When both the Old and New Testaments speak about the **heart**, they never mean merely human feelings. According to Strong's, the Hebrew word **lebab** (3824) is rendered: "*heart*" (as the most interior organ); "*being, think in themselves,*" "*breast,*" "*comfortably,*" "*courage,*" "*midst,*" "*mind,*" "*unawares,*" and "*understanding.*" Strong's Greek Dictionary, states that the Greek word **kardia** (2588) is rendered: "*heart,*" i.e. (figuratively), *the thoughts or feelings* (mind); also (by analogy) the middle. The Biblical word "*heart,*" then, is the inner aspect of a man, made of three parts altogether—the mind, emotions, and the will. The heart can be influenced by what we put in our minds.

Isaiah the prophet explained to the children of Israel why God had hidden His face from them. Their sins had separated them from God. They have been inundated by the Canaanite idols for centuries and become enamored by their practices and traditions, thus rejecting the one true God that brought their ancestors out of Egypt. Isaiah said that the result was "their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: **their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity;** wasting and destruction are in their paths" (Isa. 59:7). Second Kings 17 gives us the background and context of what Isaiah witnessed and why he prophesied against Judah.

They abandoned all the commandments of the Lord their God and made metal images of two calves and made an image of Asherah and worshipped the host of heaven and served Baal. And they burned

their sons and daughters as offerings and used divination and omens and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, provoking Him to anger (2 Kings 17:16-17).

They had allowed their hearts to be influenced by the Gentile nations around them through intermarrying and assimilation of the culture. May we learn from the history of God's people and guard our hearts and minds. May we heed the saying of the Psalmist when our hearts have darkened by the influences of the world.

Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word. With my whole heart have I sought thee: Oh let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I laid up in my heart, That I might not sin against thee (Psalm 119:9-11).

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## FEET THAT RUN TO EVIL

Bryan Hodge

“**T**hese six things the Lord hates; Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: ... Feet that are swift in running to evil...” (Prov. 6:16-19).

The number six is stated, and then the number is changed to seven. This is not unusual in Old Testament literature (e.g. Job 5:19; Prov. 6:16-19; 30:15-16; 30:18-20; 30:21-23; Amos 1:3; 1:6; 1:9; 1:11; 1:13; 2:1; 2:4; 2:6). This may at times be a literary way of saying “several” or “many” (e.g. Amos 1:3). If so, the number is not literal or exhaustive. It is possible to continue counting. Some believe that when this increasing of the number is followed by an actual list (e.g. Prov. 6:16-19), the last item is being emphasized. The ESV Study Bible comments,

“This numeric literary device presents a representative rather than an exhaustive list... that seeks to draw particular attention to the final item as the focus of God's hatred. It is easy to agree that God hates the first six items; it is also easy to overlook the seventh.”

What is the nature of the God you imagine? Some imagine a God who hates nothing. However, the Bible is clear that there are things God hates (e.g. Deut. 12:31; 16:22; Prov. 6:16-19; Mal. 2:16) and considers an abomination (e.g. Deut. 7:25; 17:1; 18:9-12; 27:15; Prov. 6:16-19; 11:1, 20; 12:22; 15:8, 9, 26; 16:5; 17:15; 20:10, 23).

It is important that we learn to view sin as God does. The Psalmist wrote, “You who love the Lord hate evil!” (Ps. 97:10 cf. 119:104, 128). Solomon wrote, “The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and ignorance and the evil way and the perverse mouth I hate” (Prov. 8:13). Paul taught, “Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good” (Rom. 12:9 cf. Heb. 1:9; Rev. 2:6, 15).

Our text says that God hates, “Feet that are swift in running to evil.” Some not only do evil, but are eager to do evil. Matthew Henry comments, “Vigour and diligence in the prosecution of sin – feet that are swift in running to mischief, as if they were afraid of losing time or were impatient of delay in a thing they are so greedy of” (Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible, Vol. 3, p. 674).

How are we using our feet? Our feet can be used for evil (cf. Prov. 1:10-16; 6:16-19; Isa. 59:7), or good (Rom. 10:15). “Ponder the path of your feet... Remove your feet from evil” (Prov. 4:26-27). Are we walking in the counsel of the ungodly (Ps. 1:1), or by the light of God's word (Ps. 119:105)? Are we walking according to the course of the world (Eph. 2:2), or as children of light (Eph. 2:2), or as children of light (Eph. 5:8)? Are we walking in darkness of hatred (1 John 2:10-11), or in love (Eph. 5:2)? Are we trying to walk in the steps of the Savior (1 Pet. 2:21-23)?

Are we zealous for good as some are for evil? Matthew Henry continues commenting,

“Feet that are swift in running to mischief... The policy and vigilance, the earnestness and industry, of sinners, in their sinful pursuits, may shame us who go about that which is good so awkwardly and so cold” (ibid).

Zeal is needed. Let us shod our feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace (Ephesians 6:15), and go forth. Our feet need to be shod, more than our seats padded! Let us be as the Psalmist who said, “I made haste, and did not delay to keep your commandment” (Ps. 119:60).

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## A FALSE WITNESS

Ross Haffner

“**T**he ends justify the means” and “A little white lie never hurt anyone”—these two clichés miss the obvious and contradict Almighty God. Proverbs 6:16-19 reveals seven things that the Lord hates. These abominations do not belong in the realm of moral ambiguity, yet man will run to defend them to some degree or another. James warns us about the tongue’s great potential to destroy, and John was told that “all liars” will have their part in the lake of fire, so we should not be surprised to find lying mentioned twice among the seven abominations God hates (Jas. 3:5-8; Rev. 1:8).

The difference between “a lying tongue” and “a false witness who speaks lies” allows for a more specific and pointed application of the unchanging truth about lying. Lying is a weapon of destruction. By claiming to provide the truth, a false witness uses that weapon to its most terrible potential.

A false witness can condemn an innocent man on trial. Our Lord was slandered by false witnesses on the night of His betrayal. At first it was difficult to find two witnesses that could agree on which crime the Lord had allegedly committed, making it hard to keep the appearance of legality for the process. Finally, two came forward in agreement and the council was able to hastily arrive at their predetermined verdict (Matt. 26:59-68). Certainly, a Christian should never have any interest in testifying falsely in court. But the application of the Bible’s stance on false witnessing extends beyond the courtroom.

A false witness can destroy a man’s reputation in the court of public opinion. Solomon warns,

He who is devoid of wisdom despises his neighbor, But a man of understanding holds his peace. A talebearer reveals secrets, But he who is of a faithful spirit conceals a matter,

and, “A dishonest man spreads strife, and a whisperer separates close friends” (Prov. 11:12-13; Prov. 16:28, ESV). The words of the Christian are to spread grace, not malice (Eph. 4:29). While we carefully examine our own words let us also recall that if God hates the sin of being a false witness then we should avoid those who would bend

our ears to gossip (Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6-14).

A false witness can erase the potential yield of truth. Lying attacks from both angles against the power of truth by spreading falsehoods and by replacing truth with error. Truth unifies by nature. An abominable seven in Proverbs is matched and surpassed by a delightful seven in Ephesians where Paul commands that we strive to “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” by holding fast to the truth that there is

one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all (Eph. 4:3-6).

Truth is the basis for unity. Once a lie removes that accord, all that remains is discord. Speaking truth can restore the fallen, call sinners to Jesus, protect the innocent, edify the weak, and encourage the faithful. Lies cannot help anyone; instead, they actively dissuade those in need of truth from searching for it.

The reasons we lie are many, but ultimately each one comes down to control: I will either seek my own way or trust in the words of my Creator. My choice must not be made carelessly because I will be judged by the Lord and His word in the end (Acts 10: 42; John 12:48). On this subject, He has made His will clear:

Whoever secretly slanders his neighbor, Him I will destroy... He who works deceit shall not dwell within my house; He who tells lies shall not continue in my presence (Ps. 101:5-7).

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## ONE WHO SOWS DISCORD

Johnie Scaggs, Jr.

**O**f the seven things God hates in Proverbs chapter six, the last one of these seven is “...he that soweth discord among brethren” (Prov. 6:19). There are four parts to this statement:

- (1) “he” that is, the one who is doing the sowing;
- (2) The sowing itself;
- (3) That which is sowed;
- (4) The one to whom it is sowed—the brethren.

As we think about the one who is doing the sowing we should realize we all are sowing something whether good or evil. The life we live, the things we say, etc., show what we are sowing. Therefore, we must be careful not to sow the seed of division. We should be sowing seeds of peace and joy and things of such nature as the fruit of the Spirit which Paul spoke of in Galatians 5:22-23. Fruit starts with a seed and for it to produce, it must be planted by someone. If we plant the right seed in our hearts we will help bring about unity instead of causing discord.

The idea of sowing is an aspect used throughout the Bible. It is one that was common then and is still common today. I remember growing up on a farm and planting seeds in the field and putting out a garden every year. We always, without exception, reaped what we planted. This follows the Biblical truth that all things produce after their own kind (Gen. 1:11-25). This is true of physical things and the same principle is applied to spiritual things. If you sow discord among the brethren, then division will be the result. However, if you sow unity, then the brethren will be united together for the cause of Christ. One of the problems Paul addressed with the brethren in Corinth was division.

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you (1 Cor. 1:10-11).

As they sowed seeds of carnality (1 Cor. 3:1) they would continue to reap the fruit of division. As Paul said, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

The thing being sowed that God hates is discord. The word "discord" is only used twice in the Bible, and both times it is in this very chapter (6:14,19). The idea of "discord" is "controversy, ... strife (conflict) – bitter conflict; heated often violent dissension." (Logos Bible) The character of a Christian should never be one of strife, but one that seeks to make peace. Jesus said, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5:9). The gospel of the Lord calls us to peace—peace with God and a desire to have peace with others, and especially our brethren. When

we empty ourselves of self and place Christ on the throne, then and only then will we be able to have peace.

The discord sown is among the brethren. What a great shame that many do not understand the relationship we are to enjoy as brethren. Of all the people on earth, there is no other group of people that we should enjoy being around and getting along with other than our brethren. Ask yourself this question: "Is it my objective to live together with the Lord and His children throughout eternity?" If the answer is yes, then should you not get started on it now? We are commanded to love each other. John said, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18). You cannot look for conflict with the brethren and then say you love them.

The one thing the world needs to see from the church is a united people. A people who love God more than anything in this world.

CW

*continued from page 1*

(Prov. 16:19). It exalts itself by haughty attitude rather than by actual accomplishment (Prov. 18:12). Pride convinces people to trust in what they have and what they have accomplished upon the earth rather than in God and His blessings (1 Cor. 6:17). A proud man assumes he has all the answers (1 Sam. 2:3) and all of the time in the world (Jas. 4:16). In short, pride fills a heart with self to the brink, leaving no room for others or for God except as a means to display the imagined height of his spirituality.

Social media may make the problem of pride more obvious today, but its roots lie not in technology but in the heart (Psa. 131:1). This is not a sin of expression but one of self-involvement; therefore, the cure lies not in discovering a more delicate manner of expression but rather in humbling the heart so that the need to express self disappears in the process of being caught up in knowing, loving, and serving God (Mark 10:45). Therefore, "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up" (Jas. 4:10).

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