

# Christian MONTHLY

DEDICATED TO THE PROCLAMATION  
OF THE WORD OF GOD



**Psalm 119:105**  
**Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,  
and a light unto my path.**

November 2019

## A Teacher's Qualifications

Wayne Juntunen

**L**AST MONTH WE WROTE ABOUT the importance of the teaching ministry. This month, I would call your attention to some basic qualifications of the teacher. No doubt each of us could make up our own list of qualifications we feel are important for a Sunday School teacher to possess. There are at least four items which ought to comprise every listing that might be made. They are 1) a teacher must believe; 2) a teacher must be anointed with the Holy Spirit; 3) a teacher must be a person of prayer; 4) a teacher must love.

In saying that a teacher must believe, we need to understand that this does not mean simply a historic faith in knowing that Christ was a real person who lived at a specific time in history. Nor is it a general belief in the existence of God; nor even simply an intellectual ascent or agreement to the truths contained in the Bible. Rather "to believe" means a saving faith whereby one has a personal trust in Christ as their Savior which results in the assurance of salvation (John 3:36). Such a faith expresses itself in the fruits of faith (John 15:1-8) and it is the only proper basis for one's confidence of being used by the Lord (2 Corinthians 3:1-6).

Christ must be the object of one's faith in order for that faith to be valid. However, in order to be a teacher of God's Word, the teacher must also believe that the Bible is the absolute Word of God and the only norm for doctrine and life. Again, as with faith, such a faith in the Bible is not simply intellectual ascent to the Bible as containing doctrinal truths. Nor is it to ascribe to the Bible the status of being only a good book by which one can learn principles or truths which will guide him through life and help them to become an upright citizen. Rather to believe the Bible to be the Word of God means that we trust the Word as the means or channel through which God speaks to us and to those we teach. We teach this Word because it is written by the Spirit and as the sword of the Spirit it has the power to change or transform lives: it brings life to the dead and enables the newly born to grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ.

As fundamental and important as faith is to one who would be a teacher, this faith must have power if it is to be effective in doing the work of God. This power is supplied to us by God through the Holy Spirit. Thus, the second

qualification of the teacher is that he must be anointed with the Holy Spirit. There are several reasons for this: 1) Jesus instructed His disciples not to go from Jerusalem until they had received such power. 2) The believers in the early church gave evidence of such power in their lives by which thousands were converted, miracles were performed, and great signs and wonders abounded. In fact, the entire book of Acts is not really the acts of the apostles but rather the acts of the Holy Spirit working in and through them.

The third reason for the anointing of the Spirit is for the sake of one's own teaching ability: a) In the first place the Word is written by the Spirit and if one would try to understand it with his carnal mind he would soon be engrossed in falsehood. The Word can only be understood by the Spirit (1 Corinthians 2:9-12). b) Secondly, the Spirit provides the power, boldness and strength to proclaim the Word in purity and truth without fear or favor of men (Acts 4:31, 7:51-53). c) Thirdly, the Spirit is the ultimate Teacher. He is the one who brings the Word of Christ to our remembrance, and He is the one who convicts the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (John 16:7-15). To be without the power of the Spirit is to have a tank full of gas in the car and no motor to power it.



***...in order to be a teacher of God's Word,  
the teacher must also believe that the Bible  
is the absolute Word of God  
and the only norm for doctrine and life.***

Having faith and the power of the Holy Spirit, the teacher must then be a person of prayer. Prayer must be first for one's self and then for one's students. No matter how closely we walk with the Lord, none of us has yet to come to the point where we are perfect. We are ever in need of God's grace and blessing which surely He pours upon us even without our prayer. But a child on his knees before his Father moves the heart of the Father with compassion for the answer to our prayers is not in what we ask for, but the attitude of the heart in our asking. The psalmist says the Lord will not despise the contrite heart and the broken spirit.

When one in his sense of helplessness turns in total dependence to the Lord, the Lord then has an avenue or an opening into such a life. Prayer is the opening of the door of our heart to the Lord and letting Him enter and begin His work.

Then, the teacher is to pray for his students. The young ones have difficult battles, so pray for them as Abraham prayed for Lot, as Christ prayed for His disciples, as Paul prayed for his converts. Their needs are many; their circumstances are varied. Let us never forget to pray for them!

Finally, the teacher must love. Paul says if we have faith to move mountains, and have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and have not love, we are nothing (1 Corinthians 13:2).

Our love, too, is manifold; it is first a love for the Lord. He is to be our first love. When He is, our lives will show it in a discipleship of denying ourselves and carrying the cross.

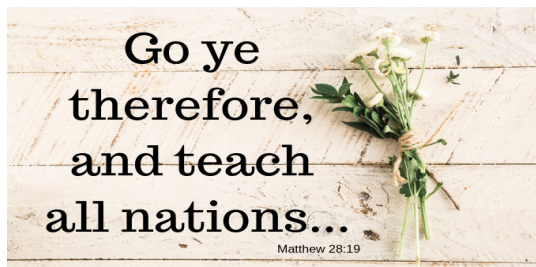
We are, also, to love the Word of God. Such love will give us the desire to read, meditate, and study the Word. As the psalmist writes, we will meditate on it day and night. We will

discuss it with others; we will share it with others. We'll use it as the manna for our soul in the morning and evening. God help us to so love it and glean from it the spiritual food we need for our life.

Finally, we are to love the students or children whom we teach. Such love will express itself in thoughtfulness, kindness, patience, understanding, firmness, gentleness, mercy, etc. We will be attuned to their needs; we will be alert to their feelings and will enter into their life situation to

the degree the Lord gives us the ability to do so. We will love them as persons and so we will show them the respect and honor which is due to them in their station of life.

The qualifications are great, but so is the task. Remember, dear brothers and sisters in faith, you who are called to teach, the promise of the Lord still abides today and belongs to you: ***Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.*** (Ephesians 3:20-21) ~



## The Comforter

Beth Staudinger  
Leslieville, Alberta, Canada

**I**N THESE DAYS OF MUCH PERPLEXITY and concern for the Christian because of the sin and evil that seem to be gathering strength around us in the world in which we live, Jesus' own words can bring us much comfort: *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* (John 14:27)

So we know that He is with us and will be with us whatever lies ahead. When we are His own, He is with us at all times through the Holy Spirit which He has given to us. Sometimes He can seem far away but if we turn to the Word, it will remind us that He is constantly with us and dwells within us.

Jesus said: *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.* (John 14:16-18)

***Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*** (Matthew 28:19-20)

May we find comfort in these words. ~



## Sing Praise to the Lord



**S**ing praise to the Lord! Praise Him in the height;  
Rejoice in His Word, you angels of light.  
You heavens, adore Him by Whom you were made,  
And worship before Him in brightness arrayed.

Sing praise to the Lord! Praise Him on the earth  
In tuneful accord, you saints of new birth.  
Praise Him Who has brought you His grace from above;  
Praise Him Who has taught you to sing of His love.

Sing praise to the Lord! All things that give sound,  
Each jubilant chord, re-echo around.  
Loud organs, His glory tell forth in deep tone,  
And trumpets, the story of what He has done.

Sing praise to the Lord! Thanksgiving and song  
To Him be outpoured all ages along!  
For love in creation, for Heaven restored,  
For grace of salvation, sing praise to the Lord!

Henry Williams Baker



# What Is Your Name?

Jaakko Rahja; Kirkkonummi, Finland

Translated by Juha Tyni; Battle Ground, Washington



**W**HEN A CHILD IS BAPTIZED, choosing a name can be exciting and even difficult.

Sometimes it takes a long time for father and mother to come to an agreement in the matter.

Few people today think of what a child's name means to its recipient or name-giver. I think it is unfortunate,

because the name of the child is like a foreword to his life.

In the Jewish tradition, it was customary to give a child a name that was significant in one way or another. The child may have been given the name of some ancestor. It was as if they also wanted to use the power of the name to continue the family line. This practice still exists in many families.

Sometimes the name mentioned in the Bible depicted the nature of the child or his birth. For example, John the Baptist's mother, Elizabeth, did not name her child after her husband or her ancestors, even though that would have been a very understandable practice at the time. Elizabeth wanted to be obedient to the angel, and named her child John (the Baptist).

For a person today, John is perhaps just a name, but this was not the case for Elizabeth. The word 'John' (Heb. *Yochanan*) means: God is merciful. Elizabeth felt that God was in a special way merciful to her and her husband Zechariah. Elizabeth wanted to leave a testimony of God's mercy, to her family and also outside the family, by giving the child that name, as the angel had commanded. The names of John and Elisabeth (Heb. *Elisheva* = God is abundant) still testify to us of God's mercy and abundance.

There are times when a person changes his name when his life takes a whole new direction. An acquaintance of my youth changed his name to signify that he had received the grace of repentance. Today, also he is John.

A familiar name change in the Bible was the one of Simon, who received the new name Peter (= rock). Peter's confession of the faith is like the rock upon which the Lord founded His church. As the people of Israel approached the promised land, Moses gave his successor Hosea a new name, Joshua (Heb. *Yehoshua*), which means: The Lord is salvation. Joshua's mission was to lead God's peculiar people over the Jordan and bring them to salvation in the Promised Land. Through the name of Joshua, every Israeli understood that true salvation was not from Joshua but from God (Ex. 13:16).

The first man was named Adam. It means two things: 'man' and 'dust of the earth.' Adam, on the one hand, was created from the dust of the earth, and thus mortal and earthly. But on the other hand, God gave him the spirit of life. Adam was thus mortal in his body, but at the same time he was a human, or an immortal, living soul. As descendants of Adam, we are alike: our bodies are mortal, but our souls are immortal, or eternal.

What about the name Jesus (Heb. *Yeshua*)? It means the same as Joshua, or God is salvation. So, God sent His only Son in the midst of us, and He was to be called 'God is salvation.' Could there be a better first name for the Savior? The name of Jesus alone reveals who and what Jesus is. In addition, Jesus has the title Christ, or Messiah (Heb. *Mashiach*). Jesus, therefore, is a king and has been anointed for this task. The Bible talks a lot about the kingship of Jesus, and how one day all knees have to bend before Him.

Sometimes Jesus introduced Himself with the words "I AM." He then answered in the same way that God introduced Himself to Moses once. When Moses asked God's name, he received the reply: "I AM THAT I AM ... This is My name forever ... This I shall be called [*This is My memorial to all generations*] (Exodus 3:14-15)." Already the names reveal that Jesus and God the Father are one. In addition, that Hebrew name "I AM" contains three tenses. It has a past tense, a present, and a future. So, Jesus has been in the beginning of the time, He is now, and He will be forever.

Thus, the name of Jesus as a whole teaches us a great deal about Him. Jesus Christ means that He is the One who was at the beginning of time, is now, and will return one day. He is one with the Father and is "God's salvation" who once restored the relationship between man and God and brought salvation from the condemnation to damnation. Jesus is also anointed King, having dominion on earth, as in heaven.

This name of Jesus is still proclaimed. Many names are forgotten, but the name Jesus is alive and powerful. In Him we have forgiveness of our sins, life and salvation.

Naming a child is therefore not insignificant. The name can tell a lot. So, it is a good idea to calmly and privately consider together and pray that God will reveal a suitable name for the child. However, it is well to remember that the most important thing is to baptize the child into communion with Jesus and in His name. It is well that the name of the child is written in the Book of Life. ~

## 2020 Apostolic Lutheran Church Calendars

You may now order the Apostolic Lutheran Church calendar for the year 2020. The price for each calendar is \$5.50 to cover the cost of printing and mailing. Do not send your payment with your order. An invoice will be included with the shipment for payment to be mailed to the Federation accountant.

Please send your order in one of the following ways:

**By email:** [alc\\_calendars@mac.com](mailto:alc_calendars@mac.com)

**Or by telephone:** Leave a message at 925-454-1648

**Or by mail to:** Corrie Karlsen, 2994 Rodeo Lane, Livermore, CA 94550

Corrie Karlsen, ALC Calendar Committee

# A Time of Thanksgiving

Gwen Wilson  
Ridgefield, Washington

Dear Children far and near,

Hello to each of you, and I pray that God will bless you today and in the days ahead.

It is that time of year again when we in America set aside a special day to focus our thoughts on giving thanks to God for all He has given us. This day began many years ago back as far as the year 1619, but it was not established as a national holiday until 1941. It is a well liked holiday by many including me and my family.



ONE OF THE FIRST THANKSGIVINGS in America was many years ago. The Pilgrims who celebrated it had come from England, a country far across the water. They had sailed in a ship and it took them almost two months to reach America. They were leaving their homeland in search of the freedom to worship and pray as they wanted to. They arrived in their new home late in the fall of the year and there was little time to build good homes and no time to grow gardens. They only put up simple homes that would provide little warmth and since it was past harvest they would have little food.

That first winter was very hard on them and many of them died from cold and hunger, but they did not give up.

The following spring brought hope and they were able to plant gardens, build better homes and start getting more settled. In the fall they brought in their harvests, hunted for meat and were so thankful for all their blessings that they decided to celebrate with a feast. The thing they were most thankful for was that they could worship God freely.

We can be so thankful that here in the United States of America, we can still freely worship God. There are many who would like to take that away but we pray God will protect us and keep evil away.

We should be thankful every day for all we have and receive. God is always being so good to us that we could give

Him more thanks. The Bible talks about thankfulness in many places. The many verses talk about different reasons why thanks are being given. Here is one: *Psalm 92:1: It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High.*

Have your dad, mom, brother, or sister help you look up and read these verses on thanksgiving:

**Psalm 95:1-3**

**Psalm 100:1-5**

**Psalm 106:1**

**Psalm 107:1**

Can you children list 10 things you are thankful for?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, we have much to thank God for every day. He is truly a GREAT God, and does all things well. Praise His name. I want to share a prayer of thanks that I came across.

## Give Thanks

**For food in a world where many walk in hunger,  
For faith in a world where many walk in fear,  
For friends, in a world where many walk alone:  
We give you thanks to you, O Lord.**

Author Unknown

God bless and keep you as you serve Him each day.  
God's peace.

## Prayer for Thanksgiving Day

ALMIGHTY AND GRACIOUS FATHER, we give you thanks for the fruits of the earth in their season and for the labors of those who harvest them. Make us, we pray, faithful stewards of your great bounty, for the provision of our necessities and the relief of all who are in need, to the glory of your Name; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Book of Common Prayer

# Rejoice with Thanksgiving

Martin Luther

**Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men.**

**Philippians 4:4**

**J**OY IS THE NATURAL FRUIT OF FAITH. The apostle says elsewhere (*Galatians 5:22-23*): *But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.* Until the heart believes in God, it is impossible for it to rejoice in Him. When faith is lacking, man is filled with fear and gloom and is disposed to flee at the very mention, the mere thought, of God. Indeed, the unbelieving heart is filled with enmity and hatred against God. Conscious of its own guilt, it has no confidence in His gracious mercy; it knows God is an enemy to sin and will terribly punish the same.

Since there exist in the heart these two things—a consciousness of sin and a perception of God’s chastisement the heart must ever be depressed, faint, even terrified. It must be continually apprehensive that God stands behind ready to chastise. Solomon says (*Proverbs 28:1*), *The wicked flee when no man pursueth.* And *Deuteronomy 28:65-66* reads, *The Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart... and thy life shall hang in doubt.* One may as well try to persuade water to burn as to talk to such a heart of joy in God. All words will be without effect, for the sinner feels upon his conscience the pressure of God’s hand. The prophet’s injunction (*Psalms 32:11*) likewise is: *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.* It must be the just and the righteous who are to rejoice in the Lord. This text, therefore, is written, not for the sinner, but for the saint. First we must tell sinners how they can be liberated from their sins and perceive a merciful God. When they have been released from the power of an evil conscience, joy will result naturally.

But how shall we be liberated from an accusing conscience and receive the assurance of God’s mercy? The question has been sufficiently answered in the preceding postils, and will be again frequently satisfied later on. He who would have a quiet conscience, and would be sensitive of God’s mercy, must not, like the apostates, depend on works, still further doing violence to the heart and increasing its hatred of God. He must place no hope whatever in works; must apprehend God in Christ, comprehend the Gospel and believe its promises.

But what does the Gospel promise other than that Christ is given for us; that He bears our sins; that He is our Bishop, Mediator, and Advocate before God, and that thus only through Him and His work is God reconciled, are our sins forgiven and our consciences set free and made glad? When this sort of faith in the Gospel really exists in the heart, God is recognized as favorable and pleasing. The heart confidently feels His favor and grace, and only these. It fears

not God’s chastisement. It is secure and in good spirit because God has conferred upon it, through Christ, superabundant goodness and grace. Essentially, the fruits of such a faith are love, peace, joy, and songs of thanksgiving and praise. It will enjoy unalloyed and sincere pleasure in God as its supremely beloved and gracious Father, a Father whose attitude toward itself has been wholly paternal, and who, without any merit on its part, has richly poured out upon that heart His goodness.

***Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.***

**Philippians 4:6-7**

Here Paul teaches us to cast our care upon God. The meaning is: Take no thought for yourselves. Should anything transpire to give you care or anxiety—and such will be the case, for many trials will befall you on earth—make no effort to escape it, be it what it may. Have no care or anxiety. Turn to God with prayer, with supplication, entreating Him to accomplish for you all you would seek to effect by care. And do so in thankfulness that you have a God solicitous for you and to whom you may freely come with all your anxieties. Who does not so when misfortune befalls, but endeavors to measure it by his reason and to overrule it by his counsel, and falls into anxiety—this man plunges himself into deep wretchedness, loses his joy and peace in God, and all to accomplish nothing. He but digs in the sand, sinking himself ever deeper, and effects no good. Of this fact we daily have testimony in our own experience and in that of others.

It may be necessary to add this, however: Let no one conclude he will be utterly careless and rest upon God, making no effort, no exertion, not even resorting to prayer. Whoso adopts this course must soon fail and fall into anxiety. We must ever strive. Many care-engendering things befall us for the very purpose of driving us to prayer. Not undesignedly does the apostle contrast the two injunctions, *In nothing be anxious, and, In all things flee to God.*

“Nothing” and “all” are contrasting terms. Paul thus makes plain that many things transpire which tend to create in us anxiety, but we must not let them make us overanxious; we must commit ourselves to God and implore His aid for our needs.

Now, let us examine Paul’s words and learn how to frame our prayers and what attitude to assume. He makes a fourfold division of prayer: prayer, supplication, thanksgiving and petition. By “prayer” we understand simply formal words or expressions—as, for instance, the Lord’s Prayer and the







psalms—which sometimes express more than our request. In “supplication” we strengthen prayer and make it effective by a certain form of persuasion; for instance, we may entreat one to grant a request for the sake of a father, or of something dearly loved or highly prized. We entreat

God by His Son, His saints, His promises, His name. Thus Solomon says (*Psalms 132:1*), *Lord, remember David, and all his afflictions*. And Paul urges (*Romans 12:1*), *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God...* and again (*2 Corinthians 10:1*), *Now I... beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ...* “Petitioning” is stating what we have at heart, naming the desire we express in prayer and supplication. In the Lord’s Prayer are seven petitions, beside prayer proper. Christ says (*Matthew 7:7-8*): *Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall*

*find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened*. In “thanksgiving” we recount blessings received and thus strengthen our confidence and enable ourselves to wait trustingly for what we pray.

Prayer is made vigorous by petitioning; urgent by supplication; by thanksgiving, pleasing and acceptable. Strength and acceptability combine to prevail and secure the petition. This, we see, is the manner of prayer practiced by the Church; and the holy fathers in the Old Testament always offered supplication and thanks in their prayers. The Lord’s Prayer opens with praise and thanksgiving and the acknowledgment of God as a Father; it earnestly presses toward Him through filial love and a recognition of fatherly tenderness. For supplication, this prayer is unequalled. Hence it is the sublimest and the noblest prayer ever uttered. ~

## His Work in Us

C.O. Rosenius

*The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever: the Lord shall rejoice in his works.*

**Psalm 104:31**

**O**F COURSE, EVERYBODY LOVES WHAT he has made himself! Much more than the Lord, all the works of whom are sheer beauty and perfection. Think deeply over this fact. Because it brings with it tremendous comfort! Will God not be satisfied with what He has made Himself? He must surely rejoice in His own works! But what and where are His works? Is it the devil in hell? God preserve us! In his present shape he is his own master. Are they the angels in heaven? Not even they! In the covenant of works they have themselves earned their gloriousness and gained their crowns as the result of a struggle. Are they then the self-righteous with their own merits and virtues? Never! Those are their own works and they will themselves be responsible for them. Where then do we find the works of the Lord which are His delight?



Where a publican smites upon his breast, saying: God, be merciful to me a sinner (*Luke 18:3*). Where a Bartimaeus cries by the highway side: Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me! Where a woman from Canaan speaks about the dogs and the crumbs, and a contrite and broken-hearted Mary Magdalene washes the feet of Jesus with her tears. Where a Paul exclaims happily: I obtained mercy (*1 Timothy 1:13*), and an Asaph: “Whom have I in heaven but thee? And there is none on earth that I desire beside thee (*Psalms 73*).” And when a Simon Peter begins to falter in his speech when he says: “Lord, that knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee (*John 21:17*).”

Yes, there, where such things take place! Where stony hearts become changed into soft clay in His hand, and faces hard as steel into wax, so that He can impress His image thereon. Where souls who have never asked for the Lord now begin to thirst for the living God as the hart panteth after the fresh water. Where the righteous began to coo like doves on the ruins of their righteousness; and the wise began to consider their wisdom foolishness. Where poor sinner began to weep at His feet, and condemned evil-doers gladly dare to invoke Him as their Defender against the accuser.

There, there are His works! And where His works are, there is His delight. His delight, then, is among the children of men; and that among poor repenting sinners. In them He delights. On them He feasts His eyes. Does not a friend of nature delight in a beautiful landscape? Does not the one who has planted a vineyard rejoice at the sight of its blooming and fruitfulness? Even thus the Lord has His delight in the garden He has planted on earth with His blood of atonement and His Spirit.

Does not the new creation in a sinner delight His eye? He cannot look enough at it, because it is His work. He says to His dove open “Let me see thy countenance for thy countenance is comely (*Song of Solomon 2:14*).” “But,” you say, “this describes His dove, the pious, lovable souls. In them He can have His delight. Not in me and those like me, because I am an abominable sinner!” What are you saying? Does God merely delight in your piety? Can you please God by your own works? Have you thrown away the truth so full of comfort, that “the Lord shall rejoice in His works!” that we have been made well pleasing in His dear Son, and not in ourselves? But you say: “I find sheer sin and impurity within myself. Is this the work of the Lord?”

The very fact that you find sheer sin and impurity within yourself is the work of the Lord. The sin is not the work of the Lord, but the fact that you feel it within yourself. That is not the work of nature, nor of the devil. The inspiration declared by the serpent: “Ye shall be as god,” has filled the whole of our human nature with self-idolatry. Therefore a contrite and sorrowful spirit is such a work of the Lord that God and His angels rejoice in it. It is the work of the Lord that brings lost sons and daughters into the arms of the Father, that drives the sinner to the mercy seat to wrap himself in the righteousness of Christ, “the best robe” (*Luke 15:22*). Here is the greatest delight and joy of the heart of God! The one who has put on Christ is holy and glorious before God, even if in himself, and in his own eyes, he is a most abominable sinner. ~

# We Sin Because We're Sinners

Lois Matson  
Yacolt, Washington

I recently heard in a sermon the adage: “We are not sinners because we sin. We sin because we are sinners.” To some people that distinction may seem similar to the one about chickens and eggs. Does it really matter? The doctrine regarding the origin of our sin is important, though. This subject of Original Sin has caused confusion through the ages of the Christian Church.

**I**F WE ARE NOT SINNERS BY NATURE, by inheritance from our first father Adam, then a newly-conceived infant would be pure and sinless until an actual sin is committed. Theoretically, at least, a person would have the ability to resist sin. But we do not resist sin, and, in fact, we *cannot* resist sin.

The Formula of Concord says this about Original Sin:

And first, it is true that Christians should regard and recognize as sin not only the actual transgression of God's commandments; but also that the horrible, dreadful hereditary malady by which the entire nature is corrupted should above all things be regarded and recognized as sin indeed, yea, as the chief sin, which is a root and fountain-head of all actual sins. And by Dr. Luther it is called a nature-sin or person-sin, thereby to indicate that, even though a person would think, speak, or do nothing evil (which, however, is impossible in this life, since the fall of our first parents), his nature and person are nevertheless sinful, that is, thoroughly and utterly infected and corrupted before God by original sin, as by a spiritual leprosy; and on account of this corruption and because of the fall of the first man the nature or person is accused or condemned by God's Law, so that we are by nature the children of wrath, death, and damnation, unless we are delivered therefrom by the merit of Christ.

If we are sinners by nature, by inheritance from our first father Adam, then we stand condemned before God's righteous Law from conception. We need the saving faith that is given by God through His life-giving Word. Because of this faith given by the Word, we will early and with grateful hearts bring our children to Holy Baptism. We will earnestly desire that they be joined with Christ in His death and His resurrection. Because of the faith given by the Word, we will eagerly come to the Lord's Supper. We will desire the

strengthening of our faith and cleansing from the weight and sin which so easily besets us.

The apostle Paul wrote (in Romans 5) that sin and death came into the world by one man (Adam), and that death spread to all humans because all have sinned, but the grace of God and the free gift came upon all humans because of the one man (Jesus Christ). Paul goes on to say:

**Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.** For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. (Romans 5:18-19)

This is God's work. He makes sinners by nature into saints. He makes the dead to live. In His kindness, He makes the children of wrath into His own beloved and dear children.

*And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. 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. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.* (Ephesians 2:1-10)



By grace. Through faith. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift! ~

## Christian Monthly Vol. LXXV—No. 11

Subscription Rate: 1 Year

US: \$12 (Washington residents add your local sales tax)

Canada: \$18 (US money order only) Foreign: \$25

Send articles for publication to:  
Lois Matson, Editor  
Email: [cm@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:cm@apostoliclutheran.org)  
Phone: (360) 904-6951  
Postal Mail to:  
CHRISTIAN MONTHLY  
PO Box 2126  
Battle Ground, WA 98604 USA

Address subscriptions, payments,  
and Book Concern orders to:  
Anders & Clara Sundqvist, Managers  
THE BOOK CONCERN  
PO Box 2126  
Battle Ground, WA 98604 USA  
Phone: (360) 896-7344  
Email: [books@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:books@apostoliclutheran.org)

## Apostolic Lutheran Church of America

[www.apostoliclutheran.org](http://www.apostoliclutheran.org)

Western Mission: [western@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:western@apostoliclutheran.org)

Eastern Mission: [eastern@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:eastern@apostoliclutheran.org)

Foreign Mission: [foreign@apostoliclutheran.org](mailto:foreign@apostoliclutheran.org)

The Christian Monthly (ISSN 0009-5494) is published monthly for \$12 per year by the Apostolic Lutheran Book Concern, 19113 NE 144th Street, Brush Prairie, WA 98606. Periodical permit paid in Brush Prairie, Washington.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: PO Box 2126, Battle Ground, WA 98604

**General Disclaimer:** The material in the *Christian Monthly* is reviewed for scriptural soundness and to ensure that it does not conflict with the teachings of the ALCA. Publication does not imply that other material by included authors has been so approved.



**HAVE YOU MOVED?** Please notify the Book Concern of address changes. We must pay return postage on undelivered mail.

## ‘Tis the Season

Bill Payne; Chattanooga, Tennessee

Submitted by Alvar Helmes; Battle Ground, Washington

Wow! What a great time of year. The long hot summer is behind us as witnessed in the cooler temperatures and the beautiful fall colors. This is a good time of year to do your outside projects. It is amazing how much more stamina one has with the drop in temperatures. The heavy humid air has been replaced with the cool thinner autumn air which is minus the pollen, ragweed, and all the insects that invade us in the summer. The change in seasons is a luxury that all of us in this area can be thankful for.

Thanksgiving is fast approaching, and the anticipation of being with our loved ones lends a special degree of excitement to our lives. Most of us have already decided where we will be on this special holiday and who we will be with. I believe it does our heart good to stop everything and give thanks to our Creator for all He has done for us. I wrote this little poem for this very special day.

### A Thanksgiving Poem

As we approach this special day in the fall  
Let us all say "Happy Thanksgiving to all."  
When life's pressure seems like it's beginning to mount  
Remember our blessings are too numerous to count.  
As Jesus looks down with a heart full of love,  
He rains down His many blessings from above.  
A lot of our blessings are so easy to see:  
The flowers, the grass, and the mighty oak tree.  
The Sun, the Moon, and the bright stars up above  
All attest to our Savior's heart full of love.  
The animals, the birds, and the things of the sea  
Speak of the love He has for you and me;  
So when we say "Happy Thanksgiving" this fall  
Let's remember the greatest Giver of all.



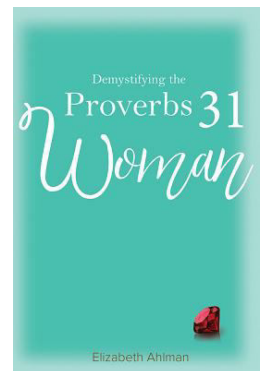
## Book Recommendation: *Demystifying the Proverbs 31 Woman*

I have just finished reading a book that I would like to briefly review/recommend here. It's called *Demystifying the Proverbs 31 Woman*, by Elizabeth Ahlman (Concordia Publishing House).

Of the topics that dominate women's Bible studies, right near the top of the list would have to be the "Proverbs 31 Woman." And, if my guess is right, pretty much all of those studies end up portraying the "Proverbs 31 Woman" strictly as a biblical ideal that all women are supposed to strive to become. And, trying (and perhaps) failing to do so, I fear that many women have been demoralized by this glowing example that they just can never become.

That said, I highly recommend this book (not only to women, but also to pastors and those who study the Bible). It's written as a Bible study. As a quick disclaimer, Ahlman is a highly educated woman, and she writes as such. This is not a fluffy or lightweight study. The payoff of following her, as she does the hard work of proper biblical interpretation, is that, around midway through the book, you begin to get a very clear picture of what the writer of the Proverbs is portraying.

Properly understood, what has been a burden to many (as they are told they need to get on the hamster wheel of performance), is actually beautiful Gospel, where God's goodness is on display.



Pastor Jason Salmi  
Vancouver, Washington