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▲ Realize that God loves you.

The Bible says in John 3:16, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

▲ Understand everyone is a sinner.

Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." No one is perfect. We have all broken God's commandments. This is called sin, and it separates us from God.

▲ Sin has a price that must be paid.

Romans 6:23 tells us, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord"

▲ Jesus paid the price for your sin.

Romans 5:8 says, "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." If we choose to accept Christ, we do not have to pay the price of death and Hell for our sins because Jesus paid for our sins when He died on the Cross. Three days later He rose again!

▲ Finally, pray. Ask Jesus to be your Saviour, and claim His promise of eternal life.

Romans 10:9, 13 says, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." This is a promise directly from God that if you will confess that you are a sinner and trust Him to be your Saviour, He will save you and give you the gift of eternal life.



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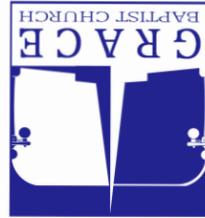
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The Earnest Contender

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A publication ministry of Grace Baptist Church

Volume 26, Issue 1
Winter 2012

The Earnest Contender

"...that ye should earnestly contend for the faith..."

Jude 1:3

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It's a Wonderful Life

Key Text: Ephesians 3:17-19

By Pastor Bickelhaupt

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." (Eph 3:17-19)

Every Christmas season one of my favorite movies – *It's A Wonderful Life* – is televised. Jimmy Stewart plays George Bailey, the head of a small town building and loan. Underpaid, overworked and unappreciated, George Bailey comes to his wit's end and is contemplating suicide. As he contemplates the attempt, he makes the statement, "I wish I'd never been born." George Bailey thought his life was a waste and worthless. His current trial made him forget that he really did have a wonderful life. Throughout the film, George is shown what life would have been like had he not been born at all. The movie's message conveyed the idea that each person's life touches all those it comes into contact with.

This same message is also true of each believer. We are saved from our sins the day we ask Christ to save us. Then we start living the Christian life. Many may look back at the "fun" sinful pleasures they left behind and begin to desire them once again. Like Lot, weak Christians "pitch their tent toward Sodom," and long for the unfruitful, destructive desires of the flesh. Those in the world tell of the great time they are having and what Christians are missing! Christians who revert to their former life will soon discover that it really isn't such a wonderful life. Unfortunately they realize this only after the world has used and abused them.

I did not get saved until I was twenty years old. By that time, a lot of sin and regret had entered my life. The night my first born came into the world, I was drunk. I couldn't drive my wife to the hospital. Her sister had to drive us; I rode in the back seat. As the delivery proceeded, I began to feel sick because of the liquor. The doctors kicked me out of the delivery room. The lost world may tell you that living a sinful life is "a wonderful life," but it's not! It is a



FRIENDSHIP BANQUET

See page 6

See "Life" pg. 2

“Life” (from pg. 1)

life of shame and regret! It wasn't long after that I trusted Christ. I regret and am ashamed of all of those sinful decisions. Thank God there is forgiveness and new life in Christ. When a person gets saved, the past is the past. I *never* want to go back!

Please consider the worldly view of “a wonderful life.” With drinking, drugs and tobacco comes the wasting of necessary funds to provide for your family. It promotes the wrong values to all who come into contact with you. It creates sickness and premature death. Does this sound like a wonderful life? With a free sexual lifestyle comes broken homes, distrust, financial stress, STD's and death! But the world says, “Oh, but it's a wonderful life. Really? Examples of sin and their consequences are endless. All the world really has to

offer is brokenness, heartache and regret – not “a wonderful life.”

Now consider the life of the Christian who is living for the Lord. As a saved person he is forgiven and blessed! Since I've been saved, I have not had one drop of alcohol! No hangovers. No regrets of my drunken behavior. After nearly thirty-seven years of marriage, I can honestly say I have no regrets for being faithful to our marriage vows. Every night my wife and I pray together. We pray for our children and grandchildren. We pray for our church family and those in need. We pray for our lost friends. We do all of this with no regrets the next morning. We endeavor to walk in the Spirit of God each day, and as we do, it is with no regrets.

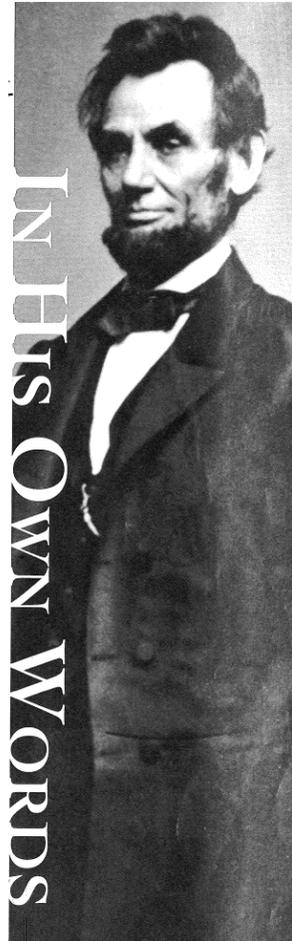
Like George Bailey, many think they are missing out on a lot as a

Christian, and they are! They miss out on hardships, heartache, sickness, and much regret! Jesus Christ said in John 10:10 that He came to give life and to give it more *abundantly!* In the passage above, the Apostle Paul wanted the Ephesian believers to understand the blessedness of a spirit-filled Christian life. He wanted them to be able to fully understand the fullness – “*what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height*” – of the life of the Christian. Paul wanted them “*to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.*” Consider all that the Lord as done for you, the forgiveness that He offers, the healing that He gives, the strength He grants and His provisions. Certainly, you would have to admit the Godly Christian life is, “A Wonderful Life!”

THE FAITH OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN

PRESIDENT'S DAY

From *The Soul of Abraham Lincoln*
–William E. Barton



I believe in God, the Almighty Ruler of nations, our great and good and merciful Maker, our Father in heaven, who notes the fall of a sparrow, and numbers the hairs of our heads.

I believe in His eternal truth and justice.

I recognize the sublime truth announced in the Holy Scriptures and proved by all history that those nations only are blest whose God is the Lord.

I believe that it is the duty of nations as well as of man to own their dependence upon the overruling power of God, and to invoke the influence of His holy Spirit; to confess

(see LINCOLN pg. 8)

The Earnest Contender

The Earnest Contender is printed quarterly as a ministry of Grace Baptist Church. All articles for *The Earnest Contender* should be submitted no later than the 20th of every odd month. All articles are subject to change and approval. All articles should be submitted to graceoh@juno.com in MS Word format. Donations are accepted to minimize printing and publishing costs. Please submit donations to Grace Baptist Church:

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Leo's Lair

Word Find

Names of God...

S	W	A	G	E	M	O	D	N	A	A	H	P	L	A
V	T	Y	S	H	G	J	C	K	R	U	O	K	A	L
E	M	R	T	S	O	A	Y	D	P	E	J	B	C	Z
C	V	L	E	D	O	P	R	I	T	S	E	N	O	M
A	K	I	N	G	O	F	K	I	N	G	S	A	L	S
E	M	O	I	M	G	N	Q	D	O	G	U	L	R	P
P	Y	N	L	A	J	T	R	S	M	C	S	B	S	S
F	K	O	V	Q	H	I	H	L	N	W	Y	I	O	L
O	U	F	R	G	E	M	W	F	P	X	T	L	R	E
E	S	J	E	H	O	V	A	H	G	I	D	A	C	U
C	O	U	P	S	T	A	R	B	C	N	M	X	Z	N
N	L	D	N	M	R	U	Y	T	H	G	I	M	L	A
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R	F	H	O	J	B	E	S	T	F	E	A	M	N	M
P	B	L	O	R	D	O	F	L	O	R	D	S	T	I

Jehovah
Almighty
Alpha and Omega

Lion of Judah
Immanuel
Jesus

King of Kings
Lord of Lords
Prince of Peace

Unscrambler

Unscramble four of the words from the word find.

- MANELMIU -----
- YGMAHILT -----
- JNUOAIHLFO -----
- AEHJVHO -----

Penny Drive



APRIL 25, 2012

Bible Trivia

The nobleman and his sick son were from what city?

- A. Cana of Galilee
- B. Bethesda
- C. Capernaum
- D. Samaria

Answer: C (Read John 4:46-54)

JUST FOR LAUGHS



God sees Adam's loneliness and says to him, "Adam, you are my greatest creation and therefore, I am going to create for you the ultimate companion. She will worship the very ground you walk on, she will long for you and no other, she will be highly intelligent, she will wait on you hand and foot and obey your every command, she will be beautiful, and all it will cost you is an arm and a leg." Thinking for a few moments, Adam replies, "What could I get for a rib?"

www.christian-jokes.net



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The Earnest Truth

Crossing the Line



The Sin of Androgyny: Is it a He or a She?

By Jeremy Bickelhaupt

Puke, Vomit, Hurl. These are the best words I can bring up (pun intended) to describe my disgust for cultural androgyny – the societal blurring of the gender lines.

We live in a culture where masculinity is criticized for its rough exterior and insensitivity, and feminism is elevated as the preferred trait among men. To succumb to this idea, it is now acceptable for parents buy their son girls' jeans and allow him to grow his hair out long enough to make Rapunzel jealous. This same culture that belittles masculinity in men, promotes it for women. Our daughters are told that there are no barriers or rules for dress. Anything goes, even if that means looking the part of their male counterparts. Society warns that it would be an epic failure to ask individuals to don a gender-appropriate hairstyle or wear gender-appropriate attire because "you may damage their psyche" and you might "limit their opportunity to express individuality."

In the 1970s, Sandra Bem – the inventor of the *Bem Sex-Role Inventory* and a highly-motivated women's rights activist – theorized that all humans can be classified by their traits: masculine (instrumental traits), feminine (expressive traits), androgynous (high masculine and feminine traits) or undifferentiated (low masculine and feminine traits).

Bem's study and theories of androgyny can be argued to have some validity in the sense of classifying traits, since it is true that both male and female bodies produce both testosterone (male hormone) and estrogen (female hormone) and the levels of these hormones vary greatly by individual. Scientifically, it is possible that a man might produce more estrogen than another, thus causing him to have a higher voice or less body hair or be more emotionally expressive than other

men. But does this "feminine" classification permit him to behave and dress like a woman?

Regardless of the hormone levels of an individual – whether they favor the masculine, feminine, androgynous or undifferentiated traits– God is specific in His creation. In nature, He has made male and female (Gen. 1:27). Hormones distinguish *traits*, not gender. Bem's study is dangerous because it has done more than classify character traits; it tries to define gender based on those traits. Consequently, it has opened the door for people to justify the acceptability of crossing the gender line.

Scripture instructs God's people to draw a line between the genders. "*The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God (Deut. 22:5).*" "*Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair,*

(Continued pg. 5)



Pop icon Justin Bieber (left) and Actress/Model Scarlett Johansson (right) promoting today's androgynous look.

MINISTRY NEWS

JANUARY 29

David Barnhouse
Missionary to Tanzania
11 a.m.

FEBRUARY 1

Club Resumes
The Young Lions' Club
7 p.m.

FEBRUARY 12

Frank Kinsey
Missionary to Costa Rica
6 p.m.

FEBRUARY 15

"Share the Love"
The Young Lions' Club
7 p.m.

FEBRUARY 18

Adult Dinner Banquet
Singin' in the Rain
6:30 p.m.

MARCH 4

Berry Williams
Missionary to Scotland
11 a.m.

MARCH 11

Time Change Sunday

MARCH 14

"BFF Night"
The Young Lions' Club
7 p.m.

Search for Pennies

Ottawa County Christian Academy has been registered on GoodSearch.com. Use the site and select OCCA as your charity of choice and each time you conduct a search, and a penny is donated to our school. You can also earn more by shopping through its sister site GoodShop.com. This site allows you to shop your favorite stores, but it gives a percentage of your sales back to our school. Everyone searches the web, so why not do it while raising some money for our school. It is such an easy way to help our ministry, so register now and begin searching for pennies!

Ladies Fellowships

All ladies of GBC are encouraged to attend fellowships on the second Tuesday of each month. Ladies will meet at various homes to fellowship and praise God through devotionals, testimonies and prayer requests. Please see Gail Bickelhaupt for locations and times.

Wednesday Weigh-In

Are you tired of the yo-yo diet and weight loss failure? Well, a key to the success of any weight loss program is accountability. If you are interested in being held accountable for your weight, then be sure to attend each Wednesday evening for a brief weigh-in. Meetings will only last as long as it takes to record your weight and your weight will be only viewed by you and the recorder. An incentive program will be implemented to encourage all participants. Please contact Kortney Lorenzen for more program details.

Dinner Banquet

GBC will host its annual dinner banquet at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 18 in its fellowship hall. The theme is entitled *Singin' in the Rain*. Cost is \$14/plate. Come out and enjoy a great time of Christian fellowship. Those desiring to attend should register on the sign-up sheet in the church foyer or call 419-898-4002.

Club News

The Young Lions' Club will conduct several theme nights this quarter. First, on Feb. 15, clubbers are encouraged to wear red – the love color – for a Valentine's Day theme night. Then on March 14, all clubbers are asked to bring a first-time visitor for BFF Night (100 bonus pride points for each visitor!).

NEW! OCCA Referral Rebate

Attention all current and prospective parents of Ottawa County Christian Academy: Starting this spring, in efforts to increase enrollment, a \$100 discount will be applied to your 2012-2013 tuition bill for each new student* you refer to us up to 5 students (\$500). All you have to do is ask the incoming family to mention your name during the recruitment process, and the discount will be yours.

Renovation Project

Grace Baptist Church continues to accept donations and offerings to cover the cost for remodeling projects. We are looking to raise about \$4,000 to remodel the foyer and bathrooms of the original building. Please submit and designate donations to: GBC, PO Box 69, Oak Harbor OH 43449.

(from *Androgyny* pg. 3)

it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering (I Cor. 11:15)."

Although these trends disgust me, I can't say that I am surprised. The Bible warns us that in the last days, "men shall be lovers of their own selves (II Tim. 3:1-9)." Today's culture is consumed with outward appearance, which is really a reflection of the inner self. The worldly man's heart is filled with wickedness, so why should we be surprised when his sin spills out and alters his appearance?

In a sense, this behavior is expected from the worldly crowd. Really, we should we expect nothing less when our entertainment industry (ie. TV, movies, music, fashion, etc.) bombards us with unisex propaganda. For example, the openly homosexual Ellen Degeneres flaunts her masculine fashion and behavior on her daily talk show. Most of her attire – from her haircut to her PF

Flyers – screams masculinity. On the other end, you have the late Michael Jackson, whose long hair, soft-toned skin and effeminate voice warranted public speculation regarding his normalcy. But the public has not only accepted these oddities, they have embraced and mimicked it.

Perhaps Christian parents don't think androgyny to be a big deal. Perhaps they don't care the effects of it on their children. What a sad state to disregard such an important issue. Androgyny has led to a plethora of societal problems including homosexuality, promiscuity and immorality. Christian parents have dropped the ball in this area, many claiming that they don't want to interfere with their child's freedom of expression. Some fear their children will rebel against them if they enforce strict dress standards. What they fail to realize is that fearing the child is evidence of who is in control! Take a stand and lead your children so they don't fall victim to androgyny.

The topic should disgust you. My choice of words in the introduction (*puke, vomit, hurl*) was chosen not to be crude, but because I believe God feels the same about us. No doubt, we are in the Laodicean church age and Christians are growing apathetic. We go to church and are instructed to be separate and Spirit-filled, yet we have no conviction of sin. We are lukewarm and that makes God sick! He is ready to "spew us out of his mouth (Rev. 3:14-15)."

Androgynous philosophy is *sinful* and Christians should stand firm against it – even if it means squelching your child's "freedom to express himself." Remove the androgynous influences in your home. Replace movies, television and worldly music with more family-oriented activities that glorify God. You can't alter their hormones or change their personality, but you can – as a parent – keep your children from crossing the gender line that God so distinctly created. □

(LINCOLN Continued)

their sins and transgression in humble sorrow, yet with assured hope that genuine repentance will lead to mercy and pardon.

I believe that it is meet and right to recognize and confess the presence of the almighty Father equally in our triumphs and in those sorrows which we may justly fear are the punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins to the needful end of our reformation.

I believe that the Bible is the best gift that God has ever given to men. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book.

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I believe the will of God prevails. Without Him all human reliance is vain. Without the assistance of that Divine Being, I cannot succeed. With that assistance I cannot fail.

Being a humble instrument in the hands of our heavenly Father, I desire that all my words and acts may be according to His will; and that it may be so, I give thanks to the Almighty, and seek His aid.

I have a solemn oath registered in heaven to finish the work I am in, in full view of my responsibility to God,

with malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right as God gives me to see the right. Commending those who love me to His care, as I hope in their prayers they will commend me, I look through the help of God to a joyous meeting with many loved ones gone before.

This President's Day (Feb. 20) pray for leadership that seeks God's aid as Lincoln did. Pray for our President – whoever it may be – that he is used as an instrument of God.