THOUGHTS OF AUGUST, 2014

1. After being on the decline for decades, fatherhood appears to be on the rise in popularity in America. Family matters and family persons have always been encouraged by the church and parachurch ministries [that’s still fully the church], but I notice that the secular media have found it popular to write and speak of committed fathers and are devoting whole issues of their magazines to fatherhood. It must be no coincidence, but at the same time those institutions that [partly] arose to supplement or replace absent fathers are on the decline in regards to their fathering – Boy Scouts, sports coaches, and church ministers [especially priests]. Homosexuality, of the pedophilia type, has shown the need for real fathers and whole families.

Malachi [4:6] was shown the children’s need for fathers, and pressed into our minds and hearts not only their specific need but that our alternative would be a curse. We have been experiencing the curse. Perhaps we are about to experience family healing and the lifting of the curse.

2. On the other hand, while still thinking about families, D. R. reminds us that the Lord came to cause division within families! See Matt. 10:34-39; Luke 12:51-53. We were given that information so we would not compromise our calling in Christ if/when we encountered family relationship hindrances to obedience. Abraham and Jesus, our examples of faithful obedience, experienced and dealt with family division caused by their obedience – Gen. 22; Mark 3:20-35.

3. The Lord gives the heads of families and congregations the authority to properly deal with spiritual problems, thus protecting the flock. Problems will either come in through the head, or through the body, but faithful, righteous leadership has what is necessary to deal with them. No matter the magnitude of the spiritual problem, or the smallness of the leadership and group, it is our Father’s good pleasure to give us what it takes to grow the kingdom – Luke 12:32. The question is whether we are on our cross-walks, as were Abraham and Jesus. That adequacy may be to be aware of an attack, and to get help from elsewhere – meaning that each flock may not have in residence all that it needs all of the time.

4. D. K. has made the point that intercessors are subject to being easily led out of intercession into direct action. Intercessors have sensitivities that make them liable for being changed from intercessors into workers. Indeed, every saint should have both faith and works, but the sensitivity of the intercessor can easily lead them into big-time or full-time works, to the neglect of their real calling, anointing, and power – which is interceding on behalf of the needy and those who are doing the work of the call.

5. I read that John Steinbeck [1902-1968], American writer, said “No one wants advice, only corroboration.” That is at least moderately accurate under usual circumstances if we define advice as good suggestions with no further commitment involved. When asked for guidance I make an effort to discern whether the request is for advice or for counsel [counsel, as opposed to advice, is a sharing of Life’s insights, with a commitment to walk to the cross together to accomplish the goal] – Prov. 20:18. Life and time have been too expensive, and thus the results to precious, to squander as “advice.” “Counsel” is solid and rich and effective before God – Ps. 73:24.

Counsel is God’s way and purpose revealed; advice can be squandered without worry. PARTIAL CORRECTION: Counsel may be given, but if it is taken as only advice it may be squandered. The deciding factor is whether the receiver/hearer has a repentant heart and listening ear – Luke 7:30.

6. The Old Testament is loaded with prophecies about Jesus, the Messiah. Many are shrouded, some partly shrouded, and others unshrouded. Look at Hosea 5:14 🡪 6:3.

 v. 14 – For I will be like a lion to Ephraim [brings forth and bears fruit, speaks of the Mosaic covenant], and like a young lion to the house of Judah [birth in Bethlehem, ministry in Jerusalem]. I, even I, will tear to pieces and go away [Matthew 23]. I will carry away, and there will be none to deliver [Jerusalem’s destruction in 70 A.D.].

 v. 15 – I will go away and return to My place [heaven, between His first and second comings] until they acknowledge and bear their guilt and seek My face [acknowledge Jesus Messiah]; in their affliction they will earnestly seek Me [Jewish remnant accepts Jesus Messiah after their tribulation].

7. If we are to be disciples, the Beatitudes/Sermon on the Mount will strip us naked and the Holy Spirit coming upon us in power will re-dress us. Matthew 5 and Acts 2 are powerful and effective, for disciples.

8. The mind and heart of the hearers is the battlefield for the preacher. It must be on point for what is going on in the lives of the hearers. The local preacher [of a congregation of believers] is to know what is going on among the flock so that his preaching can be pointed. No doubt that the Holy Spirit will lead the preaching of a street preacher, but shepherds should know what is going on or is threatening to endanger their flock.

Preaching is not the only weapon for preachers, and preachers are not the only ones responsible for the flock.

9. Thank God for simplicity. We are simple creatures of His simple creation. The gospel is simple. The Scriptures are simple. Salvation is simple. Walking with Jesus is simple. Loving Him and being loved by Him is pure simplicity.

The thief on the cross may have had some previous contact with Jesus, but it certainly had not changed him from being a practicing thief, now condemned to death, into being a believer/disciple – Luke 23:42. It is remarkable that Jesus’ testimony, in that terrible physical condition and situation, was able to reach from one suffering soul into another with an adequate [simple] presentation of salvation. Yes, I know that that is common. The simplicity of the gospel is POWERFUL!! Jesus and that thief met that day in the “afterlife.” Amazing simplicity; amazing grace!

The Roman centurion, a heathen, came humbly to Jesus on behalf of his dying servant, asking the Healer to heal his servant – Matt. 8:8. The thing he perceived was that this itinerant preacher was a healer by virtue of His being submitted to “a god who heals.” He asked that Jesus simply give the word and the servant would be healed. Jesus did and the servant was. Jesus’ compliment to the centurion was that he had greater faith than anyone of God’s people whom He had encountered in Israel. Those long prayers in the temple were worthless compared to this simple request on the street.

If we will live and speak from our hearts we will walk in the simplicity of true faith. Our prayers will be honest, directly to the subject, short, and aimed at the Lord Himself. He Himself will honor those simple prayers. That’s results!

10. “Censorship reflects a society’s lack of confidence in itself.” – Potter Stewart [1915-1985], U. S. Supreme Court Justice. On the other hand, freedom [of all sorts, including freedom of speech] reflects a society’s confidence in itself! Have you noticed that the kingdom of God has complete freedom? We can say and do anything and still be members. Of course, there are eventual consequences and we are taught about them ahead of time. Even at that, the consequences are avoided when we repent and get back in step. It seems to me that the Lord is very confident in Himself, His plans, His ongoing progress, and the eventual results. Absolute freedom and absolutely good results.

11. Have you noticed that this month, August, 2014, is especially constructed? It has 5 sets of Friday-Saturday-Sundays. That will happen again in 823 years. There is a good chance that we will be much of the way through the millennium when we again see it.

12. It is the nature of government to increase, whether good or bad government. Isaiah [in 9:7] understood that. He got it from his usual “reliable source,” as reporters like to sayl. The Holy Spirit whispered in his ear about the Messiah: “There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, ..” Increase is a good thing, a God-made thing, so no wonder the devil finds it so easy to counterfeit it through his influence on and control of world governments, whether Rome, America, Mexico or U. K.

13. “Being defeated is often a temporary condition. Giving up is what makes it permanent.” – Marlyn vos Savant [1946-present], American columnist. Jesus had several defeats [could do no great miracles in certain places, was beaten and killed] but won the war. Some of the Holy Spirit’s most common exhortations are; “Get up again! Go!”

14. “You can’t build a reputation on what you are going to do.” – Henry Ford [1863-1947], American industrialist, founder of the Ford Motor Company, an Episcopalian. You can’t be a disciple based on what you are going to do. You can’t be a Christian just by knowing you should be. Guys, we can’t settle for being husbands just because we are married. You sisters deserve and get a free ride on this topic.

15. “Patience often gets the credit that belongs to fatigue.” – Franklin Jones [1908-1980], American journalist. I have not been measurably fatigued since I retired, but I can substitute “ignorant silence” for “fatigue.” That can be further strengthened by slow nods of the head together with a mixture of a sigh and low-level groan. You know!

16. Don’t miss the little, interesting and only somewhat important points in Scripture. Scripture speaks of 3 heavens: the first heaven is our atmosphere, the second heaven is space, and the third heaven is where God abides. Paul was apparently referring to his out-of-body experience when he was stoned to death and spent some time in the third heaven. See Acts 14:19-20; 2 Cor. 12:2.

And, of course, there are 3 hells: Jesus called the first hell “Abraham’s bosom” and “Paradise.” When He died and descended to Paradise he preached the gospel to those righteous ones, and ascended with them and with Paradise, so that now the redeemed go “up” when we die this earth death. That left creation with only 2 hells. The second hell is the temporary holding place of the unrighteous, until their day of judgment before the Father at the Great White Throne. The third hell is the location of the everlasting fire, reserved for the devil and his angels, where those will go who choose to reject Jesus’ offer of salvation through faith.

The heaven that we are headed for forever is the third heaven. At that time the first and second heavens will be done away with, leaving only the third heaven – which will come down onto the earth, “resurfacing” the earth and establishing our residence here with God on earth forever.

It’s in the Book.

17. There are many good reports on the growth of Christianity in China. As reported this month by the Koinonia Institute, there were an estimated 58 million Protestant Christians in China in 2011 and 9 million Catholics in 2010. Their information came from the Pew Research Center. Christianity continues to spread in the atheistic nation. In fact, Christianity is having such a widespread influence, the Chinese government has decided to create its own version of Christianity to keep the religion under state control. Rather than fighting Christianity head-on, the government is developing a socialistic version of the Christian faith for popular consumption, one that makes sure Communist ideals are mixed with the message. As China’s Christianity becomes acceptable to the state, and the gospel is “adjusted” for their various humanistic purposes, our presently strong Chinese brothers and sisters will be tempted to become like the church in America. Pray for them.

18. Scripture reminds us that we can look into them and find ourselves. That holds true not only when we want to apply them to ourselves but also when we are ducking and weaving to avoid Holy Spirit’s more effective punches. The Scriptures are good mirrors for information on ourselves, meaning encouragement and correction. They may also irritate us if the problem in those verses reflects us and we do not want to see ourselves.

Of course, we don’t need Scripture to do that. Our responses to others tell others and ourselves realms about us. If a certain person or person-type irritates us, we understand that that person or type mirrors that which I and others have been wrestling with in our souls and behavior. Psychiatry has known that about us for years. Carl Jung [1875-1961], Swiss psychiatrist, psychotherapist, founder of analytical psychology, and a pantheist said “Everything that irritates us about others can lead to an understanding of ourselves.” I will agree with him on that, but not on the bulk of other things that he said or that have been attributed to him.

19. One ingredient of love is that it has some degree of understanding.

God’s love for His creation is simple, has total understanding, and more than understanding. His love leads Him into taking both extreme [appropriate] action and extreme [apparently inappropriate] inaction. His love is shown as being unchangeable [even in the face of human failures] and changeable [even when we think we are doing well]. He searches/focuses on our hearts and responds with powerfully loving acts. In our case, we focus on doing the right thing and wonder why He doesn’t answer our prayers. “Cleanse your hearts” is a central command and shows that we have been granted a vital involvement in His actions toward us.

Human love is complex, mixed with variable percentages of ignorance and understanding, love and hate, total commitment and limitations. It is unique in that it has variable mixtures of the positives and negatives that lead us into action. Human love can be trusted only variably, it being swayed by feelings, attitudes, worries, history, hormones, race, etc., etc.

Where the church functions under one Head, it not only functions as a unit but is the most consistently, perceptive and clear-minded public organization in the area. It walks in the light as Christ Jesus walked and yet walks in the Light. In that light we have fellowship with one another, and His blood cleanses us daily from all ignorance [and sin]. We know all that we should know.

20. Edmund Burke [1729-1797], Irish-born British parliamentarian, Anglican, supporter of the American Revolution [for good reason, it not being a bloody vendetta], opponent of the French Revolution [for good reason, it being a bloody vendetta], wrote, “Men are qualified for civil liberty in exact proportion to their disposition to put moral chains upon their own appetites … It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that men of intemperate minds cannot be free. Their passions forge their fetters.” Those in Christ are granted true liberty by Christ, who frees us from the sin that brings immoral self-indulgence. Christ Jesus leaves us free to live according to a mature, self-controlled conscience. We are free from having to sin, free from being compelled to obey God’s own law, free from man’s religious laws, and even free from man’s civil laws [meaning free enough to keep them voluntarily and fully, short of sinning in obedience to those laws]. The Spirit of truth guides and enables us.

On the other hand, evil governments and evil men get along very well, also. Both, being evil, devise and cooperate with evil laws to their own and mutual benefit. It is the virtuous man who is feared by evil government, the same as it is the evil man who fears righteous government.

In the United States we had more freedom when we were self-governed. Since the loss of our virtuous society, virtue being replaced by permissiveness, we have needed [?] more laws and have fallen into the hands of an oppressive government. Its laws have been unable to create morality or even compliance. Surprise!! Our increasingly lukewarm and false religion has us worshipping false gods – ourselves.

The answer? Consider that the call of Christ is not to make us happy or to bestow earthly blessings on us, but to partake in His sufferings and death. We are offered an abundance of that essential, grace, so that He can be revealed in us. It’s all about Jesus.

21. Adam was given the full knowledge of what for him was good and what was evil – “Take care of everything but don’t eat the fruit on that tree.” That was very clear and simple. More information came later through Moses. Although man had begun knowing good and evil only from God, he then began deciding those things for himself. He began deciding “what was right in his own eyes.” But his new ability did not have true knowledge as its source. It was susceptible to too many variables and too many gods – self, idols, and circumstances. Although he had become like God in that he knew good and evil, his trouble was that he was not God.

Pretending, even unknowingly, that we are God opens us up to temptation and sin. Eve’s temptation began the same way Satan’s had when he rebelled and was thrown from heaven. She began with judging God, by distrust of His love and wisdom. His limitations upon her behavior [don’ eat that fruit] only served to strengthen her deception. Perfect trust would have protected her [and Adam, and us] from temptation.

 In this process, compare Eve’s deception in the garden and Jesus’ trust in the wilderness. Isn’t it remarkable that Eve was given the perfect place in which to obey God, a lush garden where all her needs were met, and Jesus was given the most difficult place, a desert wilderness. Whereas Eve chose to not trust God’s goodness, despite total support in the natural, Jesus chose to reside in that goodness despite total lack of support in the natural -- hunger, thirst, physical danger and pride. He whom the Father was making the center of all creation refused to regard His needs as any more than they were – His loving Father’s perfect provision. Eve’s and Adam’s life-decision produced shame, blame and disunity; Jesus’ produced life and power.

The Lord always provides that which we need to live righteously and to serve Him according to His call.

22. We are delivered and sealed from believing lies when we choose to believe the truth. So here is a list of simple, essential truths that fly in the face of our soul’s well-learned unbelief. They will dispel unbelief and lies as we choose them from among the large mix of contrary choices:

 1) Part of the good news about Jesus’ accomplished work is that we have the fullness of God’s righteousness and that it shows through us more and more as we steadily believe it. Rom. 1:17.

 2) When we have sinned, repented and confessed, by believing that we have been granted a pardon so complete that God [and faithful believers] considers us as having never sinned, we are right! Rom. 4:5.

 3) When we read that Christ has put an end to any possible success when saints try to improve ourselves, and that such success now comes by faith, we know that He means and applies that only if we believe it. Rom. 10:4.

 4) Aside from us and any of our efforts, Christ alone has taken us into Himself and has shared/is sharing with us God’s wisdom [knowing what God would do, and doing it], God’s righteousness [being and doing right by faith], God’s sanctification [made holy and set apart to God], and God’s redemption [rescued and restored]. It’s all planted within me by His Spirit despite the actions [sins] of my soul. My actions should be and will be better but otherwise I am already the wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption of God. 1 Cor. 1:30.

 5) Because God made sinless Jesus to be sin on our behalf, we now are the righteousness of God in Christ. It was a complete and permanent swap. 2 Cor. 5:21.

 6) The righteousness of my accomplishments may gain me rewards in the hereafter, but the righteousness I have been granted through having believed that the Lord has imparted His righteousness to me is that which He will be looking for when I stand before Him. Phil. 3:9.

 But what about those sins, our unfaithful choices? No big problem to our almighty Father! We are His workmanship. He will disciple [discipline] us as it pleases Him to do. We are His children, whom He disciplines because He loves us.

23. There is a world of difference between argument and discussion, other than that of basic attitude. In an argument there is an exchange of ignorance; in a discussion an exchange of knowledge. I watch certain news T-V groups go through their liberal-conservative gyrations. They cannot stay on topic, cannot hear what the other is saying, and obviously do not intend to improve. I think confusion and disagreement are their plan. Some segments thrive on confusion and disagreement, unable to be informed or to come to agreement. Church, let’s not be that way. We have one Head, and He speaks. If we will repent of our self-willed hearing, thinking and acting we will begin to enjoy oneness. We and the world will greatly benefit and our Creator/Redeemer will be blessed. That’s worth our diminishing so He can increase in and among us.

24. We have lots of important daily processes involving such as finances, health/sickness, and job/joblessness. Those are not basic processes but they are important to man and God. If we think they are the most important processes in our lives we have become very superficial.

On a deeper level, although not yet the deepest level, are such as I have seen in the process of my life. First, I was an independent, self-centered loose cannon. Then I was grabbed by the Lord and immersed into body/corporate [body of Christ] life and made to be a functional part of one local congregation [one part of Christ’s body]. Then, by more grace, I was granted self-control in order to become a trusted individual who could be sent out from that local congregation by the Holy Spirit. I have been blessed to see others process along that same trail. It’s spiritually natural, comes through abiding in Jesus and His word, and takes time and tears. It is part of discipleship, and puts us on the trail towards becoming an overcomer.

25. God said, “Let there be light” and there was light. No sweating like God the Carpenter had to sweat while bringing Light back into the darkened world. The difference between the two occasions of creating Light? The presence and effect of sin. A debt that had to be paid. A division between God and man [and between man and man] that was otherwise irreparable. Let’s live by the abundant light we have, and by all the more that we can get.

26. After last month’s Thought on fighting our internal-only spiritual battles, and that the tougher they were and the longer they went on before your weapons of faith, patience, etc. ended the trial victoriously, H. F. wrote of having heard a testimony given by a bomber pilot. The testimony was that the closer to the target they came, the more flak they took. Good comparison. There are always natural comparisons to the spiritual, because the spiritual are at the root of everything that shows naturally. Everything is spiritually based. That’s why walking in the spirit is so meaningful, powerful, enlightening, etc. When Jesus spoke to the storm He was talking to the spiritual powers and authorities behind it.

27. “The pessimist complains about the wind, the optimist expects it to change, the realist adjusts the sails.” – William Arthur Ward 1921-1924], American writer, Christian.

28. Some saints who have a broad, deep and effective ministry in Asia have offered us some of the Lord’s reasons for and insights into global terrorism. They are worth sharing, for adjustment of our attitudes and actions as may be needed.

 1) The battle is spiritual – Satan is motivating terrorists [“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.” John 10:10]. With each passing day we can expect terrorism to increase [“.. Woe to the earth and the sea, because the devil has gone down to you! He is filled with fury, because he knows that his time is short.” Rev. 12:12]. We do not need to expect that civil governments know the spirituality of all things, so cannot fight on the true level. They do not understand the cause of terrorism. Many do not even believe in the devil [The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.” 1 Cor. 2:14].

 2) Terrorists are unrestrained and evil, in part because they are confused. Paul the Apostle had been a hate-filled terrorist who was filled with violence and murder, but was granted Light. Then he turned many to that same Light and wrote much of the New Testament. It is a good thing that the Lord did not give up on him, as some of the Christians had. Confusion between what is Light and darkness persuades those in darkness to think that “.. they are offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them” -- John 16:2-4.

 3) The church is rising in numbers and influence all over the world, including or especially in the Muslim world. Our brothers and sisters, and their children, face death this very day. As much as they can, they live in peace with the Muslims but the growth of Christianity has caused a violent reaction. The Muslim leaders feel threatened, as did the Jewish leaders in Jesus’ day. But salvation through Jesus is progressing and cannot be stopped. In fact, the more the church is terrorized the more it will grow, just like Israel in Egypt: “But the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied and spread; so the Egyptians came to dread the Israelites” -- Ex. 1:12.

 4) Other religions are frustrated by and envious of Christianity. We have a big God, we speak big words, we have a big Book, and we have big results. Other religions cannot match any of that. That makes their religion and life difficult for them so they often make Christians’ lives difficult. They have no hope for real transformation of souls. They do have discipline and focus, but only our crucified, dead, risen, and reigning Jesus changes evil to good for individuals and communities. Non-Christians are faced with the decision of whether to follow Jesus or to stay with their traditions. Jesus said, “This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God” – John 3:19-21.

 5) Shame is a cancerous growth and evil power, whether in other religions or in Christianity. A brief time of shame when one has sinned is good and effective, but after repenting and being forgiven the shame should promptly fade away. When shame is held onto it becomes toxic and can compel people to take violent actions. While Jesus is giving others hope, peace and joy, Muslims continue in their guilt and shame. Their frustration leads them to compensate by being violent against Christians, even to the point of murdering family members. Their earthly display of strength shows how empty and spiritually impoverished they are, while Christians’ unselfishness and compassion gradually wins many Muslims to the Lord. “It is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people” – 1 Peter 2:15.

 6) Fear works against functional trust in Jesus. Any fear of the world’s darkness does not agree with that which we know, such as, “God is on His throne.” The truth is that believers have already died – passed from life into death and back into Life eternal. The Lord has all things in His hands, some of which include our persecution and death. He said and still says, “I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after your body has been killed, has authority to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him. Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. Indeed, the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows” – Luke 12:47.

 7) Jesus wins – Rev. 11:15.

29. The Lord commanded Israel to apply salt to every offering, whether the offering was animal or vegetable – Lev. 2:13. Eventually Israel began to talk of “a covenant of salt.” They knew that their lives could be good in every way, but if they did not apply salt to every offering they could not expect Jehovah to respond as He said He would. If they salted the offering, they knew He would respond according to the covenant He had established with them as His people. On one occasion the king of Israel was about to lead his army into battle against a much larger force. To encourage his men, he reminded them that they had salted their offering to Jehovah. They were duly encouraged, and won the battle with Jehovah’s help.

Jesus told and tells us that we are the salt of the earth. The “us” and “we” are His believers, the church; but more on that later. Exactly as the Israelites’ salt was added to their offerings to Jehovah, so must our earthen salt be on everything we offer to Him – those things being our prayers, labors, ministries, contributions, etc. If our offerings to Him are salted, we can expect Him to respond according to the covenant He has established with us as His people. As salt we do not salt the world. As salt we salt that which we offer up to Him. That’s what He responds to, the saltiness of our offerings. So what is our saltiness? What is it that makes us, while we are yet in this world, the world’s salt before God? Are we the world’s salt simply because we are born again? Does that move God to fulfill His promises? Does it work that way in your life and in your church? And what does it mean for the salt offered to Him to be tasteless – Matt. 5:13; Mark 9:49-50; Luke 14:25-35?

Let’s look at some of the covenants for daily life that the Lord offers us. 1) “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” 2) “It shall be done to you according to your faith.” 3) Husbands, honor your wives so that your prayers will not be hindered [condensed – ed.].

How will we label that ingredient which is in or of us that is called salt? Is it discipleship, the fruit of the Spirit, abiding, or something out of a longer list? Let’s settle for the probable answer to all of our questions: Our salt is the Life of Christ as He flows through us. If it is Jesus’ life that we pour out on our offerings, our Father responds to us as He did to Jesus. Lord, help us deal with our tasteless Christianity.

30. Some of life’s internal battles are fought and won in short order; others are long and drawn out for years, and with variably faithful and unfaithful results. One of my prolonged battles has been “when to give and when to keep.” Giving and keeping are joint actions that should come from a combined action of heart [generosity] and head [wisdom]. At times we should give until it hurts. At other times we should give until the hurting stops. At other times we should not give at all, as in 2 Thessalonians 3:10

Here is one [among others] way to determine the appropriateness of your generosity [or miserliness]: If your money/time/property is necessary for your service to the Lord, keep it. All of the remainder, if it is not necessary, it is available for gifting to another. If it helps you along the way, keep it and use it. When it is no longer in use, give it. Our lives should not be cluttered with excesses in our “bank” that the Lord has put there for someone else’s journey.

That is only one way to determine whether to give or keep, but it is a good help if we have a real desire to give to those who ask.

31. For those of us who are expecting the pre-tribulation rapture of the church, our reason is that we understand Scripture. The rapture must come at that time to make way for the rise of Israel as prophesied in the Old Testament. If the church was to remain in the world, Israel could not rise to its destiny. Israel was blinded to the truth of the gospel only until the church could be fully formed. Then the church must and will be removed so Israel can arise. That will be after Israel is devastated during the tribulation. Then it will accept Jesus Messiah and will be born again as a new Israel – a nation that will be the head of all the nations on earth. At last!