

**THE FIVE WISE VIRGINS**  
**Lesson #2 RECEIVED THE TRUTH**

by Barbara Wilkinson

[10b] And at that day when I shall come in my glory, shall the parable be fulfilled which I spake concerning the ten virgins;

1. for they that are wise
2. *and have received the truth,*
3. and have taken the Holy Spirit for their guide,
4. and have not been deceived,...

DC 45:10b,c

The 1829 Webster's Dictionary defines **receive/received** as: **To take or obtain intellectually; to retain; to be endowed with; to embrace and believe in.** That suggests a lot more than just owning the Scriptures and having them on the coffee table to collect dust. When Satan tempted Christ, he challenged Christ to turn stones into bread. Christ quoted Scripture by saying:

... It is written, that man shall NOT live by bread alone, BUT by EVERY Word of God.

Luke 4:4

That means you can't pick and choose the words we want to LIVE BY, you **must LIVE BY ALL OF THE WORDS OF GOD, the parts we like and the parts we DON'T like.** In fact, it is a commandment:

**And I will give unto you A COMMANDMENT,**

- that ye shall forsake all evil and cleave unto all good, [be righteous]
- that ye shall **LIVE BY EVERY WORD** which proceedeth forth out of the mouth OF GOD;
- for he will give unto the *faithful*, **LINE UPON LINE, PRECEPT UPON PRECEPT;**

Sec. 95:3a

Even Christ had to learn one precept at a time until he knew in full. He learned the precepts AND HE DID WHAT THEY SAID. If we live by EVERY WORD OF GOD, we are exercising our faith in Christ:

... **BY EVERY WORD ... out of the mouth of God, MEN BEGAN TO EXERCISE FAITH IN CHRIST ...**

**Moroni 7:24**

There is a BIG DIFFERENCE between

- FAITH in the Word of God, OR in Christ and
- BELIEF in the Word of God OR in Christ.

FAITH is a noun. "I have faith in the Word of God," is a statement only without any action. Faith, the noun is easy, you don't have to prove. But you BELIEVE in the Word when you put that faith into action by EXPERIMENTING ON THE WORD. So BELIEF is the action form of FAITH.

BELIEF IN THE WORD, [putting your faith into action] is a REQUIREMENT for receiving an outpouring of the Spirit:

[161] And thus we see that the Nephites did begin to dwindle in UNBELIEF, and grow in wickedness and abominations, while the Lamanites began to grow [an action word] exceedingly in the knowledge of their God; [because they] ... did begin to KEEP his statutes and commandments, and to WALK in truth and uprightness before him. [Actions, which support their faith in God's Word.]

[162] And thus we see that the Spirit of the Lord began to withdraw from the Nephites, because of the wickedness and the hardness of their hearts. [Because of no faith in action.]

[163] And thus we see that the Lord began to **POUR OUT HIS SPIRIT upon the Lamanites, BECAUSE OF THEIR EASINESS AND WILLINGNESS TO BELIEVE IN HIS WORD.** [Because according to verse 162 they put their faith into action.]

So we need to understand that FAITH plus works [believe and put it into action] brings about an outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Principles with a promise are Scriptures we can have faith in and prove by our actions. Here is a good example that we should all have faith in and believe enough to try it:

**Bring ye ALL THE TITHES into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and PROVE ME NOW HEREWITH, saith the Lord of hosts, IF I WILL NOT open you the windows of heaven, and POUR YOU OUT A BLESSING, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.**

**Malachi 3:10**

In the late 40's I had FAITH that God would bless people who paid their tithing; but I wasn't sure, because I'd never paid my tithing. When I was 15 years old, a friend said my allowance would go further if I paid my tithing. I had faith in what she said, and BELIEVED enough to try to pay my tithing and see if it would work.

It worked! I was only receiving 50 cents allowance per week, but I was able to do as much as my friends that were receiving \$5.00 per week. Is that impressive? Then I went through 12 years of college [8 years out of state] and came out debt free. Max and I bought a house without even a down payment, and had it paid off in 8 years instead of 30 years. Max had Alzheimer's and I was sure we would be street people before he died. We weren't, I am not wealthy but I have enough income to meet my needs, and my house and car are paid for and I'm debt free. That's a blessing that there isn't room enough to receive it, since Max retired 10 years early! We had FAITH in this one Scripture and turned that FAITH INTO BELIEF when we paid our tithing in full each year. Just having faith alone in something doesn't do anything for us. James told us how to test our faith in a Scripture when he said: **“ But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” [James 1:22]** I have a friend who regularly preaches on Malachi 3:10, says it works because he has seen it in my life. But he has never paid his tithing in full so is deceiving himself, because he has never received the blessing himself.

The following Scripture talks about the Jews who loved to hear Ezekiel's talks:

**[31] And they come unto thee [Ezekiel] as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and THEY HEAR THY WORDS, BUT THEY WILL NOT DO THEM; for with their mouth they show much love, but their heart goeth after their COVETOUSNESS.**

[materialism?]

**[32] And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, ... FOR THEY HEAR THY WORDS, BUT THEY DO THEM NOT.**

Ezekiel 33:31,32

Unfortunately, they didn't do what he said. Does that sound familiar? We have the same problem today. People come to all sorts of classes, but they are not doing what is being taught, so they are not fruitful as the parable of the sower says. [Mat 13:20] We all seem to struggle with this. How do I know? Because if we were DOERS, we would receive a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and people would notice; WE would notice. There are times when I receive an outpouring of the Spirit, but not continually. AM I EXPECTING TOO MUCH? I don't think so. I want to be a Spirit filled person to the point that others can see it and desire it too. What better witness can we have than that our light so shines that others can see our good works.

One of my favorite examples is the transformation of Amulek. In his first recorded sermon, he describes himself before an angel visited him and told him to go home as he would feed a prophet that day:

**[1] ... I am Amulek; I am the son of Giddonah,... who was a descendant of Aminadi ... who interpreted the writing ... on the wall of the temple, written by the finger of God. ... [I'm a] descendant of Nephi, [He is giving his pedigree] ...**

**[4] And behold, I am also a man of no small reputation ... I have many ... friends, and I have also acquired much riches, by the hand of my industry; [He admits he was materialistic, but he doesn't seem to realize yet, that the Lord gave him the power and ability to become wealthy, Deu 8:18]...**

**[6] Nevertheless, after all this, I never have known much of the ways of the Lord, and his mysteries and marvelous power. [7] I said I never had known much of these things; BUT behold**

**I mistake, for I have seen much of his mysteries and his miraculous power; yea, even in the preservation of the lives of this people;**

**[8] Nevertheless, I did HARDEN MY HEART, for I was CALLED MANY TIMES, and I would not hear; therefore I KNEW concerning these things, YET I WOULD NOT KNOW;**

**[9] Therefore I went on REBELLING AGAINST GOD, in the wickedness of my heart, even until the fourth day of THIS seventh month, which is in the tenth year of the reign of the Judges. [7/4/10 That is the day he met Alma.] [10] ...an angel of the Lord appeared unto me, and said, Amulek, return to thine own house, for thou shalt feed a prophet of the Lord; ... [11] For he has fasted many days because of the sins of this people, and he is an hungered, ... receive him into thy house and feed him, and ... the blessing of the Lord shall rest upon thee and thy house. [12] ... I OBEYED the voice of the angel, and returned towards my house. ... Alma hath dwelt at my house; [See verse 9, he was there for less than a month before they started preaching]**

**[17] ... and the blessing of the Lord hath rested upon us according to the words which he spake.**

### **Alma 8:1-17**

Amulek had a heritage in the church, so he KNEW the history, mysteries of the kingdom, and miracles of the Lord, but he HARDENED HIS HEART, was indifferent, towards it all. **I THINK** he was probably in the priesthood because we are NOT told of his baptism OR ordination by Alma. We've all seen members and priesthood who know the mysteries and miracles of God, but haven't magnified their calling and have ignored the promptings of the Lord. They have a background in the church, but did not respond productively. They rebelled against God – that is, they DON'T DO WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN TAUGHT. [Mos 1:79-82]

Amulek was just such a man until he saw an angel, that alone would be a SIGNIFICANT SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE, but then he housed a highly favored prophet of the Lord, that is, Alma was endowed with the Holy Spirit, who taught all his family and blessed them. This endowed ministry transformed Amulek; his life was literally turned around. Within the same month, he was out preaching with Alma. [Alm 8:9]

Shortly thereafter, the town's people cast out of the city all the men who believed Alma and Amulek's teachings, and burnt their wives and children at the stake. [Alm 10:44-49] Were Amulek's wife and children among those being burnt to death? I think so. At that time Amulek was able to say that THEY, he and Alma both, had the ability within them to stop them from killing the women and children. [Alm 10:48-52] Now THAT is endowed ministry. I haven't seen or heard of anyone in my days that could say that.

This gives me HOPE. IF we OBEY and ARE TAUGHT UNDER ENDOWED MINISTRY, we too could be endowed in less than a month. If we desire to see such a manifestation, we need to work harder at OBEYING and DOING GOD'S WORK. When Amulek finally accepted the responsibility to preach the Gospel, he was Spirit filled.

**“RECEIVING THE WORD” IS NOT JUST READING IT.** The Israelites were told to HEAR and OBSERVE TO DO the Word and they would receive the promises. [Deu 6:3 (The promises are given in verses 7:12-16)] **Hear and observe to do,** is the definition of **HEARKEN**.

Is **HEARKEN** a synonym of **RECEIVE THE TRUTH**? If we just hear the Word and don't do it, we really aren't RECEIVING it. You are NOT living by the Word, therefore it has NO effect on your life, and so **you are no better off than the people who never heard it.**

I like Deuteronomy. Moses is about to die and is reminding the people all the things the Lord has called them to do and to be as they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. The following is some of the things they were told; remember what God says unto one He says unto all. Moses assures them their choices will determine if they are blessed or cursed of God:

**[26] Behold, I set before you this day A BLESSING AND A CURSE;**

**[27] A blessing, IF YE OBEY THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD YOUR GOD, which I command you this day;**

**[28] And a curse, IF YE WILL NOT OBEY THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD YOUR GOD, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.**

Would you/we receive a blessing or a curse right now if the Lord decided to do this to us? God told the Nephites:

**... INASMUCH as ye shall keep my commandments ye shall prosper in the land; but INASMUCH as ye will not keep my commandments ye shall be cut off from my presence.**

2 Ne 1:34

**Inasmuch** is a quantitative word meaning **to the extent that you do it**. So the more commandments you keep the more prosperous you will be; and the less you keep, the further you will be from God. Do we see this correlation in the lives of people today? When you are less diligent at keeping God's commandments, do you find yourself afar from God? This understanding was repeated 22 times throughout the Book of Mormon. It's important that we understand it. If you want to be near God, you **MUST** keep the commandments.

Moses told the people to NOT listen to false prophets who say to worship other gods, instead:

**Ye shall**

- **walk after the Lord your God, and**
- **fear Him, and**
- **keep His commandments, and**
- **obey His voice [Receive His words], and**
- **ye shall serve Him, and**
- **cleave unto Him.**

Deu 13:4

Moses continually told his people HOW TO live close to the Lord. Ponder these thoughts daily, trying to diligently do each one and expect to walk closer to the Lord. Unfortunately, Moses realized the people weren't even aware that they weren't doing these things. Are we any different? Like the Israelites, are we doing what is right in our own eyes?

**Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes.**

Deu 12:8

They were about to go into the Promised Land and God warned them what was REQUIRED to receive the greater blessings:

**[4] ... for THE LORD SHALL GREATLY BLESS THEE in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee for an inheritance to possess it; [For us, that's Independence.]**

**[5] ONLY IF thou CAREFULLY HEARKEN unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to OBSERVE TO DO all these commandments which I command thee this day.**

Deu 15:4-5

We are already in our promised land. Will we miss being GREATLY BLESSED because we are not:

- **CAREFULLY HEARKENING to the voice of the Lord, and**
- **OBSERVING TO DO all the commandments given?**

Remember God says, **"I, the Lord, am bound when ye do what I say, but when ye do not what I say, ye have no promise."**[Sec 81:3b] So understand, God is only bound by what He says, IF we do what He says.

- **ZION WAITS** for an obedient people that DO ALL THE COMMANDMENTS. [Gen 9:21]
- **THE KINGDOM WAITS** on a people who will CAREFULLY HEARKEN TO THE VOICE OF THE LORD.
- The Lord waits for a righteous people, which is defined as: **"And it shall be our RIGHTEOUSNESS, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, ... [Deu 6:25]**

Moses really harps on the importance of keeping the commandments because he KNEW how important it was to their salvation. In fact, the complete 28<sup>th</sup> chapter of Deuteronomy says:

- **IF** you will keep His commandments, you will receive these blessings. [Deu 28:1-14]
- **BUT IF** you do NOT keep His commandments you will receive these curses. [Deu 28:15--]

Read it and see how many of the blessings and curses we see in the lives of the people today are because they are or are not keeping the commandments. Remember: What He says unto one He says unto all!!!

The Book of Mormon tells one of the best blessings we will receive IF we hearken to the Word of God:

**[39] And I said unto them, ... [that] whoso would HEARKEN UNTO THE WORD OF GOD, and would HOLD FAST UNTO IT, they would never perish;**

**[40] *Neither could the temptations and the fiery darts of the adversary, overpower them unto blindness, to lead them away to destruction.***

**[41] Wherefore, I, Nephi, did exhort them to give heed unto the word of the Lord; ...**

**[42] ... and remember to keep his commandments always, IN ALL THINGS.**

**1 Nephi 4:39-42**

Do you RECEIVE this truth? Do you believe it? Wouldn't it be wonderful if the TEMPTATIONS of Satan could NOT OVERPOWER US AND CAUSE US TO SIN? The Word of God even tells us HOW TO BRING THAT ABOUT:

- The Lord's prayer says, "**suffer us not to be led into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**" That is, ask God to help you.
- Alma gives even more details when he said to, "**... watch and pray continually that ye may not be tempted above that which ye can bear; and thus be led by the Holy Spirit, ...**" [Alm 10:28] Are you doing that DAILY, CONTINUALLY? The 3<sup>rd</sup> characteristic of the wise virgins is that they were led by the Holy Spirit.

This is just one example of how well things go if we "**... hearken to the Word of God and hold fast to it.**" [1 Ne 4:39] Unfortunately, modern revelation says that the day will come that the people will not hold fast to the Word of God. Do you think that day has arrived in this nation, AND even among His people?

**and THE DAY COMETH that they who will**

1. **NOT HEAR the voice of the Lord**, [reject the Lord's words by not obeying Mosiah 1:79-82]
2. **NEITHER the voice of his servants**, [not doing what His priesthood is calling us to do.]
3. **NEITHER GIVE HEED TO THE WORD of the prophets and apostles**, [reject prophecy and revelation by not doing what they say to do.]

**shall be cut off from among the people, for they HAVE strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant [Gen 9:21, they are not keeping all the commandments]; they seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness [which is to keep all His commandments], but every man**

1. **WALKETH IN HIS OWN WAY**, [do your own thing] **and**
2. **AFTER THE IMAGE OF HIS OWN GOD, WHOSE IMAGE IS IN THE LIKENESS OF THE WORLD**, [we make God in our image, with our limited ability and finite understandings]

**...and shall perish...**

**Sec. 1:3c-e**

Notice if you aren't keeping His commandments, you will be affected in this life and life eternal:

- In this life they will be cut off from among the people who are keeping His ordinances and His everlasting covenant, that is keeping all His commandments.
- They will PERISH; they will NOT receive a part in the kingdom.

When I look at these things and my/our lives, I see we are in a precarious, insecure position. In some areas we make no effort to do what we have been taught; in others we struggle to do what we have been taught. In a few areas we have heard and are doing what we have been taught. I'M A HARSH JUDGE; do I see it like it is?

An honest SELF EVALUATION IS ESSENTIAL. Satan tells us we are doing just fine! The only way to KNOW THE TRUTH is to evaluate your life in relationship to the Word of God, listen to what His servants are calling us to do and prophets like Moses tell us we should be doing. Liken ALL Scriptures to yourself and your time.

I always thought we were 'more righteous' than the Jews at the time Lehi left... time of Zedekiah, but now I don't think so:

[Jer 16:10] And it shall come to pass, when thou shalt show this people all these words, and they shall say unto thee, Wherefore hath the Lord pronounced all this great evil against us? or what is our iniquity? or what is our sin that we have committed against the Lord our God?

[Jer 16:11] Then shalt thou say unto them, Because your fathers have forsaken me, saith the Lord, and have walked after other gods, and have served them, and have worshipped them, and have forsaken me, and have not kept my law;

[Jer 16:12] AND YE HAVE DONE WORSE THAN YOUR FATHERS; FOR, BEHOLD, YE WALK EVERYONE AFTER THE IMAGINATION OF HIS EVIL HEART, THAT THEY MAY NOT HEARKEN UNTO ME;

## WE MUST BELIEVE EVERY WORD OF GOD

And he ...fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, ... that he might make thee KNOW that man doth not live by bread only, but BY EVERY WORD that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live.

Deu 8:3

We don't have trouble with this if we are reading only our favorite Scriptures. But start reading EVERY WORD OF GOD. Start at Genesis 1 and read to DC 155 etc., and you will begin to struggle continually to believe EVERY WORD OF GOD. For example, you will struggle with the belief in the wrathful God portrayed in the Old Testament. YOU will struggle to believe that all we have to do is keep all the commandments and Zion will come. [Gen 9:21] You'll struggle to believe that works means what you have BEEN, good or bad [Alm 7:42] These are things I've struggled with and heard our people say, "I don't believe that!" The things we 'can't' believe irritate us and we refuse to believe them **OR we talk to God about them and ask Him to help us understand these truths.** Which of these 2 options you take determines whether you will believe EVERY Word of God and RECEIVE THE WORD, or refuse to believe every Word of God.

- You must call on the name of the Lord for help to understand what He means by THAT!
- Then you must study it out in your mind, study the Scriptures looking for the answer, or
- Keep an eye open as you daily read through all the Scriptures, and EXPECT the Lord to show you the Scriptures that support what He says.
- You must also DESIRE to know the truth and
- NOT JUST LOOK FOR THINGS THAT SUPPORT WHAT YOU BELIEVE or want to believe.

This last requirement was a problem in the early restoration church because they came from many different religions, all with different understandings that they were sure were right. Thus they were told:

**49:1a HEARKEN UNTO MY WORD, ...**

**49:1b Behold, I say unto you, that they DESIRE TO KNOW THE TRUTH IN PART, BUT NOT ALL, for they are not right before me, and must needs repent;**

**Sec. 49:1a,b**

Think of teachings/practices you have seen in the church or among His people that you don't believe are correct. Look up ALL THE SCRIPTURES YOU CAN FIND ON THE SUBJECT. Determine what all those Scriptures say, so you know EXACTLY WHAT THE LORD SAYS IS THE TRUTH, IN THAT AREA! Do this with every area you

- Have trouble understanding,
- Are frustrated by what is being taught, or
- What you THINK the Scripture is saying.

IF God wants me to search out the truth of some teaching, He makes me be irritated by what it says, or what someone else says it says, etc. My best recent example is the term, to bring about the CAUSE of Zion. That really irritated my understanding. Finally I looked up the definition of CAUSE and learned that it meant in essence to **"DO that which is required to bring about a given result."** So the CAUSE of Zion, means God is calling us to DO THAT WHICH WILL BRING ABOUT ZION. That was like a 400-watt bulb going on because we are told exactly what to do to bring about Zion:

**... when men should keep all my commandments, Zion should again come on the earth, the city of Enoch which I have caught up unto myself.**

**Gen 9:21**

So when you see a Scripture that irritates you and you can't accept it, instead of rejecting it, ASK God to lead you to understand it. Then, look for EVERYTHING you can find on the subject. My testimony is that as you do this, God will open up your understanding on the subject and you will RECEIVE THE TRUTH.

### **WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT WE LIVE BY EVERY WORD OF GOD?**

God told Nephi EXACTLY why it is important:

**And MY WORDS shall hiss forth unto the ends of the earth, FOR A STANDARD UNTO MY PEOPLE, which are of the house of Israel**

**2N 12:44**

If you are reading only part of God's Word you have

- An INCOMPLETE AND INACCURATE STANDARD to live by.
- We can easily be misled by the WORLD'S standard.

BUT IF you are READING ALL OF GOD'S WORDS you become aware that the worldly standards are far below God's standards. We are told that: **"... my [God's] ways [are] HIGHER THAN YOUR WAYS, and my thoughts THAN YOUR THOUGHTS."** [Isa 55:8,9]. We are called to walk on the higher ground or God's higher way.

You would think it would be easy to recognize that God's Words and ways are higher than the world's ways, but that isn't necessarily true because WORLDLY understandings sound so LOGICAL, until they are compared with God's Word. If you are not regularly reading God's Word, you do not realize His ways are higher than the worldly ways. How many people do you know that diligently, regularly, daily read ALL of God's Words? How regularly and diligently do you read all of God's Word? Many people only study the Scriptures when they need something for worship or for a sermon etc. Therefore, most people don't know much about God's laws, statutes, ordinances, or commandments.

A glaring example is God's truth that sex is only for marriage. But worldly wisdom says it is okay to have sex out of marriage today because we have the pill and you won't get pregnant. Since that worldly theory was accepted, the number of pregnancies out of marriage has sky rocketed. which required accepting abortion. Now Congress is voting on partial birth abortions. None of this would be a problem IF we follow God's laws and keep sex as an exclusive function in marriage.

Another problem with sex out of wedlock is sexually transmitted disease. There were only 5 in the 1950's; today there are over 50. God's ways are higher than man's ways, and certainly less heart breaking. When we reject God's Word and "do our own thing," by choosing the lower worldly standards, we must suffer the consequences.

### **WE WILL BE JUDGED BY THE WORD AND BY OUR WORKS**

We have been told we will be judged by two things 1) the Word, and 1) by our works:

**For out of the books which shall be written, I will judge THE WORLD, Every man ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS, ACCORDING TO THAT WHICH IS WRITTEN [the Word of God].**

**2 Ne 12:66**, see also 3 Ne 13:2; Words of Mor 1:17

So if we are smart we will read all 3 Scriptures regularly, so we know the STANDARD we will be judged by. If we KNOW the Word of God and rebel against it, that is, don't do it, we will suffer the consequences:

**...wo, wo unto him who KNOWETH THAT HE REBELLETH AGAINST GOD; for salvation cometh to none such, except it be through repentance and faith on the Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Mos 1:108-109**, also see Mos 1:79-84

That is, on judgment day you can't say, 'I didn't now that,' and be excused from the punishment affixed. WE KNOW THAT WE ARE CALLED TO OBEY AND DO or receive the curses affixed. We have our agency and CHOOSE daily whether we will obey and live, or disobey and suffer the consequences.

### **WHY DO I POUND SO HARD ABOUT BEING DOERS OF THE WORD?**

We must understand that to RECEIVE THE WORD means we KNOW THE WORD AND DO IT. This is essential if we are to be an effective witness/teacher to help bring others to Christ.

From Genesis to the end of the Doctrine and Covenants we are called to witness and evangelize the world. We are even told if we can't go into the world we are to help send others. This call isn't just to the priesthood. Emma Smith was called to expound the Scriptures, and to exhort the church, as it was given to her by God's Spirit. God also said, **"...What I say unto one I say unto all..." [Mat 24:49; Mar 13:52; Luk 21:36; DC 61:3d, 6c; 81:1e; 89:1; 90:8d.]** So what He said to Emma he said to all women. Joseph Smith, III gives his mother the credit for teaching him right and wrong. He admits it was upon her teachings he built the foundation of his life's service to the Lord. Anything I've read about her indicates she was a living example of THE WORD. How much of her teaching to her children was by example and how much by words? I had a mother who also taught me right and wrong, but the thing I remember most was her living example of righteousness. What she did spoke loudly to me. A college teacher taught us that, **"What you do speaks so loudly that I can't hear what you are saying!"** What are our actions saying to the world around us?

What will our children say of us? I gave birth to no children, but I am very much aware that children look up to many women and men too. For example, years ago at church a young girl used a popular slang word of the day. Her mother chastened her about using that word. Her prompt response was, **"Well Barb says it!"** She was looking and I failed miserably in that area. I was raised in California where the language, the slang word usage is much rougher and cruder than in the Midwest. I have struggled with that all my life; I am not a good example in that area.

In contrast, I was a camp counselor for several years. I KNOW at least 2 girls were watching me very carefully, because recently they have made contact with me and said I was a strong influence on the direction their lives took. That was one week's contact 40 years ago. Such a short contact, and such a big influence. We never know who is watching our actions, to see if we have RECEIVED THE WORD and are DOING IT. I wonder how many saw me when I was not setting a good example? When my actions have spoken so loudly that they can't hear what I was saying. So we must live our lives very carefully so that what we have received in the Word shows in our actions, so we can lead others to Christ.

The other day in church I saw a 4 year old looking with awe at 2 young girls probably 12 and 13 years old. I can remember as a child, carefully scrutinizing the women in my branch. I'm sure they had no idea that they were setting examples by what they DID, more than what they said. My Sunday School teacher for 11 years and her daughter were shining examples. We had many church members in my home as I grew up, I can name the ones that set good examples and the ones that set bad moral examples. I'm to this day, heart sick about the ones that set bad examples, and in awe of those who set good examples.

If we were only interested in our own salvation, it wouldn't matter so much if we obeyed or not because only one life would be at stake. But since we are responsible for teaching our children, as well as others, it is essential that we DO WHAT WE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT, so we set a good example. How many of our church children have been lost to the Lord because of our collective bad example?

Yes, many have had good examples in their parents and church family but have CHOSEN to reject God and His teachings. For those we all need to pray diligently that the day will come when they will remember the good examples, not the bad examples that were before them as a child, and will return to the Lord.