

GOD'S "B-HIVE"

Bees and honey have been around for a long time. Honey is first referred to in the book of Genesis, and bees themselves are referred to in Deuteronomy. An interesting story of honey is found in Judges 14:1-18, where Samson fell for a Philistine woman of Timnah. He wanted her for his wife, and took his parents to meet her. On the way, he was confronted by a lion, and with his bare hands, he killed the lion. Later, they came through that same area, and he found the dead lion, and took honey from it and gave to his parents. Later, it became the basis for a "riddle" he gave to 30 young men, which involved 30 changes of garments. The men "plowed" with his heifer and learned the riddle, and won the 30 changes of garments when they told him the answer.

Elsewhere in scripture, "honey" is discussed. It is associated with the promised land in a figurative way. David spoke of the sweetness of honey (Psa. 19:10; 119:103). Solomon wrote of the value of honey, but warned it should be eaten in moderation (Prov. 24:13; 25:27). Honey and the honeycomb are referred to numerous times in scripture. It is a very sweet, healthful product, that involves bees and their hives (houses where the honey is stored), and is said to be the only food that will not spoil. Our very existence on this earth is largely based on the existence of Bees (which make honey), as we depend on them to pollinate the plants that grow our food.

Today, GOD has His "B-Hive". This study will involve five (5) "B's" in this Hive.

The First "B" is BELIEVE. There are several things WE must believe, to be in God's hive. (1) We must believe the **WORD** of God, the maker of bees and their good work for humanity. Jesus declared that what was written (scripture, the word) was that we might "believe", and ultimately have life (John 20:30f). When Paul went to Berea and preached the scriptures, the hearers examined the scriptures daily to determine if Paul was telling them the truth or not, and it is said that many of them "believed" (Acts 17:11f). Jesus rebuked the Jews for NOT "believing" the word that Moses had written (John 5:39-47). The very BASIS of our believing" IS the word itself (Rom. 10:17).

(2) We must believe in the **GOD** that the WORD reveals. The Bible begins by telling us what GOD created, and even the creation is evidence OF His existence (Gen. 1:1; Rom. 1:20). Fools deny God's existence (Psa. 14:1). Paul wrote that without faith IN God, that we cannot please Him, and that we MUST "believe" in Him (Heb. 11:6).

(3) We must also believe in **CHRIST** as God's SON. This was acknowledged by Peter Matt. 16:15f), and confessed by the treasurer in Acts 8:36f. Jesus declared that unless we "believe" in Him, we shall die in our sins (John 8:24). "Believing" is part of our initial obedience in being saved from sin (Mark 16:16).

(4) We must also believe in the **PROMISES** of God. Abraham believed in God's promise to him, and was willing to sojourn in a strange land, and sacrifice his son if necessary because of that promise (Gen.12:1-3; Heb. 11:8-10, 17-19). Through faith, Sarah believed in God's promise (Heb. 11:11f). We live in "belief" of God's promise of eternal life (Tit.1:2).

(5) We must also believe in the **RESURRECTION** (not only of Jesus, but our own in time to come). Paul relates this TO the "promise" of God, as one of the basic elements of his hope (Acts 26:6-8). Abraham even knew that God could raise the dead (Heb. 11:17-19). Paul declares that the resurrection is one of the basic elements of the gospel to be "believed" (1 Cor. 15:1-4), and that our faith and our eternal existence depends on the resurrection of JESUS, and our OWN resurrection at the end of time (1 Cor. 15:12-14, 21-23).

(6) We must also believe in the **BLOOD** of Jesus, that was shed for the remission of sins (Matt. 26:28), that purchased the church (Acts 20:28), and saves us (Rev.1:5).

Paul wrote that we are to have “faith in his blood” (Rom. 3:25). We must never count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing (Heb. 10:29). We continually depend on the blood for our cleansing as we walk in the light and confess our sins (1 John 1:6-8). Abel “believed” in God and shed the blood of lambs in sacrifice to God, which pointed to the shedding of Jesus' blood (Heb. 11:4; 12:24).

(7) We must also believe the **GOSPEL** message OF the WORD. The “gospel” (good news of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus) was something NEW to the first century to anyone who might already believe the WORD of God, and it too had to be believed. The “gospel” is God's power to save all who “believe” it (Rom. 1:16). When Jesus gave the great commission to preach the GOSPEL, He stated that one who “believeth” and is baptized shall be saved, and the one who does NOT believe shall be damned (Mark 16:15f).

(8) Finally, we must believe **ALL THE BIBLE SAYS** about any and every subject under consideration. In Luke 24:25, Jesus condemned the state of those who were “slow of heart to to believe **ALL** the prophets have spoken”. The Bible is not like some kind of cafeteria, where we can walk through and select what we want at any given time, but more like a plate of food set before us, with instructions to eat ALL that is on the plate. We must believe ALL the Bible says about the **church**, that Jesus is the builder (Matt.16:18); that it was paid for by His blood (Acts 20:28); that He is the head of it and shares this rule with no one in heaven or on earth (including the Pope of Rome); that it is ONE (Eph. 4:4); that it is entered only at the point of baptism and salvation (Acts 2:47; 1 Cor. 12:13), and it is the ONLY body to be delivered up to God for eternal life at the second coming (Eph. 5:27; 1 Cor. 15:23f). We must believe ALL the Bible says about worship in singing, preaching, prayer, communion and giving (Acts 2:42, 47; Heb. 2:12; 13:15). We must also believe ALL the Bible says about the plan of salvation, how that the believer must repent and be baptized FOR the “remission of sins”, or salvation (Acts 2:36-41, 47). Someone has said that it is easy to believe what one DESIRES to be true. We must lay aside our preconceived ideas, and the errors we may have been taught, and continue to received ONLY “the engrafted word which is able to save our souls” (James 1:21). It is easier to believe error that we have heard a thousand times, than it is the truth we hear one time, but once we HAVE heard it, we need to be obedient to it. We are accountable to God for what the Bible says, and will be judged by it in the last day (John 12:48).

The Second “B” in God's “B-Hive” is BELONG. As obedient believers, we DO belong. In the first place, we belong to **CHRIST**. In Gal. 3:26, Paul declared that we are children of God by faith (the gospel system of “believing”), and specifically declares that we completed this transaction by being baptized INTO Christ—thus becoming a part of Him spiritually (v. 27). THEN, he stated “And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise” (v. 29). The word “Christ's” is possessive case showing that we BELONG to Him. Paul said he was crucified with Christ (Gal. 2:20), and to live WAS Christ (Phil. 1:21). Belonging to Christ, it can also be said that we belong to the **CHURCH**, for we are “added to” it (Acts 2:47), and are thus baptized into it (as the body), as stated by Paul (1 Cor. 12:13). Congregations in the first century were known as churches OF CHRIST (Rom. 16:16). In Corinth, there were some who wanted to be “of Paul”, “of Apollos”, or “of Cephas”, while others were content to just be “of Christ” (1 Cor. 1:12). In our time, some congregations that were once “of Christ”, have dropped the term “of Christ” from their signs, lest the offend some who read their signs and get the idea that they think that they are the ONLY ones “of Christ”. Are they ashamed of Christ? Jesus speaks of the fact that those who are ashamed of Christ on earth, of them will He be ashamed in the last day (Mark 9:38). If ONLY the church Jesus built was the only one the world KNEW, then it would not be inappropriate to refer to just “the church”, OR

when we are talking ABOUT the church among ourselves. However, due to the multiplicity of names in the so-called Christian world, it is wise and appropriate to use the term “of Christ” in connection with His church, lest people get IT confused with one of the many denominations—some of which MAY use another scriptural designation (such as “Church of God”), and are distinctly NOT the “church of God” of the New Testament, as per 1 Cor. 1:2.

The 3rd “B” in God's “B-HIVE” is BEHAVIOR. It is important that those who DO belong to Christ and His church, BEHAVE themselves in such a manner as to not bring reproach and hurt TO Christ and/or His church. We are to let our light shine before men that they may glorify GOD (Matt. 5:16). Paul told Timothy to let no one despise his youth, but that he was to be an example OF or TO believers--“in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (1 Tim. 4:12). The word “conversation” in this text is not necessarily referring to “verbal conversation or talking”, but to CONDUCT (as is so stated in the NKJ). This refers to one's “manner of life”, or spiritual behavior. We are to “behave” ourselves in the church (1 Tim. 3:15). Paul practiced proper behavior among the believers (1 Thes. 2:10). Elders are to be of “good behavior” (Tit.2:3), that they may be a good example for others to likewise practice good behavior (Heb. 13:17). Peter told godly wives to LIVE in such a way that they can convert their husbands through their godly example, rather than through their preaching the word in an effort to convert them (1 Pet. 3:1f).

In spite of this teaching, there ARE some who are NOT of good behavior, and do not care who knows it. Some do not BEHAVE as Christians should. Some are unfaithful to Christ and His church, having forsaken Him. One former Christian died, and it was noted in his obituary that he was “affiliated with the church of Christ”. It was NOT noted at his funeral that he was a faithful member of the body of Christ. Many have hardened their hearts and lives to the point they do not care what others think, nor do they have second thoughts about what the Lord thinks about them, or where they will spend eternity. Those who curse, gamble and drink do NOT set forth a good example of the believers. Paul stated that evil companionship corrupts good manners, and ruin the behavior of some who were once devoted to Christ (1 Cor.15:33). The word “communications” (KJV) is “company” (NKJ), and “manners” (KJV) is rendered “morals” (ASV), or “habits” (NKJ). Be careful with the company you keep, for you shall be known by them, and can easily become LIKE them. When we face the Lord in judgment, it will not be enough just to SAY, “I belonged to the church while on earth”, for just belonging is not enough. Bees are BUSY, and WE should be busy as bees.

The 4th “B” in “GOD'S B-HIVE” is BUSINESS. The word “business” suggests being BUSY in something. First, we can be busy in our *gainful employment*. Solomon spoke of one “who excels in his work” (Prov. 22:29). We are not to be “slothful in business” (Rom. 12:11). We are to labor with our hands that we might be able to help others in need (Eph. 4:28). Those who have made great success in material matters should not let this keep them from doing good—even for their OWN eternal benefit (1 Tim. 6:17f). One rich man died who had not laid up treasure in heaven (Luke 12:15-21; cf Matt. 6:19f). Second, some are busy in *not doing their own business* (1 Thes. 4:11). This involved their WORKING with their own hands, as commanded. Third, there are some who are busy in *other men's matters*, which obviously comes from their NOT doing their OWN business. They are “busybodies”--busy with disturbing the bodies of OTHERS (1 Thes. 3:11). Some women were “idle”, and began to wander from house to house and busy in speaking things which they ought not (1 Tim. 5:13). Being busybodies is identified with murder, thievery, and in evil doing (1 Pet. 4:15). Fourth, there are those whose business is *working for the Lord*. Some are full-time in the Lord's service, and

others are working for the Lord WHILE they are gainfully employed in making a living. Jesus knew the importance of His “Father's business” (Luke 2:49). The feeding of the hungry is the “business” of the Lord (Acts 6:3). Phebe was busy in the work of the Lord and deserving of assistance (Rom. 16:2). As we have opportunity, we are to DO good to those in need—especially to those in the household of faith (Gal. 6:10). Too often, we become SO busy in material things or pleasures that we do NOT have time to do the Lord's business in any way. In 1 Kings 20:35-43, we read about a man who was to guard another, but while HE (the man doing the guarding) was “busy here and there”, allowed the man to escape. Let us never become so busy with our own things that we do not have time to help others with their needs—especially in matters pertaining to the soul.

The 5th “B” in “GOD'S B-HIVE” is that of BOLDNESS. Our business is to share the truth of God, and to influence people for Him—through our example and our words. Often times we are timid, and do not have the courage or boldness to speak out for the Lord. Even the religious leaders in the first century observed how Peter and John spoke with **boldness** when they taught, because “they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13). Even though they were basically “uneducated men”, they spoke the word with boldness. WE need to acquaint ourselves with the word of God so that we can boldly or confidently use it in conversing with others. With “boldness” the apostles continued to teach God's word (vs. 29-31). Boldness is also needed in our conduct, and stand for the truth. Many times we find ourselves in an environment where we are embarrassed to do or say the right thing, and we go along with the crowd, and are not distinctive. We may gossip with them, curse with them, drink with them, and even become sexually immoral with them—simply because we do not have enough boldness to do the right thing.

Paul makes a marvelous statement in saying, “*We having the same spirit of faith, according as it is written, I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak*” (2 Cor. 4:13). If WE truly believe in the truth that we have in the word of God, how can we keep from speaking it to the lost to help them see the way of salvation. If WE are “**B's**” in “**GOD'S B-HIVE**” in believing, belonging, behavior and in business, let us practice boldness in teaching the lost. “Boldness” is NOT just getting loud and denouncing people, but correcting their errors that have caused others to be lost, and leading them to the truth through God's word.

Don Tabet, 215 W. Sears, Denison, Tex. 75020 <donwtabet@cableone.net>