

Church of God, The Eternal

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Announcement Letter
July 1991

Dear Brethren:

Spiritual Principle (No. 1): Borrowing from Members in the Church

God is the author of marriage and the family. From the union of a man and his wife come the children with whom God intends to repopulate the earth. The duty of parents is to teach those children. Much spiritual teaching is the same to sons and daughters. However, responsibilities in this physical existence are vastly different. Sons must be taught professions, crafts, vocations. They must be taught duty and responsibility. They must be taught the proper use of authority—a necessary ingredient for a peaceful, harmonious, and contented society. For without such education, how can sons ever take care of wives, jobs, children, and other responsibilities? A son who must fall back on the care of aged parents, or look to others for support, is at the same time an embarrassment, a manifestation of confusion of principles, and a failure in relation to a God-given responsibility. A son of character would not allow such a set of circumstances to prevail in his life. He has assumed the bequeathed duties of life by virtue of birth. He refuses to compromise principles or admit failure. (Encountering difficulties which are not of one's own making are not implied at all. No man is immune from temporary, transitory trials and difficulties.)

In a fashion comparable to the above instructions, the ministry bears a chargeable duty over the body of Christ. The members must be taught duty, responsibility. They must be held accountable for their words and promises. In these physical relationships they are subject to the evaluations and decisions of the ministry (I Cor. 6). Oftentimes members of the body wanting to be wholehearted and genuine in the faith allow their hearts to lead them, and not their minds. When this occurs, all too frequently the kind and benevolent are left bearing the responsibility which rightfully belongs to the other party, and then as the duty grows long and irksome an attitude of hurt, contempt, and finally resentment begins to surface. To avoid this situation, there are many instructions which come from God. They must be learned and applied. Indeed, we must learn to live by every word of God. What are some of the instructions God gave to us relative to the subject at hand?

First, the church is chargeable for true widows (above 60 years of age) and for orphans (those who because of accident, or whatever, have been left without a chargeable bread-winner). See I Timothy 5:9–15 and Deuteronomy 14:28–29. But notice, at times there are others who are chargeable. Even though a widow may fit all the qualifications for the receipt of third tithe, if she has relatives in the church, those relatives, not the church, are duty-bound to care for that widow. And such duties will form the basis for the judgment of Christ at the time of His return. Remember, the called and faithful child of God must live by all the Word of God.

Second, a husband and father is under absolute responsibility for the care of his wife and family. In fact, to fail that call of duty and responsibility is to make oneself inferior to (worse than) a Gentile—one not called of God (I Tim. 5:8). He is an infidel. Why? Because to be called of God is to be made aware of duty and responsibility. Regardless of what the behavior and pattern of life lived in the past by those now called, they must effect the necessary changes of mind and heart and translate those changes into action. They begin to bear their responsibility as ordained of God. In other words, they no longer force others to sustain them—bearing a responsibility which they are required to bear.

Even from youth, young men especially must be taught to bear responsibility (Lam. 3:27). Duty is the crucible of fire. Out of such responsibility will come the revelation of characteristics which will form the basis of our future judgment. Why? Because duty is the reward of the future. How can God give to us the reward of tomorrow when we have miserably failed to perform acceptably in the trial of the present? The unequivocal answer is, He will not!

Most indebtedness is a form of slavery. Because of mistakes, failures of one type or another, or unwillingness to live the way of God, we have allowed ourselves to return to bondage. Does not the Bible tell us, "the borrower is servant to the lender" (Prov. 2:7)? It is precisely because of this bondage principle that the Apostle Paul was inspired to write: "Owe no man anything but to love" (Rom. 13:8). What God expects is that we should assume diligently (Prov. 12:24) our divinely ordained responsibilities and then live within the limits of our capabilities and resources.

It is God who both blesses and curses. His promise to us is that, if we do well, we shall be blessed. Curses, most frequently, are an indication that we should examine our thinking and responses. Have we committed ourselves in some way? Have we honored our word regardless of the cost or pain involved? Have we assumed our God-given responsibility? Are we honest—manifesting integrity and purpose? And, we all must remember that God reads both minds and hearts. Do emergencies suddenly

appear because we have not practiced the Biblical principle of thinking ahead (Prov. 29:18)? Good, intelligent planning would help most of us to avoid sudden crises.

Despite all the efforts of men, occasionally need for borrowing will surface. Especially today, in a Babylonian system which we cannot totally avoid, major purchases will need to be made—such as homes and/or cars. For many years, the church did not frown on such purchases if the amortization consequences were carefully weighed and balanced against the other needs of the family. The lender usually is a business lending institution. Since it is a business deal, most of the inherent problems which could surface are eliminated.

For many years the church did not recommend any borrowing from members—that is, one member borrowing from another member. Where a critical need exists, the Bible speaks of the benevolence of the righteous in that they give of their abundance to alleviate the need of the impoverished. When one member does give to another, the lender should not give unless he is ready to consider the loan as a possible gift.

Considering all the factors involved and the long experience which the ministry has observed, they do not recommend any member loaning to another member without first addressing the matter to the attention of the ministry. Oftentimes, we will have information which might affect your decision to either honor or not honor the specific request. It is not our intent to intervene in your decision. What you do is your responsibility. However, if you decide to lend without first counseling with the ministry, you should not hold the church or the ministry accountable for the decisions which you make. Further, be aware that all people do not live up to our expectations. For that reason, please do not allow yourselves to judge God or His way of life on the basis of what any other human being may do or not do.

What is amazing is the number of times over the years—we have seen many—where members have pleaded with others for economic assistance during a time of crisis and then subsequently repudiated their debt—a debt which they recognized only months earlier. What happened to the principle of upholding our word, regardless of the cost?

Since the body is the charge of the ministry, before God, we feel it is to your benefit if we are apprised of any request before it is granted. We are here to help, not hurt. There simply have been too many cases where now ex-members have walked out on their indebtedness and claim no further responsibility. Can you imagine how God is going to judge such matters?

Spiritual Principle (No. 2): Who Should Bear Specific Responsibility in the Church?

This is a subject the ministry wants to study in depth when the opportunity presents itself; the material presented in this letter will be cursory and limited. However, a succinct statement needs to be made now.

From a judicious and thorough analysis of the contents of I Timothy 3:1–13, it becomes most obvious that restrictions are imposed upon the selection of those who do actively serve in the church. A divorced and remarried individual is only one class of the membership mentioned—the husband of one wife. What about those who are humanly willful, those who refuse to be subservient to the whole ministry? What about those who precipitate controversy? or are involved in contention and strife? All these matters will be studied carefully, soon.

For the present, we suggest that all lead men continue to administer such responsibilities as you have in the past. In no way should we render an administrative decision which will need to be rescinded almost before it is given. It is the duty of those responsible to create peace and harmony. If controversy surrounds a particular issue, or action, avoid it. We all must be mindful that the duty of each is to generate accord and contentment.

Positive instructions for us all will be forthcoming. Thank you for patience and understanding.

Prayer Requests

[Omitted for confidentiality]

Deaths

Mr. Laurence Perkins: Expired on June 27 after a long bout with cancer. Our deep sympathies are extended to Mrs. Perkins and her family.

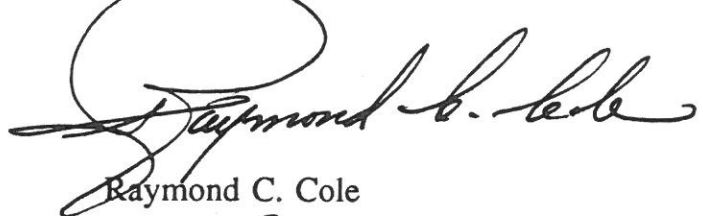
Trips

July 6	George Leeman	Allentown, Pennsylvania
July 13	George Leeman	Austin, Texas
July 13	Robert Sloneker	Baltimore, Maryland
July 20	Robert Sloneker	Nashville, Tennessee
July 20	Bryce Clark	Sacramento, California
July 17-28	Raymond Cole	South Africa
August 17	Robert Sloneker	Vancouver, British Columbia

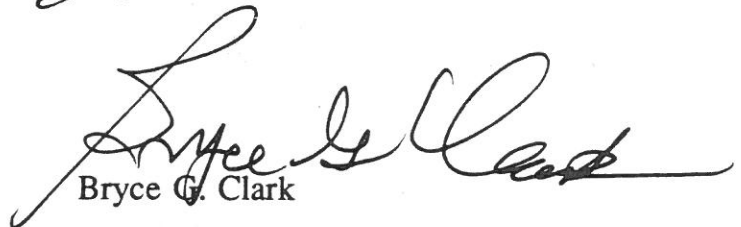
Tape Schedule

Tape Series:	Mailed:	For:	Title/tape #:
WSE-BC 122	6/12	7/6	Great men of the Old Testament, #39
WSE-GL	6/12	7/13	How to keep the Sabbath, #4
WSE-RC 52	6/26	7/20	How to recognize a true Christian
WSE-RS 12	6/26	7/27	Signals of Danger
WSE-BC 122	7/10	8/3	Great men of the Old Testament, #40
WSE-RS	7/10	8/10	What Jesus has done/will do for you
WSE-GL	7/24	8/17	How much do we appreciate God's Holy Spirit?
WSE-RC	7/24	8/24	What is the purpose of authority? #1

In Christian love,



Raymond C. Cole



Bryce G. Clark