

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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Is it “Scripture?”

(Jerry Fite)

In generations past, people gathered around the fireplace to chat. Conversations would ensue about the Bible. Some sayings would be attributed to the Bible, which are not in the Bible. The theory is these reflective sayings became known as “Chimney Corner Scriptures.”

A familiar one focusing on parents and children comes to mind: **“Spare the rod and spoil the child.”** This exact phrase is not in the Bible, but sparing the rod is: *“He that spareth his rod hateth his son; but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes”* (Proverbs 13:24). It describes the parent’s heart, not the undisciplined child’s character. If “spoil” is equated to “ruin,” the Bible does address what happens when chastening does not occur: *“Chasten thy son, seeing there is hope; and set not thy heart on his destruction”* (Proverbs 19:18). Again, the negative and positive characteristics of the heart of the parent are addressed, not if the child is spoiled or not.

Another Biblically sounding saying is, **“Cleanliness is next to godliness.”** While being godly is certainly a scriptural goal, we should offer our children the inspired wisdom of *1 Timothy 4:7-8*: *“...and exercise thyself unto godliness: for bodily exercise is profitable for a little; but godliness is*

profitable for all things, having the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.” While taking baths to keep the body clean is good hygiene, for a parent to equate such practice as “Scripture” is unscriptural!

Does the Bible say anywhere **“God helps those who help themselves.”**? Some think so, but this “I will help myself first before appealing to God for help” approach to obtaining God’s blessings is not found in Scripture. We did nothing to help ourselves when God sent His Son to save us. *“For while we were yet weak, in due season Christ died for the ungodly”* (Romans 5:8). God saved us, and *“...called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given in Christ Jesus before times eternal...”* (2 Timothy 1:9). God helped us before we knew we needed any help. Not receiving help from God is a matter of not “asking,” not that we have not done enough to pull our own weight before beseeching God (*cf. James 4:2*).

You can read the entire Bible and never find the passage which states, **“Let your conscience be your guide”**. But we do read that God is to be our guide: *“For God*

is our God for ever and ever: He will be our guide even unto death” (Psalm 48:14). Our way in life must be illuminated by God’s Word. *“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path”* (Psalm 119: 105). Since our inward conscience judges our actions based upon what we know and accept as truth, we must make sure we teach our conscience the truth of God’s Word. If not, we may be doing things contrary to God when we are following our conscience. Paul acknowledged this fact when he said, *“I verily thought with myself that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus Christ”* (Acts 26:9).

Where is the book, chapter and verse that says, **“One good deed deserves another.”**? We are instructed to do good deeds for others regardless of what they do for us or to us. *“So then, as we have opportunity, let us work that which is good toward all men, and especially toward them that are of the household of faith”* (Galatians 6:10).

Be diligent to pay close attention to what you read in your daily Bible reading this year! Many things said to be in the Bible may sound good, even Biblical, but they are not there!