

THE INVITATION SONG

Levi Sides, Jasper, AL

“Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

Observing Christian conduct over a few years of preaching has caused me to ask a question. At the conclusion of every service we sing an “invitation hymn.” Yet I wonder if it is really an “invitation” song to some. If appearances accurately reflect attitudes, then it is not.

To some the invitation song means the end of another sermon. It marks the close of a service that has been patiently endured in much the same manner as a dental appointment. It is painful, but necessary.

To others, it is a time to stretch cramped muscles, sleepy limbs, and clear numbed brains for the trip home. To others, this song furnishes the opportunity to survey the audience and make “goo-goo” eyes at the little one who has been amusing them most of the service. To others, it is a time to quietly leave and beat the crowd out of the front door.

Still to others, this song is a time to dress. Coats, wraps, shoes—whatever has been shed during the worship, must be slipped on during the “invitation song,” because at the “amen” we must rush for the door. A moment for these chores after the dismissal would throw their timing out of balance.

And, lest you conclude that I am totally negative, to many the “invitation song” is a sacred moment, a sensitive time at the conclusion of the preaching of God’s Word when the sinner has the opportunity and the encouragement of all Christians to respond in obedience to Christ’s Will and Word, and to be added to the fellowship of a spiritual kingdom where souls may be saved for eternity (Acts 2:36-47).

Christians consider this song a means by which to extend the invitation of Jesus Christ to all (1 Timothy 2:4; 2 Peter 3:9).

Jesus said, “Come unto me all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30). At the close of the New Testament, Jesus also said, “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come...And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

What do you do when the invitation song is sung? Do you pray quietly in behalf of the lost? Do you sing so you might extend the invitation of Jesus Christ enthusiastically to the lost? Or, do you “sigh with relief” that the service is finally over?

EDITORIAL

STRANGE THINGS

Jesus often amazed and astonished those of the first century by both word and deed. Numerous times in the Gospel accounts, we find the audiences astounded at some great teaching of the Christ, or one of the many miracles he performed. The miracles he performed garnered much attention, amazing those who saw them (see Matthew 15:31; Mark 4:41; 7:37; Luke 4:36). However, these were not done in an attempt merely to bring attention upon himself. Jesus performed these deeds so that some might come to believe the word he spoke. The miracles gave credence to the message he brought to the masses. Those who listened to his teachings had never heard anything like it. From a very early age he bewildered the religious leaders and the common people of his day with his superior teaching (Luke 2:48). At the conclusion of his lengthiest, and perhaps greatest discourse—the Sermon on the Mount—the Bible records that “the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Matthew 7:28,29). Those who were attentive to his message “marveled” (Matthew 22:22) and were “astonished” (22:33). Even Christ’s closest companions could do nothing but marvel at his teachings (Mark 10:24). At times, it was a combination of both word and deed that left the huddled masses buzzing (Matthew 13:54). There has never been, nor will there ever be a teacher who could captivate an audience as did the Lord Jesus Christ.

On one occasion Jesus healed a man who was bedridden with palsy. Before he commanded the man to rise up and walk, he first pronounced this man’s sins forgiven (Luke 5:20-24). The man rose up immediately, walking to his home (vs.25). Those gathered on this day who witnessed this event summed it up by saying, “We have seen strange things today” (vs.26). The teachings and deeds of Jesus were indeed strange. They were/are strange in that they were out of the ordinary. Jesus would often introduce his teachings, “Ye have heard it said....but I say unto you...” These teachings of the Lord were strange in the sense of newness. The miracles he performed superceded the laws of nature and were truly supernatural and extraordinary. The teachings and deeds of Jesus were also strange in the sense that they

did not fit the preconceived ideas of many people. Many of his teachings were difficult to accept, and so some could dismiss this by convincing themselves that his teachings were strange. The religious leaders of Jesus’ day had a misconstrued idea of the mission of the Messiah. They were under the impression that this Messiah would deliver Israel from Roman oppression, and would sanction the traditions of the elders. His teaching and his actions defied both of these false notions, and for this reason the religious leaders of Christ’s day refused to hear his message of salvation. Because his teachings were so unorthodox, and because his message and his actions were not in harmony with the tradition of the elders, the religious leaders dismissed Jesus as a lunatic and a blasphemer. Thinking he was a lunatic, the religious leaders tried to ignore the Christ. However, when Jesus began to draw the masses by virtue of his message and miracles, the religious leaders saw him as a threat to their way of living. Classifying him now as a blasphemer, the Sadducees and Pharisees now had justification for eliminating this lunatic known as Jesus of Nazareth.

Could it be that we too see strange things when we read about the miracles and study the message of Christ? It could be that these seem strange to us because we do not spend time studying the word of God as we should. A lack of knowledge of God’s revealed will is a serious plague in our land. So many are following their own way in matters religious instead of allowing God to direct their paths through His word (Jeremiah 10:23). Far too many are enslaved to sin because they have not been set free by the word of God (John 8:24). The gospel message, the good news about salvation, is God’s power to save (Romans 1:16). Therefore, men must hear and study this message if they will come to have a faith that will lead them to the Lord (Romans 10:13-17). By studying and obeying this message one’s soul will be made pure (1 Peter 1:22). The good news stored up in our hearts will keep us from sin (Psalm 119:11). One who will be truly happy is the person who will meditate upon the word of God day and night (Psalm 1:2). In our land there is a famine of the word of God (Amos 8:11), not because God has taken His word from us, but be-

cause so many are unwilling to read and study it. This problem is not limited to those who are amoral, or those who are not religious. Spiritual ignorance, unfortunately, is a great problem even among God's own people. A lack of knowledge of the word of God led to the downfall of Israel (Hosea 4:6), and it is doing the same to spiritual Israel (the church, Galatians 6:16) today. Too many Christians fit the description given by God through Jeremiah: "My people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge" (Jeremiah 4:22). Indeed, the teachings and actions of Christ are strange to so many because of ignorance of God's word.

It could be that the teachings of Christ seem so strange because they do not fit our own preconceived ideas. It is detrimental to the well-being of our souls to approach the Bible with the idea that we are going to prove what we think is right, and reject anything that would conflict with our thinking. How many come to the Bible with the idea that faith only saves, picking and choosing passages that they feel supports this premise, while rejecting any that would contradict their idea (such as James 2:24)? How many are influenced to believe that denominationalism is divinely sanctioned, or at least tolerated by God, and will refuse to see that there is only one church that enjoys divine authorization (Ephesians 4:4), the one and only one church that Christ will save (Ephesians 5:23)? When one approaches the Scriptures in this way, he exhibits an attitude identical to that of the religious leaders of Christ's day. His teachings did not fit their thinking, so they simply dismissed him with the wave of a hand. Jesus condemned the self-righteous religious leaders for this attitude (John 5:37-40). In order to be pleasing to God, we must approach a study of the Bible with the attitude that whatever it says, that we will do. We must allow our lives to be shaped by the word of God rather than trying to make the word of God conform to our thinking. To many, the teachings of Christ are strange because they conflict with strongly held opinions which many are unwilling to give up.

Are the teachings and deeds of Christ strange to you? Is it because the word of God is unfamiliar to you due to a lack of study? Is it strange to you because it does not fit your preconceived notions? Resolve now to remedy this problem by studying the word of God fervently. Approach this study with the attitude that you will follow the will of God without reservation and without pretense. To do so will lead to the salvation of your soul, and eternal bliss in the life to come.

HOW DO YOU TELL?

Eva Nell Brown Naramore

How do you tell the joy you feel
When in your heart you know it's real?
But there's no way with words to find
The overflow of love divine.

Like bubbles bursting in the air
And children laughing everywhere.
The joy within a heart that's pure
Heals stress that nothing else could cure.

More than the medicine that's strong,
Because you're living right, not wrong.
The body may be weak with pain
And no words found that will explain.

But with true love for God inside,
There is no way the joy to hide.
Joy cannot be explained in words,
Though ten thousand may be heard.

Unspeakable, the gift of God!
Though some may think this to be odd,
The spark that lights the soul divine,
Creates anew the joy of mind.

Earthly riches cannot compare.
Desire for them is lost with wear.
The light of God has lasting glow,
Even when life's sun sets low.

Because eternal it will be
When we're safe at home across death's sea;
So peaceful, calm, tranquil and quiet
When God's gift, our light, burns bright.

When fruits of love, with faith we bear,
Let others know how much we care,
There's joy that words cannot explain
In time of sunshine, or in rain.

LEARNING HOW TO JUDGE

Chris Hodges, Valrico, FL

Matthew 7:1 “is one of the most often misunderstood and misquoted passages in all the Bible” (Stuart Weber). Too often, this verse is misused to teach that it is wrong to judge in any circumstance ever. For example, a person engaging in a sinful act may say, “You can’t judge me,” to another person who may have said something negatively to him/her about the sinful act. Such a misunderstanding of this text would mean that no one ever could speak out against sin. Therefore, the “I’m okay, your okay” mentality would be perfectly acceptable and everyone will be saved since it doesn’t matter what you do or what you don’t do.

However, this is not what Matthew 7:1 teaches. For example, the Bible actually commands us to judge at times. Staying in Matthew 7, Jesus teaches us that we must not give dogs what is holy or cast pearls before pigs (v. 6). Thus, we must decide what is holy, what are pearls, who are dogs and who are pigs. Also, in verses 15-20, Jesus instructs us to judge whether or not a prophet is a false prophet based upon his fruit. Further, one could not practice the Great Commission (Matt. 28:19-20) without judging who is saved and who is lost. Furthermore, Jesus Himself said, “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment” (John 7:24, ESV). Therefore, all judging cannot be wrong since some judging is absolutely necessary in order to please God.

That being the case, what does Matthew 7:1 really teach? For the answer, we need only to stay in the context of this passage. When we look at the context, we can learn how we should judge correctly. First, let us begin by noting what we should never do when it comes to judging. According to verse 2, we must be very careful about the standard we use in judging others. In all actuality, there is only one standard of judgment, which is the Word of God (John 12:48). However, some people add to it when they place judgment upon others just like the Pharisees in the first century (see Matt. 15:1-9). We must never be guilty of condemning people based upon our opinions, traditions and such.

From verses 3-4, we learn that we cannot adopt a “do as I say and not as I do” mentality. The imagery used here is quite comical, but it truly illustrates the point quite well. Imagine someone talking to you about a piece of dust in your eye while they are standing there with a 2x4 sticking out of their own eye. You would not take that person seriously and would be offended by their hypoc-

risy. The same is certainly true when we try to talk about someone else’s sin when we haven’t taken the time to deal with the sin that is in our own lives. We will never be effective in converting others until we are first truly converted ourselves and walking the walk.

Verse 5 gives us a 2-step formula for judging correctly. Step 1 requires us to examine ourselves and remove the planks in our own eyes. Paul wrote, “Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? – unless indeed you fail to meet the test! (2 Cor. 13:5).” Each morning, we start the day by looking into a mirror to make the necessary corrections to our physical bodies. Each day, we should also look in the mirror of God’s Word (James 1:25) and make the necessary corrections to our spiritual bodies. Step 2 requires us to examine our brother’s eye in order to help him remove the speck that is in it. However, step 2 cannot be started until step 1 is completed. Yet, step 2 is just as necessary as step 1. The speck cannot be ignored. We are our brother’s keeper. Paul wrote, “Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted (Gal. 6:1).” Further, James wrote, “My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sin (James 5:19-20).” We are not doing anyone any favors by ignoring his/her sin. A failure to speak out against sin is a failure to obey God and a failure to love our brother. True love wants the best for others. Since the best is going to heaven, then we should want that for everyone. If that is the case, then we must do all that we can to help others go there, which includes pointing out sins that could hinder them from going to heaven. However, let us be sure that we “speak the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15).

When we follow the instructions of Jesus found in Matthew 7:1-5, we will learn how to judge correctly. Let us not be hypocrites, but let us care enough to take a stand against sin. Sin cannot be ignored whether in our own lives or in the lives of others. After all, “the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23a.). The only remedy for us all is the blood of Jesus Christ (Rom. 6:23b.), which is accessed at baptism (Rom. 6:3-5) and continually applied and we walk in the light (1 John 1:7).

GET ON YOUR KNEES

Neal Cook, Haleyville, AL

The room is quiet. It has a clean, anti-septic smell. There are chairs lined up against the walls. Out-of-date magazines lie on tables in the middle of the room. Some of the chairs are empty, but many are filled. They sit in silence. Some flip nervously through the pages of the magazines. Some stare straight ahead. "Ms. Johnson, please come back now." Some look down at the floor. Some mumble the words of a prayer. "Mrs. Wilson, please come back now." Some look down at themselves. Some have tears in their eyes. "Ms. Smith, please come back now."

Between the calls to come back, the others wait in silence. You can hear the tick-tick of the clock or the cars outside going by. But if you really listen closely, you can hear a tiny, whispered voice: "It's not my fault that you went out partying and got drunk. Please don't kill me, Mommy. It's not my fault that you thought he was so cute and wanted to impress your friends. Please don't kill me, Mommy. It's not my fault that Daddy never paid you enough attention and you felt so lonely and just wanted affection. Please don't kill me, Mommy. It's not my fault that his parents felt that boys will just be boys and that he was just sowing his wild oats. Please don't kill me, Mommy. It's not my fault that Grandma didn't want to be too strict on you and felt that you should have your freedom. Please don't kill me, Mommy."

Since 1973, more than 49,551,703 tiny, whispered voices could be heard. That's an average of approximately 1,376,436 unborn babies killed each year...or 3,771 each day...or over two every minute. We build monuments for the war dead. And we should. We pass legislation to prevent highway deaths. And we should. But, where are the monuments for the aborted children? Where is the legislation to prevent their deaths? Where are the tears? Where are your tears? Where are my tears? Do we, as Christians, even care? If we love the life created by God, we *must* care. We are told in Psalm 139:13-14 and Job 31:15 that God created the life that is in a mother's womb. Since God cared enough to create the life, should we not care if man destroys it?

There is a song written by Lois Gail Sypolt, which was recorded in 1993, that tells us that we do need to care—that we do need to cry. It is titled, *Cry for the Children*. Here are the words:

*Values of this world are twisted and evil. And in our minds, we cannot find right or wrong anymore.
We spend to recycle, keep our highways clear,
We're concerned about things like the earth's atmos-*

phere. And some even cry, Because the whale may not always be here.

But we're killing our children. It's time to cry for the children. For their blood flows like a river in the name of women's rights. But God knows each heartbeat. He knows when every birthday should have been. America, please, get back on your knees, For the sake of our children.

Eyes that never saw mother, now, gaze on the Savior. Cries never made are now cries of praise to the Lamb they adore. Little hands that in death were torn apart are held by a hand that's been nail-scarred. Heaven now welcomes innocent children we daily destroy.

But we're killing our children. It's time to cry for the children. For their blood flows like a river In the name of women's rights. But God knows each heartbeat. He knows when every birthday should have been. America, please, get back on your knees, for the sake of our children. America, please, get back on your knees, for the sake of our children. Jesus loves the little children.

News of an unwanted pregnancy is devastating news, especially when the expectant mother is a young girl who has all of her hopes and dreams of college and career suddenly endangered. Or when the expectant mother lives in poverty and already cannot afford to support her existing family. It is only natural for them to look to easy solutions. It is only natural for their parents to want to make all of their problems and hurts go away. However, killing the innocent is not the answer. The real answer is to not put yourself or to allow your child to put himself or herself in the position of having to get that news. There was only one immaculate conception in the whole history of mankind. It is not an "accident." It is the result of a voluntary event. It is the consequence of a choice. Children are responsible for their choices. We as parents are responsible to train up our children so that they will make the right choices.

Hopefully, the eyes of all Christians will soon be opened to this sin that is plaguing our nation. Yes, Jesus does indeed love the little children, and so should we. Jesus also loves those of *all* ages. He loves Christians of all ages who have sinned, and He is willing to forgive the sins of those who confess them. He also loves the lost and has shed His blood so that those who will obey the gospel can have their sins washed away.

CHILDREN IN SEARCH OF A CRUSADE

Dan Cates, Independence, MS

Between the years of A.D. 1095 and 1270, the Catholic Church waged a series of "holy" wars, called crusades, against the Muslims who controlled the Bible lands. The crusades were largely failures; this was at least partially due to the lack of conviction among those who were fighting them (they were motivated by a desire for riches or shortened stays in *their* feared purgatory). In the year 1212, after mediocre Third and Fourth Crusades, children attempted to rally in the place of their failing adults, "thinking that the purity and innocence of childhood would be able to accomplish what the strength of adulthood, because of its sin, could not" [*The Eternal Kingdom*, Maddox]. One of the two efforts comprising the Children's Crusade was led by a young French boy named Stephen of Vendôme; the other was led by a young German boy, Nicholas. Thousands of children, both boys and girls, were led by Stephen to Marseille, France, from whence they planned to gain passage to the Holy Lands and undoubtedly, in their minds, to gain glory for God. Thousands more, likewise composed, were led by Nicholas into Italy. These children, a great many of whom were under the age of twelve, would not be rewarded for their efforts in spite of their great zeal! Those who had gone with Nicholas into Italy were turned back toward Germany due to the effects of being children who were separated from those who fed and clothed them and due to the diseases which accompanied their hunger and lack of proper clothing. Those who had gone with Stephen into Marseille were even worse off: Some were ship-wrecked; others were tricked by those whom they supposed to be sympathetic to their cause and were sold into Egyptian slavery. Obviously, many of both groups died, and history contains no record of any success in the Holy Land by even one of these sincere, well intentioned children who were effectively abandoned by those who should have been modeling the way!

Here is the application: Our children love their God, as is evidenced by their soft-hearted songs of devotion, and they want to be important in His sight. We are living in an age in which there is a great battle between the forces of good and those of evil, and our children want to be in this fight so that they can stand lovingly and faithfully and fearlessly on behalf of their loving God. They want to learn His will, they want to sing His praises, they want to learn His Word, they want to spend time with their fellow-soldiers, they want to see their parents

and every other significant adult in their lives doing righteous things for the pleasure of their God! And, yet, we fail them. We fail them when we--as parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, or even friends--do not live model lives before them. We fail them when we do not provide for their spiritual needs--when we do not bring them to church, when we do not read the Bible to them, when we do not take interest in their Bible school lessons, when we do not give God the glory due Him. We fail them when we provide no spiritual leadership--when we think that at ten years old they are capable of fighting their spiritual battles alone or are capable of remaining spiritually minded apart from the umbilical which is fellowship with the saints; or when we let an ungodly society or a humanist education system or mischievous friends or other such rear them and not only factor into, but, also, determine their eternal destinations! We fail them if we, as a church filled with those who call themselves Christians, are not showing them in every one of us the Christ-like life; we fail them as a church when they are here and the pews are empty where we sit during Sunday morning worship and where we should be at every service; we fail them as a church when we take them for granted; we fail as a church when we do not show them that we care for them; we fail them as a church when we do not encourage those who might otherwise not bring them; we fail them when we are more concerned about ourselves than we are about them.

We do not consciously want to fail them; therefore, we must not put our children into the position in which they have to make the difference in their own lives in spite of us--for they, like those child crusaders, will be hard-pressed to provide for themselves spiritually and will, most likely, fall into the hands of those who will mislead them or will spiritually starve to death! Our children want to succeed, and they want to do so with us (their families, friends, and potential fellow-soldiers) by their sides--how can we help them?

First, we can give them their spiritual orders. We can nurture and admonish them (Eph. 6:4), for we are their providers of spiritual and emotional needs as much as for physical ones! We can command them (Gen. 18:19), for we are their parents or grandparents or teachers or at least ones who truly care for their spiritual well being!

Second, we can give them their spiritual swords. Moses reminding the Israelites of their position before and responsibilities under their God said told them to teach what they had seen and experienced to their children (Deu. 4:9,10). Later, Moses continued by giving them "the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded" (Deu. 6:1); he commanded, "And thou shalt teach them [the words of Deu. 6:4-5-DFC] diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deu. 6:7). Timothy could be expected to continue in obedience because he had learned and been assured of Truth for ". . . from a child [he had-DFC] known the holy scriptures, which are able to make [him-DFC] wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (II Tim. 3:15).

Third, we can give them their spiritual stamina. We can train them (Pro. 22:6), so that they will know how to put God's Word and Will into practice. We can remind them (Psa. 78:3-6), so that they can pass the God's Word and Will on to their children.

David likened children to arrows (Psa. 127:4), and rightfully so, for they will more likely go where we aim them than where we do not! We do not want to see our children be defeated as they try to fight the Lord's battle, and we certainly do not want to do anything to contribute to their defeat. Let us be for our children what the child-crusaders did not have: Godly adults!

WOT

SOLICITING ONLINE SUBSCRIPTIONS

Due to the uncertain nature of the recent economic down-turn, and with the increased cost of both printing and mailing a publication like *Words of Truth*, we are asking that all individual subscribers please consider taking *Words of Truth* by email. Most have the capability to receive our publication in such a manner, and we are asking all who can to please consider doing so. We wish to be the best stewards of the financial resources that God has entrusted into our care, and we feel that by taking such measures we can do even greater good with God's blessings. You may sign up for the email version of *Words of Truth* by visiting our website, www.sixthavenuechurch.org. Under the "Resources" tab, you will find a place to submit your email address to receive *Words of Truth*. You may also email your request to sixthavenue@bellsouth.net. We will still mail bundles to congregations, and individual subscriptions to those who are unable to receive *Words of Truth* by email. Please consider taking *Words of Truth* by email so that we may continue to do the greatest good we can with the blessings God has given to us. If you are currently receiving *Words of Truth* and wish to receive it by email, please submit your email address as well as your mailing address so that we may cross-reference your records in our database. This will allow us to make the transition much easier.

NEW PRINTER

We apologize for the delay with the June issue of *Words of Truth*. The printer we have been using, Higginbotham Printing of Anniston, Alabama, had to shut down operations due to the economy, a move that came rather suddenly. We appreciate Bobby Wingo for all of his help with the publication of *Words of Truth*, as well as all of the good folks at Higginbotham Printing. We want to thank Commercial Printing of Birmingham, Alabama, and Mike Leathers in particular, for providing us the opportunity to continue printing with the same format and quality that you have come to expect from *Words of Truth*. We regret any inconvenience this has caused, but understand that this was beyond our control.

FREE BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

If you would like to study the Bible in the privacy of your own home and at your own pace, enroll in a free Bible correspondence course. All materials are free of charge, and you are under no obligation to continue the study. Brother Hap Johnson will be glad to get you started in study of God's word today. Request your free study by writing to the church office at the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ, 1501 Sixth Avenue, Jasper, Alabama, 35501. You may also call us at (205) 384-6446. You may also visit us at www.sixthavenuechurch.org, and under the "resources" tab, request your free Bible study course.

ASK A BIBLE QUESTION

QUESTION: Brother Posey, we are in the process of electing Deacons. Should they have believing children? Thank you, GB.

ANSWER: Dear GB, the qualifications for Deacons are found in I Timothy 3:8-13. The term "deacon" means, "servant" because it describes the work and purpose of a deacon. A deacon is a servant of the church who is put in charge of some activity or responsibility that needs special attention and leadership. In regard to children, there is one difference between an Elder and Deacon in the area of family; the qualifications for ELDERS require that he have believing children (i.e., baptized believers), while the qualifications for DEACONS requires that he rule his children and their home well (1 Tim. 3:12). Presumably, deacons will normally be younger men, whose children may not yet be old enough to be members of the church. The phrase "believing children" is taken, with scriptural reason, to mean children who have obeyed the Gospel Plan of Salvation (i.e., possess genuine faith, repented of sin, confessed Jesus as Lord and baptized for the remission sins) and are members of the church (Rom. 6:17-18; Acts 2:47). This requirement for elders' children does not occur in the qualifications for Deacons. Therefore, according to I Timothy 3:12, a deacon (1) must be a married man and (2) have a family to be scripturally qualified. There is NO indication that his children must be Christians as in the case of elders' children. However, a deacon should strive to teach his children God's Word so that one day, when they reach the age of accountability, they would "put on Christ" in baptism (Gal. 3:27).

—Mark N. Posey
Decatur, AL