

Don't Hold On



by Dawn Reed
E. Ky. Columnist

Jesus' words in John 20:17 have puzzled me for decades.

Mary Magdalene was distraught that Jesus' body was missing. When she realized it was Him standing beside her,

she was overjoyed! Yet, at that dramatic moment, Jesus said, "Do not hold on to Me . . ." OF COURSE Mary wanted to hold on to Him! It's what we ALL would do!

Every year as we study the wonderful Resurrection story, I come across John 20:17 and have a "Hmmm" moment. Though I didn't understand, I chose to trust that Jesus knew exactly what He was saying and hoped I might figure it out some day.

This year as we are trudging through the days of COVID-19, the verse has taken on new meaning. The words, "Don't hold on to . . ." echo in my mind.

Jesus knew He could not stay; the Holy Spirit was going to come. And it would be a

good thing! It was just hard to comprehend! In this verse, did He mean, "Don't hold on . . . to the way things were?"

That's what I'm feeling about Corona. Every man, woman, boy and girl has been disrupted by the virus. Everything has changed: each church, ministry, family, and job. We can't hold on to how things were. It's a whole new way of life!

I feel like so many things or layers have already been stripped away! Today, I'm pondering "What is Jesus telling ME not to hold on to?"

Is He saying, "Dawn, don't hold on to your job. Anyone can be laid off. It's not all you are. It's not what defines you.

Dawn, don't hold on to your vanity. Stop worrying so much

about how you look! You can't wear makeup in an N95 mask. And after donning a visor and face shield, how your hair looks doesn't matter.

Don't hold on to money. Use it wisely and save for sure, but don't forget to be generous.

Don't hold on to past hurts. Digging them up only causes you more pain than the inflictor.

Don't hold on to relationships that cause you harm. (Being "safe at home" sure aids in that!)

Don't hold on to the ministries you lead. It's not yours anyway, it's Mine.

Don't hold on to guilt. I know you've made mistakes, but I really, really have forgiven you!

Dawn, don't hold on to your

comfort. The couch is cozy but it doesn't change lives. Get up, get going."

Jesus told Mary Magdalene things needed to change for the better. He would go and the Comforter would come. He knew best!

This very morning, I read the prayer of a missionary in the Pacific Rim (Voices of the Faithful, 2005): "Lord, forgive me when I stubbornly hold on to things that don't really matter, things that prevent others from possibly coming to Christ. Show me attitudes, traditions or habits that may be stumbling blocks to others".

I am comforted that as I let go of unnecessary things, my Heavenly Father will keep holding on to Me!

Seeds of Hope



Returning to earth after several orbital circles in outer space, a Russian cosmonaut proudly boasted, "I looked everywhere, but I didn't see God." That statement made me wonder what evidence would have been acceptable to him to prove that there is a God. Paul once wrote, "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen."

The eye, our "window to the world," seems to be a very special part of God's creation. But before the eye was formed, in His unfathomable wisdom a process was set in motion: "Let there be light!" He ordered. For us to see anything light must be

reflected off of an object to form a "picture" or the eye is useless.

Before God created our eyes He prepared a special place for them: He formed the bones of the skull to give them a safe place to do their work. He then fashioned our eyelids to keep out dirt and dust and made eyebrows to keep glaring light from damaging them. Finally He developed a lubricating process to keep our eyes moist and clean by causing tears to flow.

Finally, there is the cornea. It allows rays of light to pass through the iris and form a scene in our brain. And here the process becomes complete: Our brain takes what we see and enables us to make sense of God's creation, love and salvation through His word.

"Seeing" God, however, takes more than the eye. "If you search for Me with all your heart, you'll find Me."

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The Unchangeable Word of God

by BOB CASEY, preacher
Cornerstone Church of Christ
70 Bond Street at Camp Avenue in West Irvine

In **John 12:48**, Jesus says, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." This is made so clear in Revelation 20:11-15.

So, take notice, that just as the Word was spoken back then, it will speak the same way at The Judgment. Also, our Lord says in **Matthew 24:35**, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away." Also, **Romans 2:16**, "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."

Then in **Hebrews 13:8-9**, it reads, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace . . ." My point is, with only these few passages given in warning, we need to take heed so as not to be led away with unbiblical teachings. We are warned in 1 Timothy 1:4, 1 Timothy 4:1-6, and Titus 1:14 not be taken in by false teachers.

Now then, what does it profit anyone who will allow men's teachings and traditions to rule their lives? As one reads the story from Jesus, recorded in **Matthew 15:1-9**, here is the situation. Some were considering the traditions of the elders to be held as equal as the plain commandments from God. They asked Jesus, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." Then our Lord answered their question with a question, saying, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?"

Then, He pointed out their error, that the Scriptures taught one to honor their fathers and mothers, but they were not doing it. Then, it caused our Lord to say (**verse 9**), "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Vain simply means, useless, void, not good.

How sad is the day we find ourselves in, for multitudes are still repeating the mistakes of the Pharisees in Jesus' day. In the Old Testament, **Malachi 3:13**, God says, "your words have been stout against me, Yet ye say, What have we spoken so much against thee?" Today, many still speak loosely, carelessly; and will even deny plain passages of scripture that even a young school student would have no problem understanding. So, what is the difficulty? Many do not know, because their concept of Bible sayings are gained by what someone else says, having never read the Bible for themselves! Remember this, it will

not be someone else that will give an accounting for your ignorance at The Judgment!

Here are some of the instances of false concepts: First of all, the name of the church. With approximately 2500 groups all claiming to be teaching the truth, just where is one to turn to find it? I suggest the Book of God called "The Bible". Within this Bible, we find Jesus speaking in **Matthew 16:18**, "upon this rock (speaking of himself) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Then in **Ephesians 5:25**, it says that "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." And in **Colossians 1:18**, it says that Christ "is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." Approximately 35 times, the church is mentioned in the Scriptures, but when they are called by the same name, obeyed the same things, Paul in Romans 16:16 called them the "churches of Christ." Then Paul wrote in **Romans 7:4**, "that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." I ASK, "If ye then say we are married to Christ, why do you take the name of someone else? **James 4:4** calls such ones as being "adulterers and adulteresses."

How have, and how many still do today, become hopelessly trapped into meeting with their particular group? It all began in 1600 when the printing pages went into use. Men, many uneducated in the Scriptures, went all over the place establishing groups with a certain belief and practice and called it by some man's name, and off we went.

A man said to me one day, 'now you know that you are a member of the church of Christ because of the way you were taught.' And then another went, 'somewhere else, it would just kill my father and mother.' I hope you know what I said to him.

There have and still exist a lot of changes among the churches of men concerning worship practices; like the Plan of Salvation, being substituted for other plans. A simple reading of **Acts 2:14-47** will answer every dispute among us. Baptist in water is a burial and it is still for the remission of sins, because the Bible hasn't changed.

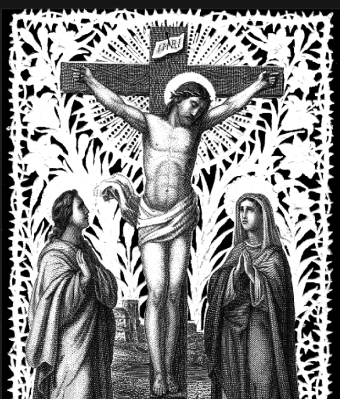
Then singing established in **Ephesians 5:19** and **Colossians 3:16**, plus 1 Corinthians 15:15 and **Hebrews 13:15**, has been turned into playing, plucking or banging instead.

The Lord's Supper is nearly abolished in most groups, hardly practiced by some, none by others. In Remembrance of Me is forgotten. Then, there are many more things that deviate from the worship of many. Still, the Lord's word has not changed. What are you practicing? Will the Scriptures fully endure it? Call for further study, 1-859-369-4165.

Sincerely, Bob Casey

THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold behold your son!" Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. JOHN 19:26, 27



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BIBLE WORD SEARCH

by Elie's Spiritual Treasures

PROVERBS 31:8-9

Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

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Find the **bolded/underlined** words in the diagram. They run in all directions — forward, backward, up, down and diagonally.

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The Spats



by Jeff Pickering



"What are you looking so happy about? I'm just getting them _____."

SCRAMBLERS

Unscramble the letters within each rectangle to form four ordinary words. Then rearrange the boxed letters to form the mystery word, which will complete the gag!

Grain
BRIEF
 Raid
DEVAIN
 Leaf
PLATE
 Relief
PRESITE

TODAY'S WORD