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Isaiah condemned their hypocrisy and told them they needed to change. If they would free the oppressed, share with those in need, etc., God would bless them with healing, answered prayer, guidance, strength, and joy.

**Isa 58:8-9**, *“Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. 9 Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I.”*

Religious activity is no substitute for an obedient heart. With God's help and a willingness to change we can eliminate the core problems, not just the symptoms.

Let us strive not just to be religious but obedient to the Lord in all things.

— Shane Williams

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**Times of Assembly:**

**Sunday:**

Bible Class 9:45am  
Morning Worship 10:45am  
Evening Worship 5:30pm

**Wednesday:**

Bible Class 7:30pm

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# The Lilbourn Light



*“Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” -Psalm 119:105*



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## Willing to Change

In the growing search for stress relief, many have sought release through spas, massages, pills, and exercise tapes. The craving to ease tension and anxiety has spawned an entire industry. One report ended by saying, *“Although people will pay to fix their stress, they are not about to change the lifestyle that is causing it.”*

No matter what the trouble, it seems our first response is to treat the symptoms rather than the cause.

During the days of Isaiah, God's people were not experiencing the Lord's blessing. They went through the activity of worship but couldn't understand why God wasn't noticing their religious labors (Isa. 58:3).

**Isaiah 58:3**, *“Why have we fasted, they say, 'and you have not seen it? Why have we humbled ourselves, and you have not noticed?' Yet on the day of your fasting, you do as you please and exploit all your workers.”*

While they were fasting, they were also taking advantage of their workers and fighting among themselves (vss.3-4).

**Isaiah 58:4**, *“Your fasting ends in quarreling and strife, and in striking each other with wicked fists. You cannot fast as you do today and expect your voice to be heard on high.”*

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## Manasseh's Reform

During his 55 year reign as king, Manasseh sacrificed his own children to idols, practiced witchcraft, profaned the Temple, and involved himself in all kinds of evil (II Chronicles 33:1-9). When he eventually repented and began to worship God, his conduct was drastically changed.

**II Chronicles 33:12-13,** *“And when he was in distress, he entreated the LORD his God and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers. 13 When he prayed to Him, He was moved by his entreaty and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem to his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the LORD was God.”*

Manasseh's life demonstrates that what we really believe has a deep effect on our behavior. In our times, lawless people and violent behavior should not surprise us. What can we expect from people when they have been taught that belief in God and having moral standards are just “old ways” or myths? It's no wonder that cheating in our schools and teen pregnancy are so high. No wonder violent crimes fill the news of each

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day.

The only real solution to this problem is a return to a belief in God as He has revealed Himself in the Bible. Manasseh's life was radically changed. When he finally came around, Manasseh removed the foreign gods from the temple, he removed all the altars from Jerusalem and he began sacrificing to the Lord (II Chronicles 33:15-16). No, he couldn't change what had happened previously; nor could he make everyone else follow his new found zeal (vs. 17). His son also went on to follow in his old footsteps (vs. 21-22). What we see, however, is Manasseh did what he could to put the broken pieces back together.

The lives of people today are also transformed when they hear the truths of the Bible, turn to God and respond in obedient faith.

No matter how bad you've lived, you probably haven't done the evil that Manasseh did in his reign. God stood ready to be his God. Manasseh finally knew that the Lord was God and made his life worth something. God stands ready to help us change as well.

— Shane Williams

## Helping God

People have always had a tendency to want to "help" God when He seems slow to do what they want or what He has promised.

The Lord had promised Abraham that his descendants would be as numerous as the stars and that an heir would come from his own aging body (Gen. 15:1-5). Abraham & Sarah were both unsure how this promise of God would be accomplished. Abraham believed the Lord, but Sarah eventually decided to help God. She talked Abraham into fathering children through her maidservant Hagar. Ishmael was born, but he wasn't the son of promise (17:18-21). Fourteen years later, when Abraham and Sarah were very old, God did the impossible— Sarah conceived and the son of promise (Isaac) was born.

**Genesis 18:14,** *“Is anything too difficult for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, at this time next year, and Sarah*

*shall have a son.”*

Often times we only understand what we can physically see. We must have the kind of faith that allows us to look beyond things we can't make clear. Let us look to God and understand that what He promises us will come to pass, regardless of the amount of time or circumstances (II Peter 3:9). Facing an impossibility gives us the opportunity to trust God.

**I John 2:25,** *“And this is the promise which He Himself made to us; eternal life.”*

— Shane Williams

## God's Plan for Saving Man

- ⇒ Hear the Gospel (Romans 10:17)
- ⇒ Believe the Gospel (Hebrews 11:6; John 20:31)
- ⇒ Repent of Past Sins (Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30)
- ⇒ Confess Faith in Christ (Romans 10:10; Matthew 10:32)
- ⇒ Be Baptized in water (Acts 2:38; Mk. 16:16; Gal. 3:27; I Pet. 3:21)
- ⇒ Be Faithful until/ unto Death (Rev. 2:10)