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It's Time
to Give a
Good Report

917-A

Series: Living Lessons From Proverbs



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It's Time to Give a Good Report

The scene is the boardroom of a famous Christian Missionary organization. It's decision-making time and the atmosphere is one of tenseness. A spirit of expectation is tempered by a spirit of discord. Who knows what kind of decision this day will bring forth? Better still, who knows the effects that decision will have on thousands of lives?

Actually, the story had its origins several years before, when a group of the organization's key men, spearheaded by its wise old leader, had spent a day alone in prayer seeking God's will and God's direction for their ministry. Several things resulted.

1- The men had agreed that God was calling them to a new work; a work that would take them into a country never before touched by the Gospel. They were being called to enter into a new land.

2- The men agreed that God was calling them to a new intensity of commitment, as well. So often with a new calling there comes a new commitment. The cost might be high, but the cost would be incidental so long as they knew they were in the center of God's will.

3- The men all agreed that they knew what country they were being called to. It was a little known nation in the mid-east known as Canonia. To the rest of the world, Canonia was an unknown quantity, but to the COI Missionary Group, it was a land of milk and honey, a land of spiritual conflict and spiritual victories, a land hitherto untouched by the Good News or by God's people. These things they knew. So more than a year ago now, the board of COI had written (after days of prayer and fasting) to the government of Canonia seeking to be the first Christian group ever to begin a missionary work within their borders.

Up until now, no group had ever been allowed to do so. The Canonian government's first response was one of cold indifference, routine form letter, a packet of applications and questionnaires, and a brief but curt statement of their policy

It's Time to Give a Good Report

of excluding “religiously diverse” groups from disrupting their culture. Not even a ray of hope.

Still, so sure were God’s men of God’s call that they but prayed the more; responded to the endless sea of red tape, and continued to train people for the task of evangelizing Canonia. The apparent obstacles simply increased their faith.

Miracle after miracle followed. And always God provided just at the final moment everything they needed. It was as though He were parting a sea of impossible barriers to better enlarge their vision of Himself.

Finally, just two months ago now, the miracle of miracles had occurred. The sage old leader of the group had called together his executive committee in an emergency session. There he read to the shocked group a letter from the Canonian president. It read:

Dear Sirs:

We are pleased to announce that your group has been cleared to be the first such religious organization to be granted full and complete missionary privileges in our country.

We are enclosing twelve visas and the accompanying paper work to allow your people free access to our beautiful nation.

We look forward to your arrival.

Sincerely,

General Elohim

President of the Canonian Republic

The feeling of exuberance was followed by a feeling of awe—awe that God would choose them and awe at the immensity of the task before them. They humbled themselves and prayed. And Dr. Mosel, the group’s leader, introduced a resolution commissioning a group of key people from their group to visit Canonia immediately and get some perspective of what they might expect when they entered the land. He charged them

It's Time to Give a Good Report

to survey the spiritual potential as well as the strongholds the enemy had gained. They were to investigate the physical problems they would encounter once they were in the land: food costs, housing availabilities, and the cultural transitions, they could expect as well. Then with a season of prayer, he put them all on a big jetliner and sent them to survey the new home God had so graciously given them.

What they saw when they got there, however, was not at all what they had expected. The land was beautiful and productive, the economy prosperous. Physically it was a touch of paradise, an oasis in a desert of economically-starved nations. But spiritually the picture was more ominous. Satan had made inroads at every turn. Witchcraft was the national religion. Materialism was the national god. Satanic powers controlled the very atmosphere. Christianity was little-known and even less-accepted.

Spiritually, the land was filled with giants. And the missionaries were overwhelmed at the immensity of the challenge. Which brings us to today's board meeting. Now they have returned and convened together for a status report with Dr. Mosel and the entire board.

"Well, what do you think?" the wise old man began. "Tell us about the land." There was a moment of silence and then one of the younger men stood to his feet. "It's a beautiful country," he began. "It's a thriving country, but the odds are against us. Everywhere we look Satan is in control. He has overtaken the people with prosperity, deceived them through idolatry, and destroyed them through immorality. We would be fools to attempt such a mission. I move we do not go."

A flurry of "amens" followed, as one after another of the bright young men echoed the same refrain. Before long, an air of panic swept the room. "They would eat us alive," one man exclaimed. "We'd be fools to go," another chimed in, gaining fresh courage from the knowledge that the negatives were, in fact, in control of the meeting.

Finally, a quiet, Godly young man named Joe stood up. "Aren't we forgetting something?" he asked politely. "Didn't God call us to Canonia? Didn't He promise to go with us? Aren't we like Abraham?" To stagger not at the promises of God through unbelief, but being strong in faith, giving glory to God, be fully persuaded whatsoever He hath promised, He is able also to

It's Time to Give a Good Report

perform? “The challenge does not negate the call,” Joe inserted. “It simply confirms it. Sure the enemy controls the land. That’s why God’s sending us. But our God is in the heavens. Whatsoever He hath spoke, He will also do it.” Tears streamed down Joe’s cheeks as he concluded, “The issue is not the size of the enemy, my friends. The issue is the size of our God. And the stronger the enemy, the more of God’s power we can experience. The battle is not ours, it’s God’s,” Joe continued, “and the issue is not whether or not it is God’s will to go; the issue is whether or not we will obey.” With that he took his seat.

But Joe’s “spiritual” approach only angered the others. “Unrealistic!” one man exclaimed. “Faith over facts,” another cried, “Nonsense.” And thus there ensued another whole outcry of negative response from the disgruntled majority. Their negative bent seemed all but contagious. Soon the entire board was overcome with grief.

“Has God played a trick on us?” one board member moaned. “We must have misread His will,” another cried. And before the day was over they voted nearly unanimously to write the Canonian government and decline their offer.

Decline they did. And decline they did as a spiritual force as well. Never again was there the same wind of power, the same trust in God’s calls. They began reasoning things from man’s perspective, applying more human logic, lest they again be “embarrassed” by these “faith-type” decisions.

You don’t hear much about COI anymore. They just seem to be going through the motions, wandering through a desert of Christian activities. Void of real purpose. Void of real power.

On that fateful afternoon when the cries of that negative majority won out and the board believed a bad report, COI died spiritually. They missed their mission. So they missed their mark. And thousands in little Canonia never heard the claims of Christ, all because those men chose to yield to the power of a bad report.

You say, “Is that a true story? Did that really happen?” Beloved, I’m afraid it’s a true story indeed. Only the names have been changed to make it more current. You see, the C.O.I. stands for Children of Israel. The real name of the land is the Land of Canaan. Their leader was not Dr. Mosel, but a Godly saint named Moses. But the story’s true! You can read it in Numbers

chapter thirteen.

God gave them the land and told them to possess it. Twelve men went out to spy out the land. Ten came back with a bad report. They viewed the land through the lens of man's perspective. "The enemy's too big, the circumstances too discouraging," they reported.

Only two men, Caleb and Joshua, looked at the land from God's perspective. "Sure the enemy's big, but our God is bigger," they reasoned. "The circumstances are difficult," they agreed, "But does not our God show forth His power more perfectly when there is no hope but Him?"

But the majority won out and their fate was sealed. They missed the joy of victory. They missed the thrill of seeing God keep His Word, when only His Word gave hope. They lost their power. They lost their purpose. They wandered about aimlessly until they perished. They died without experiencing what REAL SPIRITUAL VICTORY was all about. All because they listened to those who viewed the problem from man's perspective.

They are not unique. This room is filled with people who have, at one time or another, fallen victim to the disease we know as a "bad report." You watch for yourself. One person can enter a room and begin to complain about his circumstances. Money's tight. Jobs are scarce. No real friends. Church doesn't seem to care. And soon a sea of murmuring sends ripples submerged beneath an outward atmosphere of spirituality until soon the vast majority in that room are complaining about something. They don't even know it, but they are the victims of a bad report.

On the other hand, have you ever noticed how one smiling face can light up a whole room? How one positive Godly response can turn the tide and send the enemy of negativism scurrying for cover? In either case, one person's attitude can affect and infect the spiritual bloodstream of thousands. What about you?

When you look at the cup of life, is it half full? Or is it half empty? When someone asks you, "How was your day?" what floods your mind? All the neat things God taught you today? Or all the tough things you experienced along the way?

What do you call your friends to tell them? That your car broke down again and you're so broke there's no way out? Or that God met your need when your car broke down today and

It's Time to Give a Good Report

sent someone by to give you a ride, someone who needed Jesus, and a bad transmission let you transmit the Gospel? What a God! To Him Be Glory? Or Woe is me! Is that your story?

We're here to look at those folks who always give a bad report. The Bad News Bores, we'll call them. As we continue study of The Tongue, with Part 3, entitled, "IT'S TIME FOR A GOOD REPORT," our outline is simple. Part one we've just completed.

I- The Illustration

II- The Explanation

III. The Exploration

IV- The Exhortation

Our purpose is to lay the groundwork for a study of giving a bad report and to investigate in the process the whole issue of our perspective. By perspective I mean this: Two people can have the same traumatic experience and see it from two totally different viewpoints. The very calamity that brought depression and futility to one and issued forth in a bad report, to another is actually a source of joy, a cause for rejoicing, an element of encouragement. If the circumstances were identical, and the results totally opposite: then the only logical explanation is perspective. It is perspective that causes men and women to give a bad report.

And it is perspective that causes others facing the same challenges to give a good report. We've seen an illustration of perspective in the twelve spies. Now, let's seek an explanation. First, some definitions.

A Bad Report - Reporting on life from a negative perspective.

It has as its source a negative, hostile spirit. It is the result of seeing life from man's vantage point. Man's vantage point makes Satan seem to be a giant. Man's vantage point makes life's circumstances measuring sticks of happiness, rather than stepping stones to joy.

It reasons that if life is physical and success is circumstantial, then whatever happens to you that is unfavorable or uncomfortable is unfortunate and is, in essence, "Bad News." So you become a reporter covering the story of your life, and how you cover that story depends on where you are standing at the time.

Let's imagine there are two reporters sent to cover the

It's Time to Give a Good Report

same story about a fire. One was at ground level. Flames were everywhere. All he saw was panic in people's faces. He would write, "Flames are shooting everywhere. The intensity of the heat is unbearable. No doubt we all will perish. We cannot go on," he reports. "This is so futile. It's all over now."

But the second reporter climbed up an adjoining hill and looked down on the fire. He too could see the flames and the frightened people. But he could see the bigger picture since he was higher. He saw the fire trucks surrounding the blaze from the other sides. He knew it was only a matter of minutes till the blaze was extinguished. He could see that it was only brush that was burning, waste that needed to be gone. The fire had a purpose. He could see a hedge of stone surrounding the fiery furnace. It could only go so far. The fire had its limits. He reported, "A little blaze down there but it's under control. It's accomplishing its purpose. And it can go no further than the skilled fire marshal allows it."

"From up here," he writes, "everything looks okay." He gave a good report. But the first reporter is too close to the circumstances. All he see is flames. All he smells is smoke. All he feels is heat. All he does is imagine the worst.

The difference is perspective, perspective being defined as, "A man's interpretation of what he sees, the quality of which is relative to the height from which he sees it."

So the closer a man or woman gets to God...
the higher his vantage point of life,

And the higher his vantage point of life
the better is his... Perspective.

What's your perspective of life's trials? What kind of reporter are you? Is all you see fire? all you smell smoke? all you feel heat? Then no wonder you give a bad report! No wonder your life is characterized by negatives. No wonder you cannot experience joy!

God says, "Come up here!!" "See? I've hedged you about with a wall of stone. The flames that engulf you can go no further than I allow." "See? There's a cloud filled with refreshing rain poised just above the blaze. At whatever moment I choose," says God, "I'll but speak, and showers of blessings will extinguish the flames."

It's Time to Give a Good Report

“See? All that’s burning is dross, weeds that would choke out the greenery of life if left untended.” “I know what I’m doing,” God says. “This fire is for a purpose. That’s good news, now give a good report. There may be fires, but it’s time to give a good report.” A good report, then is reporting on life from God’s vantage point which affords us a positive perspective.

From man’s perspective trials mean failure. They issue forth in bitterness. (Bitterness—the presence of resentment towards God’s sovereignty.) We ask, “Why should this happen to me?”

Bitterness leads to murmuring. (Murmuring—the outward expression of bitterness that comes from believing a bad report.) We ask, “Did you see what happened to me?”

Murmuring leads to presumption. (Presumption—the acceptance of the lie that God owes me pleasant circumstances.) We say, “I deserve better.”

And presumption leads to depression. (Depression—that state of hopelessness that sees no escape and sees no purpose.) It is the ultimate end of viewing your circumstances from man’s perspective.

On the other hand, those who view life from God’s perspective, instead of bitterness, murmuring, presumption, and depression, experience as a result of the very same experiences grace, mercy, peace, and joy.

Grace: God’s imparted ability to stand.

Mercy: God’s blessed limits beyond which Satan cannot go.

Peace: God’s imparted confidence in His own sovereignty.

Joy: Exultation over God’s deeper plan.

So the issue is how we use the tongue to report the circumstances of life, and the explanation is perspective. If you’re looking at life from man’s perspective, good circumstances lead to a good report, but bad circumstances lead to a bad report, which results in bitterness, murmuring, presumption, and depression. If you’re looking at life from God’s perspective, all of life’s circumstances lead to a good report, which releases grace, mercy, peace, and joy.

So there we have the illustration and at least part of the explanation. Now for the exploration into how God feels about

It's Time to Give a Good Report

a negative report. And for the present, we will look simply at passages from Proverbs that define God's perspective of the tongue as a tool to build or destroy simply by how it reports on the circumstances of life. And I think you'll discover as you peruse Proverbs, "It's Time For A Good Report."

Very quickly, let's search for principles from Proverbs on a negative tongue. First look at the Scripture:

The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness.

(Proverbs 10:32)

The upright speak what is helpful; the wicked speak rebellion.

(TLB)

The lips of the righteous know what delights others, but the mouth of the wicked is perverse.

(Berkley)

The righteous man can suit his words to the occasion; the wicked know only subversive talk.

(NEB)

Righteous people know the kind thing to say, but the wicked are always saying things that hurt.

(GNB)

To summarize and paraphrase, Proverbs 10:32 says this:

What the Godly man says ought to be constructive and positive and generate encouragement. The enemy's words are negative; they tear down; they destroy and they hurt.

Proverbs 11:9 is next. It says,

An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbor; but through knowledge shall the just be delivered.

Evil words destroy. Godly skill rebuilds.

(TLB)

You can be ruined by the talk of godless people, but the wisdom of the righteous can save you.

(GNB)

With his mouth, the godless man destroys his neighbor.

(ASV)

False speech the hypocrite will use to ruin his neighbor.

(Knox)

The words you speak can make or break your neighbor's spirit. You can ruin him or save him simply by what you say.
(Proverbs 11:9 paraphrase)

Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop; but a good word maketh it glad.

(Proverbs 12:25)

Anxious hearts are very heavy, but a word of encouragement does wonders.

(TLB)

It's Time to Give a Good Report

A heart bowed down with anxiety, how a kind word can refresh it! (Knox)

Literally we can read Proverbs 12:25 this way:

A man's heart may be buried beneath the weight of life's problems, But what you say, if it is a good report, can lift his burdens and bring him joy.

Next read Proverbs 15:30. It says,

The light of the eyes rejoiceth the heart; and a good report maketh the bones fat.

Pleasant sights and good reports give happiness and health. (TLB)

A cheerful glance brings joy to the heart, good news invigorates the bones. (NAB)

The eye that smiles, how it cheers the heart! Good news, how it lends vigor to a man's frame! (Knox)

Smiling faces make you happy, and good news makes you feel better. (GNB)

To summarize, it says this:

The joy on your face and the joy in your words may help determine your attitude towards life.

Even your health will be affected by your perspective.

Then there are these verses:

The heart of the wise teacheth his mouth and addeth learning to his lips.

Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones. (Proverbs 16:23, 24)

The wise man's mind guides his speech and what his lips impart increases learning. (NEB)

Kind words are like dripping honey, sweetness on the tongue and health for the body.

Or paraphrased:

If you are wise, you'll watch what you say. Speak words of encouragement and others will respond. You'll bring them good health and happiness in the process.

And Proverbs 27:9,

Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart: so doth the sweetness of a man's friend by hearty counsel.

It's Time to Give a Good Report

Literally it reads like this:

Wise words of encouragement make a man's soul incredibly sweet. They are something you can apply to the wounds of life.

So Proverbs says this about a good report and positive speech. (Listen, we'll condense and expand and paraphrase.)

God's man watches what he says. He makes it constructive and he makes it positive. His goal is to encourage.

Satan's goal is to use the tongue to tear down and destroy. And your words can literally destroy your neighbor's spirit. He will respond to your tongue.

You can take a man who is buried beneath his problems and simply by giving a God's-eye-view of the circumstances, lift his burdens and bring him joy.

Even your own health will be determined by your perspective, and your tongue will reveal that perspective.

So if you're wise, you'll watch what you say.

You'll speak positive, encouraging words, words that bring hope and healing to others.

That's what Proverbs has to say. Condensed to one line, it's this: "It's Time to Give a Good Report."

One encouraging word can turn a storm into sunshine. One God's-eye response can literally light up another's life. Give them hope. Give them courage. Give them a testimony out of a test. God wants his children to focus on His perspective. He wants us to be Good News Guys, not Bad News Bores. Nobody loves a Bad News Bore.

Ask yourself, "Do you love to repeat bad news? Does the smallest obstacle cause you to grow discouraged? Is your first response always negative? Do you enter the game of life expecting to be a loser? When someone asks 'How are you?' is your immediate response circumstantial or spiritual? Do you catalog the day's calamities or count the day's blessings? Do you always have a reason why it can't be done? What do you see first in others? Their positive qualities? Or their faults?"

The key is perspective. If you're always negative, always saying negative things, you may become so circumstantially frustrated that you never really enter the land of victory. You may be so busy describing the size of the enemy you forget how

It's Time to Give a Good Report

big your God is. You may get so busy reporting the fires you fail to crawl up into God and see the fires from His vantage point.

There are hedges to limit them, showers to extinguish them, and besides, God is only burning weeds. There's purpose in the midst of them. I beg you to crawl up into God right now and begin to give a good report of life. It's time for God's kind of coverage of the news. All the world hears is bad news. It's Time For A Good Report.

Next lesson we'll look at some further principles from Numbers chapter thirteen. We'll look at how to respond to some practical situations. We'll look at why we give a bad report and what to do when we hear one. And then finally, how we give a bad report without ever saying a word. In the meantime, for the next seven days, I have an assignment for you and it just could be the most important thing I've ever asked you to do. The assignment is this: (It has five parts)

Assignment 1- For the next seven days, give only a good report of people. You either find something positive, something of value, or something encouraging to say about everyone, or you say nothing at all.

I don't mean you can't correct your children. You can correct their behavior, but don't malign their character. Find something about everyone that's good. That's what God is doing for you, thinking thoughts of peace and not of evil. Find something encouraging to say about everyone. And find something encouraging to say to everyone. Let your husband know about his strengths. (Maybe you've told him about his weaknesses.) Let your wife know about her worthiness, her depth, her beauty. Let your employees know of their good points. (You've called them on the carpet for their bad ones.) Let your parents know how they've blessed you. Let your children know they're a heritage of the Lord.

And every time you are tempted to say something cruel, or cutting, or damaging, or discouraging, guard your tongue-close the gate.

And whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of a good report, if there be any praise speak those things instead.

(Philippians 4:8 paraphrase)

Remember, if you have no words of praise, no good reports,

It's Time to Give a Good Report

say nothing. It's time to give a good report. Don't grumble about football, or money, or the weather, but especially about people.

Will Rogers said he never met a man he didn't like. For the next seven days, neither will you.

Assignment 2- For the same seven days, give only a good report to God. That means you set aside time for praise, for thanksgiving, and for intercession. Let your own needs wait, your own complaints go unspoken. Just for this week don't complain to God about your lot in life (your lot in life will be repossessed anyway). Praise him instead for your lot in eternal life.

Eternally you have need of nothing, you possess everything. Thank Him. For one week:

- Praise Him for His Mercy
- Praise Him for His Grace
- Praise Him for His Love
- Praise Him for Himself
- Just Praise Him.
- Thank Him for your friends
- Thank Him for your enemies
- Thank Him for your blessings
- Thank Him for your trials.
- Gather your family together for praise sessions. Begin to make a family praise list to use continually.
- Give only a good report of people
- Give only a good report to God.

Assignment 3- Thirdly, give only a good report of God. When was the last time you shared with your family what your life was like before you met Christ? What your life would be like today if you had not met Christ? Perhaps they are not aware or have forgotten what God has done for you. You don't need to be proud, but you do need to be grateful. When was the last time you shared with your fellow-workers or your neighbors what your Great God has done for you? He lifted you up from the miry clay, set your feet on a rock, and established your goings. He put a new song in your heart, new language on your lips, gave you new reasons to live, a new story to tell. TELL IT!

Assignment 4- For one week, give only a good report of yourself. I'm not talking about boasting. I'm talking about

It's Time to Give a Good Report

honestly accepting who you are in Christ. The Eternal Creator, the God who spoke the worlds into being and holds them in place by the breath of His Mouth, looked down into the corridors of time and chose you. He chose you to be adopted into His family for eternity. That makes you special! He traded the life of His only Son, the sinless one, for yours. My friend, that makes you valuable. So stop the pity party, stop down-grading yourself. You're God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus unto His good works. When you make degrading comments about yourself you are questioning His wisdom in choosing you, questioning His work in redeeming you, and questioning His grace in transforming you. I know He's not finished yet, but "He that hath begun a good work in you will perform it." (He'll finish what He started.) It's Satan that keeps haunting you with the past, resurrecting your failures, magnifying your weaknesses. God has forgotten the past. He's using your failures, bringing power out of your weaknesses. He's becoming your strength. You've been re-created in His Image. Stop belittling His Image. Give a good report of yourself.

Assignment 5- Perhaps the hardest but most important assignment of all, for one week, for the next week, give only a Godly perspective, a good report to others of the circumstances and situations in your life. Things may be rough from the world's perspective. You may be sick, or broke, or out of work, or rejected, or discouraged. And your first response is to share those circumstances with those who ask. But remember, every time you do, these things happen.

1) You magnify the physical as though that were the kingdom for which you live. This world is not your home. This body is not for keeps. And these trials are but for a season and but for a purpose. But when people say, "How are you?", and you recount your physical trials, they can only assume you live for those things.

2) You cheat yourself out of an opportunity to glorify God. Everybody else will respond with their physical circumstances. You're different. You live in a different sphere, an eternal sphere. If they know you're suffering and ask how you're doing, and you give a good report of the joy, or the peace, or the hope you have in Christ, you have allowed your God to work all things together for good, to use all things for the praise of His Glory.

It's Time to Give a Good Report

3) If you answer with a bad report and list the woes of this world you are under, you will in essence only multiply your woes and deepen your depression. Your very countenance will reflect your perspective. Proverbs says your heart will be affected by whether or not you report the fires of life from the vantage point of the flames or the vantage point of the mountain.

You say, "Well, what kind of a good report do I have to give? I'm not rich!" You're not rich? You're a child of the King, an heir of God, joint heir with Christ. You have treasures laid up in heaven where moth and rust cannot corrupt, where thieves cannot break through and steal. All of the spiritual treasures of the heavenlies are yours. You're an heir of the King, and His resources never end. Don't say you're not rich. That's a bad report.

You say, "But I'm nobody." Nobody? My friend, if you're a Christian, your name's written in the Lamb's Book of Life. The God of Eternity calls you by name. He has a Crown of Life which the Righteous One has prepared for you and all those who love His appearing. Nobody? He's about to announce your presence with the shout of an Archangel and the trumpet of God. Why, a whole being of angels stopped and sang the moment you entered into the Kingdom. Nobody? Beloved, one day you'll rule angels. One day you'll sit at the feet of Jesus, and you'll have fellowship with the likes of Joseph, Noah, and Abel. You'll be greeted by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; welcomed by Moses and Paul. You'll be honored at the Bema Seat of Christ and rewarded beyond your wildest imagination. Don't ever say you're nobody when you're God's!

You say, "But I'm troubled on every side. I'm wracked with pain, surrounded by defeats. So was Paul; he said,

We are pressed on every side by troubles, but not crushed and broken. We are perplexed because we don't know why things happen as they do, but we don't give up and quit.

We are hunted down, but God never abandons us. We get knocked down, but we get up again and keep going.

These bodies of ours are constantly facing death just as Jesus did so it is clear to all that it is only the Living Christ within who keeps us safe.

Yes, we live in constant danger to our lives because we serve the Lord. But this gives us constant opportunities to show forth the power of Jesus Christ within our dying bodies.

(II Corinthians 4:8-11)

It's Time to Give a Good Report

My Friend, that's perspective! I know your body hurts. Mine does too. But I've got a new one on order, and so do you. One day soon it'll be delivered and there's not going to be any more pain. You say your purse is empty? Jesus understands.

though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich. (II Corinthians 8:9b)

You say the house is run down. That's only your temporary residence. The Master Carpenter is building you a mansion. It has a sign in the yard, "SOLD," with your name beneath it. You say, "I have no jewels"? Beloved, one day soon you'll walk on streets of gold. The foundations of the walls of the city will be jasper, sapphire, emeralds, and topaz. The gates will be pearl. Jewels? You'll be surrounded by them.

You say, "But I'm so discouraged." Ah, but soon that darkness will disappear forever. There'll be no night there, no discouragement, no depression, no confusion, no sin, and no bad reports. And all of life will be lived from God's perspective. And God has given it all to you and all to me with a written guarantee, and He's sealed it with the seal of His Spirit. Do your friends know that? Do you know that? Then what reason have we to give a bad report? Or, isn't it time for a good report? For this next week, let's all agree:

To give a good report of people

To give a good report to God

To give a good report of God to others

To give a good report of ourselves in Christ

To give a good report of your life to others

We can give a good report of life because we have eternal life.

Unless, that is, by God's Sovereign purpose you do not know for sure that these things are yours. Perhaps, you have not yet personally given your life to Christ. Then you cannot give a good report, and this is all a mystery to you. You cannot see life from God's perspective because you do not yet have God's Spirit.

Right now I invite you to invite Jesus to come into your life. You need but acknowledge your sin, acknowledge your need for someone to pay the price for that sin, and acknowledge that Jesus paid that price in full. Then humbly, quietly, but joyfully, ask Him to come into your heart right now. He will. In that instant the angels will rejoice, your sins will be forgiven. He'll

It's Time to Give a Good Report

write your name in the Lamb's Book of Life. He'll announce you in the courts of Heaven as a Child of the King. And you can spend the rest of this life and all of the next with us, praising God and giving a good report because...

TIME TO GIVE A GOOD REPORT

It's time we gave a good report
To a world that's tossed and torn
They hear enough of life's despair
It shrieks at every turn

Life's newscasts broadcast tragedy
They broadcast grief and woe
They magnify life's hopelessness
And all life's pain they show.

But Christians, we've a good report
To offer fallen man
We've found the world's solution
God has a better plan !!!

It's time we gave a good report
Of others now related
For Man redeemed has once again
In His likeness been created

It's time we gave a good report
To God for all He's done
While we were sinners yet unclean
He gave for us His Son

It's time we gave a good report
Of God to those around us
And let them know in joy just how
His mercies so surround us

It's time we gave a good report
Of all we have in life
Of all the beauty, faith, and power
We even find midst strife

We need to give a good report
And broadcast time is near
You're on the air!!! Now tell the world
The news it longs to hear

It's Time to Give a Good Report
They'll jump for joy—they'll shout aloud
They'll give your God His Glory
For you'll have given God's report
And they'll have loved His story!!!

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