

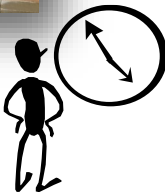
## THE BATTLE CREEK BULLETIN

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### Time of Assembly



#### Sunday:

Bible Study 9:00 a.m.  
Worship 10:00 a.m.  
(every other week)

Worship 5:00 p.m.

#### Wednesday:

Bible Study 7:00 p. m.

## Idle Words

By Craig Thomas

*"Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases to be, for the faithful disappear from among the sons of men. They speak falsehood to one another; with flattering lips and with a double heart they speak. May the LORD cut off all flattering lips, the tongue that speaks great things; who have said, 'With our tongue we will prevail; our lips are our own; who is lord over us?' Because of the devastation of the afflicted, because of the groaning of the needy, now I will arise,' says the LORD; 'I will set him in the safety for which he longs.' The words of the LORD are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times. You, O LORD, will keep them; You will preserve him from this generation forever. The wicked strut about on every side when vileness is exalted among the sons of men" (Psalms 12).*

In Psalm 12 David laments at the unruliness of the wicked and especially the unruliness of their tongues (i.e., words, speech). The speech of such people is described as:

1. using duplicitous flattery (Psalms 12:2),
2. boasting prideful things (Psalms 12:3),
3. using one's tongue as a weapon (Psalms 12:4), and
4. using the tongue to oppress others (Psalms 12:5).

David's description of these wicked people provides a perfectly accurate description of many in our society today.

In my over seventy-year pilgrimage on this earth, I have never seen our society so divided and so much venomous speech be spewed out on a nonstop basis. For example, politicians and others are constantly and without a legitimate basis accused of being "Hitler!," a "racist," a "misogynist," a "fascist!" etc. I try to keep up with current events, but it can be very depressing. I have several news sites on the internet that I check semi-regularly. However, I must severely limit my time there because it is downright depressing given all the

awful things people are saying. James rightly said, *“And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell”* (James. 3:6).

It is obvious from Psalm 12 that a lack of “tongue control” is not new. David experienced three thousand years ago exactly what we experience today. However, our modern (?) society has taken it to a whole new level. I firmly believe these ugly thoughts and attitudes betrayed by today’s speech were always there in many people’s minds. But the internet and social media are now providing an outlet for such acrimony, bitterness, and animosity. Read the comment section of any internet news story these days to see what I mean. The degree of anonymity offered by the internet contributes to this problem. People can hide behind their computer screens as they rip and tear others to shreds, as they *“bite and devour”* one another (Galatians 5:15). There are little if any consequences. But God sees! God knows! Some of the most frightening words in the Bible were spoken by Jesus when He said:

*“... out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned”* (Matthew 12:34-37).

Let us remember James’ words: *“My brethren, these things ought not to be so. Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh”* (James. 3:10-12).

We need to think of these things before we speak or hit the “Send” button!

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## I Hope I Never Get That Forgetful

By Alan Smith

I heard about three sisters -- ages 92, 94, and 96 -- who lived together. One night, the 96-year-old drew a bath. She put one foot in, then paused. "Was I getting in the tub or out?" she yelled.

The 94-year-old hollered back, "I don't know, I'll come and see." She started up the stairs, but stopped on the first one. She shouted, "Was I going up or coming down?"

The 92-year-old was sitting at the kitchen having tea, listening to her sisters with a smirk on her face. She shook her head and said, "I sure hope I never get that forgetful," and knocked on wood for good measure. Then she yelled, "I'll come up and help both of you as soon as I see who's at the door."

The saddest part about this story is that I don't find it nearly as funny as I would have 20 or 30 years ago! As each year goes by, I find myself forgetting more and

more. I'm one of those husbands who goes into the store with a list of five things my wife has told me to buy and I come out with four things. Some of you may be thinking that doesn't sound too bad, but you need to realize that three of those four items never were on the list to begin with!

While my failing memory gives me some reason for concern, my bigger concern is that I develop "spiritual amnesia." There is the possibility that I may someday take God's bountiful blessings for granted and not remember to give thanks to Him for all that He has done. Every day God sends us blessing after blessing. Whether we ask for them or not, whether we deserve them or not ("He makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good"), whether we acknowledge them or not, we are absolutely flooded with blessings from a good and gracious God. So do we remember where those blessings come from? More importantly, do we remember to give thanks to our God for them?

The Psalmist encourages us with these words: "Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, who satisfies your mouth with good things" (Psalm 103:1-5a).

As the 92-year-old sister put it, "I sure hope I never get that forgetful!" Now, if you'll excuse me, I've got to go see who is at the door!

To the God who keeps on giving and giving be all praise and honor and glory!



## I'm Not 18 Years Old Anymore

By Zeke Flores

### I'm not 18 years old anymore

My body doesn't move as it did then; more things droop and sag, and more parts hurt and ache.

- At 18 I had very few responsibilities. I lived entirely in the moment making decisions solely based on my selfish desire for immediate gratification.
- At 18 I had far more leisure time on my hands and risked my life and health on dangerous activities and substances.

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- At 18 I blew through money like I had a hole in my pocket and misused things I should have taken better care of.

No, I'm not 18 years old anymore

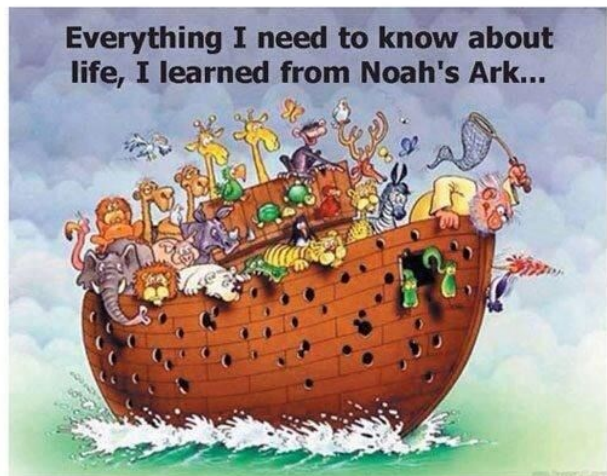
By God's mercy, I've had 44 more years added to my life (so far) and in that life, I've had the love of a good and wise woman added to me, along with the blessing of children and grandchildren who love me in spite of myself and my corny jokes.

- I'm not 18 anymore, and my decisions are now informed by a conscience that's molded by God's word and will, which helps me to see the longer road.
- I'm not 18 anymore, and though my body doesn't move like it once did, its actions are more certain and directed toward a clearer purpose.
- I'm not 18 anymore, and where once I lived in self-satisfaction, I see I have an obligation to others around me to whom I can offer myself in a variety of ways, all of which bring more satisfaction than selfishness ever could.
- I'm not 18 anymore, and though my hair is thinning and grayer, it represents a lifetime of joy, sorrow, and tough decisions which have hopefully made me wiser and instilled character and integrity.
- I'm not 18 anymore, and where once I had no definite plans for the future, now I see more distinctly than ever God's plan for my future and a clear way to get there.
- I'm not 18 anymore, and while I'm nowhere near the man I hope to be, by God's grace I'm not the man I once was.

No, I'm not 18 years old  
anymore

*"Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life" (Proverbs 16:31).*

*"They will still yield fruit in old age; they shall be full of sap and very green, to declare that Yahweh is upright ..." (Psalms 92:14-15).*



- 1 Don't miss the boat.
- 2 Remember that we are all in the same boat.
- 3 Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the Ark.
- 4 Stay fit. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to do something really big.
- 5 Don't listen to critics; just get on with the job that needs to be done.
- 6 Build your future on high ground.
- 7 For safety sake, travel in pairs.
- 8 Speed isn't always an advantage. The snails were on board with the cheetahs.
- 9 When you're stressed, float a while.
- 10 Remember, the Ark was built by amateurs; the Titanic by professionals.
- 11 No matter the storm, when you are with God, there's always a rainbow waiting..