

### **Be a Berean!**

*The Bereans...received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day* (Acts 17:11). “Be a Berean” will regularly cover topics that arise during Lockport Alliance Bible classes. Contact Franklyn Pfeil—[liftedup@lockportalliance.org](mailto:liftedup@lockportalliance.org)—with questions or comments.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### **“Let every heart prepare Him room”**

It’s Washington’s Birthday, or is it Lincoln’s? Whatever, it’s a day off from work! I think we should have Buchanan’s, Pierce’s, Nixon’s, Clinton’s, Eisenhower’s, and Carter’s off as well. And Ralph Nader’s, and Ross Perot’s, and Barry Goldwater’s, and William E. Miller’s. (Also-rans have feelings, too, you know.) In fact, Miller’s birthday should get us two days off, seeing that he lived right over there by DeSales.

This day off is perfectly situated, because it’s been insanely hectic lately, and ‘Be a Berean’ is due. So at 10:00 I put the magic hands of chance to the keyboard. Pretty soon something starts to form about the woman in John chapter 8. It’s not good, but it’s not bad--and it’s got to be finished today. So I stay with it, wrestling with it until 4:00, when I get out of my chair for the first time in six hours to let our dog out. Five minutes later I come back and read it whole. It just won’t do. It’s sub-par, lackluster, dead.

“Shelley, the pen’s run dry. I worked this idea all day, and it went straight to nowhere.”

“Just stop writing. Go for your run, and look around you.”

So I run. An old James Taylor line—“sweet dreams and flying machines, in pieces on the ground”—comes to mind, with the rhythms of my footfall. Does God want me to write about Flight 3407?

I get home. I fiddle at the keyboard with sweet dreams and flying machines and the tower of Siloam, where eighteen died when it fell (1). After another long while, it becomes apparent that that’s not what God has in mind, either.

Now it’s 10:00, p.m. I’ve written all day and have nothing to show for it. Shelley hands me a writing tablet. “Put this and a pen beside your bed and go to sleep. There will be a ‘Berean’ before morning.”

I went upstairs, but I didn’t go to sleep right away. I thought back through the day. I’d come up empty, but it was a good day, the house filled with noise and laughter, boys and Shellster. And, of course, there was incessant talk of bubble hockey. That’s right—bubble hockey, which I was thinking about as I drew my last waking breath...

...because all the rage around here lately is bubble hockey. The boys have bubble hockey fever. The 10<sup>th</sup> commandment is staring them down as we speak—all because of bubble hockey. They’ve begged for a bubble hockey game, but Shelley says no.

But I teach them that no is often temporary, while yes can mean forever. And so we work on the fine art of personal persuasion. We work on phrasing questions in such a way that the only answer possible is the one you want. We work on the ‘bait-and-switch,’ ‘the reverse double-negative,’ ‘the truth-but-not-the-whole-truth,’ ‘the redirected reluctance,’ the ‘contrapositive contingency,’ and other time-honored ploys and gambits of extortion, I mean coercion, I mean manipulation, I mean persuasion.

Most often, my fledgling little scammers practice these proven methods on Shelley. They’ve used every technique listed above to try and get her to buy a bubble hockey game. She still says no. Today, they invented a new technique—the ‘pathetic-attempt’--sort of a heart-tugging version of the ‘old-college-try.’ They built a bubble hockey game out of boards and Popsicle sticks and Elmer’s glue and duct tape. They even dragged out the Erector Set (which we hadn’t seen for 5 years) and used the levers, gears, and pulleys. It all played on the strings of my heart, I’ll tell you. But Shelley was unmoved.

Then they used the classic ‘Les Nessman’ technique, named for a character on “WKRP,” the 1980’s television show. Les’s desk was in a room with other desks, and he longed for nothing more in life than his very own office with walls. So he staged a protest by putting tape on the floor where walls should be, and by insisting that everyone enter by the opening in the tape where the door should be. Frankie and Eddy ran a variation, rearranging their bedroom furniture in order to leave a big empty space in the middle—“Right where bubble hockey should be...”

Now it’s 3:28 a.m. It’s taken me only an hour to fill the tablet with the column that you’re reading. And I’m pleased with it. God didn’t just give me a column, He gave me a good one.

The light’s been left on in the boys’ room. I often get up to turn out their light at night. As I was about to flip the switch, the unfamiliar room arrangement sort of startled me, and drew my eye to the big empty space in the middle, where bubble hockey should be.

“Right where bubble hockey will be,” I decided. My alarm would be ringing in an hour, at 4:43. I turned it off, dressed, and went downstairs to cruise the internet, to learn all about bubble hockey.

I’ll be turning a page soon. More than that, I’ll be starting a whole new chapter in the volume of my life. When I do, I’ll be getting extra money for unused sick days. And the first thing I’m going to do is fill that empty space with bubble hockey. Not just any bubble hockey game, but a good one.

Where does that come from, that instinct to give—to give our kids what we can, maybe more than we can? It was sent via beacon to shine in, then out of, the hearts of Dads and Moms:  
*Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning* (2).

God hates an empty page, an empty room, an empty house, an empty heart. His desire is to *fill your life with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's*. (3)

So let every heart prepare Him room.

Carve out space just for Him in your heart, in your day. And leave the light on, ‘cause it’s His element; He’s at home there (4). And if you really want to bring out the Father in Him, make frequent mention of His Son whenever you ask Him for anything (5). You can’t scam God (or Shelley!) but the mere mention of Jesus never fails to move His heart, and often His hand.

Re-arrange if you must; make sure His space is right at the center of everything. Then watch Him fill it—

with wonders of His love, and wonders of His love, and wonders of His love.

\*\*\*\*\*

Scripture cited: (1) Luke 13:4 (2) James 1:17 (3) Psalm 103:5 (4) 1 Tim. 6:16 (5) John 16:23-24

\*\*\*\*\*

It is our fervent hope that you will 'be a Berean' by attending one of these Bible-based classes this week! —

"Cross Ties"--Sunday at 9:45

"Becoming A Woman of Purpose"--Sunday at 9:45

"A Detailed Study of Luke"--Sunday at 9:45