

### Prayer List

Gene  
Judy  
The Williams' Family  
Ophelia

### Services:

#### Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.  
Assembly 9:50 a.m.  
Assembly 6:00 p.m.

#### Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

### Elders:

Brad Behrens - [bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com](mailto:bradbehrens@pinolechurchofchrist.com)  
Michael Odom - [MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com](mailto:MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com)  
Ernie Sprinkel - [preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com](mailto:preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com)

### This Week's Question:

Who confessed Israel's sins after he heard the walls of Jerusalem were in ruins?

### Answer To Last Week's Question:

Almond blossoms - Exodus 25:33

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# *Pinole Tidings*

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## **Razor Straps and Restoration**

Dee Bowman

The bathroom was a special place when I was growing up. Not so much because it was there that we learned and practiced personal hygiene, but mainly because that's where the razor strap hung. The razor strap was the scepter of my Dad's authority. It hung on a nail just to the left of the medicine cabinet and just the sight of it was enough to strike fear in a little boy's heart.

Mind you, the razor strap didn't have to do anything in order to be effective. Just the fact that we were acquainted with what it could do was a sufficient deterrent. Actually, the sound of the strap on the posterior regions of a little boy's anatomy was more startling than painful and just the sight of it being removed from its prominent place in the throne room was reason enough to tune up with short staccato whimpers for what was to become in just a few seconds a full-blown outcry.

I'm sure the razor strap served very well the need for which it was originally intended—to strop the straightedge

razor's sharp edge to a fine hone. But my recollections of the twin-strapped leather bands have nothing at all to do with whiskers and clean-shaven faces. It is still today a majestic symbol of discipline, that rare and mostly forgotten attribute so necessary to order and accomplishment. It represents to me honor and honesty, right and conscience, the necessity of truth and integrity, all those things which allow us to live life without fear and without an accusing conscience.

Discipline is involved in restoration. It was the failure of the early church leaders to be disciplined by a "thus saith the Lord" that brought about the need for restoration in the first place. If the first leaders had been properly disciplined by the doctrines of the gospel there would have been no deviation and thus no need for a restoration. The discipline of the New Testament precedent relating to self-government for each church was very early sacrificed to the pride of the leaders. This failure of the early Christians to subscribe to a "thus saith the Lord" philosophy brought about power disputes, struggles for both personal and geographic supremacy, and eventually not only division, but rank immorality as well.

Personal discipline is the beginning of restoration. Restoration must begin with the individual, for it is persons who are the object of restoration. We do not seek to restore some institution; we seek to bring people to God by exposing them to the power of the blood of Christ through the gospel. And any endeavor to merely emulate the New Testament church in organization or work or worship in preference to concentrating on restoring

individuals to fellowship with God is not only illogical and non-scriptural, but doomed to certain failure. The primary function of any effort to restore New Testament Christianity must be to bring sinners to God.

Furthermore, we are not finished restoring the New Testament arrangement until we have first disciplined ourselves in accordance to those personal assignments in it. Just the fact that we look like the New Testament church in work, organization and worship is not enough; we must also mold the character the New Testament assigns. To the Ephesians, Paul said, "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love" (Ephesians 4:1ff). We are not New Testament Christians and thus have not restored New Testament Christianity until we have adopted these attitudes. The adoption of such attributes as "lowliness" (one's recognition of his worth without his connection to Christ), "meekness" (disciplined strength), "longsuffering" (constancy in well-doing), and "forbearing one another in love" (being willing to endure one another's faults) is a sure sign of a person's desire for a character which is disciplined by scripture and is thereby to be viewed as the purest form of restoration.