

## Sunday School Lesson

By Bessie Wilton

### INTRODUCTION

In the minds of many people, the word repentance is a religion term, church talk, or theological jargon. However, God's Word makes it very clear that without repentance on our part, any fellowship with God is impossible. It is as simple as that. Repentance is imperative for us if we would walk with God. Jesus said to those who might be looking at the wickedness in the lives of others, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish," (Luke 13:3). Repentance may be considered by many to be an option, but the option is quite clear. It is either life or death. The ultimate choice is one or the other - repentance or ruin.

In the Old Testament the term for repent is the very common word that means to turn or to return. To repent is to turn from the old life of wickedness and sin and to turn to God and to right living. In the New Testament, the word for repentance means a change of mind that leads to a change of life.

Repentance involves a radical transformation of one's thinking, attitude, outlook, and direction of life. Repentance is not just being sorry. That is only the beginning. If the sorrow is genuine, it will lead to repentance and to salvation, (2 Corinthians 7:10).

In today's lesson those who were called upon to repent were not pagans. They were people who had entered into a covenant relationship with God. Sin had been a violation of that covenant and had brought estrangement from God. These people must, therefore, repent or perish.

### LESSON BACKGROUND

In light of Hosea's experience with his wife, Gomer, he came to understand the magnitude of the love of God. As the prophet would show love to his adulterous wife, so God's love would yet be extended to his sinful people. The aim of love in both cases was restoration - the restoration of Gomer to the bosom of her husband, and the restoration of Israel to a position of loving fellowship with God. Love could accomplish this. But in neither case would it be an easy matter.

### THE LESSON

"Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel: for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, no mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood," (Hosea 4:1-2).

God had an indictment to make against Israel and summoned the nation to the bar of justice to hear it read. The people were corrupt. There was corruption of the mind - their attitude was despicable. The people of Israel were unfaithful; they were without truth; meaning there was no trustworthiness, no steadfastness, no faithfulness to the truth; no confirmation of truth by their lives. Israel did not live the truth. She was unfaithful to all that was true.

"I will go and return to me place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early," (Hosea 5:15). "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for He hath torn, and He will heal us; He hath smitten, and He will bind us up. After two days He will revive us; in the third day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; His going forth is prepared as the morning, and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth," (Hosea 6:1-3).

To a visitor in Israel it would appear that the people were very religious. "In God we trust!" would be a cherished slogan, and certainly religious activity would be very apparent and much a part of the public scene. Yet, in spite of all this religious activity and ritual, they had become so corrupt in thought and deed that God would depart from them. They were a godless nation in spite of their show of religion.

Hosea 6:1-3 are understood by some to indicate a response to the message of Hosea by his hearers. They would return to Jehovah. This is not the case, however, for their repentance was so shallow that in verse 4 they again had to be rebuked. It seems better to connect these verses with 5:9-15. There would be none to deliver Israel from judgment. The only help would be God Himself.

So great is the mercy of God that His blessings will not long be withheld from His penitent children. The nation was to die because of her sin and unfaithfulness to God. But she would be raised up, and restored. When Israel returned to God, people would be earnestly intent upon such a knowledge of God as would lead them steadfastly in His way. God, who had returned to His place, would just as surely come forth again with blessings for His people. As the rain made possible any life at all in an otherwise dry and barren land, so God's coming would bring life to the nation seeking Him.

Surveys taken in America indicate there has been an awakening of Christian interest in the land. Apparently more and more people are becoming disillusioned with humanistic secularism and with the "anything goes" philosophy that some say is "the American way of life." Bible sales run into the millions. Recordings of gospel music become national hits. But is there a genuine turning to God?

Actually, when we consider the ethical and moral corruption that exists in many quarters today, we wonder if we, as a nation, are any different from or better than ancient Israel. One person has observed that if God does not bring judgment upon such debauchery and sin as we see in America today, then Sodom and Gomorrah should receive an apology.

If Israel needed to repent, what about our own land? Now, as then, there are only two options: repentance or ruin. And the repentance must be real, a genuine turning to God and to His way.

# Roy Matthews: Next Few Years Will Be Critical

By Audrey C. Lodato  
Post Staff Writer

Although Charlotte City Council elections are still four months away, candidates are gearing up for the contest. Roy H. Matthews, a registered Democrat, is a recently announced candidate.

In explaining why he decided to run for City Council, Matthews stated, "I have always felt strongly that one should choose something to which you can contribute, and then share your time, your caring, and your resources." He believes in "being part of the answer instead of part of the problem."

Matthews contends that the next few years will be "critical for our city," and that it will take "grit" on the part of Council members and commissioners to implement the 2005 Plan. He asserts, "One of my greatest desires as a member of Council will be to continue the effort to bring all factions of this community to a position of cooperation between and respect for the desires and needs of everyone involved in this issue. If this problem of proper planning is not dealt with adequately and decisively, we're going to have a deteriorating community which is nothing more than a hodgepodge of unpleasant surroundings, and reactive instead of anticipated road-building and other infrastructure."



Roy Matthews  
.....City Council candidate

Matthews cites taxes, roads, and continued revitalization of the city, not just uptown, are among other major issues he sees confronting City Council.

Matthews was the first president of the Northeast Community Organization, Inc. He served on the Urban Symposium, a group of appointed citizens who made general recommendations that paved the way for the 2005 Plan; chaired a subcommittee of the Mecklenburg

County District Representation Study Committee; and is an appointee to the Citizens Capital Review Committee, which is looking into the financial needs of the community.

Matthews has been in the printing business since 1956. He is presently an account executive in the Charlotte region for Fisher-Harrison Corp. of Greensboro, a commercial printer and publisher.

A Charlottean since 1962, Matthews and his wife, Bonnie Carraway, have two sons. The Council hopeful is an elder and adult Sunday School teacher at Eastway Christian Church.

Present Council members are Charlie Dannelly, Laura Freck, Ann Hammond, Paul Juneau, Ron Leeper, Sue Myrick, Pam Patterson, Herbert Spough Jr., Minette Trosch, Richard Vinroot, and Velva Woolen. All 11 seats are up for election November 5.

The primary will be held on September 24 to choose one Democrat and one Republican for each vacancy. There are seven district and four at-large seats on Council.

The filing period for City Council is from noon on Friday, August 2, to noon on Friday, August 23.

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### More Doctors Prescribing Exercise Programs

More doctors today are prescribing for their patients an exercise program such as walking a specific time each day, playing tennis, swimming or participating in aerobics. These forms of exercise are used in many cases as a preventative for many diseases.

Also, there are health problems in which exercise plays a key role for a patient's recovery. In the past, long periods of bed rest were prescribed for heart attack victims. Today, many of these patients are walking, jogging and exercising after their period of confinement. Interestingly enough, people with asthma who swim do better than those who do not. However, swimming is not for every asthmatic patient but most who do participate in this sport feel better. It has been proven that people who suffer from arthritis are helped with stretching exercises, lifting light weights and manipulative activities such as knitting. There is also evidence that running (in particular) can help depressed patients about as much as drugs and without possible side effects.

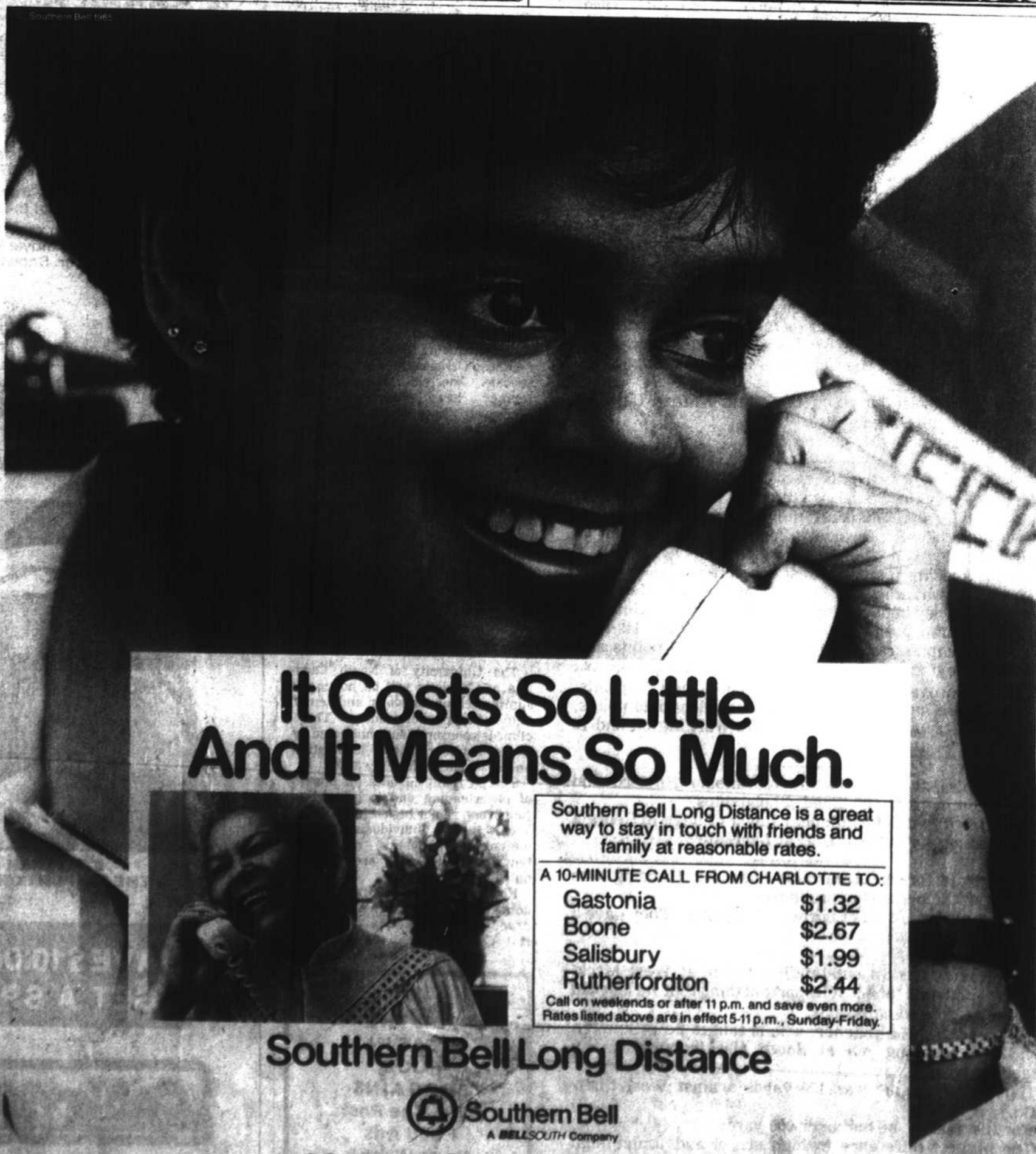
Exercise has become a large part of preventative medicine due to the many benefits gained from a regular

### Exercise Programs

exercise program - some of these benefits include improved blood circulation throughout the body (skin, lungs, heart and other organs) and aid in handling stress. It is to be noted also that persons who exercise do not tire as easily, and are more enthusiastic, optimistic, have a greater sense of well being and are relaxed and sleep better.

A formalized exercise program should provide pleasure and enjoyment. It should be demanding but not exhausting. The best guideline is to listen to your body before it begins to tire, slow down or stop. Always set limits especially that fit you. A patient who is recuperating from an illness, however, should consult with their family physician prior to beginning an exercise program - he or she will specify a program that is especially suited for you. (Written by Ralph G. Brashear, M.D., Wendell, N.C., family physician, as a public service of the North Carolina Academy of Family Physicians.)

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