

# PREPARING TO STAND

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“In this age, just prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, God calls for men who will prepare a people to stand in the great day of the Lord.” SW 3/21/1905

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## WHY ISN'T THE CHURCH WHAT IT SHOULD BE?

by Jim Buller

Many of us have become discouraged with the church. Things are happening in it that just shouldn't be happening. Many of us feel that we are not 'being fed' or having our spiritual needs met. And as time goes on, it seems that things aren't getting any better, they just keep getting worse! What can/should we do?

In the last issue of *Preparing to Stand*, it was noted that: “the church as a whole is not what it should be. Except possibly for early apostolic times and a few other more or less isolated incidents throughout history ... for the most part it probably never has been.” In this issue, we will explore what is probably the main reason why the church isn't what it should be, and more importantly, how we can/should respond.

Back in the beginning, the first thing Adam and Eve did after they sinned, was to hide from God. (See Genesis 3:8.) And at the end, people will be calling for the rocks and mountains to fall on them and hide them from the face of Him who sits on the throne. (See Revelation 6:16.) In between these two events, throughout human history, most of mankind has, in one way or another, been trying to hide from God. And, if we are honest, we would all have to admit that there is something in each one of us that wants to keep at least little distance between us and God. So it is not surprising that whether we are willing to come to God, and allow His Holy Spirit to work in us and through us, or whether we continue to seek to avoid interacting with Him figures heavily into the Judgement. Note the following verses from John 3:19-21.

And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.

As we continue with this train of thought, keep in mind that Lucifer chose to give up his position as the closest angel to God in order to go his own way. Jesus died so that we could make the exact opposite choice, to give up our own way to be close to

God. Coming to God involves surrendering what *we* want so that *His* will can be accomplished in our lives.

It should therefore also not be surprising that this desire to hide from God and avoid making this surrender has figured heavily into church practice and teaching throughout the ages. Notice the following quotation from *The Great Controversy*, page 572.

A prayerful study of the Bible would show Protestants the real character of the papacy and would cause them to abhor and to shun it; but many are so wise in their own conceit that they feel no need of humbly seeking God that they may be led into the truth. Although priding themselves on their enlightenment, they are ignorant both of the Scriptures and of the power of God. They must have some means of quieting their consciences, and they seek that which is least spiritual and humiliating. What they desire is a method of forgetting God which shall pass as a method of remembering Him. The papacy is well adapted to meet the wants of all these. It is prepared for two classes of mankind, embracing nearly the whole world—those who would be saved by their merits, and those who would be saved in their sins. Here is the secret of its power.

Notice that in order to quiet their conscience, “nearly the whole world” seeks “that which is least spiritual and humiliating,” and desires “a method of forgetting God which shall pass as a method of remembering Him.” Although many people want the ‘security’ of being ‘in the church,’ they are still desire to hide from God in one way or another. The following quotations from *The Great Controversy*, pages 566-567 and 594-595 expand on this idea a bit more.

Thousands who have not an experimental knowledge of Christ will be led to accept the forms of godliness without the power. Such a religion is just what the multitudes desire.

The multitudes do not want Bible truth, because it interferes with the desires of the sinful, world-loving heart; and Satan supplies the deceptions which they love.

The reason the church is not what it should be, is because we, (collectively), have been seeking our own ways, and because worldliness, in its many forms, has crept in. But keep in mind that just getting rid of worldliness is not the answer. We would then be like the man described in Matthew 12:43-45 who, after a demon had been cast out of him, left his ‘house’ empty. As a result the demon returns with seven other demons, “and the last state of that man is worse than the first.” Don’t forget, *the* issue is connecting with God, surrendering our desires to Him, and allowing His Spirit to work in us, so we can be a channel for His love to flow out to those around us. Thus, rather than focusing on the things that are wrong in the church, we would do better to encourage a deeper spirituality, both in ourselves and the church.

I cannot emphasize enough that *it is Jesus who saves us, not the church. We can* have a secure relationship with Him no matter what else is going on anywhere here

on earth—even in the church. Keep in mind that at the crisis in the Parable of the Ten Virgins, the ‘foolish’ girls turned to their ‘sisters,’ showing that their relationship had just been with the church! Fortunately, these ‘sisters’ were ‘wise’ enough to send them to *The Source*. Even those in the church who are spiritual cannot save us. We can only get our ‘extra oil’ from *The Source of Oil*. So let's not wait for the crisis to be encouraging our brothers and sisters to go to The Source!

Let's also take a look at the sixth chapter of John. This is a most interesting chapter, and I would encourage you to study it thoroughly as we will only be able to hit some of the high points here. This chapter starts with the story of the feeding of the five thousand. The people get all excited, and want to make Jesus king. The disciples are among the chief instigators of this movement, and Jesus knows something must be done quickly to stop it. (See also *Desire of Ages* chapter 40, “A Night on the Lake”). So He sends the disciples across the lake in a boat while He dismisses the crowd. Then He goes up on the mountain to pray. A little later a storm comes up, and Jesus comes to the disciples walking on the water. Although John does not mention the incident, this is the same time when Peter walks out on the water to meet Jesus, (see Matthew 14). As Jesus enters the boat, the storm stops, and they are “immediately ... at the land where they were going.”

The next day, the people find Jesus, and the excitement starts up all over again. So Jesus explains to them that His kingdom is first and foremost a *spiritual kingdom*. Then, as the people slowly realize that Jesus is not going to give them what they want, many of those who had been following Him, “went back and walked with Him no more.” From wanting to make Him king, they turn to leaving Him in disgust. This complete reversal was so bad that Jesus even turned to the Twelve and asked them, “Do you also want to go away?”

For their whole lives, the disciples had been taught that the Messiah was going to kick out the Romans and set Israel up as the world superpower. So why wasn't Jesus going with ‘the plan?’ Why He had so completely squashed all the enthusiasm of the last couple days? They just didn't understand, it didn't make any sense at all. Yet, they still had enough faith in Him to respond, “Lord,” if we left You, “to whom shall we go?”

In the same way, we may not understand why God is doing what He is doing. It may not make sense why He is allowing the things that have been happening to happen—in His church! And so, in a very similar way the question comes to us, “Do you also want to go away?” Will we, like the Twelve, have enough faith *in Him* to say, ‘If we left you, “Lord to whom shall we go?”’

Dear brothers and sister, stay with Jesus! Abide in Him. Look directly to Him for your spiritual nourishment. Be sure your relationship is with Him, and not just with His church. Yes, this connection requires a surrender. But let's not be like Lucifer and give up heaven just to go our own way. And, as God gives you the opportunity, encourage others come to God and/or deepen their spirituality.

Till we all come to the unity of one faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ. (Ephesians 4:13-15)

## NETTING —Part 1

Knowing how to net is a valuable skill. Since cordage is fairly easily to make, being able to net lets you to make something to hold and carry larger items probably more quickly than by any other method. Various native peoples have made and used nets for this very purpose. The natives of New Guinea are known for their ‘billi-bags,’ a sort of netted shoulder bag, and the California natives used a ‘carrying net’ which was sort of like a small hammock which they slung across their back to carry loads. Nets with feathers or leaves attached to the mesh have also been used for capes/cloaks and camouflage. And of course, many peoples all around the world have made all sorts of sizes and shapes of nets for catching various fish, birds, and animals.

### Shuttle

Although a ‘shuttle’ is not absolutely necessary, using one will make the process of netting will go much more smoothly. A shuttle also allows you to work with longer lengths of cordage, so you don’t have to add as often. The simplest shuttle is just a stick that has been notched on each end. However, shuttles can be made more efficient by flattening the stick, by refining the notches, and by carving a ‘point’ on one or both ends. Flattening the stick allows more cordage to be wrapped on the shuttle by minimizing the bulk taken up by the wood.



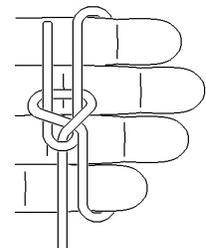
Refining the notches helps to keep the cordage in place and also allows more cordage to be warped on the shuttle. Pointing the ends help the shuttle go where you want it to go, without catching on the loops while making the knots. A good shuttle should be carved long enough to hold a fair quantity of twine, and narrow enough that it will easily pass through the loops in the netting.

### Getting Started:

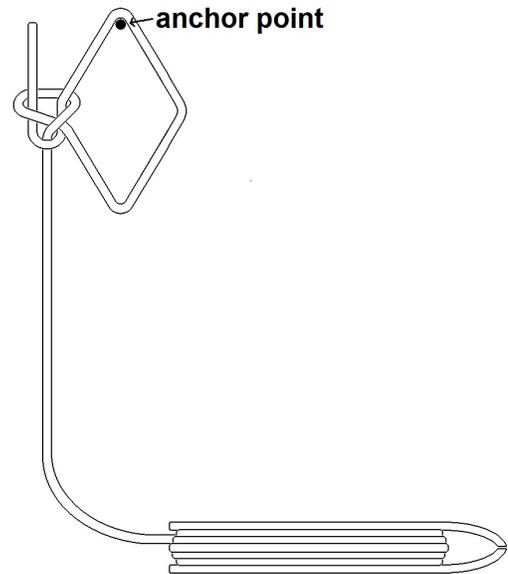
Begin by filling the shuttle with cordage. Leave about a 2 ft / 60 cm long ‘tail’ of cordage that is not wrapped onto the shuttle. For simplicity, in these instructions we will be using ‘two-fingers’ to ‘gauge’ or size the holes in the mesh of the net. Other gauging, both larger and smaller, are possible to make different sized net meshes.

More sophisticated netting uses a flat smooth stick for a mesh gauge, but using your fingers to gauge the net works fine for primitive purposes.

Start by making a loop at the end of the ‘tail’ of cordage with a bowline knot. Size this loop so that all four of your fingers held flat will *just fit* into the loop. Slide additional cordage through the knot to either open up the loop, or make it smaller as necessary.

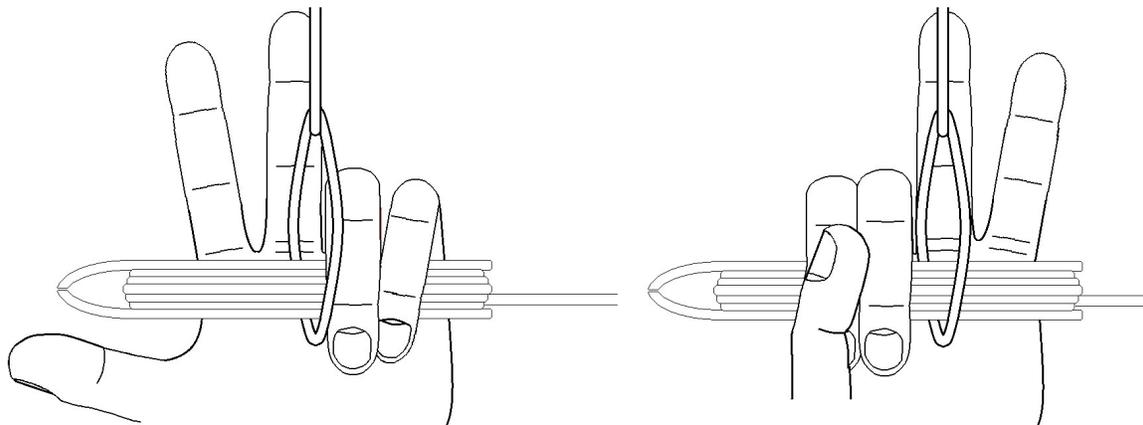


Position the knot so it is half way along one side of the loop as shown in the drawings. Anchor the 'top' of this original loop to something solid, as you will need to pull or 'tension' against this anchor point. Note that the loops in the drawings have been expanded side to side for clarity, but in reality both sides of the loop would be laying next to each other.



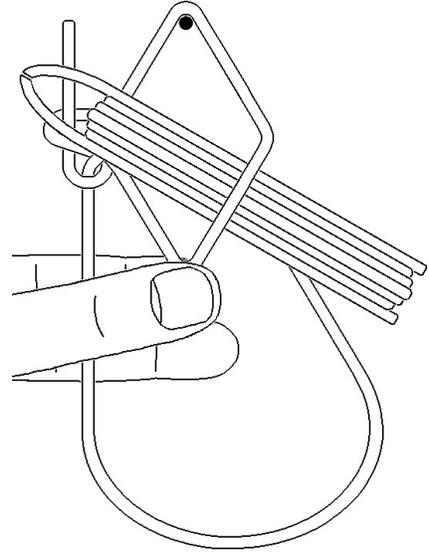
### 'Passing the Shuttle'

Learn to 'pass the shuttle.' Grasp the center of the shuttle with your hand. Then, lift off the thumb, index, and middle fingers, while still gripping the shuttle with the ring and little fingers. While holding the shuttle in this way, pass it about half-way through the loop, until the loop is up against your ring finger. The loop should be going between the shuttle and the palm of your hand. Then, re-grasp the front part of the shuttle on the other side of the loop with your thumb, index, and middle fingers. Finish by releasing the ring and little fingers and pulling the shuttle the rest of the way through the loop. Learn to make these motions smoothly, almost as one continuous motion when you pass the shuttle through a loop. The illustration shows the palm view the hand so that the finger movements can be easily seen. But when you pass the shuttle through a loop while you are netting, you will probably be looking at the back of your hand.

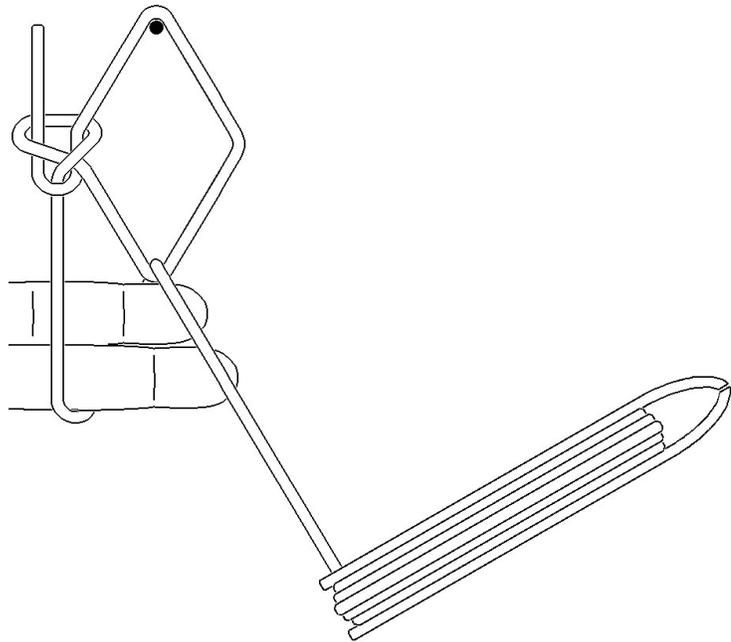


## The Netting Knot

(1) Reach around the cordage coming down from the bowline knot with the index and middle finger to grasp the bottom of the original loop with the thumb and index finger. Keep the middle finger together with the index finger, as it will be needed in this position in a moment. Pass the shuttle through the original loop from back to front.

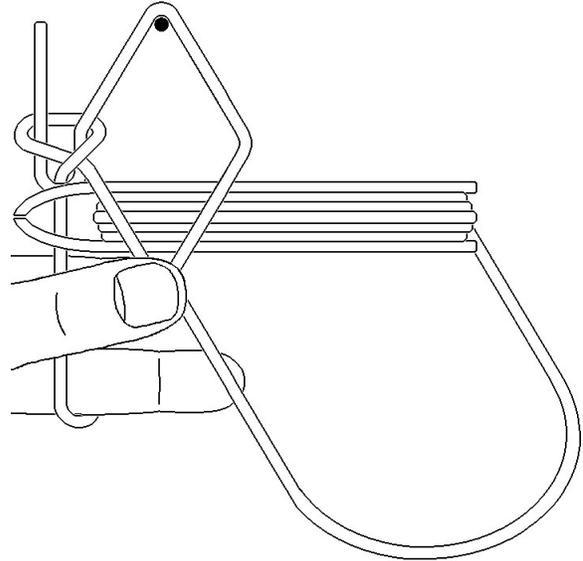


(2) Continue holding onto the shuttle as you pull the rest of the cord through the original loop. Pull 'down,' away from the anchor point. The cord coming from the bowline knot needs to go around your index and middle fingers, as shown in the drawing, to make the new net mesh loop. (Remember that the loops have been expanded side to side in the drawings for clarity.) As the cord *begins* to tighten around the index and middle fingers, let go with your thumb. Tensioning against the anchor point, continue pulling the shuttle cord down until the cord going around the middle and index fingers is *just snug*, with the original loop resting against the upper edge of your index finger as shown in the drawing. This step 'gauges' or determines the size of the new net loop.

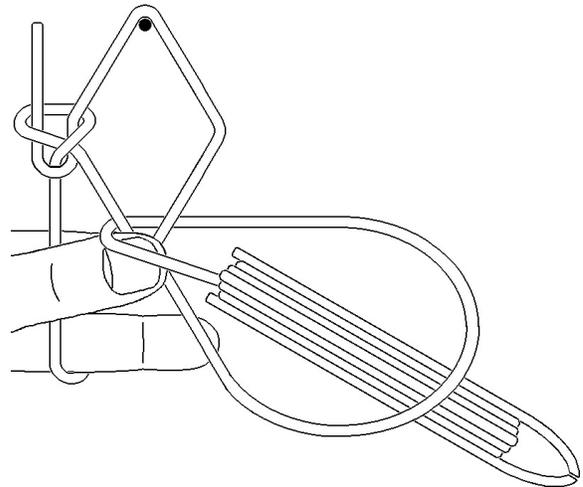


(3) Continue to maintain tension against the anchor point with both your middle finger and the shuttle cord equally so you can pull out your index finger without losing the gauge. If the cord slips either way on the original loop, repeat the gauging in Step 2. As you are pulling your index finger out, swing the shuttle cord slightly to the right and your middle finger to the left. This opens the loop a little so it is easier to both remove your index finger, and to pass the shuttle through this loop. Balancing the tension between the middle finger and the shuttle cord is the key here.

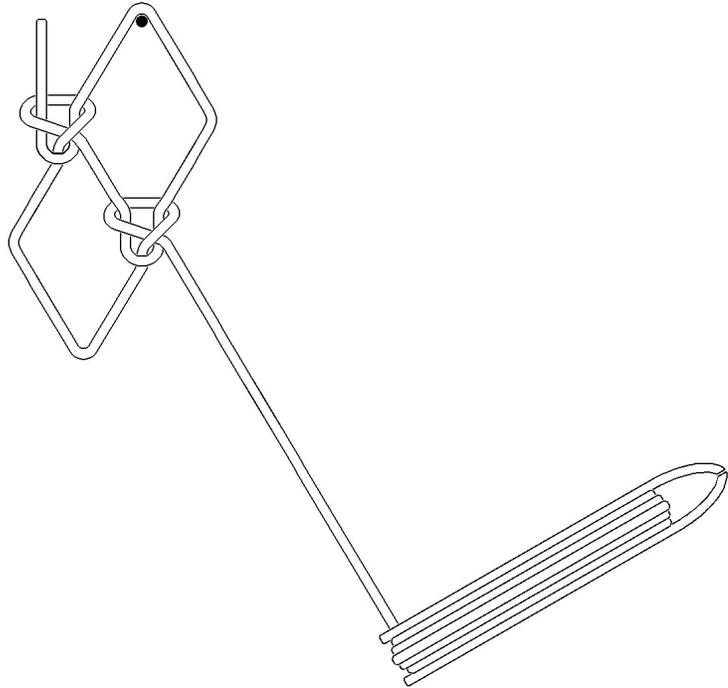
Once your index finger has been pulled out, move it around behind the cords, and grasp the spot where the two cords cross each other at the bottom of the original loop with your thumb and index finger to keep them from slipping out of position while making the rest of the knot. Once the cord position has been grasped by the thumb and index fingers, you can release the tension of the middle finger and shuttle cord. Then pass the shuttle through this new net loop from behind the original loop, but don't pull the shuttle cord all the way through quite yet.



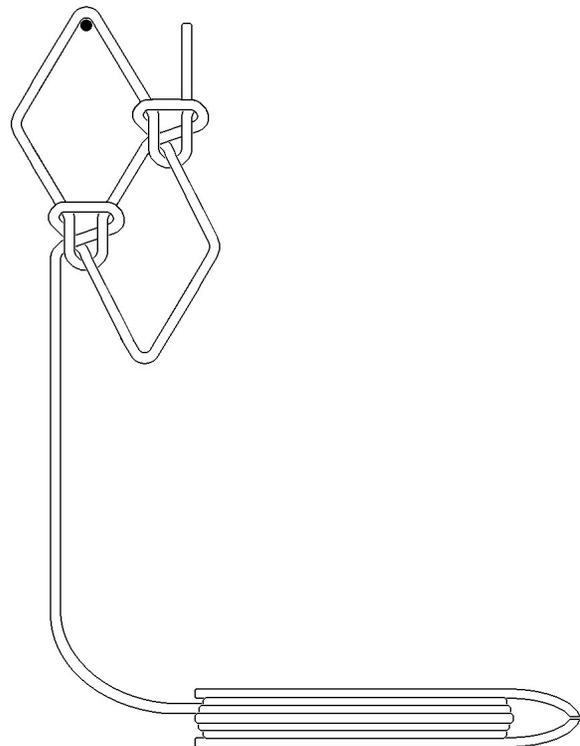
(4) Pass the shuttle 'down' through the loop of shuttle cord, and pull against the anchor point to tighten the knot. Be sure the knot forms around the lower part of the original loop, above the thumb and index fingers, or it won't come together right. It might be helpful to let the tightening knot 'squeeze' the thumb and index fingers out of position.



After making this first netting knot there should now be two loops in the growing net. Notice the diagonal alignment of the loops to each other.



Continue by flipping the net over at the anchor point, and making a new knot at the bottom of the second loop, using the same procedure of gauging, and knotting described earlier. You can learn to net from both left to right, or from right to left, (the motions shown here would just be reversed), and then you wouldn't have to flip the net over between each knot. But when learning, (and probably even afterwards), it is probably easiest to just go one direction, and flip the net over on the anchor point.



After making the third loop, flip the net over to make a fourth, and so on, until you have a 'double chain' of loops. When the shuttle cord gets short and hard to work with, simply unwind the shuttle a bit. This double chain is sometimes called the 'foundation' of the net. For simplicity, the example in the drawings here only shows eight loops. But you will need to make twice as many loops in this chain as you want the finished net to have across its *width*.

Instructions for making a small carrying net are planned for the next issue of *Preparing to Stand*. However, if you are wanting to experiment before it comes out, (using the alignment shown in the drawing to the right), turn your double chain 90 degrees to the right, and run a stick or cord through each of the upper loops. Attach this stick or cord to an anchor point. Then, continue netting across the lower loops. When you reach the end of the row, flip the net over on the anchor point, and net across another row, and so on until the net is the size you want.

