

SPIRITUAL INSIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE

FAITH *for life*

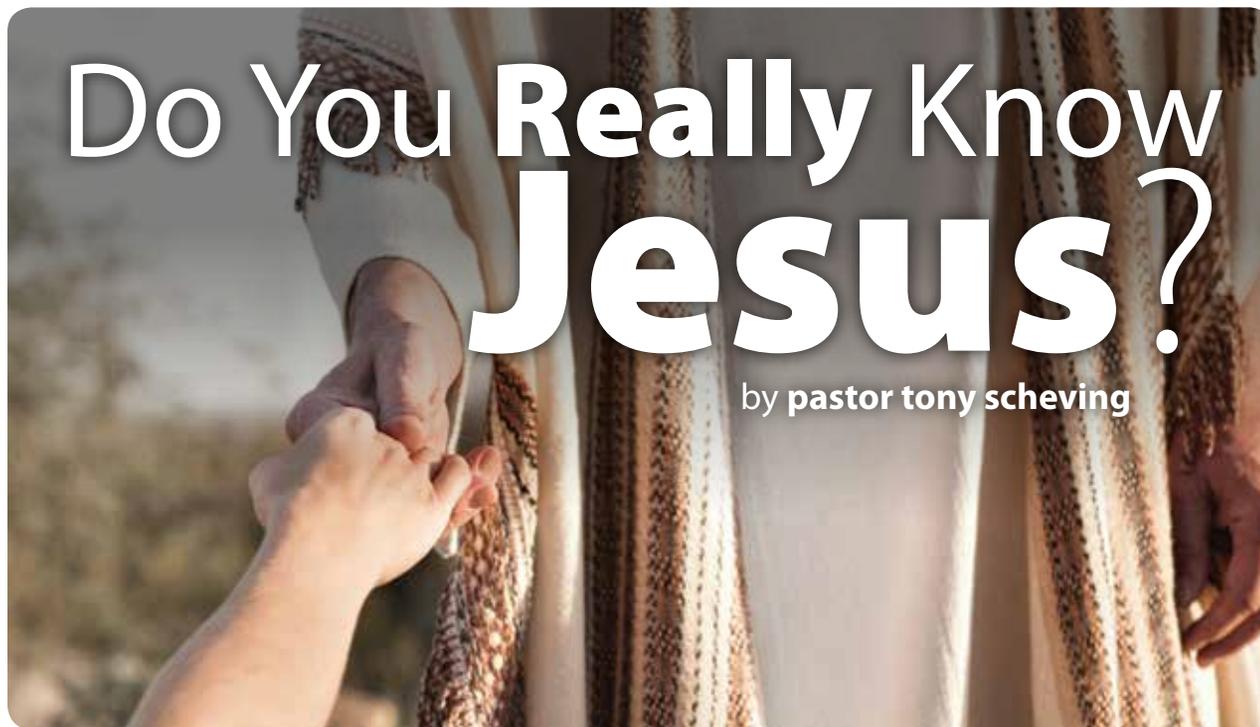
*“The **life** which I now live...I live by the **faith** of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20*

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Do You Really Know Jesus?

by pastor tony scheving

In This Issue:



Pg. 4 Only Two Religions in the World

Pg. 10..... How to Raise Kids That Handle the Challenges of Life!

Pg. 12.....Is Something Missing in Your Life?

Pg. 13...Why Is the Resurrection of Jesus So Important?

Pg. 16..... How to Win the War With Worry

God says, *“Let not the wise man glory (boast) in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory (boast) in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD”* (Jeremiah 9:23-24). That verse says that the important things in life are not about money, education or power, but understanding the truth about your Creator. Do you really know and understand Jesus? Historically there is more evidence that Jesus Christ walked this earth 2000 years ago, than evidence that Thomas Jefferson walked this earth just 200 years ago. Josephus, the Jewish historian, in A.D. 90, wrote a brief biographical note on ‘Jesus Who is called Christ’ in his Antiquities of the Jews. Tacitus the historian writing in A.D. 114 tells us that ‘The founder

of the Christian religion, Jesus Christ, was put to death by Pontius Pilate in the reign of the Roman Emperor, Tiberius’. Pliny the Younger wrote a letter to the Emperor Trajan 60 years after Jesus lived on the subject of Christ and Christians. The Babylonian Talmud also makes mention of Jesus Christ. However, a ‘historical head knowledge’ of Christ is one thing, but what do you really know about Jesus in truth, and spiritually in your heart?

continued on page 2



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FAITH *for life*

His Divine Majesty

This story is told of Daniel Webster when he was dining with a company of intellectual giants in Boston. During the dinner the conversation turned to the subject of Christianity. Mr. Webster frankly stated his belief in the divinity of Christ and his dependence upon the atonement of the Savior. One 'Freethinker' said to him, "Mr. Webster, can you comprehend how Christ could be both God and man?" Mr. Webster promptly replied, "No, sir, I cannot comprehend it. If I could comprehend Him, He would be no greater than myself. What I need and have is a super-human Savior." Webster later wrote, 'I believe Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. The miracles which he worked establish, in my mind, his personal authority, and render it proper for me to believe whatever he asserts. I believe, therefore, all his declarations, as well when he declares himself to be the Son of God, as when he declares any other proposition. And I believe that there is no other way of salvation than through the merits of his atonement'.

Truly Jesus Christ is super human. The very calendar of this world revolves around him. Every time an atheist writes a check he acknowledges the number of years since the birth of Christ. Why did Jesus make such a lasting worldwide impact? The Bible says that Jesus is *'The image of the invisible God'* (Col 1:15) and that in Him *'dwells all the fullness of the Godhead (Trinity) bodily and that ye are complete in Him'* (Col 2:9-10). That means Jesus Christ is God with skin on. He is God Almighty and He said so in Revelation 1:8 when he stated, *'I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty'*. We call this His 'deity'. He forgave sins as only God can do and the Pharisees hated him for it (Luke 5:21). In the Bible, Jesus is even referred to as 'God' by His heavenly Father (Hebrews 1:8). The Bible also refers to Jesus as the 'great God and our Savior Jesus Christ' in Titus 2:13. There are two hundred and fifty-six names given in the Bible for the Lord Jesus Christ, and perhaps this was because He was infinitely beyond all that any one name could express.

His Deserving Magnitude

Why is Jesus worthy of such honor? For starters, Jesus is the one and only key for finding our way to God. The Bible says, *'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus'* (1 Timothy 2:5). According to this verse there's not a number of different ways of getting to God or heaven. Also, Jesus is worthy of honor because is holy and He never sinned. The Bible says He *'was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin'* (Hebrews 4:15).

Jesus was also compassionate. When Marie Antoinette was on her way to Paris to become queen, she gave the command that no sick or crippled people should be permitted by the wayside, that she might not be troubled by the sight of suffering. But wherever Jesus went, the sick, the lame, the blind were brought by the hundreds to the wayside, and none went away unhealed or unhelped. Of course Jesus is worthy of honor because he loved us so much that he died to pay for our sins. Jesus said in John 15:13, *'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends'*. As a result of all of this, Jesus Christ will one day return and be crowned king forever! Revelation 19:16 says, *'And he hath on his vesture ... a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS'*.

Helen Keller never went to church during her early childhood. Deaf, dumb and blind, she did not learn the story of the love of God in Christ until she was taken to Pastor Phillips Brooks for religious instruction (he wrote the Christmas carol 'Oh Little Town of Bethlehem'). The great preacher told her in the simplest possible language how God had sent Jesus to teach us His will, show us His love, and make Himself known to humanity. The face of Miss Keller lighted up as she spelled into the hands of her interpreter, "I knew all the time there must be One like that, but I didn't know His Name."

His Directive Mission

Many like to dwell on how Jesus lived a good life and helped people, but why did he actually come to this earth? What was his real mission? He told us in Luke 19:10

when he stated that *'The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost'*. We are all born 'lost' and on the road to hell as sinners (Matthew 7:13-14). The world is a sinful mess and so is every person living in it. 1 John 5:19 says, *"The whole world lieth in wickedness."* Everything is 'not ok' as some claim. The Bible says, *"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience"* (Ephesians 5:6). Jesus said in Matthew 24:4, *"Take heed that no man deceive you."* Jesus added in John 3:19, *"Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."* We must recognize our sinfulness before we can get saved.

Many will not make it to heaven. 1 Corinthians 6:9,10 says, *"The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."* God loves mankind, but His justice will not overlook man's sin. People are sadly following their hearts (I.e.; what they think is right). Proverbs 14:12 says, *'There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death'* (including false religion). You can't trust your heart! Jeremiah 17:9 says *'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know (trust) it?'*

Jiminy Cricket once said "let your conscience be your guide." But the Bible says the conscience is defiled, corrupted and seared. Jesus said in Matthew 6:23, *'If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!'* (Another reason we need the Word of God for truth).

The Directive Mission of Jesus Christ as the Son of God was to die for the sins of the world. John 3:16 says, *'For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.'* The Bible says the Son of God came *'to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith'* (Acts 26:18). What are you trusting-in to take you to heaven when this life is over?

Do You Really Know Jesus?

continued from previous page

Someone well said, "If Jesus were born one thousand times in Bethlehem and not in me, then I would still be lost." The Bible says *'That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith'* (Ephesians 3:17).

Every person must examine themselves about their relationship with the Son of God Almighty.

Many years ago someone wrote of Jesus and said, "He had no cornfields nor fisheries, but He could spread a table with fish and

bread for five thousand. He walked on no beautiful carpets or velvet rugs, but He walked on the waters of the Sea of Galilee and they supported Him. When He died, few men mourned, but a black drape was hung over the sun. Though men trembled not for their sins, the earth beneath them shook under the load. All nature honored Him, while sinners alone rejected Him. Corruption could not get hold of His body. The soil that had been reddened with His blood could not claim Him with a grave. He wrote no book, nor built any church house. But after two thousand years, He is the one central character of human history,

the pivot around which the events of the ages revolve, and the only Regenerator for the Human Race. Was He merely the Son of Joseph and Mary, and was it merely human blood that was spilled at Calvary's Hill for the redemption of sinners? What thinking man can keep from exclaiming like Thomas: "My Lord and My God!" If Washington or Lincoln could walk into the room, we would all rise; but if Jesus Christ should come in, we would all kneel. Now then, 'Do you really know Jesus Christ?' ■

To learn more about making Jesus your personal Savior, please read pages 6-7, or go online to 7StepsToGod.org.

John Newton

WRITER OF "AMAZING GRACE"

He was once an infidel, whose godly mother had died when he was only seven years of age. At the age of eleven, he left school and joined his father's ship to begin life as a seaman. Plunging into debauchery, he became incredibly rebellious. After serving on several ships, and working on the islands and mainland of the West African coast, collecting slaves for sale to visiting traders, wicked John

Newton became captain of his own slave ship. Such was his vicious way of life that he captured, sold and transported black slaves to the West Indies and America.

On March 10, 1748, while he was sailing to England from Africa, a tremendous storm arose and it appeared that all would be lost. Newton was so

terrified that he began to read a book entitled "Imitation of Christ". Through this book, God sowed the seeds of conviction in John's wicked heart, causing repentance and bringing about his eventual acceptance of Christ as his personal Savior. Shortly thereafter, Newton ceased his role as a slave ship captain and became an effective crusader against slavery. He

also commenced a preaching ministry and for fifteen years he told of the saving grace of God in his own life.

Finally the day came when the old "Sea Captain" left the shores of earth to set foot on the celestial shores of heaven, to be with Christ. In a small cemetery in Olney, England, stands a tombstone with the following

inscription: "John Newton, clerk, once an infidel and libertine, a servant of slavers in Africa, was, by the rich mercy of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, preserved, restored, pardoned, and appointed to preach the Faith he had long labored to destroy."

John Newton wrote a beautiful hymn, "Amazing Grace." Perhaps you have sung it, but can you sing it truthfully? Read the following stanzas and may God help you to see that *"By grace are you saved through faith; and not that of yourselves: it is the gift of God."* (Eph. 2:8)

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found;
Was blind, but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear,
The hour I first believed.
When we've been there ten thousand
years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.





THERE ARE ONLY two religions IN THE WORLD

by pastor cary schmidt

How many religions are there in the world? Hundreds? Perhaps thousands? Just trying to comprehend all the various belief systems can be mind boggling. In fact, it seems that the latest craze is to just toss them all into the same category and say, “They’re all the same. We’re all going to the same place—just as long as we believe”! While that’s convenient, it doesn’t really make sense. What these religions believe from one to the next varies widely. In fact, some are diametrically opposed in belief. It sounds nice to conclude that “all roads lead to the same place” but that theory doesn’t hold water, and it isn’t supported by the Bible.

So how do you sift through all the religious “fluff” and cut to the heart of the matter? How can you know truth from error—fact from fiction? How can you discern between God’s true design and man’s cheap substitute? The answer to these questions are more simple than you could ever imagine. Back to my original

question. How many religions are there in the world?...Would you believe two? The truth is, you can categorize every single religion of the world into one of two basic categories. You can cut right to the heart of the matter rather easily. Think of it this way. Most religions acknowledge a creator and a spiritual world. It’s defining that creator and understanding that spiritual world that starts to reveal the differences in how to enter into a ‘peaceful afterlife’. In some form or fashion, most religions of the world are attempting to answer this basic question. So, how can we take so many complicated systems of belief and simplify them down to two basic belief systems? Two words: DO or DONE.

First let’s look at the DO religions. Their central message is “what you must DO to gain the approval of God and to earn entrance into Heaven.” The general agreement among these religions is that man is somehow separated from God and must DO something to be restored to Him. In these systems God is really angry that

people are misbehaving. He’s somewhere up in Heaven, upset with the whole human race for doing things that displease Him, and He’s expecting everyone to make up for their wrongs by DOING good things. He’s sitting on His throne, arms folded, expecting humanity to compensate or atone for their failures by doing good deeds or religious things for him.

Now, the definition of “what God wants us to DO” varies widely, and thus we have so many differing systems of belief, but the mindset is still the same. The message is simply this, “DO.” Do the right stuff, don’t do the wrong stuff, and somehow God will grant you acceptance into Heaven. It’s like having the same macaroni and cheese cooked fifty-two different ways. The central message of each of these religions are identical—“God is upset at you, so you’d better start doing good things to make Him happy!”

In this DO category, every religion has a different list of “DOs” and “DON”Ts.” For some, the list is extremely long and tedious—confess your sins, get baptized, give money, take communion, get confirmed, shave your head, sell flowers at the airport, distribute literature door to door. The list is as endless as the imaginations of men. And with every passing decade new religions are popping up with new lists. For other systems it’s more basic and general—be good, be nice, generally try to outweigh your bad works by your good works. For some systems, the list is extreme and even bizarre—instituting rituals of self-mutilation, child sacrifice, Holy Wars, suicide, murder, and painful forms of bondage or penance. Either way, the central message is the same—you must work your way to God. You must perform “God’s list, DO God’s demands, appease God’s anger, and earn God’s forgiveness.”

These systems are the ultimate form of religious bondage for billions of people all over the planet. They are held hostage to fear and are bound to complex systems of religious behavior that they are convinced will restore them to God and give them eternal life. The DO religions vary widely in style and structure—they come in many different flavors—but they all add up to performance-based acceptance. God is the taskmaster and we humans are the slave

continued on next page

Faith for Life

Only Two Religions in the World

continued from page 4

labor. In order for God to love and accept us, we'd better DO things that make Him happy.

The saddest thing about these systems is that they offer only despair and bondage. They leave the human heart feeling ultimately rejected by God and forever wondering if "I've done enough." They characterize God as more of a slave driver than a heavenly Father, and they leave your heart feeling anything but "close to God."

These systems fill the heart with nagging doubts. What if I missed something? What if I haven't lived up to God's demands? What if I'm doing the wrong list? What if my list is missing some critical element? Am I in the 'right religion'? Have I been good enough? How good is good enough? What if I haven't been good enough? These systems are great for building wealthy, powerful religions because they enslave people, but they do nothing to relieve the inner fears and yearnings of our hearts. They do nothing to heal the conscience and truly bring us into God's favor. They do nothing to introduce us personally to the loving heavenly Father of whom the Bible speaks.

Friend, the question we must ask when looking at these systems is "What has God said?" Very few people realize this, but to accept any of the DO religions, you must basically throw away the central teaching of the Bible! Look at these Scriptures for yourself and consider what God is saying to you... "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us...*" (Titus 3:5). In other words, you cannot gain God's favor by doing good works. Again, God says, "*Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight...*" (Romans 3:20). He's saying, "you cannot justify yourself in God's sight by doing good deeds." Here's another one, "*But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness*" (Romans 4:5). In that verse God literally says that you cannot do good works to gain God's favor. How much more clearly can God say it than this, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law..." (Galatians 2:16). God goes on to say that His favor cannot be earned. He says in Ephesians 2:8-9 that

salvation is "not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works...." Think about that! "Not of works." What does that mean? Quite simply—there's not a DO list on the planet—there's not a religious system ever invented that will gain you one little bit of favor from God or bring you any closer to His presence.

Now I know what you're thinking. "How can this be? Surely I can please God by doing good!" Hang in there. A good life has its place, but remember we're talking about coming to God and relating to Him. We're talking about being restored to Him. We're not talking about all the fringe benefits of being honest, living a good life, and giving to charity. We're asking this question—Does "doing these things" gain me any "brownie points" with God? If I do them, does He approve of me, accept me, forgive me, or love me more? Most religions say, "Yes...so long as you are doing our list." But in God's own words to you, He says no. It is "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done...*" (Titus 3:5). Over and over again in the Bible God says, "You cannot earn your way to me. You cannot DO anything to gain my favor or to earn my acceptance." The Bible speaks truthfully of mankind in Isaiah 64:6 when it says... "*But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.*" In that verse, God is saying, "There is something so massively dividing us, that even your best behavior is pointless." Good behavior is useless against the problem that divides us from God. You must understand that God never tells us that performance gains His salvation.

The conclusion of the matter is this. "DO" doesn't cut it. Nowhere in the Bible is there even one verse that teaches that God accepts me more and forgives my sin when I DO the right things. Doing good works doesn't gain favor with God. Why? Well, God isn't impressed with a cold religion. He wants a close relationship.

Now, let's look at that other word—DONE. DONE means; Finished. Complete. Ended. Accomplished. Fulfilled. What a great word! Though most religions of the world fit into the DO category, there is still the DONE category! The true message of the Bible is DONE. In other words, everything necessary to restore you to God

and bring you into eternal life with Him has already been DONE.

When Jesus was hanging on the cross, He said these words, "*It is finished*" (John 19:30). The phrase literally means "paid in full." DONE. Those were the last words He spoke before He died. In that moment something amazing happened in Jerusalem. In the temple of God in Jerusalem there was a veil separating the outer room from the most holy inner sanctuary. In the moment that Jesus died, the veil was miraculously torn in half from top to bottom—thrown open for all. Suddenly it was as if whatever separated God from man was now completely removed, and God was inviting all humankind to come directly to Him! It was God saying to the whole human race "DONE!" DONE says "there's nothing more to DO." The price is paid. The debt is forgiven. The atonement is complete. If you try to earn it, work for it, or DO something to get it, you're wasting your time. It's already DONE. Or in the words of Jesus on the cross, "*It is finished.*"

This is the message of God to the human race. "So long as you are busying yourself with DOING, you're missing what I've already DONE." The gift is purchased, the table is set, there's no need to DO anything more! His invitation to you is not to DO for Him, but rather to come to Him. So with all the religions in the world, are there really only two? That's the bottom line. Just two. DO or DONE. Are you stuck on DO? Are you trapped in a system of performance thinking you're headed in the right direction? Are you trying to earn your way to God?

I often ask people this question, "If you died today, would you go to Heaven?" Interestingly, most people say, "Yes, I think I would." When I ask "Why?" they answer something like this, "Because I'm trying to be a good person, and I've tried to do good things." You know what they are saying? I'm DOING! Friend, are you stuck on DOING? If so, you're missing the central message of the Bible. If you're trusting a performance-based system of religion, you're missing God's true way of coming to Him. What would you say to that question? What are you trusting? DO or DONE? Do you just have a religion? ■

HOW TO FIND GOD AND REALLY KNOW HIM

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

There are three things that you can know for sure...

1) That you are going to Heaven. *"These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life"* (I John 5:13).

2) That your life will be changed when you get saved. *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (II Corinthians 5:17).

3) You will never lose your salvation. *"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand."* (John 10:28).

It all revolves around Jesus Christ!

Who is Jesus Christ? John 1:1 says, *"In the beginning was the Word (Jesus), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* John 1:3 continues, *"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."* Jesus was God in flesh or God the son who created everything.

He came to earth to save us. *"For the son of man is come to*

seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). The first step in going to heaven is to realize we need to be saved from our sin.

How do we get to heaven?... *"Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (John 3:3).

There is a difference between a physical birth and a spiritual birth. *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit"* (John 3:6).

Why do we need a spiritual birth? Man was originally created a three part being in God's image—a trinity. *"And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness: so God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them"* (Genesis 1:26). Man is made up of body, soul, and spirit.

God placed Adam and Eve in the garden. *"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die"* (Genesis 2:16-17). Man ate of the fruit and though he didn't die that day physically, he died spiritually!

When Adam and Eve had children they were now born spiritually dead as well (no longer in God's 3-part image). Genesis 5:3 says *"And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth."* That is why we must be re-born spiritually.

That is also why we have a sin nature. You don't have to teach a toddler to be selfish, lie, steal things, sass back, fight

with siblings, etc...it is also our nature as we grow up.

Most people fail to see themselves as serious sinners. They feel they are a "good person." They are comparing themselves to others, instead of God's standard; the 10 Commandments. Let's see how you rate compared to the 10 Commandments.

#1 Thou shalt have no other gods before me (Exodus 20:3) No one can claim they have never put anything ahead of God (money, career, own self centered goals, pleasure, sports, entertainment, sin, vice, a relationship with another, etc).

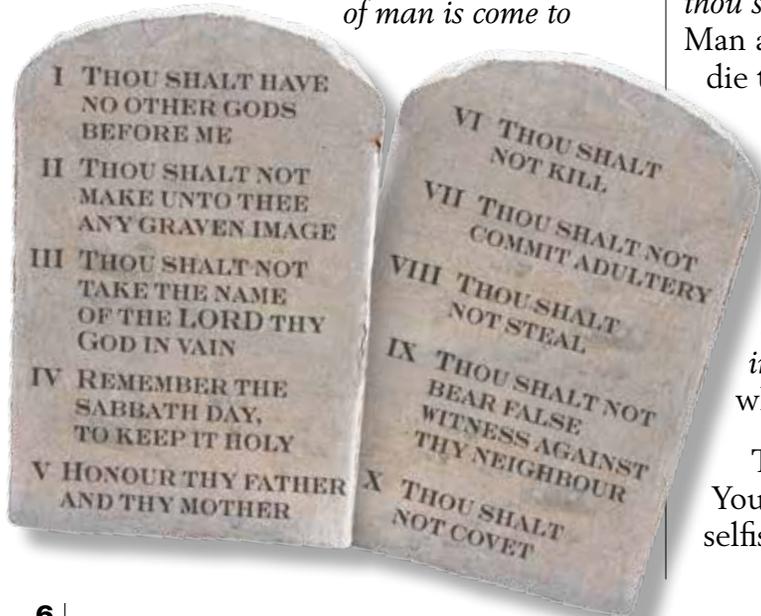
#2 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image (of God) (Exodus 20:4) Many have been guilty of inventing a God of their own imagination and liking... a God who 'suits them.' People want a "God that overlooks sin and takes everyone to heaven." They have improvised and dreamed up a God of their own image.

#3 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain (Exodus 20:7) Re-read that carefully. God is keeping record of every time you've used His name as a curse word and you will answer for it one day.

#4 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy (Exodus 20:8) Have you always honored the Lord's Day or been faithful in church attendance? (Heb 10:25)

#5 Honour thy father and thy mother (Exodus 20:12). Have you ever disrespected or disobeyed your parents. Have you ever argued with them or dishonored them?

continued on next page



How to Find God

continued from previous page

#6 Thou shalt not kill (Exodus 20:13) Although most people have never committed murder, they are guilty of “murder of the heart.” Jesus clarifies this commandment in Matthew 5:21-2; Whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother... shall be in danger of hell fire. Have you ever been mad or bitter at someone?

#7 Thou shalt not commit adultery (Exodus 20:14) While many have never committed adultery, Jesus said; Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart (Matt 5:27-8). Have you ever lusted after the opposite sex? This is adultery of the heart according to Jesus.

#8 Thou shalt not steal (Exodus 20:15) Who could claim they’ve never taken anything that doesn’t belong to them? ... something small or even the boss’s time?

#9 Thou shalt not bear false witness (Exodus 20:16) No one could honestly claim they have never told a lie!

#10 Thou shalt not covet (Exodus 20:17) Have you ever desired anything you didn’t have or didn’t need? Have you ever been discontented, jealous or ungrateful? This is covetousness.

Most people are guilty of breaking all 10 commandments! Many places in the Bible reveal that liars, adulterers, thieves, the covetous, etc will spend eternity in hell! (Rev 21:8, I Cor 6:9-10, Gal 5:19-21). How could you ever expect to get to heaven by “living a good life?”

Romans 3:10 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

Romans 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

Sin has a penalty... Romans 6:23 *“For the wages of sin is death”* (hell).

We cannot possibly get to heaven by keeping the law (10 Commandments).

The 10 Commandments were given by God to show us how impossible it is to

be saved by doing good works. *“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith”* (Galatians 3:24). The law (10 commandments) shows us that we are condemned and need a Savior.

You will never get to heaven by doing good works. Titus 3:5 says, *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us.”* *“Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Romans 5:1).

Yet getting to heaven is not automatic just because Jesus died for your sins! Salvation is a gift that must be received. *“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God”* (Ephesians 2:8). That means that baptism has nothing to do with being saved. Romans 6:23 explains, *“The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

How does a person know when they are ready to be born again? They know they are ready when they mean business with God, and are willing to repent of sin. Acts 3:19 says, *“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.”* II Peter 3:9 says the Lord is *“not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”* Jesus said, *“except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”* (Luke 13:5). That means being willing to also turn from false religion or false teaching—anything contrary to the word of God, the Bible.

To repent means to change your mind about your sin, and make Christ the Lord

of your life. Are you willing to turn from your sin and turn to God? Do you believe that Jesus paid the full price on the cross for your sins?

Though God hates sin, he loves you and sent Jesus to die for your sins. *“But God commendeth (proved) his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).

If God is dealing with you about your need of forgiveness, and you would like to be saved (born again), the final step is to ask God for the gift through a simple prayer. *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved”* (Romans 10:13). Notice the promise of this verse from a God who cannot lie. Titus 1:2 says, *“God...cannot lie”*. Do you believe that God will save you simply because He said He would? Christ will save you if you are willing to make him the Lord of your life.

If you know that you are ready, you can pray and ask God to save you in your own words such as: “Dear Heavenly Father, I know that I am a condemned sinner unable to save myself, but I am willing to turn from my sins and make Jesus my Lord and master. I now trust in His sacrifice on the cross to pay for my sins. Please forgive me and save me. Amen.” ■

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Equally Different:

Understanding your spouse

by Dr. R. B. Ouellette



One of the greatest modern myths is that there are no essential differences between men and women. This is unbiblical, unreasonable, and dangerous to your marriage. God made men and women different, both physically and emotionally, and He commanded husbands to take note: “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife” (1 Peter 3:7). We may not understand why our spouses think and feel the way they do, but we should understand that they think and feel certain ways.

I believe the following statements will resonate with most couples, and I trust it will be helpful in understanding the person God has given you to be your life’s partner.

Think Different

From the very early stages of development, the brains of men and women develop differently. Weeks after conception, men receive a huge dose of testosterone and later a biochemical bath that severs much of the connection between the left and right brain. This promotes competitiveness and focus at the cost of multitasking. Women get a heavy dose of estrogen which develops a more nurturing and caring nature. The result is a very different way of thinking for men and women. Men are analytical with a laser-like focus, while women are much more intuitive and are able to juggle many tasks at the same time. There are obvious advantages and disadvantages to both.

A man can usually tell you exactly why he believes something. If he doesn’t trust someone, he would tell you that he caught the person in a lie or saw him keep back money that wasn’t his. In math terms, he can “show his work.” Women don’t “show their work” but often come to the right conclusion by intuition—their brain working faster than they can explain. To see the difference in focus, watch one spouse have a phone conversation while the other is listening. The wife is perfectly capable of talking to one person on the phone and getting feedback from her husband next to her. The husband cannot. If his wife asks him to ask a question, he has to put the person on hold, turn to his wife and ask, “What did you want me to ask him?”

Feel Different

Because of the way God made them, men base their significance upon their achievements, while women are more centered on relationships. Ask a couple about a road trip and the wife will talk about the wonderful coffee shop they discovered. The husband will glow with pride because he shaved thirty minutes off the road time compared to last year.

Men like to solve problems alone; women like to help others solve problems. It’s supportive, encouraging, uplifting, and helpful for one woman to give another woman advice. Men just need encouragement to “stick with it.” Men tend only to ask for advice under two circumstances: when they are looking for a solution and when they want someone to blame.

Affirmation & Solutions

After reading the differences between how men and women think and feel, you can see conflict coming like an oncoming train—predictable and unrelenting. The different thinking patterns and behaviors are ripe for misunderstandings and unmet expectations.

Primarily, men want to fix problems, and women want to affirm people. When the wife shares a problem, the husband assumes she is telling him because she wants him to

fix the problem—that’s why he would share a problem. Really, she just wants sympathy and encouragement, and she will prolong the conversation until she gets it. It’s not even a conscious decision, but she may reject her husband’s solutions because she isn’t done talking about the problem yet. If this continues the wife is subconsciously rejecting his solutions in order to continue the conversation. Thus, the husband will feel rejected and the wife won’t find the reassurance she was looking for from her husband.

Women have their own expectation to “improve” their husbands. Their desire to redecorate the house and add certain touches to meals carries over to the relationship with their husbands. A wife may give small advice on how to drive, how to dress, and generally “mother” her husband. But stable men don’t feel romantically inclined toward their mothers. How have your efforts to “improve” and “fix” each other worked so far? Maybe it’s time to quit trying to change each other and decide to love and accept.

Sayings & Meanings

Figuring out what to say is a challenge for men and women. Knowing how to say it is the next obstacle. “You never talk to me,” she says. “I’m talking to you right now,” he replies. “But you never spend time with me,” she tries to elaborate. “I’m with you now.”

“But I feel like you’re someplace else.” There, she said it! That’s what she really wanted to say. “What do you mean I’m someplace else? I’m standing right here!” What the wife is trying to say is, “I wish we could talk more. I need you in my life. I appreciate you. I wish you would give me more attention.” Women speak more from their emotions, while men speak in literal facts. The gap between men and women is wide, but not impossible. Here are a few tips for men and women to better live, communicate, and express their appreciation for each other.

Marriage Advice: For Men

Listen. Try to listen to your wife with empathy. Try to understand what she is

continued on next page

Equally Different

continued from previous page

feeling and put yourself in her place and on her side. Notice the details. Do many small things for your wife, not just a few big things. A man may feel like the grand gesture will be most effective, but women appreciate small but frequent reminders of your love and affection; a phone call, a book she might enjoy, a bouquet of flowers. Ask her counsel. Your wife may not always be able to give you a reason for her opinion, but her advice is highly valuable. The husband, under God, bears the responsibility to make the final decision, but he would be wise to hear what his wife has to say.

Appreciate her motives. Even when you can't appreciate her message, appreciate her motives. When your wife complains about your heavy workload, she's really saying that she would like you to be home more. This is good! She wants you around! Would you rather she suggested you get a second job, work 100 hours a week, and never see her?

Offer support. Before offering solutions, listen. It is more important to her that you listen before trying to fix the problem.

Accept her as she is. Do not try to adjust her to what you wish she was.

Marriage Advice: For Women

Do not give unsolicited advice. Trust me. If you followed this single piece of advice, your husband would be giddy. Partially because of our ego, we don't take helpful advice as a sign of love and care. Don't make him talk. Do not try to make your husband talk when he withdraws from you. He needs time. He doesn't know what to do about it yet, so he's waiting. If you try to make him talk now, the results will be unpleasant. I read an old proverb, "Don't follow your husband when he goes into the cave. Otherwise, the dragon that lives in the cave may breathe fire on you."

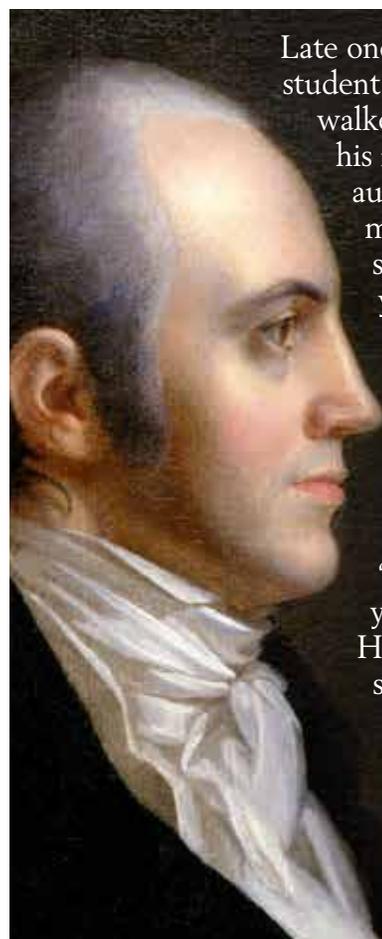
Be clear. Make it clear you do not blame your husband for the problem you are describing. My dear wife will often say to me, "I know this is not your fault. I know you cannot do anything about this. But..." She then proceeds to share with me her concern. I recognize then that she is looking

for sympathy, understanding, and support, and she is not blaming me for the difficulty.

Condense it. Make requests short, direct, and non-manipulative. For example, you will find better results if you say to your husband, "Sweetheart, would you be willing to take out the garbage tonight?" as opposed to saying, "Honey, do you think you could please take out the garbage this week? It has been two weeks since our garbage has been taken out. The garage is full of trash. It stinks to high heaven, and I don't know why in the world we haven't gotten it out to the curb before now!"

Give perspective. Put things in perspective for your spouse. When you are telling him of some difficulties, be sure to let him know that you are, by and large, happy, satisfied, and encouraged in your marriage.

Whether you accept all of the scientific and sociological concepts of this article, we must agree that the Scripture requires men particularly to dwell with their wives according to knowledge (good advice for both spouses). One of the greatest secrets to success in marriage is to stop trying to get your partner to understand you and start trying to understand your partner. ■



Late one night in 1772 a young student at Princeton University walked across the campus to his room. He had just left the auditorium in which a revival meeting was in progress. For several days and nights this young man had attended these services. He was much impressed with the sermons as the claims of Christ were earnestly placed before him.

A Christian professor said, "Burr, if God is speaking to you, you better respond to His call. Go to your room, and settle this matter with God." He went to his room. At last he left his room and met the professor who asked him concerning his decision. Aaron Burr said, "I settled it with God

alright, I told Him that if He would let me alone, I would leave Him alone, and that settles it."

History tells us that Aaron Burr was qualified in every way to distinguish himself as a leader and statesman. He was the grandson of the famous theologian and preacher, Jonathan Edwards. At the age of 35, he was a member of Congress. In the election of 1800, Thomas Jefferson and Aaron Burr were tied for the presidency, but Jefferson was given the deciding vote and Burr became the Vice-President.

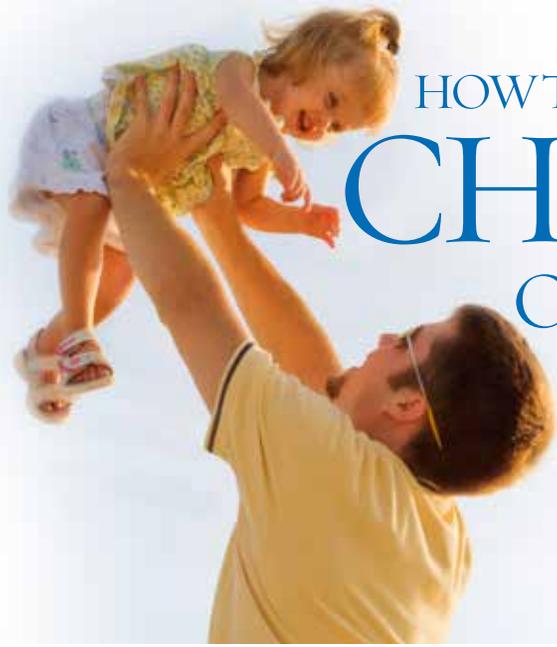
Sometime later, Burr killed Alexander Hamilton in a duel, which made him an outcast from his country's social and political life. He fled to Europe where he lived for four years on borrowed money. Returning to this country, he tried to practice law

for 20 years, but he died in poverty, a broken and disillusioned man.

As Aaron Burr walked across that Princeton campus that night, it was perhaps the last time he ever gave any serious thought to the question "What will I do with Jesus Christ, the Savior God has provided?" He turned his back on this Savior, and went out into the darkness of a soul without Christ and without hope. Would to God that all men would trust Christ, for He is the Savior we need. He will be either our Savior, or He will be our Judge. No one can avoid coming face to face with Him eventually.

Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." ■

A Fatal Choice



HOW TO RAISE KIDS THAT HANDLE THE CHALLENGES OF LIFE

by **Doug Hammett**

Christian parenting is definitely a challenge. It can be difficult to raise stable and wise children in a Christian manner. In a world that constantly mocks and attacks the Christian lifestyle, it is easy for a child to wander away. Your duty as a parent is to give them the upbringing they need to walk with their Creator. To do so, you must learn how God wants you to parent, provide an example for your child, and give them the Christian encouragement that they need.

Christian Parenting is Biblical Parenting

Christian parenting should always be based on the Bible. A wise Christian lives his or her life by the Book, and raising a child should be no exception. This will require two very major commitments on the part of a parent. First, it will take a willingness to actually become familiar with the Bible's views on parenting (a solid Bible preaching church will help). Next, it will require a commitment on the part of the parent to actually follow those views. While difficult, it will benefit both your child and your own walk with Christ.

The Bible's views on parenting stretch further than simply honoring one's mother or father. A child should be obedient of course, but a parent should also be caring.

The story of the Prodigal Son teaches that a parent's love for a child is unconditional, while stories like that of Noah and his sons teach a child's duty is to honor their parents.

There are dozens of passages in the Bible about the duties between a parent and

child, and it will take time to grasp them all. Once you have the knowledge that you need, it must be implemented. Being a Christian parent can be difficult but with God's help it is a manageable task. Your role as a parent is a complex one, and it will combine discipline, care-giving, and instruction in the ways of the Lord.

Christian Parenting: Making Your Relationship with the Lord First Priority

The first step on Christian parenting is to make sure that as a parent you are truly saved and have a relationship with the Lord. Without that, you will just be following a set of rules and your parenting will be doomed to failure.

The next step that all Christian families must take is making sure that the family dynamics reflect God's way. Many parents wish to take a "do what I say, not what I do" stance when it comes to leading a Christian lifestyle, but such an attitude is not only foolish but goes against the will of God. If you want to raise your child in a godly manner, you will first need to examine your own life. It might be wise to take some time to sit down and consider your own relationship with the Lord.

If you want to encourage your child to follow in your footsteps, first make sure that you are on the right path. If you want to encourage your child to read the Bible, for example, you should set a good example. Guiding them in their reading is a good thing, but showing them it is something you

desire for yourself will be a very powerful motivator. Make sure that you follow the same path that you want to set for your child, and he should have an easier example to follow. This may require certain changes in your daily life, but they will be to the benefit of both yourself and your child.

Christian Parenting: Encouraging Your Child

One of the hardest parts about Christian parenting is motivating a child to stay on the right path. In a world that will constantly pull your child away from the truth, it can be difficult to keep your child from going astray. While rules and boundaries are important, it is equally as important that you encourage your child.

Look at Paul's letters in the New Testament for inspiration; while there is correction and boundary-setting, there is an equal amount of praise and encouragement for those in need. Never let your children feel like 'they are alone' with their problems. Take the time to share your own difficulties, and encourage them to share their problems.

You should do your best not to judge your child, within reason. If you see that they are straying, try to give them information and encouragement to return to God's way.

Use Biblical examples when appropriate, but also try to work in examples from your own life. Children cherish and learn from Bible stories, but also the stories from your own life.

Finally, make sure your family is involved in a good Bible teaching church. This community will help reinforce the teaching your children are getting at home and build bonds that help the child in difficult times to have others to walk with them through life.

There is no doubt that raising godly children is a difficult task. But Christian parenting is possible if you walk honestly, Biblically and humbly with God. ■

For more information please go to fargobaptist.org and check out the information under "Media".

don't lose your CHILDREN

by Dr. Paul Chappell

Joshua 24:15 - *“Choose you this day whom ye will serve...but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”*

A young man was to be sentenced to the penitentiary. The judge had known him from childhood, for he was well acquainted with his father—a famous legal scholar and the author of an exhaustive study entitled, *The Law of Trusts*. “Do you remember your father?” asked the magistrate. “I remember him well, your honor,” came the reply. Then trying to probe the offender’s conscience, the judge said, “As you are about to be sentenced and as you think of your wonderful dad, what do you remember most clearly about him?” There was a pause. Then the judge received an answer he had

not expected. “I remember when I went to him for advice. He looked up at me from the book he was writing and said, ‘Run along, boy; I’m busy!’ When I went to him for companionship, he turned me away, saying ‘Run along, son; this book must be finished!’ Your honor, you remember him as a great lawyer. I remember him as a lost friend.” The magistrate muttered to himself, “Alas! Finished the book, but lost the boy!”

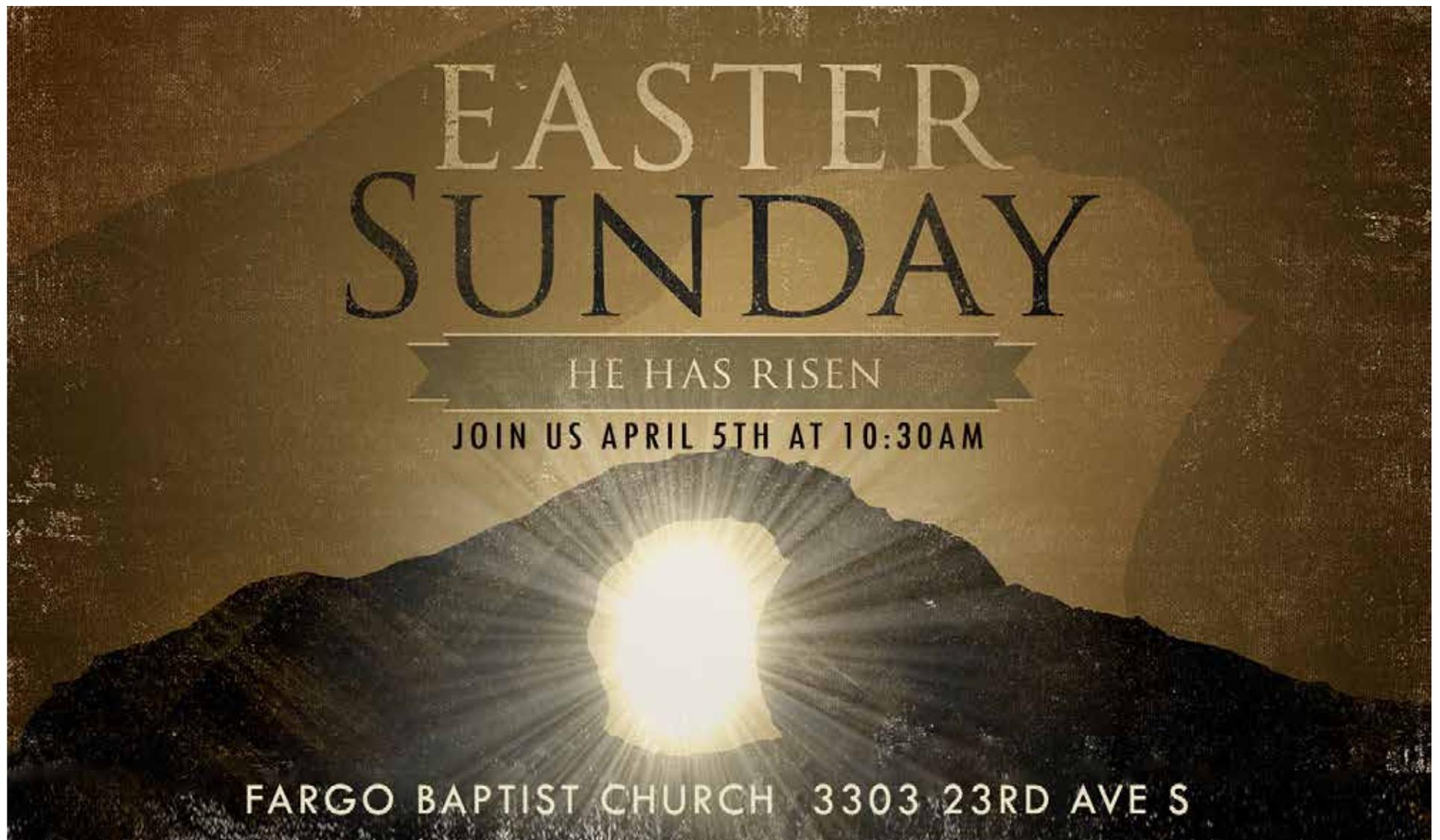
This man lost valuable time to teach his son right from wrong because he was more interested in his work. Joshua realized this principle as he began leading the children of Israel. When Moses died, God chose Joshua to lead His people. He led them on their journey in the desert, their conquest on the Promised Land, and their establishment of a new nation. But Joshua’s responsibility as a leader began at home. He knew he needed to lead his own family before he could lead the children of Israel.

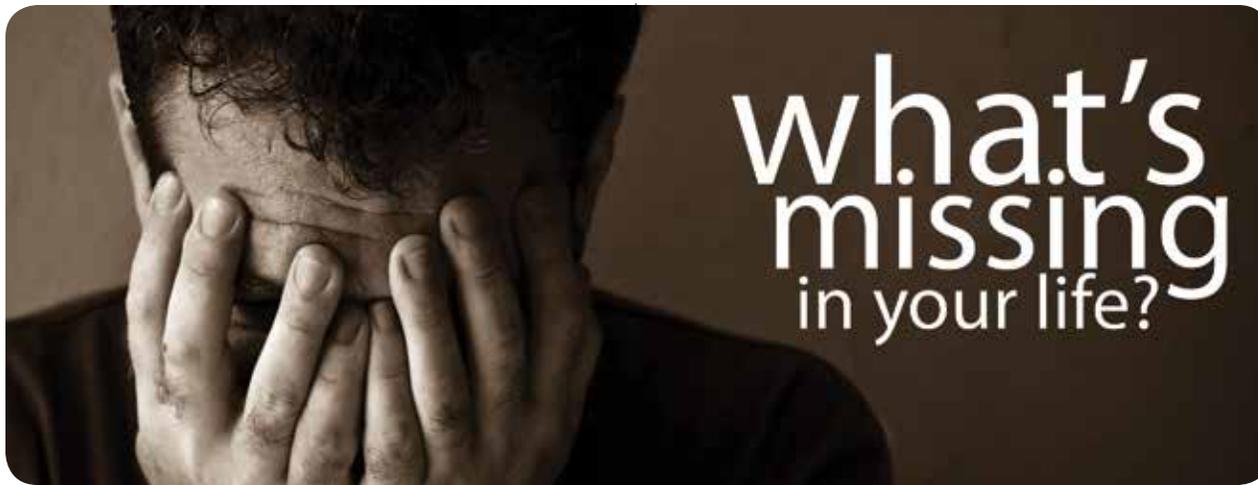
God never intended for Joshua’s responsibility as leader of Israel to come

before his responsibility to lead his family. Joshua chose to lead his family to serve the Lord, and God blessed him because of his choice.

Dads and Moms, your greatest life’s work is to properly train and guide your children into a loving relationship with their Creator. More important than a career, a promotion at work, or a hobby are the hearts of your children. God has given you the great privilege of training your children! Make it a top priority in your life.

Are you biblically training your children? Do you take them to a solid Bible teaching church? Are they a priority in your life? The devil is attacking young people like never before, and as Christian parents, we must be active in guiding them to Christ. Spend time mentoring your children today. Let them know you love them and that you care. Seek God’s help in leading your family, and don’t lose the time you have to train your children. Your children are the most important treasures in your life. ■





My friend, are you dead or alive? Do you ever feel that there is something important missing from your life? A vital part of your existence that isn't there, and has never been there? An empty void and longing, deep within the depths of your soul, crying out to be filled?

If you do not know the Lord Jesus Christ on a personal basis, that is the problem. God, the giver and sustainer of life, is missing from your life. The Bible says that without Jesus Christ as your personal Saviour, you are *"dead in trespasses and sins."* (Ephesians 2:1b)

How did it happen?

In the Garden of Eden, before man's fall, Adam and Eve were alive, that is, they were "spiritually" alive. They walked in perfection, and oneness with God. *"And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."* (Genesis 2:16-17)

On that day, when they disobeyed God and ate of the fruit, they died a "spiritual" death. Sin entered in, and they were separated from God. Since then, every one of us has been born into sin. *"Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"* (Romans 5:12) *"Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."* (Psalm 51:5) *"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:"* (Romans 3:10) *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"* (Romans 3:23)

The results of sin are a spiritual death, a physical death, and if you die without Jesus Christ, an eternal death. This is eternal separation from God in hell fire.

What has been done about it?

Jesus Christ, the God-man, was not a partaker of man's sinful bloodline. He was perfect, sinless, righteous, holy, born of a virgin, and God in the flesh. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."* (John 1:1-3) *"And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."* (John 1:14)

He came to seek and to save that which was lost. He offered Himself the perfect, sinless sacrifice unto God, to redeem man from the sin which separates him from God. He came to give life back unto men. *"...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."* (John 10:10) *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."* (John 5:24-25)

Now it is up to you.

My friend, do you hear His voice calling you through these Scriptures? He wants to

breathe life into you. This receiving of new life from Jesus Christ is what He called being born again. We see this in the Bible when Jesus tells Nicodemus, *"... Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born a gain, he cannot see the kingdom of God... That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."* (John 3:3,6)

My friend, repent! Turn to God from your sin, and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ by faith and be born of God. God promised in Romans 10:9, *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."* When you turn to God, the missing link will be found, and the empty void will be filled. You will be one with God. He will be your Father, and you will be His son. You can rejoice with us in this great truth forever. Amen. *"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."* (I John 5:12) ■

QUICK THOUGHTS

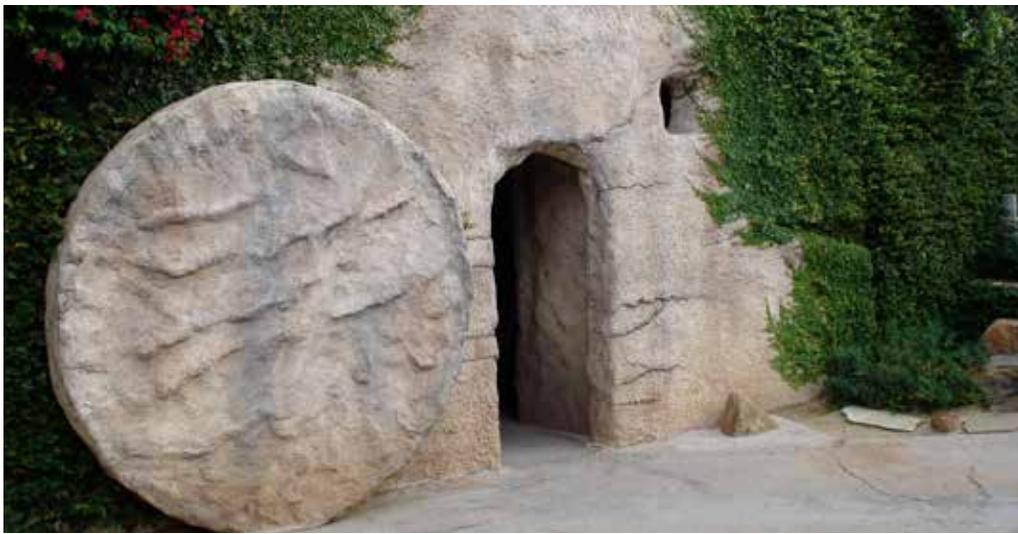
MONEY:

After making all of the adjustments to compensate for inflation, research shows that parents today are spending 500% more on their children than parents did just one generation ago. This may help to explain why 80% of 18 to 25-year-olds see "getting rich" as a top goal in life.

ABSTINENCE:

An overwhelming number of parents want their kids to practice abstinence until marriage and support abstinence education programs that drive that point home. Though six states have announced their intent to refuse federal funding for abstinence-only education, a recent Zogby poll shows they are out of touch with Americans.

The poll found that 83 percent of parents want their children to save sex until marriage and a majority of families believe that programs should reinforce the abstinence message.



WHY IS THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST SO IMPORTANT?

by Nick Nichalinos

"Thanks be unto God, Christ has "risen from the dead" | Corinthians 15:20

Question: Why is the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ so important to the thinking of some?

Answer: The resurrection of our Lord is the very foundation of our salvation and our hope. Unbelievers have long sought to shut down the tomb of Christ and keep Him therein. They know how vital His resurrection is to Christianity. There would be no Christianity if Christ be not raised from the dead. Let me briefly show the great tragedy if Christ had not raised from the dead:

(1) It would make Christ an impostor and a deceiver because He had promised many times He would be raised from the dead (Matt. 12:40; 17:22-23; John 2:19; 10:17-18). If He wasn't raised as promised, He lied, and therefore all of His claims about Himself were false. He instilled a false hope in His followers if He wasn't raised from the dead.

(2) It would dishonor God and His Word, because He had promised to raise Jesus from the dead (Psa. 2:7), and therefore Christ's "body (in the tomb) rested in hope" (Psa. 16:9-10). But if the Father didn't raise Jesus from the dead, He failed to keep His Word to His Son. A person's word is his honor. If we don't keep our word, we are dishonest and dishonorable. Therefore, if the Father didn't raise up Christ from the dead, then He has disgraced Himself because He didn't keep His Word.

(3) It would make the Bible prophets of both the Old Testament and the New

Testament equal impostors and masters of deception. All these men would have been uninspired, low, contemptible men if our Lord's resurrection was only a made-up story. In truth, the resurrection of Christ was a fact and they were eyewitnesses of it. Many of them died violent deaths proclaiming the resurrection. They knew it was real and gave their lives as a result.

(4) If the resurrection was a hoax, believers in Him as Savior would yet be unsaved and in their sins (1 Cor. 15:12-19). And we would be 'of all men most miserable'. His death then becomes of no value at all. It was a needless tragedy. A "dead" Christ cannot come back for us (John 14:1-3); a "dead" Christ cannot be the Head of the church (Col. 1:18), our advocate (1 John. 2:1), our High Priest (Heb. 10:21), give us strength (Phil. 4:13), keep us safely in His hand (John 10:26), be the future judge of the lost (Rev. 20:11), etc. I hope by now you can see the importance of the resurrection of Christ.

By His resurrection, we have the assurance that Jesus is the Messiah and Christ (Rom. 1:4), and that it is safe to trust Him as Savior (Acts 16:31), and that He will keep us saved by His divine power (John 10:28), and as saved ones we have the promise that we shall be raised as certainly as He was (John 14:19). *"Thanks be unto God, Christ has "risen from the dead, and has become the first fruits of them that slept (died)" (1 Cor. 15:20).*

Christianity stands or falls with regard to the resurrection of Christ. "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" (Acts 26:8) ■

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The GOD of Creation

by adrian rogers

The first verse of the Bible says in Genesis 1:1, *'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'*. The key to the entire Bible hangs right by the front door. We will never begin to exhaust the truths in this verse as we bring our teacup minds to dip into this great ocean of truth. But you need to understand at least part of it, and you must believe all of it because it is so foundational. You will never really comprehend anything else in the Bible unless you understand what this verse reveals about the God of creation.

The God Who Is Presented

First, we see the fact of God is not argued here in Genesis 1:1. The nature, existence and being of God are not explained. He's just presented. No philosophy about it, no argument, no apology for it. It simply states, *'In the beginning God...'*

God doesn't bother to try and explain His existence, and neither should you. There are no proofs for God, but don't let that shock you. God doesn't need any proof. Sometimes an atheist will swagger up to a believer and say, "Prove there is a God." That never threatens me. I just smile and say, "Prove there is no God."

You see, God does not reside in the realm of proof. To try to prove God by looking through physical, material things would be like tearing apart a piano trying to find the "Hallelujah Chorus." You don't prove God, and you don't disprove God. You believe in God. And if a man doesn't believe in God, it's because he has chosen not to believe in God.

The God Who Is Powerful

In Genesis 1:1 we also see the God who is powerful. He is the God of all creation;

therefore, He is the God of all power. The Hebrew word for "created" in Genesis 1:1 is "bara". It speaks of something only God can do, making something out of nothing. As we look at God's creation, how amazed we ought to be. Our bodies are made up of 300 billion cells, each one more complicated than New York City. The known universe is more than 10 billion light years across. The complexity and vastness overwhelm us, yet God spoke, and it was so. He made it all out of nothing.

Now, when I said there are no proofs for God, I didn't mean there's no evidence for God. Do you understand the difference between proof and evidence? If you see a watch, then you reason there must be a watchmaker, right? What about the atomic clock of the universe? Do you think that just happened? As we look around, we see evidence everywhere that our Creator is a God of might, miracle, and power.

The God Who Is Purposeful

God had reasons for creating the heavens and the earth, and we don't have to guess what they are. God created all things for His pleasure (Rev. 4:11), for His praise (Rom. 11:36), and for His people (Psa. 84:11). So the trees lift their leafy arms and say, "Praise God." Mighty oceans heave with their billows and say, "Praise God." You, my dear friend, were made to praise Him as well. God created all good things for His glory and our enjoyment.

The God Who Is Personal

God is a Spirit, yet He also has the characteristics of personhood: intelligence,

emotion, and will. He's not some impersonal being or force. This verse literally says, "In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth." Elohim is a compound Hebrew word. El speaks of God's strength and unlimited power. The last part of the word means to keep a promise or covenant. Put them together and you have "The God in whom nothing is impossible and who always keeps His word." Isn't that great?

This personal God has chosen to reveal Himself, giving every one of us an innate awareness of Himself (Rom. 1:19, 20). Jesus Christ came to reveal the Father to us (John

You will never really comprehend anything else in the Bible unless you understand what this verse reveals about the God of creation.

1:14). God is a *"faithful Creator"* (1 Peter. 4:19). He didn't make this world, fling it out into space, and turn His back on it. He made it. He will look after it.

This powerful, personal, purposeful God made everything for a purpose including you.

His plan for you begins with you accepting the sacrifice of His Son as the payment for your sins. He loved you enough to give His Son to save your soul. Aren't you glad the very first verse of the Bible introduces us to a God like that? ■

A PERFECT BIBLE

For fifteen years, the Research Science Bureau offered a reward of one thousand dollars to anyone who could find a scientific mistake in the Bible. The reward was later raised to ten thousand dollars.

Dr. Harry Rimmer, the organization's president, said that over the years they received thousands of letters from people seeking to collect the reward.

Yet, in all but two cases, when the facts were presented concerning the true teaching of the Bible along with the correct scientific data the

correspondents were satisfied that the mistakes had been their own and that the Bible was vindicated. Dr. Rimmer said if they had ever published the letters in a book they would have called it, "The Philosophy of Ignorance," because every question had risen either from ignorance of the Bible text or of the science involved.

The two cases where those seeking the reward were not satisfied with the answers given were taken to court. The court cases proved to be great opportunities. The results of both

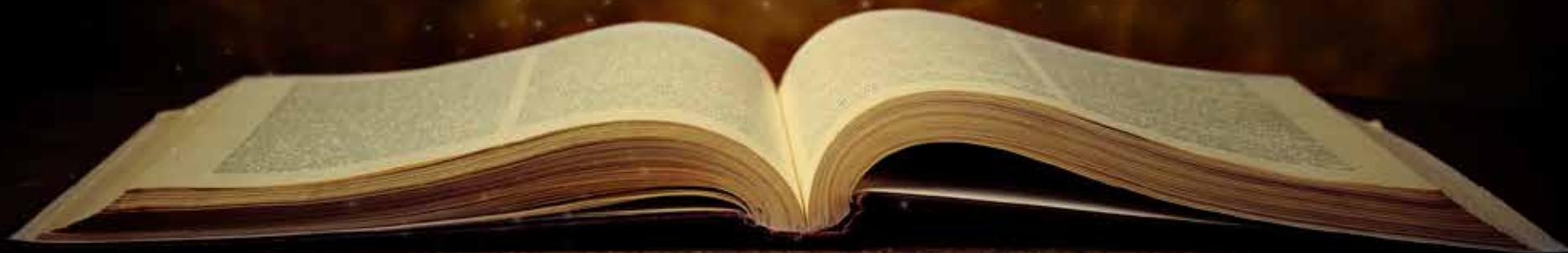
lawsuits were that even in court, the Bible was judged correct and its detractors wrong. The courts found testimonies of the Bible writers to be eyewitness accounts that could not be contradicted by people who were theorizing centuries after the events in question had taken place.

Rest on the promises of God's perfect Word for all your needs today. *"The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple."* (Psalm 19:7) ■

LINCOLN AND WEBSTER ON THE BIBLE

"I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book. I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had no where else to go. I can see how it might be possible for a man to look down upon the earth and be an atheist, but I cannot conceive how he could look up into Heaven and say there is no God." — Abraham Lincoln

"If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible, our country will... prosper. But if we and our posterity neglect the instructions and authority in this book, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overtake us and bury our glory in profound obscurity." — Daniel Webster



HOW TO WIN THE WAR WITH WORRY

Dr. Adrian Rogers

Do you ever worry? We all do, but we shouldn't. Worry is not just a weakness; it's wickedness. Three times in the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord says "Take no thought," which actually means "take no anxious worry." To each worrier He says, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on" (Matthew 6:25). "Take no thought" doesn't mean not to plan ahead. The Bible praises the ant that stores up for the winter. It's not foresight but worry that's forbidden. Don't reach into tomorrow and borrow trouble. Worry is the interest paid on borrowed trouble. Don't pull tomorrow's clouds over today's sunshine. To win the war with worry, we must...

Recognize the Cause

No matter our stage in life, we can find something to worry about. The uneducated worry because they don't know enough; the intelligent because they know too much. The rich fear losing what they have; the poor fear not having enough. The old

worry because they're facing death; the young because they're facing life.

But Jesus said, "Behold, the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; and yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" (Matt 6:26). Jesus reasons that if God takes care of the birds won't He take care of you? What farmer would feed his barnyard chickens, then starve his beloved children?" Jesus says, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow."

Understand the Cost

Worry is absolutely useless. It never dried a tear, lifted a burden, or solved a problem. Worse yet, it's harmful. Like sand in machinery, worry won't lengthen your life, but it may shorten it. You can worry yourself to death but not into a longer life. Worry buries blessing. There are blessings all around if you'll look. Worry blinds you to the blessings of today.

Worry steals strength. Worry is contagious—it spreads gloom everywhere, taking the joy out of today and the strength out of tomorrow. When we pile tomorrow's problems onto today, it weighs us down. You arrive at tomorrow out of breath because you've been carrying a double load today that God didn't intend.

Worry is also a wound in the heart of God. Jesus said, "Wherefore, if God so clothe

the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Matt 6:30). Worry even has Christians living like pagans, thinking like the world, not someone who has a heavenly Father.

Trust In the Lord

Worry is an insult to God. Jesus said, "Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of these things" (Matt 6:32). Someone loves you so incredibly that He gave His dear Son. He knows all about you. Even the hairs of your head are numbered. Your Creator in heaven knows about, cares about, and loves you. His instruction to every person is given in Matthew 6:33 when He says, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."

Because God loves you, He may even arrange some problems for you. We wouldn't come to God, trust Him, or lean on Him if we didn't have problems. All sunshine makes a desert, so our Lord allows some trouble. Trouble reminds us that we need God. Trusting in the Lord begins with receiving His Son Jesus Christ as your Savior, and then living a life of faith daily relying in Him. ■

For more information please go to fargobaptist.org and check out the information under "Media".



Senior Pastor
Tony Scheving

Campus Minister
Neal Irion

Asst. Pastor
Dan Schatz

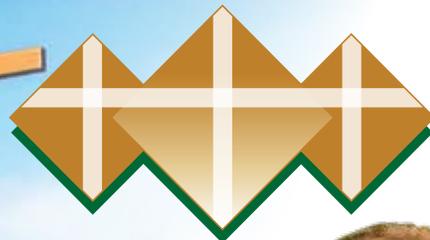
Asst. Pastor
Brett Iepson

Church Administrator
Jared Scheving

Bible College
Bob Venem
Frank Wilson

Sunday Bible Class 9:30am
Sunday Worship 10:30am
Sunday Evening 6:00pm
Wednesday Service 7:00pm

We're Building Lives!



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