

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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## The Most *Important* Thing for You To Know

by Pastor Tony Scheving

**Y**ou can talk to various people and they know ‘a lot about a lot’. They might know the latest movie or movie star. They might know the latest hit songs and the singers. They might know the batting averages of the baseball players. They might know a lot about the stock market. But there is something far greater to understand and it involves the Son of God. None of the movies, songs, singers, baseball players or Dow Jones averages will matter one day. But understanding the reason Jesus had to shed blood on the cross will matter for all time and eternity. Please read on carefully. Do you understand why Jesus had to shed blood on the cross?

First of all, Jesus was God in the flesh (John 1:1-3, Phil 2:6, I Tim 3:16). He existed in eternity past (Micah 5:2) and created the universe (John 1:3, Col 1:15-16). Jesus is the only person to ever live a sinless life (Heb 4:15). Jesus Christ is the only one to ever rise from the dead to substantiate all the claims He made. No other religious figure has ever risen from the dead. Also, Jesus Christ is coming back and it could be in our day! (the indicators are there).

And most importantly, Jesus is the only way to heaven according to the testimony of others as well as Himself (John 3:36, Acts 4:12, I Tim 2:5, I John 5:11-12). Jesus said in John 14:6, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.*” Notice that Jesus didn’t say he was a good way, or a better way, or even the best way. He said I’m the way, and added that you cannot come to God (or heaven) except through Him! Now that would be perceived as pretty narrow in all-inclusive days, but that is what the Creator of the Universe said.

So, why did the Son of God have to come to this earth and shed His blood for our sins? Let’s go back to the very beginning. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden, they lost their innocence and became aware of their nakedness. They tried to cover up with fig leaves

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## The Most Important Thing For You...

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but God chose another way. The Bible says in Genesis 3:21, *“Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them.”* The skins came from animals which had to die sacrificially, most likely lambs. The very first blood was shed because of sin.

God apparently established a principle (involving blood) and taught it to Adam and Eve who taught it to their sons Cain and Abel. But Cain chose to improvise and do things his own way. The Bible says in Genesis 4:3-5, *“Cain brought of the fruit of the ground (fruits and vegetables) an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock (sacrificial lamb)... And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth.”* Of course this led to Cain’s jealousy of Abel and he murdered his brother. Cain’s problem was clear. He had gone around God’s ordained method of atoning for sin and tried to do so with a bloodless sacrifice (fruits and vegetables). Manmade religion is still improvising today.

Time marched on and thousands of years later by the time of Noah, mankind had become totally corrupt. God judged the earth with a worldwide flood (this took place 4500 years ago). When the flood waters subsided, Noah came out of the ark and saw the first rainbow. He then offered up a blood offering. In Genesis 8:20 the Bible says, *“And Noah builded an altar unto the LORD; and ... offered burnt offerings on the altar.”* The shed blood of the lambs continued.

As we read on in the Bible, 500 years pass and God raises up the very first Jew named Abraham. God tests Abraham’s faithfulness by

commanding him to sacrifice his beloved son Isaac. When Abraham shows his willingness to do so God ‘calls it off’ and blesses Abraham for his obedience. Instead of sacrificing his son Isaac, Abraham sacrifices a lamb. The Bible says in Genesis 22:13, *“And Abraham went and took the ram (male lamb), and offered him up for a burnt offering.”* The blood shedding sacrifices continue for several hundred years.

Around 1500BC (3500 years ago) the Jewish nation had grown until they became a threat to the world empire of Egypt. Pharaoh, the Egyptian king, subjected the Jewish people to slavery. God raised up Moses to be their deliverer. God sent nine plagues upon the land of Egypt to punish them and convince Pharaoh to let the Jews go free, but with each one he ‘dug in’ and hardened his heart and refused to release the Jews.

Finally God determined to send the death angel into the land one night to judge every household in Egypt that did not have blood on the doorpost of their house. God instructed the Jews how to observe that first Passover by killing a lamb and shedding its blood on the doorpost. God said in Exodus 12:5, *“Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male of the first year: ye shall take it out from the sheep...and shall kill it in the evening.”* God was very specific about this Passover lamb. He gave five specific qualifications. First of all, that lamb had to be a male. Secondly, it had to be spotless (no marks or blemishes on it). Thirdly, it had to be a yearling which is the prime of life for a lamb. Fourthly, it had to be killed at 3:00pm in the afternoon. Fifthly, that innocent lamb would die in the place of the firstborn of the household.

Once out of Egypt and into freedom, Moses built a Tabernacle where the lambs continued to be sacrificed. Every year for the next 500 years, faithful Jews would observe that Passover and shed the blood of the lambs. In time, Solomon replaced the Tabernacle of curtains with a magnificent stone Temple. On the day of the Temple dedication Solomon sacrificed 120,000 lambs (I Kings 8:63). To this day you can go into the ruins of the lower level of the old Temple site (Dome of the Rock) and see the cistern that was once filled with the blood of lambs from that dedication day.

God had established a very important principle. He said in Leviticus 17:11, *“The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your*

*souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul”* (i.e.- forgives sins). The Bible says in Hebrews 9:22, *“All things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.”* (i.e. - no forgiveness of sin) God was trying to show us something with the shed blood of the lambs.

Finally, 2000 years ago, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Creator of the Universe came to planet earth. When he reached the age of 30 He walked 60 miles from Nazareth to the Jordan River where John the Baptist was baptizing. The Bible says in John 1:29, *“John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.”* God’s precious Son had come to die for the sins of mankind. Like the Passover lamb, Jesus would reveal the same five qualities. He would be a male like the lamb (ram). He would be spotless (sinless). He would die at the prime of life (33 years of age). He would die at 3:00pm in the afternoon on a cross. And He would be the innocent dying for the guilty. The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 5:7, *“For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.”*

When Jesus bowed His head and died on the cross He said, *“It is finished”* meaning this was the last blood to be shed. At that moment the thick veil back in the Temple there in Jerusalem supernaturally tore in half sending a message from God that this would be the final sacrifice for sins forever. The Bible now speaks of Christ and says, *“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace”* (Ephesians 1:7).

Over the years manmade religion has improvised like Cain and taught that baptismal water washes sin away. Nowhere does the Bible say that water (baptism) can cleanse us from our sin. Forgiveness for sins by God has always been by blood, going way back to Adam and Eve. The Bible says in 1 Peter 1:18-19, *“Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”* In Revelation 1:5, the Bible mentions *“Jesus Christ... him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.”*

Friend, what are you trusting in to take you to heaven? People talk a lot about ‘faith’ saying ‘you gotta have faith’ and ‘keep the faith’. At the same time they are clueless to what your

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## The Most Important Thing For You...

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faith should be in. If you are trusting in your good works to get you to heaven, then your faith is in yourself, not the blood Jesus shed on the cross. If your faith is in your baptism then your faith is in water, not the blood Jesus shed on the cross. Speaking of Jesus, the Bible says in Romans 3:25, *“Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation (atoning victim) through faith in his blood.”* If your faith is in anything else but the shed blood of the Son of God on Calvary’s cross you will miss heaven! Going to heaven is not automatic just because Jesus died for the sins of the world. You must receive that payment for your sins by placing your faith in that sacrifice (shed blood) as the atonement for your sins (read more about this on pages 6-7).

Do you understand the importance of the shed blood of Jesus? That blood is the most precious commodity in the whole universe! Do you understand the whole concept? It’s sad how people can be informed on so many things and yet miss the most important thing in life. There is something far more important than what is going on in Washington or Hollywood or Wall Street. There is something far more important than what is being discussed by the ‘talking heads’ nightly on television. There is something far more important than the latest movie, latest song, or latest Super Bowl. The thing that will outlast everything else for all time and eternity is the fact that God the Son came down from heaven and took on human flesh in order to die on a cross and shed His divine blood to pay for your sins. Have you placed your faith in that blood? It is the most important thing you will ever do. ■

*“The future and success of America is not in this Constitution, but in the laws of God (Bible) upon which this Constitution is founded.”*

*—James Madison*



If there is one Christian quality that should stand out above all others, it is the ability to love. Christians are to love like no other creature on earth. Love is the key to the Christian life as God intended it. Jesus even said that love would be the tell-tale sign of true Christians. *“By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.”* - John 13:35

Many assume that serving God is the only thing a Christian should be focusing on, but notice what the Apostle Paul says, *“Though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity (love), I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned (martyrdom), and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.”* - 1 Cor. 13:2-3

Serving others, as noble as it is, takes a back seat to love. In fact, if we simply practice love at all times, the servitude will follow since we will automatically be fulfilling God’s law. *“for all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”* - Gal. 5:14

A Christian’s love is supposed to surpass the world’s definition of love, going beyond what the world regards as sufficient and reasonable. Jesus said, *“but i say unto you which hear, love your enemies...for if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them”* - Luke 6:27-32. A Christian’s love should be unconditional. The stipulation that, *“I’ll love them as long as they either love me back and/or don’t take advantage of me,”* is not the basis for Christian love. Christian love doesn’t worry about the possible consequences to self.

Now, after looking at all this, many will wonder, *“Who could possibly practice Christian love?”* Christian love, as described, is self-sacrificial in nature. It is “unnatural” in

the sense that it goes against the human tendency to put self first. In fact, a better word would be “supernatural,” which describes exactly what it takes to practice Christian love...supernatural intervention. Namely, from God Himself. The Bible says: *“He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love”* (1 John 4:8). In other words, you or I can’t even begin to practice Christian love (the love the Bible describes) unless God is intervening and working in our lives...we must first know God! However, it is in this area of faith that most run into a wall. We simply can’t seem to fully trust God. It is here where most people advance no further, resolving to wait until somehow their faith increases...if it ever does. But there is a fundamental reason why we find it hard to fully trust God, and it is here where knowing God personally makes all the difference in the world.

To fully trust God we must know Him personally! Think of the people you find it easy to trust; they are typically the ones you know the best. The better we know someone, the easier it is to predict how they will react under certain circumstances. Knowing the person’s “mode of operation” is vital if we are to entrust someone with our lives. Paul summed it up best when he said: *“For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”* 2 Tim. 1:12

Therefore—the key, to Christian love is to know God personally. Do you feel stagnant in your ability to love? Do you know the Son of God as your Lord and Savior?

*“He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.”* 1 John 4:8 ■

# DEALING WITH DEPRESSION

by Pastor W.A. Criswell

Elijah was a great man who lived several centuries before the time of Christ. He was a mighty prophet of God, yet he struggled with depression. The Bible says in I Kings 19:1-4, *“And he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.”* It is Elijah that shall precede the coming of our Lord (Malachi 4:5). It was in the spirit of Elijah that John the Baptist prepared the way for the first appearance of Jesus (Matthew 11:14). And now it is this Elijah who is depressed sitting under a juniper tree, praying that he might die (I Kings 19:4).

The issue of depression and disappointment is a universal malady. There is nobody who is not subject to it, nor is there anyone who has not experienced it. That’s what the psychological studies all avow. This is one common denominator in which all of us share. We all know what it is to be depressed. It’s some kind of a black hole into which the whole world of life and living is sucked into. We don’t want to see anybody. We are miserable with ourselves and with the whole sorry situation in which we have found ourselves.

Another thing I learn from reading these psychological studies is that the man who is a counselor to the depressed must be very aware of and guard against his sympathy with the depressed patient he’s trying to help, lest he himself also fall in the same abyss. The psychological counselors say that when you talk to somebody who is depressed and you’re seeking to raise them out of their gloom, that if you are not careful, you will find yourself falling into the same deep darkness.

Depression, if the psychologist is correct, it’s universal for all of us who breathe. It is one common denominator of human life. According to the psychologists, those

committed to religious values (trying to do right) and the more intellectual are more susceptible to it. Those with lower moral values are less susceptible.

Job was a wise man with high moral values. When his world was turned upside down he wanted to die. The Bible says in Job 3:1-3, 11, *“After this opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day. And Job spake, and said, Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. Why died I not from the womb? Why did I not give up the ghost when I came out of the belly?”*

Then there was King David, one of the most wise and moral men in the Bible. Yet David wrote in Psalm 42:5, *“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me?... O my God, my soul is cast down within me.”* Then David added in Psalm 69, *“Save me, O God; for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail while I wait for my God... Reproach hath broken my heart; and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.”* And then in Psalm 130:1-2, David said, *“Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice: let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.”* It’s obvious from the Bible that God’s children are susceptible to depression.

History also bears witness of Christians struggling with depression. In the 400’s there was an early church Latin Christian by the name of Jonas Cosianus who wrote a long study on his struggle with depression. In the Renaissance, the most famous, most circulated and best seller of all of the books during that time was Robert Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Martin Luther struggled with depression all his life and when he had his

awakening of faith and nailed his thesis of 95 grievances on the door of the Wittenberg church it didn’t stop. When he translated the Bible into German, or married Katherine Von Bora he still continued to wrestle with awful depression for the rest of his life.

The second greatest selling book of all time (*after the Bible*) is *Pilgrim’s Progress*. In the storyline, the first thing that Pilgrim did was to leave the City of Destruction and turn his face toward the City of God. Soon afterwards he fell into the Slough of Despond full of quagmire and mud. That’s when ‘Help’ comes to pull him out of the pit. As they talk to one another, Pilgrim wants to know why the queen and king haven’t filled this thing up? ‘Help’ replies, “It can’t be filled up, and it can’t be mended. And it’s in everybody’s way. They all wallow in the dirt and the mire and the quagmire of the Slough of Despond.” That’s what you read in *Pilgrim’s Progress*.

I’ve read a great deal of Charles Spurgeon, whom I think is the greatest preacher outside of the New Testament. To my amazement, time without number, does Spurgeon begin his sermons with a testimony of the deep, deep, deep depression in which he has been the days of the previous week. And out of that he will speak his words asking for the prayers of the people (*this is one of God’s greatest preachers*).

Another thing I learn said about depression and despondency is it has been a subject of medical study from the beginning of medical science. There are no eras in medical technology and research into which they have not probed concerning this subject of depression. Hippocrates is called the “Father of Medicine.” He was a Greek physician. He lived about 460 BC, 460 years before Christ. And in studying that phenomenon, he called it “melancholia.” That’s a Greek word: *melas*

is the Greek word for “black,” *chol* is the Greek word for gall or bile. So he called it “the black bile, melancholia.” We’ve taken the exact Greek word and spelled it out in English, melancholia, melancholy. Plutarch was born about 45 AD and was a famous classical Greek biographer. He has a long discussion here concerning melancholia, concerning depression and despondency. Of course there are modern psychoanalytical physicians, like Freud, who go on and on and on about it. Freud wrote a book entitled; *Mourning and Depression*.

Truly despondency and depression are some of the sharpest instruments in the arsenal of Satan, by which he attacks and renders useless the Christian disciple and soldier of the Lord. You are no good to yourself and you are no count to God or anything else when you are depressed in the Slough of Despond. So, we are going to look at what God has to say about it:

First of all, why do we fall into depressions? Let’s look at Elijah. Elijah was burning the candle at both ends. He had the heavy weight of responsibility upon his shoulders. He thought he was one of the last of the people standing for right and truth. He had personally taken upon himself what was actually God’s concern and responsibility. It led to burn out and depression. There is so much about life that is noble and good but inevitably beyond our control.

Elijah had also gotten his eyes off the Lord and on to himself. He was living in his little cave alone and having a pity party. When we make ourselves the center of our lives we are going to be despondent. Things had not turned out the way Elijah thought they should have. Days earlier Elijah had led in the overthrow of the heathen false prophets of Baal. God had answered his prayer for a drought and then reversed it when he prayed for rain. Can you imagine the pinnacle of triumph the prophet felt on the top of Mount Carmel! But now Queen Jezebel was on a witch hunt to get Elijah. Suddenly he finds himself praying to die! In the real world, things don’t always turn out as you think they are going to turn out. There are inevitable providences in life that you can’t control that are going to overwhelm you. That’s life.

So what is God’s answer to these depressions into which we fall? He gives them here in God’s Word. Number one: As Elijah sat there under that juniper tree, he went to sleep (1 Kings 19:5-6). And an angel touched him and said unto him, “Arise and eat.” And there was a cake baked on the coals and a cruse of water. And he did eat and drink and went back to sleep. And the angel of the Lord came again the second time, and touched him, and said, “Arise, eat.” What is the first thing that God says to us and does for us when He gets us out of the Slough of Despond and out of our depression? The first thing is, take care of the body that houses our soul (1 Corinthians 6:19). When you are down, you’re no good to anybody. You need to be up. And to be up, we live in a house of clay. And God says it needs to be taken care of. Get some good sleep, rest, and eat right.

The second thing the Lord teaches to Elijah is to quietly seek our God. Although God can be seen in earthquakes, wind and fire, we need to seek him through the silent guidance He gives us through His Word, the Bible. When we read His book, He speaks to us in a ‘still small voice’. When we read the Bible, God speaks to us, and when we pray He listens as we speak to Him.

The third thing God did for Elijah was to recirculate him into usefulness. God gave him several assignments to do. God didn’t put us on the earth to sit around and criticize, groan and gripe. Life is for doing and accomplishing. It’s for glorifying God. It’s for doing His work. That’s what life is for. We’ve got to be out doing something for God if we are going to get out of ourselves and into the victory of the Lord. When Elijah was sitting around having a pity party God said, “*What are you doing here, Elijah? What are you doing here?*” (1 Kings 19:9, 13).

I think of the Lord God as He spoke to Moses at the Red Sea. The army of Pharaoh was behind him, the desert to the right of him, the mountains to the left of him, and the sea

in front of him. Moses cried out to God, “*Lord, Lord!*” And the Lord God said to Moses, “*Why criest thou unto Me? Speak to the children of Israel that they go forward*” (Exodus 14:15). God said, “Why cry unto Me?” Move! Do! Get going!” And when they put their feet down in the water, the Red Sea parted and the waters piled up on either side. All Israel passed through in triumph and in victory (Exodus 14:21-22). That’s a way to help get out of a depression. Get busy, get with it, move, and see what God does! Instead of sitting around and asking God to take your life, “Get up!” Fulfill the assignment God has given you to do.

In summary, if you’re struggling with depression you must; stop burning the candle at both ends. Secondly, remember that you are not alone in your feelings. Thirdly, don’t try and take on the burdens that God meant to carry. Fourthly, realize that there is so much in life that is beyond your control and trust God with it. The kingdoms of this earth belong to our Lord, and it is He that shall reign forever and ever (Revelation 11:15). Don’t let the inevitable providences in life that you can’t control overwhelm you. That’s life. Get your eyes back on the Lord instead of yourself and your problems. ■

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# 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).*

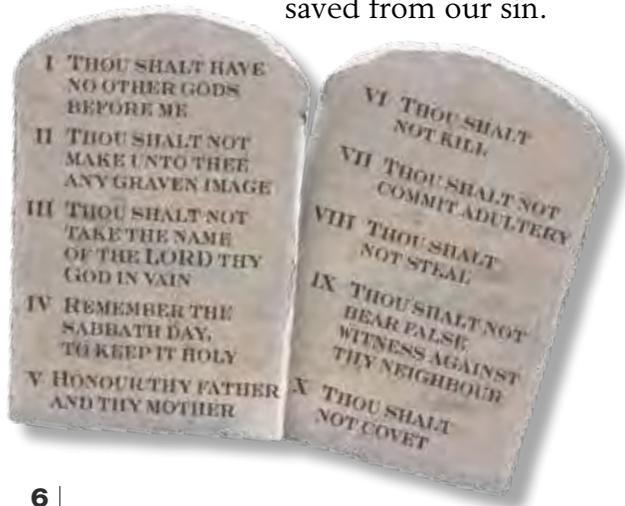
**2) That your life will be changed when you get saved.** *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).*

**3) That 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?

#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;

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## How to Find God

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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." ■

For more information please go to [www.7StepsToGod.org](http://www.7StepsToGod.org)



**EASTER SUNDAY**

Sunday | April 21, 2019 | 10:30am

Make plans to be a part of our services as we celebrate our risen Savior!

**FARGO BAPTIST CHURCH | 3303 23RD AVE. S | FARGO**

The graphic features a background of purple flowers and green leaves. A circular inset shows a cracked stone with a hole, symbolizing new life. The text is in white and yellow, with a black bar at the bottom containing the church name and address in white.

# DO YOU THINK YOU'RE A GOOD PERSON?

TAKE THE QUIZ AND  
FILL IN THE BLANKS

- Yes, I'm a Good Person.  
 No, I'm not a Good Person.

## 1. Have you ever told a lie?

- Yes, I've told a lie.  
 No, I've never told a lie.

What does that make you? If someone lied to you, what would you call them? ...That makes you a liar. We might not like that word - we like to say we're 'just human', or that we 'stretched the truth'. But the truth is - if we've told a lie, we're a liar. Okay, I'm a liar.

## 2. Have you ever taken anything that did not belong to you? (Even something small?)

- Yes  No

That makes you a thief. It sounds harsh, but the truth is - if we've ever stolen anything, we're a thief. Okay, I'm a thief.

## 3. Have you ever looked at another person with lust or desire?

- Yes, I've looked with lust.  
 No, I've never looked at another person with desire.

Jesus said, that makes you an adulterer. Jesus said in Matthew 5, that to look at someone with lust is to have committed adultery with them in your heart. Okay, I'm an adulterer.

## 4. Have you ever been angry with another person?

- Yes, I've been angry with another person.  
 No, I've never been angry with another person.

Jesus said, that makes you a murderer Jesus said in Matthew 5 that whoever is angry with his brother without cause is guilty of murder of the heart. Okay, according to God's standard, I'm a murderer.

## 5. Have you ever used God's name as a curse word or to express disgust?

- Yes, I've used God's name in vain.  
 No, I've never done that.

The Bible calls this blasphemy. According to God's standard, the Bible, that makes you a blasphemer. Okay, according to God's standard, I'm a blasphemer. You may not realize this, but those are just five of the Ten Commandments.

By your own admission and the standard of God's law, the Ten Commandments, you are a lying, thieving, blasphemous, murderous, adulterer at heart. What about coveting (being discontented with what you have), or disrespecting your parents as a child. What about putting other things ahead of God (idolatry)? And you have to face God on judgment day!

## If God were to judge you by His law, would you be innocent or guilty?

(Be honest with yourself and God)

- I would be Guilty.  
 I would be Innocent.

Based on your guilty verdict, would you go to heaven or hell? The Bible says that all murderers, adulterers, thieves, and liars will have their place in the lake of fire - Revelation 21:8.

- I would still go to heaven.  
 I guess I would go to hell.

## The Bible offers hope.

II Peter 3:9 says that God is "not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance." Imagine you are standing in front of a judge, guilty of serious crime. All the evidence has been presented and there is no doubt of your guilt. Your apologies and good works cannot erase your crimes; therefore you must be punished. The fine for your crime is \$250,000 and you have no money.

The judge is about to pass sentence when someone you don't even know rushes in and pays your fine for you! The court accepts the

money and declares that you are free to go. That is exactly what God did for you on the cross 2000 years ago.

Romans 5:8 "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Jesus loved you so much that he paid the penalty for your sin, so you wouldn't have to! God has provided a way of escape, and that is through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

**Repent of Your Sin.** That means turning away from your sin and asking God to forgive you for breaking His law. Jesus said in Luke 13:3, "Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

**Refuse Your Own Self-Effort.** Realize that there is no way you can work your way to heaven or somehow be "good enough" to earn heaven.

Ephesians 2:8-9, "For by grace ye are saved through faith and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

**Trust in Jesus Christ as Your Only Hope.** Trust in Jesus, like you would trust a parachute if you were jumping out of an airplane. You wouldn't just believe in the parachute, you would put it on (put your trust in it) and jump (act on it). That is how we must put our faith and trust in Jesus as our only hope of heaven.

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."

**Receive Jesus Christ as Your Savior and Turn your life over to Him.** John 1:12, "But as many as received Him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name"

Today with all your heart, turn away from your sin, and surrender your life to Jesus Christ. Please don't put it off. You may die today and then it will be too late. Put your faith and trust in Him today.

II Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

# IS EVERYTHING REALLY OKAY?

## **| Ponder this thought...**

Eternity is far longer than your life time and your soul is far more important than your body. Yet the average person spends very little time considering where their soul will spend eternity. Many people think... "Everything's ok, - I'm no worse off than anybody else, and actually I'm not as bad of a sinner as many others - I'm a good person who believes in God."

But, consider the sobering words of Jesus Christ below:

*"Broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction (hell), and many there be which go in thereat... Narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life (heaven), and few there be that find it."* (Matt 7:13-14)

## **| So here's a question for you:**

According to the words of Jesus (above)...Are most people going to heaven or hell?

Jesus also spoke of Judgment Day when He said the following:

"Many will say to me in that day,"

"Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied (preached) in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works?"

"And then will I profess unto them,"

"I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." (Matthew 7:22-23)

*(Please read that again very carefully)*

Sadly, these people will miss heaven.

Quiz yourself and please answer the following questions...

1. Do these people appear to be Christians and even ministers, and why?
2. Are there just a handful of "Christians," or a large number, and why?
3. Are there some in this condemned group who thought they served the Lord and lived a good life? Did their good deeds get them into heaven?
4. Did Jesus recognize them all as "children of God?"

SO WHAT ABOUT YOU? Is everything really "okay"...or could you possibly be part of this group?

ACCORDING TO GOD'S WORD:

"Everything is not ok." Could it be that many have been deceived?

The Bible says: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." (Proverbs 16:25)

Apparently, multitudes of people are religious and think "everything's ok" but Jesus said: "If therefore the light (religion) that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matt 6:23)

Imagine the spiritual blindness of thinking "I'm ok" but still being on the wrong path!

Is there an answer to this tragedy?

The Bible teaches that a person can know for sure they are forgiven and going to heaven when they die (I John 5:13). It's not a matter of what church you belong to or whether you believe in God. It all revolves around the Son of God, Jesus Christ. But, there is a big difference in believing in Jesus Christ versus believing on Jesus Christ.

God loves you, and your soul is more precious and valuable than anything this world can offer. Jesus said,

*"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"* (Mark 8:36)

## **| Would you like to truly know God?**

The "7 Steps to God" is a free and interesting Bible study that answers most of the questions people have about God and other spiritual matters. If you would like to go through this Bible study with a pastor or staff member of Fargo Baptist Church or Heaven 88.7FM, please email us to let us know at [BibleStudy@KFBN.org](mailto:BibleStudy@KFBN.org)

If you would like to complete an online Bible study, or have us send you a correspondence Bible study through the mail, visit [www.7stepstogod.org](http://www.7stepstogod.org) ■

# THE 'NOT SO FAMILIAR' TEACHINGS OF JESUS

Ask the average person today what they know about the teachings of Jesus Christ and you will most likely hear: "He taught to love your enemies, to forgive and turn the other cheek, and of course, the golden rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." There are other teachings, however, that don't tend to be as familiar. All the Bible verses below were spoken by Jesus. Some of them may surprise you.

Jesus taught that few people will go to Heaven. He warned...

*"Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."* Matt. 7:13-14.

One reason is because most don't see themselves as 'that bad of a person'. But Jesus taught that we are all serious sinners.

*"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."* Mark 7:21-23

Jesus taught that we need to repent of our sin. *"For I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* Matt. 9:13.

And since unrepentant sinners are not allowed in Heaven, Jesus taught that Hell is the place where they are sent:

*"The Son of man [Jesus] shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."* Matt. 13:41-42

*"And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."* Matt. 5:30

*"Fear him, which.. hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."* Luke 12:5

In Hell, a person does not simply cease to exist because Jesus taught that Hell is a place of eternal torment.

*"And in hell he (unsaved sinner) lift up his eyes, being in torments."* Luke 16:23

*"And (God's angels) shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."* Matt. 13:50

... Jesus taught that hell was a place of eternal fire that burns forever . . .

*"Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:"* Matt. 25:41

*"And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:"* Mark 9:43.

Again... Jesus taught that a person must repent in order to avoid Hell.

*"The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."* Mark 1:15

*"I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."* Luke 5:32

*"Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."* Luke 15:10

To repent means to change your mind about sin and anything erroneous you may be trusting in to get you to Heaven such as baptism, good deeds, church membership or self-righteousness, and place ALL your trust in Jesus' payment for your sins, making Him the one and only Lord and Savior of your life. This is necessary because Jesus taught that you must believe that He died for our sins as the Savior of the world.

*"I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."* John 8:24

Repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ results in being born again, and Jesus taught that you must be born again:

*"Jesus answered and said... Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* John 3:3

*"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."* John 3:7

If you were to die today, are you 100% sure you would go to Heaven? God loves you and wants you to be sure. The Bible says

**You can be sure** (1 John 5:13).

Have you been spiritually born again? If not, please carefully read pages 6 & 7 or contact Faith for Life for a one on one Bible study. ■

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

# PALM SUNDAY REMINDS US THAT WE CAN TRUST OUR BIBLES!

Many today are still waiting for the promised Messiah to come when actually He has already come at the only possible appointed time in history. In the Bible, God predicted the triumphant entry of Jesus into the city of Jerusalem on a donkey (Palm Sunday) hundreds of years before it happened...*to the day!*

In 538 B.C. God inspired the prophet Daniel to write the following bold prediction:

**Daniel 9:25** – *“From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto (until) the Messiah the Prince shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks: the street shall be built again, and the wall.”*

**Keep in mind this was written 538 years before the birth of Jesus!**

Jerusalem had been destroyed 40 years earlier by Babylon and King Nebuchadnezzar. Babylon was later conquered by the Medo-Persian Empire in 538 BC (in fulfillment of prophecy).

In this prophecy, Daniel claimed there would be 69 “weeks” (7 units) of years (69 x 7 = 483 years) between the issuing of a decree to rebuild Jerusalem and the appearance of the Messiah (Jesus). In 464 BC, Artaxerxes, a Persian king, ascended to the throne. Nehemiah, the Jewish cupbearer to King Artaxerxes, was deeply concerned about the ruined condition of Jerusalem following the defeat of the Jews (Nehemiah 1:1-4). As a result, he petitioned the king:

**Nehemiah 2:5** *“And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favor in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers’ sepulchers (Jerusalem), that I may build it.”*

According to the Old Testament, the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem was issued “in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king” (Nehemiah 2:1). The first month on the Jewish calendar month was

Nisan, and since no day is given, it is normally assumed the date would be understood as the first, the Jewish New Year’s Day. And, in the Julian calendar we presently use, the corresponding date would be March 5, 444 BC.

So when did the Messiah appear? On numerous occasions Jesus prevented his followers from revealing His identity as the Messiah. He frequently performed miracles and swore His disciples to silence, saying his “hour has not yet come” (John 2:4, 7:6). But, on March 30, 33 A.D., when he entered Jerusalem on a donkey, he rebuked the Pharisees’ who protested and encouraged the whole multitude of his disciples as they shouted, “Blessed is the King of Israel that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Messiah). Jesus even said, “If these (people) remain silent, the stones will cry out” (Luke 19:38-40). This was the day on which Jesus was publicly declared the Messiah.

Let’s compare then, the date of the decree (March 5, 444 BC) with the date of Jesus’ declaration (March 30, 33 AD). Before we begin, we must clarify an important feature of the Jewish prophetic year: It was comprised of twelve 30 day months (it had 360 days, not 365 days like our calendar).

Since Daniel states 69 weeks of seven years each, and each year has 360 days, the following equation calculates the number of days between March 5, 444 BC (the twentieth year of Artaxerxes) and March 30, 33 AD (the day Jesus entered Jerusalem on the donkey)  $69 \times 7 \times 360 \text{ days} = 173,880 \text{ days}$ .

Now let’s compare Daniel’s prophecy with the true interval between the two events. The time span from 444 BC to 33 AD is 476 years (remember 1 BC to 1 AD is only one year). And if we multiply 476 years x 365.2421879 days

per year (corrected for leap years), we get the result of 173,855 days (25 days off). Close, but not precisely what Daniel predicted. Now let’s add back the difference between March 5 and March 30 (25 days). What is our total? You guessed it, 173,880 days, exactly as Daniel predicted.

The ancient Jews were careful to use prophecy as a measuring stick. If someone claimed to be a prophet, yet his predictions did not come true, he was abandoned and his writings did not make it into the Canon of Scripture:

**Deuteronomy 18:22** *“When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously.”*

Only the Creator-God can predict the beginning from the end. This prophecy of the triumphant entry of Jesus into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday) is only one of hundreds of prophecies given in the Bible to prove its validity as the Word of God. **You can trust your Bible!** ■

*“I believe the Bible is the best gift God has given to man.”*  
— Abraham Lincoln

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# IS FAITH BECOMING IRRELEVANT?

BY: PASTOR BRIAN WEISS

It has been well documented in recent years that many young adults are leaving the churches in which they were raised, and in some cases are altogether rejecting the faith of their parents. Secular thinking seems far more common among Millennials than in those generations which preceded. More young adults identify themselves as Atheist or Agnostic than ever before. In a 2017 Lifeway Research Poll it was revealed that about 66% of young adults will stop attending church in the first few years after leaving their parent's house. This is a very concerning statistic to those of us who want to see our children grow up to love and serve God.

## THE DIFFICULT QUESTION WE MUST ASK OURSELVES IS WHETHER THE FAITH THAT WE HOLD SO DEAR IS IRRELEVANT IN THIS DAY AND AGE.

Is it possible that as time progresses, and the world advances, the beliefs of our Christian forefathers no longer resonate with young people? Some are quick to declare that we must not force our children to believe a certain way, but rather leave it to their own personal choice. As a parent myself, I recognize that my children will have to make their own decisions as they enter adulthood, yet that does not absolve me of any and all responsibility to prepare them to make the right decisions. God has entrusted me with the care and upbringing of my children, and a big part of that includes teaching them the truth of God's Word. So, what can parents do to help their

children see the importance of living for God?

We must emphasize the need for a personal relationship with God. The Bible describes true Christianity as a life that is committed to knowing and following God. This cannot be overemphasized, as so much religion consists of ritual and man-made tradition. The truth is Jesus is a person, not a religion. He calls us to a relationship in which we find forgiveness, contentment, peace, joy, and fellowship with Him. The first step in this relationship is to come to a personal knowledge of Jesus Christ by receiving Him as Savior. Jesus said in John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father but by me." Notice that Jesus didn't say that He is a good way, or even the best way, but rather the only way to the Father.

It is in Jesus, not in a church or denomination, nor is it in our good works that we find salvation. The Bible says in Titus 3:5 "*Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us...*" and in Ephesians 2:8-9 "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast.*" When we enter a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, He forgives our sin, and invites us to a life of fellowship with Him. 1 John 1:7 "*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.*"

It is in a daily walk with God that we find relevance in our faith. If everything that we teach our children about God is only intellectual facts, and not a genuine love for Him, it should come as no surprise that they would turn away from the truth. If that is case, it could be said that our beliefs are irrelevant. If, however, we can teach them to seek God personally, and then demonstrate to them a life of genuine love and service to God, it will become more of a reality to them. We can, and must encourage our children to accept Christ as their personal Savior, and walk with Him each day in prayer and study of the Word of God. If someone only knows about the Bible, and about God, but doesn't know God, their faith is shallow and irrelevant. But if they know Him personally, because they have been saved, and have grown to walk with Him, that person's faith is the most genuine and authentic part of life.

In addition, there are several characteristics that I have observed in families that seem to influence the spiritual direction in their children's lives:

### 1. IF GOD ISN'T REAL TO THE PARENTS, THE CHILDREN ARE NOT LIKELY TO TAKE SPIRITUAL THINGS SERIOUSLY.

It is absolutely imperative that you, as the parent, know and love the Lord. It is not enough to simply take your kids to church, and hope that someone there will be the influence that they need. You must come to know Christ as your Savior, and then

## Is Faith Becoming Irrelevant?

*continued from previous page*

demonstrate a sincere love for Him in your daily life.

### **2. IF THE EMPHASIS CONCERNING SPIRITUAL MATTERS IS PRIMARILY DUTY INSTEAD OF LOVE, THE REACTION WILL LIKELY BE TO ESCAPE THE RULES, RATHER THAN TO SEEK THE LORD.**

So often in Christian homes, much emphasis is placed on “doing right”, more than on “being right”. While it is necessary to require our children to behave with respect and obedience, we must also create an atmosphere of love and grace in our homes. We must teach our children that what is most important is to have a heart for God, and for their parents. If their hearts are

right, good behavior will naturally follow. Ephesians 6:4 *“And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”* This verse teaches us that there needs to be a balance between discipline and love in the home. If we are lacking in either, we are likely to produce rebellion and bitterness.

### **3. IF THERE IS NO SUBSTANCE OR FOUNDATION TO THE BELIEFS BEING TAUGHT, CHILDREN WILL BE EASILY SWAYED WHEN CONFRONTED WITH OTHER IDEAS.**

Often, well meaning parents will teach their children truth, without explaining why it is true. Some people seem to believe that “because I said so” is a good enough answer. It is true that our children must be taught

to obey whether or not they understand the reasons. However, parents who desire their children to be grounded in their faith, must be willing to spend some time teaching and instructing their children. Especially when it comes to spiritual truths, we need to be ready with a Bible answer, even when the difficult questions arise. This requires that we are diligent in our study of the Word of God. Furthermore, it is imperative to raise children in a church that plainly teaches the Bible, not just man’s opinion.

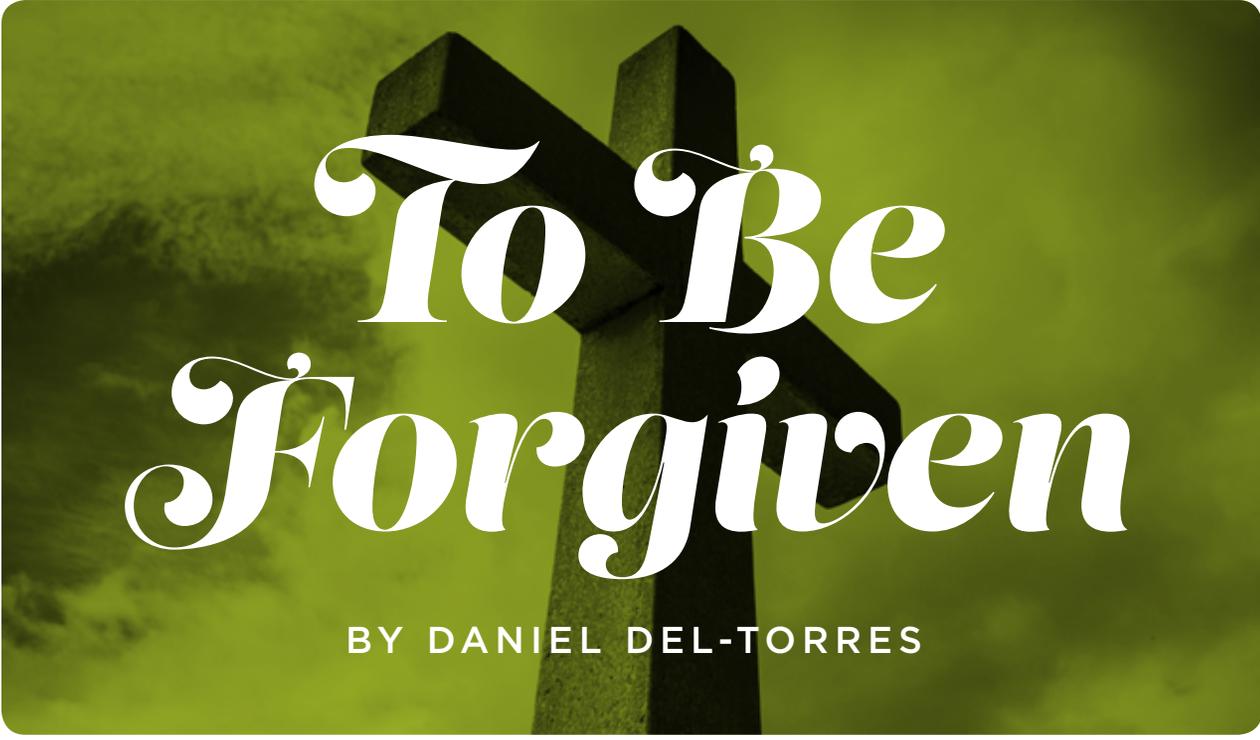
Friend, if you are concerned for your children’s spiritual well-being, the best thing you can do is to know Jesus personally (see pages 6&7), and be growing in your walk with Him. Teach your children how to seek and know God. And get into a Bible preaching church where your family can grow, and flourish spiritually. ■

# *abortion*

This year marked the 46th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, and reminded us that since the historic Supreme Court ruling on January 22, 1973, over 60 million babies have been aborted (the combined current population of Florida and California). In 1984, President Ronald Reagan issued the first proclamation designating January 22nd as the National Sanctity of Human Life Day. He

famously said, “I’ve noticed that everyone who is for abortion has already been born.” President Reagan also stated, “I believe that until and unless someone can establish that the unborn child is not a living human being, then that child is already protected by the Constitution which guarantees life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness to all of us.” Tragically, the state of New

York just countered Reagan’s point by redefining a person as “a human being who has been born and is alive.” By such definition, New York is declaring that the term “baby” only applies to a child that has been born. It’s hard to imagine that such insanity is deemed logical and progressive by so many. ■



# To Be Forgiven

BY DANIEL DEL-TORRES

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**“BLESSED ARE THEY WHOSE INIQUITIES ARE FORGIVEN,  
AND WHOSE SINS ARE COVERED.” ROMANS 4:7**

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The verse you just read describes what many people have spent a lifetime seeking. To be forgiven is why millions participate in religion. It is why many are baptized, believing that water will somehow wash away their sins. Others trust in their good deeds or their attempt to keep the Ten Commandments hoping their efforts will merit them forgiveness. The list of things people will trust goes on and on, but sadly they never seem to fully get rid of the person’s sense of guilt before God.

Perhaps you have been trying to get your sins forgiven. Maybe you’re trusting in one of the things previously mentioned to make yourself forgiven by God. Do you feel totally guiltless before Him. If you did, then Heaven would be a sure thing. You wouldn’t have to wonder if you’ll go there when you die. True forgiveness of sins would result in total assurance of Heaven. But if you can’t say: “I know for sure I’m going to Heaven when I die,” then what you’re trusting in has not gotten you the forgiveness you seek. It’s as simple as that.

Fortunately the Bible, God’s Word, tells us exactly how forgiveness is obtained.

It teaches that: “...Christ died for our sins...” (1 Cor. 15:3). And it is because of His death and shed blood, that you can obtain forgiveness. The Bible, referring to Christ, says that: “We have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:14).

All the good deeds, church membership, baptism, and self-righteousness in the world will not “persuade” God to forgive you, because none of those acts involve death and shed blood. The Bible says: “Without shedding of blood is no remission [forgiveness]” (Heb. 9:22). Jesus Himself during the Lord’s supper told His disciples: “For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins” (Matthew 6:28). And as for water washing away sin, the Bible says that Christ: “Washed us from our sins in his own blood” (Rev. 1:5).

Forgiveness of sins can only be obtained by trusting in what Christ has done on the cross. There is no other way. Jesus said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). He told His disciples “That repentance and remission [forgiveness] of sins should

be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem” (Luke 24:47). In fact, Jesus specifically told the Apostle Paul to go to the Gentiles and tell them about His death on the cross so, “They may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me” (Acts 26:18). This is exactly what Paul did, as he preached: “Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man [Jesus] is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins” (Acts 13:38).

During his sermons, Paul would show that Christ’s death was foretold by the Old Testament prophets. He said: “To him [Jesus] give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission [forgiveness] of sins” Acts 10:43. Paul’s entire ministry emphasized the fact that forgiveness of sins is through Christ and Him alone. He said: “But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Rom. 5:8-9). God had sent His Son, “To be a propitiation [payment for sins] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God” (Rom. 3:25).

On one occasion, Paul reminded the church at Colosse how Christ had saved them, “Having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross” (Col. 2:13-14). He also reminded the church at Ephesus of Christ’s blood-bought forgiveness when he told them, “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:32). The Apostle John once reminded some Christians of what had made their forgiveness possible, when he said, “I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his [Jesus’] name’s sake” (1 John 2:12).

We have shown you all this to stress the fact that forgiveness of sins can only

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## To Be Forgiven

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be obtained through the Son of God. *“If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart [i.e. Trust] that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved”* (Rom. 10:9). To ignore this and continue to trust in your baptism, good deeds, good behavior, church membership, self-righteousness, or anything other than Christ, is to make His death on the cross mean nothing. Paul said: *“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain [for nothing]”* (Gal. 2:21).

To treat the death of God’s Son as nothing, is to bring the wrath of an angry Father upon you. The Bible warns that, *“if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries”* (Heb. 10:26-27).

So please take the time, think about what you have read, and consider the words of

Jesus Christ Himself: *“I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins”* (John 8:24). Our Lord added in Luke

13:3, *“Except ye repent [change your mind], ye shall all likewise perish”*

Not far from New York, there is an old cemetery with a grave which has inscribed upon its headstone just one word—  
“Forgiven.”

There is no name, no date of birth or death. There is no epitaph, no fulsome eulogy—just that one word, “Forgiven.”

But that is the greatest thing that can be said of any man, or written upon his grave, “Forgiven.” Have you experienced forgiveness? ■

# Abundant Living WITH ETERNITY IN VIEW

BY: PASTOR AUSTIN WARTNER

**John 10:10 – *“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”***  
(Jesus Christ)

When we contemplate life, it is certainly a very short journey. The Bible says in James 4:14, *“For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.”* Understanding the shortness of life makes one contemplate, “What I am going to do with the life I have been given?” People do all sorts of things with their time, most of which is concentrated on the here and now. People will fritter away time and fail to realize they can’t get it back. Personally, I don’t want to be a person that comes to the end of my life and realize I wasted it trying to entertain myself or involve myself in something that has no

eternal value. I believe, to live abundantly as a Christian, one must change his viewpoint and get a proper perspective of life; one that has eternity in view.

Life doesn’t end at the grave. This life is really just a ‘dressing room’ for eternity, and we spend way more time on the other side of death’s door than we do this side. That may sound a bit depressing to some, but it is a reality that needs to be addressed. People aren’t concerned when an insurance agent tries to sell life insurance to them, or a lawyer tries to write a will for them. However, when a preacher asks people if they are prepared for eternity, they don’t want to think about it. They push off the thought and will use the noise of this world to drown out reality. As a result, they miss the whole point of life. When we live with eternity in view, we understand

why we are here and where we are eventually going. We can live abundantly because we have the answers to life’s greatest questions and it’ll direct the decisions we make now. Without the answers, so many clamor after what they can make out of this life and often find themselves living empty lives. Jesus promised to give people an abundant life, and that starts with a proper perspective about it.

## Eternal Preparation

The first step in having eternity in view is being prepared for it. That means knowing for sure you are on your way to heaven. The Bible says that, before we die, we can know for sure that heaven is our home, *“These things have I written unto you that believe on*

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## Abundant Living with Eternity in View

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*the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life...*" (I John 5:13). I remember the first time somebody showed me that verse, I was amazed that I did not have to 'wait and find out' if I made it. Do you know, for sure, heaven is your home after this life is over? Many assume it is, but deep in the recesses of their heart, they don't know for sure and it scares them. However, it doesn't have to be that way. Jesus came to deliver us from that fear of the unknown after death. The Bible says, *"that through death he (Jesus) might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"* (Hebrews 2:14-15). When Christ came and died on Calvary's cross, He provided the way to heaven. Jesus said in John 14:6, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* If we are willing to repent of our sin, and trust Christ as our Savior, He'll save us and give us that assurance about our eternity. Have you had a time when you've trusted Christ to save you? In order to live abundantly, our eternal destination must be settled.

### Eternal Plans

Once a person has his eternity settled, the purpose of life comes into focus much more. According to the Bible, we are to live for the

Lord, Who provides purpose and meaning in life. The Bible says, *"If ye then be risen with Christ (saved), seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth"* (Colossians 3:1-2). If you know Christ as your Savior, your affections should be more towards the heavenly; not the earthly. As I mentioned earlier, many people live for the temporal; however, one day the temporal will no longer exist! When people are investing their money, they are looking for an investment that will yield good dividends. The Bible says that one day this Earth is going to pass away, and all the works accomplished in it will be gone (II Peter 3:10-13). So, investing our time, treasure and talent into the temporal things of life pays back poor dividends. Instead, if people invest in the eternal, they would find they will receive huge dividends in the end. Jesus said, *"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"* (Matthew 6:19-21). According to Christ, the best investment that brings about an abundant life is in the eternal! Somebody once stated, "One life will soon be passed, and only what's done for Christ will last." What are you investing your life in?

### Eternal Place

If you know the Lord as your personal Savior, then you have a bright future ahead! According to the Bible, heaven will be like nothing ever experienced here on Earth, *"But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."* (I Corinthians 2:9). The Bible describes heaven as having streets of gold, pearly gates and eternal bliss. In fact, all pain, sorrow, and crying will be gone. That's because sin, the culprit of suffering in this world, will be eradicated, once and for all. Life doesn't end at the grave if you are saved; it just enters a whole new and blissful place. Jesus said, *"In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you"* (John 14:2). Great things lie ahead for the child of God.

Living life with eternity in view certainly gives us purpose and hope for this life. Again, so many don't know why they are here, how they got here, and where they are going. God supplies all those answers and gives us a proper perspective on life. I hope that if you don't know Christ as your Savior, you'll respond to His love for you and get things settled about your eternity. If you do, life makes much more sense and can be lived much more abundantly. ■

# Loneliness

A recent report noted that "Kodokushi" is escalating in Japan. The word means "lonely death" and it refers to the phenomenon of elderly people dying alone and not being discovered for some time. Sadly, as this article noted, this is common in Japan. Americans don't have a similar word, but many are slowly dying of loneliness in the midst of crowds as they wonder if anybody even notices them.

On January 17, 2018, Prime Minister Theresa May appointed Britain's first Minister for Loneliness. In a country of 66 million people,

more than 9 million British say they are often or always lonely. May said, "For far too many, loneliness is the sad reality of modern life." The British lawmaker said, "loneliness doesn't discriminate." The Harvard Business Review cited research that loneliness has the same effect as smoking 15 cigarettes a day, and also noted "America's loneliest people are non-heterosexual, and non-religious."

Loneliness is an epidemic, but there's a great antidote... Hebrews 13:5 - *"For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."*

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