

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*

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

FROM THE MINISTRY OF FARGO BAPTIST CHURCH

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A PASSION *for* LIFE

A Message by Pastor Tony Scheving

*“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”
(Ecclesiastes 9:10)*

Years ago there was a mortician with a sense of humor who had a sign in his window that read *Why Walk Around Half Dead When We Can Bury You for \$69.95?* Do you have a passion for life? The Bible says *“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work...in the grave, whither thou goest”* (Eccl 9:10). The tireless space scientist Dr. James Van Allen didn't have the usual mail tray on his desk that read “in and out.” He had four slots that read, “pressing, urgent, frantic, and overdue!” Unlike Dr. Van Allen, many people go through life in a docile and sedated state, making plans but lacking the ambition to follow through. The road of life is truly paved with good intentions, but one accomplished deed is

still worth more than a 100 brilliant plans.

OUR ADMONITION

The verse above says, *“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.”* That speaks of passion, vigor and zeal! President Harry Truman said, “I've studied the lives of great men and women and found that those at the top all have one thing in common... they live their lives with enthusiasm, energy and hard work. The Bible says *“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily”* (Col 3:23). During his lifetime, an old-time circuit

riding preacher preached three sermons a day for over 54 years (over 59,000 sermons). He averaged 5000 miles a year on horseback and spent over 200,000 miles in the saddle during his ministry. He also wrote a four-volume commentary while pastoring a church until age 83. He became apologetic at that time because he could only write for 15 hours a day without his eyes getting sore. At age 86 he still preached twice a day riding horseback over 30 miles daily! How do we measure up when it comes to a passion for life? As someone once said, a pessimist is someone

who needs a kick in the “can'ts.” Do you sleepwalk through life just “going through the

motions?” The Bible mentions King Hezekiah and says; *“In every work that he began in the service of the house of God...to seek his God, he did it with all his heart”* (II Chron 31:21). Any old dead log can float downstream. God is seeking Christians who will stop dragging their feet as they shuffle through life, and put their whole heart into it.

might; for there is no work... in the grave, whither thou goest.” This life is the only opportunity we will ever have. Christianity doesn't need any more sluggards.

The Bible says *“the soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing”* (Prov 13:4). It's been said that the first step in making your dreams come true is to wake up! An old-time preacher once said “Give me 300 men who fear nothing but God...hate nothing but sin...and are determined to know nothing but Christ...and we will turn the world upside down.” Jesus even said while still a 12-year-old boy *“I must be about my Father's business”* (Lu 2:49). Later on He showed great passion by going to the cross and doing His Father's will (Jn 4:34). In the Greek language in which the Bible

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OUR ACTIVITY

William Wrigley (of chewing gum and Wrigley Field fame) came to Chicago as a young man with \$50 in his pocket, and turned it into millions. He was often quoted as saying “nothing great is ever achieved without enthusiasm.” Why should we do our best in life? The verse above states *“do it with thy*



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FAITH *for life*

PASSION FOR LIFE

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was originally written, the word “enthusiasm” means “one possessed by God.”

In I Cor 5:10, the Apostle Paul speaks of laboring abundantly by the grace of God working in his life. Are you a Christian who is really fervent in spirit or are you just

going through the motions living a bland life?

Back in the 1920s, Thomas Edison and Henry Ford visited their good friend Luther Burbank out on the west coast. Luther had them both sign his guest book, which included their names and interests.

After Edison had written in the book, Ford started to sign the registry when he paused to notice what Edison had written. Under “name” he had written “Thomas Edison.” Under “interests” Edison had written “everything!” Where are the Christians who will take an interest in the things of God? We only live once on this earth, and a life is too precious to waste. The Bible speaks of making good use of our time (Eph 5:16).

OUR APPOINTMENT

Our study verse says “*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work...*

in the grave, whither thou goest” (Eccl 9:10). We all have an appointment with the grave. The Bible says “*it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*” (Heb 9:27).

Many years ago, a friendly undertaker in Washington State used to sign his letters; “eventually yours.” We are all racing toward the grave, and a lifetime truly flies by. What kind of a legacy will we leave behind? You can travel the world and view the Great Wall of China, Stonehedge, the Pyramids, the Coliseum, or the Catacombs. Those who built them are long gone, and one day we will join them on the other side. We will all leave something behind.

In a sense, we’re planting trees we will never sit under. What will we leave behind? The Bible says “*the memory of the just is blessed*” (Prov 10:7). We’ve all been given potential to influence others. Do we inspire those around us with our passion for life? St. Paul told some folks in the city of Corinth; “*your*

zeal hath provoked many” (II Cor 9:2).

Does our exuberance inspire anyone? We only get one chance at life. Whatever needs to be done must be done now with a heart of zeal. The Bible even says in Deut. 6:5 “*Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*” In Proverbs 3:5 it says; “*Trust in the LORD with all thine heart.*” The Bible also tells us to obey our God with all of our heart and soul (Deut 30:2). It may be high time for some Christians to stop moping around. Too many are living an inward life preoccupied with “self” and focused on their own needs. Consider one more time the instruction of our text; “*Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work...in the grave, whither thou goest*” (Eccl 9:10). ■

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HOW TO MAKE Marriage WORK

BY: RALPH WOERNER

LEADING THE WAY

Certain individuals are trying to tell us that traditional marriage as we've known it over the years isn't working anymore—that it's on its way out. I strongly disagree. For better or for worse, marriage and family have always been the building blocks of society and a primary source of human happiness.

According to one survey, 89% of individuals over 29 years of age, listed a "happy family" as the most important goal of their lives. The need is not to abandon marriage and family, but to strengthen it. Only in the context of the home can human worth and happiness at its highest level be experienced. Only in a stable marriage can a man and a woman share their love, their joys, their sorrows, and their dreams with one another in the deepest kind of way. Only in a stable family can they give to their children the love, security and happiness they need to become mature and caring adults.

Just because many marriages experience a certain amount of difficulty, or even because some of them fail, is no reason to assume that the institution

itself is at fault. Marriage, like everything else, has its problems for the simple reason that it involves two individuals who are less than perfect. Husbands and wives succeed by working through their difficulties. At times they may feel like throwing in the towel, but believing in their ability to win, they stubbornly reject this option. The cause for their success lies more in their character qualities than anything else. It's not the wedding ceremony, or the piece of paper. It's the depth of their commitment that makes the union succeed. The reason some marriages succeed in the face of stubborn difficulties, while others fail, is one of character and commitment. Marriage is not to be condemned when a couple fails. The fault lies elsewhere. This said, let me mention a couple of things which are critical to the establishment of a good marriage: effective leadership and right priorities.

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Nowhere is effective leadership more crucial than in the home. A family without an effective leader faces trouble constantly. We've all observed leaderless situations. An athletic team lacking in leadership

loses. A business lacking in leadership goes under. A government lacking in leadership is overthrown. When effective leadership in the home is present there's a sense of order. When it's lacking, there's a sense of chaos.

The best guidebook on marriage has been around for centuries. The Bible leaves no question about who God says the leader of the family should be. *"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church"* (Eph 5:23).

"I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God" (I Cor 11:3)

The man who doesn't provide effective leadership in his home fails God and his family. Ineffective leadership falls into three categories.

First, there's the man who thinks being head of the family means being accountable to no one. His time is his own; no one

ever tells him what to do. The only memory his children have of him is the back of his head as he rushes out the door for his next hunting trip, the next meeting, or the next game.

Second, there is the man who thinks being head of the family means dictatorial dominion. He demands his own way in everything. In conflict he's always right; he can never be wrong. Given the opportunity to make home a heaven on earth, this man creates hell on earth for those around him.

Third, there's the man who doesn't lead at all. His home is filled with chaos. He wavers on decisions and never says yes or no firmly enough to make it stick.

He's failing when it comes to family leadership, yet he blames his wife for problems encountered in the home.

In contrast, an effective leader has a clear understanding of what he wants. To accomplish this he sets boundaries, enforces rules, assigns responsibility appropriately. He does these things lovingly, putting the interests of his wife and children ahead of his own.

RIGHT PRIORITIES

To make a great marriage, a man must also

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Preparing for Good Health By Paul Winje

Amos 4:12 says “*prepare to meet thy God*”. We would be foolish to think we could be ready for this meeting if we have done nothing to *prepare* beforehand; the same is true regarding our health.

What are we doing to prepare and plan for good health? Many of us fail to exercise, eat better, or make the necessary health changes because we don't *prepare* to do so. Romans 13:14 says “*But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*” In other words, we should do everything we can to make it hard for ourselves

to fail when we come to those “moments of decision.” Why? Without the proper *preparation*, we normally choose unhealthy ways to fill our bellies and our time. If we have a tendency to dine out, we should plan our meals for the week or bring our lunch to work. If we tend to reach for unhealthy snacks, we should purchase plenty of healthy snacks and make them readily available. If we find we are not exercising, we may consider finding an exercise partner or setting aside specific times during the week. We could pre-wash and pre-cut fruits and vegetables to increase our likelihood of eating

our daily allowance. All of these are examples of making healthy decisions ahead of time through *preparation*. Doing so will make us much more likely to reach our goals and attain better health. ■



“Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything.”

— Albert Einstein

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have his priorities in good order. This means he views his family as his greatest treasure and invests his time accordingly. Jerry's company offered him a position in management. This would entail weekend conferences at the whim of the president, a hotline on his night table, frequent plane trips all over the country, plus breakfast and dinner with company personnel several times a week.

“I'd make a lot of money,” Jerry said, “but I love Joan and the kids too much to accept your offer. Give the job to someone else.” Jerry had his priorities straight. He became a successful husband and father because he shaped his concept of success around his family.

If large returns are expected in the future, sizable investments of time must be made in the present. The man who realizes this gladly pays the price to reach his goals for his homelife. The fellow who took the job that Jerry turned down is going to have a lot of money. However, if my experience is reliable, the man with the cash is going to look at Jerry's family one day and say: “I'd give everything I own to have a family like yours!”

Cultivating a stable home isn't easy. The price is high and the rewards are late in coming. When they do arrive, however, they make the sacrifice very worthwhile! ■

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On the Lighter Side

“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.” Proverbs 17:22

One day a big red fire truck zoomed by an elementary school full of first graders. There was a Dalmatian dog in the front seat of the truck. Little Susie said, “Teacher, is the dog there to help find people in the burning building?” Before the teacher could respond, little Tommy spoke up and said, “Everybody knows that they use the dog to find the fire hydrants!”

My grandson was visiting one day when he asked, “Grandma, do you know how you and God are alike?” I blushed in humility while I asked, “No, how are we alike?” “You're both old,” he replied.

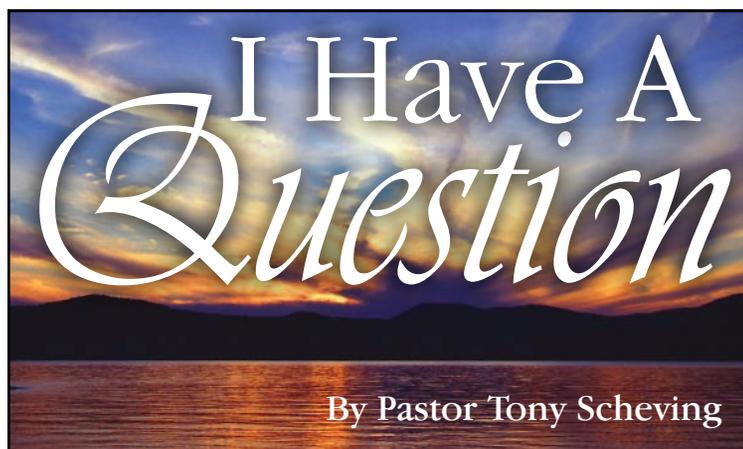
When my grandson asked me how old I was, I teasingly replied, “I'm not sure.” “Look in your underwear, Grandpa,” he advised. “Mine says I'm four to six.”

Little Susie's aunt was visiting over the holidays. She inquired of little Susie, “When you get to be as big as I am, what are you going to do?” “Go on a diet,” said little Susie in an honest tone of voice.

When Daniel's father returned home from work, the teenager knew he'd have to explain his dismal grades so he tried a creative approach. He avoided the subject by asking, “Dad, do you remember how you said you'd give me \$50 if I passed all of my classes?” His father nodded that he recalled the deal. Daniel then smiled and declared, “Well, I've got some great news. I just saved you 50 bucks.”

“Love is blind, but marriage is a real eye-opener.”

Soon after they married, Eric asked his wife, “Would you have married me if my father hadn't left me a fortune?” The new bride replied, “Honey, I would have married you no matter who left you a fortune.”



Where Do Little Children Go When They Die?

There are few things sadder than the loss of a baby or toddler. Over the years I've done a number of heartbreaking funerals involving babies who never lived to grow up. Many people have wondered what the Bible has to say about this matter. What happens to children who die without being able to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior? The opinions of various people run the gamut. I've even heard from a protestant minister who felt that aborted babies wind up in hell because they were never baptized or confirmed. Of course this is cruel and outrageous theology if you consider what the Bible teaches. Where do little children go when they die?

The requirement for getting to heaven is to be born again according to Jesus. He said in John 3:3, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Of course this is impossible for a child who is not able to exercise the repentance and faith necessary to be saved. So what is his fate? God has given us clues in the Bible to help us answer this question. In II Samuel 12, a child is born to King David out of an adulterous relationship with a woman named Bathsheba. This was

a scandal, and also an awful testimony to the heathen nations watching Israel. God could not allow this sin to go unchecked, and the baby boy ended up dying seven days after he was born (before being circumcised, which would have taken place on the eighth day). King David (also a prophet) made an important statement in verse 23: "But now he (the child) is dead...can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." David spoke of going to be with the child one day. Where did the child go?... Wherever David would go one day. Was David going to heaven or hell?

David is the most mentioned name in the whole Bible next to Jesus. In spite of his sin of adultery, David was still a saved man and testified in the famous twenty-third Psalm "I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever" (i.e., heaven). So David went to heaven when he died. What David was saying at the death of his baby was, "I will see him again in heaven one day." Notice that this baby didn't go to purgatory or some limbo type of place. There is no such place according to the Bible. The baby went to heaven, and he went there immediately according to the Bible (II Cor 5:8).

Some would argue that if a baby is not baptized, he can't go to heaven; but a careful study of the Bible would show otherwise. There was a thief on a cross next to Jesus when He was crucified. In his dying hours that thief professed faith in Christ and trusted Jesus as his Savior. Jesus told the thief, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43) The thief was never baptized, but according to Jesus he went to heaven at death. According to the Bible, baptism has never had anything to do with going to heaven. In 313 A.D. the Roman Emperor Constantine was the first one to embrace the false teaching of baptismal regeneration (i.e., the teaching that baptism will make you a child of God and wash your sins away). By 370 A.D., they were baptizing infants and by 416 A.D., infant baptism had become mandatory in the Roman Empire. Yet it is a manmade tradition, not found anywhere in the Bible.

In the third chapter of the book of Job, we find another example of babies going to heaven when they die. In verse eleven, the man Job describes a "stillborn birth" where the baby is dead when delivered. Many parents have agonized over this situation. In the next several verses, Job describes how the baby is in a "better place" of bliss and rest (heaven). One of the greatest proofs that small children go to heaven when they die, came from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself. Speaking of children in Matt 18:14, He said plainly, "it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish" (or go to hell). When the child is too young to decide, God decides for

them. He does not hold them accountable for their sin nature because they are not able to understand it spiritually. God takes great notice of children and has a special place in His heart for them. The Bible says in Psalm 127:3, "Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD."

Children are precious heirlooms given by God. When Eve had a baby, she said, "I have gotten a man child from the Lord." Children are special and God loves them. Jesus Christ always made time for children. God does not hold them accountable until they are older. In the case of the prophet Jonah, God spared the city of Nineveh from



*Psalm 127:3
says, "Lo,
children are
an heritage of
the Lord."*

destruction, partly because of all the children that were in it. God said in Jonah 4:11, "should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six

score thousand (120,000) persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand" (small children). When God judged the rebellion of the Jews before bringing them into the Promised Land, He spared those age 20 and under, and did not hold them accountable.

These examples from the Word of God point to an unmistakable truth: small children are not accountable and in the tragic event of their early death, they go straight to heaven. Millions of children throughout the world die yearly through famine or other causes. God has promised to take them all to heaven (Mt 18:14). This is a comfort to know.

My daughter works as a volunteer to professionally photograph deceased babies as a keepsake for the parents. After many parents experience this tragedy, they ask, "Why?" Then the very next question is "Where?"... "Where is my child now?" Like King David said, you cannot bring the child back to you, but you can one day go to be with the child by being truly born again (see pages 6-7 of Faith for Life). If you are currently reading this and you have experienced the loss of a child, my heart goes out to you. God cares as well, and can relate to your loss. He knows how it feels to lose a child, as He allowed His only Son to die for our sins. ■

If you have a question you may email Pastor Scheving at RevSkev@faithforlife.net. Also, for a more in-depth sermon on this subject, you can purchase a CD sermon for \$3 from Fargo Baptist Church, 3303 23 Ave S, Fargo, ND 58103.

HOW TO HAVE A RIGHT *Relationship* WITH **GOD** GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

There are three things 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.

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. The 10 commandments reveal our sinful condition.

#1 "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). No one can claim that they have never put anything ahead of God

(money, career, another person, own goals, pleasure, sin & vice, etc).

#2 "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image" (Exodus 20:4). Many have been guilty of inventing a God of their own imagination and liking (a "God that overlooks sin and takes everyone to heaven").

#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). Read it carefully—are you guilty of ever doing this?

#4 "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8). Have you always been faithful in this area?

#5 "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Exodus 20:12). Who can say that they have always honored their parents?

#6 "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13). While most have never committed murder, Jesus clarifies this commandment when he tells us that to even hate or be bitter at someone is murder of the heart (Matthew 5:21-2).

#7 "Thou shalt not commit adultery" (Exodus 20:14). While many have never committed adultery, Jesus tells us in the Bible that to even lust after the opposite sex is adultery of the heart (Matthew 5:27-8).

#8 "Thou shalt not steal" (Exodus 20:15). Who could claim that they've never taken anything that doesn't belong to them?

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

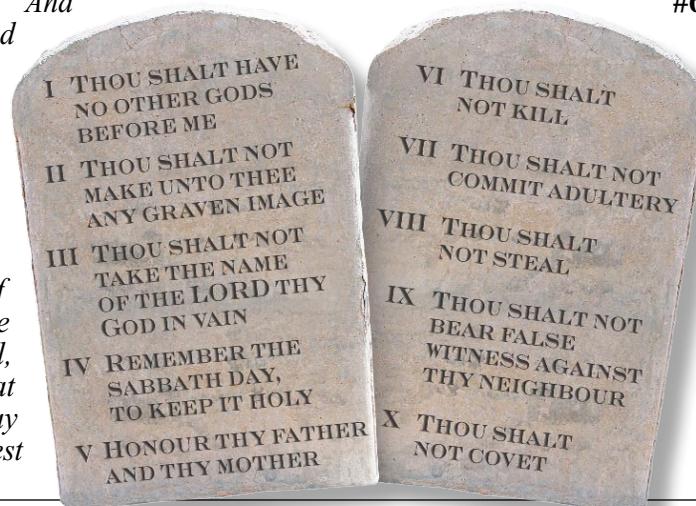
#10 "Thou shalt not covet" (Exodus 20:17). Have you ever desired anything you didn't need, or that wasn't yours?

Many places in the Bible tell us that liars, adulterers, idolaters, thieves, the covetous, etc., will spend eternity in hell (Revelation 21:8, I Corinthians 6:9-10, Galatians 5:19-21).

Romans 3:10 tells us, *"As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one."*

Romans 3:23 says *"for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."*

Romans 6:23 explains that sin has a penalty: *"For the wages of sin is death"* (hell).



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GET TO HEAVEN?

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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 convicting you of 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

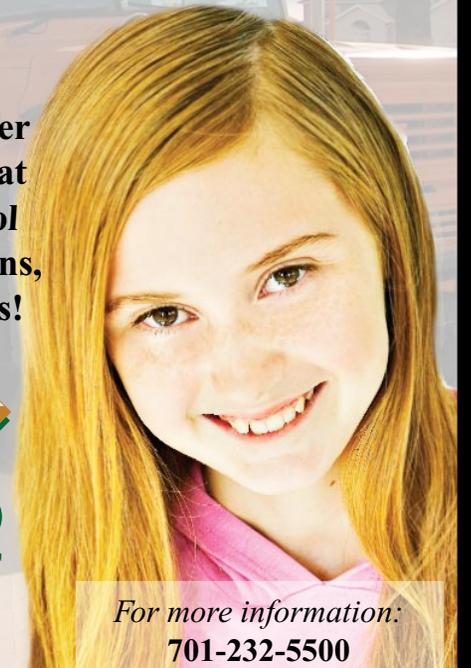
am willing to turn from my sins and make Jesus my Lord and master. I now trust in His sacrifice on the cross to pay for my sins. Please forgive me and save me. Amen." ■

HEY KIDS! RIDE THE BUS TO SUNDAY SCHOOL!

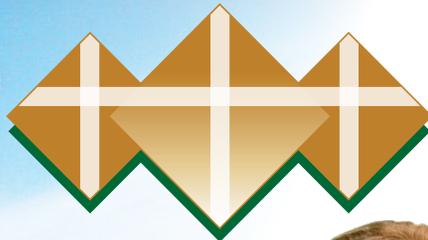
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Out of DESPAIR

Please be there, I prayed as my fingers dialed the familiar numbers. If I didn't reach her soon, I feared my suicidal thoughts would become reality.

"Hello, Mom? I need to talk."

Tears fell as I told her I'd just been served divorce papers. "I'm scared, Mom. I don't want to live anymore."

I couldn't believe my marriage had gone so wrong. Just 10 years earlier, we were newlyweds; young and in love. Over time emptiness and discontentment pervaded. Each argument drove us further apart, until finally, we separated.

Why's this happening to me? Where's God in all this? I slipped deeper into depression.

As a child, I'd attended church regularly with my family. Singing hymns gave me wonderful, warm feelings. When I entered college, however, I quit attending church. I was convinced I didn't need God. Married at age 19, I enjoyed life in the fast lane.

Meanwhile, my mother faced serious illnesses and marital problems. I expected her to be angry with God. Instead, she loved God more than ever. It was her strong faith that prompted me to call, searching for a reason to live.

She listened patiently as I spilled everything, including my doubts about God. Knowing my rebellious nature, she had waited for me to approach her.

"God loves you and doesn't want you to commit suicide," she said. "He's been with you all along, you just didn't realize it. He wants to help you with your problems."

Before we hung up, Mom read a scripture passage to me: *"For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart"* (Jeremiah 29:11-13). Scripture verses had never seemed pertinent to me. This time, the words went straight to my heart, lifting my spirits and renewing my will to live.

The road remained rocky. My divorce was bitter, and I found myself depressed again. My friends tried to help by playing cupid, "What you need is a man in your life." I wasn't interested.

One day a conversation with a Christian friend turned to spiritual matters. He asked me, "If you were to die tonight, would you go to heaven?"

What a weird question, I thought. Only God knows that.

Keeping my cool, I answered, "I don't know... maybe. It depends on how picky God is."

He assured me that he had received eternal life in heaven. I was appalled. He was either the most conceited man I'd ever met or he was blasphemous.

He did pique my curiosity, though. In response to my persistent questions he invited me to a Christian conference.

Everything the speaker said seemed directed at me. When he talked about how destructive sin, bitterness, and depression are, I was sure he'd been watching my life on a hidden camera.

The speaker said that God loves me even though I'm a sinner, that the penalty for my sins is death, and that Christ's death on the cross paid for my sins. I'd heard all this before, but I felt as if I were hearing it for the first time. Even John 3:16 took on new meaning: John 3:16 *"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."*

Suddenly everything was clear. I realized that my emptiness and depression

actually revealed my heart's longing to know God. Happiness wasn't what I'd been searching for, it was Jesus Christ!

The speaker gave us time for personal prayer, "Dear Jesus," I prayed silently. "I want you as my Lord and Savior. Please forgive my sins and come into my life."

I was overjoyed to feel God's presence and love so strongly. A peace swept over me, reminding me of the emotions I'd felt singing hymns as a child.

In the following months, I started attending church regularly and reading the Bible daily. I wanted to know everything I could

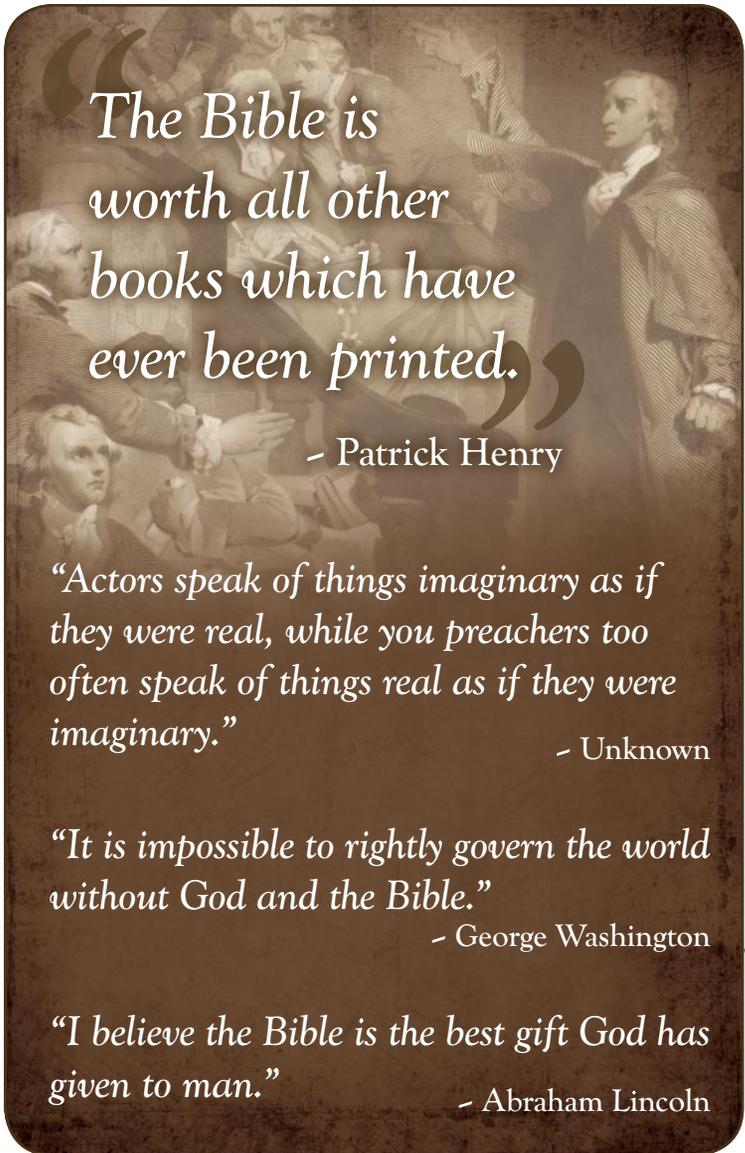
about Jesus, the Light that led me out of despair.

My problems didn't disappear when I became a Christian, but I no longer felt despair. My relationship with Jesus gave me hope and inner peace to withstand storms that blew my way.

My friends noticed the dramatic change. "Why are you so happy?" they asked. "Have you got a new man in your life?"

"As a matter of fact, I do," I answered, chuckling. "But not the kind you're thinking of."

By Elissa Kaupisch,
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The Bible is
worth all other
books which have
ever been printed.

- Patrick Henry

"Actors speak of things imaginary as if they were real, while you preachers too often speak of things real as if they were imaginary."

- Unknown

"It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible."

- George Washington

"I believe the Bible is the best gift God has given to man."

- Abraham Lincoln

Evolution's "Contribution"

—By Daniel Aceituna—

Bob Douglas reached for the milkshake just as it began to topple. “Honey, be careful. That dress cost me a day’s pay.”

“Sorry Dad,” Lynn said, devouring another french fry. “What do we do next?” she said, excited over spending her 16th birthday with her dad.

“Well, we haven’t been to the museum in a while...” “That would be fun,” Lynn said, finishing the milkshake with a loud noise from her straw. “They have dinosaurs on display. Sarah was telling me about it.”

“Oh...” suddenly Bob wasn’t crazy about the idea. “Well maybe we could do something else.”

“But it would be fun! Please?”

“Yes I know, but...” Bob noticed the plea in her eyes. “Okay, why not?”

On the way to the museum Bob explained that a dinosaur is mentioned in the Bible book of Job, and considering the dimensions of Noah’s Ark, there is no reason to assume that some dinosaurs

could not have gone along with Noah for the ride. The conversation continued well into the museum, as Bob took every

came after all, that is, until an elderly man overhearing his latest explanation was instantly offended.

“Excuse me sir, I’m Dr. Mat Isaac, a paleontologist. I teach at the local university. I overheard something you were teaching your daughter... it is your daughter, correct?” Bob nodded.

“You are doing her a disservice by teaching her a creation account; you’re filling her head with fairy tales, and giving her a false view of reality. I’m afraid it will have a detrimental effect well into her adult life.”

Bob hesitated, not sure how to respond. He didn’t feel like getting into a creation-evolution debate, right then and there. Yet, he had to say something. After another second or two, Bob turned to his daughter and said, “Honey, I’m sorry. He’s right. I’ve been one-sided. I should give you reality according to evolution, and its logical ramifications.”

Bob noted the professor’s smile, and then faced his daughter again.

“Honey, according to evolution, you evolved from a one cell organism. You came into being thanks to natural selection acting upon random genetic mutations over millions of years. Evolution turned that one cell into a highly complex organism called Lynn Mary Douglas, celebrating her 16th birthday in a beautiful new dress, with the rest of her meaningless life ahead of her.”

Lynn frowned at her father’s last remark. Bob glanced at the professor, whose smile was disappearing. He continued.

“That’s right Lynn, it’s all for nothing. You came into existence for no specific reason; you have no purpose in life beyond simply existing. Evolution implies that there is no soul, and there is no afterlife; any sense of self or higher meaning you attribute beyond the neurons firing inside your head... is illusionary. You’re just advanced flesh. You came from an animal, so why not act like one?”

“Therefore, my gift to you on your first day of adult life is moral liberation. Act how you want, as much as you want, and don’t waste time worrying about whether it’s right or wrong; in the end, it doesn’t make a difference. There is no room for God within evolution’s framework, therefore don’t worry about judgment to come. You are your own judge. Next time someone dictates morally to you, remind him or her that as an evolved creature you are free to set your own rules and are accountable to no one but yourself.”

“Every act your heart desires, do it

quickly. Don’t waste time worrying about others. It is a sign of weakness; self-preservation should be your

key motivation. Heap every need and anything you desire upon yourself. Borrow, cheat, connive, exploit, cut corners, even steal if you have to; there are too many random forces working against you.”

“Live for the now. Eat, drink, be merry, for tomorrow some competing virus on its way up the evolutionary ladder may destroy you. It’s either you or it. It’s you or anyone else, so why even bother with having or keeping kids? They will only straddle your survival-driven selfish life; why get bogged down sacrificing for another meaningless life that’s going nowhere?”

Bob paused, looked hard into his daughter’s eyes... then winked. “Honey, I hope you now see the ramifications of believing that you evolved.”

Lynn nodded. She was proud of how her dad handled it.

Bob smiled and looked at the professor.

“Dr. Isaac, thank you. My daughter can now live a more realistic life; free from the detrimental effects of godly accountability. However, the future recipients of her new-found philosophy... will not be so fortunate.”

Americans in Large Numbers Reject Evolution

Roughly half of Americans reject the theory of evolution and instead believe that God created humans in their present form in the past 10,000 years, according to a new Newsweek poll.

The survey of 1,004 adults...found that 48 percent of Americans believe God made humans “pretty much in the present form at one time within the last 10,000 years or so.” Another 30 percent believe humans evolved over millions of years, with God guiding the process (a belief sometimes called theistic evolution). Only 13 percent believe in a God-less evolution.

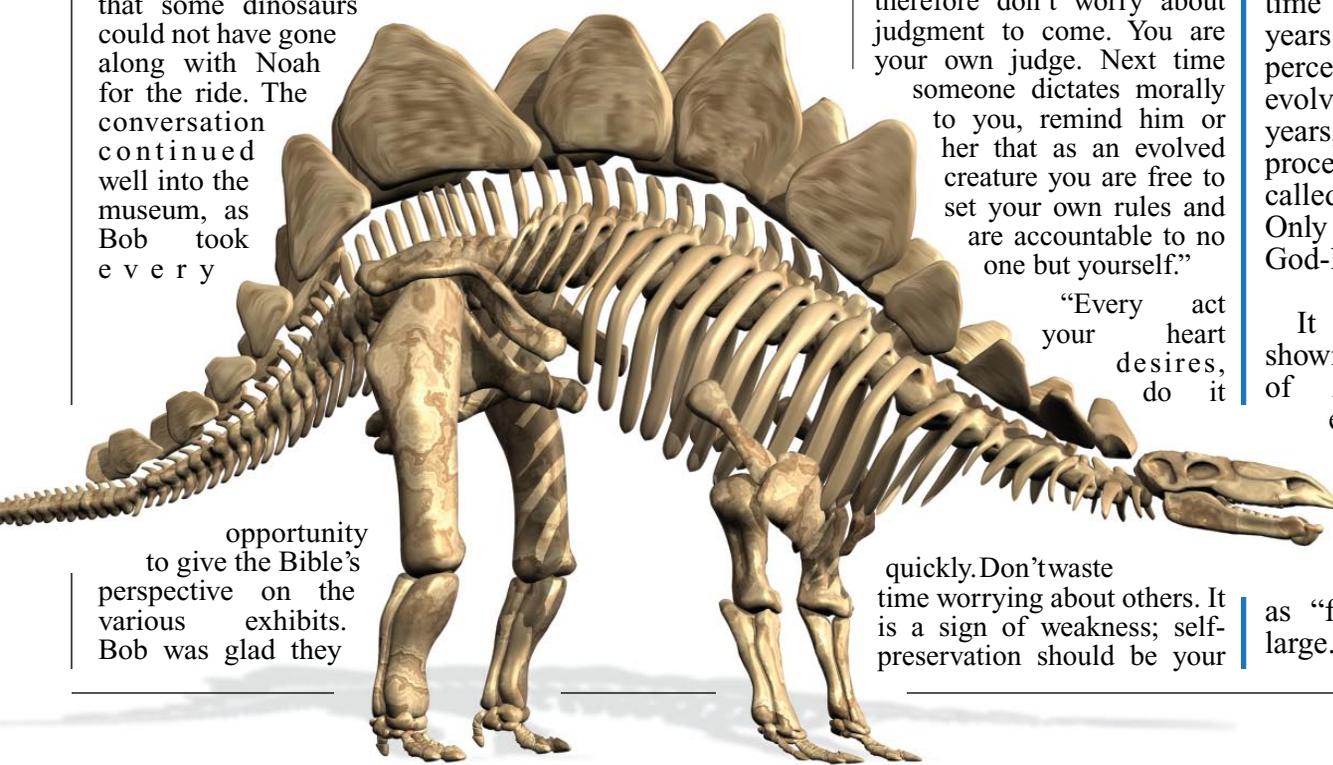
It is but the latest poll showing that a large number of Americans discount evolution—despite the fact it is promoted as “true” within the mainstream media, school system (where it’s now taught as “fact”), and culture at large.

A Gallup poll of 1,002 adults...found that 46 percent of Americans believed God created humans in their present form within the past 10,000 years. Thirty-six percent believed in theistic evolution, and only 13 percent believed in evolution with God not playing a role.

A Harris poll of 1,000 adults in June 2005 found that 64 percent believed “human beings were created directly by God.” 22 percent said humans “evolved from earlier species,” but 10 percent of those believed humans “are so complex that they required a powerful force or intelligent being to help create them.”...

The *Newsweek* poll also found that 91 percent of Americans profess a belief in God, and only 3 percent describe themselves as atheists. (Not quite the figures the evolutionists and atheists like to use!).

—Crosswalk.com



opportunity to give the Bible’s perspective on the various exhibits. Bob was glad they

the **future** of **America**

By Mike VanHorn

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Psalm 11:3

This past April, three Christian missionaries were attacked by 10 Muslims and brutally killed. The Muslims were pretending to be interested in converting to Christianity. This happened in the country of Turkey. What do you know about the nation of Turkey?

Did you know that Joseph and his brothers were born in Turkey? It was also the birthplace of St. Paul who was born in Tarsus, Turkey. Later on as a missionary, Paul was stoned to death in Lystra, Turkey. Turkey was also home to the seven churches mentioned by Jesus in the book of the Revelation. John the apostle was also the pastor of a church in Ephesus, Turkey, and according to history, Mary died in the country of Turkey. Several epistles (Colossians, Galatians, Ephesians, I & II Timothy, I & II Peter, and the Revelation) were all written to churches or people in Turkey. In fact, believers were first called Christians in Antioch (present day Antakia) Turkey –Acts 11:26.

It's easy to see that Turkey was a country once influenced by the Bible and Christianity. Today the country is 99.9% Muslim. It is now illegal to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ and you risk your life by doing

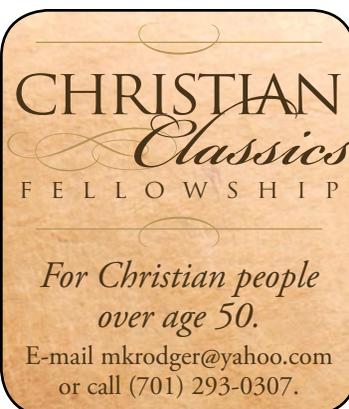
so. Turkey no longer has the true Christian influence that teaches to love and pray for your enemies (Matt 5:4), not murder them. What has happened in Turkey is exactly what can happen when a Christian country turns away from the Bible. History affords us many examples (China, Cuba, etc). That brings up the question of America. What does our future hold?

Our nation is slowly turning away from the Bible. We are aborting (killing) babies, and starving handicapped people to death. We have kicked God, prayer, and the Bible out of our institutes of learning, but allowed Eastern religion to be advocated. Sodomites have left the closets while Christians cower in theirs. We live in a sex-saturated society and our young people are more promiscuous with each passing year. We are slowly being brainwashed into believing that all of this is acceptable and nothing is absolute.

Turkey was a country once full of the gospel! Our Forefathers founded the United States on the principles of the Bible and Christianity. Today our society is doing everything it can to destroy our Biblical foundation. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" –Psalm 11:3.

If Christ should tarry his second coming, will this nation become a 99.9% Muslim country? What does the future hold for America?

Revised from an article by Mike VanHorn, Murfreesboro, TN



Scientific Thoughts on the **BIBLE**

When dealing with disease, clothes and body should be washed under running water. (The Bible told us that in Leviticus 15:13 thousands of years ago). For centuries people unknowingly washed in standing water. Today we recognize the need to wash away germs with fresh water.

The earth free-floats in space, affected only by gravity. While other ancient sources declared the earth sat on the back of an elephant or turtle, or was held up by Atlas, the Bible alone states what we now know to be true... "He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing" (Job 26:7).

Blood is the source of life and health (Leviticus 17:11,14). Up until 120 years ago, sick people were "bled" and many died as a result (e.g. George Washington). Today we know that healthy blood is necessary to bring life-giving nutrients to every cell in the body. God declared, "the life of the flesh is in the blood" long before science understood its function.

The Bible specifies the perfect dimensions for a stable water vessel (Genesis 6:15). Ship builders today are well aware that the ideal dimension for ship stability is a length six times that of the width. Keep in mind, God told Noah the ideal dimensions for the ark 4,500 years ago.

Moms & MORE

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Some people think the word *cheapskate* is an insult. Not me. I enjoy being called that. It reminds me that I'm not what I used to be—a credit card junkie.

There was a time I used plastic to fill the gap between our pathetic income and the life "I so richly deserved."

When my six-figure bridge collapsed, (yes that would be more than \$100,000 in non-mortgage debt), I had two choices: change my ways or lose everything.

Knowing I wouldn't do well with the latter, I opted for change. I could fill several books with all that happened and what I've learned, but I'll cut to the chase. We didn't go bankrupt; we paid back every penny and now I live to tell. Yeah, you can call me a cheapskate any day and I'll take it as a compliment.

So, you may be thinking, how did she do that? I stopped spending every penny I had and all we hoped to have in the future. Bottom line: I learned how to live on less than our income: A lot less. The steps are simple:

1. Rein in your brain. You have to stop believing you are entitled to have it all now and then pay and pay and pay for it later. The truth is you can't have it all, but you can have enough.

2. Embrace frugality. I was repulsed by the word until I understood it. Frugality is just doing whatever it takes to spend less than you earn. What a novel concept.

Frugal doesn't mean tacky, frumpy or stingy. The truth is we cheapskates actually fix stuff instead of running out to buy new stuff...another novel concept!

We figure out how to use this for that when that costs more than this. We drive paid-for cars, we challenge everything and ask if there's a better way.

3. Never pay retail. As cliché as that may sound, it's a principle to hang onto. With so many discount stores and a secondary market in this country that is second to none, you may never pay retail again. And how about that food? Let me tell you, I was a major coupon snob until I learned how to make those things work for me. Now I save around 60% off my grocery bill every week. I swallowed my pride and learned how to do it right.

I could go on and on, but I'll close with this: If you begin to apply even a few of the tips and take to heart what you read here, you will end up with extra cash. Count on it. ■

By Mary Hunt.. used by permission of the author. All rights reserved.

THE MESHAN STONE

In 1868, one of the most incredible and exciting finds of the century took place. A large black basalt stone measuring 3½ feet high by 2 feet wide inscribed with ancient characters was discovered by German medical missionary F. A. Klein. He quickly informed the German authorities, but not before word of the discovery reached the French. The chase was on. Before the Germans could arrive, the French diplomats quickly traveled to the modern day city of Dhiban, Jordan and offered the locals a large sum of money. The poor Bedouins refused, deciding they could make more money by breaking it into pieces and selling the separate parts to competitors. Thankfully, a papier-mâché impression was made beforehand. Eventually two thirds of the fragments were recovered and pieced together along with the papier-mâché copy. (The reassembled stele can now be found in the Louvre Museum, in Paris France).

The discovery of this ancient artifact proved to be a record 34 lines, and is to this day, the longest inscription found on a stone monument (as opposed to scrolls) yet found in Palestine.

What is even more incredible, though, are the words that it contained.

Written in the ancient Moabite language (similar to ancient Hebrew) it proclaimed the victorious rebellion of the Moabite King Mesha, against Jehoash, son of the famous Ahab and Jezebel, and grandson of Omri. This took place in about 896 BC.

Mesha says, "I am Mesha, son of Kemosh[yatti], the king of Moab, the Dibonite. My father was king over Moab for thirty years, and I became king after my father...Omri was the king of Israel, and he oppressed Moab for many days... And his son reigned in his place; and he also said, "I will oppress Moab!" In my days he said so. But I looked down on him and on his house, and Israel has been defeated... (in the rebellion).

God Himself mentions this same Mesha and his rebellion in the Bible. You can read the story in II Kings chapter three:

And Mesha king of Moab was a sheepmaster, and rendered unto the king of Israel an hundred thousand lambs, and an hundred thousand rams, with the wool. But it came to pass, when Ahab was dead, that the king of Moab rebelled

against the king of Israel. And king Jehoram went out of Samaria the same time, and numbered all Israel. And he went and sent to Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, saying, The king of Moab hath rebelled against me... (II Kings 3:4-7).

To archeologists who had doubted the Bible and built careers on trying to disprove it, this was one of a series of continual embarrassments. Sadly, though they did not believe the Bible which claims to be infallible, they now would believe a stone inscription of a fallible dead king.

This is one of the most significant archeological finds in history and one that substantiates God's Word. Unfortunately many of these archeologists will continue to look for the "next opportunity" to try to disprove the Bible. ■

By David R. Dennis, Academic Dean, Master's Baptist College



PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

HOW ARE YOUR FINANCES?

We're now past the holidays and perhaps reeling from overspending throughout the past month. Americans spent over \$470 billion at Christmas time. Yet studies show that much of the global poverty problem could be overcome by \$80 billion (less than one fifth of what we spent on Christmas). Further studies show that if you make \$37,000/year, you're in the top 4% income bracket worldwide. If you make as much as \$45,000/year, you are in the top 1%! If your personal assets (property) exceed only \$60,000, you are among the richest 10% of the world. But it really doesn't seem to matter how much we earn and have. A recent report in the USA Today exposed the financial woes of Americans earning more than \$100,000/year! Nearly 20% of them still live from paycheck to paycheck. A third of them save less than \$250/mo, and 10% don't have any type of a retirement plan. In addition to that, while Americans are by far the wealthiest people in the world, they spend much more on themselves at Christmas than they do on charitable giving all year. In fact people spend twice as much on entertainment as they do in donations to their church. We are by far our favorite charity. The Bible says in I Timothy 6:10 *"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith."* Sam Houston (of the Alamo fame) was converted to Christ in the mid 1800s. Houston was a reckless individual, and his commitment to Christ caught many by surprise. When he was baptized he insisted that his wallet go under the water with him as an indication that Christ would be Lord over his finances as well. Houston also insisted on paying half of the local preacher's salary. There is a nerve that runs from the heart to the pocketbook. It is a good indicator of Who is really the Lord of our life.

HOW IS YOUR BIBLE KNOWLEDGE?

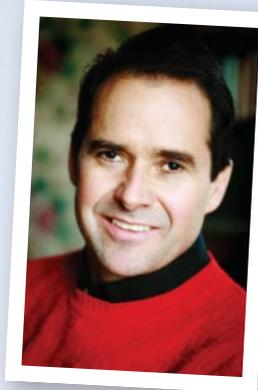
USA Today reported recently on the outcome of a quiz given by Stephen Prothero, chairman of the religion department at Boston University

and author of *Religious Literacy - What Every American Needs to Know*. The quiz revealed that 60% of Americans can't name 5 of the 10 Commandments in the Bible, and over half of high school seniors think Sodom and Gomorrah...were married!

82% of Americans believe the Bible contains the words "God helps those who help themselves." Back in 1975, McDonald's launched one of the most memorable advertising campaigns of all time. These commercials taught people to name the main ingredients of a Big Mac hamburger in rapid-fire cadence. You'll recall it's "two all beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun." In conjunction with the October 19, 2007 release of the animated movie, *The Ten Commandments*, Kelton Research conducted a survey regarding Americans' knowledge of Exodus 20. After polling 1,000 people, they discovered that more people could name the contents of a Big Mac than recall seven of the *Ten Commandments*. What about you? In a related "man on the street" interview study, knowledge about the Ten Commandments was pitted against cultural trivia. The findings of this recent study found that most respondents could name the four Beatles, but many participants couldn't recall even one commandment. (Houston Chronicle) The Barna Group has found that even born again American adults spend an average of seven times more hours each week watching television than they do reading the Bible, praying or in church worship. We wonder why the love for Christ has become frigid. Jesus foretold that in the last days: *because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold* (Matt 24:12). How tragic is this lack of Bible knowledge? More than half of all adults (54%) believe that if a person is generally good or does enough good things for others during their life, they will earn a place in Heaven (2005 Barna Research). This proves so clearly that the majority of church-going Americans, including preachers do not know the truths of God's Word. (Ecc 7:20 *"For there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not"*...Eph 2:8-9 *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: and not of works lest any man should boast."*)

WHAT IS YOUR PURPOSE?

By the age of 28, Tom Brady had won three Super Bowls. Unfortunately, the New England



Pastor Tony Scheving

Patriots' quarterback had also made the news for his disappointing personal life as well. This past year he fathered a child out of wedlock in a messy love triangle. Prior to this tragic set of events, Brady shared some revealing words in a 60 Minutes interview. He mused, "Why do I have three Super Bowl rings and still think there's something greater out there for me? I think, 'God, there's got to be more than this.' I mean this isn't... this can't be what it's all cracked up to be." Steve Kroft, the interviewer, then asked, "What's the answer?" Brady replied, "I wish I knew. I wish I knew." (Isaiah 55:2 says; *"Wherefore do ye spend... your labour for that which satisfieth not?"*) The human heart has a "God shaped vacuum" that nothing else can fill. It

is like a "black hole" in outer space. People try everything to find fulfillment, but come up empty. Until we find our purpose in God, life will remain elusively meaningless. (Leadership) At the same time, actor Stephen Baldwin was converted to Christ upon rethinking the significance of his life in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. The once renegade entertainer has become a sincere and outspoken Christian. He is troubled by the ineffectiveness of most Christians, and has a great desire to make a difference by pointing people to genuine faith in Christ. According to researcher Tom Rainer, more than 60 million unchurched adults are willing to allow a true Christian to share the gospel with them (Outreach). Our neighbors to the north would be a good example of the future of America if true Christians don't testify of Christ. A recent poll found "a significant decrease in spiritual interest in Canada over the past 15 years." In 1992, 61% of Canadians said religion was important to their daily lives. In a recent poll only 39% now feel that religion is important to them. Contrast that to Saudi Arabia where 96% of Saudis feel that their religion is a very important part of their lives (LifeSiteNews). Christians truly need to follow the challenge of Jesus who said *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"* - Matthew 5:16.

Pastor Tony Scheving

Compiled by Pastor Tony Scheving. If you have questions or comments please correspond at: RevSkev@faithforlife.net