

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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FROM THE MINISTRY OF FARGO BAPTIST CHURCH

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what is life all about?

a message by pastor tony scheving

“Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” (1 Corinthians 10:31)

What are you living for? Why do you do what you do? What is your purpose in life, or actually...what should be your purpose in life? As kids, we all sang the “Hokey Pokey” song which states... *“That’s what it’s all about.”* What is life all about?

The average person is clueless as to why they were put on this earth. They are living for things like: fun, money, sex, vice, entertainment, sports, or pleasure. Sadly, these things are as shallow as the Hokey Pokey in light of *“the big picture.”* The Bible says in Proverbs 21:17, *“He that loveth pleasure shall be a poor man”* (in more ways

than one). Then there are some who live for power, fame, recognition or attention. They are ‘applause junkies’ and don’t even know it. They desire credit or honor. They are ‘in their glory’ when they are getting the attention. Ironically, this is the exact opposite of the Bible verse above.

God’s Word says *“Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”* (1 Cor 10:31). That means that God should always get the credit and honor. Do you wake up every day to exalt your Creator and please Him with your life? Do you live to deflect all the applause back toward God?

Thomas Edison was a genius with many inventions and over 1000 patents. When his wife asked him one day “Where do you get all of your ideas?”, Edison just smiled and pointed to heaven! That’s called ‘giving God the glory.’

In 1808, when the famous Austrian composer Haydn was a fragile old man, he attended a grand performance of his composition “The Creation.” The crowd was electrified by the presence of such a legend. When the concert was over, the crowd gave a thunderous applause for the composer. Haydn was deeply disturbed by the recognition. He mustered up all his strength to rise to

his feet and then pointed to heaven and shouted, “Give Him the glory, give Him the glory!” He then collapsed back into his seat totally exhausted and was wheeled out of the concert hall, never to be seen in public again. The Bible says, *“Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name”* (1 Chron 16:29). How concerned are you about glorifying God as you were created to do?

self reverence

“To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen” (Rom 16:27).

We do God a great disservice when we proudly take the credit. How would you feel if someone stole your honor? Jerry and

Joe were two skinny, shy youths with glasses back in 1930 when they came up with the concept of Superman, the “Man of Steel.” In need of money a few years later, they signed over the rights to Superman for \$130. Superman went on to be a multi-million dollar superhero in movies, television, and comics. Jerry and Joe said that in 1966 they stood on the sidewalk on the opening night of the Broadway musical “Superman”, unable to afford a ticket to the premiere of their own creation! Someone had stolen their ‘glory.’

How does God feel when we seize His glory? The Apostle Paul said, *“But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ”* (Gal 6:14).

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FAITH *for life*

WHAT IS LIFE?

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Why do we do what we do? Why does a man try to make money? Why does a woman try to look sexy. Why do we set out to accomplish something? Is it for God's glory or ours? This can be a serious indictment against our motives.

If God created us and gave us our talents, looks, and abilities, how can we take any credit? The Bible says, *"What hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"* (1 Cor 4:7) One day a woodpecker was banging away at a tree when lightning struck it and blew it into a thousand splinters. The dazed woodpecker got back on his feet, looked at the tree and said, "Wow... I'm really something!" The Bible says, *"Not unto us, O*

LORD, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory" (Ps 115:1).

the sobering responsibility

"For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor 6:20)

I remember back in 1971 as a kid following the classic boxing match between Mohammed Ali and Joe Frazier. Ali said beforehand, "There's not a man alive who can whip me...I'm too smart (he tapped his head), I'm too pretty (he lifted the head high in a profile), I am the greatest. I am the king! I should be a postage stamp...that's the only way I could get licked!"

I must admit that I was thrilled when Frazier won

the match! The verse above mentions glorifying God with our body (looks and abilities) and spirit (our soul which includes our personality and talents). Why does God give us certain abilities? The Bible says, *"Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required"* (Lu 12:48).

The ex-Beetle song writing team of Lennon and McCartney had talent, but it wasn't used for God's glory. Elvis had a beautiful baritone voice, but it wasn't used for God's glory. Napoleon was a great leader, but his ability wasn't used for God's glory. Maybe you have the ability to sing, play an instrument, make money, administrate or lead. Maybe you have a great personality or the gift of gab. Whatever abilities you may possess...could God get some glory from them? After all, it is the very reason we were put on this earth. That's what life is all about. The Bible says, *"If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified"* (1 Pet 4:11).

It's not all about us, but God!

the sacred reality

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God" (Col 3:17)

When Samuel Morse was working on his telegraph invention he would often hit a dead end not knowing what to do. He later testified that at such times he would pray for God to give him wisdom, and without fail, the next step would come to

him. When he finally tested the invention in 1844 his first words in Morse code were "What hath God wrought!" The Bible says, *"Give unto the LORD, ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory"* (1 Chron 16:28) Again, we are reminded to *"do all to the glory of God"* (1 Cor 10:31).

Can a person get drunk to the glory of God? Can someone view pornography to the glory of God? Can you watch trashy TV about housewives cheating on their husbands, to the glory of God? Can you selfishly scope out the biggest piece of pizza to the glory of God? How about taking God's name in vain, or cussing? Can this be done to the glory of God? Can you rent a dirty movie or go on a smutty website to the glory of God? Can we read the *National Enquirer*, or another magazine to find out who's shacking up with whom, and having a baby out of wedlock...to the glory of God?

God says, *"Yet I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil"* (Rom 16:19). Can we lose our temper in anger to the glory of God? Can we listen to lewd or sensual music to the glory of God?

the salvation realization

"Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil 2:11).

Without being born-again (as Jesus mentioned in Jn 3:3), we cannot glorify God. The Bible says, *"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"* (Rom 3:23). For the first

20 years of my life, I was trying to do good and please God. Unfortunately, it was all in vain. The Bible says, *"They that are in the flesh (unsaved) cannot please God"* (Rom 8:8). Back in the spring of 1981, God dealt with my heart and I finally understood what it meant to make Jesus the Lord of my life (Phil 2:11). I was willing to turn from my sins in repentance, and place all of my faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. That is the only thing that can save us from our sin and take us to heaven. Now I want to glorify my Creator with my life as a Christian. Sometimes glorifying the Lord may mean going through rough times. Peter said, *"If any man suffer as a Christian...let him glorify God on this behalf."* Whatever it may be in life; our goals, dreams, desires, and schemes should all be to glorify God. It is what life is all about. Sadly, there are very few who really live life this way.

Many years ago, Pastor Earl Cannon organized a parade to honor God in Chicago. He was expecting a crowd of around 15,000. Sadly, all that showed up was a handful of people and 200 policemen to direct traffic. What a different world it would be if every human finally realized why they were put on this earth. Glorifying God was the burning desire of Jesus. Before going to the cross to die for us he said to his Father, *"I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do"* (Jn 14:7). From this point on and for the rest of our lives, may born-again Christians make it the desire of their heart.... *"Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God"* (1 Cor 10:31). ■

sharing our faith,
friendship, and fun...

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and more

Our free meetings provide practical tools for successful mothering. Community professionals discuss topics such as...

- organization ● finances ● health ● nutrition ● safety ●

The Bible is explored to uncover God's timeless advice on motherhood. Mothers get a chance to unwind in a relaxing environment while making new friends, and learning valuable information.



All mothers are welcome to attend on the
first tuesday of every month from
6:30p.m.-8:30p.m.

Meetings held at FARGO BAPTIST CHURCH ● 701.232.5500

The FATHER of OUR NATION, *and* PRAYER

“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16)

In his diaries, George Washington wrote, “Let my heart, O gracious God, be so affected with your glory and majesty, that I may fulfill these weighty duties which you have required of me. I have called upon you to pardon me of my sins. Thank you for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, offered on the cross for me. You gave your Son to die for me and have given me assurance of salvation.” Can you sense the love that George Washington had for his God? His heart sought after God through personal times of prayer. As we approach another election in this great nation, let’s remember to pray for our Creator to give us Godly leaders who will rule in righteousness. ■



Mondays
7:00 PM CMU 208

Thursdays
7:30 PM CMU 212

MSUM

campus
BIBLE
studies

Mondays
8:30 PM Lake Agassiz Rm
Memorial Union

Thursdays
7:00 PM Room of Nations
Memorial Union

NDSU

BULLETIN BLOOPERS

These sentences actually appeared in church bulletins or were announced in church services.

The Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

Ladies, don’t forget the rummage sale. It’s a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

Remember in prayer the many who are sick of our community.

Don’t let worry kill you off—let the Church help.

For those of you who have children and don’t know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Next Thursday there will be tryouts for the choir. They need all the help they can get.

Irving Benson and Jessie Carter were married on October 24 in the church. So ends a friendship that began in their school days.

At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be “What Is Hell?” Come early and listen to our choir practice.

Scouts are saving aluminum cans, bottles and other items to be recycled. Proceeds will be used to cripple children.

Please place your donation in the envelope along with the deceased person you want remembered.

The church will host an evening of fine dining, and gracious hostility.

This season, catch the true spirit of Christmas!

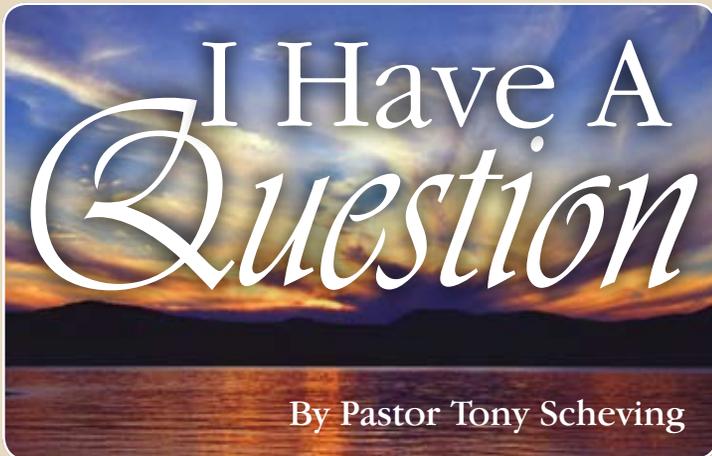
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What Makes Abortion Right or Wrong?

It's election time, and there is endless debate over the issue of abortion. Human opinions are a dime a dozen. Is there not a real standard to go by? Is there not a source of truth, or is it just a free-for-all? When our nation was being forged in the early days of our independence, the standard was our Creator's instruction manual on life...the Bible. It was the very reason freedom loving people came to the new world in the first place. Before you downplay the Bible, you may want to know that God holds it above His own name (Ps 138:2), and we will be judged from it on judgment day according to Jesus (Jn 12:48, Rev 20:12).

So what does God's Word say about abortion? Is it an issue for nine people in black robes to decide, or is it our Creator's call? Do those judges even believe His Word and make decisions based on God's standard? Human supposition says that the unborn is not a child; it's just part of the woman's body. Supposedly it's a woman's right to do as she wants

with her own body because 'the unborn child doesn't have a soul.' Supposedly it's a woman's property to do as she pleases. In the infamous Dred Scott decision of 1857, our Supreme Court decided a black American slave essentially did not qualify as a human being. They were simply 'somebody's property.' What a dreadful, and even embarrassing conclusion to come to by today's standard! Yet, we currently have judges, politicians, and talking heads who justify the 'right of a woman' to do what she pleases with her own body (her property).

The New Testament of the Bible was originally written in Koine Greek which is a very precise language. The Greek word for a baby (brephos) is the exact same word whether referring to a baby inside the womb or outside of the womb. This is very important. At the birth of Jesus, the Bible says in Luke 2:12, "*This shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.*" We would

recognize this 'babe' as a human being. It would be murder to kill it at this point. Now notice what the Bible says about John the Baptist in Luke 1:41, "*When Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.*" John the Baptist is still unborn. This babe inside the womb was around 22 weeks along in the pregnancy, and he's still called a babe, or brephos! The Greek word 'brephos' means 'infant.' It's a word that speaks of a person, not a fetus, embryo, or thing. It makes no difference to God whether the child is inside or outside of the womb, it is still a human baby according to our Creator.

Let's go on. What is a soul? According to the Bible, the soul is the real you. It is the seat of your personality, your character, your disposition and temperament. It is the reason you laugh or cry. It is the real you. It is invisible and lives inside of the body. It is the source of your life. When your body dies, the soul departs and lives in one of two places forever (heaven or hell). The body is just a 'motel' that your soul is temporarily living in. One day it will 'check out.' We receive an eternal, never-to-die soul at the moment of conception (along with our sinful nature).

That's why you don't have to teach a toddler how to lie, be selfish, or sass back. David said in Psalms 51:5, "*Behold, I was*

shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Only a person could be a sinner, not a thing (fetus or embryo). We are a sinner from conception because we receive our living and never-to-die soul at conception. In a recent article in a local newspaper, a "contributing" writer called those who believe this, "right wing religious zealots." Unfortunately, our society has been pretty brainwashed. God's word indicates that a child

new or additional life from the mother.

God recognizes us as human beings while we are still in the womb. God called the prophet Jeremiah into the ministry while his mother was still carrying him (Jer 1:5). That little one inside of the womb is a person. King David speaks clearly about God recognizing him as a human before he was ever born (Ps 139:13-16).

Isaiah the prophet was recognized and called by God while in the womb. "*And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant*" (Isa 49:5). The great man Job said to God, "*Thou hast*

“Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.”

Psalm 127:3

receives his soul at the moment of conception along with the sin nature which all human beings possess. That child in the womb already has an eternal soul which is the source of life. He or she is a human being!

Science even tells us the unborn child already has a DNA code, which is unique from both parents. The unborn child has his own blood supply and organs apart from his mother. Three to four weeks after conception, there is also a detectable heartbeat. Once conception takes place, the child receives only nourishment from his mother through the umbilical cord. He receives no cells, no flesh, and no

clothed me (my soul) with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews" (Job 10:11). Notice the word 'me' in these last two verses. As though the unborn baby is a real 'me' person. Now, there are some who argue that Adam wasn't alive until God put breath in him and he began to breathe on his own.

They say the same must be true for a baby who is only really a living person after they began to breathe on their own. There is no comparison here at all. Adam was lifeless and still until he began to breathe. Any mother who's ever felt the kick of the baby in her womb knows that baby is very much alive and growing inside of her. Ultrasounds given during

abortions have shown the unborn baby screaming and kicking in fear inside of the mother, as he tries to get away from the suction hose about to dismember him. This baby can already experience terror because he is a human being!

Very early in the Bible God says, *"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man"* (Gen 9:6). We have been made in the image of God, whether 3 weeks, 3 months, 3 years, or 30 years. Later in the Bible God says, *"Thou shalt not kill"* (Exo 20:13). In the very next chapter it says, *"If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her...and if any mischief follow (i.e. the baby dies), then thou shalt give life for life"* (Ex 21:22-23). That is pretty plain. Perhaps an abortion doctor should consider the following: In Proverbs six, God mentions the things that He hates! In verse 17 it says, *"hands that shed innocent blood."* There is nothing more innocent than a baby!

Back in Bible times, the heathens sacrificed to the false gods of Molech and Baal by throwing children into fire (Ps 106:37-8). While that may seem extremely calloused, is it any worse than dismembering a living baby limb by limb with a sharp knife under the guise of choice? The most dangerous place in America is not a coal mine, race car, dark alley or shark infested waters...it's a woman's womb. Nearly four thousand babies perish every day in the land of the free. Half the people who enter an abortion clinic never come out alive.

We can look with disgust at Hitler's cruelty to six million Jews 65 years ago. America has a genocide of its own which is far worse. We have murdered approximately 50 million baby boys and girls since abortion became "legal" in 1973 (where have all the babies gone?). That is more helpless babies than the population of the states of; NV, OR, ID, MT, UT, WY, CO, NM, ND, SD, NE, KS, OK, MN, IA, AR, MS, and AL - combined! That's nearly 45 times more American deaths than caused by all wars combined since the American Revolution.

It is hypocrisy for us to condemn China for human rights violations while butchering our own children. God will hold the guilty accountable one day for this shedding of innocent blood (II Ki 24:4). That includes those who vote 'pro-choice' through the ballot box. We may justify this bloodshed because we have declared it 'legal', but one day we will be judged by God's law and not man's. All the doctors, nurses, parents, congressmen, lobbyists, senators, presidents, Supreme Court justices, and voters will give an account.

We have become desensitized as a nation. A few years back, an eagle was killed here in ND just 125 miles west of Fargo. The authorities put forth a \$2500 reward for information leading to the arrest of the culprit. The crime was punishable by a fine of \$100,000, or a year in jail. We have laws in our land to punish anyone who even harms an unborn eagle, while we allow

the slaughter of unborn babies. The Bible calls that *"an inordinate affection"* Col 3:5 (i.e. a perverted passion).

We are saving the owls, whales and trees while we destroy our children. I'm afraid we've lost our ability to reason. We have been sold a bogus bill of goods. We have been told that it would be better for an unwanted child to be aborted, while three million couples are waiting to adopt. We were told that aborting an unwanted child would lower child abuse throughout our land. The opposite has proven true. Child abuse has increased dramatically since Roe v. Wade. Ronald Reagan said, *"We cannot diminish the value of one category of human life, without diminishing the value of all human life."* And then he added... *"There is no cause more important."* It has ramifications in so many other areas.

Abuse within the womb has spread to abuse outside of the womb. That is because abortion devalues life as it desensitizes the heart. Imagine even debating the morality of the heartless act of partial birth abortion. We are simply not thinking...we have become numb. We have become a pagan nation, killing without caring. We are already beginning to see the introduction of euthanasia in our land. The Bible states, *"Their mind and conscience is defiled"* (Titus 1:5). The problem with America today is we've been brainwashed to believe we just evolved by random chance. This means we really have no purpose or meaning in life: we are basically animals.

Then when people act like animals, we wonder why?

Let's not kid ourselves... abortion is a big money business. Many abortionists make as much as \$2000/day. As usual, it's not about the freedom of choice, but money. The majority of our national media has done a good job swaying the population to their biased pro-choice position. Our society has been led to believe it's just tissue, or an 'unevolved' person. In reality, many of those in power use abortion as a smokescreen to control world population. Sadly, many Americans who oppose abortion are still funding it unwillingly through tax dollars that go to organizations like 'Planned Parenthood.' Christian people need to raise our voices in opposition. Indifference to such a holocaust is simply unacceptable. God is the giver and taker of life. Man has delved into a sacred area (the womb) where he has no business being.

Ecclesiastes 11:5 says, *"As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all."* We need God back on our side. Isaiah 59:2-3 says, *"Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood."* Yet, even now, those who have been an advocate of abortion can find forgiveness through repentance (I Jn 1:9).

As a nation, God says to us, *"If my people, which*

are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (II Chron 7:14). Proverbs 14:34 says *"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."* In closing let me say...that unborn baby is not just a glob of undeveloped tissue. He or she is an eternal soul, a creation of God in His own image. Somebody needs to speak up for the unborn who are unable to speak for themselves. In this whole battle of 'rights,' the rights of the unborn have been overlooked. God says, *"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live"* (Deut 30:19). ■

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 may purchase a CD sermon for \$2 from Fargo Baptist Church, 3303 23 Ave. S, Fargo, ND 58103.

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KNOWING FOR SURE YOU'RE GOING TO *Heaven?* 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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GOING 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." ■

Most of us would like to believe we would be more generous if we just had more money. The world's 946 billionaires help explode that myth. According to *Forbes*, these wealthiest people on the planet give about 1.2 percent of their annual earnings to charitable causes. Actually, most of all charitable giving comes from the modest wage earners, so be generous with whatever you may have.

—Leadership magazine

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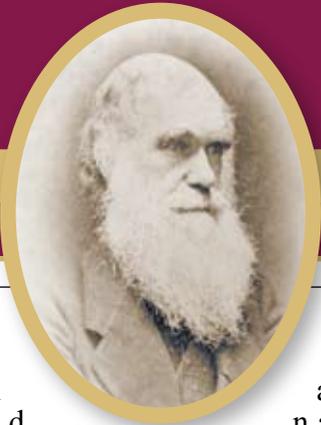
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what did charles darwin really believe



by: david dennis

Charles Darwin and Abe Lincoln are household names and were recently compared in a Newsweek article as the most influential men of our day. They were both born on the same day and both suffered the tragic losses of children. That is where the similarities end. The loss of a child eventually drove Lincoln to God, while the loss of a child caused Darwin to turn on God. Darwin began to look for ways to 'explain away God' and today he is remembered for his theories on evolution. He has been revered as a 'great man' and even buried with honors at Westminster Cathedral. As normal with sacred icons, the praiseworthy things are mentioned, while the more embarrassing things are simply dismissed. Charles Darwin had some bizarre beliefs that are often overlooked. The reader deserves to know that these false beliefs are a product of evolution. Many of these beliefs are considered taboo and even immoral. Have you ever heard the other side of Darwin? What did Charles Darwin REALLY believe?

darwin believed women were inferior

Darwin and many of his disciples believed that women were intellectually and biologically inferior to men. Dr. Jerry Bergman, professor at Northwest State College in Archbold, Ohio writes in his article, *Darwin Taught Male Superiority*: According to Darwinian theory, "women were less evolved than men, and because of their smaller brains, they were eternally primitive, childlike, less spiritual, more materialistic, and a real danger to contemporary civilization." Darwin felt the differences were so great that he was amazed "such different beings belong to the same species!" Many Darwin biographers, including Peter Brent and Evelleen Richards, conclude that Darwin had a low opinion of women. Brent

concluded, "It would be hard to conceive of a more self-indulgent, almost contemptuous, view of the subservience of women to men" than Darwin's attitude. Richards writes that Darwin had "clearly defined opinions on women's intellectual inferiority and her subservient status." In *The Descent of Man*, Darwin argued that adult females of most species resembled the young (children) of both sexes and that "males are more evolutionarily advanced than females." That would even give Gloria Steinem and Jane Fonda some mixed feelings about Darwin!

darwin was a racist

Darwin believed in the superiority of the white man. In the following quote, Charles Darwin places the Black Man and the Aborigine somewhere between the White Man and baboons. Darwin said, "At some future period, not very distant as measured by centuries, the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace the savage races throughout the world. At the same time the anthropomorphous apes... will no doubt be exterminated. The break between man and his nearest allies will then be wider, for it will intervene between man in a more civilized state, as we may hope, even than the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as now between the negro or Australian and the gorilla."

Wow, did you just read what I read? Does that sound just a tad bit prejudiced? In fact, have you ever seen the ENTIRE title of Darwin's book? It goes like this: "On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection, or the PRESERVATION OF FAVOURED RACES IN THE STRUGGLE FOR LIFE." (The 6th edition conveniently dropped this slightly slanted portion of the title.) And just who were the "favored races"? Well the Europeans, of course. Let's see now...what "race" was Darwin? European? Hmmm. What a coincidence. While it's true that other people

had racist tendencies in the 1800's, this is not an excuse. Racism by any name and by any degree is still racism. So let's call it like it is. Darwin was a racist. He may not have fit the typical mold of the angry skinhead shouting obscenities or racial slurs, but he was definitely a racist. The difference that Darwin made was this: no one had yet formulated these racist ideas into a concise volume and called it "science." When that day in 1859 arrived with the publishing of his book "On the Origin of Species", arrogant and proud men could now justify what they had believed all along—their own superiority.

Now they had 'proof.' Now they could boost their own egos with God out of the picture. All they needed was a prophet to give them a new 'holy book.' Darwin was the 'new Moses', who wrote a 'new bible', where the gods of nature and chance created man, and the god of death could eliminate the weak in the survival of the fittest. Darwin would lead them to the promised land of natural selection and humanism where man could sit on the throne and run things his own way. But what far-reaching consequences would arise from these views? What would happen when those with strength, cunning, and money were also evil men? What would happen if those men were in positions of power, but had no conscience? Would they not eliminate those who stood in their way, and claim it as their right, because of natural selection? This unfortunately, is exactly what happened.

darwinism: the foundation of nazism

If we look at some of the comments of Adolf Hitler, would we find a comparison with the words of Darwin? Let's look again at the first part of Darwin's previous quote: "the civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate, and replace the savage races throughout the world." While not personally promoting the elimination of people groups, Darwin sees this to be the natural outcome of the 'survival-of-the-fittest' mentality if practiced by nations. While Darwin simply posed a theory, Adolf Hitler fulfilled the prophecy by putting it to practice with ruthless efficiency. Hitler viewed himself as the architect of evolution on a grand scale. Hitler wasn't going to wait around for "natural" selection. He would accelerate this 'process' and 'scientifically' "exterminate, and replace the savage races" himself. Adolf Hitler, (influenced by Friedrich Nietzsche, a follower of Darwin who took his theories to its furthest conclusion) constantly ranted about the Übermensch; that is, the Aryan "SUPER MAN", the final product of evolution. When one sees the words of Darwin,

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darwin

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and then sees the fanatical ravings of the madman Hitler in his book “Mein Kampf”, it’s not hard to ‘connect the dots.’ Hitler said, “The natural struggle for existence...allows the strongest and healthiest to survive. A stronger race will supplant the weaker, since the drive for life in its final form will decimate every ridiculous fetter of the so-called humaneness of individuals, in order to make place for the humaneness of nature, which destroys the weak to make place for the strong.” I think it would be safe to say, that Hitler was a Darwinist.

Remember that quote earlier by Darwin about baboons? How does this compare to Hitler’s words in “Mein Kampf?” He spoke of “sub humans, lower human types, monstrosities halfway between man and ape,” and said, “Take away the Nordic Germans and nothing remains but the dance of apes.” By the time the smoke had cleared and WWII was over, millions of people worldwide were slaughtered due largely to a faulty philosophy. I wonder if a decimated England ever realized the sad influence its hero Darwin, (buried in Westminster Cathedral), had on their enemy Hitler?

darwinism influenced communism

Hitler was not the only man who took Darwin’s writings to a destructive conclusion. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels collaborated in one of the most fatal and repressive movements the world has ever seen: communism. They believed that there is a kind of social evolution, a natural and inevitable class struggle, which will evolve from capitalism to a classless society, brought about when the struggle will erupt into revolution. Marx found a kindred doctrine in Darwin; dogmas that reinforced his own twisted views. Darwin was his hero. Marx wrote to Engels concerning “The Origin of Species” saying, “This was the book that contains the basis in natural history for our views.”

In 1861 he also wrote, “Darwin’s book is very important and serves me as a basis in natural selection for the class struggle in history...” A true scientist must examine all possibilities. In looking for a theory for the creation of all life without the Creator, he took God out of the picture, and the intelligent Darwin, with a few strokes of the pen, became a fool! The Bible says, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity” (Psalms 53:1). Darwin’s twisted logic unfortunately created many monsters. His Godless views corrupted Godless men, who

unleashed destructive forces against humanity. Millions perished with the rise of communism.

the great contrast

Anytime someone leaves the true doctrines of the Bible, his error will give birth to destructive and contradictory beliefs. Proverbs 14:12 says, “*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.*” The Bible has always taught that men and women were created as equals, but may have different roles. God is not a chauvinist or a sexist; he does not choose men before women. God does not base His acceptance on performance, race, or gender. God desires a relationship with EVERY man, woman, and child based on His love for the individual regardless of nationality, gender or performance. That includes the elderly, unborn, crippled, and mentally or physically impaired.

Jesus Christ never taught such arrogant and condescending doctrine as Darwin. He loved the Roman as well as the Jew. He commanded Paul to go the Gentiles – that’s most of us. He talked to the Samaritan woman in John chapter 4. The Samaritans were hated by the Jews, yet Jesus loved those who were considered social outcasts, and those blemished by sin. He saw people as eternal souls with feelings, hope, and dreams; not as tools for the furtherance of genetic perfection. Would this not be expected of our Creator? The Bible tells us that God “*hath made of ONE BLOOD ALL NATIONS of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation*” (Acts 17:26).

The Bible also adds, “*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*” (Galatians 3:28). And what of you? Which sounds more appealing to you? Do you prefer the personal God of the Bible, who loves and accepts you for who you are, not for your genetic performance? A Creator who loves you ‘in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer?’ Or would you want the humanistic god of Darwin, a callous indifferent force that would cast you aside once you ceased to be useful, which uses you only *if* you are healthier, or better, or richer? Which ‘handbook’ do you prefer? The Bible that says you were created with a divine purpose by the

loving Hand of the Creator? The Bible that you can trust because God cannot lie (Titus 1:2)? Or would you prefer Darwin’s ‘bible,’ that has the theories of a man who tried to dismiss God? A book that dismisses the usefulness of the soul inside, but emphasizes the superficial outside. A book which places every one of you who is reading this article on some evolutionary scale based on man’s biased and fallible criteria, or his own personal preferences (such as blond and blue eyed, or maybe an IQ level, or maybe if you look like a Barbie doll). A book which labels you like some 8th grade clique, (the nerds vs. the jocks), and then belittles you because you are not in its class.

Do you want the God who will free you from sin and guilt and give you a home in heaven, with your name written in the book of life forever? Or do you prefer the shallow ‘bible’ of Darwin, which leaves you without purpose, without hope, your only reward is death, and your name will be forever forgotten like that of a dead animal? This ‘bible’ of Darwin’s is the textbook that is taught to most children, not as THEORY, but as FACT.

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darwin

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the legacy of charles darwin

People have argued that the damage done to society is not the fault of Darwin, but that twisted men took a good theory and misused it for their own purposes. Here is the flaw in that logic: Darwin's theories were already twisted. Men like Marx, Hitler and Lenin didn't have to twist anything. They did not change what Darwin said; they simply used it the way they were written – in context - for their own purposes. This is not to say that every evolutionist is a Nazi or a sexist. But all who adhere to Nazism are undeniably evolutionists (and sexists are simply bigots of gender). This is not to say that all evolutionists are communists. But all communists are undeniably evolutionists. This is not to say that Darwin was a murderer, but unfortunately Darwin's evolution created many murderers. The religion of Darwinian Evolution is arrogance and insecurity masquerading as science. When Darwin lessened humanity according to skin color and gender, and then legitimized it by calling it science, he cast aside man's humanity, and replaced it with an animal.

Is it any wonder, that Darwin's 'bible' would be the Bill of Anti – Rights used by bullies to eliminate those they hated? His views, once latched onto by proud, angry, and Godless men, were used to unleash destructive forces this world had not yet seen. What is the legacy, the fruit of Darwin? Adolf Hitler is responsible for the death of over 83 million people (21 million for political and racial motives including the Holocaust, and approximately 62 million in the war in Europe). According to the "Black Book of Communism," this Godless system is responsible for the deaths of approximately 94 million souls worldwide, 65 million in China alone. As William Penn well stated, "Those people who will not be governed by God will be ruled by tyrants!" Though Charles Darwin did not directly murder anyone, he did plant a young tree that someday would bear poisonous fruit. It did not yield for many years, but when it did, many were killed or made sick when they ate it.

The fruit, therefore, of the evolutionary tree that Darwin planted may be summed up as this: Darwin indirectly contributed to, or at the very least was in agreement with, movements that brought about the elimination of close to 180 million people. Darwin was some hero! Did you know that there is a new global holiday in the works to be celebrated yearly on Feb. 12 called "Darwin Day?" I'm afraid we're just not thinking. "Newsweek" may want to seriously re-think the comparison of Darwin and Lincoln, and others may want to reconsider

this "icon of humanism" for the damage he has done. A Biblical principle states that the person who starts a fire is responsible for the collateral damage associated with it. *"If a fire break out, and ...the field, be consumed therewith; he that kindled the fire shall surely make restitution"* (Exodus 22:6). Partial blame must therefore go to Darwin for the blood on his hands. His tragic

words started a fire that spread to Godless men, who used them to justify their tyranny, and the extermination of those less desirable; because in their view' and in Darwin's view, might makes right. ■

For sources of information, please visit the Faith for Life link at www.fargobaptist.org.

faith in the fog

"the apostles said unto the lord, increase our faith." luke 17:5

George Mueller of England lived in the 1800s and ran an orphanage, caring for over 10,000 orphans during his ministry. Mueller never asked for a donation for his orphanage, but always saw miraculous answers to prayer ... some just in the nick of time. During his lifetime he received over 1,000,000 British pounds in answer to specific prayers. Mr. Mueller made several trips across the Atlantic Ocean to North America. On one trip the following incident took place as revealed by the captain of a ship.

"We had George Mueller of Bristol on board," said the captain. "The fog was thick and I had been on the bridge for twenty-four hours when George Mueller came to me and said, 'Captain, I have come to tell you I must be in Quebec on Saturday afternoon.' 'It is impossible,' I said. Mueller said 'Very well then, if your ship cannot take me, God will find some other way. I have never broken an engagement in fifty-seven years; come, let us go down into the chart room and **pray**.' 'I looked at that man of God and thought to myself ... what insane asylum could this man have come from, for I never heard of such a thing as this?' 'Mr. Mueller,' I said, 'do you know how dense this fog is?' He replied, 'No, my eye is not on the density of the fog, but on the living

God who controls every circumstance of my life.' "Then he knelt down and he prayed one of the most simple prayers. When he had finished I was going to pray, but he put his hand on my shoulder and told me not to bother." Mueller said, 'Captain, you do not believe God will answer, yet I believe He already has ... there is no need whatsoever for you to pray about it.' "I looked at him and George Mueller said", 'Captain, I have known my Lord for fifty-seven years and there has never been a single day when I have failed to get an audience with the King. Get up, Captain, and open the door and you will find the fog has gone.'

"I got up and the fog indeed was gone, and on that Saturday afternoon George Mueller kept his promised engagement."



faith & finances

“owe no man anything”

Romans 13:8

by pastor scheving



Is it spiritual to talk about money? Well the Bible speaks on money as much as any other subject. There is a nerve that runs from the heart to the pocketbook, which tells a lot about our spiritual condition. A man heavily in debt has a ‘broken decision-maker’ which hinders him in every way. Debt immobilizes a person as well as causes stress in an already strained marriage. Jesus said “*No servant can serve two masters*” (Luke 16:13). Sadly nine out of ten times, debt is “self inflicted.” Nasty debt bondage is only a symptom of the actual root problems, which are covetousness, pride (keeping up with the Joneses), irresponsibility, and impatience (unwillingness to wait to purchase). Sadder yet, is the hardship that unpaid debt causes the creditor, which the bankrupt man normally doesn’t think about. Many years ago as an electrical contractor, I felt the sting of someone else’s debt when one of my customers filed bankruptcy while owing me \$3500. I never saw my money. Over a million Americans file bankruptcy every year. Many small businesses are ruined in the process. Back in Bible times there was no such thing as filing a ‘Chapter 11’ or a ‘Chapter 13’. In Matthew 18, Jesus tells a parable about a man who was ‘in over his head’ financially. Jesus said, “*Forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made*” (Matthew 18:25). I would dare say there were a lot less people in debt back then. In the Old Testament, we find a woman left in debt after the death of her husband. The woman desperately pleaded for help from the prophet Elisha saying, “*My husband is dead; and thou knowest that thy servant did fear the LORD:*

and the creditor is come to take unto him my two sons to be bondmen” (II Ki 4:1). Unfortunately, unplanned things such as the death of a bread winner can happen. This is all the more reason to practice self-restraint with our purchases, and become “invulnerable.” Nobody likes wolves at the door. The goal is to

A man heavily in debt has a ‘broken decision-maker’.

become insulated from recessions, lay-offs, inflation, etc.

To “*owe no man anything*” (Rom 13:8) is going to require a whole new outlook on life. You will have to forget what society is telling you. You will have to ignore the cry of our culture. You will have to disregard what you have been trained to believe as ‘a good little consumer.’ You will have to stop ‘jumping through the hoops’ of the advertisers. If you ever get out of debt, it will be against all odds. The American dream has become a nightmare. The whole system is designed to keep you drowning in interest. We are often flattered by credit card offers that show up in the mail telling us we qualify for big bucks on our credit limit because we have such good credit. These same companies aren’t quite as flattering when you overspend and can’t make the payment on the credit card. While the world tells us that we need more income, the problem is actually not the paycheck, but the discontented human heart. The more income folks receive, the more they increase their standard of living (instead of paying off their debt). As soon as people get a raise or a tax rebate, they run off to buy a new computer or a flat screen television. Of course, the retailers can convince you to buy anything

as long as you can make the payment. As a result, people live on the razor-thin edge of vulnerability. Conventional wisdom is just plain wrong!

Recently, I went to my 30th year high school class reunion. I found myself reflecting back 30 years to a testimony I heard from a high school teacher during my senior year. This teacher had just purchased a new house for \$30,000 on a 30-year loan. The teacher told the senior class of her and her husband’s encounter with the bank. She said by the time they

were done paying off the house it would cost them three times what they had purchased it for due to interest. As a frugal high school student, I remember how my jaw dropped as I thought of a \$30,000 house actually costing \$90,000 due to interest. Of course, that would be ‘chicken feed’ compared to the prices of houses today, but it was enough for me to say, “There’s got to be a better way.” Today many people will end up spending \$300,000 in interest by the time they pay off their house. Imagine nearly a third of a million dollars of hard-earned money spent on interest for your house alone! (as a donkey once said...hee haw!). Think of how many hours a person would have to work to earn a third of a million dollars. A person will wear themselves out for decades working like a dog, day in and day out. The

whole system is propped up by those who profit from it. Mr. Rothschild who built a huge banking dynasty, called compound interest “The eighth wonder of the world.”

Imagine taking that same \$300,000 and keeping it in your own pocket to wisely invest and live off of during retirement. Now, so far we’ve only discussed your house loan. Imagine the other interest paid on cars, furniture, electronics, credit cards, etc. Americans are paying enough in interest to ‘choke a duck.’ Americans are singing “I owe, I owe, so off to work I go” (insert whistling here). Whatever happened to the ‘old days’ when you earned the money before making the purchase? (what a novel thought!) It seemed to work ok for Grandpa and Grandma, or Mom and Dad. The problem today is the ‘Me’ generation trying to instantly reproduce the same lifestyle it took Mom and Dad 30 years to acquire. At the bottom of it all, we find something called pride! So few are willing to drive a more humble car or live in a more modest house. The goal is to pay off these items and then move up; but it takes patience. Are you willing to practice ‘delayed gratification?’ What would make life happier and more stress-free: fancier houses and cars with high payments, or the absence of the pressure of monthly payments? Is it really worth it? What financial condition will you be in five years from now if you continue on the same course you’re currently taking? What if you were to pay off all debts, operate on a ‘cash’ basis, and focus on future wealth building? In the next issue of FFL, I’ll be talking about how to effectively retire your current debt.

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PASTOR'S PERSPECTIVE

PRAISE GOD ANYHOW

"Therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually" Heb 13:15

There are thousands of languages and dialects in this world, but there is one word that is the same no matter what the language. It's the word 'Hallelujah', which speaks of praising God our Creator. The Old Testament of our Bible was originally written in Hebrew, and Hallelujah is a Hebrew word for 'praise God.' "Hallel" means praise, and "jah" means Jehovah. Now it's one thing to praise God during the good times of life, but the verse above speaks of a 'sacrifice of praise.' We know what it means to have to sacrifice, or to make a sacrifice. It means to be put out, or do something when it's difficult. Well, the Bible tells us to still praise God when we've been put out or let down. This is a sacrifice of praise.

THE REQUIREMENT

I've been to the tomb of George Handel in London's Westminster Cathedral. When Handel was writing his famous "Messiah", he became so engrossed in his work, that he barricaded himself in his room seldom eating or sleeping for 23 days, sobbing as he composed. As he was writing the Hallelujah chorus he said, "heaven came down and the great God Himself." Most people wouldn't understand this. In fact, back in the days of Jesus, the religious clergy didn't get it. When Christ made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem, the clergymen ordered Jesus to command the people to stop praising Him. Jesus said, "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out" (Lu 19:40). Think about that! Imagine the sound of praise coming out of rocks. Our Creator meant what He said here. God must be praised! It is a requirement of man and nature. The Bible even says, "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee" (Ps 76:10). God will somehow even get glory out of the folly of the heathen. Now the truth here is this: Christian people need to be careful about being 'selective' in our thanks and praise to God. God is good whether life is kind or not. The Bible says, "be instant in season, out of season." The word 'instant' means "steadfast or not fickle." To praise God anyhow, may hurt or cost you something. The Bible says, "Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Eph 5:20). If God wants us to do so regardless, then evidently it is possible. He tells us to "rejoice evermore" (1 Thes 5:16).

THE REASON

Why should we praise God anyhow? In the gospel of Luke, chapter 10, the disciples were rejoicing because they had power over demon spirits. One chapter earlier, the disciples were embarrassed when they weren't able to help a demon-possessed boy. The circumstances of life may change, but God is "the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever" (Heb 13:8). That means life will have emotional mountains as well as valley, but God's

goodness doesn't change. My son and daughter-in-law recently experienced the frustration of planning a wedding, but later felt the joy of a beautiful ceremony. Any mother knows the agony of travailing to give birth to a child, and also the joy that follows after the delivery (John 16:21). Circumstances change by the hour. Poverty can replace prosperity and setbacks can replace success. Bad health can replace good health and persecution can replace popularity. John the apostle knew the joy of seeing the glorified Jesus on the top of the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17), but afterwards knew the pain of slave labor in a copper mine on the island of Patmos. It was all within the will of God as John received the incredible and final book of the Bible while banished to isolation. God was still on the throne and in control of His world. The Bible tells us that God, "Will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Heb 13:5). We can praise God anyhow because He is always in control. Decades ago, the Russians launched their first satellite into outer space. The atheistic communist magazine Krokidil boasted, "The universe is now under new management!" Of course that is laughable (Ps 2:1-4). There is a sovereign Creator in control of all the circumstances of this universe and your life, so praise God anyhow.

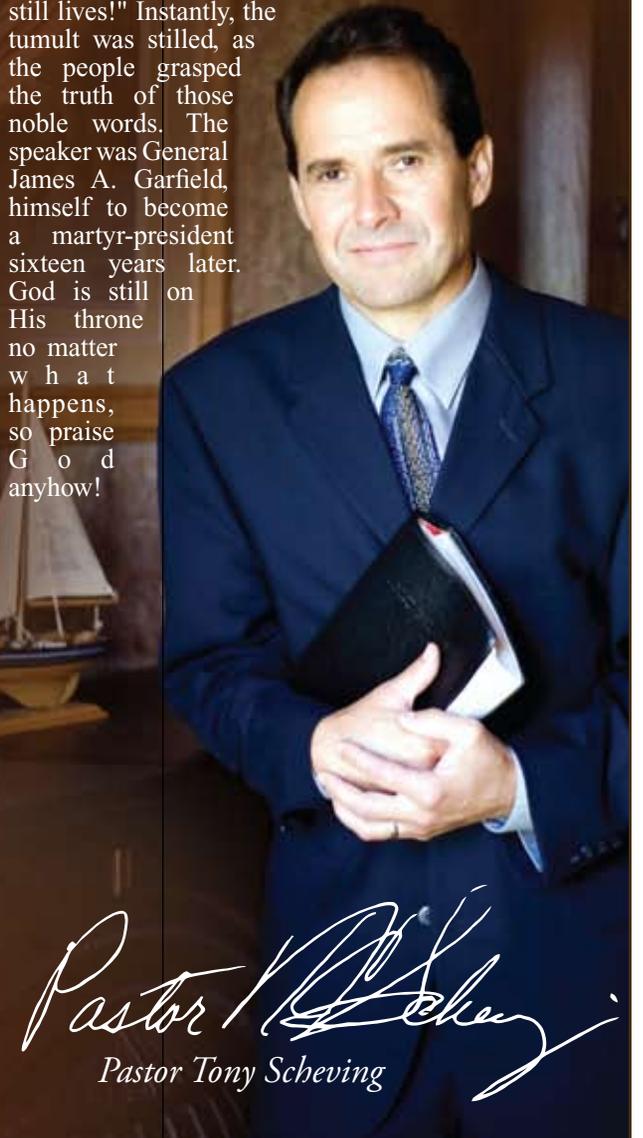
THE REACTION

One of God's faithful missionaries, Allen Gardiner, experienced many physical difficulties and hardships throughout his service to the Savior. Despite his troubles, he said, "While God gives me strength, failure will not daunt me." In 1851, at the age of 57, he died of disease and starvation while serving on Picton Island at the southern tip of South America. When his body was found, his diary lay nearby. It bore the record of hunger, thirst, wounds, and loneliness. The last entry in his little book showed the struggle of his shaking hand as he tried to write legibly. It read, "I am overwhelmed with a sense of the goodness of God." What a reaction to adversity! I also think of the man Job in the Bible, who lost all his children, wealth, and health in a very short time. Picture with me Job standing over the 10 graves of his children and saying, "The LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD" (Job 1:21). Later on Job said, "Though he (God) slay me, yet will I trust in him" (Job 13:15). We would call that 'a sacrifice of praise.' Life is often lived from peaks to low valleys and back again. Joseph went from being the favored son, to slavery, to being a favored employee, to being falsely accused and sent to a dungeon. From there he became the overseer of the Egyptian empire! Moses went from being criticized by his people to being the hero who parted the Red Sea and brought deliverance. David went from being a giant killing national hero, to being a fugitive, to being a king, to being overthrown by his own son. On the day of Pentecost, Peter preached and revival broke out. A few weeks later, Peter is beaten and thrown into jail. Life can really be a roller coaster. Praise God anyhow! God is still good if the cupboards are bare, the car is running lousy, the creditors are calling and your job is in jeopardy. Instead of panicking, or having a pity party, we need to offer up a sacrifice of praise.

THE RESULT

Psalms 107:22 "And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing." What happens when we "praise God anyhow?" A few months after Jesus ascended to heaven, the apostles were beaten by the Jewish religious leader for preaching the

gospel. How did they respond? The Bible says, "They departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name" (Acts 5:41). They praised God anyhow! As a result, they had the power of God working mightily in their lives (Act 4:31). Later on, Paul & Silas would be beaten and thrown in jail. Instead of having a pity party, they praised God (Act 16:25), and God worked a mighty miracle for them. There is something powerful about praising God even in the midst of trials and adversity. Praise releases God's power to work on our behalf. King Jehoshaphat and the Jewish people were in an awful predicament in II Chronicles 20. Instead of panicking, they offered up a sacrifice of praise and God worked a mighty deliverance from their enemy. God is able to bring about a 'reversal' in the midst of bad times if we would just remember to trust and praise him (Ps 107). At times of defeat, sickness, poverty, death, loneliness, persecution, and weakness, remember to offer up a sacrifice of praise. God is still on His throne and the Bible says, "Without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb 11:6). On the morning of Lincoln's assassination, a crowd of fifty thousand people gathered before the Stock Exchange Building in New York. Emotions ran high and there was danger of a riot pursuing. Just then, a well-built man in an officer's uniform stepped to the front of the balcony, and in a voice that rang like a trumpet he cried, "Fellow citizens! The Bible says of God, 'Justice and judgment are the establishment of His throne. Mercy and truth go before His face.' Fellow citizens! God reigns! And the government at Washington still lives!" Instantly, the tumult was stilled, as the people grasped the truth of those noble words. The speaker was General James A. Garfield, himself to become a martyr-president sixteen years later. God is still on His throne no matter what happens, so praise God anyhow!



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