

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*

Complimentary Copy

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WHATEVER WILL BE, WILL BE?

“Whatsoever the LORD pleased, that did he in heaven, and in earth”

– Psalm 135:6

Do you remember the song from years ago by Doris Day entitled “Que Sera Sera,” (whatever will be will be)? There are many people who take a fatalist view on life. They often refer to things like good luck, chance, fate, fortune, or even karma. Webster refers to “destiny” as the predetermined course of events. The Bible verse above refers to God being in control. The Bible says in Job 23:14, “*For He performeth the thing that is appointed for me.*” Do things just happen, or does God control destiny?

Providential Riddle

Things don’t just happen. In the Bible, we find a woman by the name of Ruth who is in the godly lineage of Jesus Christ. Ironically, she was a pagan woman worshipping idols, before God entered the picture. It’s a long and beautiful story

and can be read in the four chapters of the book of Ruth. Many things had to just happen for Ruth to go from being a hell-bound heathen, to being part of the wonderful bloodline of the Savior of the world. There are no coincidences with God. There is no such thing as chance. In spite of what anyone says, America was founded and set up by Bible-believing Christians who came from England. How different the outcome would have been if it hadn’t been for a storm at sea a few decades earlier that sunk the invading Spanish fleet. Many believe America would have been another third world country like Mexico. No country in the history of the world has ever sent more

missionaries and evangelized more people than America. Was that storm at sea just a coincidence? When George Washington was fighting in the French-Indian War, he had three horses shot out from under him in one battle. While removing his jacket that evening, a bullet fell out along with much shrapnel. The Indians later admitted that they had shot at Washington repeatedly and singled him out for death. They called him “The man God wouldn’t let die.” The story of the bulletproof Washington used to appear in our history books, but has since been removed as history has been rewritten. The point is that God had a greater purpose for Washington to become the ‘Father of our nation.’ Things don’t just happen with God. There was once a Christian young lady who lived way out in the country on a dirt road. She thought she would never meet a guy and get married. One day, a car broke down in front of her farm. She took a cold glass of water out to the handsome

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FAITH *for life*

Whatever will be, will be? *continued from page 1*

young man fixing his car (who happened to also be a dedicated Christian), and ended up marrying the guy. If it's God will for us to be married, He has the right spouse picked out (Gen 24:44). God also has a perfect plan for our lives. When Paul became a believer, God told him to go into the nearest town, and *"it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do"* (Act 27:24). Often, we lament when the car breaks down, or an event gets rained out, or a deal falls through. God says in Isaiah 55:8, *"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD."* Many years ago in Springfield IL, a young Abraham Lincoln had just failed in business. He really wanted to be an attorney, but couldn't afford Blackstone's Commentaries that were the cornerstone of practicing law at the time. The day he closed down his business, he purchased an old barrel full of blankets and junk for fifty cents. That night as he was rummaging through the barrel, he discovered it contained Blackstone's Commentaries! He looked up to heaven and realized God had something for him to do! There are no accidents with God. God has a plan for every life. We will one day be amazed to find out what God had actually orchestrated in our own lives.

Painful Resentment

When things don't go the way people want, they often get upset with God. The Bible says, *"Behold, he taketh away, who can hinder him? who will say unto him, 'what doest thou?'"* (Job 9:12). When things went sour for Naomi in the book of Ruth, she got bitter. But God was working behind the scenes, and by the end of the book Naomi was holding a precious grandson who would be in the lineage of the Messiah. Trust God when you don't understand and keep a broad perspective. Life can be a roller coaster, so let God be God. The Bible says, *"We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose"* (Rom 8:28). God has never said, "oops!" Nothing riles or shocks God. God is never taken by

surprise. Did it ever occur to you, that nothing has ever occurred to God? Down here on earth we wring our hands and pace the floor in distress, but God has never been alarmed. He calmly sits on His throne in charge of everything. God didn't create the earth and then wind up an alarm clock and sit back for thousands of years waiting for it to go off. He is closely attached to His creation and monitoring all activity. When things go wrong in your life, don't be a Jonah and get mad at God. You can't resist or reject God and win. He loves us and is either doing or allowing what He knows is best. People get mad at God because they can only see one piece of the puzzle while God sees the whole puzzle. Just yield to Him, and wake up every morning ready to accept whatever He allows in your life.

Praising Response

I heard of a pastor who was passing out Christian literature with his young daughter when he was arrested. The police handcuffed him in front of his daughter, put him in a squad car, and brought him downtown to occupy a jail cell with a bunch of thugs. While the pastor was sitting there wondering what was going on, a rough looking character in the cell walked over and sat down next to him. He asked why a sharply dressed man like himself was in a jail cell with a bunch of criminals. The pastor proceeded to talk to the felon and the conversation turned spiritual. Before it was over, the convict had received Christ as his Savior. Minutes later, the pastor was released from the cell with an apology, and realized why God had him in that jail. The Bible says in Mark 7:37, *"He hath done all things well."* God's providence should keep us humble. God is putting all the ingredients together to make up a recipe. If you ate a raw egg, or cup of flour, or salt, baking soda, or other ingredients separately

...it would be yucky! But if you mix them all together you can make a delicious cake. God sees the finished product.

The Bible says, *"He doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, 'What*

doest thou?'"
(Dan 4:35).

Currently, there are politicians, the filthy rich, and the shakers and movers who think they are calling the shots. The truth is, they are not (Prov 21:1). God has the final say. When it comes to life, there are a

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number of "unchangeables." We have no say over when we were born, our gender, birth order among our siblings, who our parents are, our height, bone structure and a number of other things. At the same time, there are some things that we can alter. God doesn't want us to be fatalists who sit back and do nothing. I heard of a guy who fell down the stairs and got up saying, "I guess that was meant to be, but I'm sure glad it's over with!" James 2:20 says, *"Faith without works is dead."* God wants to work with us in His sovereignty. God hasn't eliminated our free will. He could have made Adam and Eve obey, but he gave them the freedom to choose. In the same way, we can choose to do right or wrong. The greatest choice we'll ever make in life is to make Jesus Christ the Lord of our life and be born again (please see pages 6-7). We all have an inescapable appointment with death. Job said, *"For I know that thou wilt bring me to death, and to the house appointed for all living"* (Job 30:23). We need to prepare for death by placing all of our faith in what Christ did on the cross. In a nutshell, we should make right choices, but trust our sovereign God for the outcome. It really is a wonderful mystery. *"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"* (Romans 11:33) ■

Some Thoughts on the FLOOD

by Pastor Tony Scheving

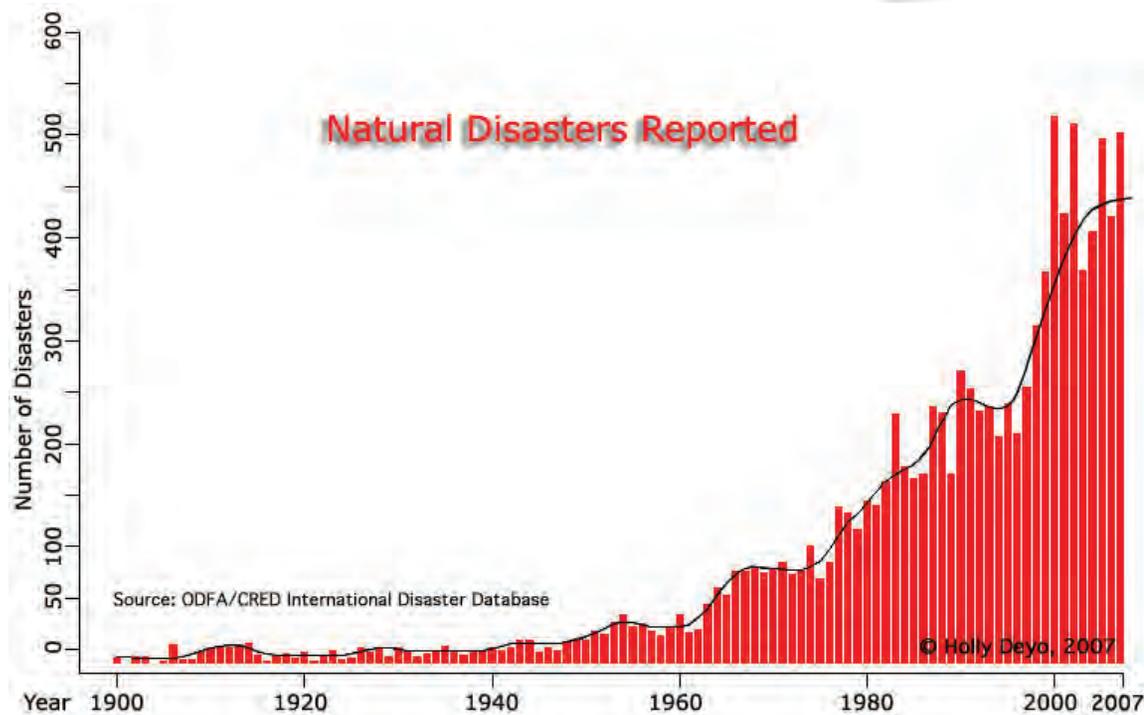
My home is a stone's throw away from the Red River. When major flooding hits our region, my house becomes an island as I build a dike around it and control the seepage and ground water with pumps around the clock. My family is without water and sewer for many days and we pray for our rural electricity to keep running. Family memories are made as we use a canoe to get out to the road where the car sits high and dry. But there is a spiritual side to a flood.

Recently our mayor said, "The river is performing as designed by God." The Bible says in Psalm 29:10, "The LORD sitteth upon the flood." This means God is in control of a flood. The Bible also says, "God bindeth the floods from overflowing" (Job 28:11). This means that God can prevent a flooded river from spilling over its banks. Recently, as the floodwaters rose, people around

the region and nation were praying. I was blessed as I watched local city authorities open their daily flood meetings with prayer instead of statistics. I was also impressed as I watched our local citizens partner with the civil authorities to fight the Red, instead of criticizing our leaders for not bailing us out. That's good upper Midwest character. The Bible says, "Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it" (So of Sol 8:7). May I commend the FM area for the love and support they've shown to others during this difficult time. When an emergency arises, it unites people together in a common cause. It's also a good time for people to re-evaluate their priorities in life. Perhaps such a crisis can serve to loosen our grip on the temporal, and get our eyes on our Creator.

Finally, as I considered the amount

of preparation that went into getting ready for the flood, I thought of the word "foresight!" The Bible says, "A prudent man foreseeth the evil." It also adds, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." It's crucial to plan ahead for a flood, but preparing for eternity is infinitely more important. Sadly, many fail to prepare for the hereafter. To see what the Bible says about getting ready for eternity, please refer to pages 6-7.



And as he (Jesus) sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world? And Jesus answered and said unto them, ...there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.
-Matthew 24:3,4,7

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what can wash away SIN?

*For it is the blood that
maketh an atonement
for the soul.*

Leviticus 17:11

Sincere people today are trusting in many different things to forgive their sins. The Hindu, Buddhist and Moslem all have various ways to atone for their sins. Within the realm of Christianity some hope to have their sins forgiven by doing good works, getting baptized, observing the sacraments, going to church or keeping the commandments. God's plan for forgiveness from the very beginning, is very clear according to the Bible verse above. After Adam and Eve sinned and lost their innocence in the Garden of Eden, they tried to cover their nakedness with fig leaves. God gave them an object lesson right away and used animal hides or leather (Gen 3:21) to cover them. Obviously some animals (most likely sheep) had to die, and the first blood was shed for sin. Immediately God gave them a promise of a coming Messiah one day (Gen 3:15). Adam and Eve's two sons, Cain and Abel, were soon offering up sacrifices to God. Abel offered up a lamb as a blood sacrifice, which was acceptable to God. Cain offered God a bloodless sacrifice of fruit and vegetables and it was rejected. God had set a precedent as told in Hebrews 9:22, "without shedding of blood is no remission" (forgiveness of sin). Years later Abraham is found offering up sheep as a blood sacrifice (Gen 22:13). By the time we get to Moses, God establishes the Passover involving the following instructions: A special lamb was to be sacrificed. It would be a male lamb without spot or blemish. It would be a year old, which is prime of life for a lamb. Its blood would be shed as a sacrifice, and the innocent would die for the guilty! That lamb would be a picture of someone who was yet to come. The Passover and the shed blood of lambs would continue for many years. After numerous centuries, Jesus Christ appeared on the scene, and John the Baptist proclaimed, "Behold the

Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Jesus Christ would be like that Passover lamb as a male, without sin, dying in the prime of life (age 33) as the innocent dying for the guilty. For many years, the blood of sacrificial lambs had been shed by the thousands. Jesus would shed the final blood on the cross. Before He died, He spoke those last words, "It is finished" (John 19:30). By this he meant there's now no more need for animal sacrifices. The moment Jesus died, the thick veil back in the Jewish temple supernaturally tore in half and God made it clear there were to be no more animal sacrifices. The Jews continued to sacrifice lambs until Titus the Roman general permanently destroyed the temple. God had spoken. So what can cleanse us from our sins? Please carefully read the following Bible verses as they spell out the answer:

1 John 1:7 *"The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"*

Ephesians 1:7 *"In whom (Jesus) we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins"*

Romans 5:9 *"Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."*

1 Peter 1:18-19 *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as...tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot"*

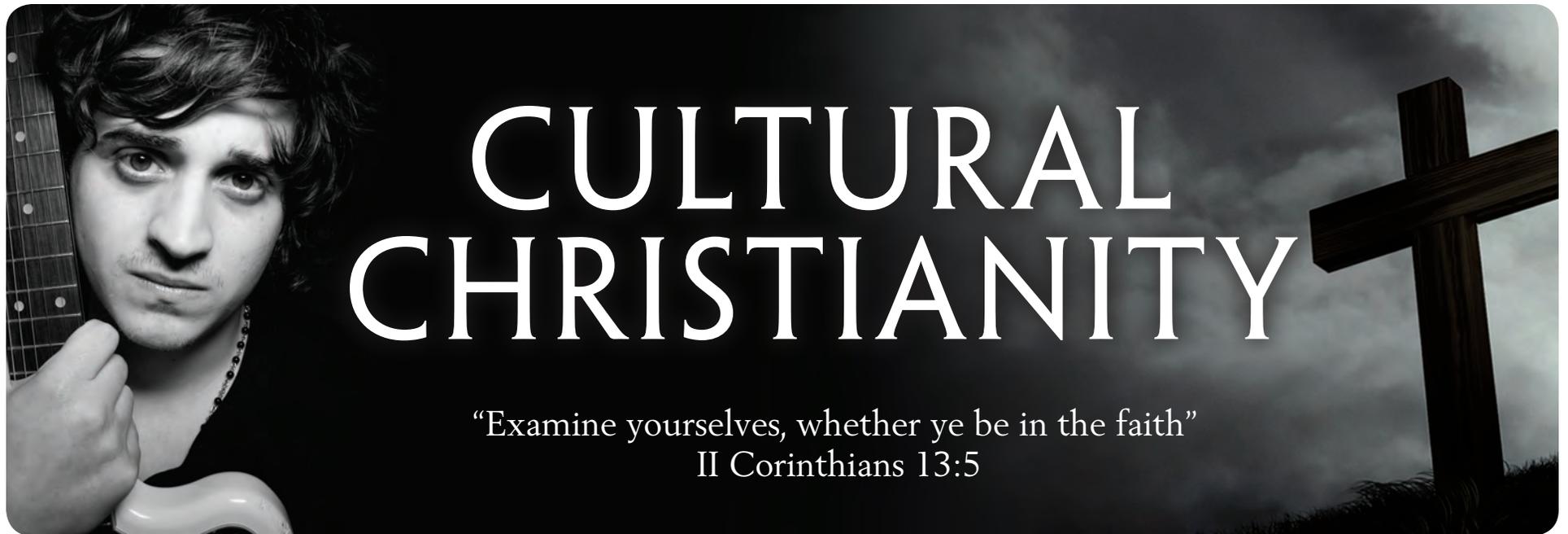
Revelation 1:5 *"Unto him (Jesus) that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood"*

Apparently baptism or doing good deeds has nothing to do with getting us to heaven. That leaves us with one final question. How can we apply the shed

blood of Christ to our own sins? The answer is by being born again (John 3:3,7). This requires two things which are both connected to the shed blood of Christ. First of all we must be willing to repent of our sins. The Bible says, "*Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out*" (Acts 3:19). Secondly we must put 100% of our faith in the blood sacrifice of Jesus on the cross to save us from hell and our sins. The Bible says "*God hath set forth (Jesus) to be a propitiation (satisfactory payment) through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins*" (Rom 3:25). ■

Please carefully read pages 6-7 for more instruction on how to know your sins are forgiven.





CULTURAL CHRISTIANITY

“Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith”
II Corinthians 13:5

These days it's in vogue to be a Bible believing Christian in America. Mega-churches abound with sharp programs and entertainment. It is now cool to be a fan of contemporary Christian music. Radio stations are playing music about Jesus, and there are bookstores full of Christian material. Many people pray over a meal before eating and even celebrities wear crosses around their necks. There are football players kneeling to pray after a game and “John 3:16” banners by the goal posts. It's a much different world from when the Catacomb martyrs were bleeding and dying for the faith. In light of this, many today are making decisions for Jesus, but are they supernatural or superficial decisions? In the Bible we find unbelievers just going with the flow of “Christian culture” without being truly converted to Christ and the cross. The Bible predicted a great “apostasy” (departure from the truth) in these last days in which we're living (II Thes 2:3, I Tim 4:1, II Tim 3:1). Today we see many deciding to make Jesus their Savior, without making Him their Lord (master). The Bible says “that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ” (Acts 2:36). We don't become a real child of God with just a mental assent to right theology. The clergy of Christ's day had a lot of right doctrine (Mt 23:3) but Jesus still called them children of the devil (John 8:44). Is it possible to agree with Bible truth and still be on the road to hell? Jesus spoke of the coming Judgment Day, and of those who thought they were Christians, but

were tragically wrong (Mt 7:13-14/21-23). They were going along with the Christian Culture without ever truly being converted to Christ. We don't become a future citizen of heaven by just mechanically reciting a sinner's prayer. The culture and trend of today is to get into a Bible study, read Christian books, and turn over a new leaf. Unfortunately this is not the spiritual birth Jesus spoke of when He said, “*Ye must be born again*” (in order to go to heaven; John 3:3,7). This spiritual transformation is not something you “grow into.” It is not becoming more knowledgeable about spiritual matters. Jesus said, *except ye be converted...ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven* (Mt 18:3). This conversion takes place in the heart, not the head. It starts with a change of mind about our sin. Many today are sauntering up to the old rugged cross for forgiveness and salvation, without any guilt, shame, or repentance over their sin. In the Bible we find the unsaved under great conviction (guilt) over their sin (Act 2:37/9:6/16:29-30). In this day and age of the “feel good gospel” it's hard to find many pulpits preaching against sin like Jesus did (Mt 23:13-32). The bar has been lowered to the point where anyone can jump over it into the “Christian world.” Today's definition of godliness and holiness is pitiful (I Pet 1:15). We find a spiritual menace among us called “easy believism” which promotes a velvet cross instead of a blood stained one. We've resorted to worldly methods to draw crowds instead of really preaching the Word without compromise. The results are shallow decisions, and

counterfeit Christians. The ultimate result is superficial conversions instead of supernatural ones. Being genuinely born again requires a miraculous work of God on the heart. It cannot be manufactured by man. It cannot be found in a “touchy, feeling-oriented” emotional experience. It's not just an intellectual decision. It is a God-spawned miracle. No watered down gospel will ever produce this supernatural spiritual birth. People today are blinded by their sin, self-righteousness, false religion, and pride (II Cor 4:4). They have been lured into a false sense of security by the Christian culture. Most people feel they are going to heaven when in actuality they're not (Matt 7:13-14). Only God can break through the blindness to reveal Himself to the unsaved (John 6:44). When the Holy Spirit works on the human heart (John 16:8) the sinner sees his need to repent! Only then can he exercise saving faith to make Christ the Lord of his life. This is neither cheap nor shallow. It means giving your whole life to Christ. It's an all-or-nothing commitment. Many people today are looking for something real and worthwhile to commit their lives to. When you truly mean business with God, you'll cross the bridge from the world and burn it behind you. Only then will you know the joy and excitement of being genuinely converted, and not just a cultural Christian. ■

*For more information on becoming a true Christian please carefully read pages 6&7.

HOW TO FIND GOD AND REALLY KNOW HIM

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

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

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

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

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

It all revolves around Jesus Christ!

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

He came to earth to save us. *"For the son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10). The first step in going to heaven is to realize we need to be saved from our sin.

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

There is a difference between a physical birth and a spiritual birth. *"That which*

is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the spirit is spirit" (John 3:6).

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

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

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

That is also why we have a sin nature. You don't have to teach a toddler to be selfish, lie, steal things, sass back, fight with siblings, etc...it is also our nature as we grow up. 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).



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Faith for Life

Forgiveness from God

continued from previous page

#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).

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

The 10 Commandments were given by God to show us how impossible it is to be saved by doing good works. *"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith"* (Galatians 3:24). The law (10

commandments) shows us that we are condemned and need a Savior.

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

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

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

To repent means to change your mind about your sin, and make Christ the Lord of your life. Are you willing to turn from

your sin and turn to God? Do you believe that Jesus paid the full price on the cross for your sins?

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

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

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

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

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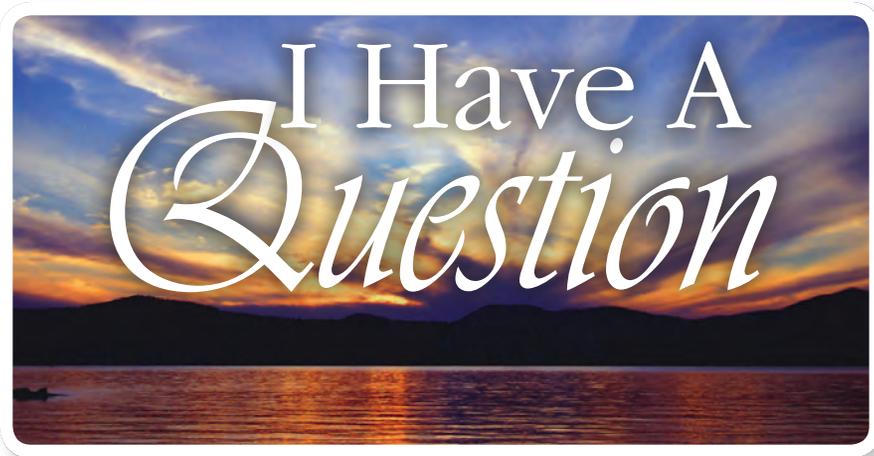
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Who Are the Baptists?

"I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." (Jesus Christ ... Matthew 16:18)

If you lived in the Bible Belt of the United States, you would be surrounded by Baptist churches. Here in the upper Midwest, they're somewhat uncommon. As a result, we find a lot of inaccurate information circulating about the Baptist faith. Who are the Baptists?

There are currently more Baptist counties in the United States than any other denomination. Baptist people were some of the earliest settlers in the US. The

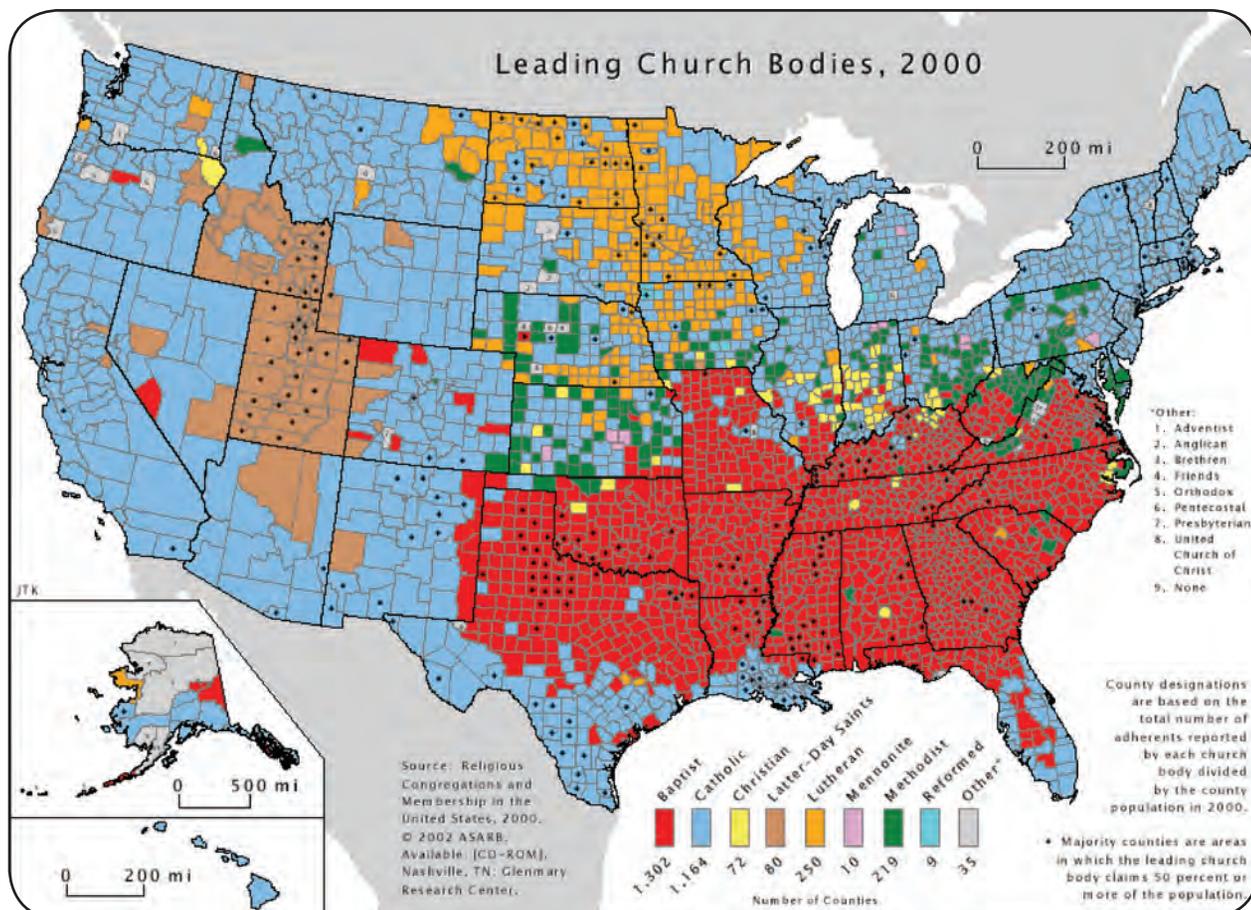
first Baptist church in America was formed just seventeen years after the Pilgrims settled here. It is believed that the constitution of the US was modeled after the church constitution of a New England Baptist church. America owes much of her religious freedom primarily to the Baptists. The Baptists were all patriots in the Revolutionary War.

George Washington was

baptized by Baptist Pastor John Gano, into the First Baptist Church of NY. Abraham Lincoln once said, "I owe everything I am to my Baptist mother." Other famous Baptists would include: John Smith, Sam Houston, Andrew Johnson, Warren Harding, Wm. Jennings Bryan, Harry Truman, John D. Rockefeller, Charles Spurgeon, John Birch, Martin Luther King, Billy Graham, Charles Stanley, Tim LaHaye, Johnny Cash, Louis Armstrong, Jim Brown, Joe Frazier, Kevin Costner, Chuck Norris, Cal Thomas, Mike Huckabee, and Rick Warren just to name a few. (Obviously we can't endorse all past

and present Baptists any more than we can endorse all Germans... like Hitler). There are countless other famous Baptists from various countries and eras. There is no shortage of evidence to show that St. Patrick was actually a Baptist (Google that one... you'll be surprised!). Many of the world's greatest missionaries were Baptist. Many beloved songs were written by Baptists such as, My Country Tis of Thee, Blessed Be the Tie That Binds, How Firm a Foundation, Pass Me Not O Gentle Savior, Near the Cross, and many more. The second greatest selling book of all time (next to the Bible) is Pilgrim's Progress, written by John Bunyan who was a Baptist preacher. The Baptists also led the way in the establishing of many of our nation's Ivy League colleges.

Twenty-first century Baptists have a Christian heritage that extends all the way back to the time of Jesus Christ and the apostles. The leading historians of all ages agree to this fact. Please note the following quotes and teachings by various historians (none who were Baptist themselves). Catholic historian Cardinal Hosius, who was a leader of the Catholic Council of Trent in 1561, acknowledged the ongoing persecution of Anabaptists for the prior 1200 years (from the time he lived). This would place us back to the time of 361 AD, shortly before the Dark Ages, and long before the Protestant Reformation. Cardinal Hosius also added that the Baptists existed 400 years prior to Augustine, who lived in 430AD (it's easy to do the math). Sir Isaac Newton said, "The Baptists are the only body of known Christians that have never symbolized with Roman Catholicism." The outstanding Lutheran historian Mosheim said, "Before the rise of Luther and Calvin (ie-Protestant Reformation), there lay secreted in almost all the countries of Europe persons who adhered tenaciously to the principles of modern Baptists." The Edinburg Encyclopedia (Presbyterian) states, "The Baptists are the same sect of Christians that were formerly described as Ana-Baptist ... from the time of Tertullian to the present time." (Tertullian was born just fifty years after the death of the Apostle John.) The great Methodist historian John Ridpath stated, "There was a Baptist church as far back as 100AD...as all Christians were then Baptist." Zwingli, the Presbyterian



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Faith for Life

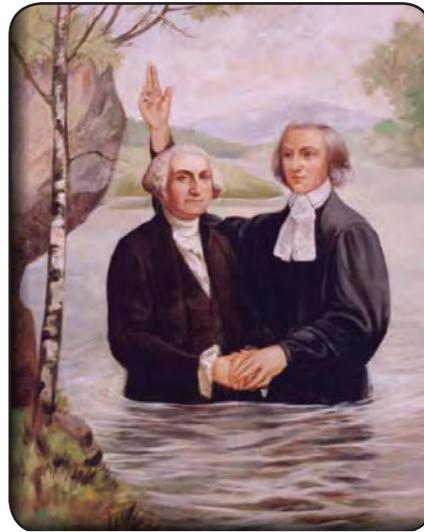
I Have a Question

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historian, acknowledged the existence of Baptist churches 1300 years prior to his time (1530AD). There are numerous other quotes which date the Baptists back to the apostolic days, but please carefully read the following quote from the book "Crossing the Centuries": "The Baptists...have an unbroken continuity of existence from the apostolic (apostles') days down through the centuries. Throughout this long period, they were bitterly persecuted... imprisoned, tortured and slain." This book and quote were endorsed by associate editors with PhDs who headed up the history departments of Harvard, Yale, and Brown Universities, along with scholars such as Catholic Cardinal Gibbons and also former Presidents Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson. The Baptists go back to the time of Jesus Christ!

Some may wonder, "What do Baptists believe?" Baptists, for the most part, believe the Bible is the supernatural Word of God. They believe in the absolute freedom of religion, and that everyone has the right to believe as they please. Baptists have never forced their religion on anyone or proselytized with the sword like so many others. The early patriot Patrick Henry (an Anglican) wanted to make the Baptist faith

a mandatory "state religion" in the early days of the US. Ironically, it was the Baptists who said, "Thanks, but no thanks." It was the Baptists who fought hard to separate the state from church matters (the expression was born in a letter from Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptist Church). Baptists are also one of the few who teach you cannot get to heaven by earning it. Baptists believe that salvation was paid for by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, and is available to all who will repent of their sins and place all of their faith in the finished work of Christ at Calvary. Baptists will baptize only those who have done this, and always by immersion in water because it is the only way according to the Bible. Baptists do not baptize infants, as the practice is not found anywhere in the Bible. Baptists believe that any believer can have their sins forgiven by confessing straight to God without having to go through a clergyman. Baptists believe that Jesus Christ is coming again, and could return at any moment, beginning with the rapture of believers.



Baptism By Immersion of
George Washington
By John Gano

Down through the centuries, their enemies and others have branded Baptists with many different names including Montanists, Novatians, Donatists, Paulicians,

Albigenses, Waldenses, (names of various leaders, locations or pastors), Anabaptists ('re-baptizers'), and Baptists. Why the name Baptist? It's what these Christians believe since the first century. If someone is baptized by a Catholic priest, it would make them a Catholic. If someone was baptized by a Lutheran minister, they would be a Lutheran. The same goes for Mormons and Methodists. That brings up the question ... Who baptized Jesus and his disciples? (please read Matthew 3). For nearly 2000 years, the Baptists

have been bitterly persecuted for their faith, and millions of martyrs have suffered, leaving a trail of blood. Yet Jesus promised in Matthew 16:18, "*I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*" ■

wet pants

Come with me to a third grade classroom..... There is a eight-year-old kid sitting at his desk and all of a sudden, there is a puddle between his feet and the front of his pants are wet. He accidentally wet his pants! He thinks his heart is going to stop because he cannot possibly imagine how this has happened. It's never happened before, and he knows that when the boys find out he will never hear the end of it. When the girls find out, they'll never speak to him again as long as he lives. His young life is ruined!

The boy believes his heart is going to stop; he puts his head down and prays this prayer, "Oh dear God, this is an emergency! I don't know what to do. I need your help now!"

He looks up from his prayer and here comes the teacher with a look in her eyes that says he has been discovered.

As the teacher is walking toward him, a classmate named Susie is carrying a goldfish bowl that is filled with water. Susie trips in front of the teacher and clumsily dumps the bowl of water in the boy's lap.

The boy pretends to be angry, but all the while is saying under his breath, "Thank you, Lord! Thank you, Lord!"

Now all of a sudden, instead of being the object of ridicule, the boy is the object of sympathy. The teacher rushes him downstairs and gives him gym shorts to put on while his pants dry out. All the other

children are on their hands and knees cleaning up around his desk. The sympathy is wonderful. But as life would have it, the ridicule that should have been his has been transferred to someone else - Susie.

She tries to help, but they tell her to get out. "You've done enough, you klutz!" Finally, at the end of the day, as they are waiting for the bus, the boy walks over to Susie and whispers, "You did that on purpose, didn't you?" Susie whispers back, "I wet my pants once too."

May God help us see the opportunities around us to help out others.



faith & finances

“The Grace of Giving”



“It is more blessed to give than to receive.”
—Jesus Christ, Act 20:35

In the past several editions of FFL, we have discussed how to get debt free. Why is it important for a Christian to get out of debt? It will relieve stress on a marriage and give much peace of mind. But it will also enable a believer to give to the greatest cause on the face of the earth: the carrying out of the cause of Jesus Christ! God owns the universe and doesn't need our money, but He has chosen to enlarge our hearts by allowing us to give in order to finance His work. This will cause us to grow in character, give us a purpose in life, and also enable us to receive eternal rewards.

Jesus spoke as much about money and giving as any other subject. He knew it was a real indication of where the heart of a Christian was. Giving is a huge part of the Christian life and the Bible says much about it. Yet, when a preacher speaks on money, some people put their “defense” up. It goes against the grain of depraved human nature. We tend to be suspicious, selfish, and stingy. But giving is a grace! The Bible says, *“As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God”* (I Pet 4:10). The word ‘grace’ speaks of God doing us a favor by letting us voluntarily give out of love for the Lord.

A Christian who doesn't give generously to a scriptural church is shrinking his own heart. The apostle Paul hesitated to teach the church at Corinth about giving because he was afraid it wouldn't be well received. He later wrote back to them in II Cor 12:13 and said, *“What is it wherein ye*

were inferior to other churches, except it be that I myself was not burdensome to you? Forgive me this wrong” (i.e.- I'm sorry I didn't compel you to give). He told them they were inferior or stunted in their Christian faith because they hadn't learned to give. Giving to God's work goes way back to the beginning of the Bible, long before the law was given. Abraham paid tithes to Melchizedek the High Priest in Genesis 14. Later on, God established principles for his people and giving. In Leviticus 27:30, the Bible says, *“And all the tithe of the land ... is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD.”* God wanted His people to give in order to support the ministry of the Tabernacle. He also wanted an opportunity for His people to show their love for Him, and to bless his people as they gave.

When we give, we imitate God who is the ultimate giver. The Bible says, *“For God so loved the world, that he gave his only*

begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16). A Christian is not truly yielded to His Creator until God is the ‘Lord of His pocketbook.’ There are many who will attend church, read their Bibles and pray, but they falter when it comes to giving. The Bible says, *“Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase”* (Proverbs 3:9). When we have the faith to give, it honors the Lord and shows we trust Him. God wants us to give with a willing heart. God said in Exodus 25:2, *“Bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it willingly with his heart ye shall take my offering.”* And then He adds, *“Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which he hath given thee”* (Deut 16:17).

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Announcing...

VeBS!

JOIN THE FUN



Come join in the fun and mystery as we investigate new life in Jesus. You'll love searching for clues as we visit different rooms in a house that will help you learn to live your life for Jesus.

Searching for clues in the garden, the dining room, the family room, the kitchen, and the living room, children will become detectives engaged in fun games, meaningful activities, Bible memory, cool crafts, and creative snacks—all with one purpose—to learn about living each day for Jesus.

Children (and adults) ages 4 to 12 are invited to join the excitement for this Very exciting Bible School® program!

Keep your eyes and ears open for how to get involved and be part of the excitement!



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CONTACT

Fargo Baptist Church

PLACE

June 15-19 from 6:00 pm - 8:30 pm

DATE / TIME

Why should we be givers to the cause of Christ? ...In order to partner with God in fulfilling the Great Commission (Matt 28:19-20). We should also give because it is a true part of worship. Thirdly, we should give in order to be blessed. Jesus said, *"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over"* (Lu 6:38). We must sow in order to reap. This will require faith, but you will never out give God. The Christian who faithfully gives to the work of the Lord will know the thrill of seeing a real and living God work in his life. The Bible says, *"Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver"* (II Cor 9:7).

A lad of 16 years named William left home to seek his fortune with all his possessions tied in a bundle carried in his hand. He met an old canal-boat captain. William told him his father was too poor to keep him and the only trade he knew was soap and candle making. The old man then knelt and prayed earnestly for the boy and advised: "Someone will soon be the leading soap-maker in New York. It can be you as well as someone else. Be a good man, give your heart to Christ, pay the Lord all that belongs to Him, make an honest soap; give a full pound, and I'm certain you'll be a prosperous man." Upon entering the city, William remembered the captain's words. Poor and lonesome, he immediately united with a church. The first dollar earned, he gave 10% to God. Ten cents of every dollar were sacred to the Lord. Having regular employment, he soon became a partner and later sole owner of the business. He made an honest soap, gave a full pound and instructed his bookkeeper to open an account with the Lord of 1/10 of all income. The business grew, so he gave 2/10, 3/10, 4/10, 5/10 and finally he gave all his income. This is the story of William Colgate, who has given millions to the Lord's cause. No wonder Jesus said, *"It is more blessed to give than to receive."* (Act 20:35). ■

If you would like to receive free Biblical financial counseling please call the staff of Fargo Baptist Church at 232-5500.

Jesus Said WHAT?

Most people think there are many different ways of getting to heaven. To listen to most preachers, you would think that it doesn't really matter what you believe, as long as you're sincere. You've probably heard the expression "All roads lead to heaven." In these politically correct days, people want to be broad-minded and not exclude any religion or religious leader. But what did Jesus say? Jesus claimed to be the only way to heaven. He clearly stated in John 14:6, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."* Notice that Jesus didn't say he was a good way, or a better way, or even the best way. He said I'm the way, and added that you cannot come to God (or heaven) except through him! Now that would be perceived as pretty narrow in all inclusive days, but that is what the Creator of the Universe said. Are you going to believe the broad-minded preacher, or God the Son? Jesus Christ also added, *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see*

life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36). Again, he intimates that he's the only way to heaven. The apostle Peter was apparently pretty narrow as well. He spoke of Jesus Christ and said, *"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:12). The apostle Paul adds, *"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"* (I Timothy 2:5). Apparently St. Paul didn't think there were many different ways to heaven. The Apostle John stated, *"This is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life (heaven), and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life"* (I John 5:11-12). Apparently St. John didn't feel that all roads led to heaven. There are a number of other Bible verses, but the conclusion is clear. According to Jesus Christ and his Word, he is the only way to heaven. If you claim to be a follower of Christ, do you believe that? ■

Pastor's Perspective

HOW TO KEEP A CHILD'S HEART

"My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways."

-Proverbs 23:26

The Bible says, *"In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents"* (II Timothy 3:1-2). Have you ever seen a rebellious kid with a hard, calloused appearance? It's usually an outward sign of inward anger, bitterness, resentment, and self-centeredness. It's also normally a sign of a parent who's lost his child's heart. By that, I mean they no longer have the child's feelings, affections, or regard. The child is no longer concerned about his parent's opinion, or pleasing his mom and dad.

God made the heart to give away, and everyone gives his or her devotion to something. Sometimes people give their hearts to education, getting a degree, making money, material things, building a business, or to a relationship. The Bible says, *"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life"* (Prov 4:23). Children are looking for someone or something to give their heart to. Sometimes sports heroes will have a kid's heart, or raunchy music and entertainment. Often a kid's friends will mean more to him than his parents. Sometimes parents will lose their child's heart when their daughter gets involved with a boyfriend. There are many things lurking, from alcohol and pornography to gangs and MTV, which are stealing the hearts of children from their parents. Sometimes a good look at the bedroom of a kid will tell where his heart is. There are many things competing for a child's heart. The heart of every problem is a problem of the heart.

According to the Bible, a child's heart belongs to his parents until he gives it to his spouse at marriage. God knows this will protect a child from all the landmines of bad relationships. When my daughters turned twelve years old, I gave them a promise ring with a pledge to let Daddy

have their heart until they get married. When I walk them down the aisle on their wedding day, they will give the ring back to me and replace it with their spouse's wedding ring. Studies now reveal that "purity pledges" are not working. It's not hard to figure out why...it's due to a parent losing his child's heart. A pledge to physically remain a virgin until marriage will not hold up in the midst of temptation if a young person has given his or her heart to someone other than their parents.

The Bible says, *"The glory (pride and joy) of children are their fathers"* (Prov 17:6). In the early years of childhood, a kid's hero is naturally his dad or mom. His first words are "Mama" and "Dada." When children talk to themselves in their crib or make up little songs, you'll always hear the words "Mama" or "Dada" somewhere amongst the lyrics. Children's little thoughts are continually about their parents. Their attachment and devotion is to their parents and they have warm feelings about their parents. Their little lives revolve around mom and dad. Sadly, this is lost in most homes, as children grow. How do you know if you are losing your child's heart? Does he want to be around you or his friends? Does he strive to please you or could he care less? Does he seek your counsel or someone else's? Is he any longer concerned about carrying out your wishes? Does his life revolve around the latest Hollywood star, rock diva, NFL star, or you? Is your child obedient to you, or does he continually rebel or challenge you?

If you've lost your kid's heart, how can you regain it? Start by trying to re-establish the lines of communication. Plan outings with him and have fun. Take an interest in what he enjoys doing or introduce him to fun and wholesome activities you know he'll enjoy. It's also important to establish some reasonable rules and standards. Show your child you care enough about him to put some boundaries around his life. You may need to regulate what friends he runs with. The Bible says, *"evil communications (associations) corrupt good manners"* (I Cor 15:33). When parents let a child run loose, they're sending the message that they don't care about him. The Bible gives examples of poor fathers like David and Eli who didn't restrain their kids. More parents are under protective than over protective. The reason kids usually become

bitter is not because of rules; it is because of angry parents who are harsh and scream and are inconsistent. Remember that rules will not work without first having a relationship. Someone said, "Rules without a relationship equal rebellion and resentment." Many parents address their kids with an angry spirit much of the time. It is perhaps the biggest cause for lost affection and devotion from children. It does incredible damage (Eph 6:4).

Another way to regain your child's heart is to take back control of the household. The average home revolves around the kids when it should revolve around the parents. Kids are running the show and essentially calling the shots. Dads must lead their households and not relinquish the leadership to the children. Our society has promoted a 'kid power' and 'the year of the kid' mentality. We have made little prima donnas and idols of our kids. It's a real unbiblical culture, resulting in proud children instead of humble ones. Society has coddled kids by making them untouchable in our schools when they act up. I recently heard of an overweight kid who sued his mom because he didn't like the healthy food she was serving at home. Kids have gotten a real attitude of self-importance. If you foster this foolish spirit in your kids, you will lose their heart. My kids have been taught to be thoughtful of their parents. They wait on us, and not vice versa. While they live in our house, they will contribute to the common cause, and seek to be a blessing to their parents. We never capitulate to their attitudes, as it's a fast way to lose their respect. You must "call their bluff" and never blink! Finally, remind your children that you have their best interest at heart, and you are in their corner trying to help them. In closing, let me say that child rearing is not easy, but can be a tremendous blessing if done God's way. The Bible says in Ps 127:3, *"Children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is His reward."*

Pastor Tony Scheving
pastor tony scheving

