

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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self inflicted FRUSTRATION

By Pastor Tony Scheving

I have seen all the works that are done under the sun; and, behold, all is vanity and vexation of spirit.
- Ecclesiastes 1:14

Many people talk about adding 'years to their life', when they actually need to add 'life to their years'. They're living empty meaningless lives by God's standard. God didn't create us to exist and then die. Many are missing the whole point of life. The book of Ecclesiastes is an examination of a life lived without God. Solomon the writer was the wisest and richest man to ever live. He was uniquely qualified to answer the big question ... "What is the whole point of life"? As he conducted his 'experiment', he became very frustrated with the world's options. It became a miserable endeavor, instead of an exciting venture, and vexed his soul with emptiness.

LACKING FUN

One evening in 1808, a gaunt, sad-faced man entered the office of Dr. James Hamilton in Manchester, England. The doctor was struck by the miserable appearance of his visitor. He inquired: "Are you sick?" "Yes doctor" said the man, "I am

sick of life itself. I can find no happiness anywhere, nothing amuses me, and I have nothing to live for. If you can't help me, I shall kill myself." Dr. Hamilton counseled, "You only need to get out of yourself. You need to laugh; to get some pleasure from life." "What shall I do?" said the desperate man. Dr. Hamilton replied, "The circus is in town. Go to the circus tonight to see Grimaldi, the clown. Grimaldi is the funniest man alive. He'll make you laugh." A look of pain crossed the poor man's face as he said: "Doctor, don't jest with me; I am Grimaldi."

Most people are looking for fun and happiness. Yet Solomon says that 'fun' without God is hollow and shallow. He calls it 'vanity and vexation of

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spirit' (Eccl 2:1) which means it's empty and meaningless. People today are looking for pleasure and fulfillment in money, possessions, illicit sex, pornography, alcohol, drugs and other vice. The Bible says when 'sin' is finished it brings forth 'death' (a dead life... James 1:15). 1 Timothy 5:6 says, *"She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."* The Bible speaks of being *"dead in trespasses and sins"* (Eph 2:1). Life without God is a dead end. What promises to be so 'fun' continually leaves people feeling empty.

LOST FREEDOM

The Prodigal Son set out to have his freedom and ended up in the hog pen. The Bible says, *"Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel"* (Prov 20:17). Many people think the real Christian life is restrictive bondage, when actually it's the other way around. Jesus said, *"Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin"* (John 8:34). Sin promises so much, but delivers so little. All of Satan's apples have worms, and the 'pleasure' of sin is short lived (Heb 11:25).

Oftentimes people find themselves with an addiction they can't let go of. After they get a hold of it, it gets a hold of them and they can't get rid of it. Samson's problem with lust would be a classic example of this. The Bible says, *"For of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage"* (II Pet 2:19). It all leads to self inflicted disappointment. God offers something so much better. The great man Joshua once said *"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord"* (Josh 24:15). Jesus added, *"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon"* (the world's system). Living for sin and pleasure is the least pleasurable thing you can do, and only leads to lost freedom. This is true for an individual as well as a nation.

LIMITED FEELING

Many people are looking for some type of 'high' or good feeling in life. Why do people seek after money, building their

business, looking sexy, being entertained, getting drunk, sex, drugs, etc? Obviously, there's a feeling or 'buzz' attached to all of these things. Some resort to buying things to make themselves feel better. When Cardinal Mazarin lay dying in 1661, he said to the Comte de Brienne, "What trouble I have gone to collecting all these things! Can I leave them without regret? Adieu, dear pictures that I have loved so dearly, and which have cost me so much! I shall see them no more where I am going! Ah, I must leave all this behind!" The Cardinal was right about that. We're all going to leave our 'things' behind one day. You don't find a U-haul following a hearse. What do you engage in to try and make you 'feel good'?

Some seek knowledge, educations, and degrees that won't mean a thing in the next life. This is the 'information age', and to many, 'intellect is king'. Many become proud of all they know. The Bible says, *"Knowledge puffeth up"* (I Cor 8:1). Some self proclaimed 'intellectuals' think they're Einstein reincarnated and have all the answers. The Bible mentions those who are *"Ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth"* (II Tim 3:7). King Solomon was the wisest man to ever live, and he said in Ecclesiastes 1:18, *"For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."* Man will never find the answers without God. The Bible says that men without God have *"The understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart"* (Ephesians 4:18). Our human brain can perform 40 trillion operations/second and outclass any computer; and yet foolish man says the brain evolved but someone obviously must have made the computer. While it's apparent that someone designed and made the Mars Rover, man turns around and says Mars itself evolved. Man's wisdom is pitiful when it leaves God out of the picture. James 3:15 says, *"This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish."* Solomon wrote both the Bible books of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs. Proverbs shows us God's wisdom, while Ecclesiastes sadly contrasts man's quest for knowledge without God.

LITTLE FULFILLMENT

Phineas T. Barnum, the famed circus showman was credited with saying, "There's a sucker born every minute." On the evening of April 7, 1891, Barnum was arguing about a discrepancy of a few pennies in the big show's daily gate receipts in Madison Square Garden. A few hours later he was dead and gone forever. Solomon said in Ecclesiastes 1:3, *"What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"* Then he added in Ecclesiastes 2:11, *"Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do: and, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit."* I've been to the graves of Michael Jackson, Farrah Fawcett, Walt Disney, Marilyn Monroe, and a host of others. The Bible says in Job 14:10, *"Man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?"*

The human body has enough iron in it to make two 10 penny nails, enough phosphorus to make 4000 matches, enough fat to make 75 candles, enough lime to whitewash a chicken coop, and enough hydrogen to fill a balloon. Our bodies also contain about 60 spoonfuls of salt, a bowl of sugar, a dose of magnesium and some potassium. Someone estimated the chemical and mineral worth of an average human body is about a couple of bucks. Yet people will spend a lifetime caring for their bodies while neglecting their eternity bound soul, which is worth more than the whole world (Mark 8:36).

Solomon was a king with incredible wealth, brains and talent. And yet the day came when he died and occupied a grave like any peasant. Death levels the 'playing field' for everyone. When the day of death comes, a king must step down from his throne, a minister must close his Bible, a judge must remove his robe and step down from his bench, a lawyer must try his last case, an author must pen his last book, a banker must write his last loan, a nurse must tend to her final patient, an actor must recite his last lines, a farmer must plow his last field, and a lumberjack must cut down his last tree. One day we will all lay down

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Self Inflicted Frustration

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our knife and fork for the final time and grapple with death.

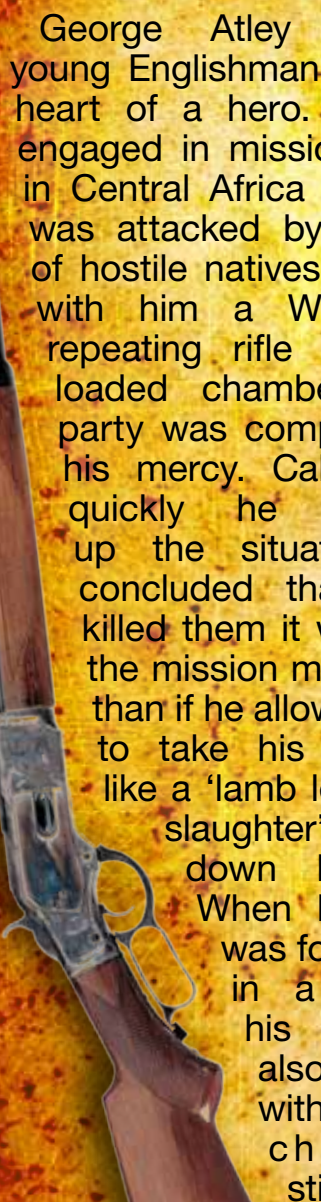
Over 180,000 people go out into eternity every day (the population of the FM area). Dr. Mayo, whose scalpel performed many surgeries, was convinced there's more to man than just lungs, kidneys and a heart.

There is an eternal soul! Ecclesiastes 12:7 says, *"Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."* So what is the point of life? Solomon ended the book of Ecclesiastes by saying, *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man"* (Ecclesiastes 12:13). We are on planet earth to bring glory to God our Creator by living for Him. The Bible says, *"Whether*

therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor 10:31). A life lived in the will of God brings great satisfaction and pleasure. It all starts with knowing God in a real and wonderful way. If you would like to get closer to God please go to; www.7StepsToGod.org. ■

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HIS UNUSED RIFLE WAS LOADED



George Atley was a young Englishman with the heart of a hero. He was engaged in missions work in Central Africa when he was attacked by a party of hostile natives. He had with him a Winchester repeating rifle with ten loaded chambers. The party was completely at his mercy. Calmly and quickly he summed up the situation. He concluded that if he killed them it would do the mission more harm than if he allowed them to take his life. So, like a 'lamb led to the slaughter' he laid down his rifle. When his body was found later in a stream, his rifle was also found with its ten chambers still loaded.

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By Frank Turek

Cutting Through the Smokescreens

You're Sleeping With Your Girlfriend?

My friend David has a knack for cutting through the smokescreens people throw up when they don't want to be accountable to God. Last week, with one comment, he blew away all the smoke that a young agnostic was hiding behind. It was a demonstration of tremendous insight, and it required some courage as well.

For several weeks David was teaching a series on Christian apologetics, which involves providing evidence for the truth of Christianity. David thought it would be wise to do so because 75 percent of Christian youth stop attending church after age 18. Many of them abandon the church because they're bombarded by secularism in college and they've never been taught any of the sound evidence that supports Christianity.

Last week, after David finished a presentation refuting the "new atheists"—Dawkins, Hitchens and the like—a young man approached him and said, "I once was a Christian, but now I'm an agnostic, and I don't think you should be doing what you're doing."

"What do you mean?" David asked.

"I don't think you should be giving arguments against atheists," the young man said. "Jesus told us to love, and what you're doing is not loving."

David said, "No, that's not right. Jesus came with both love and truth. Love without truth is a swampy, borderless mess. Truth is necessary. In fact, it's unloving to keep truth away from people, especially if that truth has eternal consequences."

Thomas Huxley, famously said many years ago that the reason he and many of his contemporaries "accepted Darwinism even without proof, is because we didn't want God to interfere with our sexual mores."

David was absolutely right. In fact, if you look at Matthew chapter 23, Jesus was

more like a drill sergeant than he was like Mister Rogers.

But the young man would have none of it. Without acknowledging David's point, he immediately brought up another objection to Christianity. David succinctly answered that one too, but again the kid seemed uninterested. He fired a couple of more objections at David, who began to suspect something else was up—something I've noticed as well.

I've found that the machine-gun-objection approach is common among many skeptics and liberals. They throw objection after objection at Christian believers and conservatives but never pause long enough to listen to the answers. It doesn't matter that you've just answered their question with an undeniable fact—they've already left that topic and are rattling off another objection on another topic as if you hadn't said a word. They don't really seem interested in finding the answers, but in finding reasons to make themselves feel better about what they want to believe. After all, a skeptic with one set of beliefs, is actually a true believer in another set of beliefs.

David recognized exactly what was happening in his conversation. So after the kid fired off another objection, David decided to end the charade and cut right to the heart. He said, "You're raising all of these objections because you're sleeping with your girlfriend. Am I right?"

All the blood drained from the kid's face. He was caught. He just stood there speechless. He was rejecting God because he didn't like God's morality, and he was disguising it with alleged 'intellectual objections'.

This young man wasn't the first atheist or agnostic to admit that his desire to follow his own agenda was keeping him out of the Kingdom of Heaven. In the first chapter of his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul revealed this tendency humans have to "suppress the truth" about God in order to follow their own desires. In other words, unbelief is more motivated by the heart than the head. Some prominent atheists have admitted this.

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Atheist Julian Huxley, grandson of “Darwin’s Bulldog” Thomas Huxley, famously said many years ago that the reason he and many of his contemporaries “accepted Darwinism even without proof, is because we didn’t want God to interfere with our sexual mores.”

Professor Thomas Nagel of NYU more recently wrote, “It isn’t just that I don’t believe in God, it’s that I hope there is no God! And, naturally, I hope that I’m right in my belief. I don’t want there to be a God; I don’t want the universe to be like that. My guess is that this cosmic authority problem is not a rare condition and that it is responsible for much of the skepticism of our time.”

Certainly the new atheists such as Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins have problems with cosmic authority. Hitchens refuses to live under the “tyranny of a divine dictatorship.” Dawkins calls the God of the Bible a “malevolent bully” (among other things) and admits that he is “hostile to religion.”

It’s not that Hitchens and Dawkins offer any serious examination and rebuttal of the evidence for God. They misunderstand and dismiss hundreds of pages of metaphysical argumentation from Aristotle, Aquinas and others and fail to answer the modern arguments from the beginning and design of the universe. (Dawkins explanation for the extreme design of the universe is “luck.”)

Instead, as any honest reader of their books will see, Hitchens and Dawkins are outraged at the very thought of God. Even their titles scream out contempt (“God is not Great,” or “How Religion Poisons Everything” and “The God Delusion.”) They don’t seem to realize that their moral outrage presupposes an objective moral standard that exists only if God exists. They have to sit in God’s lap to slap his face.

While both men are very good writers, Hitchens and Dawkins are short on evidence and long on attitude. As I mentioned in our debate, you can sum up Christopher’s attitude in one sentence: “There is no God, and I hate him.” Despite this, God’s attitude as evidenced by the sacrifice of Christ is: There are atheists, and I love them.

the FOUNDATION *of* FORGIVENESS

by PASTOR PAUL CHAPPELL

Families should stick together. Families should have each other's backside. Families should stand together against outside threats, and stay close during difficult times. But sometimes that doesn't always happen.

In the book of Genesis, the great man Joseph had done nothing wrong against his brothers. He simply had tried to obey God, obey his father, and treat his brothers fairly. Jealousy got the better of his brothers and they turned on Joseph. The men he grew up admiring, respecting, and trying to be like turned on him in a savage way.

Joseph's brother's stripped him of his favorite coat, threw him in a pit, considered killing him, then sold him into slavery and told their father he was eaten by a wild animal. Some family! But all would not be lost as Joseph soon rose to be a very powerful ruler in Egypt, with God's help. Soon Joseph's brothers were seeking his help, and begging for his mercy. If there ever were a chance for revenge, this was it.

How did Joseph respond? He forgave them, mourned the time he'd missed with them, and offered to provide for their needs. What caused Joseph to forgive his brothers? He had learned the value of forgiveness and mercy.

One of the most difficult things to do is choose to forgive rather than seek revenge. Joseph had the power to punish his brothers for how they treated

him and some would say he had every right to do so, but he chose instead to forgive his family. Like Joseph, none of our families are perfect. We all have struggles and difficulties, but if we desire to set a godly foundation for our families, we must learn to forgive each other.

You know better than anyone how difficult forgiving family members can be. The ones who are closest to you can hurt you the most. But God's desire is for your family to be a place of forgiveness, grace, and restoration. You won't feel like forgiving the loved one who wronged you, but just as God forgave you of your offenses against Him, so you can forgive your family members. The Bible says, *“Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you”* (Eph 4:32).

Jesus is our example in every area of our lives. We look to Him for guidance in how to live godly lives on this earth. When it comes to forgiveness, His example is clear ...forgive others as He has forgiven us. Others don't deserve forgiveness for their wrong doings. But in the same way, we don't deserve eternal life and forgiveness of sins. God has way more grace than we have sin.

How forgiving are you when a family member hurts you? This can be humbling, but don't become so prideful that you hold on to anger and hurt. With Jesus' example in mind, offer forgiveness when others wrong you.



are *You* a good person?



Do you try to do what's right? Are you currently living a good enough life to go to heaven? If good people go to heaven, will you be in the line somewhere? God's standard for righteousness is the 10 Commandments. How well are you obeying God's law? Please take the following self-examination using the 10 Commandments.

1st Commandment, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me...* Does God have first place in your life? Have you ever put anything ahead of God such as money, education, a career, another person, sports, entertainment, pleasure, materialism, sin etc?

2nd Commandment, *Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image...* Have you ever been guilty of inventing a God of your own imagination and liking... a God who suits you by overlooking sin, and taking everyone to heaven?

3rd Commandment, *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...* Have you ever taken God's name in vain? Carefully read that commandment again. God will judge you for using His holy name as a curse word.

4th Commandment, *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy...* Have you always been devoted in this area? Have you always honored the Lord by faithful attendance in a scriptural church?

5th Commandment, *Honor thy father and thy mother...* Have you always honored your parents? Have you ever grieved them with your behavior? Have you always obeyed and respected them?

6th Commandment, *Thou shalt not kill...* While you most likely have never committed murder, Jesus clarifies this commandment in Matthew 5:21-22. He tells us it is 'murder of the heart' to even be mad, or hateful toward another human being. Have you ever been bitter toward someone?

7th Commandment, *Thou shalt not commit adultery...* Perhaps you've never committed adultery. Again, Jesus clarifies this commandment in Matthew 5:27-28. He tells us it is 'adultery of the heart' to even lust after the opposite sex. Have you ever done that? The Bible says all adulterers will be condemned to hell (I Cor 6:8-10).

8th Commandment, *Thou shalt not steal...* Have you ever taken something that belonged to someone else? Have you ever taken something small home from work? Have you ever stolen the bosses' time? The Bible says that thieves will be condemned to hell (I Cor 6:8-10).

9th Commandment, *Thou shalt not bear false witness...* Have you ever told a lie? Then you are a liar. God warns us that all liars shall have their part in the 'lake of fire' (Rev 21:8).

10th Commandment, *Thou shalt not covet...* That means you shouldn't desire anything that belongs to someone else. Have you ever coveted after something you didn't have? The Bible says the covetous will not inherit the Kingdom of God (I Cor 6:9-10).

While some people like to argue theology or debate the existence of God, these are actually 'smokescreens'. The real truth is, you are a sinner who is accountable to a

holy God and will one day stand before Him in judgment.

What if the private daily thoughts of your mind were to be replayed on a movie screen in front of your friends and family? You would be mortified! If you only sinned three times a day in 'thought word or deed', that's still over a thousand sins in a year, and over 80,000 sins in an average lifetime! God is a just judge and cannot allow sin to go unpunished. Sin has a penalty... "*For the wages of sin is death (hell)*" –Rom 6:23

The bottom line? ... "*As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*" (Romans 3:10, 23).

You cannot possibly get to heaven by keeping God's Law (The 10 Commandments). They were given by our Creator to show us why we are condemned by sin and need the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to purchase our forgiveness.

"*Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*" - Galatians 3:24

Yet God's forgiveness is not automatic. You must be willing to receive it by repenting of your sins, and placing all your faith in what Jesus did on the cross.

Perhaps you are 'good' compared to some people, but the standard is God's law, not other people. How can you be forgiven of all your sins forever? Please go online at www.7StepsToGod.org to take a free home Bible study and find out how to get right with God.



WHAT MANY RELIGIONS FAIL TO MENTION

Eternity is far longer than your life time. Your soul is far more important than your body. Yet the average person spends very little time considering where their soul will spend eternity. The average person thinks "everything's ok, and I'm no worse off than anybody else, and actually I'm not as bad of a sinner as many others.... I'm a good person who believes in God." But consider the sobering words of Jesus Christ:

"Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction (hell), and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life (heaven), and few there be that find it." (Matt 7:13-14)

QUESTION: From the verses above... 'Are more people going to heaven or hell?'

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

Matthew 7:22-23, Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?' And then will I profess unto them, 'I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity'. (Please read that again very carefully and consider the following).

Sadly, the people mentioned above will miss heaven. Please carefully reread the verse above and answer the following questions.

Are these people Moslem, Hindu, Buddhist, or Christian, and why?

Are these just a handful of "Christian" people, or a large number, and why?

Are there some "Christians" ministers and preachers in this group, and why?

Are there some in this group who 'thought' they were exorcists, and why?

Did the people above 'live a good life' and do good deeds and works?

Did Jesus recognize them as 'children of God'?

Is everything really 'ok'? Could you possibly be part of this group?

"Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev 20:15).

Apparently, "everything is not ok." Could it be that Satan has deceived the multitudes?

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

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

Imagine the spiritual blindness of thinking "I'm ok" but still being in darkness.

The Bible says we can know for sure we're going to heaven when we die when it says, *"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). But, there is a big difference in believing in Jesus Christ versus believing on Jesus Christ. God wants you to know for sure you are going to heaven (II Pet 3:9). The most important issue in your life is where you will spend eternity. 'Faith for Life' is concerned about your soul. We invite you to take a free on-line Bible study entitled "7 Steps to God" at: www.7StepsToGod.org.

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WHO are you trying to PLEASE?

By Pastor Tony Scheving

Do I seek to please men? For if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. – St. Paul, (Galatians 1:10)

There's been much speculation why Viking's quarterback Brett Favre keeps pushing himself, and can't decide on retirement from football. Actually Favre has already acknowledged a strong drive within him to keep going in order to please his dad, even though his father has been dead for nearly seven years. Favre has spoken of an inward ambition to find the acceptance of a dad who was difficult to please during his childhood. What son doesn't want to please his parents? What wife doesn't want to please her husband? What employee doesn't want to hear "Atta-boy" from his boss? We 'aim to please' and God has made us that way. The big question is, "Who are you trying to please?"

Pleasing Society

Many people live their lives keeping one eye on society to be sure they're trendy, in vogue, and fashionable. Many teenagers drink, smoke, do drugs and wear some pretty silly things due to peer pressure. They want to fit in with society. The Bible says *"The fear of man bringeth a snare"* (Prov 29:25). There is something in human nature that fears rejection from others and sometimes we wind up getting in trouble while trying to please someone. Adam 'caved in' and ate the forbidden fruit while trying to please Eve (Gen 3:17). King Saul 'caved in' and disobeyed God in order to please the people (I Sam 15:24). In John 9 we find a blind man who takes a stand for Jesus, but his parents compromise and 'cave in' while trying to find favor with the wrong religious crowd.

Intimidation has caused many to wind up on the wrong side of the issue. The Bible

says, *"For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God"* (John 12:43). The Bible speaks of a man who was a disciple of Jesus, *"but secretly for fear of the Jews"* (John 19:38). Many suffer from gross insecurity and 'follow the herd' being afraid to take a stand. Many years ago the communist Soviet Union Premier Khrushchev spoke very critically of the late Premier Stalin as he addressed a general conference. During the speech, someone from the audience sent a note up to the platform which read: "Why didn't you speak up while Stalin was committing all these murderous atrocities?" Khrushchev shouted, "Who sent up this note?" Not a person stirred. "I'll give you one minute to stand up and identify yourself!" The seconds ticked off... no one moved. Khrushchev then said, "All right, I'll tell you why I didn't speak out against the cruelty of Stalin; for the same reason no one will admit to writing this note.... I was afraid to take a stand."

There are many like Khrushchev who have been ensnared by intimidation (Prov 29:25). Yet the Bible says, *"Hearken unto me, ye that know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law; fear ye not the reproach of men, neither be ye afraid of their revilings"* (Isa 51:7). Many preachers today have even watered down the gospel in an attempt to not offend sinners. Yet the Bible says, *"As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God"* (I Thes 2:4). The Apostle Peter said *"We ought to obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:29). Ironically, years earlier that same Peter denied the Lord three times while trying to please the crowd. Do you worry about pleasing society?

Pleasing Self

Back in 1963 the Beatles recorded the song "Please Please Me." In the 70s, Ricky Nelson proclaimed in a song, "You can't please everyone so you've got to please yourself." Is that who we should strive to please...me and self...really? Sadly, this is what many people are unknowingly doing. This has especially become prevalent in what the Bible describes as the 'end times'. In II Timothy 3:2,4 it says, *"In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves... heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."*

Trying to please yourself is the quickest road to misery. Solomon lived in self pleasure when he wrote "Whatsoever mine eyes desired, I kept not from them," but then he added, *"And, behold, all was vanity and vexation of spirit"* (Eccl 2:10-11). Jesus described a wealthy farmer in Luke 12 who was all wrapped up in 'pleasing himself'. But God said unto him, *"Thou fool"* (Luke 12:20). Four chapters later Jesus describes a rich man who lived in self-pleasure but wound up in hell (Luke 16:19). God describes today's society in Zechariah 7:6 when He says, *"When ye did eat, and when ye did drink, did not ye eat for yourselves, and drink for yourselves?"* So many have the mentality of Cain who said, *"Am I my brother's keeper?"* (Gen 4:9).

Perhaps the biggest crippler of marriage is "Me-ism". Many enter into marriage unwittingly thinking their spouse is there to please them and meet their needs. Later when the problems arise they say things

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Who are you Trying to Please?

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like, “we just grew apart...all we did was argue...I’m not sure I loved him in the first place...we were too young to know what we wanted.” Sadly, all along the real problem was self-centeredness and selfishness. Jesus said ‘love your neighbor as yourself’ because he knew self-love and self-pleasure was an accurate barometer of human nature which everyone could relate to. In the Bible we find countless examples like Solomon, Nebuchadnezzar, Simon the Sorcerer and Lot who were all trying to please themselves.

Why do men look at pornography? They are trying to please themselves. Why do women step-out on their husbands and have an affair? They’re trying to please themselves. Why does a teenage boy tell his girlfriend that if she really loved him she’d go all the way? Because he’s actually trying to gratify himself and bring himself pleasure. Why do people steal, do dishonest things, and greedily take the last piece of pizza? They’re trying to please themselves. The apostle Paul sadly lamented, *“For all seek their own (well-being), not the things which are Jesus Christ’s”* (Phil 2:21). The Bible says we are, *“To bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves... For even Christ pleased not himself”* (Rom 15:1,3).

Pleasing the Savior

Pleasing the Savior should be the goal of a real Christian. It has never been the goal of the world. The Bible says, *“They please not God and... with many of them God was not well pleased”* (I Thes 2:15, I Cor 10:15). How many Hollywood celebrities live to please God? How many rock stars, professional athletes or politicians really live to please God? Yet the Bible says we were actually created for ‘God’s pleasure’ (Rev 4:11). We all need to ask ourselves, *“Is my life pleasing to God my Creator?”* What a novel thought! The Bible mentions a man by the name of Enoch and says, *“He had this testimony, that he pleased God”* (Heb 11:5). Moses also pleased God when he chose *“rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season”* (Heb 11:25). I’m sure the Apostles pleased Christ when *“they brought their ships*


to land, and forsook all, and followed him” (Luke 5:11).

That’s what life is all about.... pleasing our Creator. This should be the aim of real preaching in every church pulpit whether sinners like it or not. Again, the Bible says, *“As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God”* (I Thes 2:4). It also adds in I Cor 1:21, *“It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”* It also pleases God when we are generous givers of our time, treasure and talent. The Bible says, *“But to do good and to communicate (by giving) forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased”* (Heb 13:16). It pleases the Lord when we reach out to try and be a blessing to someone. The greatest example of such a lifestyle was the Lord Himself. God the Father said in Matthew 3:17, *“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”* Throughout His ministry, Jesus was able to say, *“I do always those things that please Him”* (John 8:29).

An attitude of just pleasing God would really simplify our lives. Just look at everything you do and say, *“Will this please the Lord?”* Does your reading material

please God? Do the internet websites you view please God? Does your TV watching please God? Would He sit next to you and watch those programs with you? Does your conversation always please God? Would your humor please the Lord? How about your appearance, activities, and associations? Are the purchases you make actually God’s will for you? Is your entertainment pleasing to Him? How about your thoughts, attitudes and desires? Do they all please God? Friend, this is what life is all about! It’s not about money, possessions, degrees or careers...it’s about pleasing the Lord. God will even bless the person who pleases him with peace (Prov 16:7) and answered prayers (I John 3:22).

So forget about pleasing society. Don’t bother continually looking over your shoulder to see if you’re in step with the world. It doesn’t matter. You can also forget about pleasing yourself. The Bible says we need to ‘die to self’ which means ...‘boot self out of the picture’. The goal of every person should be to please God, and to one day hear, *“Well done thou good and faithful servant”* (Matt 25:21). When it’s all said and done, pleasing God will be all that matters.



BIBLE STUDIES	
Campus	
NDSU	MSUM
<i>Mondays</i>	<i>Mondays</i>
8:30 P.M.	7:00 P.M.
HIDATSA ROOM	ROOM 227
NDSU MEM UNION	MSUM CMU
<i>Thursdays</i>	<i>Thursdays</i>
7:00 P.M.	8:30 P.M.
ROOM OF NATIONS	ROOM 216
NDSU MEM UNION	MSUM CMU
<i>Christian</i>	
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Are People Born on the Road to Heaven?

Getting to heaven is the most important thing in life. Yet most people don't know how to get there.

Ignorance is not bliss when it comes to spiritual matters. God says in Hosea 4:6, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." II Peter 3:5 says, "For this they willingly are ignorant." Most people never take the time to thoroughly examine what the Bible has to say. People are also hanging on to the first thing they learned spiritually without checking it out. We tend to believe and embrace the first thing we learned, even if it's wrong. What does the Bible say?

God originally created man to love and to love Him in return. I John 4:19 says, "We love Him (God), because he first loved us." Yet mankind turned out sinful. Jesus said in Mark 7:21-23, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." We could add; selfishness, lying, stubbornness, anger, cursing, drunkenness, etc. The Bible says,

"There is none righteous, no, not one: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of

God" (Romans 3:10, 23). Our 'righteousness' is like a filthy rag (Isa 64:6).

Mankind is sinful because we are born spiritually dead. Why is that? When He originally created man, "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" (Gen 1:26-7). God is a three part trinity as the Father, Son & Holy Spirit. Man was also created in God's image as a three part being; Body, soul & spirit, (I Thes 5:23). Our body is the physical flesh and bones. The soul is the real you, your disposition and personality. It is invisible and lives inside the body. The spirit of man is that part that enables us to know that there is a supreme God somewhere.

Sometime after God created Adam & Eve, sin entered the picture. Genesis 2:16-17 says, "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." Did Adam and Eve eat of the tree? Unfortunately they did. But did they die that day like God had said? (notice again the verse above). God had not made an idle promise. Adam and Eve certainly died that day. Not physically...but spiritually. Afterwards, their children were also born as two part beings, now spiritually dead. Genesis 5:3 says, "Adam ...begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth." That spiritual deadness

transferred to all mankind. Romans 5:12 says, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." We were all born as sinners. That is why a toddler will naturally lie, steal cookies, sass back, fight with their siblings, be selfish, etc. Nobody needs to teach them how to sin! In Psalms 51:5, the Psalm writer said, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." We are sinners from our conception.

That's why the world is a sinful mess. I John 5:19 says, "The whole world lieth in wickedness." Jesus said in John 3:19, "Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." We must recognize our sinfulness before we can get saved. Jesus said in Luke 19:10, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." According to Jesus, most people are going to hell (even within Christianity!) Jesus said in Matthew 7:22-23, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." In Matthew 7:13-14 Jesus said, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, (hell), and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life (heaven), and few there be that find it." Isaiah 5:14 says, "Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure." Apparently everything is not ok (as most people think). Ephesians 5:6 says, "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience." Jesus said, "Take heed that no man deceive you", (Matt 24:4). Many will not make it to heaven. The Bible says in I Corinthians 6:9,10, "The unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." God loves mankind, but His justice will not overlook man's sin.

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I Have a Question

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People are sadly following their hearts (i.e. what they think is right). Proverbs 14:12 says, *"There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."* You can't trust your heart! Jeremiah 17:9 says, *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know (trust) it?"* We can be easily deceived. The Bible says the conscience is defiled, corrupted and seared. I Corinthians 8:7 says, *"Their conscience being weak is defiled."* I Timothy 4:2 speaks of *"Having their conscience seared with a hot iron."* Hebrews 10:22 mentions *"An evil conscience."* Titus 1:15 says *"Their mind and conscience is defiled."* Many are following false doctrine and manmade religion which contradicts the Bible. Many have invented a God in their own mind which suits them, and will overlook sin. Jesus said in Matthew 6:23, *"If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"* (Another reason we need the Word of God)

Satan has also blinded people from the truth. Satan is real and Jesus personally encountered him in Matthew 4:1-11. The Bible says in II Corinthians 4:3-4, *"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world (Satan) hath blinded the minds of them which believe not."* John 12:40 says, *"He hath blinded their eyes,*

and hardened their heart; that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted." Jesus called Satan a liar in John 8:44. Satan deceives with a false appearance, masquerading as loving and truthful. II Corinthians 11:14 says, *"For Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light."*

He also has his false preachers and ministers. II Corinthians 11:14-15 says, *"Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness."* Jesus said in Matthew 15:14, *"If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."* Peter said in II Peter 2:1, *"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies."* Be warned! I Peter 5:8 says, *"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."* Once again, everything is not ok!

The Bible speaks much about people being unknowingly deceived and deluded. Ephesians 4:18 speaks of many: *"Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart."* John 1:5 says, *"And the light (true gospel) shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not."* Also, people don't want

the truth because they don't want to repent or change the sinful way they're living. John 3:19 says, *"And this is the condemnation, that light (truth) is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil."* Romans 3:11 says, *"There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God."* Jesus said He came to... *"Open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me"* (Acts 26:18). God reaches out through saved & caring people. Jesus said, *"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him"* (John 6:44).

If the information above has made you uncomfortable, that is the first step in coming to God. It's like a 'wake up call' when God reveals the truth to us. It means that God is dealing with you about your spiritual need. Please follow through in finding God. To discontinue any pursuit of finding the truth would be the greatest mistake of a life- time. Great peace and joy will prevail if you continue to seek God in spite of the guilty feeling. The next lesson will deal with 'how to know for sure you're going to heaven'. Please also note the website: www.7stepstoGod.org.

To listen to sermons online please go to: www.sermonaudio.com/fargobaptist.

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Pastor's Perspective

WHAT YOUR TEENAGER IS THINKING

If you have a teenager, you probably wonder what is going through their head sometimes. They seem to come from another planet and think so differently than you do. You probably want to try and shake some sense into them at times. Why does it seem like you are worlds apart from your teen? Is there not a way to get inside of their head and see what they're thinking? Cary Schmidt, a church youth Pastor surveyed people in their early twenties who had grown up in solid Bible based churches. He received some great insight on what they had been thinking while growing up as teenagers in Christian homes. Please note the following eight things most teens are thinking, but won't say.

FIRST OF ALL, teens know if their parents are real or fake. They're smarter than we give them credit for being. If they see one type of appearance in public, and another kind of behavior at home, it is a real turn off. Our kids know we make mistakes and are sympathetic when we admit it, but if we're too proud to 'come clean' it's a turn off. They can see straight through the hypocrisy. They know our hearts and are constantly evaluating our motives. If our life is consistent, then they accept our faith as real. If not, then they struggle with the conflict and reject our faith altogether. Parents of teens need to avoid dishonest lives full of contradictions ("do as I say and not as I do") and live a life worthy of respect and trust from our kids.

SECONDLY, teenagers want a real faith and spirituality from their mom and dad. Sometimes teens have questions about the Christian faith. If parents are following God's Word (the Bible) than we should have the answers from our Creator. If a teenager has a religious question, it doesn't mean that he is rebelling. He may be just trying to make some sense out of it all. He may be trying to make a connection between God's principles and real life. A good Bible teaching church is there to help with this process, and every Christian parent needs to be in such a church and also in the Bible to help their teenager with his questions. When that teenager brings up different issues like sex, morality, abortion, sodomy, evolution, healthcare, immigration, welfare, etc, a parent should be able to explain what is right or wrong from God's standard.

THIRDLY, teenagers are curious about the opposite sex, but they don't want to bring it up. Teens are at a stage of life where the hormones are awakening. We live in an ungodly culture which continually bombards them with the promotion of sex. It seems like everyone is

talking to our kids about sex except parents. Many parents want to bury their heads in the sand and hope they don't have to deal with sex, but that's a big mistake. Our children should have an open door to us to be able to ask questions about such sensitive issues. If Christian parents give their teens the truth, they will be able to resist a world of lies. If we fail to give them the truth they will most likely buy into the lies.

FOURTHLY, a teenager needs a real bond with his or her parents. Most homes tolerate a superficial relationship between teens and parents. Many parents may think this is what the teenager wants, but nothing could be further from the truth. Perhaps the teenager doesn't even realize it, but there is a deep seated desire to be close to their parents and to also please them. Our Creator has designed it that way. There is no substitute for this. This becomes extremely obvious when you look at the results. A teenager who has a healthy relationship with Dad and Mom is a totally different kid than one who doesn't. It's like night and day. They think differently, behave differently, reason differently, and even feel differently. The long term outcome of their life makes this truth so obvious. Don't let your teenager's friends, hobbies, job or a relationship with the opposite sex steal their heart away from you. Create times of bonding with your teen, and follow through to make sure it happens.

FIFTHLY, your teen needs and even wants rules that are enforced out of love. Our teens expect us to be authorities even though they might appear to rebel. When we fail to provide boundaries and restraints, we're actually saying, "I don't care how you turn out; just don't bother me." It really sends a signal that we don't care enough about them to be concerned how they turn out. Too much freedom without parameters sends a message to our kids that they don't mean enough to us to invest our time in them. It says we're not willing to be put out and get involved because we don't love them that much. As long as the teen stays out of our way, we'll get along fine. Real Christian parenting is actually filled with sacrifice and hard work. Though your teen may buck against the rules, he needs them for his own protection. If the rules aren't in place and enforced, there will be much regret later. It's also a good idea to explain the reason behind the rules so your teen doesn't think you're just trying to spoil his fun. Deep down he will respect you for it. And remember, rules without a relationship equal rebellion.

NUMBER SIX; teenagers need their parents to be united on raising children. When mom and dad don't stand together on the rules or punishment, the kids will 'divide and conquer'. Statements like "don't tell your father" or "I don't agree with your mother on this matter" will bring confusion and rebellion into the home. If you don't agree with your spouse on a matter, discuss and resolve the issue privately. For your children's sake, stand together. You should also never allow your child to criticize or speak negatively about your spouse. If they begin

to air out their frustration to you about the other parent, you should always side with the other parent (your spouse). It is also important to reinforce any and all authorities in a child's life whether it's the parent, pastor, principal, or policeman. Divided authority brings confusion. Authorities aren't always right, but unless it's something morally wrong, try to side with that authority for the sake of your child. Otherwise, you may raise a rebel.

NUMBER SEVEN; be willing to work out the problem areas. Sometimes you may ask your teenager, "What is wrong with you?" and often times quite honestly, they don't know the answer! If you are confused about their behavior and thinking process, join the club...so are they! Between the ages of twelve and twenty young people receive a complete 'brain rebuild'. Plus, the ungodly part of our society and culture is also making a bid for their impressionable hearts. Be willing to work through problems together and find Biblical solutions with patience and prayer. Teens need answers to their problems, and if they can't talk to you about them and get those answers, they are going to go somewhere else. Our children also need acceptance along with the needed discipline. Remember that correction is ultimately designed to restore a child into a right relationship with you. Teens can handle correction that flows from a compassionate heart and ends with a hug and prayer.

FINALLY, teenagers need reinforcement when they do something right. They can often go through their teen years feeling like they are always in trouble. When they do something wrong they're always caught, but when they do something good it is just expected and nothing is ever said. This can be extremely discouraging and also cause bitterness. In most cases they over-exaggerate our criticisms in their minds and feel like complete failures. For this reason it's important to keep things in context if it's 'not a big deal'. And when they've done something right, be sure to acknowledge it. In fact you should praise your child for several things compared to every reprimand you have to deliver. This will constantly challenge you to look for 'the good' and praise it!

So there you have it... eight things teens won't tell you, but it's what they're thinking all the same. Parenting is the toughest job you'll ever love and worth the time and effort. Make sure you parent according to the principles taught in God's Word, and that you're also faithful in a good Bible teaching church. Your family is counting on it.

Pastor Tony Scheving
pastor tony scheving

