

SPIRITUAL INSIGHT FOR YOUR LIFE

# FAITH *for life*

*“The **life** which I now live...I live by the **faith** of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” Galatians 2:20*

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## What is More Valuable than the Whole World?

by pastor tony scheving

*“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” –Mark 8:36*

## IN THIS ISSUE:



- Pg. 3...The Poison of Bitterness
- Pg. 5.....The Incredible Sayings of Jesus
- Pg. 8.....One Hundred Years from Now
- Pg. 9.....Man is Basically Good???
- Pg. 10.....What Does the Bible Say About Abortion?
- Pg. 16.....Hall Of Fame Parents

**T**he Roman Emperor Hadrian lived around 200 AD. He is still regarded as one of the greatest Caesars of all time. He was an incredibly busy and industrious builder. Perhaps no man in history built so many architectural structures and left such a mark upon Europe as Hadrian. He was still building a 750-acre tract at Tivoli Italy when he learned that he was dying. He was quoted as having said, *“O fleeing little soul, where do you go now?”*

In Matthew 16:26 Jesus said, *“What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* Christ implies that your soul is more valuable than anything the world can offer. Imagine all the oil in Saudi Arabia, all the diamonds

in South Africa, all the gold in Fort Knox and all the money on Wall Street, and yet your soul is infinitely more valuable than all of them combined! God made you precious and valuable. Your soul is worth more than anything the world can offer.

**Yet, most people focus more on their body than their soul.** The health and beauty industry is a multi-billion dollar business. The body may live for several decades, but the soul lives on forever in either heaven or hell. The word ‘body’

*continued on page 2*



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## What is More Valuable than the Whole World?

*continued from page 1*

appears 152 times in the Bible but the word 'soul' appears 473 times (three times as many!) You receive your soul at the moment of your conception (Ps 51:5). Your soul is invisible and lives inside of your body throughout your whole life.

**Your soul inside your body is the real you** (your personality, thinking, affections, desires, abilities, intelligence and feelings). Genesis 2:7 says, "*The LORD God formed man (Adam)...and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.*" The Bible adds "*The first man Adam was made a living soul.*" You have a body, but you are a soul. The soul is the real you. It is your soul that loves. In Matthew 22:37 Jesus said, "*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul.*" It is the soul that feels sadness. Matthew 26:38 says, "*Then saith (Jesus) unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful.*" Your soul is the center of your feelings & emotions.

**Your soul leaves your body at death.** Genesis 35:18 says, "*And it came to pass, as (Rachel's) soul was in departing, for she died ...*" The soul leaves the body at the moment of death. The Bible says in Acts 7:59, "*They stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit (soul).*" When the soul leaves the body, the body is lifeless and no longer feels or thinks. James 2:26 says, "*The body without the spirit (soul) is dead.*" There's a soul inside of you just waiting to get out! Our bodies are just

a 'motel' the soul is temporarily living within. One day at death our soul will 'check out' permanently. A Swedish doctor in a book he authored says he discovered the human soul weighs around 21 to 25 grams. He placed terminally ill patients on sensitive weight scales and saw the needle drop as soon as the patient died. The same findings were documented by other American doctors. Evidently the soul even weighs a little something and the body gets slightly lighter when the soul leaves.

**Your soul cannot die.** In Matthew 10:28 Jesus said, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul." Your soul is immortal and eternal and will live forever in one of two places. That makes it extremely valuable; worth more than anything else you own.

**Many people neglect their soul for the temporal things of the world.** In Luke 12:20 a rich farmer had a bumper crop and made plans for a materialistic future. But God said unto this man, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?" You never see a U-Haul following a hearse to the cemetery. (We're going to leave all our possessions behind one day when we die).

**Your soul will live on forever in either heaven or hell.** Four hundred years before the birth of Christ, Socrates, the renowned Greek Philosopher was condemned to death for corrupting the youth of Greece. He drank the poison hemlock and lay down to die when a friend asked him, "*Shall we live again?*" The dying philosopher who normally had all the answers could only reply, "*I hope so, but no man can know.*" According to God's Word, we can know for sure! (read on).

**Your soul needs to be 'converted' sometime during your life.** Psalms 19:7 says, "*The law of the Lord (Bible) is perfect, converting the soul.*" Apparently our soul needs a time when it is saved or converted by the gospel taught in God's Word. (Please read more about this on pages 6-7).

**According to the Bible, you will go to hell forever if your soul is not converted.** In Luke 16:22-23 Jesus spoke of an

unconverted man and said, "*The rich man also died, and (his body) was buried; And in hell he (his soul) lift up his eyes, being in torments.*" This man was still conscious, aware of his surroundings, and remembered his former life back on earth. But this man's soul was never converted and went to hell where he remains suffering to this day.

**Your soul immediately goes to heaven at death if converted.** In II Corinthians 5:6, 8, Paul the apostle said, "*While we (the soul) are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord. We are ...willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord*" (in heaven). In Luke 16:22 Jesus said, "*And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and (his soul) was carried by the angels into (paradise or heaven).*" In Mark 9, Jesus speaks with Moses who reappears on earth 1500 years after he had lived and died (his soul had been alive in heaven all that time). In I Samuel 28, the prophet Samuel is alive and speaking from paradise (heaven) years after his body had died.

**You can know for sure your soul is going to heaven.** 1 John 5:13 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.*"

**If your soul is saved (converted), it goes to heaven immediately upon death.** In Revelation 6:9-10, (John the apostle gets a vision of heaven and says) "*I saw the souls of them that were slain (martyred) for the Word of God.*" They were alive & well and even speaking up in heaven in the same chapter. Jesus told the thief on the cross who got saved just before his death, "*Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise*" (Luke 23:43). This man's soul went straight to heaven with Jesus that same day.

Hebrews 12:1 says, "*We also are compassed about (surrounded) with so great a cloud of witnesses (the many deceased Christians named in the previous chapter)...let us (survivors on earth) run with patience the race (life) that is set before us.*" There is a 'great grandstand'

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## What is More Valuable than the Whole World?

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in the sky and our saved deceased loved ones are in it watching us! In John 5:24, Jesus said, *“He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation (purgatory or hell); but is passed from death unto life.”* At death, the soul of a Christian goes straight to heaven. In Philippians 1:23, Paul the Apostle said, *“For I am...having a desire to depart (from this world), and to be with Christ; which is far better.”* Also, note Acts 7:59, *“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit’ (soul).”* Like all born again Christians, Stephen went straight to heaven!

God makes it clear in the Bible. If someone has been saved the Bible way, they go straight to heaven as soon as their heart stops. They don't need to be “purged” from their sins before qualifying for heaven. The Bible says, *“The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin”* (when we're born again, 1 Jn 1:7).

The Bible says in Hebrews 9:27, *“It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment (heaven or hell).”* Also note from this verse that there is no such thing as reincarnation. Where we will spend eternity is determined before we die based on whether our soul has been converted or not. Revelation 21:24 tells us that, *“The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of (heaven).”* Once again, you can know for sure your soul is going to heaven... 1 John 5:13 *“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.”* Where will your soul spend eternity? (For more information on this please refer to pages 6-7).

# THE POISON OF BITTERNESS



Are you currently bitter toward anyone? Someone well said that *“bitterness is like burning down your own house to get rid of a mouse.”* Someone else said that *“being bitter is like taking poison and waiting for the one you hate to die.”* It actually hurts us the most. Some people are affected by bitterness and don't even realize how deadly it is.

Dr. S.I. McMillen, author of *“None of These Diseases”* points out how physical maladies including ulcers, high blood pressure, and strokes are connected to harboring resentment and hatred toward others. He says, *“It might be written on many thousands of death certificates that the victim died of ‘grudgitis’.”*

Dr. McMillen describes how hating a person enslaves the one who hates. He wrote: *“The moment I start hating a man I become his slave. I cannot enjoy my life anymore because he even controls my thoughts. My resentments produce too many stress hormones*

*in my body; I become fatigued after only a few hours of work. The man I hate may be miles from my bedroom, but more cruel than any slave driver because he whips my thoughts into such a frenzy that my inner spring mattress becomes a rack of torture. I really must acknowledge that I am a slave to every man on whom I'm bitter toward.”*

During World War II the U.S. submarine Tang surfaced under the cover of darkness to fire upon a large Japanese convoy off the coast of China. Since previous raids had left the American vessel with only eight torpedoes, the accuracy of every shot was absolutely essential. The first seven missiles were right on target; but when the eighth was launched, it suddenly deviated and headed right back at their own ship. The emergency alarm to submerge rang out, but it was too late. Within a matter of seconds, the U.S.

*continued on page 4*

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

## The Poison of Bitterness

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sub received a direct hit and sank almost instantly.

In much the same way we can destroy ourselves by hostility toward others. The effects of holding a grudge are very serious. Modern medicine has shown that emotions like bitterness and anger can cause problems such as headaches, backaches, allergic disorders, ulcers, high blood pressure, and heart attacks, to name just a few. By seeking revenge, we really inflict great harm on ourselves. When we do not love our enemies but strike back at them, we hijack God's authority to give out justice. We read in the Bible, *"Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord!"*

If a certain rattlesnake is cornered, it can become so frenzied that it will accidentally bite itself with its deadly fangs. In the same way, when a person harbors hatred and resentment in his heart, he is often hurt by the poison of his own malice. He thinks he is injuring his enemies by displaying his wrath, but the real harm is inflicted deep within his own soul.

The cause of bitterness is obviously 'people'. People let us down, betray us, stab us in the back, lie about us, and cheat us. As long as there are people there's the potential for bitterness. The key to victory over bitterness is not to try and 'change the world' but to change our own reaction to the behavior of people. Consider the following verses from God's Word.

James 3:14 16, *"But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work."*

Ephesians 4:31 32, *"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice, and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."* (We need to forgive in the same way God has forgiven us).

Hebrews 12:14 15, *"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness, springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled."* (Failure to repent of bitterness will poison others as well as ourselves).

The reasons for bitterness can be many. Maybe it was a dad who never took time with a child, maybe it was a sibling who was favored, maybe it was physical, sexual or emotional abuse, maybe it's because of rejection or jealousy. Regardless of the cause, how can we get victory over bitterness?

We must first acknowledge that we are bitter and that bitterness is a sin. Proverbs 28:13 says, *"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."* The Psalm writer exclaimed in Psalm 51:2 3, *"Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin is ever before me."*

Confession is hard because we have to face what we are, but at the same time it is liberating. The Bible says in I John 1:9, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* Sometimes you may need to confess it to the one you've been bitter toward. The Bible says in James 5:16, *"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed."*

Spending time in God's Word will

also help us get victory over bitterness. The Bible says in Psalm 119:165, *"Great peace have they which love thy law (Bible): and nothing shall offend them."* One other key to victory over bitterness is to pray for the one you're angry at. Jesus said in Matthew 5:44, *"Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you."*

Jesus was never bitter toward anyone, even those who crucified Him. He said in Luke 23:34, *"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."* Actually, Jesus was dying on the cross for our sins including bitterness. Yet Jesus continued to love His enemies. You should hate sin not people. You've got to mature enough to see the distinction. God loves people and hates sin. May God help us to triumph over our bitterness and live a victorious life.

# 7 STEPS<sup>TO</sup> God

## BIBLE STUDY

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Do you ever wonder *what life is all about?* In a sense, it's actually a dressing room for eternity. In the big picture we're "here today and gone tomorrow." 7 Steps to God is a Bible study designed to prepare people for the next life and also to enhance the quality of this present life. God created you with a special purpose in mind and has a wonderful plan for you. The Bible is the instruction manual to life and at Heaven 88.7 we're here to help people find God through His Word. If you are interested in taking the 7 Steps to God Bible study please contact us. Our staff is available for either a one on one, or group Bible study free of charge.

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# The Incredible Sayings of Jesus Christ

*"Never man spake like this man!" - John 7:46*



The words we speak determine a lot about our character, life, and personality. What did Jesus Christ have to say when He walked this earth 2000 years ago? The enemies of Jesus sent soldiers to arrest Him, but they returned empty handed and simply stated; *"Never man spake like this man!"* - John 7:46

Jesus was without a doubt, the most incredible and central figure in all of history. The world's calendar revolves around His birth. His coming was predicted and was fulfilled to the letter. He did things no other man has ever done including rising from the dead. This accomplishment alone validated the incredible words He spoke.

Jesus said words which only God Himself had the right to speak, words so incredible that if spoken by just a man, would be an indication of psychological problems, or at the least, he would be delusional. Judge for yourself. Look at the incredible words of Jesus Christ. Was he just a man...OR WAS HE GOD?

## Jesus Claimed His Words Were Eternal.

*"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."* - Matthew 24:35

## Jesus Claimed He was alive thousands of years before He was born.

*"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."* - John 8:58 (Abraham was born around 2000BC!)... Jesus

also claimed in this same verse above to be the great *"I AM"* that God Himself claimed to be in the days of Moses 1500 years earlier.

## Jesus Claimed the Bible Foretold His Coming to the Earth.

*"Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."* - John 5:39

## Jesus Claimed He Was in Heaven at the Same Time He was Walking the Earth.

*"No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."* - John 3:13

## Jesus Claimed to Be the Very Son of God!

*"Say ye of him, whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God?"* - John 10:36

## Jesus Claimed to Be the Promised Messiah of the World.

*"The high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ (the anointed One – the Messiah), the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I AM: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven."* - Mark 14:61-62

## Jesus Claimed to be Able to Forgive Sins.

His enemies asked, *"Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? (true!) Jesus replied, "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins..."* - Mark 2:7,9

## Jesus Claimed to be Sinless Himself.

*"Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?"* - John 8:46

## Jesus Claimed to be Able to Resurrect the Dead.

*"No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day."* - John 6:44

## Jesus Claimed to be the Only Way to Get to Heaven.

*"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me."* - John 14:6 ... furthermore Jesus claimed that if someone did not believe in His divinity they would not go to heaven;

*"For if ye believe not that I am ...ye shall die in your sins."* - John 8:24

## Jesus Claimed to be Able to Give Eternal Life that Could Never be Lost.

*"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

## Finally, Jesus gave us the gospel in one sentence.

*"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

Conclusion: Either Jesus Christ was an imposter, a crazy man, a lunatic – or He was who He claimed he was, God in the flesh, *"Come to seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10). Who else could make such statements and then back up His words by raising the dead and healing the lame and the sick and eventually rising from the dead Himself! This could only be the long awaited promised one who for thousands of years had been prophesied to come as the sacrificial Lamb of God who would come to take our sins away.

Why were the words of Jesus Christ so incredible? Because he was the only man in history whose words matched his walk. Someone who raised the dead, healed the lame, who never sinned, and with loving compassion forgave the sins of the worst of humanity. People judge you by the words you speak. Go ahead and judge the words of Jesus Christ. They were written because that is precisely what Jesus Christ wants you to do. He has nothing to hide.

*"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, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."* - 1 John 5:13 The soldiers were sent to arrest Jesus one day but returned mesmerized and stunned. They could only say of Jesus...

*"Never man spake like this man!"* - John 7:46

# How to Find God and Really Know Him

## God's Plan of Salvation

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

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

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

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

It all revolves around Jesus Christ!

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

He came to earth to save us. *"For the Son of man is come to*

*seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10). The first step in going to heaven is to realize we need to be saved from our sin.

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

There is a difference between a physical birth and a spiritual birth. *"That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit"* (John 3:6).

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

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

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

That is also why we have a sin nature. You don't have to teach a toddler to be selfish, lie, steal things, sass back, fight with

siblings, etc... it is also our nature as we grow up.

Most people fail to see themselves as serious sinners. They feel they are a "good person." They are comparing themselves to others, instead of God's standard; the 10 Commandments. Let's see how you rate compared to the 10 Commandments.

#1 *"Thou shalt have no other gods before me"* (Exodus 20:3). No one can claim they have never put anything ahead of God (money, career, own self centered goals, pleasure, sports, entertainment, sin, vice, a relationship with another, etc).

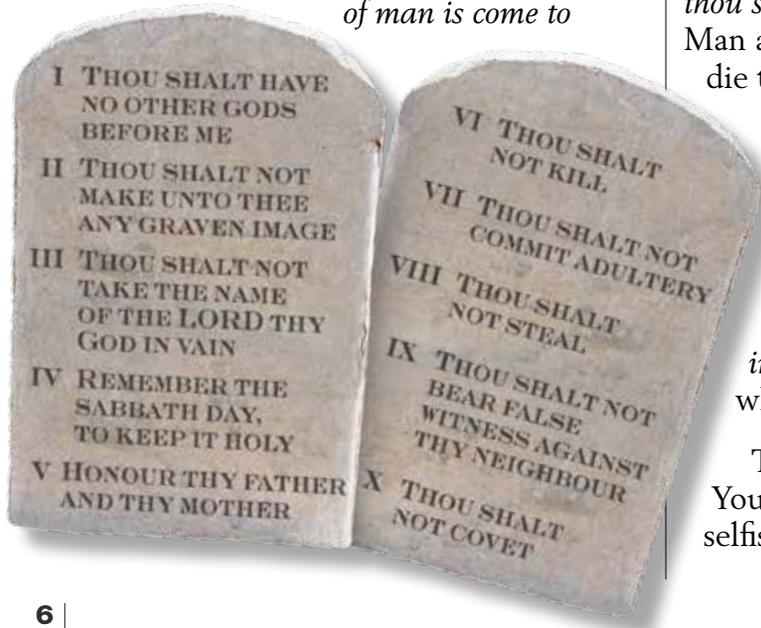
#2 *"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image (of God)"* (Exodus 20:4). Many have been guilty of inventing a God of their own imagination and liking... a God who 'suits them.' People want a "God that overlooks sin and takes everyone to heaven." They have improvised and dreamed up a God of their own image.

#3 *"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain"* (Exodus 20:7). Re-read that carefully. God is keeping record of every time you've used His name as a curse word and you will answer for it one day.

#4 *"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy"* (Exodus 20:8). Have you always honored the Lord's Day or been faithful in church attendance? (Heb 10:25).

#5 *"Honour thy father and thy mother"* (Exodus 20:12). Have you ever disrespected or disobeyed your parents. Have you ever argued with them or dishonored them?

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## How to Find God

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#6 *"Thou shalt not kill"* (Exodus 20:13). Although most people have never committed murder, they are guilty of "murder of the heart." Jesus clarifies this commandment in Matthew 5:21-2; Whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother... shall be in danger of hell fire. Have you ever been mad or bitter at someone?

#7 *"Thou shalt not commit adultery"* (Exodus 20:14). While many have never committed adultery, Jesus said; Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart (Matt 5:27-8). Have you ever lusted after the opposite sex? This is adultery of the heart according to Jesus.

#8 *"Thou shalt not steal"* (Exodus 20:15). Who could claim they've never taken anything that doesn't belong to them? ... something small or even the boss's time?

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

#10 *"Thou shalt not covet"* (Exodus 20:17). Have you ever desired anything you didn't have or didn't need? Have you ever been discontented, jealous or ungrateful? This is covetousness.

Most people are guilty of breaking all 10 commandments! Many places in the Bible reveal that liars, adulterers, thieves, the covetous, etc will spend eternity in hell! (Rev 21:8, I Cor 6:9-10, Gal 5:19-21). How could you ever expect to get to heaven by "living a good life?"

Romans 3:10 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:*

Romans 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;*

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

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

The 10 Commandments were given by God to show us how impossible it is to

be saved by doing good works. *"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith"* (Galatians 3:24). The law (10 Commandments) shows us that we are condemned and need a Savior.

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

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

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

To repent means to change your mind about your sin, and make Christ the Lord

of your life. Are you willing to turn from your sin and turn to God? Do you believe that Jesus paid the full price on the cross for your sins?

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

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

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

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

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# ONE HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW

Have you ever wondered what life will be like in **100 years**? So much can change in that time. Consider how much has changed technologically in the last **100 years**. We use devices on a daily basis that could not have even been dreamed about a hundred years ago in 1918. Imagine trying to explain a touch screen, or cloud-based storage to someone who had never even seen a toaster, or sliced bread for that matter (The toaster was invented in 1919, while sliced bread didn't hit the market until 1928). Besides the incredible technological advancements of the last **100 years**, just think how many other things have changed. America has been through six or seven major wars, and many other conflicts. We have seen 17 different presidents occupy the White House during that time. Major empires have risen and fallen in the past **100 years**. Considering all of this, it is impossible to accurately predict what life will be like a **100 years** from now.

But one thing is for sure, whatever life is like in **100 years**, we will not be around to see it. It's pretty safe to say, that within that time period, most of us who are alive today will be long gone. And when that happens, it won't matter to us what new technology has revolutionized the world, it won't matter who is the greatest musician or athlete, it really won't even matter who is occupying the White House. To us, there is only one thing that will matter in a **100 years**; where we will be. Yes, once we leave this life, the only thing that will matter is whether we are in heaven or hell.

1 John 5:11-13 reads: *"And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, 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. 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, and*

*that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God."*

This is wonderful news! God has made a way that we can know beyond any doubt that we will go to Heaven when we die. So many people are going through life, hoping that somehow they will be good enough to go to Heaven, but ultimately, they do not know. Sadly, many people die without having true assurance that they are ready to meet God. The Bible clearly teaches us, not only that we can know we have eternal life, but also how to receive it.

## It's about a Person

1 John 5:11 tells us that eternal life is in Jesus, God's Son. Many people are trusting in religion, or a church to secure their eternal destination. But the Bible tells us it is not about those things, it is about Jesus Christ. When speaking of his confidence in his eternal destiny, the Apostle Paul said, *"I know Whom I have believed"* (2 Timothy 1:12). It is interesting that he didn't say *"I know what I have believed,"* he didn't even say, *"I know how I have behaved"*. You see, Paul knew the truth; that salvation is found in a person, Jesus Christ. It is not of our own good works, that we are saved, but by God's grace.

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

Titus 3:5, *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us."*

## It's about Possession

1 John 5:12 says, *"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."* The Bible does not teach that

salvation is found in what we know, but rather in what we possess. Do you have Christ in your life? Have you ever received Him as your Lord and Savior? John 1:12 reads, *"But as many as received him (Jesus), to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name"*. Friend, according to the Word of God, the only way you can have eternal life, is if you have Christ as your personal Savior.

## It's about Peace

In 1 John 5:13, the Apostle John expresses the purpose for which he wrote the book; that we may **know** that we have eternal life. Honestly, it is not pleasant to consider our own mortality, but you can truly have peace in knowing that you are saved. No doubt, if you are still wondering what will happen after death, or perhaps you are just hoping God will accept you, that is a miserable place to be.

You can find true peace in knowing for sure that you will be in Heaven when you die. Jesus said in John 10:27-30, *"My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."* What peace there is in knowing that you have an eternal salvation that you can never lose!

Friend, you don't know what life on Earth will be like **100 years** from today, but you can know for sure that you will be with Christ in Heaven. May I encourage you today to turn to Christ, and receive Him as your Lord and Savior? For more information on how to be saved, and have a right relationship with God, please see pages 6-7.

# “Man is Basically Good?”

Many like to think that man is basically good... that he has *“A spark of benevolence inside waiting to be fanned into a roaring flame of goodness.”* However, the human race has shown very little to substantiate the claim that man is basically good. Such a claim flies in the face of all the real-life evidence we find all around us...the never-ending wars, ongoing scandals in the news, fighting among spouses, siblings, friends, lying, selfishness, stubbornness, pride, etc. These are things we are all too familiar with.

Some prefer to think of man as neutral; as not having a natural bend toward good or evil. Man, according to behaviorist B.F. Skinner, *“is a creature of circumstance, controlled and molded by external influences.”* This argument puts the blame on “society” for man’s evil behavior. But where does the evil in society come from? Is not society made up of people? Social actions are the collective result of individual actions. Any evil found in society originates from the very people who make it up--right?

The debate rages on with most people simply weighing man’s good against his bad, shrugging their shoulders and concluding that few are truly sinful, most are better than worse, and for the most part, we’re not all that bad. Is mankind basically good according to nature as well as the Bible?

## Who would teach a child to sin?

No parent in their right mind would set out to teach their child “bad behavior”. Yet, left to themselves, that is the behavior pattern children gravitate toward. You don’t have to teach a child how to lie, how

to sass back, how to steal a cookie, how to be selfish with their toys, etc. Parents have to spend their time “correcting” the child; they must counteract the inborn wrong behavior by teaching them how to do right. If man was “Good” by nature, then a child’s natural inclination would be to behave himself thus saving their parents a lot of headaches!

## Are we really being honest with ourselves?

Notice what King Solomon, considered the wisest man that ever lived, said as recorded in the Bible: *“All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes”* (Proverbs 16:2). He also said: *“Most men will proclaim everyone his own goodness”* ( Proverbs 20:6). We are quick to puff ourselves up, expounding on the “good” things we do, while downplaying the bad: *“For he flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful.”* (Psalm 36:2).

It’s not that we’re “really not that bad.” The truth is, we don’t want to readily admit just how bad we really are. Yet, in the end, we’re only fooling ourselves because the Bible warns that: *“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts”* (Proverbs 21:2)

## Which brings us to the heart of the problem

One day Jesus Christ preached to a group of religious leaders called the Pharisees on how to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus’ message required repentance and faith on their part. Unfortunately, for those religious leaders, repentance required an admittance of their sinful state, something the Pharisees were not about to do, due to their self-righteous, self-justifying attitude. Notice what Jesus said to them, point blank: *“Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.”* (Luke 16:15)

## The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart

The debate as to whether man is good or sinful will never be resolved as long

as people keep comparing themselves ‘with themselves’. The best a person can do is judge one another based on outside appearance. God sees things differently: *“For the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.”* (1 Sam. 16:7)

We can justify our sinful actions all we want, but in the end, the determination as to whether we are good or bad is based on what God sees when He looks at our heart. It is our heart that exposes us as the sinners we truly are. Our heart; that thinking, and emotional part of us that is hidden and secret to the world, is where our true attitude toward others and our Creator takes place. Jesus said of the human heart: *“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man”* (Mark 7:21-2).

No one is immune from this heart problem. The Bible makes no exceptions when it comes to proclaiming the state of our hearts: *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”* (Jer. 17:9). *“Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?”* (Prov. 20:9). The answer to the previous verse is “no one can say it!” The Bible says: *“ There is none righteous, no not one”* (Rom. 3:10). *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”* (Rom. 3:23).

My dear reader, you can enter the grand debate trying to justify whether you’re good in the eyes of men, but the bottom line is ...you, me, and everyone else in-between is a sinner before God. Our hearts give us away. We sin not only by choice, but worse yet, by nature. And if you are still not fully convinced, then take the time to look into the mirror God has provided for our ‘heart examination’...God’s Ten Commandments; ten “simple” commands that for the life of us, we simply can’t keep. Please refer to page 6-7 to see how your life stacks up to God’s standard.

# What Does the Bible Say About Abortion?

Recently one of our ND Senators voted to continue the aborting of unborn babies beyond 20 weeks which is a horrific practice. Afterwards she was photographed ‘celebrating’ the vote with a ‘high-five’ to a fellow senator from NY. Imagine rejoicing over a vote that continues the brutal practice of killing and dismembering a human child in the womb just days before he or she could survive on their own.

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

So what does God’s Word say about abortion? Is it an issue for nine people in black robes to decide, or is it our *Creator’s call*? Do those judges believe God’s Word and make decisions based on His standard? Human supposition says that the unborn is not a child; it’s just part of the woman’s body. Supposedly it’s a woman’s right to do as she wants with her own body because ‘the unborn child doesn’t have a soul.’ Supposedly it’s a woman’s property to do as she pleases. In the infamous Dred Scott decision of 1857, our Supreme Court decided a black American slave essentially did not qualify as a human being. They were simply ‘*somebody’s property*.’ What a dreadful and embarrassing conclusion for

our Supreme Court to come to by today’s standard! Yet, we currently have judges, politicians, and talking heads who justify the ‘right of a woman’ to do what she pleases with her *own body* (her property).

The New Testament of the Bible was originally written in Koine Greek which is a very precise language. The Greek word for a baby (*brephos*) is the exact same word whether referring to a baby inside the womb or outside of the womb. This is very important. At the birth of Jesus, the Bible says in Luke 2:12, “*This shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.*” This baby (Jesus) is already born and we would recognize this ‘babe’ as a human being. It would be murder to kill it at this point. Now notice what the Bible says about John the Baptist in Luke 1:41; “*When Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost.*” John the Baptist is still unborn. This babe inside the womb was around 22 weeks along in the pregnancy, and he’s still called a babe, or *brephos*! The Greek word ‘brephos’ means ‘infant.’ It’s a word that speaks of a person, not a fetus, embryo, or thing. It makes no difference to God whether the child is inside or outside of the womb, it is still a human baby according to our Creator. Footnote: The unborn John the Baptist who leaped for joy

inside the womb was about the same age (around 20 weeks along) as the babies our US Senator voted to abort.

Let’s go on. What is a soul? According to the Bible, the soul is the real you. It is the seat of your personality, your emotions, your character, your talents, your disposition and temperament. It is the real you. It is invisible and lives inside of the body. It is the source of your life. When your body dies, the soul departs and lives in one of two places forever (heaven or hell). The body is just a ‘motel’ that your soul is temporarily living in. One day it will ‘*check out*’. We receive an eternal, never-to-die soul at the moment of conception (along with our sinful nature). That’s why you don’t have to teach a toddler how to lie, be selfish, or sass back. Well, David said in Psalms 51:5, “*Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me.*” Only a person could be a sinner, not a thing (fetus or embryo). We are a sinner from conception because we receive our living and never-to-die soul at conception. That really settles the question; ‘*when does life begin*’.

In a past article in a local newspaper, a “*contributing*” writer called those who believe this, “*right wing religious zealots.*”

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## What Does the Bible Say About Abortion?

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Unfortunately, our society has been pretty brainwashed. God's Word indicates that a child receives his soul at the moment of conception along with the sin nature which all human beings possess. That child in the womb already has an eternal soul which is the source of life. He or she is a human being! Science even tells us the unborn child already has a DNA code, which is unique from both parents. The unborn child has his own blood supply and organs apart from his mother. Three to four weeks after conception there is also a detectable heartbeat. Once conception takes place, the child receives only nourishment from his mother through the umbilical cord. He receives no cells, no flesh, and no new or additional life from the mother. The unborn child has their own body and soul!

God recognizes us as human beings while we are still in the womb. God called the prophet Jeremiah into the ministry while his mother was still carrying him (Jer 1:5). That little one inside of the womb is a person. King David speaks clearly about God recognizing him as a human before he was ever born (Ps 139:13-16). Isaiah the prophet was recognized and called by God while in the womb; *"And now, saith the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant"* (Isa 49:5). The great man Job said to God, *"Thou hast clothed me (my soul) with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews"* (Job 10:11). Notice the word 'me' in these last two verses; As though the unborn baby is a real 'me' person.

Now, there are some who argue that Adam wasn't alive until God put breath in him and he began to breathe on his own. They say the same must be true for a baby who is only really a living person after they began to breathe on their own. There is no comparison here at all. Adam was soulless, lifeless and lying still until he began to breathe. Any mother who's ever felt the kick of the baby in her womb knows that baby is very much alive and growing inside of her. Ultrasounds given during abortions have shown the unborn baby screaming and kicking in fear inside of the mother, as he tries to get away from the suction hose

about to dismember him. This baby can already experience terror because he is a human being!

Very early in the Bible, God says, *"Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man"* (Gen 9:6). We have been made in the image of God, whether 3 weeks, 3 months, 3 years, or 30 years. Later in the Bible God says, *"Thou shalt not kill"* (Exo 20:13). In the very next chapter it says, *"If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart from her...and if any mischief*

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***"Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward." -Psalms 127:3***

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*follow (i.e. the baby dies), then thou shalt give life for life"* (Ex 21:22-23). That is pretty plain... it's considered the murder of an unborn child (human). Perhaps an abortion doctor should consider the following: In Proverbs six, God mentions the things that He hates! In verse 17 it says, *"hands that shed innocent blood."* There is nothing more innocent than a baby! Back in Bible times, the heathens sacrificed to the false gods of Molech and Baal by throwing children

into fire (Ps 106:37-8). While that may seem extremely calloused, is it any worse than dismembering a living baby limb by limb with a sharp knife under the guise of choice?

The most dangerous place in America is not a coal mine, race car, dark alley or shark infested waters...it's a woman's womb. Nearly four thousand babies perish every day in the land of the free. Half the people who enter an abortion clinic never come out alive. We can look with disgust at Hitler's cruelty to six million Jews nearly 75 years ago. America has a genocide of its own which is far worse. We have murdered approximately 50 million baby boys and girls since abortion became "legal" in 1973 (where have all the babies gone?). That is more helpless babies than the population of the states of; NV, OR, ID, MT, UT, WY, CO, NM, ND, SD, NE, KS, OK, MN, IA, AR, MS, and AL - combined! That's nearly 45 times more American deaths than caused by all wars combined since the American Revolution. It is hypocrisy for us to condemn other countries for human rights violations while butchering our own children. God will hold the guilty accountable one day for this shedding of innocent blood (II Ki 24:4). That includes those who vote 'pro-choice' through the ballot box. Americans may justify this bloodshed because we have declared it 'legal', but one day we will be judged by

*continued on page 12*



**EASTER SUNDAY**

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## What Does the Bible Say About Abortion?

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God's law and not man's. All the doctors, nurses, parents, congressmen, lobbyists, senators, presidents, Supreme Court justices, and voters will give an account.

We have become de-sensitized as a nation. A few years back, an eagle was killed here in ND just 125 miles west of Fargo. The authorities offered a \$2500 reward for information leading to the arrest of the culprit. The crime was punishable by a fine of \$100,000, or a year in jail. We have laws in our land to punish anyone who even harms an unborn eagle, while we allow the slaughter of unborn human babies. The Bible calls that *"an inordinate affection"* Col 3:5 (i.e. a perverted passion). We are saving the owls, whales and trees while we destroy our children. I'm afraid we've lost our ability to reason.

We have been sold a bogus bill of goods. We have been told that it would be better for an unwanted child to be aborted, while three million couples are waiting to adopt. We were told that aborting an unwanted child would lower child abuse throughout our land. The opposite has proven true. Child abuse has increased dramatically since Roe v. Wade. Ronald Reagan said, *"We cannot diminish the value of one category of human life, without diminishing the value of all human life."* And then he added... *"There is no cause more important."* It has ramifications in so many other areas. We are already beginning to see the introduction of euthanasia in our land.

Abuse within the womb has spread to abuse outside of the womb. That is because abortion devalues life as it desensitizes the heart. Imagine even debating the morality of the heartless act of partial birth abortion! We are simply not thinking...we have become numb. We have become a pagan nation, *'killing without caring'*. The Bible speaks of *"having a conscience seared with a hot iron"* (I Tim 4:2). In society today we've been brainwashed to believe we just evolved by random chance. This means we really have no purpose or meaning in life...we are basically animals who've evolved further along. Then we witness beastly behavior such as mass shootings and we wonder why? Reagan was right...*"We cannot diminish the*

*value of one category of human life, without diminishing the value of all human life."*

Let's not kid ourselves...abortion is a big money business. Many abortionists make as much as \$2000/day. As usual, it's not about the freedom of choice, but money. The majority of our national media has done a good job swaying the population to their biased pro-choice position. Our society has been led to believe it's just tissue, or an *'unevolved'* person. In reality, many of those in power use abortion as a smokescreen to control world population. Sadly, many Americans who oppose abortion are still funding it unwillingly through tax dollars that go to organizations like *'Planned Parenthood.'* Christian people need to raise our voices in opposition.

Indifference to such a holocaust is simply unacceptable. God is the giver and taker of life. Man has delved into a sacred area (the womb) where he has no business being. Ecclesiastes 11:5 says, *"As thou knowest not what is the way of the spirit, nor how the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child: even so thou knowest not the works of God who maketh all."* We need God back on our side. Isaiah 59:2-3 says, *"Your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood."*

Yet, even now, those who have been advocates of abortion can find forgiveness through repentance (I Jn 1:9). As a nation, God says to us, *"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land"* (II Chron 7:14). Proverbs 14:34 says, *"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people."* An unborn baby is not just a glob of undeveloped tissue. He or she is an eternal soul, a creation of God in His own image. Somebody needs to speak up for the unborn who are unable to speak for themselves. In this whole battle of *'rights,'* the rights of unborn human beings have been overlooked. God says, *"I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed (children) may live"* (Deut 30:19). ■

## does life have meaning?

Hugh Morehead is the chairman of the Dept. of Philosophy at Northeastern University. Forty-five years ago he began a hobby of writing to famous philosophers, scientists, and authors asking them, **"What is the purpose of life?"** The responses he got back were depressing at best.

Legendary chemist and author, Isaac Asimov wrote back, "As far as I can see there is no purpose to life." Karl Jung, the famous Austrian psychiatrist, wrote, "I don't know what the meaning or the purpose of life is, but it looks like as if there were something meant by it." And Albert Ellis, the psychiatrist who invented RET therapy said, "As far as I can tell, life has no special or intrinsic meaning or purpose." Well-known educator, Edward Gorny replied, "I doubt if there is one" ...**So much for the experts!**

For many years now, people have been told they are just a product of evolution. That makes them basically a refined animal. So many people today are searching for the meaning of life, and yet are not finding it. They see life as mere existence, void of any purpose or meaning. But as Christians we know that God has a purpose for our lives. 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). He doesn't want us to merely exist, but to fulfill His plan for our lives.

Solomon indicated in the book of Ecclesiastes that if we don't understand the purpose of life, it will seem useless, tiresome, and unfulfilling. Ecclesiastes 1:2-3 says, *"Vanity of vanities ...all is vanity. What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?"* God tells us that when we live without His purpose and plan, it is all a waste! Only one life will soon be past, and only what's done for God will last! ■



# A Lesson For America

By Mike VanHorn

In recent years Christian missionaries have been attacked and brutally killed. The Muslims attackers have pretended to be interested in 'converting to Christianity'. This is happening in the country of Turkey. What do you know about the nation of Turkey?

Did you know that Joseph and his brothers were born in Turkey? It was also the birthplace of St. Paul who was born in Tarsus, Turkey. Later on as a missionary, Paul was stoned by a mob in Lystra, Turkey. Turkey was also home to the seven churches mentioned by Jesus in the book of the Revelation. John the apostle was also the pastor of a church in Ephesus, Turkey, and according to history, Mary died in the country of Turkey. Several epistles

(Colossians, Galatians, Ephesians, I & II Timothy, I & II Peter, and the Revelation) were all written to churches or people in Turkey. In fact, believers were first called Christians in Antioch (present day Antakia) Turkey -Acts 11:26.

It's easy to see that Turkey was a country once influenced by the Bible and Christianity. Today the country is 99.9% Muslim. It is now illegal to preach the

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

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

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

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

An advertisement for Fargo Baptist Church. It features a photograph of a family (a man, a woman, and a young boy) smiling and embracing. In the background, there is a church building with a large wooden cross. The text includes the slogan "We're Building Lives!", the church name "FARGO BAPTIST CHURCH", and the address "3303 23rd Ave S Fargo, ND · 58103". A list of services is provided: Sunday Bible Class 9:30am, Sunday Worship 10:30am, Sunday Evening 6:00pm, and Wednesday Service 7:00pm.



# Where Do Babies Go If they Die?

By Pastor Tony Scheving

According to the UN, over 20,000 people die worldwide every day of malnutrition and most of them are small children. There are few things sadder than the loss of a toddler or baby. Over the years there have been a number of heartbreaking funerals involving babies who never lived to grow up. Most people have been touched in some way with such tragedies. Where do babies go if they die, whether they've been baptized or not? Many people have wondered what the Bible has to say about this matter.

What happens to children who die without being able to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior? The opinions of various religions run the gamut. Some ministers have speculated that aborted babies wind up in hell because they were never baptized or confirmed. Of course this is cruel and outrageous theology and doesn't line up with what the Bible teaches. Where do little children go when they die? The requirement for getting to heaven is to be 'born again' according to Jesus. He said in John 3:3, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Of course this is impossible for a child who is not able to exercise the repentance and faith necessary to be saved. So what is his fate?

God has given us clues in the Bible to help us answer this question. In II Samuel 12, a baby son is born to King David. The baby ended up dying seven days after he was born (before being circumcised, which would have taken place on the eighth day). King David (also a prophet) made an important statement in verse 23: "But now he (the child) is dead... can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me." David spoke of going to be with the child one day. Where

did the child go?... Wherever David would go one day. Was David going to heaven or hell? David is the most mentioned name in the whole Bible next to Jesus. David was a saved man and testified in the famous twenty-third Psalm "I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" (i.e., heaven). So David went to heaven when he died. What David was saying at the death of his baby was; "I will see him again in heaven one day." The baby boy went to heaven when he died.

Notice that this baby didn't go to purgatory or some limbo type of place. There is no such place according to the Bible. The baby went to heaven, and he went there immediately according to the Bible (II Cor 5:8). Some would argue that if a baby is not baptized, he can't go to heaven; but a careful study of the Bible would show otherwise. There was a thief on a cross next to Jesus when He was crucified. In his dying hours that thief professed faith in Christ and trusted Jesus as his Savior. Jesus told the thief, "Verily I say unto thee, today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43) The thief was never baptized, but according to Jesus he went to heaven at death.

According to the Bible, baptism has never had anything to do with going to heaven. In 313 A.D. the Roman Emperor Constantine was the first one to embrace the false teaching of 'baptismal regeneration' (i.e., the teaching that baptism will make you a child of God and wash your sins away). By 370 A.D., they were baptizing infants and by 416 A.D., infant baptism had become mandatory in the Roman Empire. Yet it is a manmade tradition, not found anywhere in the Bible. Jesus strongly warned about following manmade

religious tradition that contradicts the Bible (Matthew 15:1-9).

Baptism doesn't make someone a Christian. It doesn't wash away sin. According to the Bible, it's always taken the shedding of blood to atone for sin, not water. Baptism (immersion) simply publicly professes and identifies a born-again Christian with Jesus Christ as a believer. Jesus set an example by being baptized and he commanded us to be baptized—to publicly show forth our decision to trust Christ as Savior. Baptism (immersion) pictures His death, burial, and resurrection. It also pictures my new life in Jesus Christ, but it has nothing to do with taking a baby to heaven if they die. You won't find a baby baptized anywhere in the Bible.

In the third chapter of the book of Job, we find another example of babies going to heaven when they die. In verse eleven, the man Job describes a "stillborn birth" where the baby is dead when delivered. Many parents have agonized over this heartbreaking experience. In the next several verses, Job describes how the baby is in a "better place" of bliss and rest (heaven).

One of the greatest proofs that small children go to heaven when they die, came from the lips of Jesus Christ Himself. Speaking of children in Matthew 18:14, He said plainly, "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish" (or go to hell). When the child is too young to decide, God decides for them. He does not hold them accountable for their sin nature because they are not able to understand it spiritually. God takes great notice of children and has a special place in His heart for them. The Bible says in Psalm 127:3, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord." Children are precious heirlooms given by God. When Eve had a baby, she said, "I have gotten a man child from the Lord."

Children are special and God loves them. Jesus Christ always made time for children. God does not hold them accountable until they are older. In the case of the prophet Jonah, God spared the city of Nineveh from destruction, partly because of all the children that were in it. God said in Jonah 4:11, "should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than six score thousand (120,000) persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand" (small children). God created children and certainly understands their lack of comprehension at an early age. He does not hold them accountable.

*continued on next page*

**Faith for Life**

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

After many parents experience the tragedy of losing a small child they ask, "Why?" Then the very next question is "Where?" ... "Where is my child now?" Like King David said, you cannot bring the child back to you, but you can one day go to be with the child by being truly born again. If you are currently reading this and you have experienced the loss of a child, God cares about your loss and grief. His heart too was grieved when His only begotten Son died for the sins of mankind. For more information about receiving Christ as your personal Savior, please take note of pages 6-7. ■

## FAITH & FINANCES

God's Word says in Romans 13:8, "Owe no man anything." Prior to this scripture, the Bible is talking about money, then the Word of God simply states, "Owe no man anything". It seems to imply that we should seek to be debt free. If we think about it, God built both the beautiful Tabernacle and the breathtaking Temple in Jerusalem debt free. Apparently, God frowns on debt. There is nothing unspiritual about the subject of money, as the Bible speaks more about it than any other subject. Jesus spoke about money as much as any other issue.

Our Creator knows us and has some words of wisdom for us. There is a nerve that runs from the heart to the pocketbook, and it tells a lot about one's character. Outside of a loan on a business, the financial goal of every Christian should be to get debt free in every other area. When we speak of getting out of debt, we're not just talking about the credit cards, furniture, jewelry, boat payment, car payment, or school loans. We're talking about eventually getting rid of the house payment! A person heavily in debt doesn't think clearly, and that's why the crux of marital counseling is normally related to finances. Poor handling of money can cripple a marriage. Many couples feel the strain in this area. It has been said that 90% of the population has a problem with handling money. There are nearly a million bankruptcies nationwide annually, with the rate rising

dramatically right here in North Dakota. Last year, many people across our nation lost their homes to foreclosures.

The problem is normally not a lack of income (though most would not admit it), but rather a lack of control over our spending. It boils down to a lack of control over our desires. We covet after many things and think, "We just have to have them!" Later on, we will hold a garage sale to get rid of those things that clutter our homes. The things we sell at our garage sale at one time cost us ten times more than the pitiful price on the masking tape. We talk about how we made \$200 dollars at our garage sale when we actually lost \$2000! Jesus said, "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). It is really a matter of 'unsanctified desires', which exceed our means. The remedy is not a better job with more money. The remedy is a matter of contentment, victory over covetousness, and better management (stewardship) over what God has given us.

Too many of us have a 'hole in our pocket'. Many couples in their late 30s could have had their house paid off already if they had done things differently. Many young couples have the mentality to copy the lifestyle their parents enjoy, but they forget that it took Mom and Dad 30 years to acquire that lifestyle. Our mentality is that we've got to have it, and we want it right now! We often resort to "Mr. Plastic" (the credit card) in order to accomplish this. This lack of patience will cost us dearly in the long run. We need to practice the 'novel' idea of earning, then spending (that is the way

Grandpa and Grandma used to do it). The average American still lives better than 90% of the world.

Now, why is it so crucial to get debt free? It is the pathway to less stress and heartache in life. The Bible says, "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Timothy 6:9-10). Who needs late night 'cat and dog' arguments between spouses? Who needs the threatening calls of creditors, or wolves at the door? Who needs the 'repossession' showing up to drive 'your' car away? Who needs the sinking feeling of choking on interest? Far too many Christians get out of God's perfect will over something so temporal as some 'green colored paper'. One day, we will kick ourselves over a disastrous financial decision that cost us far more than we could have imagined. There are a number of budget plans that will help a person to get debt free, but remember that the key is to overcome covetousness and immediate gratification.



# HALL OF FAME Parents

BY PASTOR TONY SCHEVING

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*“Train up a child in the way he should go:  
and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”*  
Proverbs 22:6

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Many years ago workers were moving a display case at the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, when they found a scribbled note stapled to an old faded photo. In the picture was a middle-aged man in a Sinclair Oil uniform. The note attached said, *“From your biggest fan... you were never too tired to play ball with me... on your days off you would maintain our little league field... you always made the time to come to my ballgames... you were a Hall of Fame Dad! ... I wish you were here to share this moment with me... I love and miss you Dad.”* Apparently some ballplayer had been inducted into the Hall of Fame, and wanted to share the day and the credit with his departed dad. He wanted his dad in the Hall of Fame with him.

What our society needs are more “Hall of Fame” parents. Our children are living in *perilous times* (II Tim 3:1). Back in the “Old West” days, a child grew up facing the dangers of being bitten by a snake, or attacked by Indians or bandits. The dangers children face today are much worse. They are growing up surrounded by raunchy movies, video games, music, television, internet, and pornography. Immorality on the big or small screen is made to be funny. The world has an unholy agenda for our children. Society has redefined the family, when life begins, and now we’ve even crossed the line of saying who gets to live or die. We have thrown God, the Bible and prayer out of our schools and culture. We’ve taught our kids that they evolved over millions of years out of some organic slime. There are ungodly land mines dotting the terrain ready to destroy our children. How can a mom or dad influence their children as a Hall of Fame parent?

## Through Patronage

Children need support, approval, and reinforcement. There are children who are dying to receive it from their folks. Many children grow up with great insecurity, never having received affirmation from their parents. While it’s true that children make plenty of mistakes, a wise parent will look for opportunities to praise their children (and not just for talent, but character!). An endorsement from a parent is incredibly powerful. Children need more strokes, and less pokes. Isaiah 38:19 says, *“he shall praise thee, as I do this day: the father to the children.”* When’s the last time you commended your child?

## Through Parameters

Children need boundaries. When the heavenly Father placed His children Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he immediately laid out the rules. Society looks at policy as a negative thing, but inwardly, children desire the security of boundaries. The parent who lets their child *“call the shots”* is not doing that child any favor. The man Eli in the Bible was a sincere minister, but a lousy dad. God rebuked him by saying *“his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not”* (I Sam 3:13). On the other hand, God commended Abraham by saying, *“I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him”* (Gen 18:19). Children need reasonable rules and those rules need to be consistent. If a child is able to continually move the boundary by *“pushing against the fence,”* he will lose respect for his parents, and grow up with a lack of respect for authority. A wise parent will restrain their child. If not, the child feels that the parent ‘doesn’t care’ and interprets this as rejection. Please also keep in mind that rules are not enough if the relationship is missing. Rules without a relationship equals rebellion!

## Through Participation

Hall of Fame parents will spend time with their children. Conversation is important. Hugs are also important. Jesus took the time to hug children (Mark 10:16). I would recommend even hugging your children through their teen years. If they don’t get that affection from mom and dad, they may go looking for it elsewhere. Wise parents will

help their children stay pure by spending time with them and giving them godly parental affection.

## Through Pleasantry

Our homes need to be a place where our children want to be. We need fun and humor within our four walls. We even find references to God laughing in the Bible (Psalm 2:4). We were made in God’s image with the ability to experience joy and laughter. Many children *“hang out”* elsewhere because they want to avoid the tension at home. I’m thankful that I grew up in a family that knew how to have fun (a lot of playful teasing and immaturity!). Home needs to be a happy place.

## Through Preparation

*“Train up a child in the way he should go:  
and when he is old, he will not depart from it”*  
(Proverbs 22:6). Parents are a gift to children to provide the necessary training for life. Sadly, many dads spend more time training the family dog than their own children. Then they tie the dog up, and let the children run wild. There is something wrong with this picture. Many children leave the home and fail, due to a lack of character from a lack of training. The emphasis with today’s youth is to be cool, be popular, look good, play sports well, and have friends. There is little emphasis on character, courtesy, obedience, humility, thriftiness, wisdom, being helpful and being appropriate. That training must come from mom and dad.

Finally, it is also important to remember that parents will make mistakes while raising children. Our children know we are not perfect. That’s okay as long as they know we’re real. Nothing turns a child off faster than a parent who is a hypocrite or who’s *“in denial”* when they blow it. Parenting is a tougher job than ever, but it is worth the effort. May God help us to be *“Hall of Fame”* parents.

*“A wise parent will look for opportunities to praise their children and not just for talent, but character! An endorsement from a parent is incredibly powerful.”*