

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*

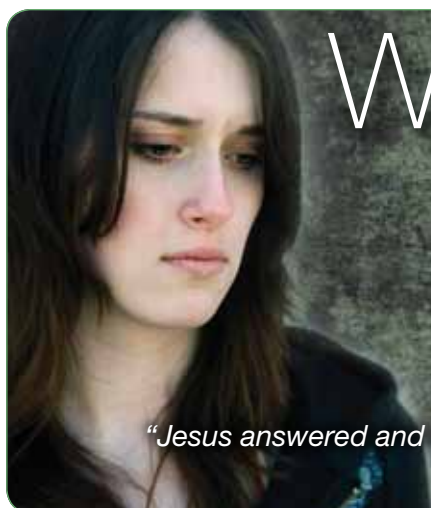
Vol. 1, Issue 4

From the Ministry of **Metropolitan Baptist Church**

www.metrobaptisttc.org

Fall 2011

Complimentary Copy



**WORRY
WORRY
WORRY**

by pastor tony scheving

“Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful (full of care) and troubled about many things.” –Luke 10:41

Someone said that a day of worry is more exhausting than a day of work. Someone else said, “When worry is admitted as a guest, it soon becomes master of the house.” Why do people worry?

We spend so much time and energy worrying about tomorrow that we miss the opportunities of today. In fact, ‘today’ is the ‘tomorrow’ we worried about ‘yesterday’. The advice newspaper columnist Ann Landers used to receive 10,000 letters every month from people seeking her counsel for their problems. She was once asked what issue she most commonly had to address.

continued on next page

IN THIS ISSUE...

Pg. 4.....Making Marriage Great

Pg. 6.....Is There Evidence for God's Existence

Pg. 10.....Are You Still Growing?

Pg. 12.....Prevailing Prayer

Pg. 14.....Myths About Life



A **PASSION**
FOR **PEOPLE**
World Missions Conference 2011

October
16-19, 2011
See page 7 for
details.

Metropolitan
BAPTIST CHURCH



PERMIT #254
SHAKOPEE, MN
PAID
U.S. POSTAGE
NON-PROFIT ORG.

FARGO, ND • 58107
P. O. BOX 107
HEAVEN 88.7 FM RADIO
FAITH *for life*

Without hesitation, she replied “Fear.” She said, “People fear losing their health, their wealth, their loved ones, and countless other things. People are worried about life itself.” Earl Derby is quoted as saying that making a speech cost him two nights’ sleep. One beforehand, thinking about what he should say, and one afterwards, worrying about what he should have said. Jesus said in Luke 12:11, “Take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say.” In the Bible, Jesus rebukes a lady named Martha for being such a worry-wart. In Matthew 6:25, He address all of us when He says, “Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on.” In other words, stop worrying so much! As we consider the bad habit of worrying, let’s look at the following:

The Crisis

What do you find yourself worrying about? Is it your looks, your health, your job, your money problems, or maybe loneliness? Perhaps you’re worried about losing your possessions? In Ecclesiastes 5:12 the Bible says, “The abundance of the rich will not suffer (allow) him to sleep.” Sometimes you wonder if owning a lot of ‘stuff’ is really worth it. Maybe your worry is more time related. You’re pressured by deadlines or just the schedule of your life in general. Parris Wittel was a dock worker in Gillingham, England for 47 years. Every morning he awoke to a sound he absolutely hated ...his alarm clock. Every morning for 47 years, early in the dark wee hours before dawn, that thing rattled him out of bed. For 47 years he longed to ignore it, yet for 47 years he submitted to the loud ringing of that clock. Finally, on the day of his retirement he got his revenge. He took his alarm clock to work and flattened it in an eighty-ton hydraulic press! With his British accent he said, “What a lovely feeling.” Are you stressed by deadlines? Are you stressed with paying the bills or getting through school, or raising kids or trying to find a way to get everything done? Someone said, “Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do but doesn’t get you anywhere.”

The Caution

Someone once said with tongue-in-cheek, “Don’t tell me that worry doesn’t do any good...I know better...The things I worry about never happen, so it must be working” While worry can cast a big shadow, God’s Word tells us not to do it. The Bible says, “It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep” (Psalm 127:2). Jesus said, “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting (pain from a sudden headache)...and cares of this life” (Luke 21:34). Many within the medical field tell us that 80% of all physical problems we suffer could be eliminated if we would both change bad eating habits,

“Worry is like a rocking chair. It gives you something to do but doesn’t get you anywhere.”

and rid our lives of worry and fear. While hard work won’t kill us, worry will. How do different people cope with worry? Some turn to alcohol. There are currently 18 million alcoholics in our nation, indirectly affecting nearly half of the population. To many, alcohol is a way to escape reality and worry. Many others are taking mood altering drugs, consuming hundreds of millions of pills a year. Some deal with the ragged edge of life by using illegal drugs. The United Nations estimates that there are over 50 million heroin and cocaine addicts in the world. Sadly, there are those who can’t find relief from worry through drugs, alcohol or mood altering pills and take more desperate measures. Suicide is now the leading cause of death in people under the age of 35, claiming over a million lives a year.

The Consideration

The songwriter said, “Oh what peace we often forfeit, oh what needless pain we bear.” A preacher from the 1700s said, “I would no more worry than cuss or swear.” Yet, overcoming worry is easier to preach about than practice. Actually, worry is ungodly because it is a mild form of atheism. We’re not trusting God! A truly born again Christian doesn’t have a thing to worry about if he considers that God is in control of this life, and He promises us heaven when our hearts stop. All we need to do is look at the promises of the Bible. Psalm 34:7 says, “The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” The apostle Paul added, “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:19). The Bible contains over 7500 promises we can claim. There are 366 times in the Bible where we are told not to worry or fear. That’s one for every day of the year (including leap year!) King David said in Psalms 37:25, “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” The same God who created the earth, and flung the stars into their sockets, still owns the cattle on a thousand hills (Ps 50:10) and will make sure we’re taken care of. God says, “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not” (Jer 33:3). Isn’t that a wonderful promise? When the apostle Paul was aging and failing in health, God told him, “My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness” (II Cor 12:9). If you’re tired, lonely, or have needs, there’s a God in heaven who cares. The Bible says to “Cast all your care upon him; for he careth for you” (I Peter 5:7). In the Bible we find an aged John the apostle, possibly in his 90s in the slave camp of a copper mine on the isle of Patmos trusting God (Rev 1). We find the apostle Paul in a storm at sea calmly trusting in the Lord (Act 27:21). We find three Jewish young men in a fiery furnace not worrying (Dan 3). Even Jonah is calmly praying for deliverance while in the belly of a whale (Jonah 2). If they could overcome worry, so can we. So what is the cure?

The Cure

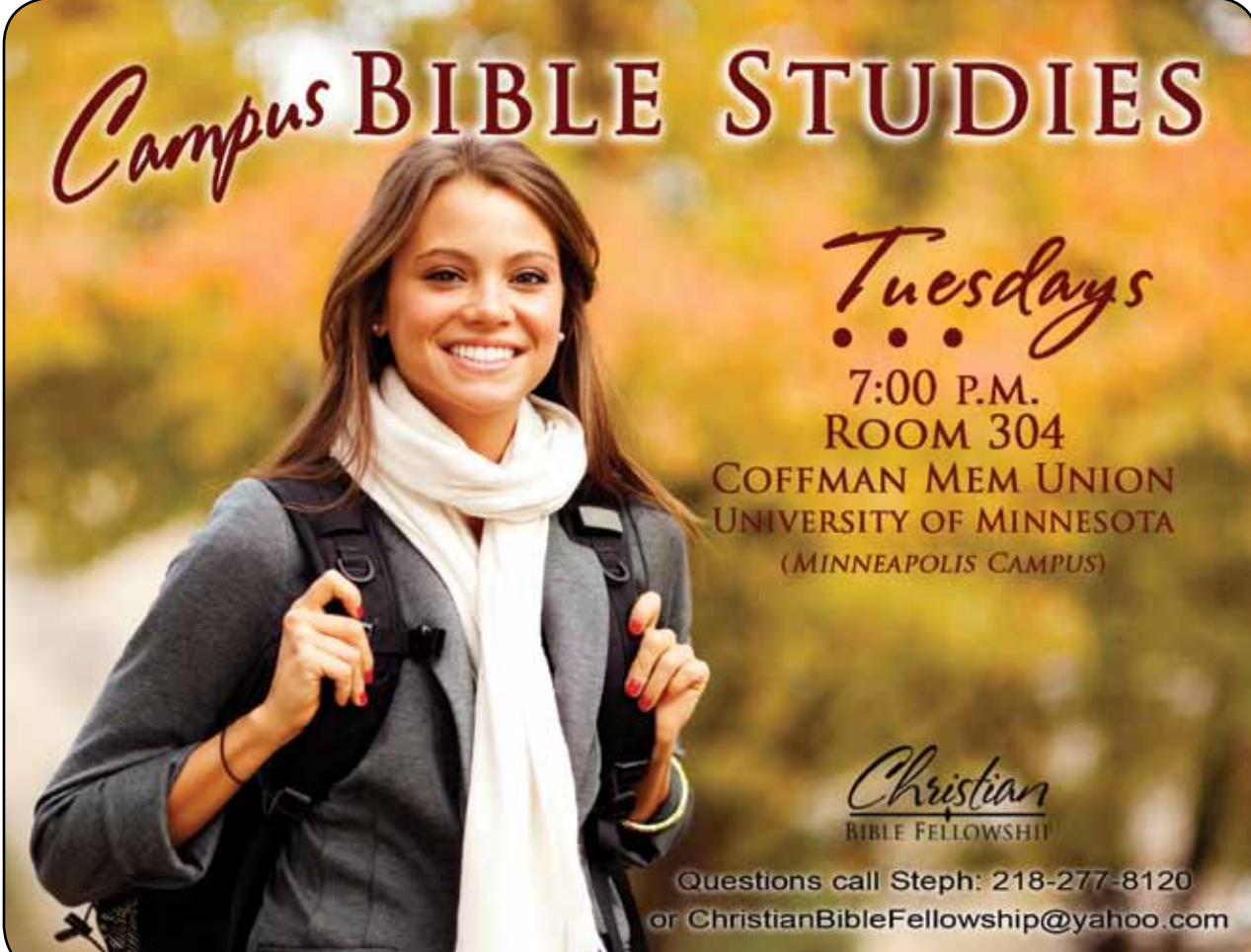
Worry is a choice. We don't need to do it, but most people still worry nonetheless. The Bible says, *"Be careful (full of care) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God"* (Phil 4:6). Years ago, a pilot was making a cross-country flight. As he was flying along, he heard a noise in his plane which sounded like the gnawing of a rat above the cockpit. For all he knew the rat could be gnawing through a vital control cable or wire. Regardless of how the rat had gotten in, the pilot found himself in a very serious situation. It was two hours back to the landing field from which he had taken off and more than two hours to the next field ahead. Then he remembered that the rat is a rodent. It is not made for the heights but to live on the ground and under the ground. Therefore the pilot began to climb. He went up a thousand feet, then another thousand and another until the gnawing ceased. The rat was dead. It could not survive in the atmosphere of those heights. More than two hours later the pilot brought the plane safely to the next landing field and found the dead rat. Worry is like that rat. It cannot live when we soar in the heights of the Most High. It cannot breathe in the atmosphere made possible by prayer and Bible reading. Worry dies when we walk 'above the circumstances' with the Lord. The whole issue is a matter of 'trusting God'. When trust is present, worry cannot crowd its way in. The psalmist said, *"Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass"* (Psalm 37:5). I heard of a man named Dr. George McCauslin who was bearing the weight of the whole world on his shoulders. Dr. McCauslin was one of the greatest YMCA directors this country has ever seen. But some years ago, he was serving in a YMCA out in western Pennsylvania that was losing membership, had financial difficulties and terrible staff problems. George McCauslin found himself working 85 hours a week to try and resolve the problems. He found himself getting very little sleep at night, and took little time off. When he was off duty, he was worrying and fretting about the problems of this YMCA.

He went to a therapist who told him he was on the verge of a nervous breakdown. He had to learn to 'let go' and somehow let God have his problems. He didn't quite know how to do that. Soon afterwards, George McCauslin took an afternoon off, took a pen and paper, and went for a walk in the western Pennsylvania woods. As he walked through the cool woods, he could just feel his tight body and his tight neck start to relax. He finally sat down under a tree and sighed. For the first time in months he was relaxing. He got out his pad and paper, and decided he would let go of the burdens of his life, and write God a letter. He wrote, "Dear God, today I hereby resign as general manager of the universe. Love, George." Later with a twinkle in his eye, so characteristic of George McCauslin, he said, "And wonder of wonders, God accepted my resignation!" The Bible says, *"Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved"* (Psalm 55:22).

The Conclusion

I once heard the testimony of a woman who knew she had become a true Christian by looking at her bed each morning. When

asked why, she said, "Before I was saved, when I got out of my bed the sheets were all crumpled because I had tossed and turned all night. Now when I get out of the bed, it's as smooth as silk." A Harris Poll surveyed Americans to find out what worries them the most. More than seventy percent said they worried about wasting too much time, especially watching television. About the same number stated they worried about not reading enough, not attending church regularly, and not being active enough in community affairs. But the survey reported nothing about worry or concern over personal sins and future judgment. It's funny how people focus on the smaller concerns of life, and overlook the major concern: where they will spend eternity. When a person finds the joy of salvation and assurance of heaven, the Bible promises, *"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (II Cor 5:17). That means we can ditch worry and replace it with trusting the Lord. Have you had a time in your life when you truly found God? For more information please refer to pages 8-9.



Campus BIBLE STUDIES

Tuesdays
7:00 P.M.
ROOM 304
COFFMAN MEM UNION
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
(MINNEAPOLIS CAMPUS)

Christian
BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

Questions call Steph: 218-277-8120
or ChristianBibleFellowship@yahoo.com



making marriage Great

By Paul Chappell

My wife and I have been married now over thirty years. It's hard to believe that something that seemed too wonderful to be true on our wedding day is even better now! I praise God for a godly wife and for the ever-deepening relationship He has given us.

Every newly-married couple knows that marriage is one of God's greatest gifts. But, after the newness wears off, far too many couples treat their marriage like the kids who get the toy "I've always wanted" for Christmas. They enjoy the gift for a short period, but very soon it is forgotten or neglected.

Marriage is for the long haul. And it actually gets better through the years when it is given continual attention. If you want a marriage that lasts, then you need these five "stays":

Stay in Love with Jesus

God's greatest commandment is to love Him: "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might" (Deuteronomy 6:5). This foundation to our relationship with the Lord is also the foundation to our relationship with our spouse. If you stay in love with the Lord and remain yielded to the Holy Spirit, He will give you love and patience for your spouse.

People who leave their spouse, do so as a result of gradually sliding—away from the Lord. They first backslide from the Lord, and then their heart is turned from their spouse.

So many husbands and wives focus on having the other spouse meet their needs. The

greatest needs of our lives, however, can only be met by the Lord. You need to be close to the Lord and walking with Him. When both partners are close to the Lord, they will then find themselves close to the other.

Stay Committed to Having a Great Marriage

God commands husbands to take the initiative in this commitment: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25).

When both partners are committed, not just to staying together, but to consistently building and strengthening their marriage, a great marriage is the result. Just as you invested in each other during your time of dating, invest in each other now. Give of your energy and of yourself to build your relationship. Don't settle for mediocrity!

Stay Grateful for God's Blessings

First Thessalonians 5:18 instructs, "In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." I've learned much over the past year about marriage just by watching my son and daughter-in-law, Larry and Ashley. Larry suffered from cancer and had to go through several treatments. Even during the intensity of Larry's illness and treatment, it's been special to see them express gratefulness to one another and focus together on God's blessings.

Satan tries to point out all the flaws in your spouse, but remember, there are many great things about your husband or wife. Look for those things, and express thankfulness for them.

Stay Open and Honest with One Another

Either spouse should be able to check the other's cell phone, internet history, or social networking sites at any time. Guarding these areas as private and protecting them from your spouse leaves room for great damage in your life. But accountability in every area helps you obey the command of Romans 14:16, "Let not then your good be evil spoken of."

Stay Regular in Church Attendance

The local church is designed to strengthen and help families. But if you're not in church, you miss the help you need. Purpose to, as a couple and as a family, obey Hebrews 10:25, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

Above all, stay together! Some couples endure marriage. But there is so much more that God desires for your relationship. Purpose to invest in your marriage—by God's grace take your relationship to new heights for the glory of God. ■

the underestimation of **SIN**

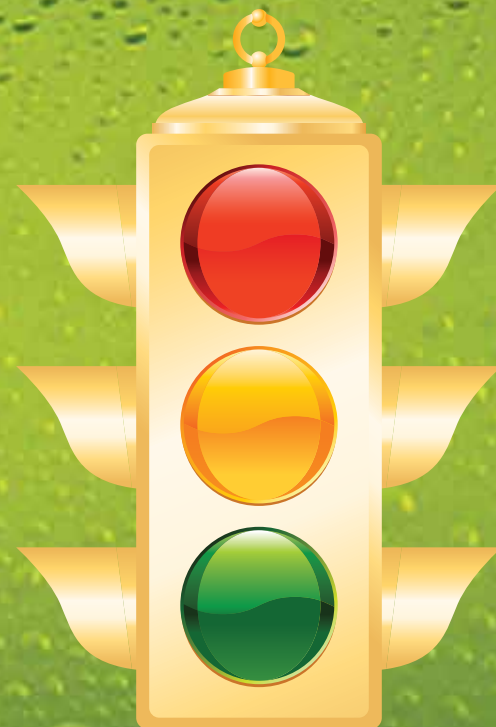


Solomon warned about the damage the 'little foxes' can do (Song of Solomon 2:15) and the citizens in Winfield, Missouri know what he meant. On June 27, 2008, the community of Winfield was flooded when a levee broke. It had been previously secured by hundreds of townspeople, volunteers, and National Guardsmen. They spent days bolstering the levee with sandbags, but it was all for naught. A muskrat, which officials said was either digging for food or building a den, burrowed a hole through the levee. The small tunnel by this 5-pound creature was just enough for the waters to seep through, bursting the levee, and flooding the town. Sometimes it's the things that seem small, like just a little sin, that cause the greatest damage; so don't overlook sin's potential danger.

Houston Chronicle, 6/28/08 ■

the testimony of a **true christian**

A man was at a stoplight when the light turned green. Unfortunately, he was daydreaming and didn't notice. The woman behind him began honking her horn, pounding on her steering wheel, and screaming at the man to move. As the woman was ranting and carrying on, there was a tap on her window. She turned to see a policeman standing next to her car. The policeman told her to turn off her car and keep her hands in sight. Next, he ordered her to exit the car with both hands up. He then took the stunned and speechless woman to the county jail. The woman sat in a jail cell for a couple of hours until the same policeman unlocked the door and handed her belongings back to her. The woman inquired why she had put in jail. The officer smiled sheepishly and said, "I'm sorry, but I'm afraid there has been a mistake. But you see, when I pulled up to your car and heard you cussing out the guy ahead of you, I also noticed the bumper sticker on your car which said, 'What Would Jesus Do' and I noticed the Christian fish emblem. Naturally I assumed you had stolen the car!" ...While this story may make you smile, it also makes a powerful point. Talk is cheap unless backed up with a real Christian life. Only eternity will tell how many 'Christians' have hurt the name and the cause of Christ by hypocritical behavior. The name Christian is a very special and important name. If you're not really living like Christ, it may be that you need to be saved. If you have been truly born again, you need to live up to the name. ■



Is There Evidence for God's Existence?

By Dr. Pat Briney



Is it possible to know that there is a God? Is it possible to show that God exists? The answer to both questions is “yes.” In fact, it is possible not only to know that God exists, it is possible to know God.

There are three laws of science to consider as evidence for the existence of God. What is special about a scientific law? A law is model of science that has been tested thousands of times with the same results and no exceptions. Credible conclusions and interpretations of science are constrained to conform to laws of science. Explanations that contradict laws of science lack credibility.

The First Law of Thermodynamics is a scientific law that leads to the conclusion that the origin of the universe is best explained by supernatural creation. Here is a four point argument for the supernatural creation of the universe.

The First Law of Thermodynamics states that energy cannot be created by natural means. As of today, there has never been an exception to the law observed.

The universe exists as energy in a variety of forms such as matter, light, heat, and sound.

The logical conclusion for the origin of the universe is that it was created supernaturally.

There must be a God.

A typical rebuttal is that supernatural creation is really an undiscovered natural law. First, this is an admission that the conclusion is logically derived whether it is supernatural or undiscovered. Second, to propose a hypothetical natural law that contradicts an empirically derived natural law is irrational. Third, a supernatural conclusion is the most plausible because it does not contradict a law.

Another typical rebuttal is that energy always existed. This brings us to the next law, the Second Law of Thermodynamics.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics states that entropy irreversibly increases in a closed system. This means that useable energy decreases and cannot be increased

in a closed system. Because of this law, perpetual machines are not possible.

The universe is experiencing “heat death,” which means it is a closed system that is winding down like a clock inside of a box. Once it unwinds it cannot be rewound. Heat death points to an end point, which means there was a beginning.

If the universe is winding down and cannot be wound up, how did the universe originate with energy in order to start unwinding? The most logical conclusion is that it originated supernaturally.

There must be a God.

A typical, mistaken rebuttal to this is that the second law only applies to closed systems, and living organisms are open systems. That is correct! Therefore, the above argument is presented for the origin of the universe not for species.

The third point of evidence for the existence of God is the Law of Biogenesis.

The Law of Biogenesis states that all cells come from pre-existing cells. No exceptions in nature or in the laboratories have been observed.

All living entities exist as single or multicellular organisms.

The logical conclusion is that cellular life originated supernaturally.

There must be a God!

To insist on natural origins is irrational and inconsistent with scientific laws of today. Credible conclusions must conform to the laws and knowledge of today. To conclude that there is no God is illogical and contradictory to scientific observation.

Biochemist, H.P. Yockey, reported in the Journal of Theoretical Biology, “With regard to the appearance of a single molecule of the cytochrome c family, even the deus ex machina needs 1036 [chances] with just the right conditions [and] 1 billion years... One who finds the chance appearance of cytochrome c a credible event must have the faith of Job.” In light of the mathematical calculation for impossibility being 10^{30} , it is

continued on page 7

Faith for Life

God's Existence

continued from page 6

rational to conclude that the natural origin of proteins necessary for life is impossible.

If the natural origin of a single protein is impossible how much more a whole cell! Biochemist, Harold Morowitz, wrote in his book, *Energy Flow in Biology*, that theoretically the simplest of cells would require a minimum of 124 proteins to function. Based on this imaginary, simple organism, he calculated that the probability of its natural evolution would be 1:10,340,000,000.

Scientists have spent years trying to create life in the laboratory with the most sophisticated equipment available in carefully controlled and intelligently designed experiments. If life cannot be artificially assembled under these conditions, how much more impossible it is for molecules to naturally assemble themselves

into living cells! The best explanation for the origin of life is supernatural creation.

There must be a God!

The famed British philosopher and outspoken proponent of atheism Antony Flew announced that after fifty years of atheism, he is now a theist. Why? He says, "It has become inordinately difficult even to begin to think about constructing a naturalistic theory of the evolution of that first reproducing organism."¹ In a telephone conversation with Philosophy and Theology professor Dr. Gary R. Habermas, Flew explained that he, "had to go where the evidence leads."²

The only logical and rational conclusion consistent with the laws of science and knowledge of the day is that there must be a God. To deny Him is to deny the methodology, history, tradition, purpose, and knowledge of science. Denial of God is a

rejection of rational thought and the power of human reasoning to enlighten mankind.

I leave you with these questions and thoughts to ponder. Is it more unscientific to believe in God or in evolution? Is it more unscientific to believe in supernatural or natural origins? Is necessary to put God in a test tube or require that He demonstrate His creative methods in the laboratory before we can conclude that He exists? You have seen the evidence. Does God exist or not? ■

Citations:

¹Philosophy Now magazine, August-September 2004. Reported in "Famous Atheist Now Believes in God", ABC news.

² My Pilgrimage from Atheism to Theism: an Exclusive Interview with Former British Atheist Professor Antony Flew Gary R. Habermas, *Philosophia Christi* Vol. 6, No. 2 (Winter 2004).

A PASSION FOR PEOPLE

World Missions Conference 2011

October 16-19, 2011

Special Music Concert on Oct 16th at 5:00pm

October 16th 6:30pm

October 17-19th 7:30pm

Featured Guest Speaker:



Tony Scheving
Senior Pastor,
Fargo Baptist Church,
Chancellor,
Masters Baptist College,
Faith for Life Contributor

Guest Musical Artist:



Bruce Frye,
Special Music for
all services



Metropolitan
BAPTIST CHURCH

Held at:
Creekside Community Center
9801 Penn Ave S • Bloomington, MN
612-310-0559 • www.metrobaptisttc.org

What is God's Plan for

H GETTING TO HEAVEN

Jesus said, *"Except a man be born again (spiritually), he cannot see the kingdom of God"* (heaven), (John 3:3).

This is because we were all born with a sinful nature, spiritually dead. Just as we've all had a time and place when we were born physically, we must also have a time when we are born again spiritually. We are not automatically Christians (born again or saved) just because Jesus died on the cross for our sins. Jesus said, *"Except ye be converted... ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"* (Matt 18:3). No one has always been a Christian. John 1:12 says, *"But as many as received him (Christ), to them gave he power to become the sons (children) of God."* No matter what anyone else says, the Bible teaches a conversion experience. The Bible is full of examples of people who had a spiritual conversion such as Zacchaeus, Matthew, Nicodemus, Pentecost converts, Paul, the prison guard, Cornelius, Rabbi Crispus and others. 2 Cor 5:17 says, *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."* This is the spiritual pivotal point of life.

Steps to Being Born Again

The first step is the hardest one. We must recognize our sinfulness. Most people don't see themselves as that bad of a sinner. They are like the Pharisee in Luke 18 who recognized the sinfulness of others, but was blind to his own sin. The Bible says in Romans 3:10, *"As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one."* Isaiah 64:6 says, *"But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."* Yet, most people fail to see themselves as that bad. They feel they are a good person, but 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.

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 such as money, a career, 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)

Reread 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 "Honor 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? Have you always obeyed them immediately with a good attitude?

#6 "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13)

Although most people have never committed murder, they are guilty of "murder of the heart." Jesus explains this commandment in Matthew 5:21-2 by saying, "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, bitter or resentful toward 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 longed

for what belonged to someone else? Have you ever been discontented or ungrateful?

Most people are guilty of breaking most or all 10 commandments! Even more alarming are the many places in the Bible which 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 says, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Most don't realize that sin has a penalty. Romans 6:23 says, "For the wages of sin is death" (Hell).

We cannot possibly get to heaven by keeping the law (10 Commandments). The law was given by God to show us how desperately we need forgiveness by accepting the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for our sins. The Bible says, "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24). We are condemned on our own, and need a Savior! Once we recognize this, we are qualified to be saved. Jesus said, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," (Luke 19:10). We must see ourselves as lost. This is the key to being born again!

Many foolishly attempt to make themselves acceptable to God by their works. In Romans 10:1-3, Paul says, "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge (Bible truth). For they ...going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God," (the payment of the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary).

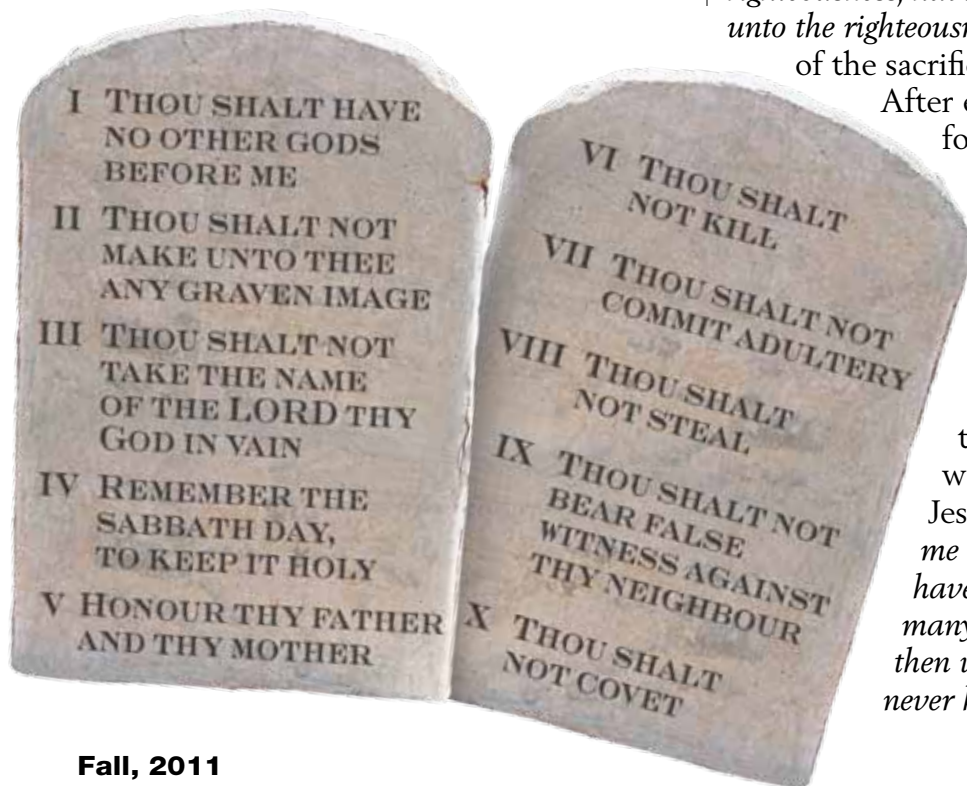
After everything Jesus suffered for you on the cross, trying to work your way to heaven is an insult to God. It's like saying that the sacrifice of Jesus wasn't adequate to pay for your sins. Many self-righteous people think they're good enough to work their way to heaven. Jesus said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not ...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," (Matt 7:22-3). Sadly, these wound up in hell because they were trusting in their own goodness and works instead of the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins.

Jesus is our substitute sacrifice for sin. The Bible says, "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (I Cor. 15:3). Jesus paid for our sin on the cross. We cannot be born again by earning it. Titus 3:5 says, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "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." All your faith must be in Jesus Christ 100%.

Getting to heaven cannot be by both grace and works. Rom. 11:6 says, "And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified (saved) by faith without the deeds of the law," (Rom. 3:28). Any verses in the Bible eluding to doing good works are always addressed to someone who is already born-again, encouraging him to faithfully serve the Lord after being saved! Titus 3:8 says, "They which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works."

Baptism has nothing to do with getting us to heaven. In fact, St. Paul said, "Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel," (I Cor. 1:17). The thief on the cross went to heaven without ever being baptized. You won't find a baby baptized anywhere in the Bible, nor anyone else getting baptized before being born again. However, after someone has been saved, he should follow the example of Jesus by being baptized (immersed) in a true Bible-practicing church. But remember: we are saved by the blood of Christ, and not the water of the baptistery. Ephesians 1:7 says, "We have redemption through His (Jesus') blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace," (a favor from God). Romans 5:9-10 says, "Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him (Jesus). When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son." Romans 5:1 says, "Therefore being justified by faith (in His blood), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." ■



ARE YOU STILL GROWING?

BY PASTOR TONY SCHEVING

“Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” -II Peter 3:18

Great Christians all have one thing in common. They are committed to spiritual growth! A Christian is either going forward or backward in their spiritual life. There is no neutral. In the Bible Jesus addresses some cold Christians when He says, *“I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love”* (Rev 2:4). If you continue to live the way you’re currently living, will you hear the Lord say in the next life *“well done thou good and faithful servant?”* (Matt 25:21). For this to happen you will have to resist the pull to be mediocre. The difference between the outstanding, the average, and the stagnant is growth! Thomas Edison was still challenging himself to invent new things up until his death at age 84. Someone said, *“If the goal is not to grow, you might as well die.”* Others should even be able to detect our growth (I Tim 4:15). As we consider spiritual growth, let’s look at three things.

The Exhortation of Growth

Back in 1872 Joshua Coppersmith, was arrested in New York for attempting to extort funds from people to develop a device which would transmit the human voice over metallic wires. A related article in a Boston newspaper stated, *“Well-informed people know that it is impossible to transmit the human voice over wires, as with dots and dashes of the Morse code, and if it were possible, the thing would be of no practical value. Authorities who apprehended this criminal are to be congratulated, and it is hoped that his punishment will be prompt and fitting.”* Of course in today’s wireless world we would smile at the stunted thinking of the

1800s. In the early 1870s, the US Congress considered halting further funds to the US Patent office because *“there couldn’t possibly be any more things to invent!”* The fact is, our Creator has wired His creation to be continually making progress. In 60 short years we went from the Wright Bros. at Kitty Hawk to Neal Armstrong on the moon! Many of us who grew up with stacks of 33 RPM records and 8-track cartridges now enjoy tiny I-pods containing thousands of songs. It’s called ‘progress’ and it’s all part of God’s plan. In the same way, God wants His children to be growing. First of all we should be growing



in our knowledge of God. The Bible says, *“Walk worthy of the Lord ... increasing in the knowledge of God”* (Col 1:10). Secondly we should be growing in love. The Bible says, *“But as touching brotherly love ... we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more”* (I Thess 4:9-10). Are you continually becoming more kind, patient, merciful, gracious and thoughtful?

Thirdly we should be growing in our knowledge of Bible truth. The Bible says, *“That we be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine ... But speaking the truth in love, may grow up”* (Eph 4:14-15). Peter adds, *“Desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby”* (I Peter 2:2). Fourthly we should be growing in faith! The Bible says, *“We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, because that your faith groweth exceedingly”* (II Thess 1:30). Finally, we should be growing in being less intrigued with the world. A Christian shouldn’t waste his time trying to be “street wise.” We don’t need to hover over all the latest crud going on in world. Do you really care what’s in vogue, or what is chic? God says, *“I would have you wise unto that which is good, and simple concerning evil”* (Rom 16:19). The apostle Paul didn’t “give a hoot” about what was going on in the sinful bath houses of Rome.

The Examples of Growth

Thomas Monaghan was the founder, president, and chief executive officer of Domino’s Pizza. From 1970 to 1985, Domino’s grew from a small debt-ridden restaurant to the second largest pizza chain in America. When asked to give an account for the phenomenal growth of the company, Monaghan explained, *“we programmed everything for growth. The key to our growth is not the tasty pizza crust, special cheese, or fast delivery. Every day we develop people—the key to growth is developing people.”* The Bible reads like “who’s who” with people who grew into

continued on page 11

Are You Still Growing?

continued from page 10

spiritual greatness like Samuel and John the Baptist. Peter was once an immature believer who failed to walk on water, argued about being the greatest apostle, fell asleep when Jesus needed him to pray, claimed he would never deny the Lord, cut off the servant's ear, and quit the ministry to go back to fishing. But after the death and resurrection of Jesus, Peter committed himself to growth and went on to preach on Pentecost and finished strong. No wonder he was able to write the verse at the top of the page, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18). The writer of the gospel of Mark was once a "Mama's boy" who chickened out on the mission field and went back home. Years later Paul referred to Mark as a useful Christian (II Tim 4:11).

Paul himself grew from obscurity to the greatest apostle of all because he was committed to growth, (Phil 3:13). Failing to grow is a recipe for disaster. Solomon stopped growing and made a royal mess of his life. Demas failed to grow and ended up out of the ministry (II Tim 4:10). The difference between the "haves" and the "have nots" is growth! A high school teacher was passed up year after year for promotion to principle

in a large school system. Finally he went to the Superintendent and complained stating that he had 25 years of experience. The Superintendent calmly said, "No Jim, you have one year of experience 25 times." Many people are examples of stagnancy with the same old rotten attitudes and wrong actions.

The Exercise of Growth

The Bible says, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon" (Ps 92:12). A Christian should be growing in his faithfulness, his finances, his love, his humility, his selflessness, his service to others, his trust in God, and his contempt for the world. He should be praying more and getting offended less. He should be becoming more thankful and more patient. He should also be growing in wisdom, holiness, and ambition. He should be better able to deal with adversity today than last year. Simply put, there comes a time to "grow up!" If a Christian is not truly growing, it's a tip off that they may not have been ever truly born again. Are you growing? Does your life revolve around the Lord and serving others, or are you still absorbed with yourself? Are you heavenly minded or enamored with the trashiness of the world? The world really has nothing to offer and nothing for a Christian to go back to. Have

you figured that out yet? If you're not growing, you are going backwards. Years ago the Virginia Medical Monthly told the story of a woman who actually grew backwards. She was a wife and mother of three daughters.

Life was normal until her husband died when the children were in high school. The mother stepped up her devotion to her daughters. She changed her clothes to those of a teenage girl and joined in her daughter's activities and fun. In a few years the children noticed that as they grew older their mother was growing younger. Psychiatrists call it "personality regression." Usually such people stop going backward at a certain age, but not this woman. She slipped backward at the rate of one year for every three months of time. Finally, by age 61, she acted and talked like a 6-year-old. She was sent to a sanitarium, where she insisted on wearing little girl dresses, playing with toys, and babbling like a child. Then she became like a three-year-old spilling her food, crawling on the floor, and crying "Mama." She slipped backwards farther to the age of one, drinking milk curled up like a tiny baby. Finally, she went back over the line and died. Again, spiritually speaking, if you're not growing you are going backwards. If you have been saved by God's grace, commit yourself to spiritual growth!

WE'RE BUILDING Lives



Meeting At:
Creskide Community Center
9801 Penn Ave, Bloomington, MN
612.310.0559

Join Us!

Metropolitan
BAPTIST CHURCH

ADULT/CHILD BIBLE CLASS...9:30 AM
SUNDAY WORSHIP.....10:30 AM
SUNDAY EVENING6:30 PM
WED MIDWEEK SERVICE7:30 PM

www.MetroBaptistTC.org ♦ PastorWartner@MetroBaptistTC.org

PRAYER

Prevailing

By
Pastor Kevin Folger

I am glad there is a God in Heaven who is not too busy to help me with my needs. Too often, though, we do not avail ourselves to the privilege of prayer as we ought; it is easier to worry about our problems and talk to other human beings than to take our needs to the Lord in prayer. Maybe that is because prayer is an exercise of faith.

We cannot see God or see Him work, so we hesitate to pray. We need to learn the discipline of prayer and avail ourselves to the opportunity of fellowship with God. One reason God allows us to face problems is so we can learn to bring our needs and troubles to Him for His touch to fix them.

I have learned that prayer is essential in my life. I have seen God do many wonderful things in direct response to my prayers. Recently, I was facing some trouble and realized that I needed to take definite steps to confront the problem; however, before I responded physically, I needed God to work in the situation. I found myself on my face before Him pleading for His intervention and help. He heard and He did that which only He could do. It was such a blessing, and it was also humbling to watch as God responded to my need.

Luke 18:1 says, *“And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray and not to faint.”* This parable dealt with a widow who went to see a judge about getting help with a problem she was facing. Her adversary was making her life miserable. We are not told what she was dealing with, but whatever it was necessitated her going to the court of law to get help. The indication is that this judge was not very sympathetic at first; he really was not at all concerned about the problem or doing much to help with the need. This woman, however, was not about to quit asking. I get the impression that every day, when this judge showed up at his place of business, this woman was the first one in line asking for his help. She was obviously not going anywhere until she got what she was after.

Finally, the judge realized that he might as well do what she asked or he was not going to get any rest. He dealt with her problem and the application is clear in verses 6-8, *“And the Lord said, Hear what*

the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?”

The central truth of this parable is that God will help His people, and He does it in direct response to their willingness to pray. God may not answer your prayer immediately. Sometimes it may be a long time in praying. You must keep coming to Him. But mark it down; if the need is legitimate and your heart is burdened, God is at work as you pray. Sooner or later, God will answer that prayer so that you know it is He who has done it.

We live in troublesome times as believers. We are seeing things happening on a daily basis that can be quite disheartening. God is not detached or uninterested. He is not removed or distant—He is waiting for us, as His people, to speak to Him about what is going on. When was the last time you really got alone with God and just pleaded with Him about things that are happening in your life and in your world? Are you fearful about the future? Pray! Are you concerned about a relationship? Pray! Do you have financial needs that are overwhelming? Seek Him! Is there a health concern in your life today? He is there to help.

I often find myself in situations that are above my head. I am always challenged by the needs of my vast congregation and the money that is necessary to do all that must be done. I know my own limitations and how little I can personally do, but it is grand to know that God, the great God that made the universe, the God that hung each star in place and flung the galaxies into outer space is available to help me!

God told the prophet Jeremiah in Jeremiah 33:3, *“Call unto me and I will answer thee and shew thee great and mighty things which thou knowest not.”* The calling here is prayer and the certainty of the promise is found in God, the One that made the promise. He is the One that cannot lie. I challenge you to claim the promise for yourself and watch what God can and will do! ■

Science & Archeology:

DO THEY LINE UP WITH THE BIBLE?

by Tony Chuck



substantiate even the earliest pages of the Bible. Then there are the remains of the Tower of Babel in modern day Iraq with a base 400' square, rising to a height of 100' where construction ceased abruptly when God

confused the languages of the people. There is also great evidence that the ancient tomb of Joseph (who was sold into slavery and later saved his people from a famine) has been discovered in the land of Egypt as the Bible mentions. There is also much speculation on the discovery of the petrified remains of Noah's ark. There was also an amazing discovery made in 1998 by archeologist Dr. Ron Wyatt. He found gold-spoked chariot wheels at the bottom of the Red Sea at the only logical crossing point, dating back to the exact time of the crossing made by the Jews.

The Bible says, *"The LORD ...troubled the host of the Egyptians, and took off their chariot wheels"* (Exodus 14:24). There are other numerous findings such as the residence of Abraham, the palace of King David, the horse stables of King Solomon, and of course the Dead Sea Scrolls. For many years, skeptics mocked the Bible because it mentioned ancient civilizations such as the Philistines and Hittites while no archeological


discoveries had ever been found of such people. As time passed, the Bible was once again proven right when many discoveries were finally made of both the Philistines and Hittites. Finally, for many years there was a discrepancy between the Bible account of the fall of ancient Babylon (Daniel 5) and the findings of many archeologists. The Bible claims that Belshazzar was the last king of Babylon while the earlier findings of the archeologist show no record of such a person. They point to Nabonidus as the final king of Babylon. However, more recent discoveries reveal that Belshazzar was the son of Nabonidus and co-regent over Babylon with his father. He was indeed the one in charge that fateful night when the empire of Babylon fell to the Medo-Persian army. Once again, archeology was a "Johnny-come-lately" and the Bible proven as true all along.

There are many other things we could point to which add credibility to the Bible, but most of all we should remember the following: God honors the Bible above His own name (Psalms 138:2), Jesus continually quoted it while on the earth, it is the final source of truth and doctrine (II Timothy 3:16-17), Jesus said we would be judged out of the Bible on Judgment Day (John 12:48), and finally, the Bible has predicted hundreds of events and always been right with 100% pinpoint accuracy. Remember, you don't critique the Bible with science and archeology, but you critique science and archeology with the Bible! ■

As science and archeology make advances, they seem to continually be catching up with the Bible. In 1492, when Columbus and his crew sailed to the new world, many still thought they would fall off the edge of a flat earth. What most people don't realize is the fact that the Bible recorded 2000 years earlier (700 BC) that the world was round!

Isaiah 40:22 says, *"It is He (God) that sitteth upon the circle of the earth."* Ancient scientists and philosophers also had differing versions on what supported the globe. Some thought we were riding on the back of a giant man, or a giant turtle. The Bible said thousands of years earlier, *"He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing"* (Job 26:7). That same Bible verse likewise makes reference to the "black hole" in the north. There was also a time when many people thought the moon gave off its own light, but God revealed the truth in Job 25:5 (*"Behold even to the moon, and it shineth not"*). Millenniums ago, the Bible also made reference to how evaporation, sea currents, and wind circuits work. The Bible also tells us that God made the human body from the ground (Gen 2:7). Today we know that the human body is primarily made of the same elements as dirt (no wonder we get a "ring around the collar"). In 1799, a sickly George Washington died from an erroneous medical procedure known as "bloodletting." Ironically, on the table next to his deathbed was a Bible which read, *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood"* (Lev 17:11). If only George's doctors had known. Scientifically, there are many things we could look at to prove the credibility of the Bible.

Then there is archeology. Prestigious institutions such as the British museum of London contain numerous artifacts to



DISCOVER THE Bible

A Free 7 Lesson Home Bible Study Course

Contact us today for your free seven-part correspondence course which can be taken in the privacy of your home.

To request the series, write us at:

Discover The Bible PO Box 20050 Bloomington, MN 55420

Or take the free course online at: www.DiscoverTheBible.org.

MYTHS ABOUT

Life

CARY
SCHMIDT

Myths abound in today's culture - fueled by urban legends, chain emails, speed-diets, and beyond! Thanks to snopes.com, it's pretty easy to run an email, a story, or a bizarre event through a quick research test to find out if it's true or not.

So, do you have a "snopes" for life? Has it occurred to you that life also has its myths and "urban legends." The issue is, these myths have much greater consequences. And much like "snopes," we need to take the philosophies, assumptions, and teachings of our pop-culture and run them through the truth test—the Bible.

Here are seven popular myths of about life—seven lies that people buy into. Let's run them through the truth test and unmask them as frauds:

MYTH 1

Happiness and love is found in a person, and I must find that person. Many people fall for this lie. Their lives become an endless search for the right person who will completely bring happiness to life. The problem is—no human being can fulfill the deepest desires of our hearts. That is reserved for God alone, through Jesus Christ. Psalm 16:11 teaches, *"Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy;"*

MYTH 2

Freedom is about making decisions alone and doing my own thing—"I gotta be me..." This is a gross distortion of a

biblical truth. Yes, God created you as an individual with many unique qualities—so in that sense, you do have to be you. But, God never intended for you to live independent of Him or outside of His purpose or structure for life. The greatest life is found when you are who God truly made you to be. In John 10:10 Jesus said, *"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."*

MYTH 3

There is a shortcut to success and fulfillment in life, and I will find it. Many believe there are quick ways to happiness and fulfillment in life, and so they fall for them—parties, illicit sex, drinking, drugs, etc. We all tend to want the path of least resistance and the quickest path to success. In truth, the best life is built patiently, one decision at a time, on the strong foundation of biblical values and principles. This takes years—not weeks or months.

God taught in Joshua 1:8 that true success is a product of biblical principles in practice: *"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success."*

MYTH 4

Responsibility and purpose in life can be indefinitely postponed. In the short term, a life free of responsibility and commitment seems like the way to go—but in the long term, it's disastrous. We

were designed by our Creator to have purpose, to embrace commitments, and to shoulder responsibilities that honor Him. God teaches that life comes with built-in accountability and responsibility. Those who embrace this, always win. Romans 14:12, *"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."*

MYTH 5

Love is a mystical, magical, fleeting thing that has something to do with sex. God is love, and God created sex, so who could possibly instruct us in this matter better than Him. Quite simply, true love is a choice, not an emotion. You do it, you don't feel it. Warm and fuzzy emotions, as enjoyable as they are, are not and never will be love. And sex is only an expression of love when it's done God's way—within a committed marriage for life. Outside of that boundary, sex is harmful in every way to both parties. It does irreparable spiritual harm.

Here's how God says it: 1 Corinthians 6:18, *"Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body."*

MYTH 6

As long as I'm not hurting anyone else, what I do doesn't matter. This sounds great and becomes an easy excuse for someone who purely lives for self. The problem is, it's simply not true. No man is an island. The Bible says in Romans 14:7, *"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to*

continued on page 15

Faith for Life

himself.” We all influence somebody. We all have people in our future whom we will one day influence. And every decision you make today has countless repercussions in people’s lives for years to come—like your kids! Think of it this way, have you become the bearer of the bad decisions of others? Probably so. And at the time, they too were thinking their decisions wouldn’t hurt anyone. But you know differently.

God commands us to live as examples to others, positively influencing them for right. 1 Timothy 4:12, “*Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*”

MYTH 7

Pleasure, possessions, and personal pursuits can ultimately fill the longing of my heart. God created pleasure. God gives us possessions. And God calls us to purposeful pursuits. But He is the source and the giver. When we forsake following God and pursue these other things, life begins to fall apart. Apart from God, more stuff merely means more problems! We’re called to worship God and use things. But so often we get it backwards. We worship things and use God.

1 Timothy 6:17, “*Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;*”

Are you falling for some of these myths? Begin today aligning your life with God’s principles—beginning with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. For information regarding how to get a restored relationship with your Creator, please go to pages 8-9

Build your life and future upon truth, not upon the myth and urban legends of popular philosophy. Opinions of men will fail, but God’s Word is always true! ■



AVOIDING FAMILY FRAGMENTATION

By Troy Dorrell

A couple of years ago I was reading an interesting article from Time Magazine about the demise of the nuclear family. One of the things they attributed this cultural phenomenon to was the loss of the family dinner table. The article mentioned that over the last several decades families have been eating together less often than ever before. The article stated that with the advent of fast food, busy schedules, differing obligations, and the TV, the traditional family simply has no time to eat together anymore. The outcome, according to the author, was an attenuated or weakened family structure that is not good for anyone involved. I would strongly agree with that conclusion because it echoes a biblical truth found in the book of Mark which says, “If a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand.”

Fragmentation in a country, a business, an athletic team, or even in the home can bring with it destructive consequences. The fragmentation does not have to be a result of conflict; it can simply be a result of not being together. Teenagers need the involvement and influence of parents and family more than ever. There are a thousand competing voices for their time and attention, and not all of those voices have their best interest in mind. Teens are making important life decisions which make the influence of a mother and father vitally important. Here are a few suggestions for spending more time with your teen to prevent fragmentation:

- Eat together as much as possible and talk about the day’s activities.
- Have a family night out or activity each week.
- Be a part of your teens athletic or school activities by volunteering to help.
- Go on family vacations together even if you don’t go far away.
- Build good memories by doing something fun together.
- Talk to your teens—if you are persistent, they will talk back (smile).
- Most importantly, just find some way of spending time together; it will pay off in the future.

Family fragmentation does not have to be a threat if we spend time with our families! ■

Pastor's Perspective

OVERCOMING THE OVERWHELMING

"From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I."

-Psalm 61:2

What does it mean to be "overwhelmed?" The dictionary defines it as, "being overcome completely in mind or feeling, to be covered or buried beneath a mass of something." Words that are synonymous would include; defeated, overflowed, overrun, smothered, swamped and stressed out. Certainly we all have times we feel overwhelmed by life, circumstances and others. Our world is a very stressful place to live at times. The Bible predicted that in days preceding the return of Jesus Christ, that people would live hectic lifestyles: *"But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro..."* (Daniel 12:4). This running "to and fro" is a proper description of life today with busy schedules, deadlines and pressures. On top of that, we face uncertainties about the future. All these things can cause us to scream, "I'm Overwhelmed!" At these times, we feel we don't know where to start, what direction to take, or even what to do. Nor do we usually have the energy to proceed. We're overwhelmed. Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State once said, "There cannot be a stressful crisis next week, my schedule is already full!" Maybe you feel this way today. Maybe you are dealing with overwhelming things in life. I've got great news; help is available from God in overcoming the overwhelming in life.

The Reality

Everyone experiences periods of overwhelming feelings. Job said, *"Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble"* (Job 14:1). We all go through seasons when things compound upon us and stress abounds. It's a reality of life.

People have a tendency to look at others' lives and think everything looks so great in their world, why not their own. However, we can't always see the inner turmoil that is actually going on. So many can mask their problems, yet if they opened up their heart, they'd probably say like Jacob did, *"...few and evil have the days of the years of my life been..."* (Genesis 47:9). We live in a stressed-out society. The World Health Organization has stated that stress is America's #1 problem. The American Medical Association claims that stress is a factor in 75% of sicknesses today. According to stressdirections.com, "\$300 billion, or \$7,500 per employee, is spent annually in the U.S. on stress-related compensation claims, reduced productivity, absenteeism, health insurance costs, direct medical expenses and employee turnover." Again, we all live in this world and have to face it. So we must learn to deal with it the way God wants us to.

The Reason

If being stressed out and overwhelmed is not good for us, why does God allow us to deal with so much of it? The stress itself is not God's fault; it's a part of living in a world cursed by sin. The Bible says, *"For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now"* (Romans 8:22). Sin has birthed the problems, the stresses, and the anxieties we often face. Our feelings of being overwhelmed often come from decisions we have made or others have made that break God's commands. These decisions have an adverse affect on everything. The Bible says, *"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself."* (Romans 14:7). No person's life is an island, the decisions we make and others make affect lives, sometimes in a negative way. Who hasn't had stress come into his life due to acquaintances, family or co-workers? No doubt, we've probably caused stress in other people's lives as well.

The Remedy

Since we all face feelings of being overwhelmed, how do we overcome it? Thankfully, God wants to help. Again, our text verse, *"...when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I."* That rock is God Himself. God is there to comfort our hearts and give us the grace to endure any situation.

Jesus said, *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light"* (Matthew 11:28-30). The Lord desires that we bring those burdens to Him. He promises to help carry those burdens by getting into "the yoke" with you and I, and lighten our load. The Bible says that Jesus knows what it feels like to be overwhelmed; *"but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"* (Hebrews 4:15). Christ experienced everything that we go through. As a result, He is very conscientious of our burdens and supplies the needed grace. A preacher once said, "For daily needs, there is daily grace, for sudden needs, there is sudden grace and for overwhelming needs, there is overwhelming grace." Abraham Lincoln once said, "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go." If we learn to pour out our hearts to God during these times of stress, we'd learn like Paul did in II Corinthians 12:9, *"My (God's) grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."* When we are overwhelmed, God has the opportunity to make His strength that much more real to us. The key is leaning on the Lord during these times. The Bible says, *"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee"* (Isaiah 26:3).

Do you have a burden today?
Do you feel overwhelmed?
Take it to the Lord.
He promises to help you overcome the overwhelming in your life. ■

