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AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL CHRISTIANS

ONLY 5% OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANS EVER WIN ONE PERSON TO JESUS IN THEIR LIFETIME!*

God commands His Church to tell *every* person about eternal life in Jesus Christ, yet we sit idly by watching the world *literally* go to Hell. In all our efforts to *encourage* and *train* Christians to tell people about salvation, that 95% failure statistic remained constant for *at least* 30 years.

THIS CONDITION CANNOT CONTINUE!

What are the ramifications of our sinful apathy, weak timidity and non-urgent lack of love for the lost? Millions, up to BILLIONS may *not* enter heaven who *otherwise might have*, with all the negative consequences this fact entails. The *number* depends on how long we let this condition CONTINUE. (See: Jude 1:7, 13; II Pet. 2:4; Mt. 8:12, 10:28; Lk. 16:23-24; Mk. 9:42-48; Rev. 20:10, 14-15, etc.)

DO YOU CARE, CHRISTIAN?

Tragically, there seems to be a **CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE** with **Pastors** to not address this *scourge* of evangelismlessness very *often* or very *aggressively*. So long as our new and **beautiful buildings**, social and **entertainment activities** and often **undisclosed salaries** are *paid for*, there's an almost unspoken agreement that no exhortation, reproof, motivation or accountability for **personal growth** in Christ or **evangelism** will EVER befall the layman. At best, maybe a sermon on evangelism, with *no follow-up* to see if *change* was effected.

We Have the GREATEST LIFE AVAILABLE, Yet We Don't ENSURE that Christians Learn How to Daily Live it or Regularly Tell it so Lost People Can Get in on it.
HOW SELFISH!

God says to leave the church building and go and tell His message to ALL, yet laymen are asked to "befriend" people in order to EVENTUALLY invite them to come and hear at church. How do we justify *passing the buck* and *pushing the burden* of evangelism on the professional? (Eph. 4:12) What about the billions who will never attend church? Do they miss the chance to go to heaven because YOU are lazy? Are lost people viewed as potential tithers (religious business "customers") *OR* people who need Jesus Christ, *wherever* the Spirit leads them to attend? (I Cor. 9:17-24)

GO TELL THEM, CHRISTIAN!

Missions Strategists say we need 40,000 additional missionary nationals to complete the Great Commission in the *least-evangelized* area of the world known as "the 10/40 Window," at a cost of **ONLY \$375 annually from EACH American church**. That figure is a PITTANCE in our affluent society, no matter the condition of our economy!

- ◆ Have you ever been told these figures from the pulpit?
 - ◆ Does your church staff have a plan to AT LEAST ensure that EVERY lost person within 3 miles of their building has *heard the Gospel* in the next 2 years (or less)?

- ◆ WHY NOT?

WAS JESUS JOKING, OR ASKING THE IMPOSSIBLE when His *last words* commanded us to take His ‘Good News’ to every soul? (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15)

- ◆ Christ could come back at any time,
 - ◆ People die unexpectedly, ‘prematurely’ and daily all the time,
 - ◆ And HUGE numbers need to be reached, so...

We can only be **URGENT** in **COMPLETING** the Great Commission!

IF hell is **real** and IF anyone without Jesus *will go there*, there can be **no greater priority** in life for a Christian than evangelism (in his actions toward man, on God’s behalf).

P.S.: If God were to give the *world* ONE (last?) chance to **HEAR the Gospel**, would He lead it to be done...

- **Urgently** or *slowly*?
- **Directly** or *indirectly*?
- **Fully acted upon** or *over-analyzed* and *over-planned*?
- Using **ALL** believers or just *some*?
- Reaching **ALL** lost people, or just *some*? (Ex.: Mt. 21:34)

PLEASE SEE **our** LOCAL CHURCH PLAN OF EVANGELISM

(section 8) to **get the job done** unto *every* human being

AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE!



A WORD TO ALL OTHERS

Finally, for those **most tragically** affected by the Church’s continued *apathy*;
 To every person who is **uncertain** whether you will go to heaven when you die...

Please forgive us for not *caring* enough to regularly and repeatedly tell you:

PRAY TO RECEIVE JESUS FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF ALL YOUR SINS!

Pray and ask God to forgive all of your sins and make you a new person through the loving, **free gift** of *eternal life* Christ offers, and accomplished by His death on the cross. (**See:** Rom. 5:8, 3:23, 6:23; Heb. 9:27; Jn. 3:16, 36, 1:12, 14:6; Ac. 4:12; I Cor. 15:4-8a; I Jn. 5:11-13)



Have You Decided to TRUST JESUS for Eternal Salvation, or Do You Have Questions, Comments, or Do You, **Christian**, Desire to Learn More About How and Why to Evangelize? Please contact us through our “Contact Us” section.

God bless you! Sincerely,

–James E. Meroney (M.Div., J.D., M.B.A.) Eph. 5:25-30; Gal. 4:16

P.S.: Christian Lay Person: if your **Pastor and Staff Members** are not lovingly holding *you* accountable, under *grace*, to have a **daily Quiet Time** (i.e., *prayer* and Bible *meditation*), and have never asked you to go out sharing the Gospel, possibly with them (as *role models*), **SHAME ON THEM**, and ask them why they have not and **when** they *plan to begin!* **That’s NOT inspired ‘leadership,’** no matter how ‘successful’ our businesses of “church” (and building programs) may appear to men! (Eph. 4:10-16; I Pet. 5:1-4). They cannot argue these ministries are not in their **biblical job description**, as they are *clearly expressed* in a “**PASTORAL epistle**”—II Tim. 1:13, 2:2, 24, 4:5.

P.S.

BIBLICAL evidence for a LITERAL completion of the Great Commission: Mt. 18:12-14, 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15; Rom. 14:10; I Cor. 15:22A; II Cor. 5:14-15; Heb. 9:27, etc.

Priorities Summary:

I don’t know about you, but this verse, MEDITATED upon, should get you motivated to serve and be committed to Christ, Christian: Rom. 2:6; To evangelize? Jn. 3:36; Pray? Jn. 14:14; and Bible study? Josh. 1:8

Meditating is prayerfully thinking about, contemplating what it’s saying, asking (and hopefully answering) related questions of the verse(s).

Let’s help that process. Verse 1—IF you’re a Christian, you will spend forever with God, and He’ll reward you for living in His will here and now. Why be poor or ashamed?

Verse 2—EVERYONE who is NOT in Jesus will go to an eternal, fiery hell. YOU MUST stop their going there by URGING them to receive Christ (i.e., evangelism).

Verse 3—ANYTHING can be yours if it conforms to Scriptures promises and its moral bounds. ANYTHING.

Do you think you might want to pray some, NOW? “ANYTHING!” Faith!

Verse 4—Americans LOVE success; they merely MIS-define it as mucho moolah. You will be blessed in ALL you do if you meditate, Christian. DO it today! Bye.

P.S.: MEMORIZE those four verses! Think on them OFTEN. Re-read them a hundred times if that’s what it takes; focus on Christ as you do. *Now*, bye.

A WORD TO PASTORS

Pastor: **Do you know the spiritual condition of every 'of age' lost person within a mile or so of your church building?**

No other church is as responsible before God for evangelizing those people, and no one is *more* responsible for your church reaching them than *yourself—that's YOUR field—YOUR Jerusalem! (II Cor. 10:16; Ac. 1:8; I Pet. 5:1-3; Eph. 4:13-16)*. How can the body of Christ KNOW it has completed the Great Commission unless every pastor can answer this question, and chooses to evangelistically 'adopt' their part of the *unreached* world (Ex.: the 10-40 window)? Let me know if I can help (See: Contact Us section).

Please consider the following priorities, and assess whether your pastoral practice mirrors God's model:

PRIORITIZED PASTOR PLEDGE

- Knowing that the Great Commission is literal—to a person—and I must do my part, and
- Knowing people die 'prematurely' and unexpectedly every day, and
- Knowing that Christ could come back at any time, I pledge to:

___ **Ensure that every lost person 'of age' within ___ blocks of my church hears an empowered, loving; Accurate Gospel presentation from someone in my church in the next 2 to 3 years.**

ANY METHOD CAN BE USED, BUT DOCUMENT THAT YOU HAVE *OBJECTIVELY* REACHED EVERYONE

- Knowing that, on average, only 13% of American Christians regularly read their Bible, I pledge to:

___ **Discover how many members (or what percentage) have a *daily quiet time***, by methods like:

- a) Heads bowed, eyes closed worship service hand raising.
- b) Same method for Bible Fellowship/'Sunday School.'
- c) Having maturer believers ask their church member friends about their Bible reading habit.
- d) Taking a statistically-accurate anonymous church poll, and,

___ **Commit to changing that 13% statistic by ensuring that I start a church-wide "relational discipleship" program, pouring life into** others and training them to do the same (as Jesus and Paul

did and taught), further described at our Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org). It will include, among other things, a mentor regularly contacting and teaching another to develop a 30-day quiet time habit.

- Knowing that only 5% of American Christians, on average, ever tell the Gospel to anyone in their lifetime, I pledge to:

___ **Discover how many members (or what percentage) ever evangelize**, by methods like:

- a) Heads bowed, eyes closed worship service hand raising.
- b) Same method for Bible Fellowship/'Sunday School.'
- c) Having maturer believers ask their church member friends of their personal evangelism habit.
- d) Taking a statistically-accurate anonymous church poll, and,

___ **Commit to changing that 5% statistic by ensuring that I start a church-wide "multiplication evangelism" program, having evangelistic members ask others to join**

them in observing evangelism in practice, till they have the courage to emulate them, starting with staff, deacons, Bible Fellowship on down.

___ If I need the assistance of any evangelists, I will seek them out, and I will consider *cooperating* with other churches—even inter-denominationally—*without fighting over* converts as potential “tithers.”

I understand, before God, that it is consistent with His nature to give mankind **at least one last chance** and warning before He institutes judgment, and **I will at least do MY CHURCH’S PART** of that global harvest threshing, locally, state-wide, nationally and internationally (Ex.: Ac. 1:8).

Before God, prayerfully signed: _____ Date: _____

PASTOR WARNING

If you are a pastor 3 or more years in service and **you don’t know the spiritual condition** of *EVERY* person within 1 to 3 miles of your church (depending on its size), you are **NOT doing your job**, no matter how well you *preach sermons*! IF the Great Commission does NOT get FULLY completed near your building—as I predict it usually will **NOT—You** will be *JUDGED*. And don’t pawn that duty off on evangelists! We all know you have the tithe-demanded secure salary most evangelists have no access to, and in our culture, **YOU are** the “professional” representative of God—**no one else**. You can’t enjoy the privileges without completing the **responsibilities**!



Source: Be A Part of It,” p. 38, by Robby and Jackie Butler (U.S. Center for World Evangelism: Pasadena, CA), 1996 (An excellent brochure detailing the amount of global work still left to be done in evangelism).

Analogy Disclaimer: **Only** if you yourself evangelize should you perform this task (rather than being a *hypocrite*), there are **MANY MORE** boats sinking, and, hopefully, there is a CROWD on the hill we don’t see—never preach into the wind. One cannot be a mobilizer until they are an **evangelizer**!

PASTORAL PHILOSOPHY OF MINISTRY

1. Leadership.

- Christ selected the men He wanted as leaders—He did not disciple all within the crowds whom He preached to. As pastor, you can only do so much. Keep your discipleship targets to around 12, and your 1:1 evangelism and quiet time targets to a workable minimum.
- And as the leader, train church leaders (staff, deacons, lay leaders and teachers, committed laymen, etc.) to utilize this same process—including multiplication evangelism and discipleship training, so eventually all within the church get evangelistic and disciplined (as an attempted goal, at least).
- Reinforce these programs in your sermons (and announcements and advertising). And always keep in mind, there are self-starters, those needing encouragement and those who can hardly be motivated no matter what you do. Grab the ripe fruit first, and assume evangelistic people may need discipleship less, as usually you have to disciple someone enough for them to be willing to evangelize.

2. Discipleship.

- Personally invite people to a discipleship group. If they don't come, ask them to have a quiet time with you until they agree to do so.
- If you do not know a person to be committed, personally ask them to join you for 30 days in having a quiet time. You may have to ask 20 or 30 times, over time (as one did with me), but if you combine asking with showing personal interest in their lives (and pray for them), they'll come around if nothing else just to quit you asking (Ex.: the importunate woman parable). By analogy (only), I have 2 guinea pigs, and I assure you the more time I spend with them the more loving they become (as with children and most 'beings'). When I get busy and can't put them on my chest very often, they get quieter, more rambunctious and I sense their joy is not as strong.
- If you know someone to be committed, enlist them in training others in discipleship or a 1:1 quiet time.
- And if someone is known to be committed and evangelistic, their evangelistic trait should take precedence in how you utilize them, as that is in much shorter demand. Non-evangelistic but committed types are much more likely to be willing to train others, but evangelistic people are few and rarely (never?) are immature or uncommitted.

3. Evangelism.

- If you do not know a person to be saved, evangelize them—even if they're church members.
- If someone is not known to be evangelistic (like 95% of your church membership), personally invite them to an evangelism training program. If they don't come, personally ask them to go evangelize with you and promise them they won't have to say a word—just pray, smile, observe and maybe just say their name.
- If you know someone to be committed but you don't know if they're evangelistic, personally invite them to an evangelism training course. The PERSONAL touch, repeated many times (and backed with prayer) is FAR superior to general announcements and mere sermons on the subject! Care, show love, and you'll be pleasantly surprised with the better results!
- If you know someone to be evangelistic, enlist them in training and taking out others.

Conclusion.

Whatever you do, **do not let anyone** (other than committed and evangelistic ones) remain in the condition to which you find them (and even those need to be 'corralled into ministry leadership) and whatever you do, do not just preach sermons to people and expect any better results than Pastor Jack Hybels, who after over 30 years in ministry admitted that he felt with all his efforts and sermons, he really hadn't changed many lives very much for the kingdom of God. The key is in the personal touch, the persistent asking, the quality, prayer-backed training (in evangelism and discipleship) and especially multiplication—that is, once a person is strong in either of those two programs, they are expected (from the start) to become trainers themselves, and continue on that pass it on philosophy to everyone who participates in the future.

“CHRISTIANITY IN A NUTSHELL”

For the Christian, summarizing life is pretty simple: Be holy and evangelize (by the Spirit).

Proof?:

- ▶ Christ’s marching orders and His last message was to complete the Great Commission, which is (save for water baptism in-between) evangelism and discipleship (Mt. 28:19-20).
- ▶ God reveals these two top priorities as constituting His will (I Tim. 2:4).
- ▶ The salvation of souls was the reason Christ came to earth (Lk. 19:10).
- ▶ With heaven or hell as the only alternatives for all men, who die unexpectedly all the time (and with Christ’s return could occur at any time), salvation (through) evangelism is clearly man’s number one need.
- ▶ God wants a relationship with His children, which requires two-way communication—prayer and Bible study. Hence, having a *daily* (Lk. 9:23) Quiet Time is the *means* by which that relationship is developed.

So, if you want to put Christianity in a nutshell—lost person...

Be saved and be holy, in the Holy Spirit.

See also: Josh. 1:8; Pv. 3:5-7; Ps. 119:9-11 (etc.)

EDBS PRIORITIES

A summary of Church transformation features being proposed includes:

1. Evangelism.

- ▶ Every person goes to hell if they have never received Christ for eternal salvation. (Jn. 3:16-18; Rom, 6:23, Heb. 9:27)
- ▶ The Gospel is the only message that can deliver any person from such a fate. (Rom. 1:16, Ac. 4:12; Jn. 14:6)
- ▶ The Church is the only organization commissioned by God to take that message to the nations. (Mt. 28:18-20, Mk. 16:14-16)
- ▶ Pastors are most responsible for getting their laymen to evangelize. Very few Christians do. (Eph. 4:11-13; I Pet. 5:1-2; II Tim. 4:5)
- ▶ Churches are most responsible for fully evangelizing their own area of the world. Very few Churches do. (Ac. 1:8; II Cor. 10:13; I Cor. 3:9)

2. Relational Discipleship.

- ▶ Christ preached to the crowds, but He poured His life into the disciples, who God used to turn the world upside down. Hence, relational discipling (including getting laymen into a daily Quiet Time habit) is better at growing up believers than merely preaching sermons once a week. (Mk. 4:34; Ac. 17:6; I Tim. 2:2)

3. Body Life.

- ▶ God gave every Christian at least one spiritual gift, and laymen should be active participants in using those gifts to minister to each other and fulfill the Bible’s one another’s. (Rom. 12:3-8; I Cor. 12:7-11; Eph. 4:7-13; I Pet. 4:10-11; Rom. 12:5, 10, 15:5, 7, 14; Gal. 5:13, 6:2; Eph. 4:2; I Th. 5:11)

4. Social Ministry.

- ▶ The Church should be a major leader in addressing major social problems, especially poverty. (Gal. 2:10, etc.)

BIBLE LOGIC FOR ‘EDBS’ PRIORITIES

Evangelism (E)

1. Evangelism is the number one activity Christians can do to help the lost (because hell is forever).
2. Every person alive is supposed to hear the Gospel.
3. *Every* Christian is supposed to do evangelism.
4. 5% of American Christians ever evangelizing is a tremendously bad problem.
5. Spiritual leaders, leading by example, are not the primary parties to be doing evangelism, but:
6. Spiritual leaders more than three years in the ministry are most culpable for this problem (and responsible to solve it).
7. So leaders—disciple and exhort, encourage and go with them, and laymen—go evangelize!

Discipleship (D)

1. God wants *every* Christian matured up in the faith.
2. 10% of American Christians being fully committed to Christ is a tremendously bad problem.
3. A Christian will hardly grow without ingesting God’s word (and praying).
4. Spiritual growth is a daily process (not an hour a week, at church).
5. The Bible teaches (and demonstrates) relational discipling is one of the most effective methods to grow up believers (and the main method Jesus used).
6. Spiritual leaders, leading by example, are to grow up believers in the Lord (i.e., relational discipling and establishing a daily Quiet Time habit).
7. Spiritual leaders more than three years in the ministry are most culpable for this problem (and responsible to solve it).
8. So leaders—disciple and exhort, encourage and teach; and laymen—have a daily Quiet Time!

Body Life (B)

1. Worship is a daily walk with Christ—not just an hour together in a religious building (and service).
2. Church is not a spectator sport for bench-warming laymen to observe professionals (i.e., sing, sermon and tithe).
3. The Bible teaches a ‘Body Life’ style of corporate assembly (‘worship services’).
4. Christian laymen are to use their spiritual gifts to minister to one another.
5. Christian relationships fulfill God’s ‘one anothers’ toward each other (**See**: ‘Body Life’ section for description).
6. With church as a family, age-segregated Sunday School classes would not meet that definition.
7. So leaders—engage your membership’s involvement in the ‘worship service,’ and laymen—learn Body Life activities and participate in them! **See**: Body Life, at our Will You Live Forever? button, here (or book of the same name, by Ray Steadman, or The Measure of a Church, by Gene Getz).

Social Ministry (S)

1. God has great concern for the down and hurting (Ex.: the poor, sick, disabled, widows and orphans).
2. The Church is called of God to address and minister to their needs.
3. Part of a church’s budget (and ministry activity) should be devoted to this cause.
4. That Church call cannot be outsourced to a government Welfare program, or private charities.
5. So leaders and laymen—find ministry opportunities to help those who are hurting (Ex.: this week)!



THE NINETY-FIVE THESIS OF AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY

Though this entire website serves as such, the following are its key components:

CHRISTIANITY

Church is 2 hours a week. Christianity is 24/7 walking with Jesus. See the DIFFERENCE?

Churchianity is sermon, song and silver. Christianity is worship PLUS FULL evangelism, relational discipling, body life and giving to the poor.

5% of US Christians ever evangelize, 10% are fully committed and 13% regularly read the Bible. No wonder our country is on a moral decline.

The 5/10/13 problem* can be principally cured by the EDBS solutions. See definitions at our Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org

Multiplication evangelism and discipleship trains laymen to train others to evangelize and disciple.

Pastoral staff need to individually ask three people a week to go personal evangelizing, watching them do it till they can do it themselves.

Pastoral staff need to individually ask three people a week to have a 10 minute Quiet Time with them for 30 days till the habit gets established.

From pastor to staff to deacons to Sunday School leaders & teachers to committed laymen, multiplication works for ANY size church, over time.

EVANGELISM

**CHURCHES OF ALL DENOMINATIONS NEED TO UNITE
 IN ONE LAST NATIONAL (and GLOBAL) EVANGELISM THRUST.**

Will we? Doubtful.

Pastor: Evangelize all in your 3 mile field, CHANGE the 5% who ever evangelize once statistic, and do your proportional global part in the Great Commission!

Ephesians 4 shows pastors are to train laymen up to do ministry.
 That's NOT just praying for workers!

Pastor: LEAD out in evangelizing, publicly, to influence laymen to do the same.
 Baby ducks follow their mothers' lead.

Much evangelism today is like a sales person in uniform (with a badge) on your front yard, hoping you see him and know why he's there.

Looking for a lost cell phone in your house when it's in your back yard is much like evangelizing primarily at church. Go where the lost ARE!

One's testimony DOES NOT speak of a cross, sacrifice, sin and its consequences, a risen Lord or heaven and hell. It's just your story of how that message impacted you.

What Gospel would people read watching Gandhi or Mother Theresa's deeds?
 If you don't think the Gospel is a MESSAGE, you're a MESS.

If a church has no objective way to determine if they suffer from the 5% statistic,

they are NOT serious about changing it, or even knowing it exists.

IF a pastor doesn't have a map or list of all addresses within 3 miles,
they are NOT serious about the Great Commission, as it's literal.

If the universal church has NO central war room tracking global evangelism results
and some coordinating of evangelism efforts (vs. duplication), they're inept.

DISCIPLESHIP

Jesus preached to the crowds but poured His life into the 11,
who turned the world upside down. Lesson for pastors, here.

It took guy NAGGING me MANY times to have a quiet time with him for 30 days,
so I can't imagine that method isn't still great for pastors to emulate

VERY little change will come without relational (personal) discipling.
Multiplication works even for mega churches, with TIME.

There is ZERO personal accountability for growth when a church's discipling is just
traditional sermonizing—no interaction but a one-way street.

The subjects of discipleship are crucial, but the back and forth and pouring life into people in
small group and 1 on 1 makes ALL the difference.

Discipleship allows the leader to confirm students are having daily Quiet Times,
and can share insights (from life and the Bible) and ask questions.

It took a crisis in my life to sell out ALL to Jesus,
and whatever it takes to be sold out it's worth it.

BODY LIFE

Church is NOT just to be a presentation by professionals with laymen as spectators.
That's NOT how a family or body operate.

US church services make laymen spectators of professionals,
ONLY involved in singing and maybe giving (vs. USING their spiritual gifts)!

Body life occurs WITHIN a BIBLICAL worship service, where the family is gathered
and the audience ministers and is involved. Not for professionals alone!

How and where else can the whole body interact with Body Life,
when the worship service is about the only place where they all gather?

Body life need not take more than 10 minutes of a worship service,
but it need take at least 5, and just shaking hands with a stranger is NOT it!

HELPING THE POOR

If a significant percentage of a church's budget and ministry activity
is NOT helping the poor, they AREN'T seriously doing social ministry.

CONCLUSION

US pastors are on full notice that the 5/10/13 problem* is primarily THEIRS to fix,
humanly-speaking, and to deny its existence is a sin that WILL be judged!

Pastor: It does not matter at all if none of your professional peers in the area do
FULL evangelism, relational discipling or Body Life. Please GOD, not MAN!

Pastors will be GUILTY on judgment day if they haven't led in reaching ALL in their church's
field/sphere of earth, and urgency is the biblical pace.

THE 100% CLUB?

(Emergency Urgent Care First Responders—Bringing people back to life like ER paramedics, keeping people safe from Hell’s fire & enforcing God’s laws by exhorting Christians to do His priorities)

- 100% of lost people reached with the Gospel (by 100% of Christians, using our 3-Mile Plan)
- 100% of Christians committed to Christ (enlisting 100% of pastors to lead this movement), &
- 100% of Christians regularly reading the Bible and praying (i.e., having a daily Quiet Time).

We KNOW human nature, that 100% will likely never be achieved, but it IS our goal, and all our efforts need to be toward its achievement.

Possible Actions: Have famous Christians endorse the movement; Jn. 3:16 billboards, enlist the help of good ministries and churches (Ex.: Campus Crusade and Navigators), take my Go Evangelize signs to churches, drop a note in collection plate when visiting churches, find the 5% of Christians who evangelize and unite in actions, take Go Evangelize signs to deacon meetings and pastor conferences and denominational conventions (and any large Christian gatherings), mass email campaign to all churches (**See:** mega church list, below), sloganize the movement with an icon for bumper stickers and car window decals, speak at churches, publicly challenge pastors on the Great Commission being literal (and his being primarily responsible for his own field/Jerusalem), write a book, write a Christian magazine article, letter to the editor (for newspapers), call into Christian talk radio shows, consider a yard sign, create a blog or podcast, use YouTube channels and the social media, email Christians exhorting their involvement or commitment to Christ, evangelism and a Quiet Time, get pastors to unite to fully evangelize a given zip code (multi-denominational), possibly use a megaphone?, protest outside pastors’ homes with our Disciple Your Members sign?, meet with pastors to discuss the movement (with no appointment—done), dress in sackcloth and ashes with signs (i.e., PR stunts), link our website to other Christian websites, list famous pastors per large city on billboard saying will they tell you all the message of Jesus?—Call them!, use all advertising mediums listed in Building a Billionaire Business, use automatic voicemails (only where legal), distribute VistaPrint business cards (that only say our website) on church parking lot cars (maybe with a message to ‘tell someone about Jesus this week!’), wear a shirt (or T-shirt) with our website logo on it (Ex.: to church, or in public), use a large wooden cross for publicity/attention (like Arthur Blessitt did), design a modern, 3-dimensional electronic Gospel sign (for night use and even more professionalism and attention), consider skywriting website address, identify all evangelists to enlist in the 3-Mile Plan (identify Evangelism Explosion workers, as well), use the mail, certified letters, faxes and telegrams to reach mega church (and other) pastors with the message to change their 5/10/13 problem* (and be willing to help), have a public access TV channel?, create a YouTube channel, maybe TV ads (though they are expensive), radio ads?, PR stunts (like a man on fire to illustrate the need to evangelize, or ripping up old Bibles to show how little we read them, etc.). Please suggest your own ideas and put them on our Blog at AmericanAnswers.org.



How YOU Can Help NOW

- ▶ Use various social media to inform all your contacts of our website. Promote it positively (like the most biblical and prioritized website I’ve found, etc.).
- ▶ Email (or mail) an exact (unchanged) resume of ours (at About Us) to any and every church you desire—even if they are not indicating openings (they rarely will for our areas of expertise). Someone may read our Philosophy of Ministry section and actually implement it. Be sure to reference our website. I’ll handle any legitimate inquiries of churches wanting to

obey God more than any other idols. Who knows, maybe God will call me to temporarily help out (till I run for office)?

- ▶ Use the following websites to email the following paragraph to as many churches as you can, and cumulating overlapped emails are no problem. Marketing usually works best with repetition. Do not limit it to just mega churches, though they represent the largest number of believers, but an exhaustive website listing of non-mega churches could not be found.

If you do ***NOTHING*** else, **EVANGELIZE** everyone within 3 miles of your church gathering place! Our Will You Live Forever? button, provides you the BEST of Bible materials; Accurately interpreted. Let me know any other way I can help you with this goal! God bless, Jim Meroney (JD, MDiv, MBA)

USA: <http://hrr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/database.html>

Global: <http://leadnet.org/page/world?world>

- ▶ Sponsor one billboard and choose whatever John 3:16 message you desire (from that section on our website).
- ▶ Use any and all advertising medium (listed at AmericanAnswers.org/Advertising) to promote our website address and the John 3:16 billboard messages.
- ▶ Use any of the other methods God has led myself to use to change a huge mega church, for whatever church you are a member of (such as speaking with your head pastor about his commitment to changing the 5/10/13 problem*, reaching ALL lost people within 3 miles of his building and implementing EDBS priorities soon).
- ▶ Contact an evangelist—especially not a famous one—and tell him (or her) about our website and ask how you can help him implement our 3-mile plan.

See also: Church Conflicts and Layman Methods to Get Pastors to Evoke Pastors' Evangelism for even more effective methods.

Things You Can Do to Exhort Evangelism (look for overlap opportunities with goal below): Protest churches with Go Evangelize! Signs, drop Go Evangelize business cards at church parking lots, video door to door events for YouTube, film Go Evangelize! Sign events, email churches globally asking pastors to fully evangelize, use social media (Blog about it, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram), website, use a megaphone at churches, airplane streamer, advertising-wrapped vehicle, huge helium filled balloon with message on it (you can carry around), billboard, skywrite 'GO evangelize!', organize a group to evangelize all lost in one zip code and broadcast that accomplishment, send out my resume (on our website) to every church (as it describes what needs to be done), fill-in as interim pastor to speak on evangelism, Christian magazine article, Christian 'Farm-Aid'-like concert supporting FULL evangelism, decorated hot air balloon, 18-wheeler, RV or billboard truck, chain letter tweets and emails, hold our Apology sign at city halls and state capitals (see website for pics), sidewalk chalking, protester sit- and pray-ins near churches, banner atop your home's roof, blimp with message, robot that speaks needed message, light-weight, carriable scrolling sign with programmable messages, set a Guinness world record to promote evangelism, parachute with message on it, TV and radio ads, public access TV, ham radio, yard signs, bumper stickers, place signs (one word at a time) spelling out a message, have many people hold the same sign a few feet away from each other, gather a small crowd near a Go Evangelize! Sign, take such signs to major Christian events (concerts, days of prayer, seminaries, Bible colleges, denominational meetings), portable public debate stage on pastors' job to lead laymen to full evangelism, replicate these efforts in every major city (to start),

Things You Can Do to Evangelize: Take Gospel Signs to major traffic congestion areas, place Gospel Signs near as you exercise, take Gospel Signs to major intersections and public events, skyscraper lights at night read 'Receive Jesus,' gather all Christians of a city t a public venue to pray and then go evangelize, etc.

Things Others, for LESSER Purposes, Have Done: Slept atop their church building for a week, drawn parking lot sized pic of Jesus' face in chalk, held an open-air crusade in public place with music, suggested a parade of Christians promoting evangelism, drive-in prayer (OKC), etc.

WEBSITE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For the busy Christian who needs this website **summarized** to its most important truths, the following is offered.

If you have little time (like the rest of us), read *On Hell, Why Be Totally Committed to Christ and Why Read the Bible*, and skim the sections on our Local (3-Mile) Plan of Evangelism, Relational Discipleship and Body Life. Thanks.

Note: For a thorough and deeper exploration of all New Testament verses' interpretation (including difficult ones), as well as their relation to all others (including highlighted Old Testament verses), see our upcoming New Millennium Commentary and Topicality: New Testament.

Crucial Warning for the Church in America:

Document the fact that you have completely evangelized
EVERY lost person in America by the year 2020,
or beware of having ignored (or poo poo'd) this warning.
Pastors—relationally disciple ALL your saved church members,
and start implementing 'Body Life' in your main worship services,
and start helping the truly poor more, financially and otherwise.
2020 represents a symbolic and achievable date. WILL we DO it?

Note: This date is set as a milestone to prove to ourselves our commitment, or lack thereof—*Not* as a date implying that anything prophetic will take place around it! (**Ac. 1:6-8; Mt. 24:36**)

Important Issues Addressed.

Dr. Pepper used to have a slogan promoting drinking their product at **10, 2-and 4**. In the American church, the deplorable statistics are that...

5% of Christians *ever* tell the Gospel to one person in their lifetime,
10% of Christians are committed to Christ, and
13% of Christians regularly read their Bible.

- God offers solutions to this **5-10-13 problem** (a problem not in His will), and all that's needed to know is...
- Evangelism is **not hard**—all you have to know, at a minimum, is **John 3:16**. If you understand it, you can tell someone the Gospel.
- The consequences of our lack of evangelism are that **millions and up to billions** might go to hell who *otherwise* might have *properly* responded (and *their blood* will be on our hands).
- Proof that even “pastors” are to do evangelism is found in *II Tim. 4:5, 1:6-8*—part of a “**pastoral**” epistle. Leaders are to lead by example, and the American tradition of primarily preaching *sermons* in a spiritual place—church—is **not** ALL of their biblical job description.
- Proof that EVERY Christian is to evangelize, even if it's not their *spiritual gift*, is found in *Ac. 8:2, 4, 10:19*. These Jerusalem church **laymen** were **ALL** evangelizing, and not one ‘leader’ was among them. It took **persecution** to bring this about, as it may take in America *today*. As Dr. Jarrett Stephens recently said, “If Jesus has called you to follow Him, He has called you to fish for men.” (8/23/14)

Take-Aways/Action Steps

In summary, if you're a *Christian*:

- a) Have a daily quiet time (at least 10 minutes of Bible study and prayer).
- b) Be fully committed to Christ (or you are NOT a disciple, at least in your experience), and
- c) Evangelize regularly.

And if you're a **minister/'pastor'** more than *three years* in the profession, if you are not *actively* doing the following three things, **you ARE** the primary human causing for the 5/10/13 problem* to continue (and the church to remain *anemic* and *hardly influencing* her society):

- a) **Role model** regular evangelism OUTSIDE your church building, to lead your church to accurately and lovingly evangelize EVERY lost soul within **THREE MILES** of your building in the next **THREE YEARS**,
- b) Use whatever methods are effective to specifically discover whether only **5%** of your membership ever evangelizes, and use all moral efforts and methods to change that percentage ASAP (many of which are listed in this website), and
- c) Use whatever methods are effective to specifically discover whether only **10%** of your membership is FULLY COMMITTED to Christ and only **13%** of them regularly read their Bibles, and use all moral efforts and methods to change that percentage ASAP (many of which are listed in this website).

NOTHING ELSE IS MORE IMPORTANT to both layman and professionals, and you are on record as having been *cautioned* to do these things immediately. This author will help you in any way possible, but **washes his hands** of not having told (and warned) you.

Important Questions Answered.

1. Why don't we evangelize more?
Sin—pure and simple. Timidity and fear—The ultimate **selfishness** and **hatred** of mankind;
Read: Excuses for Not Evangelizing
2. How do we get more Christians evangelizing?
Disciple them! *Immature* believers will hardly speak for God. Get them in a *regular Quiet Time* habit, and
Read: Why Evangelize?, On Hell, and The 18 Most Important Discipleship Subjects.
3. Is there any false theology going around hindering our completion of the Great Commission?
Yes,
Read: What Evangelism is Not.
4. What is an effective plan for an individual to start a habit of evangelizing?
Read: Personal Evangelism Plan.

Finally, a likely a **first-of-its-kind** website covering *250 apologetic questions* (with researched solutions), fills up *nearly half* the website, so that Christians will have a ready defense to help when facing challenging questions, and sincere intellectual lost people will have a resource for getting their **questions intelligently answered**.

Note: For a thorough and deeper exploration of all New Testament verses' interpretation (including difficult ones), as well as their relation to all others (including highlighted Old Testament verses), see our upcoming New Millennium Commentary and Topication: New Testament.

See also: How To Have the Best Life (possibly coming to YouTube)

Preface

There are **over 4,500** unique and *FREE future products* throughout our *four* main books:

Wit and Wisdom: Common Ground Through Common Sense for the Common Good

Dumb as a Donkey, Fat as an Elephant: Using Common Sense to Change Politics-as-Usual

Building a Billionaire Business: Proven Principles to Propel Profits

The Way Things Ought to Be: A Global Vision for a Better World

Any Management Consulting, Advertising, Architecture or consumer product R & D firms
seeing talent in those books
and/or our sister website, AmericanAnswers.org,
are encouraged to contact myself concerning possible employment opportunities.



GLOBAL CHURCH ACTION PLAN
 (*Formerly tweeted @ JamesMeroney)



Priorities.

Let me make this perfectly clear. Church--DO **EDBS**:
 The 3 mile plan/change the 5%/your part in global missions/body life/relational discipleship
 & social ministry (especially helping the poor) **NOW!**
 Details at our Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org

Evangelism.

EVERY local church has their part to do in evangelism locally, state-wide, nationally
 & globally. Is YOUR church a "success" by God's standard? Unlikely.

If the universal church has NO central war room tracking global evangelism results
 & coordinating efforts (vs. duplication),
 they're **NEGLIGENT** at taking the Great Commission **SERIOUSLY!**

ONLY 5% of American Christians ever evangelize ONE person, & the buck stops with
 PASTORS (in ministry more than 3 years). **DISCIPLE YOUR CHURCH MEMBERS!**

If a local church has no objective way to determine if they suffer from the 5% stat
 (of U.S. Christians who **EVER** evangelize),
 they are **NOT** serious about changing it or even knowing that it exists.

Our website gives around 13 things a pastor can do to make sure he's changing the 5% stat
 of Christians who ever successfully evangelize ONE person. **DO them!**

IF a pastor doesn't have a map or list of all addresses within in 3 miles of their building,
 they are **NOT** serious about the Great Commission, because it's literal,
 & they're **MORE** responsible than any other church for that field.

Pastors will be **GUILTY** on judgment day if they haven't led in reaching **ALL**
 in their church's field/sphere of earth, & **URGENCY** is the biblical pace.

QUIT relying on evangelizing the choir as your most well-known & reputed evangelism
 method. Pastor--**LEAVE** the building with laymen to go evangelize. **Leave & LEAD!**

'No church is perfect' is **NOT** a valid excuse for **NOT** having & starting executing a plan
 to change 5% who ever evangelize or reaching **ALL** around your building!

If **NO** local church will **LEAD** in changing the 5% stat & implementing full evangelism of
 their field, all evangelism efforts have **ZERO** proof the Great Commission is ever completed.

**CHURCHES OF ALL DENOMINATIONS NEED TO UNITE IN ONE LAST
 NATIONAL (& GLOBAL) EVANGELISM THRUST.** Will we? Hoped, but Doubtful.

Discipleship.

A Pastors' **JOB** is to prepare Christians for 24/7 empowered walking with & serving God.
 One hour of worship is **NOT ALL** they need to be engaged in as a biblical job description
 (Eph. 4).

90% of US Christians are nominal. This is a researched stat I did not dream up.
 Don't be deceived by one's Sunday best dress & behavior!

Pastor: Disciple 12 people & train them up to be able to do the same.
 There it is--clear as glass. Just Do It! It's called multiplication discipling.

Get too large a group for discipleship & you **LOSE** the ability to minister personally
 to each student. Jesus chose 12, & He's hard to improve on!

Relational discipling is **NOT** a matter of personal preference.

It's how Jesus grew people up & sermons alone cannot produce the same results.

Sermons serve their educational & perhaps inspirational purpose, but there is ZERO mechanism to seeing if the message was understood & applied.

Only 13% of US Christians regularly read the Bible. How else CAN they grow the other 167 hours of the week beyond your sermon? It's the tool! (Ps. 119:9-11, etc.)

IF a Christian doesn't have a DAILY Quiet Time (prayer & Bible study), They're hardly true disciples, as it is the tool for growth, & discipleship is DAILY!

Discipleship allows the leader to confirm 'students' of Christ are having DAILY Quiet Times, & can share insights (from life & Bible) & ask questions.

There is ZERO personal accountability for growth when a church's discipling is just traditional sermonizing—no interaction; ONLY a one-way street.

Sermons have zero personal relationship between speaker & listeners.

Multiplication discipling is how large churches can maintain such biblical intimacy.

Sunday School is NOT the ideal venue for discipleship, as it is long-term, slow-paced & the same people (vs. a shared intense growth experience).

Plus, a FAMILY is not all in the same general age group!

Body Life.

HOW & where do laymen use their spiritual gifts in traditional church to minister to & love one another? They're spectators to Sunday School lectures!

How & where else can the whole body interact with Body Life, when the worship service is about the only place where they all gather?

Body Life occurs WITHIN a BIBLICAL worship service, where the FAMILY is gathered & the AUDIENCE ministers & is involved. Worship is NOT a production by professionals.

OUR man-made church service formats make laymen spectators of professionals, ONLY involved in singing & giving (vs. USING their spiritual gifts)!

We ARE a body, & are to function as one. Where else can our ministering to & loving one another be as demonstrated that a visitor will know God is with us (I Cor. 14, absent the tongues, & Jn. 13:34-35).

LITTLE outside the church interaction occurs anymore with our busy lives.

Body Life need not take more than 10 minutes of a worship service, but it need take AT LEAST 5, & just shaking hands with a stranger is NOT it! That's a meet & greet.

TEACH your crowd about New Testament body life, & slowly; Gently ease them into a 5-10 minute practice of DOING IT! Perhaps small group prayers are a good start.

Body Life is NOT just relationships between Sunday School members.

A family is ALL the local church, & not age-based cliques!

Pastor: It does not matter at all if none of your professional peers in the area do relational discipling or body life. Please GOD, not MAN! We are co-laborers—NOT competitors!

If pastors don't "get" relational discipling or body life, go visit some ministry that does these things or view a DVD of such!

Seminaries usually don't teach body life & relational discipling, & in this manner they FAIL their students MISERABLY!

Social Ministry.

If a SIGNIFICANT percentage of a church's budget & ministry activity is NOT helping the poor, they AREN'T seriously doing social ministry.

Conclusion.

There you have it.. a blueprint for the Church universal.
Get at it, & call me to see how I can be of further assistance, if so led. God bless!
(Jn. 4:34, 9:4)

(* Some tweets extended for better clarification)

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Please note this website is a *work-in-progress*, & if you catch any un-edited errors, you will *bless* us to inform us of such through our “Contact Us” section.

Website Highlights

People are so busy these days, and so preoccupied with distractive idols, if Jesus were here in person today, they may never learn much of what He had to say. A large website based on what He taught is no different as to men's time ability to read it, so the following priority order of subject matter is suggested (See Index for page numbers):

Tier 1:

Open Letter
Prioritized Pastor's Pledge
Pointers for Prayer
Why Read the Bible
How to have a Quiet Time
Why Be Totally Committed to Christ
18 Discipleship subjects
The Bible on riches

Tier 2:

On heaven
On hell
What evangelism is not
Theology of evangelism
Scripture memory plan
Highlights of the Old Testament

THE STATE OF THE AMERICAN CHURCH

PASTORS: PLEASE SKIP THIS SECTION UNTIL AFTER YOU HAVE READ OUR FREE BOOK. HOPEFULLY AFTER THAT, YOU WON'T EVEN NEED TO RE-VISIT THIS SECTION.

For details of MANY *first-hand* experiences with *several* pastors—some quite famous—which form the **background** for these *constructive criticisms*, see our possible **YouTube video** (Search “Church Conflicts” or “James Meroney”), or “Church Conflicts,” in the Appendix.

The American evangelical church’s (i.e., Protestant, conservative, biblical) greatest moral-spiritual problem—even surpassing (because it is the root cause of the 95% evangelismlessness) is our 90% who are only nominally committed to God. We have a positive feeling about God and the Bible, many attend church, and we believe we are truly saved. But this powerless carnality, luke-warmness and/or worldly condition—whether innocent or willful—is killing our influence on our culture and our ability to please God (with associated eternal rewards, or lack thereof). This website is devoted to curing these ills, especially our Biblical Discipleship section.

Throughout the site this author has laid the blame primarily at the feet of pastors more than three years in ministry, based on Eph. 4:11-13 and I Pet. 5:1-4 (among others), primarily due to many of them following tradition more than the Bible and prioritizing bodies, bucks and buildings over what God says the church is, and is to behave like. These statements don’t make one popular, but are sorely needed! If America has any hope of ever again experiencing revival (perhaps before prophecy transpires), the church’s spiritual leaders must biblically lead, and place God’s priorities over man’s.

Just as our book on politics (Dumb as a Donkey, Fat as an Elephant: Using Common Sense to Change Politics-as-Usual) challenges America to make a bold *moral* decision on how they want to be led by government ‘leaders,’ at the latest by 2020—a year symbolizing clear vision—I challenge the American church to set that same date—2020—as a marker by which we can judge whether we will be faithful in serving God’s top priorities—Evangelism, Discipleship, Body life and Social ministry, especially helping the poor (“EDBS”), or we won’t, to which I add a sincere belief that **God’s judgment** will surely come (no date set, of course) from our being on record as having known the right thing to do, and chosen a *much lesser* path.

As I also said in that book, the **moral condition of America** (about which Billy Graham reportedly said God would owe an apology to Sodom and Gomorrah if He didn’t judge America) is largely due to the **spiritual condition of the church** (excepting the prophesied apostasy and sin increase in the last days), II Chron. 7:14 being used by analogy. I pray we will TAKE UP THIS CHALLENGE and do what the first century Christians proved was **doable**, or else, as Thomas Jefferson said:

“If God is just, I *tremble* for my country.”

For a near perfect summary of the *problems* with the **American church**, please listen to this song by one of the **top ten believers** of our generation: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXb45UTUFWU>

Priorities & the 5/10/13 problem* (few to no pastors are addressing).

Churchianity is the Christian life being defined as being nice and going to church; maybe also giving. **Christ-ianity** involved faithful church involvement plus the following...

1. **Relational Discipleship**. If Christ role modeled the most effective way to grow up a

- Christian, and we ignore it for sermonizing, we are professionally incompetent and sinning.
2. **Full Commitment.** There's no such thing as a half committed Christian being right with God. Unless you're totally committed, you're NOT a disciple of Jesus and cannot be Spirit-filled—the only Christian life.
 3. **Quiet Time.** If you don't have a daily Quiet Time, you can hardly grow and be truly living.
 4. **Personal Evangelism.** If you're not evangelistic (and only 5% are), you are HARDLY or NOT following Christ (unless Jesus lied; Mt.4:19). You obviously don't love lost people if you'll let them go to hell unwarned (the ultimate act of *hatred*).
 5. **Local Church's Evangelism.** If a church does not fully complete the Great Commission in the area they're most responsible to God for—their own “Jerusalem”—they're morally negligent and failing to do what God has called them to do, and their pastor (if in ministry over three years) is primarily to blame.
 6. **Ministry.** Using one's spiritual gift(s) in active ministry service.
 7. **Body Life.** A church ignoring body life does NOT know what church IS.
 8. **Helping the Poor.** A church doing *little* to help the poor and lowly/hurting does NOT have the heart of Jesus.

The *most popular excuse* laymen use to ACCEPT these OMISSIONS in their leaders is that we are all IMPERFECT. As in **Hitler's day**, NOTHING EVER CHANGES when you only hold to that theory. These are **TOP PRIORITIES**, and **peoples' ETERNAL destinies** lie on the church doing them! Learn *better judgment/discretion* than that, laymen, and distinguish between the *worthless* and the *worthwhile*!

Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.
–Martin Luther King, Jr.

The darkest places in hell are reserved for those who maintain their neutrality in times of moral crisis. **–Dante Alighieri** (sentimentally vs. theologically true)

The Heart of Our PRIORITIES Problem:

1. **EVANGELISM.** Pastor, **DO YOU KNOW THE SPIRITUAL CONDITION OF EVERY SOUL LIVING WITHIN 3 MILES OF YOUR CHURCH?** Do you have a plan to change that *this* year?
See: A Local Church Plan for Evangelism

2. **DISCIPLESHIP.** Have you ever Tried **TO DISCIPLE AS MANY CHURCH MEMBERS AS POSSIBLE THE WAY JESUS DID WITH THE 11** (i.e., intimately, personally, intensely and lovingly ‘pouring your life into’ people, so they’ll do the same with others, including grace-based *accountability* to ensure growth and a daily walk with God)? If **THIS IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD**, why haven't (or won't) you? **See:** Relational Discipleship

3. **“BODY LIFE.”** If Christ said **THE WORLD WILL KNOW US BY OUR LOVE**, yet “church” is too often strangers seated near each other as **spectators** watching the *professionals* (vs. interacting, knowing and lovingly relating to each other), and if the Bible's **“one another” commands** are not a joke or myth, **WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO TO IMPLEMENT THEM IN YOUR MAIN WORSHIP SERVICE?** **See:** Body Life

As mere *ANECDOTAL* evidence of the 5/10/13 problem*, **ask yourself how many** American Christians you know:

- ◆ Are fully committed to Christ
- ◆ Engage in daily Bible meditation and prayer
- ◆ Memorize Scripture
- ◆ Do regular evangelism
- ◆ Live a *miraculous*, Spirit-led life, by faith
- ◆ Have been disciplined or are discipling others
- ◆ Use their spiritual gift(s) in ministry
- ◆ Ever suffer for their faith
- ◆ Talk about spiritual things (i.e., have fellowship vs. just socializing or friend-making while being *entertained*)
- ◆ Possess basic Bible (and doctrine) knowledge
- ◆ Follow global efforts to complete the Great Commission
- ◆ Know anything about the concepts involved in ‘body life’
- ◆ Know anything about impending Bible prophecy
- ◆ Are free from the love of money (i.e., *ambition* with contentment), and
- ◆ Live a life of wisdom and truth (vs. lying—white lies or outright ones?)

These are CHRISTIAN **BASICS**! Just **attending church** and ‘**tithing**’ are NOT. That’s “**churchianity**”—not **Christianity**, and *analogous* to a business using God to say you **MUST FREQUENT THEIR BUSINESS** and spend 1/10th of your annual salary there to be a ‘*good*’ consumer. Those are **NOT** the *two greatest commands*, and they keep pastors ‘successful’ (vs. **Mt. 6:33**), but NOT NECESSARILY your spiritual life.

Contrary to *popular PRACTICE*, the **two greatest commandments** are NOT Heb. 10:25 and Mal. 3:10, but Mt. 22:34-40, biblically defined (I Jn. 5:1-5; Jn. 14:15; Gal. 5:14) and illustrated (Jn. 15:13; Lk. 10:25-37), and they are to occur 24/7, 365 days a year—NOT 1-2 hours a week!

The Cause of Our PRIORITIES Problem:

Counterfeits to Christianity Within Christ’s Church

(“The Three C’s”)

Our problem is a SIN problem, which manifests itself in various ways, including:

- 1. Churchianity**—The false belief that living as a Christian boils down to attending church, possibly singing and certainly giving a 10% “tithe” of your income. One pastor recently wrongly stated, “Church is all week long!” Only the biblically unenlightened believe a Christian is “good” simply for going to church, and bad if they don’t.
- 2. Church-as-a-Business**—Any church activities placed as higher priorities than progressively serving God through evangelism of the lost and maturing (discipleship) of believers, especially for money as the motivation more so than doing God’s will and priorities, often demonstrated by the standards of the ‘Three B’s’—bodies, bucks and buildings (vs. Mt.24:1-2 and Mt. 21:12-13).
- 3. Carnality**—The unfortunate condition of 90% of claiming American Christians in which being committed to Christ is not as high a priority as living normal, “naturally,” for oneself, which constitutes sin (either by ignorant lack of commitment, half-hearted commitment, worldliness or lip service external following of Christ so men will see, not God first and foremost knowing your heart).

INTRODUCTION

With the rise of mega churches, great architectural church buildings, increased church attendance, modernization of worship services, and church expenses and salaries being paid, MANY American pastors have been lulled into a false sense of contentment—resting on our laurels while **the world goes to hell**. Consider some of the following questions, and assess whether we could be guilty of having the same *moral* and *spiritual self-delusion* problems of the Laodicean Church of Rev. 3:

Please Note: While I am FULLY AWARE there are MANY great things the Church of America is doing, don't let these successes blind you to MAJOR issues going virtually unaddressed.

[Ex.: Specific credit is given for doing some evangelism, interesting, eloquent, preaching-oriented sermons (not *balanced* with teaching expositively), professional, great modern music, tele-screens vs. only hymnals, casual dress vs. only robes and suits, more modernized church architecture, increased political involvement and some social ministry activities (especially among the more liberal denominations)]

SPECIFIC ISSUES

Zealous Commitment

Why are so many American Christians so luke-warm about Jesus Christ? Where is our zeal? Is *eternity in heaven* that boring and insignificant?

According to II Chron. 7:14 (by *analogy*), and apart from the prophesied sin increase in the 'last days,' the **moral decay of our country** can be laid directly at the feet of un-prioritized Protestant pastors who have been in ministry over *three years* (who should know better).

The deceitfulness of RICHES has pierced *many* American Christians with many spiritual pangs, but from a lack of Bible knowledge, they hardly notice it, as that's our worldly culture.

Christians primarily living for themselves (i.e., fun, fame, fortune and feelings) are an **ABOMINATION** to God and make Him want to *throw up* (Rev. 3:16). 90% in the U.S. live this way, despite their being "**nice, church-going**"—sometimes even "*tithing*" people.

If you are not fully committed you are **NOT** a disciple, and if you are not a disciple you ARE "carnal." To have *ZERO interest* or concern about the world's problems and sufferings evidences that spiritual *blindness*.

Why are *truly committed* Christians considered extremists? Has God—or the devil—warned us to not be 'too heavenly-minded to be any earthly good?' (Col. 3:1-4; Ecc. 7:16-17)

Why do so few believers regularly meet with God (i.e., Quiet Time"), praying and **reading His word**? Is *unrestricted, 24/7 direct access* to the God of the universe that uninteresting? Meeting with God only at church is like a long distance relationship with your wife, or having a *chaperone* on your honeymoon or a mediator between husband and wife (I Jn. 2:27).

How are most American Christians *different* from moral lost people? Why are so many American believers **lovers of money** (and *entertainment*)?

Many if not most U.S. Christians have a **cultural morality** where they compare their righteousness to their peers—lost *or* saved—and what is socially *normal*, in a Politically-Correct environment. If you need a “litmus test” of the spirituality of many church-goers, talk to them about **Bible verses** they know, **evangelism**, and *Quiet Time*. Your conversation may quickly end, but at least you have taken the *pulse* and seen if there is **any** temperature in the Body. (Rev. 3:15-19; Jas. 2:26)

U.S. Christians **predominantly** aspire to a status *God* says gets **FEW** into heaven—*riches*.

Why do so many Americans adopt the “work hard, play hard” motto, and omit the “**minister hard**” third (and MOST IMPORTANT) element?

If you are a believer, **why don’t you do much** for God? Are you ungrateful? What is your ministry or service to God (Him *through* you, of course)?

You cannot *outsource* your **ministry obligation** to God by any size of church gift, or “**tithe.**”

Life summary: Be good (in the Holy Spirit), evangelize, read the Bible and pray, and attend church (including giving to God).

Discipleship

The **SINGLE most important** ACT any Christian can do for the good of their own life is to **daily read the Bible** for *ten minutes* for thirty days, until that habit has been formed, and the **SINGLE most important method** of growing up another believer (i.e., discipling) is to have another believer study the Bible with you for 10 minutes a day for thirty days, until that *habit* gets formed.

It is impossible to be truly changed by God, and be quiet about it for the rest of your life.
–**Wade Morris** [Unfortunately, people in the US prove it to be possible ALL THE TIME!]

Going to church is good (Heb. 10:25), *especially* if that church’s practices and priorities are **BIBLICAL**, but it is never substitute for a 24/7 *personal relationship* with Jesus!

Contrary to popular opinion, Christianity is NOT *being nice*, going to church regularly and “tithing” (i.e., “Churchianity”)—what my friend calls ‘coat rack Christianity.’ (Chad Uretsky). That is a MYTH (containing only *partial* truths), predominantly accepted. It is a **daily relationship** directly with God, the *outgrowth* of which is you desire to meet with other believers to worship in public.

Churchianity is like a marriage where you **never see your spouse** except *40 minutes* a weekend at a marriage seminar hosted, led and taught by an outside third party.

Since when is **Christianity** a 2 hour a week event, as opposed to 24/7 living and walking with and **knowing** God; Exhibiting His *power* and *character* and regularly *telling* people about salvation?

Between **mentoring, coaching, apprenticeship, foster parenting or adopting a child**—as contrasted with someone giving a child a 40 minute speech once a week—which approach would better build them into the **adults** you want your children to become? Then why do pastors consistently stick with primarily ‘discipling’ through **sermons**?

Mega Churches

Show me **1** mega church that is implementing a plan to evangelize EVERYONE w/in 3 miles of their building & relationally disciple ALL their members. It IS fully biblical, yet we fail to **obey**.

Jesus’ attitude and valuation of **mega church buildings** and their campuses are just like they were concerning the Jerusalem temple. And many of them will **suffer a similar fate** in the Tribulation. As well, many Christians have the same foolish awestruck glee over such things that Christ says could *never* contain God. (Mt. 24:1-4; Ac. 7:48).

If Christ returned, NOT visibly in the clouds but humbly, as before, would He stand any chance of meeting with or being identified by head pastors of mega churches, who often require an **act of Congress** to make them know their membership or meet with new church members?

Relatedly, the first 2 churches *were* mega churches, but **if your church is too big** for you to know and care about your members (i.e., personally and individually), you are **morally too big**, because you cannot properly manage God’s *entrusted* family.

People obviously like what mega churches are doing. Does God? As I rhetorically asked in 1996 at Dallas Seminary, **could you start a mega church** if the *pastor’s expectations* of his members were that they had a daily Quiet Time, regularly evangelized, were filled and led by the Holy Spirit 24/7, knew Bible doctrine and practiced the “one anothers” of Scripture among themselves while gathered?

Seeking to justify a church needing multiple millions of dollars (and rarely if ever helping members in financial need, or temporarily “poor”), one mega church member told me, “the church has to pay its bills rather than go out of business,” to which I *should have responded*, “**if mega churches obeyed God more than man** (or worldliness/love of money), **their bills would not be so high**” (as their ENTERTAINMENT ACTIVITIES, LUXURIES and EXCESSIVE SALARIES would **CEASE**; Ac. 5:29)

Mega church preachers comparing their salary expectations to CEO’s with *similarly-sized companies* is a fraudulent, *apples-to-oranges* comparison! A HUGE majority of church members **ONLY** attending services, while a FEW volunteers and staffers do the bulk of the work is **NOT** an equivalent responsibility for being in charge of 30,000 paid employees, for example. **ONLY** the **FLESH** would make such an argument. The **average American pastor** only makes \$80,000 a year (*Christianity Today*, 2009).

Many mega church pastors have a mental illness which teaches to DO “evangelism” in other areas they must start *fund raising* and *building programs* to **franchise** new locations of their church. Biblically diagnosed, it’s called a **‘love of money.’**

**How were the 11 apostles able to ‘turn the world upside down’
with the Gospel and never build one building?**

Mega church pastors follow the **Hollywood model** (“if you build it they will come”) rather than God’s model of *evangelizing, then gathering* the converts into a church. The money spent on franchised campuses could **really be used for evangelism** if it went to hire evangelists (but that’s only an *incidental* purpose used to sell *expansionism*). If you’re doing the *highest* priorities, have as many campuses as you like (but reveal and cap your salary, to prove you’re qualified to serve—I Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7). As my hero, Dr. John Bisagno recently said, If your primary concern is money in ministry, you might want to go back to the cross and take another look. (6/9/13)

American pastors do a **pretty good job** with preaching, music, offerings and announcements. They do a *much worse* job of teaching (Ex.: expositively), discipling, prayer, evangelism, body life and social ministry, especially helping the poor.

Many mega church pastors are **profits**—not prophets. As a CNN article said, “Mega churches across the United States are becoming increasingly popular which is not only bringing thousands of worshippers together, but also billions of dollars in profit.”

It has been said, ‘The *darkest pits of hell* are reserved for people who make money off religion.’ One **RARE minister** stated on a TV show ad (though of a *theological* cult):

Are you concerned about the *direction of Christianity*—the moral and doctrinal compromise, the **sensationalism** and emphasis on entertainment? Are you tired of *PREACHERS BEGGING FOR MONEY* to build their own empires? --**Brett Hickey**

Pastors ‘tithing’ to their **own church** are *self-serving*. Pastors ‘tithing’ to *others’* ministries—especially to evangelists—are **heroes**.

Just as with chiropractors (valuable as they are when you have a back ache), not all ministry “doctors” are true Ph.D. (i.e., MD-like doctors). A very popular way of appearing learned nowadays is to take a D.Min. degree—much less intellectually rigorous, but still challenging, and you can qualify to fill the seat of a large church.

Why is it that mega churches seem to always crop up in the **richest neighborhoods** in our country? One such church, where they solicited myself to interview for an Evangelism Minister position, bragged “we serve in the richest zip code in America.” Many American churches are *rich* by being ‘**blessed**’ by the devil, and some are just like the church of **Laodicea** despite their external, human “*success*.” (Rev. 3). Beautiful buildings, packed pews, secure salaries, and abundant amenities are *not* necessarily ‘**success**.’

Laymen: Require an accounting of your pastor’s work schedule. Sermon prep is important (I Tim. 5:17-18), but evangelizing, discipling and Quiet Time are *even more* important. (Ac. 6:4, etc.) Quit financially rewarding them so well just because you see **crowds** and nice **buildings!** (Ex.: Mt. 24:1-2)

Seeker-Sensitive Churches

If the Bible teaches that **no one seeks after God**, how do so many churches follow a “seeker sensitive” philosophy, which often **warps** what Church is *supposed* to be in order to “attract” spiritually **dead** people to a *supposedly* spiritually **alive** place? (Rom. 3:11)

Evangelistically lazy Christians are willing to let lost people go to hell because they were not 'attracted' to coming to their church.

Carnality

Can you imagine an **adult** wearing DIAPERS and drinking milk from a BABY BOTTLE? **Embarrassing**, yet our churches are FILLED with them, but we don't see it because so many of us have **no spiritual discernment**.

Why are our "Sunday School" classes so cliquish, why does it take **years** to befriend new members (and why do THEY have to initiate the relationship-building)? Is that the "**love**" and pace God is pleased with? Why require them to attend more and more *extracurricular* events just to *know* those few in their Bible Fellowship class?

How is it not **hypocrisy** to be "evangelical" yet never evangelistic?

Many Christians are going to be paupers in a *HEAVEN* and live in a heavenly OUTHOUSE.

The church is living like Christ will never return, and is (apparently) into this world for the *long-term*.

How is it not **hypocrisy** to believe in the Bible yet never *personally* read it? Why not just **burn** or **rip up** your Bible if it's only a church clothing accessory to you? Isn't the book God wrote *just for you* large enough for you to still need to study, or have you mastered its 31,102 verses? (II Tim.2:15)

God–You **wrote TOO MUCH**. Don't you know our relationship isn't an *intellectual; Academic* exercise? Why couldn't you have written a Cliff Notes' version, and why would You *forbid* such (Deut. 4:2; Rev 22:19)? –**The lazy (we WON'T read–entertain us) US Church**

10% of Christians are committed, yet most say God is *number one* in their life. Their righteousness, evangelism and daily ingestion of the Bible *believe* their claim, like saying you love your wife–your best friend–when you met her in a bar once and can *hardly pick her out* of a photo line-up.

Heaven's going to be a huge lifestyle change for many American so-called 'Christians.' They're not going to have their froca moca lattes or many other embarrassing idols we pass off as normal, everyday necessities.

If you're too busy for God, you're **morally too busy**, and He may choose to be too busy for you. Don't you *waste 10 minutes* a day you could have spent getting to know your Creator? As Jarrett Stephens has quoted, "The devil cannot make us bad, so he makes us busy."

If you never **memorize** or **meditate** on *God's word*, how do you expect to become more Christ-like? Don't think that hearing a sermon–the contents of which you can't remember 2-3 days later–is going to do the trick! *You're not a spiritual camel* who can survive all week off a 45 minute lesson, sometimes watered down with **fluff**, when Christ said "man cannot *live* by bread alone, but by *every* word that proceeds out of the mouth of God."

Doctrine

Why has the majority of the church blindly accepted the works-based “**Lordship Salvation**” heresy (of the 1980’s) whose prime advocate himself presents salvation as analogous to **army enlistment**, which is both free to join but extremely costly to commit to? Are we so *blind* that we can’t see that **you can’t solve the carnality in church problem (a sin) with a sin (false doctrine)**, but only through *prayer-backed* **disciplining**?

When did God change His revealed requirements for discipleship to merely requiring **willingness** to fulfill its demands, and not actual *follow-through* on such a commitment? Doesn’t the **parable of the two sons** itself prove that God honors *implementing* decisions—not just saying you’ll do something, and later changing your mind? If so, Lordship salvation does teach a **lifetime of works** in order to be saved and in order to ever have any assurance of salvation.

Why have so many jumped on the bandwagon of *piling on* against the *true* doctrine of **Saviorhood Salvation** as being “**cheap grace, easy believism, intellectual assent, eternal fire insurance, notches on one’s spiritual belt and a false Gospel**” (terms and misrepresentations the devil whispered into the ears of naïve, self-proclaimed “Christians”).

Evangelism

On **evangelism** and **discipleship**—the **top two** ministries of the Church... the majority of American churches are like a doctor who has *discovered* the cure **cancer**, but mainly cures the common cold because his practice *does well*.

Pastors: Follow the *biblical* model of fully evangelizing (Ac. 5:42, 8:4-8, 25, 11:19, 21, 14:21, 25, 15:35, 17:1-4, 16-19, 18:4-5, 11, 19, 19:8-10, etc.)/threshing your own field/sphere! (I Cor. 3:9; II Cor. 10:13-15; I Tim. 5:18), because they are those you are most responsible for among all other churches and Christians (given their proximity) and Christ died for *every* one of them—not just some!

America’s Most Wanted, and **public enemy number one** is 95% of American Christians, who are guilty of worse than murder for not telling people how to avoid **ETERNAL death**.

With evangelism as the MOST important activity a Christian can engage in toward the lost (and for eternity), and that action being the work of the laymen (Eph. 4:11-13)—EVERY layman—even with my home pastor putting himself and his reputation on the line to **LEAD** an evangelism training program, only *just under 1/10th of 1%* of a membership of over 30,000 showed. **NO ONE can tell me the American church doesn’t have a HUGE problem**, and even those results (with a famous pastor at the helm) make my repeatedly cited **5%** statistic look quite successful!

If you can help it, you don’t try to evangelize (speak the Gospel) to Christians, because they don’t need it, yet that’s PRIMARILY what we do at church, claiming thereby that we are doing evangelism.

Churches evangelizing primarily in their worship service is like looking for a date at a **marriage conference**. [i.e., There may be ‘single ladies’ there, but they would be the exception; not a ‘target-rich environment’]

Evangelism is the primary job description of every Christian... Most of us should've been fired by now for non-performance. —**Tejado Hanchell**

Knowing God's revealed plan of impending judgment on mankind (i.e., Bible prophecy), our ONLY response can be to invite people to salvation! (**Rev. 22:17**)

The **Gospel** is the power of God unto salvation—not your personal testimony (even if 'dramatic,' which your salvation **always** is). We can tell the latter but we've been commanded to tell the former.

Mankind's problem is NOT that he has no purpose, feels empty or alone, or needs a friend, someone to do a good deed for him or someone to pray for him. The Church does so many activities other than evangelize to try to 'relate' to and empathize with the lost, when God tells us what to do, what to tell them and to do it immediately! There is no time, and theirs is no mere common cold or emotional need they need resolved!

On completing the Great Commission, the American church is like *hundreds of thousands* of LONE WOLF **military commanders** who have no cohesive strategy, never communicate with the other, never track results, and have near ZERO idea how the battle is going, or even if we're **winning** or **losing**. So long as we enjoy a good worship service, don't even engage the war—unless people leave the battle field and happen into our comfortable M.A.S.H. units called "church." **BAD military Commanders** have NO IDEA the *scope* of work remaining or currently being done, and no recording of progress.

America is now a foreign mission field to third world countries we had cultivated as foreign mission fields in the 1800's. Smaller countries are sending missionaries to witness to *Americans*. *What is it they see in us that we don't see in ourselves?* A **lack of evangelism** and **need for salvation**.

Have we become the prophesied "ear tickler" generation, who never 'step on toes' or 'offend' anyone for any MAJOR moral issues? **Why do we get angrier** at someone reproving us for our only 5% who ever evangelize rather than our **anger being at the 95%** of Christians who don't give a darn about lost peoples' eternity? Are those 95% showing love and selflessness?

A New York magazine article wrote of the Bernie Madoff family, "*Meet the Worst Family in the World.*" If money were more important than God, this statement might be true, but since it is not, an interview with 95% of American Christians—who *rob* people of a positive eternity by not evangelizing—would more aptly fit the bill.

If you don't like my 'methods' or 'tone,' **YOU change the 5%** who ever evangelize one person in their lifetime (God, of course, doing it through you)! Why doesn't that 5% statistic stir up YOUR spirit to *righteous indignation*? Could you suffer from the *indifference* of a hardened heart?

When was the heavenly memo sent that Christians should abandon any Bible verses on reproof, correction and rebuke, in favor of whole-heartedly embracing our culture's **Positive Mental Attitude** and **Political Correctness** idols? In light of *large* and *prevalent* church problems, the 5% statistic of evangelizers remaining constant for 30 years, our society's increase in sin (likely a prophetic sign of the times), and many mega church pastors avoiding top priorities if such could **threaten their church growth opportunities**, how can one be very positive or overly optimistic, as is required by our culture?

If you can **prove** Jesus will **not** return for a long time, or that **everyone has heard** the Gospel, I'll change my methods and tone, and adopt the *apathetic* and *slow-paced attitude* most American Christians have today!

You think I'm judgmental? **Have you ever read** of God leading imperfect men to reprove His people for **MAJOR** sins, and **warn** them of impending judgment for such evils as **ignoring the plight of un-evangelized lost people**?

Why do so few American Christians ever tell anyone the Gospel? Is the Gospel untrue or unimportant, or has EVERYONE heard enough times that we can **quit** and feel content?

Do you know of one church who knows the spiritual condition of *every* soul within a mile of their building—the “field” and “sphere” they're most responsible before God for? Any church **more serious about men's salvation** than just growing their business would have a map of their local sphere of influence to ensure they reached them all (Ex.: neighborhood photo—Aerial Focus Maps, 214.866.0700, or actual government mailing route street addresses with owners listed). **Anything short of this** proves you're practicing a hit-and-miss, *random* approach.

If Pepsi executives were trying to get their drink to every person on earth, and launched a multi-billion dollar campaign to do so, but never tracked how many customers they had **before** and **after** that initiative (or patted themselves on the back for having ‘*many*’ customers), they'd be **FIRED**. Only *personal* evangelism—**human communication**—can ensure *all* were reached.

Anecdotally, when's the last time anyone asked you about your eternal salvation and destiny?

A *GOOD* shepherd **LEAVES** the 99 *saved* ones to **find the ONE** *lost* sheep. A **BAD** shepherd (or *hireling*) says to himself, I have a herd of 99 sheep—the lost should be able to SEE that and respond to our community-attracting activities or advertising. *GOOD* shepherds **DO** evangelism. *BAD* ones claim that's the evangelist's job.

Tens of millions of lost people in America could be *waiting* to hear from Christians. Our silence is deafening.

If the truth of hell hasn't made you evangelistic, you **haven't considered it** long enough.

We've got all eternity to *fellowship* and *worship* God—we **only have NOW** to **evangelize**. This is not to say don't worship or enjoy *koinonia*, but keep perspective of what's most needed and ‘*relevant*’ to lost people (and God's concern for them) in THIS life.

Relationship Evangelism

Biblical evangelism is bold, urgent, loving and direct. When did that standard change in favor of a **timid**, “natural,” *subtle*, **non-urgent** and non-comprehensive method? Answer: The mid-1980's.

Since when has **making friends** with people and **being ‘nice’** toward them been **biblically equated** with practicing evangelism (which is defined as **speaking the Gospel** to lost people)?

Relationship Evangelism is a declared **work slow-down** on *completing* the Great Commission, not orchestrated by God and **nowhere** clearly taught in His word (and we have Mr. Aldrich's "monumental" Lifestyle Evangelism work—which theologized this heresy—to blame).

Sadly, the "relationship evangelism" movement (started in the early 1980's) has *socially shamed* or *ostracized* direct evangelizers into the back rooms, where they are hardly united, vocal, and some have seemingly retired from evangelizing for fear of being different from the carnal norm or considered either *old-fashioned* or *stupid*, as 'everyone now knows' such practice is **"confrontational," "ineffective," only for the 10% sales personalities or not needed** in countries where the Gospel has gained a stronghold (all **LIES** of the **devil**, propagated by so-called "Christian" so-called "leaders").

Where in the Bible does it tell you to **entertain** and try to "**attract**" the world to your building, instead of leaving church to TELL THEM the Gospel? They only possess a dead, sinful spirit/nature, and a mature church should be almost a **polar opposite** of the lost's natural interests!

Does the Bible require a lost person to **attend a religious building** as a requirement for salvation? If a lost person near your church is not 'attracted' to your *events* or building, should he have no right to **hear how to avoid hell**?

Have you ever heard the **5% evangelize statistic** in a **sermon**, or that only **\$375 per American church**, annually, would **complete** the Great Commission in the least-evangelized part of the world? Who's **withholding these facts** (and why?), and who's "expertise" are you relying on?

"Church Growth"

Some preachers evidently do not believe that the Lord is with their gospel, because, in order to attract and save sinners, their gospel is insufficient, and they have to add to it inventions of men. **—Charles Spurgeon**

Why are so many American churches **preoccupied** with numeric growth, and raising *money* for **building programs**? Keeping up with the Jones'? Are modern ministers **co-laborers** or competitors (I Cor. 3:9)? When any church refuses to read what God says a church is to be, and instead relies on what tradition or their neighboring or competitor churches are doing, they *cease to please God* for the sake of pleasing their human membership to keep paying customers returning (i.e., the church-as-a-business model).

The Great Commission has been eclipsed and re-defined by the 'Church Growth' mantra, keeping laymen biblically **dumbed-down** (vs. *discipled*) and inviting people to church (vs. evangelizing) to support an "**attraction**" theory supposedly based on *culture* (vs. Christ), because laymen like **America's definition of "success"** (vs. God's—Josh. 1:8), as do pastors (**fame, fortune and keeping up with the competitor Jones—and Osteens**), because they're too lazy to tent make, if *needed*.

Why have so many pastors accepted the 'Church is a business' **lie**, and targeted people as church customers they are **in competition** with other *pastors* and *churches* to get? We are co-laborers!

Business says don't ever alienate your customers, as does **church-as-a-business**, while JESUS SAYS preach the **whole** counsel of God, reprove, and **He offended** His audience *several* times. Are our churches—especially mega churches—**more like business, or Jesus?**

Church growth teaching says worship services *targeted* to lost people should be “**relevant**,” when the Bible says to preach (and TEACH) the word—the **whole counsel of God** (Ac. 20:27). Spiritual things are foolish to the lost mind (I Cor. 1:18-25, 2:12-15), but if we change it, maybe they’ll like it, goes the theory. Customizing and **watering down** subject matter to the small percent of the Bible on relationships, family, parenting and career is an **equivalent sin** to the liberal denominations *de-mythologizing* the Bible by **denying** its miraculous parts. Both groups are guilty of *subtracting* from the word of God. (Rev. 22:18-19).

Demon-inationalism?

Though sometimes helpful, and necessary, do you believe God is **pleased** with so many **denominations**—separated from other believers and never cooperatively working to **fulfill** the Great Commission (NOT EXCLUSIVELY PROMOTING ANY CHURCH in the process)?

Why have denominations abandoned engaged debate of doctrinal differences in favor of **autonomous business units** totally self-contained and *self-absorbed*, with little to no interaction with any other churches (or denominations) in the pursuit of *business growth*?

The **Church Growth Movement** of the 1980’s is to blame for fostering this trend toward defining success by the criteria of **bodies, bucks and buildings**. Other pastors refined this concept, advocating the church-as-a-business philosophy in the 1990’s. Jesus has already shown us how He treats God’s religious institutions being treated as a business (twice cleansing the temple), and it is this author’s opinion that **any church that is run as a business ought to be taxed as a business!** Only hirelings, Balaam-like false prophets and tares are in ministry for the *fame* and *fortune*!

Why have we **lay people** allowed our donations to be used to make millionaires out of man-deemed “*celebrity* pastors” (Ex.: I Cor. 1-3) who don’t do the highest priorities, give little to the poor, and tithe only as a **reinvestment** in their own ministry?

Church Life (vs. ‘Body Life’)

The **biblically unrequired** ‘10% Christian tithe’ is primarily used to support **biblically unrequired** full-time pastors & church buildings.

Contemporary or *Traditional*? Paper or Plastic? Does the **Bible** instruct us about what types of music we are to utilize, in church, or is it up to congregation opinion polls, **age group** demographics, personal preferences and what’s *popular*? (Eph. 5:19, etc.)

Church “altar calls” are for any topic God has convicted someone about—*not* JUST salvation, joining the church or seeking baptism.

People are hungering for *genuine collective community* and **spiritual relationships**—even at our worship services, and the Holy Spirit is all too willing to provide both the **spontaneity** and **intimacy** so often lacking in our PROGRAMMED services (and church programs).

Is the Church in America more influencing our culture, or *vice versa*? Do we have any spiritual power anymore? (I Cor. 4:20)

Consequently, why is our world so perverse, God-hating and increasingly wicked? Our culture has become “**Politically Correct**”—offend no one, take no stands, just **be nice** to all—and the Church often agrees with this ‘form of godliness’ which **denies God** and His power.

Is God really *pleased* with our *throwing sermons* at these problems, or simply offering courses that are available to those interested? If better solutions exist, why are you **content** with the **failed status quo** (unless comfortable with habits and **income levels** which **MEN** view as “successful?”—Gal. 1:10)

The church is not formed to be a social club, to produce society for itself;
not to be a political association, but to be a power in politics;
not even to be a religious confederacy, promoting its own opinions:
it is a body created of the Lord to answer His own ends and purposes,
and it exists for nothing else. —**Charles Spurgeon**

Pastors

The average America church-goer has **NO** idea or involvement in what the church is supposed to be doing (i.e., *completing* the Great Commission), or what is about to soon take place (i.e., *prophecy*). Who’s most to blame? Those **entertaining** them for **profit** (i.e., ear-tickling), whom the laymen *rely* on for information and *consider* to be their spiritual “leaders” (i.e., “pastors”). Are there solutions? Yes, but the financial profits might *lessen*.

The attitude that so long as *people keep coming* and *giving* (i.e., the budget’s met), the **5/10/13 problem*** is not my fault (i.e., blame the laity, though you’re their *leader*), because I do my job (i.e., traditional vs. *full* biblical) by *preaching* (i.e., *rarely* teaching, never relationally discipling), and our church does do evangelism (i.e., only *some*, un-thorough, sporadic and *disorganized*) is a **HORRIFIC** pastoral attitude of the *heart* which needs to be repented of.

Churchianity teaches to be a ‘*good*’ Christian, **go to church** (Heb. 10:25) and **tithe** (Mal. 3:10) [and, hopefully, *being ‘good’* all week long (Tit. 3:14)]. Notice how these first two *espoused* **CORE** COMMANDS reinforce the minister’s profession (*mainly* preaching), while *de-emphasizing* **Body Life, Quiet Time (i.e., personal Bible study and prayer), relational discipleship, Lordship commitment, biblical (i.e., New Testament) giving and even evangelism**. How do you differentiate between a **true** minister, an unqualified or *corrupt* minister and a tare, false prophet, hireling, wolf in sheep’s clothing? There are *many* differences, but one way is their adherence to **biblical pastoral qualifications** (I Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9) and biblical **ministries** and **priorities**.

Since when does 5% or less of your church members doing evangelistic activities justify claiming that your church is “**reaching the world for Jesus Christ?**” Even if a person faithfully attends church and “tithes,” **you cannot pay your way out of the obligation to evangelize** any more than people used to **buy indulgences to cover their sins!** Too many of our pastors suffer from a *myopic*, “**blinders-on**” mentality of exaggerating and blowing out of proportion what **IS** being accomplished in evangelism, and trying to excuse or make all others feel included, by attributing the efforts of the **few** to the **many**.

Pastor, just between you and God, are you more concerned with **growing your church’s** size, or with **completing the Great Commission**? This is a **heart matter** no one can outwardly detect with 100% accuracy—but God knows and sees.

Whether from *ignorance* of the problem or **willful rebellion**, **too many pastors** seem content that laymen are **not** evangelizing (95% never evangelize) and **not** growing in Christ (90% in America are un-committed) so long as they are coming and giving (at church).

Since when has an evangelistic invitation at the end of a **church sermon** been the **PRIMARY** method for a church “reaching the world with the Gospel,” especially when the clergy is to **train** the laity to **do the work of ministry**? (Eph. 4)

They won’t listen, Lord. They don’t want to change church-as-a-business. They *negate* and *ignore* Your priorities, and anyone not in their system is *discounted* as an **evil** person or **extremist**. (Jer. 4:22; Judg. 17:6).

Dr. Jack Graham reports that the famed Chicago area Pastor **Bill Hybels** once admitted at a Pastor’s Conference that in *all his years* of *ministry* and *sermons*, he didn’t think he had really impacted his congregation’s lives very much. This *wouldn’t be the case* if pastors emulated **para-church** evangelism and discipleship **methodologies** and *materials*.

If pastors are LEADERS, and the **three most neglected** priorities of the Church are evangelism, discipleship and “body life,” are we really leading, **earning** our pay checks, or “successful” (no matter how many luke-warm people warm our benches (i.e., pews) and pay for our salaries and beautiful buildings!)?

A pastor is to preach, but also teach and pour his life into people (II Tim. 2:2; I Th. 2:8). Give money to pay for mega church pastors according to how well they prioritize (top priorities being evangelism and relational discipling). If they do little of these, pay them little, and earmark your gifts to specific ends.

Pay pastors even better when they preach *and* teach—not just preach (I Tim. 5:17). They’re called to do both, no matter their natural talents (or lack thereof, or even possibly laziness at reading and researching).

Pastors too often follow their peer crowd (and tradition)—**over the Bible**. Pastors’ primary commitment is to be devoted to the **word of God and prayer**, then to evangelize, disciple, preach *and* teach. Hospital visits, baptizing, counseling, marrying and burying and other lesser ministry tasks are more the work of laymen. (Eph. 4: 11-13; Ac. 6:4 and I Cor. 1:15-17—NOT doing lesser deacon or layman duties).

These things take faith. No one is promising every church member will be willing to evangelize, be committed to Christ and be disciplined, but no church will increase in these priorities if the pastors don’t mature them up (i.e., discipleship). Has any U.S. Pastor **not been disillusioned** by his *experience* where he is a **practicing atheist** regarding what God’s word says? When Christ returns, will He find faith on earth, even among pastors?

One pastor tried to discount this message by referencing a Minister who taught on parenting yet had no children (i.e.; Academic idealism by someone who has **never** experienced or **done it**), but he was SILENT when I told him that, humbly, **I have done or experienced** all these priorities as an Associate Pastor or independent Minister; Except the two only a Head Pastor can do—implementing Body Life and the 3 mile plan **church-wide**—and I’m willing (and have submitted resumes) to be hired to do even those activities as a Pastor.

Another pastor said if you bring in the people from these ministries, pastors will take note. I and *many others* have evangelized and disciplined **numbers**, but, as usual, **pastors are always looking to increase their membership and budget numbers** as *priority one*, and they could care less what God wants them to do as higher priorities, despite Matthew 6:33 saying to do the first things first, and God will bless you

Why are para-church organizations **far superior** to God's institution—the Church—in the important ministries of **evangelism** and **discipleship**?

Since when has the Bible taught that Christians should **politically associate only** with parties opposed to **abortion** and the **gay** lifestyle, but **support greed**, riches and government ignoring the plight of the **poor**? The Bible teaches that government is not to favor the rich *or* poor.

Is it only religious nut cases who are **morally offended** and **righteously indignant** that for **30 years** only **5%** of believers ever share the Gospel with anyone? Doesn't the **eternal destiny** of people we are supposed to love and care about MATTER?

Isn't the **reality of hell** enough to get us off our duffs to **make a plan** to reach everyone at least ONCE (research says it takes up to 7 times before positive responses are expected), also known as *faithfully* and *literally* **COMPLETING the Great Commission**?

Pastor, quit ALLOWING only 5% of your members to be evangelistic, by doing more—**ALL you can**—to change it, **SOON!** **Prioritize** and commit to these objectives.

Do you **care**?

Am I **spitting** in the wind or mindlessly ranting?

Is there any **godly pastor** who ever ponders these problems, make **plans** and takes **ACTION** to try to solve them? If so, I'D LIKE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Our COUNTRY is becoming more and more a **fulfillment** of these verses:

- When the Son of man returns, will He find *faith* on the earth?
- “most people’s love will grow *cold*.”
- “in the latter days, *difficult times* will come.”
- The *luke-warm* church described in Rev. 3.

We SAY we want “**revival**.” Pray, yes. But **DO** the things that put you in a position to most likely receive the answer to that prayer. **Quit ignoring** evangelism, discipleship and “body life!”

With so much **biblical ignorance** abounding among laymen, no wonder pastoral **inaction** on these matters is **accepted** and hardly even noticed! The laity is trusting the clergy to teach them what **God's word** says—including on evangelism, discipleship and “body life”—but the clergy's seminary training doesn't address these matters often, nor do their ministry peers **do them** much. **How do you expect things will change** without a grass roots movement of *Biblically-informed* and *committed* believers?

In short, God's people in America are deceived about *shallow* preaching (without teaching—I Tim. 5:17); Exclusively contemporary music (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16); Tithing, Lordship salvation, church growth more than priorities, seeker-sensitive churches (Rom. 3:11), attraction and relationship evangelism—*essentially most* practices occurring every Sunday (and some wonder

why we have or otherwise ignore the results—our **5/10/13 problem***... 5% of American Christians ever evangelize, only 10% are committed and only 13% regularly read the Bible). Dumbed-down sermons maintain this condition (II Tim. 4:3-4), so pastors can **pursue bigger pay checks** (and the laity FEEL so good after their one hour a week with God after professionals perform).

If you are willing to **do your part** to change these maladies, and want encouragement and education on what you can do, please contact us through this website's "Contact Us" section!
—Jim Meroney

EDB Ministries (i.e., Evangelism, Discipleship and Body Life Ministries)

P.S.—Feel free to get involved in any of the following message-promoting activities:

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES

What could you do for *evangelism* that is **BIG**? Pray about it, and for one thing, use all contacts and marketing savvy you possess to get this website *well-known*, well-read and *well-implemented*. A few other suggestions include:

- **#1:** Participate in the "Five Alive" Ministry, detailed below
- Fund a New York Times weekend back page ad of our Open Letter
- Contact us if you use any of our free materials to effectively stimulate a local church to action
- Email any relevant materials on this website to any and all pastors you know
- Use the author's resume attached on this site to apply for any Evangelism Minister or Pastor position (as it instructs church leaders what they should do, even if it is rejected)
- Call into Christian radio programs and exhort them according to principles on this site
- Email pastors and believers in other countries, to spread the word globally
- Leave comments on Christian blogs exhorting these principles
- *Legally* use auto-dial voicemails to reach believers with exhortations to evangelize
- Use email chain letters (if you're into that sort of thing) to promote the message
- Forward emails to your own friendship circles and Facebook or Twitter accounts
- Create your own website, and attach a link forwarding readers to this site (no funds will ever be solicited, but for the 'giving' button my webmaster created on the subject)
- Drop off door hangers when people are sleeping (for maximum efficiency), but don't get shot!
- Place evangelistic business cards on cars in parking lots (VistaPrint.com is very inexpensive)
- Meet with or email your church staff on these matters
- Put evangelism exhortation business cards on church parking lot cars
- Salesmen—leave a gospel tract or business card as you leave a business

SUMMARY:

Do whatever you can and are willing to do to promote—and DO—evangelism!

P.S.—Lest you think this author is TOO negative and sees zero good in the American Protestant church, if you want to meet genuine godly Christians who live the life, and whose fellowship I have cherished through the years, **my thanks go out to** my following fellowship friends I *wish*

you had the privilege of meeting—Dr. John Bisagno; Rev. Don Anderson, David Strawn; Mr. Bessire (who introduced me to my like-minded webmaster); Rev. Tom Eckman, Chad Uretsky and Tom Richardson. Though distance may separate us, my fellowship with each of these individuals **far surpasses** any activities of “Churchianity” with which I have been a part.

Why am I so *hard* on the Protestant Church, and not liberals or Catholics, whose official beliefs often stray further from the Bible? Because if the Church **won’t do the priorities** she’s called to—especially reaching the lost with the Gospel—**WHO ELSE IS THERE?**

What’s worse—a church being *strongly exhorted* to doing the right things, or not reaching all the lost in their community? You can try *positive motivation* on churches—especially mega churches—but, it rarely works (as we’ve been deceived that evangelism is negative and hard), and **human-defined success**, once achieved, often both blinds and hardens many churches to the truth. **See also:** Biblical Evidence for a Prophetic Voice

“Five Alive” (a *needed* ministry)

Organization: Layman-driven, voluntary, non- and not-for profit, not for fame and no “leader” but Christ. Name derives from the 5% who ever evangelize, plus others who will increase that percentage.

Purpose: Obedience to the Great Commission (completing the 3-mile plan **one time**, then *spreading the news* of that success world-wide).

Workers: Only unpaid laymen, and any like-minded pastors or evangelists (for no wages).

Duties Thereafter: Use any and all *moral* methods to get pastors on-board, ultimately without our help, and to encourage laymen to evangelize. Spread the organization around the world for global evangelism completion, and raise funds for paying 1040 window indigenous evangelists (\$15,000 a year) to complete the task there (as managed and monitored, for no financial waste).

Symbol: A stone with a 5! in red on it, connected to a sling shot with a cross on it, symbolizing the David vs. Goliath challenge of completing this task with only 5%, the exclamation mark indicating both being fervently alive and our hope for more to join us (as we pray and enlist).

Prospects: Members of Evangelism Explosion, Campus Crusade, Evangelists, (~Navigators?), etc.

Denominations: Inter-denominational, but first target Baptist, Bible Church and Charismatic (as most likely to cooperate)

Policy: Humble submission to your church leaders in your private life, to no one in this organization, and never to any prohibition against being part of this mission.

Beliefs: The Bible. Traditional mainstream doctrines.

Methods: Any method that gets you in a conversation with lost people about Jesus Christ, and can objectively document results for a completed ministry field.

Activities: ****Never let organization activities reduce your existing evangelism efforts!****

- a) Advocates visit churches to talk to pastors about the Prioritized Pastor Pledge
- b) Email the Prioritized Pastor Pledge Packet
- c) Place a Prioritized Pastor Pledge on a church’s door the night before church services
- d) Take Gospel Signs to churches (**See:** Appendix)
- e) Leave organization website business cards on church cars
- f) Organize a ‘world event’ (**See:** Foreign missions strategy section)
- g) John 3:16 billboard campaign
- h) Airplane streamer campaign

Later: To expand the 5%...

- i) Evangelism motivation seminars (Ex.: You Tube video)

- j) Evangelism training of laymen
- k) Take pastors evangelizing
- l) Etc.

Vision Materials: 3-Mile Plan (at our Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Funding: Evangelism costs no one anything but time and effort (except career Evangelists—I Cor. 9:15-19). Any activities which cost money will be funded by soliciting any and all donors sympathetic to the cause (whether they participate, or not). Ex.: Incorporation, website, billboards, materials, airplane streamers, etc.

2014 Update

Message:

Receive Jesus—sins forgiven.

Pray to receive Jesus for all your sins forgiven.

Items:

- ▶ ~Light-weight, carriable scrollable (or non-scrollable) sign, lighted for night visibility.
- ▶ Professional artwork and lettering Gospel sign (plastic or metal, waterproof, lighted by clip-ons?)
- ▶ Home-made picket Go Evangelize! signs (for surrounding crowd of workers).
- ▶ Hug, lighted white cross? (may turn off).
- ▶ Sophisticated megaphone with mouthpiece.
- ▶ Fire walker demonstration (or video).
- ▶ Old Bibles collection (to rip up).

Activities:

- Video door-to-door encounters (email YouTube link to churches).
- YouTube EDBS message.
- Take signs to marathons, rodeo, State Fair, Cowboys games, Christian concerts, National day of prayer, Christian 6 Flags day, DWF airport entrance, 121 overpass on Ohio, 4th of July celebrations, etc.
- Billboards (donated).
- Airplane streamers (donated).
- Global mega church email campaign.
- Books sold (Ex.: Zondervan, Word/Lifeway).
- Project Prosper (billboard, email, etc.)—videoed.

Other:

- Live streaming podcast (Ex.: Greg Laurie)
- Parades (with banner in front and pickets elsewhere).
- March on Washington (and state capitals).
- Public debate (on stage).
- Circle around a mega church with same T-shirted laymen.
- Hands across the city event.
- Circle around a mega church with same T-shirted laymen.
- Open air church (with music).
- People make up a cross? (vs. living Christmas' tree).
- Skywrite Jn. 3:16 or Jesus saves?
- Blimp script.
- T-shirts as participants walk, or climb.

- Use all media (including TV and radio).

Venues:

All cities of the world; large to small.
 Seminaries (Ex.: DTS, SWBTS, Criswell).
 Bible colleges.
 High church denominational headquarters (or gatherings).
 The Vatican.
 Cult headquarters.

Disclaimers:

Prayer-backed.
 Replicate in any safe country.
 Get the media involved.
 Need city permits?
 More than 20 people gets the public's attention.

Workforce:

RCCGSNA.org
 Local church evangelism leaders.
 Southern Baptist Convention evangelists list.
 10,000+ Lausanne evangelists (BGEA list).

The 'JOHN 3:16 Billboard' Campaign

Before addressing specific positive and negative feature of the modern American church in detail, an overview of that assessment can more quickly be given by your reviewing the following proposed 'John 3:16' billboard campaign, the contents of which cover our top needed priorities sufficient enough for one to skip over the section that immediately follows (if short on time).

You've seen or heard about the '**billboards for God**' campaign, with witty 1-liners signed off by God, haven't you? Before addressing the American church's greatest needs, *please review the following proposed new billboard campaign*, but please note, it does not bring me joy to *have* to do this, but I assure you it is **needed**, though undesired. If anyone will **fund the following billboard slogans**, I will take all the heat and *never* reveal your name (if you desire privacy). Some may argue this is '*airing the family's dirty laundry*,' but I have dealt with pastors over 25 years and they keep these exhortations a **secret** from their members, to maintain their **public "image."**

Every billboard will reference this website, to ensure *no one else receives the fall out*. We *could* use some billboards to tell the Gospel, but **the great need** is reaching Christian laymen and pastors to exert *godly pressure* on them to start **implementing** a 3-mile plan.

It would be *ideal* to have a donor **build a billboard** that consecutively *computer-generated* all these statements every few seconds, but it would need to be vandalism-, bullet- and fire-proof. I assure you the attention this would bring to the cause of Christ would be *worth the investment* (and you could use it for your business thereafter).

EVANGELISM

Warning the Lost

If no “Christian” has asked you where you will spend eternity recently, ask them why they don’t love you. (**John 3:16**, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

You may never have another Christian tell you the Gospel again at their current pace, so pray to receive Jesus for the forgiveness of ALL your sins.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

You will go to hell if you never hear the message 95% of the Church is too scared to tell you.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

___ Days & counting since Christians SHOULD have told ALL of you the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)
[using an *automatic clock ticker*]

If you know a Christian, ask him what he is supposed to say to you.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

To go to heaven, pray to receive Jesus for the forgiveness of ALL your sins.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Pray to receive Jesus for the forgiveness of ALL your sins or there will be literal ‘hell to pay.’ (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Many American Christians will be paupers in heaven, though it’s better than the alternative.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

If a doctor found the cure to cancer and kept it to himself, you’d feel about him the same way you should feel about 95% of American Christians.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

God nowhere requires anyone to go to church in order to learn how to go to heaven, but MOST churches do. Pray to receive Jesus for the forgiveness of ALL your sins.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Forgive us, world, for presenting Jesus as a money and real estate-craving business called “church,” when He stood for just the *opposite*.
(Jn. 2:13-16; Mt. 24:1-2; John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Our BUSINESS model does not call for telling the Gospel to EVERY lost person near our building—to literally fulfill the Great Commission. –The American Church
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

You’re being eternally duped by churches who treat you like everything’s alright, saying ONLY “God loves you.” (John 3:18; John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Never talk about religion or politics and live a shallow and *hell-bound* life.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

The 5%

5% of Christians ever evangelize. If you’re one of them, please contact us so we can organize to complete one zip code or town, to show the other 95% it CAN and needs to be done.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

The Problem

95% of Christians will do anything but tell you the Gospel—the ONLY thing they can do for you that helps you eternally.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

God requires His people to tell you how to avoid hell and go to heaven but 95% of them are disobedient. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

The evangelistic laziness of the church will cause the eternal destruction of many unreached people.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

95% of U.S. Christians are scared to tell you how to go to heaven, and for fear they'll offend you, they'll "lovingly" let you go to hell.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

How can "good" people let other humans go to hell untold and un-warned?
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

95% of American Christians are hypocrites on needed job one.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

95% of American Christians are unwise.
(Pv. 11::30; John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Atheists: 95% of American Christians are bad with God.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

95% of Christians fail to address the most important issue of life.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

5% of Christians ever tell anyone about Christ, and the buck stops with pastors.
Disciple your church members.
(I Pet. 5:1-3; Eph. 4:10-13; John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Nike knows more about biblical evangelism than many pastors and 95% of Christians—'just do it.'
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Christian: Evangelize! They go to hell if you don't, and their blood is on your hands.
(Eze. 3:18; Ac. 20:26; John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Pastors hate this website, because it TELLS THE TRUTH!
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

The most-hated website by the American church?
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

God will judge His people for their lack of evangelism.
(Heb.10:30; John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

The American Church is spiritually fiddling while Rome (eternally) burns.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Christians' apathy will ultimately cause there to be hell to pay for those they were supposed to reach. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Nice buildings, suits, dresses and a smile for an hour a week cannot disguise the fact that 95% of Christians demonstrate hatred for the lost by *never evangelizing them*.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

The Gospel: The greatest message *never* told (by 95% of American Christians).
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

God bless the evangelists. Support them like your *eternal* life depended on it.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Some Jews repented at John the Baptist's preaching.

Will ANY church *implement thorough* evangelism of everyone *near* their church?
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Judgment is needed by *every* church refusing to evangelize *every* lost soul near their church in the next 2-3 years. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

I would go on a hunger strike to get ONE American church to reach ALL the lost in their area with the Gospel, but Someone has already died on a cross for that purpose. Church: do your job!
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

In Acts one man spoke and 5,000 got saved. In America, it often takes 5,000 church members just to see one saved. (*paraphrase* of the late Dr. W.A. Criswell;
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

God requires no one to go to church to hear how to go to heaven.

That's religious business marketing—NOT the Bible.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

The Bible teaches Christians to leave their building and tell people the Gospel. Modern church requires the otherwise hell-bound to be "attracted" to their church.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

How did Christ's apostles turn the world upside down without church jump houses, Christian 'celebrity' guests, cookouts, face painting and other amenities?
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Fulfilling the Great Commission does not require one building to be built!
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Denominations—a barrier the devil uses to keep Christians from uniting (despite important differences) to DO the Great Commission. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Christian and Pastor: If your mind isn't worldly, you'll think about evangelizing *often*.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

If there was a spiritual battle and 95% of Christians were unaware of it, the devil would win.

There IS such a battle for men's eternal soul.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

500 U.S. mega churches completely ignored a recent call to fully evangelize their neighborhoods, and YOU suffer for that decision.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

If the world *really* was coming to an end, and those who knew never told you, what would you rightly think of them?

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

No Plan

If God gave mankind only *one last warning* before judgment, the Church is, sadly, too disorganized or disinterested to ensure you would all hear the Gospel one last time.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Christians have the most disorganized lack of a plan to ensure they have COMPLETED the Great Commission, and no pastor even seems to notice there's even a problem.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Relationship Evangelism

Many Christians try to *serve* you, befriend you or invite you to church, with a noble HIDDEN agenda—to eventually tell you the Gospel. You cannot afford that time wasted staying spiritually lost.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Christians trying to *become your friend* 'for Jesus'
are just too scared to tell you how to go to heaven today.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Timid Christians *lacking power* are trying to “befriend” you to eventually tell you the Gospel.

You can't afford those wasted days facing judgment if you die before then!

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Is ANY church not engaged in the Great Commission work slowdown—“relationship evangelism—that doesn't believe *the Gospel* is God's power, without emotional bonding?

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

If a Christian does good toward you *so he can tell you* the Gospel,
he is afraid the message itself is not God's power for salvation.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

'Relationship evangelism' masks Christians' fear to speak the Gospel to strangers
and hides pastors' ulterior motives for recruiting *paying* church members
more so than seeing people saved. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button,

at AmericanAnswers.org)

The Bible doesn't excuse Christians from evangelizing based on not having a *salesman's personality*,
but “godly” preachers allow their members to *disobey God* with this excuse.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

God never required Christians to have a salesman's personality—
only to speak the Gospel to lost people. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button,

at AmericanAnswers.org)

No Christian's lifestyle is ever so good you can learn how to go to heaven by watching their deeds.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

AMERICAN CHURCH LIFE

Evangelism

God does not require you to search how to go to heaven, but 95% of His Church *sinfully* does.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

If the church nearest you hasn't asked where you will spend eternity, ask them, why the hatred?

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Every church needs to tell the Gospel to every needy person near their building, but few ever WILL. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Pastors knowingly (and church members more ignorantly) are complicit in not doing their TOP priorities—*ever*. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Any church not doing “Evangelism, Disciples-making, Body Life and Social ministry to the poor” is corrupt at heart and will likely be judged soon.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Pastors are guilty of *professional negligence* not knowing the spiritual condition of EVERYONE within walking distance of their church.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

A farmer is incompetent if he only harvests a FEW corn stalks in his field. Pastors: evangelize!

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Most churches are corrupt in meeting YOUR *number one* need.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

The Church will never know if they have COMPLETED the Great Commission with their current *practice* and *pace*. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Accessibility of the Gospel is not *acceptance* of the Gospel.

Leave your church and GO EVANGELIZE, pastors!

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

God: We knowingly choose not to FULFILL the Great Commission. –The American Church

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

We never thought about our *immediate neighbors* needing to hear the Gospel.

–The American Church (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Para-church organizations *run circles* around the church in evangelism and discipleship—the same type circles as happened at Jericho.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

If one church would COMPLETE the Great Commission near their building, others may (or may not) follow suit, but we’d be one step closer to experiencing revival.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Hasten the day of Christ’s return! Go evangelize, Christian.

(II Pet. 3:11-12; John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Hirelings or Pastors?

Has *any* pastor in your area ever told YOU the Gospel?

How can they require you to *visit their building* to hear the message of LIFE?

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Pastors are getting away with WORSE than *murder*

not reaching ALL in their vicinity with the Gospel!

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Have you ever seen a pastor do any ministry outside his building
that couldn't bring in more *paying customers*?
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Why won't churches tell you the Gospel outside their building?
They want YOU as *paying customers*. God wants you SAVED (from hell).
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Any pastor who will not evangelize ALL the lost near their church ASAP
is on record as being *guilty* before God. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at
AmericanAnswers.org)

How can any *true* minister not reach EVERY lost person near their church?
False prophets are in ministry *for the money*. Follow the money (and deeds)—*not* the words.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Being a pastor is NOT just running the business and preaching a sermon.
Do evangelism, discipleship, Body Life and social ministry (especially helping the *poor*)! Duh 101
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Is any church—like Paul—'innocent of the blood of all men'—
JUST in their own neighborhood?
(Ac. 20:26; John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Get out of your cloistered office and go evangelize during the week, pastors.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Only pastors with *egos* refuse to leave their cloistered *comfort zones* to tell their neighbors
how to go to heaven—and *NOT* just those who have visited, who are potential *paying customers*.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Does any pastor believe if you simply obey God and evangelize ALL the needy near your building—
not wondering whether or how they can become paying church members—He will BLESS you?
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

If there is any pastor in America who is willing to reach EVERY lost person near their building,
and needs *help*, please contact us. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button,
at AmericanAnswers.org)

If any pastor has FULLY evangelized all people near their church, please *give me a call*.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Any pastor viewing another pastor as *CO*mpetition vs. *CO*-laborers for Christ is *CO*-rrupt.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

A pastor has no more claim to your money than an *evangelist* without a church building, and who's
doing more to get people into heaven instead of getting the heaven-bound entertained and educated?
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Someone *full-time* winning souls is much more valuable than someone just preaching sermons to the
saints. "Tithe" to *evangelists*! Quit giving them the *leftovers* after million dollar building programs.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Pastors have a *false monopoly* on Christians' "tithe,"
when evangelists and disciple-makers do more of a much more important job.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Selfish Christians only fund their church. Selfless Christians fund *evangelists*.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

The information on this website gets buried and hidden by pastors, when confronted, for fear the *truth* will hurt their religious business.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

American Church

The *Rapture* may come SOON primarily to end the *deplorable* condition of God's people, the Church.

(John 3:16, **Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org**)

American Christians **HATE** this we site. *Why?*

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

The Church in Acts impacted its culture. Today's church is too often ignored, as mere impotent, self-contained business units on street corners.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Church may be boring, but God isn't. Learn to *separate* the two.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

If you go to church and see their buildings, you'll never see that 10% are committed to God, 13% read the Bible regularly and only 5% ever evangelize one person.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Going to church, sitting and "tithing" is *not* New Testament Christianity, but "Churchianity."

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Christianity is not a spectator sport you go to a building 1 hour a week for to watch professionals earn their keep. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button,

at AmericanAnswers.org)

Give me amenities, luxuries, entertainment and a comfortably *good feeling* at church, and *TO HELL* with those who *TO HELL* will go is far too often the statement of the American Christian's behavior.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

A Christian only relying on sermons for their ingestion of the Bible is like having a human mediator between them and God, when they have *24/7 direct access*.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

A Christian only getting their Bible intake at church is like having a *chaperone on your honeymoon*. You have direct 24/7 access to God, Christian—USE IT.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Churchianity is a sermon, music and giving money. *Christianity is far more!*

The Church prays for revival, but never fulfills its other 3 requirements.

(II Chron. 7:14, by analogy; John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Laodicea was the winning National Spelling Bee word in 2010, and sadly, describes MANY U.S. churches. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Only Bible-ignorant, apathetic laymen content with crowds, buildings and a good 1 hour at church a week would allow un-prioritized pastors to continue to *FLOURISH*. You are part of the problem!

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Church-as-a-Business

It is a mental illness—otherwise known as the *love of money*—to believe you must construct a *building* in order to complete the Great Commission.

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Churches *run* like a business should be taxed like a business.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Church-as-a-business sees members as paying customers,
and Jesus TURNED THE TABLES on such an attitude.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Mega church pastors: *Reveal* your total compensation and CAP your salary if you're *really* not in it for the *money*. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Many mega church pastors need to quit using ALL AMERICANS' non-profit laws to *line their pockets!*
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

It's sad how otherwise intelligent-seeming people can be *duped* to pay for buildings to expand churches, believing that that is *required* for EVANGELISM.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Churches waste BILLIONS of dollars on themselves, when only \$375 per church could *complete* the Great Commission in the most needy part of the world (the '1040 Window').
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

With the rise of mega churches, the cries for 'revival' in America have *waned*.
Perhaps all that they wanted was more *paying church members*.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

COMPLETING the Great Commission is not part of the "business plan" of the *church-as-a-business* That Jesus would *turn the tables* on were He physically here and inside (vs. outside) them, knocking on their door. (Jn. 2:13-16; John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Rev. 3:15-19 are '*life verses*' for many mega churches.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Giving

How can otherwise intelligent-seeming people be *duped* into *making pastors millionaires* with earthly monuments to their egos, when *building program money* could WIN SOULS if we really *cares*?
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

A "tithe" is a Jewish national tax pastors *guilt* you into to keep their buildings and salaries *paid for*.
Give as the Spirit leads, and learn how to be led, Christian.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Pastors claim a *monopoly* on Christians' "tithes" and those doing the *real work*—Evangelists and disciple-makers—are left *rummaging for crumbs* and bi-vocationally working. God led this mess?
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

The foolish make pastors *millionaires* thinking they're giving to *God!*

(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Your pastor won't tell you that the New Testament teaches giving as the Spirit leads—not the *Jewish national tax*—the tithe. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Denominations

II Cor. 8:13-15... Denominations and *self-absorbed* churches ignore this truth.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Prophecy

If the world's coming to an end, the Church won't tell you and *most* of them wouldn't know it.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Jesus is coming soon, and if you're not ready there will be "hell to pay." To go to heaven, pray to receive Jesus for the forgiveness of ALL your sins.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

CARNALITY VS. COMMITMENT

If America is 'going to hell in a hand basket,' it is *primarily due* to apathetic Christians who have a *cultural morality* and remain silent about the Gospel.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

The devil *rejoices* at these statistics: 10% of Christians are committed to God, 13% regularly read their Bible and only 5% ever tell the Gospel to anyone.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

90% of U.S. Christians will be *paupers* in heaven—no evangelism, no zeal, no commitment.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

10% of Christians are committed, and the other 90% face God's *disciplining*.
(Heb. 10:30; John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Un-committed, un-zealous, un-evangelistic Christians are an *oxymoron*, yet the experience of the MAJORITY in America.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Is eternal life and direct access to God so *mundane* only 10% of Christians are committed to God?
Give away your Bible, Christian, if you don't read it *regularly*.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Rip up or burn your Bible, Christian, if you don't read it very often. Even better, give it to someone who doesn't know Jesus. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

Burning the *Koran* in Florida? 87% of American Christians cause the same effect on their Bibles, by not reading it *regularly*. (John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

A Christian *not regularly reading* his Bible is like a person taking a meal once a week. It is our life's blood, because 'man cannot live by bread alone,' or like SPIRITUAL CAMELS drinking only at church.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

If a Christian is no different from YOU—*not* zealous for God, *never* telling you about Jesus and *never* living out His Bible—ask him how he knows he's saved and what that salvation means to him.
(John 3:16, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org)

WEEKEND WARRIOR WITNESSES (WWW.)

“Give me 20 volunteers and we’ll change the world.”

Needed: Professional videographer, donated billboard (preferable centrally located) and airplane streamer.

For one weekend, these people, after praying, will do all of the following:

1. Publicly evangelize (Ex.: tracts) at a large public event on Saturday (Ex.: sports, concerts).
2. On Sunday take Go Evangelize! Signs in teams to five mega churches, as laymen arrive.
3. Airplane streamer will circle over the public event.
4. Billboard will support the weekend the entire month before.

Explanations:

- ▶ The billboard and streamer sign will use a select message from the John 3:16 Billboard campaign to expose Christians’ and churches lack of evangelism (and refer them to that website).
- ▶ IF the billboard is NOT centrally located, the 20 will ‘protest’ beneath it to draw attention.
- ▶ The media will be alerted to a major public event/protest.
- ▶ After the event is filmed, a link to its YouTube location (translated in various languages) will be attached to emails to every mega church in the world exhorting them that if two laymen can do this *minimal* effort, why can’t God’s so-called “leaders” in their own corner of the world (their field/sphere/Jerusalem)?

Website-Corroborating Book Excerpts:

Quitting Church: Why the Faithful are Fleeing and What to Do About it,
by Julia Duin (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 2008

Megachurch Errors.

...Clint Rainey recounted his thoughts of belonging to one of the area’s megachurches that boasts a skate park, sports league, café, game group, and jumbotrons. He writes that, amid all of the bells and whistles, ‘we’ve been reminded intermittently, [it] is to ‘attract seekers. I’ve grown very disenchanted with this concept. Attract seekers to what? A sanctuary worthy of a Broadway production? An auditorium mimicking a convention center? A complex of expensive buildings?’ (p. 51)

Church-as-a-Business.

Church is too patterned after corporate America. Church is a business and the congregation its customers. –**David Frederickson** (p. 113) My own church recently asked members what they would want changed in the church, then gave them a free snow cone for their troubles. Interview God–He’s your boss–not man, and He’s already spoken and answered your questions.

Church Growth-Minded Pastors.

The average evangelical pastor is not a man of the Scriptures. ...They are more into marketing modes for growth, but growth for growth’s sake is the philosophy of the cancer cell. –**Patrick Reardon** (p. 104)

Love of Money Pastors.

John Fountain... blames money-hungry pastors for his disenchantment with church and subsequent refusal to go. Mercedes-buying preachers and husband-and-wife pastoral couples who live off the offerings of poor families, including many single mothers, especially earned his wrath. (pp. 121-122)

Weak Discipleship.

[Are pastors] afraid of losing people? Do they fear being unable to make mortgage payments? Are they mindful of needing people to give more toward the church's growing expenses? I'm convinced these things combine to persuade good men to preach a soft message. –**David Wilkerson** (p. 110; unfortunately, for would-be businessman pastors, God does not allow you to pick and choose parts from the full counsel of God, and not trusting Him to supply all your needs—and competing vs. co-laboring—causes these *fleshly* decisions—Mt. 6:33 You are under moral obligation to obey God—not (i.e., more than) man, including 'church customers.' Growing stronger—not weaker—Christians is the answer, including how to increase contributions, but this can also risk carnals (vs. spirituals) exiting your doors]

Example: We don't want to do anything that will upset our listeners. –**Christian radio station manager** (p. 108)

Pastors Hiding Their Income.

One facet of control is secrecy. I've learned from years of religion reporting that many churches are very reluctant to give out their annual budget figures. Even worse, pastors do not want to divulge their salaries, even to the congregants who are paying the bills. Pastors are traditionally as poor as church mice, but usually for those who oversee a large church, salaries are generous. (p. 130)

Pre-1985 Church Life in USA.

...we remembered all too well how much livelier American religion was in the seventies. (p. 18) There they had experienced fabulous worship, great preaching, spiritual gifts, and sacrificial giving so that newcomers were converted almost as soon as they walked into the place. (p. 16) ...the spiritual power so evident in churches in the 1970's had evaporated. Church growth techniques were substituted. (p. 15)

Church Growth Flavor-of-the-Month Fads.

There is a way in which evangelicalism as a broad movement is being too worldly in trying to reach this culture. In the process, they have become it. ...I and another evangelical pastor sat down and listed eighteen different fads that swept through American churches in the past few decades. Every time something comes up, people jump on the bandwagon like lemmings. It's trying to find the quick fix that will add to your members. –**Wilbur Ellsworth** (pp. 79, 81; Ex.: Spiritual gift inventories, inner healing, Weigh Down Workshop, Left Behind series, Becoming a Contagious Christian, church growth movement, prayer walks, Home Bible studies/small groups, purpose-driven life, Toronto blessing, Prayer of Jabez; Experiencing God, spiritual mapping; Generational sins, Christian male bonding, Promise Keepers, What Would Jesus Do?, megachurch, seeker-sensitive, etc.).

POOR Pastor Spiritual Results.

Barna says most pastors are not leaders. They may be teachers or shepherds, but they do not lead—that is, motivate the flock and lead institutional change. ...they are by nature risk-averse personalities. This would be deadly in the business world, and it's deadly in the kingdom of God as well. (p. 128)

Pastors guessed that 70 percent of their members placed their faith in God as their top priority. Their members' survey showed it was like 23 percent. ...Pastors evaluate spiritual health from an institutional perspective—that is, are people involved in keeping the system going—while people are aware of their unmet need to have a deeper and more meaningful relationship with God. (p. 128)

The Power of Body Life.

Right now, Christians all over the English-speaking world are casting about, looking for a solution to the present malaise. Like the builders of Nehemiah's wall, they have often operated too separately and too far apart. Their best efforts get diminished, then absorbed by the culture. Miracles happened in Acts 2 when Christians decided to share things in common, be willing to suffer together, and be part of a supernatural church. They can happen again if enough believers are willing to pay the price. Then people will begin craving church instead of quitting church and the exodus will be no more. (p. 180)

My Age 50 Commitment to Change the 5%.

The people opting out of church had been leaders, the most committed, but as the years wore on, they simply could not stand to sit and 'watch the same old game being played anymore.' (p. 19)

Big Box Church Deacon Response to Myself.

Your life is a rebuke to them because they cannot afford to be fearless anymore. Fearless people unsettle and unnerve the structure. —Mike Bickle (p. 102)
'Oh, you'll leave,' they said, because they won't change. Either you change or you leave.' (p. 24)

Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream, by David Platt (New Society Publishers), 2010

[A good book; except for contradictory call to *Christians* to be disciples while espousing Lordship Salvation—i.e., disciple commitment required for salvation—discipleship as a one-year test run (vs. life-long requirement of believers—and disparaging on mega church size in membership numbers (vs. content criticism), despite Ac. 2, 4]

Church-as-a-Business Materialism.

I am convinced that we as Christ followers in American churches have embraced values and ideas that are not only unbiblical but that actually contradict the gospel we claim to believe. (p. 3)

Cultural Morality.

We are giving into the dangerous temptation to take the Jesus of the Bible and twist him into a version of Jesus we are more comfortable with. A nice, middle-class, American Jesus. A Jesus who doesn't mind materialism and who would never call us to give away everything we have. A Jesus who would not expect us to forsake our closest relationships so that he receives all our affection. A Jesus who is fine with nominal devotion that does not infringe on our comforts, because, after all, he loves us just the way we are. A Jesus who wants us to be balanced, who wants us to avoid dangerous extremes, and who, for that matter, warns us to avoid danger altogether. A Jesus who brings us comfort and prosperity as we live out our Christian spin on the American dream. (p. 13)

American Idol—Money—as the Number 1 Reason (0% of American Christians are Carnal.

The lesson I learned is that the war against materialism in our hearts is exactly that: a war. It is a constant battle to resist the temptation to have more luxuries, to acquire more stuff, and to live more comfortably. (p. 136)

Giving to the Poor

...[John] Calvin once said that half of the church's funds should be allotted specifically for the poor (a far cry from most church budgets today)... What if we actually set a cap on our lifestyles? ...This is what [John] Wesley did. (Radical, pp. 128-129)

Biblical Motivation to a Lordship Commitment.

This is where Christ dramatically deviates from the American dream. Yes, Jesus promises great reward, but his reward looks much different than what we might expect. The reward of the American dream is safety, security, and success found in more comfort, better stuff, and greater prosperity. But the reward of Christ trumps all these things and beckons us to live for an eternal safety, security, and satisfaction that far outweigh everything this world has to offer us. (pp. 171-172)

Pagan Christianity: Exploring the Roots of Our Church Practices,

by Frank Viola & George Barna (Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.: Carol Stream, IL), 2004

[Some good features, but excessively negative, as if almost all of Christendom is wrong. Fails to understand amoral evolutions in the church, possibility of sanctifying 'pagan' practices, as we've done with many hymns, over-emphasizes house churches, de-emphasizes legitimate role of a paid pastor, sermons and seminaries etc. Good emphasis against a required tithe and church buildings, etc. NOT Barna's best read, or career advancing work).

'Tithing.'

This was the biblical tithe. God commanded Israel to give 23.3 percent of their income every year, not 10 percent... Tithing belonged exclusively to Israel under the Law. When it comes to financial stewardship, we see the first-century Christians giving cheerfully according to their ability-not dutifully out of a command. Giving in the early church was voluntary. And those who benefitted from it were the poor, orphans, widows, sick, prisoners, and strangers... First, Abraham's tithe was completely voluntary. It was not compulsory. God did not command it as he did with the tithe for Israel. Second, Abraham tithed out of the spoils that he acquired after a particular battle he fought. He did not tithe out of his own regular income or property. Abraham's act of tithing would be akin to you winning the lottery or a mega jackpot, or receiving a work bonus, then tithing it.... Third, and most important, this is the only recorded time that Abraham tithed out of his 175 years of life on this earth. We have no evidence that he ever did such a thing again... this passage was directed to ancient Israel when they were under the Mosaic Law. God's people were holding back their tithe and offerings... The widows, fatherless, and strangers were the rightful recipients of the tithe. Because Israel was withholding her tithe, she was guilty of ignoring the needs of these three groups. Herein is the heart of God in Malachi 3:8-10: He opposes oppression of the poor. (pp. 172-175)

Minister-Focused Church Ministry.

Though revered for five centuries, the conventional sermon has negatively impacted the church in a number of ways. First the sermon makes the preacher the virtuoso performer of the regular church gathering. Second, the sermon often stalemates spiritual growth... Fourth, rather than equipping the saints, the sermon de-skills them. (pp. 97-98)

Demoninations.

The early Christians did not divide themselves into various denominations. (p. 249)



Recent Tweets
(@ JamesMeroney)

Many pastors' **DEEDS** show their favorite Bible verses to be Mal. 3:10 and Heb. 10:35, rather than Jn. 3:16 and 17:17.

Many pastors **de-emphasize** personal evangelism and Quiet Time (arguably the two most important activities for Christians) because they DON'T occur at their religious business, where THEY most directly affect church customers.

It is **NOT** the New Testament which requires church buildings, full-time pastors, or the "tithe" that supports them.

Salaries based on donations (Ex.: "tithes") or forced funding (Ex.: taxes) should be most accountably transparent and modest.

2. The Gospel

(A printable Tract I *PRAY* you'll *hand out* or *email* to MANY lost people!)

THE GOSPEL (“Good News”)

(References from the New American Standard Version Bible)

DO YOU KNOW FOR CERTAIN THAT YOU WILL GO TO HEAVEN WHEN YOU DIE?...

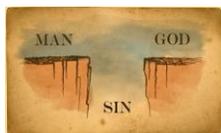
1. GOD’S PLAN: Good News... God Loves You, and has a Wonderful Plan for your Life!



“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

“The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.” (John 10:10)

2. MAN’S PROBLEM: All People have Sinned—No One is Morally Perfect.



If you have ever committed one sin, you are guilty before God as if you had committed all sins. Therefore, no one deserves to go to heaven and no one can work their way there.

“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23)

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me.” (John 14:6)

3. SIN’S PUNISHMENT: The Punishment for Sin is Physical and Eternal Death.



Man not only dies bodily when this life is over, but his soul is eternally separated from God—in hell—without Christ.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 6:23)

4. GOD’S PROVISION: God has Provided Jesus Christ as the Solution to Man’s Problem.



Christ paid the punishment/penalty for all men’s sins by dying on the cross, and He is alive today, in heaven, having been resurrected from the dead.

“Now I make known to you, brethren, the Gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.” (1 Cor. 15:1-4)

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:8)

“And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.” (Acts 4:12)

5. MAN’S RESPONSE: You can Receive Jesus Christ for the Forgiveness of All your Sins.



By faith in God’s word, the Bible, you trust God to save you from your sins. You do this by praying to invite Jesus Christ to live in your heart (i.e., life).

“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.” (John 1:12)

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him, and will dine with him, and he with Me.” (Rev. 3:20)

Please Turn This Page Over and PRAY TO GOD FROM YOUR HEART...

PRAYER EXAMPLE: “Dear God, I admit that I am a **sinner** and that I cannot come to You based on any of my own goodness or works. Lord Jesus, **I believe** You died on the cross for my sins, were raised, and are *alive today*. **Please forgive me** for ALL my sins—past, present and future—and I ask you to **come into my life** right now and *make me a new creation*. God, **I believe** based on Your word, the Bible, that because I *now* have received Christ, **You have saved me**, and I will live with You eternally when I die. THANK YOU that I now have a personal, daily relationship with You and *Your Son*, Jesus Christ, and for *all that He did for me* on the cross, and gave me at salvation. In Jesus’ name, I pray. Amen.”



NOW WHAT?..

GOD’S PROMISE: Eternal life is yours! Now, you can live out being a citizen of heaven.

“And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may know that you have eternal life.” (1 John 5:11-13, **See also: John 3:36**)

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER BLESSINGS:

You are now rightly related to God, and will be with Him for eternity in heaven. Therefore, you will want to get to **know God**, learn how to *please Him* and how to keep that relationship strong. The following SIX THINGS will be *crucial* for you to grow close to and more like God, to learn His plan for your life, and to obtain guidance from Him in the daily *decisions* of your life:

A. PRAYER AND MEDITATION (“Daily Quiet Time”) (Col. 4:2). You speak to God in Prayer. To develop a maturing relationship/friendship with Him, you should **daily meet with** and spend time with Him. Becoming **more Christ-like** *also* occurs by putting God’s word on your heart (i.e., memorization). **Meditation** is deep and prayerful contemplation on the truths of the Bible. Memorizing Scripture is a great *first step* toward getting God’s word deep in your heart, so you can *grow* in knowing His will (or plan) for your life.

B. BIBLE STUDY (II Tim. 2:15). God speaks to you through His word, the **Bible**. Bible study involves *reading, interpreting* and applying God’s word. There are many help books and *Commentaries* on the market to assist your study, and I would recommend you begin by reading the New Testament books of **John, I John and Romans**. Spend time in God’s word, and **God will reward your efforts**.

C. CONFESSING YOUR PERSONAL TESTIMONY (I Tim. 6:12). Tell a Christian person or members at a local church what happened to you *today*. They can *assist* you further, and doing so can further solidify your decision to receive Christ. You may want to re-read the other side of this page to be mentally *clear* about the spiritual **miracle** that *happened* inside you today.

D. Water BAPTISM (Ac. 2:41). You need to be baptized in a Bible-believing church, as this is the *first act of obedience*. Baptism publicly demonstrates to others your testimony about what happened internally at salvation (i.e., death, burial and resurrection to a new spiritual person).

E. WORSHIPPING GOD (Heb. 10:25). Regularly attend a Bible-believing church *fellowship*.

F. EVANGELISM (Mk. 16:15). Share the “Good News” so others can go to heaven too!

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, OR NEED PRAYER, PLEASE CALL YOUR NEAREST BIBLE-BELIEVING CHURCH
GOD BLESS YOU!

See also: Mt. 10:32-33; Jn. 4:23; Rom. 12:1-2; Phil. 3:3; I Tim. 6:12, etc.

Remember...

- **Religion** won't save you (*excepting* true religion in Jesus Christ),
- **Being moral** won't save you,
- **Believing Christ existed** and was a great moral leader won't save you,
- **Going to church** won't save you,
- Being a so-called "Christian," **not of the 'born again' variety** won't save you,
Only faith in Jesus Christ will save you!

ON WORKS

- **Works don't work** to get anyone to heaven. (Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:9; II Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:5; Jn. 14:6; Ac. 4:12)
- The salvation by **works standard** would be **perfection**, and a *curse*. (Gal. 3:10-13, 5:3)
- **One sin** makes a person **guilty of** having committed **all sins**. (Jas. 2:10)
- *Failed* salvation by works *attempts*. (Mt. 19:16-26; Mk. 10:17-27; Lk. 10:25-37)
- Christians are created to live in 'good' works, by faith. (Eph. 2:8-10; Jas. 2:21, 24, 26; Tit. 3:14)
- Christian 'good' deeds, absent the Holy Spirit (i.e., without faith), are '*dead*.' (5:11-6:1, 9:13-14)

THE GOSPEL (Theology of)

1. **Christ Died For Our Sins** (i.e., on the cross, to pay the penalty for our sins).
2. **Christ Was Buried in the Grave** (i.e., He actually, physically died).
3. **Christ Was Raised From the Dead** (i.e., the resurrection).
4. **Christ Ascended into Heaven** (i.e., He is alive/living).
5. **Christ is Received by Faith** (i.e., for the forgiveness of all our sins).

See: Mt. 27:27-28:20; Ac. 2:22-36, 3:15, 5:30, 13:32-34; Rom. 4:24c-25, 5:10-21; I Cor. 15:1-4, 21-26; Eph. 1:20; I Th. 1:10; Heb. 2:9-15; I Pet. 1:3, 3:21, etc.

3. Evangelism Defined

Evangelism is **NOT** an academic or theoretical subject. It can only be properly understood by **DOING**. Therefore, little time will be spent defining it. Evangelism comes from the Greek word for “*messenger*,” which is the same root word from which we derive our word, “angel.” From this we see that evangelism is proclaiming a message. Verbs used for it in the Bible *include preaching, announcing, teaching, speaking* and *telling*. It requires communicating words—words of the Gospel.

Evangelism is lovingly and confidently/boldly speaking an accurate Gospel message to lost people in reliance on the power of the Holy Spirit.

Nothing More, Nothing Less.

People uncomfortable with evangelizing, or those who have only hinted at the subject with lost people often hang their confidence on the verse about seed planters (‘sowers and reapers’). But even though people may not always say ‘yes’ when invited to receive Christ, only if the potential hearer *refuses to hear* the message has one engaged in evangelism *without actually speaking* the message of Christ. Don’t use your fear of speaking with lost people as some theological- or holy-sounding attitude by abusing I Cor. 3:5-9 and Jn. 4:35-38.

Also, despite theological discussions to the contrary, **evangelism is an EVENT**—not a “process.” Yes,

- a) God prepares the hearer’s heart before you speak, and yes,
- b) You should pray over the experience and for that person, and yes,
- c) You do rely on the Holy Spirit to convict as you speak, but

Evangelism itself begins—simply and exclusively—when you introduce the subject of the Gospel to a lost person. This truth is not popular today, because people want excuses for not obeying the Great Commission (that is, their *flesh* does).

Also, there is no particular **presentation** that is *required*, as long as the message presented is **fully biblical**. A very popular method I heard 2 local mega churches use (one which **copies** the other) is saying **the Gospel is as easy as ABC**—Admit you’re a sinner. **Believe** Christ died for your sins, and **Commit** to Christ (apparently adapted from Josh McDowell). This may be too simplistic, and the *commit* step certainly seems like Lordship Salvation, but I understand people are wary of Evangelism Explosion’s overly-*academic* and lengthy presentation.

Finally, research indicates it takes **7 Gospel presentations**, on average, for a person to positively *respond*, so we *cannot* think our evangelism duty is complete after the whole world has heard the Gospel once (*if* we ever even reach this *minimum* standard)—if we want people actually saved.

WHAT EVANGELISM IS NOT

(Popular False Doctrines About Evangelism, from A-Z)

In conversations with laymen over the years, it’s amazing how much *false doctrine* has been spread by spiritual ‘leaders’ on this subject, including the following commonly-held **myths** and **misconceptions**:

- a) Doing **good deeds**. These do, however, corroborate you believe what you say.

- b) *Prayer walks*. You should pray before evangelizing, but until you leave the walk and speak the Gospel, you haven't evangelized. They are performed to get the attention of people—not **God** (i.e., advertising; Mt. 6:5-6). Your presence in an area does **NOTHING—God's** presence there, with you praying to Him *from anywhere*, does **EVERYTHING**. (Ex.: Ac. 4:23-31) No wonder they **didn't exist** before the 1980's—they are a **man-made** concept (and they are also **NOT** a *service project* for students to “help the community”).
- c) Praying for the lost (despite Dallas Seminary's most famous President's book to the contrary). *Neither* is saying to a stranger, “is there anything I can pray for you about” evangelism!
- d) Serving the lost (“servant evangelism”). The greatest way to serve men's needs is to *speak* the Gospel to them! These deeds are performed to break the ice with and show credibility to *people*, and can slow down completion of the Great Commission due to pace and cost.

A “soft” (i.e., *approachable*, **kind** and *caring*) approach in vocal tone, facial expression and body language is preferred either to a harsh, robotic and abrupt inquisition or requiring “**servant evangelism**,” which seeks to *soften the subject* by doing deeds the New Testament does not indicate they did when they had **power** (save for *healing* people out of *love*—something we can hardly emulate—Ac. 3:6). **First century evangelizers did NOT** invest in or carry around *cases of water bottles* on mules or camels (especially with their local church's name imprinted inside the bottle for **advertising**!).

- e) Being FOR (i.e., emotionally supporting) the Great Commission (absent DOING evangelism).
- f) Giving to missions, though that validly allows *others* to DO evangelism.
- g) Visiting church visitors (if no Gospel message is communicated).
- h) Inviting lost people to church. You are aiding *others* doing evangelism, but *you* are not doing evangelism.
- i) Inviting people to come hear an Evangelist speak the Gospel. Though this act validly assists evangelism, and is not wrong to do, you have not yet **done** evangelism.
- j) **Telling lost people you are a “Christian,”** because that phrase is often misunderstood and does not tell them the Gospel. Cults think themselves “Christian,” as with *non-born again* Catholics.
- k) “**Planting**” churches (a very popular myth). In Acts, Christians won entire cities—at least their majority—and churches were the **result** of evangelism—not the aim/objective. Building buildings and loading them with existing believers is NOT evangelism, though resultant churches from your evangelism may be responsible to complete the ‘mop up’ campaign.
- l) Relatedly, impacting or “reaching *people groups*.” **Jesus did not die for people groups**, but people—individuals—and ALL of them. Just impacting a certain formerly-unreached culture group does NOTHING for any in that group who have **not heard** the word. They still go to hell.
- m) “**As you're going** evangelism” only. Certainly one *should* evangelize as they live their lives, but many now teach that the Great Commission (in the Greek) tells us to only do so “as we're going,” as if the first century church was not out going to new cities to evangelize **purposefully/intentionally**. This teaching that denies these verses—Jn. (3:1-21), 4:7-42; Ac. 2:14, 22, 3:12, (4:1?), 4:8-13, (19-20), 31, 5:28-29+, 42, 6:(10), 7:2+, 8:4-6, (12), 25-31, 35, 9:19b-20, 22, 27-28, 10:28+, 34, 11:(1), 19, 21, (24), <12:24-25>, 13:5, 14-16+, 46-49, 14:1, 3, 7, (9), 21-22, 25, 15:<13>, 35, 16:13-14, (25?), (30-32), 17:1-4, 10-13, 16-19, 22+, 18:4-

5, 8-9, 11, (13), 19, 19:8-10, 20:(18-21?), 21:(20-21), 22:1+, 23:1+, 24:10+, 25:8+, (11), 26:1+, 27:<10, 21+>, 28:17+, etc. . Do evangelize in your daily life, but also intentionally purpose and set out to do so, or you'll evangelize a lot less.

- n) Building bridges into lives and waiting for “open doors.” **Christ bridged the gap** between God and man and *we can add nothing to His work*. [**See:** “Relationship Evangelism Errors” for the dangers of waiting to tell lost people the Gospel till you *know them well*]. A Christian needs to assume (better, *believe*) God has been preparing hearts, be led by Him, and **assume doors are open** unless the hearer absolutely refuses to listen. You don't shove the Gospel down the throat of unwilling listeners, but nowhere in Scripture is it taught that you wait to hear something the other person says to mystically be a sign that it's time to evangelize them.

Paul's reference to a ‘wide door’ (I Cor. 16:8-9) was referring to a general city-wide receptivity to the Gospel, absent outright *persecution* (for that time being) or enforced government *prohibitions*, and his reference to God opening a door in Col. 4:2-4 is speaking of **praying** before you evangelize so God might have them prepared and open their heart to respond. The context teaches pray before you go, in relation to their being an ‘open door.’

- o) Back door osmosis or behavior modification by motivational speakers. I once heard a Charismatic bemoan a possibly lost person not starting the going to *church habit* after an “inspiring” out-of-town women's conference. The person was wined and dined (room and board), and supposedly would be motivated to become a Christian by being around them and hearing ‘leaders’ speak on mutually-shared subjects—**no word** if the Gospel was ever preached (hence, the ‘back door’ allegation). Salvation is a **miraculous change of nature** you do not “catch” by hanging around (*imperfect*) Christian role models! And, getting someone to go to church is NOT the same as **getting them saved!** When will believers ever figure this out? Answer: When they read the Bible more, and rely on their own understanding less.
- p) Having an ‘**I Am Second**’ bumper sticker or billboard. **YOU** are not the message and you are nothing (II Cor. 4:5, 12:11), even if you're famous! Even then, the proper biblical priorities are **J**esus, **O**thers, then **Y**ourself. Salvation is letting Christ freely, eternally save you, and the Gospel is a cross, a sacrifice, forgiveness—not how humble you may be now that you're saved and “famous” (at least to men).
- q) A billboard that merely refers people to a website that *does* evangelize them (Ex.: 800 Need Him or ForgiveThem.org). Nothing wrong with advertising those sites, but people could die and go to hell before accessing the Gospel on those sites. DFW had a billboard which read: ‘We're all sinners and Jesus can save us.’ That's *about as close* to the Gospel as I have ever seen on a billboard, yet even it *assumes* lost people understand the word “save,” and most importantly, **how** to be saved. Plus, we all started out sinners, but hopefully some of us are imperfect *saints* now. **Note:** Most of our **John 3:16 billboard campaign** is for exhorting t the church; evangelism is not its primary purpose, so no *hypocrisy* in these allegations.
- r) Giving your testimony. It can lead to a Gospel presentation, but in itself it is simply explaining how you have experienced the benefits of the evangelism of others. Again, **you are not the message** (II Cor. 4:5)
- s) Offering **emotional healing** (Ex.: Jesus can heal your marriage). Christ died for our sins, and getting them *all* forgiven is THE issue of salvation, and all people need this.
- t) Telling people to ‘*have a blessed day*,’ or hanging Christian memorabilia in your work office.

- u) Having a fish emblem on your car.
- v) Having a “Got Jesus?” bumper sticker on your car, or a jewelry cross around your neck.
- w) Even broadcasting the phrase, ‘**Jesus saves,**’ though true, does not inform a lost person of enough information to understand the Gospel.
- x) Having just **secular celebrities** represent Christianity as our spokespersons (Ex.: Tony Dungy, as ‘*great*’ a man and coach as he may be). Evangelism is all Christians speaking about Jesus.
- y) Sincerely hoping and *wanting* the lost to go to heaven, absent **ACTION** to tell them the Gospel (even ADVERTISING John 3:16, if there’s *more you can do*).
- z) Entertaining, dancing, or even singing spiritual songs to a crowd of *lost* people (if the songs never explicitly educate on the Gospel’s contents, and asking for a RESPONSE).

Many of these acts are **good**, but are not the same
as speaking the message of the Gospel to lost people!

4. Great Commission *COMPLETION* Statistics

YOU Do the Math:

Figures change by the second and estimates vary. Feel free to stay updated at census.gov, uscwm.org, wholesomewords.org and Barna.org, but at the time of *this* posting...

The world has approximately 6.5 billion inhabitants, *presently* (6,654,571,794).

And...

At most 2,173,183,400 claim to be Christians, though the figure is much less for those “born again” (the only type)—as low as **814,402,000** (the recorded number of Protestants and “Independents”). Then we must adjust upward for all born again Catholics, Orthodox and Anglicans “Christians.” Barna indicates only **10%** of American Christians are committed; According to Pastor Jack Graham. According to Jarrett Stephens, in America alone, statistics show that **3 out of 4** people in America are unsaved, and **80%** of them live in *metropolitan cities*.

And...

Historically **only 5%** of Christians *ever reach ONE SOUL* with the Gospel in their LIFETIME!

And...

Add to this calculation the fact that the global birthrate is 20/1000 population (who will eventually need to hear the Gospel) while the death rate is 9/1000, globally, and the number of people who *move into and out of* our churches’ ministry areas, and one can **only** honestly conclude that **THERE IS A LOT OF WORK FOR ALL CHRISTIANS TO DO!**

Then...

These figures lead me to approximate that the portion to be evangelized by EVERY Christian is between **42** and **111 each** (rounding the figures upward to the nearest digit).

ARE YOU DOING YOUR PART ?

Don’t lost people *deserve* better, and
doesn’t Christ’s suffering work on the cross deserve *more respect?*

The emphasis, here, is on EVERY Christian. There is no excuse for Christians to not evangelize regularly. You don’t want to, I know. We all have a sin nature. But you are all **called** to, and we all have a new nature (IF you are saved). The only conceivable Christian I can think of who might have an excuse to not evangelize is one stuck on a remote island by himself (who could spell **S.O.S.** and **JESUS**, with rocks, for fly-overs) or a **sadly mute or deaf believer** (who even has sign language, technology, written communication, etc., to do the job with). In the final analysis, I can **really think of very few who have a legitimate excuse**. Trouble is, almost every Christian you know excuses this sin and can **salve their conscience** in ways you can’t imagine.

Enough with PROCRASTINATION. **Quit doing the devil’s will!** Go obey God in the areas of evangelism and personal moral growth (discipleship), or **quit looking and acting so nice and holy, dressed up for church for an hour a week!** God hates hypocrisy, just as, I fear, you’ll

hate *me* if you *courageously* read this website. God bless you anyway—you'll need that blessing and power to **GO EVANGELIZE!**

Some of us in evangelism get accused of being so '*passionate*' or '*excited*' about the work we would 'witness to a light pole.' **Can we ever slow down and relax** on the subject? If YOU ever tell the Gospel to your **fair share** of people and your church reaches all lost people near their building (and does it's part *internationally*), even though people take, on average, 7 presentations to respond positively, at least you could have *peace* that you have **done your minimum duty** to God. That would not excuse you from *needing to do more* and re-evangelizing, but at least your **deserved guilt** over being in the 95% and "not doing enough" (an ambiguous, guilt-ridden statement) would be ended. However, always do what God leads you to. He leads some—hopefully many (due to the tremendous need)—to do *much more* than their part, even as laymen. I'd be much more concerned with never evangelizing, than whether I had completed my responsibility in the matter.

Update: 4.5 billion people are unsaved, and a billion have never heard the gospel.
(Radical, p. 142)

5. Motivation

(A section whose contents I hope pastors will regularly use!)

Note: You **speak** about what you CARE about, and you **make time** for the things you VALUE.

WHY EVANGELIZE?

You can evangelize without loving, but you cannot love without evangelizing.

–**Jim Meroney**

The one thing you can't do in heaven is harvest souls—you have to do that now.

–**Jarrett Stephens**

Its Importance to God

1. Clearly God's will for every Christian to **do**.

Its Importance to Mankind

1. People go to an eternal hell without Christ and learn how to receive Him exclusively through the Gospel—primarily through HUMAN evangelism.
2. How do we LOVE the lost if we care for other needs yet allow them to drift **unwarned** to an eternal *death* and *separation* from God?

Its Importance to Christians

1. Evangelism is *one ministry* for which Christians will receive **rewards in heaven**.
2. God **blesses** obedient lives, and one is not behaving obediently to **let the lost go un-evangelized**.

Christian martyrs *died* for the privilege of telling the Gospel, yet **95%** of American 'Christians' remain silent their *entire* life! –**J. Meroney**

Consider:

- Have you ever heard of a **lottery winner** who wasn't excited about it?
- Has *any* expectant mother ever not told *anyone* the great news?
- If a seismologist knew a 9.8 earthquake was about to occur and *warned no one*, he'd **lose his job**. Same goes for a *Meteorologist* with Doppler showing an impending hurricane.
- What would you think of a scientist who discovered the cure for cancer and kept it *to himself*?
- If you saw *sheep* following their leader over a cliff, you'd probably **do something** to stop it.
- If a train full of hazardous materials overturned, the government would quickly go **door-to-door** to ensure the *safety* of **everyone** in the nearby area (and warn those choosing to remain *sheltered-in-place*).

Evangelism Scriptures

“For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that **the world should be saved** through Him.” (Jn. 3:17)

The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and **he who is wise wins souls**. (Pv. 11:30)

Jesus said[^] to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work. Do you not say, ‘There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, that they are **white for harvest**. Already he

who reaps is **receiving wages**, and is **gathering fruit for life eternal**; that he who sows and he who reaps may *rejoice* together.” (Jn. 4:34-36)

“Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, even God, has set His seal.” (Jn. 6:27)

So then neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is *anything*, but **God** who *causes* the growth. Now he who plants and he who waters are one; but each **will receive his own reward** according to his own labor. (I Cor. 3:7-8)

“Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.” (Mt. 10:32-33)

And we proclaim Him, **admonishing** every man and **teaching** every man with all wisdom, that we may present every man complete in Christ. (Col. 1:28)

but just as we have been approved by God to be **entrusted** with the Gospel, so we **speak**, not as pleasing *men* but God, who examines our hearts. (I Th. 2:4)

When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die’; and **you do not warn him** or speak out to warn the wicked from his wicked way that he may live, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but **his blood I will require at your hand**. (Eze. 3:18)

Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be **pleasing** to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be **recompensed** for his deeds in the body; According to what he has done, whether **good or bad**. Therefore knowing the **fear of the Lord**, we **persuade men**, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences. For **the love of Christ** controls us, having *concluded* this, that **one died for all**, therefore all died; and He died for all, that they who *live* should no longer live for themselves, **but for Him** who died and rose again on their behalf. Therefore from now on we recognize no man according to the flesh; even though we have known Christ according to the flesh, yet now we know Him thus no longer. (II Cor. 5:9-11, 14-17)

Fifty Reasons to Evangelize

See also: Our “inspired” Tweet-A-Thons@JamesMeroney on Oct. 29, Nov. 2 and 5 (~Oct. 30-31), 2013

Most Christians **know** they should evangelize but so few ever do. Here are *fifty* reasons (with associated verses to look up and **meditate on**) which I **pray** the Lord will use to *inspire you to **get after it!*** IF YOU EVER TAKE **FIVE** MINUTES to consider the future destiny of lost people (Ex.: read Bible descriptions of *Hell*), **you’ll start TODAY!**

As with many things, such as riding a bike or learning basketball, **learn by doing** (or volunteer to go out with someone who has *experience*). Pray, and view any ‘*mistake*’ you might make as part of the learning process. Remember, **you only FAIL if you fail to try!** God will *lead* and *empower* you as you are obedient.

“If sinners be damned, at least let them leap to hell over our bodies. And if they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay. If hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let no one go there unwarned and un-prayed for.”

–**Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

“You cannot stop their dying, but, oh, that God might help you to stop their being damned! You cannot stop the breath from going out of their bodies, but, oh, if the Gospel could but stop their souls from going down to destruction!”

–**Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

“Do you want arguments for soul winning? Look up to heaven, and ask yourself how sinners can ever reach those harps of gold and learn that everlasting song, unless they have someone to tell them of Jesus, who is ‘mighty to save.’ But the best argument of all is to be found in the wounds of Jesus. You want to honor him, you desire to put many crowns upon his head, and this you can best do by winning souls for him. These are the spoils that he covets, these are the trophies for which he fights, these are the jewels that shall be his best adornment.” –**Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

1. Because God Loves All Men, Sent Christ to Die for All and Desires that None Perish.
(**Jn. 3:16; II Pet. 3:9; I Tim. 2:3-4**)

2. Because All Men Need Christ, and All have Sinned and are Sinners.
(**Rom. 3:10-12, 23**)

“Often I am asked the question, ‘Can the heathen be saved having never heard the Gospel?’ Perhaps the question that should be asked is, ‘Are you really saved if you have the Gospel but never share it?’ –**Freddie Gage**

“People who don't believe in missions have not read the New Testament. Right from the beginning Jesus said the field is the world. The early church took Him at His word and went East, West, North and South.”
–**J. Howard Edington**

“In every revival there is a re-emphasis of the Church's missionary character. Men return to Calvary, and the world is seen afresh through the eyes of Christ. The infinite compassion of Christ fills the heart, and the passion evoked by Calvary demands the whole wide world as the fruit of His sacrifice.”
–**John Shearer**

3. Because of the Reality of Heaven and Hell. There is a Serious, Somber Severity to a Wrong Choice Concerning Christ. Eternal Life or Eternal Death and Damnation Hang in the Balance If the Lost Reject God's Message and Spirit's Call to Salvation. (**Rom. 6:23; Mk. 9:44**)

“How you believe God perceives people will determine how you respond to them.” –**Jacquelyn K. Heasley**

4. From an Eternal Perspective on Life, Seeing Evangelism's Importance to God.
(**Col. 3:1-4; Rom. 12:1-2**)

“Only one life we have, at last. Only what's done for Christ will last.”
–**C.T. Studd**

“The world has yet to see the full impact of but one life, totally and completely surrendered to the will of God.” –**Anonymous**

5. Because God has Promised Believers Blessings (in This Life) and Heavenly Rewards for So

Doing. (Mt. 6:19-20; I Cor. 3:7-8; Rom. 10:15)

Perspective:



(Government housing in Heaven)

Don't live in an outhouse all your (eternal) life!

6. Because We Want to Please God. (Eph. 5:10; II Cor. 5:9-11)

“Someone said of a soul-winning friend of mine who had seventeen thousand the previous Sunday in Sunday School, ‘I think he’s overbalanced in the area of witnessing.’ My response was, ‘I’d rather be overbalanced like him and see the results he sees than be balanced like you and see the results you are seeing!’”

–**Freddie Gage**

7. To be Innocent of the Guilt (Moral Culpability) of Having Men’s Blood on our Hands by Not Declaring the Message we Know, Have Personally Experienced, and Which is the Only Message That Can Save Lost Peoples’ Souls. (Ac. 20:26-27)

Christians are to love mankind. Not evangelizing is the *ultimate* form of hatred, for you are willingly damning them to hell (if no one does your job)

–**J. Meroney**

“No one could point their finger at Paul and say, ‘You never told me about Jesus.’” –**Freddie Gage**

“If your Gospel isn't touching others, it hasn't touched you!” –**Curry R. Blake**

“We Christians are debtors to all men at all times in all places, but we are so smug to the lostness of men. We've been "living in Laodicea ", lax, loose, lustful, and lazy. Why is there this criminal indifference to the lostness of men? Our condemnation is that we know how to live better than we are living.”

–**Leonard Ravenhill**

8. Out of Gratitude and Thankfulness for Our Great Salvation. (Heb. 2:3)

“I would not give much for a man’s Christianity if he is saved himself and is not willing to try to reach others. It seems to me the basest ingratitude if we do not reach out the hand to others who are down in the same pit from which we were delivered. Who is able to reach and help drinking men like those who have themselves been slaves to the intoxicating cup? Will you not go out this very day and seek to rescue these men? If we were all to do what we can, we should soon empty the drinking saloons.”

–**D.L. Moody**

“There are two kinds of Christians—Soul winners and backsliders.”

–**Andrew Murray**

9. Because it's as Natural and Normal as Parents Desiring to Have Children (i.e., "Spiritual Propagation").

"For a Christian full of Jesus to remain silent is as inconceivable as for one to be 'filled with Einstein' and never think, or 'filled with Babe Ruth or Pete Rose' and never talk about baseball, or 'filled with Roger Staubach or Earl Campbell' and never mention football." –**Freddie Gage**

"Having joined the church of God, are any of you satisfied to be silent? Are you content to let those around you sink to hell? What! Never tell of Christ's love? What! Never speak of salvation to your own children? Can this be right? In God's name, wake up! What are you left on this earth for? If there is nothing for you to do, why are you in this sinful world?"

–**Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

10. Because Good News Cannot be Contained (i.e., Held Within). What Lottery Winner Has Ever Told No One of His Good Fortune, or New Mother Hidden the Fact of Her New Child? We Have **Good News**–Not Bad News–to Tell People, So Why be Scared to Take it to People?

"If the lost are to be reached by the Gospel of the Son of God, Christianity must be more aggressive than it has been in the past. We have been on the defensive long enough; the time has come for us to enter on a war of aggression. When we as children of God wake up and go to the work in the vineyard, then those who are living in wickedness all about us will be reached but not in any other way. You may go to mass meetings and discuss the question 'How to reach the masses.' But when you have done with discussion you have to go back to personal effort. Every man and woman who loves the Lord Jesus Christ must wake up to the fact that he or she has a mission in the world, in this work of reaching the lost." –**D.L. Moody**

11. To be Involved in the Greatest Activity in the World. Evangelism is Arguably the Most Important Thing You Can Do in Life (at Least Toward Lost People)! If the Lord Ever Uses You to 'Win' One Person, You'll be Hooked.

"Winning one person creates a hunger for more and on it goes until the soul-winner is consumed with a burning passion to win others to Jesus Christ." –**Freddie Gage**

12. To Show That We Truly Love People. All Other Efforts we Engage in to Show Love Fall Short and Do Not Eternally Help Them if We Do Not Tell Them the Gospel. (II Cor. 5:14-16)

"You can witness without loving but you cannot love without witnessing."
–**Freddie Gage**

The greatest sin for a Christian is silence. –**Dr. Jack Graham** (*paraphrased*)

The meanest act of one man against another is evangelismlessness–
Christians remaining comfortably mum about the Gospel. –**J. Meroney**

13. To Bless the Lost.

“Etiquette nowadays often demands of the Christian that he should not intrude his religion on company. Out on such etiquette! It is the etiquette of hell. True courtesy to my fellow’s soul makes me speak to him, if I believe that soul to be in danger.” –**Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

14. Because it’s the Right Thing to Do.

“It is the duty of every Christian to be Christ to his neighbor.” –**Martin Luther**

“You *must* witness if you be a Christian. You may try to shirk it if you will, but you must witness, for you are *subpoena*. That is to say, you will suffer for it if you do not. Some Christians think they will sneak comfortably into heaven without bearing witness for Christ. I fear they will be mistaken; but this I know, that every Christian who does not come out distinctly and boldly for his Master will lose all choice enjoyments.” –**Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

“The Great Commission is not an option to be considered; it is a command to be obeyed.” –**Hudson Taylor**

15. Because of the Declining Moral State of Our Country and World (which Evidences the Fact that Men are Lost Sinners and that Christ’s Return is Imminent).

“People say that we must adopt the language and culture of the day to be relevant today. That is a mistake. If the Church marries itself to the spirit of the times, it will be a widow in the next generation. There is a universal language—the language of reality and the language of love.”

–**E. Stanley Hones**

“Christians continue day by day as though being lost was nothing more than having a common cold.” –**Freddie Gage**

16. Because We are Ambassadors for Christ, as Christians. (II Cor. 5:17-21)

“Could a lifeguard sit idle if he heard a drowning cry? Could a doctor sit in comfort and let his patient die? Could a fireman sit and watch men burn and offer no hand? Can YOU sit at ease in Zion with the world around you damned? –**Freddie Gage** (quoting Leonard Ravenhill?)

‘Never talk to strangers’ was a rule we learned in kindergarten, which, if applied in adulthood, is severely detrimental to the Great Commission. (**I Cor. 13:11**)

–**J. Meroney**

17. Because the Church is the Body of Christ, and He Primarily Uses Us to be His Physical Representatives and to Serve as His Feet and Mouth (i.e., Taking and Speaking His Gospel Message to the World).

“God uses people. God uses people to perform His work. He does not send angels. Angels weep over it, but God does not use angels to accomplish His purposes. He uses burdened broken-hearted weeping men and women.”

–**David Wilkerson**

“The sign of Christianity is not a cross but a tongue on fire.” –**Samuel Chadwick**

18. To Not be Sorrowful in Heaven (at Least Possibly Initially). (I Jn. 2:28)

19. Because Spiritual Forces (Manifested in Various Ways, such as Cult Groups) are Out-

Working Us in Trying to Get Men to Follow Their FALSE Religious Systems.

20. Because it's an Outward Expression of Our Dynamic Relationship with Christ. If We are Following Christ, and are Not Evangelizing, it is Certainly Not Because Christ Lied in His Promise, or Is NOT Leading Us to Do So. (Matthew 4:19)

“Is a person a fisherman if year after year he never catches a fish? Is one following if he isn't fishing?” –**Freddie Gage**

“Can't we see there is nothing so 'shallow' as the person so concerned with his own spiritual growth that he neglects a hell-bound world around him? And, nothing is deeper than the experience of leading lost souls to Jesus.”
–**Freddie Gage**

“The spirit of Christ is the spirit of missions. The nearer we get to Him, the more intensely missionary we become.” –**Henry Martyn**

21. Because of the Urgency of the Days (Prophetically and Increased Sin-Wise). (Eph. 5:16-17; Mt. 24:12; II Tim. 3:1-5)

We have eternity to praise God and fellowship. Get about the business at hand—evangelism! –**J. Meroney**

“Is it not time for us to launch out into the deep? I have never seen people go out into the lanes and alleys, into the hedges and highways, and try to bring the people in, but the Lord gave His blessing. If a man has the courage to go right to his neighbor and speak to him about his soul, God is sure to smile upon that effort. The person who is spoken to may wake up angry, but that is not always a bad sign; he may write a letter the next day and apologize. At any rate it is better to wake him up in this way than that he should continue to slumber on to death and ruin.” –**D.L. Moody**

22. Because We are Commanded, Commissioned/Authorized and Empowered to Do So. (Mt. 28:18-20, etc.)

“Some people have said that I made the statement that 'nine-tenths of the church members haven't got power.' I didn't say that to hurt any feelings; but I refer to a good many Christians who lack power to reach out to the unsaved. Christ says, 'Go and disciple the world.' Am I uncharitable when I say that there's not more than one out of ten who is doing that kind of work? I don't want to slander the church. I would never preach again as long as I live if I thought I was hurting the church. I pray God day and night to help me to awaken the church. I don't say there are not Christians, by a good deal. I never dreamed such a thing. Many are good, converted people, but they haven't got 'converting power.' There's the trouble.” –**D.L. Moody**

23. Because Spirit-Filled and Spirit-Led Living is, Among Other Things, for the Purpose of Our Bearing Witness to Jesus (as was a Common Initial Action Following the Spirit's Infilling and Empowering in Acts. (Ac. 4:31)

“I have had the privilege of preaching the Gospel on every continent in most of the countries of the world. And I have found that when I present the simple message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, with authority, quoting from the very Word of God—he takes that message and drives it supernaturally

into the human heart.” –**Billy Graham**

24. Because of Our Spiritual Heritage, Especially the Testimony of the Martyrs Through the Ages, Who were Willing to Give Their Lives to Share God’s Message. (**See: Foxes Book of Martyrs**).
25. Because it is a Privilege to be a Part of God’s Eternal Purpose. (**I Tim. 1:11**)
26. Because of the Great Need, Both in the Numbers of Lost and the Lack of Number of Evangelizers. (**Mt. 7:13-14, 9:37-38**)

“At a certain mission church (says the Rev. W.W. Martin), I had put over the clock these words: ‘83 a minute.’ At last a deputation came to me and said, ‘Will you kindly take us down? It haunts us.’ They knew that it meant that eighty-three souls a minute were passing into eternity.” –**Paul Tan**

“More than two billion of the earth’s inhabitants are either pagan, atheistic or non-Christian. There are 800,000,000 Communists, all militant atheists. There are 700,000,000 Moslems, all anti-Christians, and there are almost a billion Indians and Chinese and other kindred Asians.” –**Paul Tan**

“The cradle and the grave are two great obstacles to fulfillment of the Great Commission. Every day, a new multitude is born, and a vast prospect list vanished. In the United States alone, there are 11,227 births and 4,970 deaths daily.” –**Carl F.H. Henry**

27. Because it is The Wise Thing to Do. (**Pv. 11:30**)

“He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose.”
–**Jim Elliot**

28. To Not be Selfish. Someone Shared the Message with You...Pass it On!

“We can talk about it. We can pray about it. We can sing about it. But until we actually GO and TELL, we can never be a soul-winner.”
–**Freddie Gage**

The world’s greatest injustice and the worst crime against humanity is to not evangelize ALL the lost. –**J. Meroney**

If you are not evangelizing, you are out of fellowship with God.
–**Dr. Jack Graham** (*paraphrased*)

29. Because “the Only Thing you Can Take With You to Heaven is Another Friend.”
–**Larry Moyer**

30. To Implement the *Primary Purpose* for which Christ Came and Died. (**Lk. 19:10**)

“The Church exists for nothing else but to draw men into Christ, to make them little Christs. If they are not doing that, all the cathedrals, clergy, missions, sermons, even the Bible itself, are simply a waste of time. God became Man for no other purpose.” –**C. S. Lewis**

“Jesus gave the Church only one task—not two, five, or ten—“and the Gospel must first be published among all nations (Mark 16:15). Everything else is secondary. To fail in this is to fail in our main reason for existence.”

–**Freddie Gage**

31. Because Only 5% of Believers Ever Win One Person to Christ, and this Statistic has, Sadly Remained Constant for 30+ Years, and is Deplorable to God.

“I would sooner bring one sinner to Jesus Christ than unpick all the mysteries of the divine Word, for salvation is the thing we are to live for.”

–**Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

32. Because all Our “Good Deeds” can Never TEACH Lost People the Contents of Christ’s Message–Only Corroborate It. (I Cor. 15:3-5)

“But the great need today is for LIFESTYLE EVANGELISM: lives lived from morning to night, seven days a week, sharing Christ, GOING and TELLING, in the shops and market places, at work, at home and at play.” –**Freddie Gage**

33. Because the Devil Wants Us to Remain Silent–or Very Slow and Timid If We DO Evangelize–and He is the Spiritual Source for All Excuses Not to Evangelize.

“Any reason to not evangelize which your mind can devise is surely birthed in the war room of hell, and YOU are the one being deceived and losing out on the blessing and victory (as with all those you could have reached).”

–**J. Meroney**

“To refuse to witness of a saving Gospel to a lost world day by day is nothing short of high treason, spiritual rebellion and inexcusable disobedience to God’s holy command.” –**L.R. Scarborough**

34. Because Today is the Day of Salvation–Not Tomorrow, or “Someday.” (II Cor. 6:2)

35. Because Your Contact with Lost People Could be the Last You Will Have with Them. No One Knows When They will Meet their Maker, But we All Must be Ready. (Heb. 9:27)

“Our lack of concern is a crime, and we are the criminals.” –**Freddie Gage**

36. Because Regularly Evangelizing is the NORMAL Christian Life, at Least Biblically. (Ac. 5:42, 16:5, 19:9)

“So many Christians have been sub-normal so long by not telling people about Jesus that when a Christian starts witnessing, others call him abnormal.”

–**Freddie Gage**

37. Because the First Stage of the Great Commission (i.e., Evangelism) CAN be Completed in Our Lifetime! With God, and Through More Evangelizing Believers, the God’s Miracle and Vision–Fulfillment of Mark 16:15–Can Become a Reality.

38. Because Evangelizing is Fulfilling and Exciting.

“To be a soul winner is the happiest thing in the world. And with every soul you bring to Jesus Christ, you seem to get a new heaven here upon earth.” –**Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

“People are searching for thrills, but one thrill that surpasses all thrills is missed by most–winning a man to Jesus. Soul-winning is the most exciting, thrilling adventure in which any individual can be involved.”

–**Freddie Gage**

39. Because Billy Graham Cannot Make Up for Our LACK Forever.

“Will the cause of Christ’s Great Commission suffer any set-back when you die?” –**J. Meroney**

40. Because We are Not to be Ashamed of the Gospel. (Rom. 1:15-16; II Tim. 1:7)

“Our churches are filled with Christians who never introduce anyone to Christ. They declare that Christ is in their life, has made the greatest change in their life, and means all the world to them. Yet, when they are faced with obvious opportunities to introduce others to Him, they fade away in fear. No one who really loved a friend would be ashamed to introduce him to another. He would be pleased and even proud to do so. He would not pretend his friend was not there, but would call attention to the fact that he WAS there. Yet many of us, when faced with an opportunity to share Christ, do just that.” –**Freddie Gage**

Penn and Teller’s Penn—an avowed atheist—reportedly respected those with the ‘courage of their convictions’ to talk to him about the Christ he disavowed.

41. Because if 11 Less-Educated, Less-Wealthy and Less Technologically Enabled People “Turned the World Upside Down” With the Gospel in the First Century, So Can We! (Ac. 17:6)

“What are we here for, to have a good time with the Christians or to save sinners?” –**Malla Moe**

“God has left us down here to shine. We are not here to buy and sell and get gain, to accumulate wealth, to acquire worldly position. This earth, if we are Christians, is not our home; it is yonder. God has sent us into the world to shine for him—to light up this dark world. Christ came to be the Light of the world, but men put out that light. They took it to Calvary, and blew it out. But an even more brilliant light shone forth from the empty tomb when Christ rose from the dead. Before Christ went up on high, he said to the disciples, ‘Ye are the light of the world. Ye are my witnesses. Go forth and carry the Gospel to the perishing nations of the earth.’” –**D.L. Moody**

42. Because we Fear the Lord and are Accountable to Him as our Highest Priority. (II Cor. 5:10-11)

“Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin, and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven on earth.” –**John Wesley**

43. Because So Many Christians are Available to Do Support Ministry and Disciple Converts, but there are Few Battlefield Warriors Working on the Front Lines.

This is like having 20 coaches or medical trainers, and only one athlete, or 20 medical staff (i.e., doctors and nurses) to run MASH units for the one injured soldier. If there is no one to bring lost people into a relationship with Christ, what is the use of having skilled personnel waiting to disciple people who never get reached? It’s like having 20 administrative personnel and only one salesman—it makes no sense! As one of my former Pastors, Dr. Charles Wisdom put it, “for a

church to not be evangelistic is like a grocery store with display cases, employees and cash registers, but no food.” (Paraphrased)

“No one has the right to hear the Gospel twice, while there remains someone who has not heard it once.” –**Oswald J. Smith**

“As long as there are millions destitute of the Word of God and knowledge of Jesus Christ, it will be impossible for me to devote time and energy to those who have both. –**J. L. Ewen**

44. Because, Though We Should Pray for Lost People’s Salvation, God Usually Answers Those Prayers Only When We Share His Message with Them. He Rarely Miraculously Intervenes. (I Tim. 2:1-7; Rev. 14:6)

“Christ alone can save the world, but Christ cannot save the world alone.”
–**Freddie Gage**

45. Because We Have Different Spiritual Gifts But are All Called to Evangelize.

“It is now possible to live a "Christian life" without doing the things that Jesus commanded us to do. "We have hired people to go into all the world, to visit those in prison, to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to care for widows and orphans. The average Christian doesn't have to do it.”–**Cal Thomas** (My high school Sunday school teacher)

“The Gospel is not something to come to church to hear, but something to go from church to tell. ... We need to stop condemning sinners for not coming to church to hear the Gospel, and start condemning Christians for not going from the church with the Gospel.” –**Freddie Gage**

“A fisherman doesn’t go fishing in his bathtub if he expects to catch fish, he casts his net where the fish are—away from his house and out into the streams and waterways.” –**Freddie Gage**

“Dr. Len G. Broughton tells of a minister, who called his leaders together and said that he was about to resign his ministry at the church, because he had seen no more converted for a considerable period. They begged him to stay, and pointed out how edified they were by his preaching. ‘Edified for what?’ he asked. Turning to one leader he asked him if he had ever led a soul to Christ. ‘No,’ was the answer, so the question was put to the next with the same result, and the next again.

Finally the minister got all the members at the meeting to promise that they would also resign with him, if within a short period they personally led no one to Christ. One Monday morning one leader began with his confidential clerk, and by the next Sunday he had eleven saved men with him in church for company. The rest of the meeting brought the tally up to thirty.”

–**The United Methodist**

46. Because it’s Your New Nature to Do So.

“You have only one business on earth—to save souls.” –**John Wesley**

47. Because if You Don’t, Who Will? You May Be the Only Christian Who Will EVER Evangelize the Person You Reach!

Have you ever noticed that there ***never*** seems to be a **good time** to **evangelize**?

- Weekdays. From 6:30 am to 7 p.m. we prepare for, commute to work, work and then return home.
- Evenings. Evenings are spent with family, doing chores; Exercising, relaxing and entertaining ourselves.
- Additional Time. Sleep may last 5-7 hours a night, and often our jobs require travel or over-time.
- Weekends. On the weekends we go to church, play, do chores and hobbies, engage in politics and social associations; Exercise, travel and relax.
- We **make our money**, try to **enjoy life** and **family**, but RARELY does any believer spend time with God, or **share the Gospel** with another!

48. Because of the Great Suffering and Sacrifice of Christ for You and Lost People.

“Jesus’ first and last message on earth were about sharing your faith (evangelism)—Mt. 4:19; 28:18-20.” –**Jarrett Stephens** (8/23/14; *paraphrased*)

49. Because You’ve Been a Christian for However Many Years and May Have Never Evangelized. Set a Date for Yourself After Which you Can Prove to Yourself that You are Procrastinating in this Most Important Area.

“Not called!" did you say? 'Not heard the call,' I think you should say. Put your ear down to the Bible, and hear Him bid you go and pull sinners out of the fire of sin. Put your ear down to the burdened, agonized heart of humanity, and listen to its pitiful wail for help. Go stand by the gates of hell, and hear the damned entreat you to go to their father's house and bid their brothers and sisters and servants and masters not to come there. Then look Christ in the face—whose mercy you have professed to obey—and tell Him whether you will join heart and soul and body and circumstances in the march to publish His mercy to the world.” –**William Booth**

50. Because to Not Evangelize is Disobedience and Sin (Objectively Speaking).

“What if a man convicted of high treason and condemned to die was not only pardoned but taken into the favor of his sovereign? If he were riding in the royal carriage and on the road he saw some of his fellow traitors pinioned and manacled, led forth in the midst of officers to die for the offense in which he had as deep a hand as they, wouldn't he entreat the gracious monarch to extend his clemency to his fellow rebels? Wouldn't the tears stand in his eyes as he admires the difference that his sovereign's free mercy has made? Wouldn't he be moved with emotions impossible to describe, of mingled joy and grief, pity and gratitude, wonder and compassion?

The Christian's likeness is drawn here. Surely each Christian must feel ready to fall down on his knees, and cry, 'Lord, why do you reveal your mercy to me and not to these others? Save them, also, Lord, for your name's sake.'” –**Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

If your church has NOT reached EVERY lost person within 2-3 miles of their building, on judgment day, YOU be the one to tell the lost *nearest your building*

you were **SO busy** saving souls, you just *couldn't get to them!*

Remember...

- People can **die** unexpectedly at *any time*, and
- Christ could **return** unexpectedly at *any time*...

“To silence a preacher from preaching judgment is like being awoke from sleep by a fire alarm, and just silencing the alarm, and going back to sleep.” –**Unknown**

Disclaimer:

Please realize, however, as a **pastor** or someone in **leadership**, that presenting the concept of going evangelizing to a group of people, if you are **only positive and excited**—*which naturally occurs with experience*—the majority will think you crazy or stupid, which can hurt your *credibility*. This is exactly why I believe the Lord led me to approach churches (pastors), global mega churches and my own denomination with more of a negative bent. You usually only have one chance to broach the subject with someone, and even if they are “turned off” to the needed but more negative approach of *reproof*, God can use that *felt anger* to get them thinking about the subject, where they had done little-to-nothing before, and 95% were otherwise often **dead set** against *ever* participating. Plus, before God and on judgment day, there is value in holding people *accountable* and putting them *on record* as consciously rejecting God’s call!

Quotes Selected From:

Encyclopedia of 15,000 Illustrations, by Paul Lee Tan (Bible Communications: Dallas, TX), 1998

Spurgeon at His Best, by Tom Carter (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1988

World Shapers, by Harold Shaw (Harold Shaw Publishing: Wheaton, Ill.), 1991

Go Tell: The Soul Winner’s Encyclopedia, by Freddie Gage (Freddie Gage Evang. Assn., Euless, TX), 1980

Billy Graham: God’s Ambassador, p. 1, by Russ Busby (Tehabi Books: San Diego, CA), 1999

Tentmaker.org

Tlogical.net

O for a passionate passion for souls,
O for a pity that yearns!
O for the love that loves unto death,
O for the fire that burns!
O for the pure prayer-power that prevails,
That pours itself out for the lost!
Victorious prayer in the Conqueror’s Name
O for a PENTECOST! –**Amy Wilson Carmichael**

Bible Fellowship/“Sunday School” Lesson

On Hell

Many people today *don't believe* there is a literal place called **Hell**. Some believe *even if there is*, they can be saved after death by doing time (“penance”) in an in-between place—so-called “Purgatory.” Others teach that you will be continually reincarnated. Some philosophies believe that we are experiencing all there is of a “Hell” right now with our trials and sufferings—a Hell-like state. Still *others* think God is so merciful and knows men's hearts so well that they **have a chance** of reaching heaven without receiving Christ. But **what does God say?**

In life, when you hear the following phrases (hopefully only by lost people and I'll **substitute the word “Heck” for “Hell”**), what is the *connotation*, or meaning to you?

- “Heck no!” Emphatic, intense. The word is used as an expletive or true “**four letter word.**”
- “Go to Heck.” Wishing the worst on an enemy or one who angered you.
- “I'm going through Heck.” **Tough, painful, unpleasant** and undesirable circumstances.

So we see that *even our culture*—and lost people specifically—have a **concept of Hell**, at least in their sub-conscious mind. You might think any reasonable person who contemplated hell would not want to (or especially **LET** themselves) go there, but that view fails to realize that lost people are spiritually blinded (by Satan), and it is their *only spiritual nature* to resist God, His image still in man (to some degree) notwithstanding. In short, they are in desperate need of help!

Overall the picture of Hell is **not a pretty one**. What does God's authoritative source—the Bible—say about Hell? Let's read *aloud* what God says...

[suggested: **one person per verse read verse aloud**]

Hell Description

- (Lk. 16:23-24; Mt. 10:28) Literal, Real (Not Imaginary or Figurative). NASA will never find Hell with their spacecraft, for it is spiritual. The *poor soul* who enters Hell will never experience relief from the throes of its flames.

“Is hell a place of fire and brimstone? Is heaven a place of gold and pearl and beautiful mansions? When I speak of these things, I ought to use the language of God. I have never been to heaven; I have never been to hell. I must trust God's revelation... I must speak God's language and when I do, I find that I am speaking in the power and unction of the Lord.” –**W.A. Criswell**

Have you ever accidentally placed your foot in **scalding hot tub water**, seen stunt men walking with flames on the back of their flame-retardant suit, or seen people walking on **fiery hot coals** to motivate themselves to have greater self-confidence? These acts are mere glimpses of the calamity Hell truly is. I believe that every person in this room knows that.

For the Christian; II Corinthians 5:6 tells us that ‘to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.’ **A lost person's soul enters punishment immediately upon** their physical

demise, later to face a resurrection to judgment (based on their sins) and a final sentencing in the Lake of Fire. This is *not a pretty picture* for anyone to face for their eternal destiny. If you **ask any normal CHILD** if they want to go to Hell when they die they will say “No.”

- **(Jude 1:7)** Punishment of Eternal Fire. Hell is not temporary, nor enjoyable—the flames are painful, and intentionally so, for it is a place of **punishment**. Judgment gets carried out in Hell.
- **(II Pet. 2:4)** Pits of Darkness Reserved for Judgment. There are **no sunny days** or *bright spots* in the life of a citizen of Hell. Where there are no flames there is only utter, total darkness (sort of like a fire in the woods in the midnight hour). But rest assured, even in this total darkness the **pain still tracks you down**. One is completely *abandoned* and *alone* and in torment. Literally and figuratively, Hell is “the **pits!**”—a pitiful place for *anyone* to end up!
- **(Mt. 8:12; Jude 1:13)** Outer, Black Darkness; Weeping and Gnashing of Teeth. Again, sad and painful. That pain has to be so excruciating and unbearable that men will not only **scream** out in pain, they will **grind their teeth** with crushing friction because of the *severity* of their discomfort.
- **(Lk. 16:23-24)** A Place of Torment, with No Let Up or Relief. There is **no exit door** to Hell—only a **wide entrance**—and there is a great chasm and inseparable gulf between Heaven and Hell. Once human life ends—if one is unsaved—life does not simply cease, as the Jehovah’s Witnesses would like to tell you, not is there some “reincarnation” into a new human (or animal, or insect) life form, as many Eastern religions teach. Only cats “have 9 lives”—really only one.

Death **IS the end of our one body and the beginning** of either eternal torment or heavenly bliss. There’s not *even* a drop of cool water to *ease* this condition, in Hell. When you attend the funeral of a non-Christian, or read of a famous lost person’s or celebrity’s death, MOURN—for truly the words the priest or minister say may comfort the bereaved but those words will never comfort the dearly departed.

“There is no way to describe Hell. Nothing on earth can compare with it. No living person has any real idea of it. No madman in wildest flights of insanity ever beheld its horror. No man in delirium ever pictured a place so utterly terrible as this. No nightmare racing across a fervored mind ever produced a terror to match that of the mildest hell.

No murder scene with splashed blood and oozing wound ever suggested a revulsion that could touch the borderlands of hell. Let the most gifted writer exhaust his skill in describing this roaring cavern of unending flame, and he would not have even brushed in fancy the nearest edge of hell.

Hell was originally ‘prepared for the Devil and his angels’—not for man! Little wonder that there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repented. He is saved, redeemed, rescued. It makes the hearts in heaven glad.” —**Selected**

We don’t need to be *morbid*, but our minds can occasionally and legitimately—with respectful *fear*—consider the present circumstances of lost people who spurned God and mocked Christ. That is TRULY a waste of a life—a life lost—and **not what God intended** for man. Rest assured, the inscription “RIP” (i.e., rest in peace) is only an empty and hollow

fiction for the deceased lost and **wish** of those *living*. ‘God rest his soul’ **WILL NOT happen** if one is lost.

- (Mt. 10:28) Both Body and Soul are There. In Hell, both body and soul are being “destroyed,” yet not annihilated or totally decimated or ever ceasing to exist. Christians should thank God daily that this will **not** be our plight, and live reverently unto Him.
- (Mk. 9:42-48) The Worm Does Not Die and the Fire is Not Quenched. I don’t know if these are worms from decayed physical bodies, but it’s obvious there is **great value in avoiding Hell!**
- (Rev. 20:10). The Devil’s Rightful Home. God intended it for no one else. Man was not created to die, nor was he created to sin. Unfortunately, man did sin and **Hell IS all lost peoples’ future home**—unless they receive Jesus Christ.
- (Lk. 16:19-31) There is No Way to Appeal Your Case or plea your way out of Hell, for **once you’ve entered, you are confined**. Physical death begins this **eternal LIFE SENTENCE**.
- (Heb. 9:27) Finally, there is no salvation after physical death—only judgment—for those who have rejected Christ.

See also: Job 38:32; Mt. 4:1, 10:25, 12:24; Jn. 8:44, 12:31; II Cor. 6:15; Jas. 1:13; I Jn. 3:8, 5:19; Rev. 12:9-10.

To summarize these truths in one word—Hell is bad,
Hell is negative—in other words...

HELL IS HELL!

Now I want to ask you a **series of questions** based on what we *learned*. It is based on the Bible, but is organized based on **PURE LOGIC**:

1. Would You Say that Hell is a Positive or Negative Place? Very negative. (Duh 101)
2. Who is Going to Go There—What Kind of People? All who are not believers in Christ. (Jn. 3:36)
3. Is There Any Way for Men to Avoid It? Salvation in Jesus Christ. (Rom. 6:23)
4. Is there any message other than the Gospel which can inform men how to get to God? No—all others are false messages. (Ac. 4:12; Rom. 1:16)
5. From What You Know of Scripture, Does God Want All or Just Some People to Be Saved? All. (I Tim. 2:4)
6. When Does God Want Men to Be Saved—Sooner or Later? Today! (II Cor. 6:2)
7. What One Group has been Entrusted by God to Deliver that Message to Every Human Being? (Col. 1:24-25) The Church—all Christians/believers.
8. Are YOU a Member of That Group? (I Jn. 5:11-13) Yes (or No).
9. Then Does Anyone Have an SUV So We Can **Go Right Now** and **Tell Somebody** About Jesus? Yes. (II Cor. 6:2)

“In the final analysis, it boils down to this one fact: Do you believe there is a hell or not? If you believe there is a hell, a place of eternal punishment in fire, then your main concern will be to rescue as many from the jaws of hell as you

can and to enlist as many to help in the life-saving work as you can.”
–Freddie Gage

[Suggested: Hand out tracts, inform them that church staff has approved our leaving (unless untrue) and child care has been alerted and that we won’t be late returning. Any emergency situations are excused!]

Congratulations! As a great *starting point*, you are no longer a member of the **disgraceful “95% club.”** Keep doing this as lifestyle habit. You can be sure your church staff supports you in this most *noble* task, as we never know when men will die or Christ will return.

And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation.” (Mk. 16:15)

Note: This message was delivered when I *substitute taught* a Sunday School class, and the Lord blessed with **100% compliance!** There’s no reason to believe YOU cannot see the **same results** if you’ll TAKE ACTION–**teach this lesson!**

To show how LITTLE evangelism gets done nowadays, an award was given for the most evangelistic church class. Though I’m **THANKFUL** for the class’ cooperation, it took only about 10 people spending maybe 25 minutes–**IN ONE YEAR**–to receive church-wide *top honors* for evangelism!

Conversely, you might also try the following message:

On Heaven

EVERYONE wants to go to heaven, but *few* want to hasten the trip. Probably *every* religion holds out **hope** for their followers to (eventually) get there. We have an instinctive knowledge that it is a **great place**, and *certainly* better than the alternative. The picture of Heaven is OVERWHELMINGLY that of a **good and positive place**, so why would people not want to go there? Sadly, due to the **devil’s blinding** (II Cor. 4:4) and men’s rejection of Christ, **FEW**, in fact, WILL.

We hear of pearly gates and angels playing harps, but how does the **Bible** describe heaven?

[suggested: one person per verse read verse aloud]

Heaven Description

Read: Rev. 21:1-22:5

- **(Rev. 21:3, 22:3) God With Us.** The whole **original purpose** of God creating mankind (Ex.: Adam and Eve) will be fulfilled–**direct, intimate relationship with God**–**FOREVER!**
- **(Rev. 22:5) Eternity With Him.** Eternity will take on its **quantitative** (vs. only *qualitative*) nature.

- **(Rev. 21:4) Eternal Rewards**. Believers will be REWARDED for the deeds they did ‘in the Lord.’
- **(Jn. 14:1-3) Many Mansions**. We think the **palace of Versailles** is awesome, but it’s only a **GLORIFIED outhouse** in heaven.
- **(Rev. 21:4) No More Tears, Sorrow, Crying or Mourning**. No disillusionments, disappointments, let downs, emotional or physical abuse, heart break or loss.
- **(Rev. 21:4; I Cor. 15:35-58) No More Pain, and Glorified Bodies**. No sickness, disease or disabilities.
- **(Rev. 21:4) No More Death**. Never attend another funeral, bury a pet or sleep on a **sick bed** or *death bed* again.

See also: I Cor. 13:12; II Cor. 4:17; Col. 3:4; I Jn. 3:2; Rev. 14:13, 19:1, 21:6, 27, 22:4

To *summarize* these truths in one word—This place is **HEAVENLY!**

Now I want to ask you a **series of questions** based on what we *learned*. It is based on the Bible, but is organized based on **PURE LOGIC**:

1. Would You Say that Heaven is a **Positive** or **Negative** Place? Very positive. (Duh 101)
2. Would **ANYONE** in Their **Right Mind** Reject Going There? No.
3. Does **God Want EVERYONE** to Go There? Yes. (I Tim. 2:3-4)
4. Can **ANYONE** Go There **Without** Trusting Christ? No. (Jn. 14:6; Ac. 4:12)
5. Is **EVERYONE** Going to Go There? No. (Mt. 7:13-14)
6. Can **ANYONE** and **EVERYONE** Go There if They Trust Christ? Yes. (Rom. 10:13; Jn. 6:35-37)
7. What is **ONLY Message** That Tells Men How to Trust Christ? The Gospel. (Rom. 1:16)
8. What **One** Group has been Entrusted by God to Deliver that Message to Every Human Being? (Col. 1:24-25) The Church—all Christians/believers.
9. Are **YOU** a Member of That Group? (I Jn. 5:11-13) Yes (or No).
10. Then Does Anyone Have an SUV So We Can Go **Right Now** and **Tell Somebody** About Jesus? Yes. (II Cor. 6:2)

6. Excuses Christians Use to NOT Evangelize (Refuted)

In the New England hurricane of 1938, the people had **no warning**. What would you think of the National Hurricane Center in 2012 if they had NOT WARNED the East Coast of Hurricane Sandy? Lost people should **feel the same way** about *every* Christian who has NOT SHARED the Gospel with them!

What *personal, emotional, psychological* or, most importantly spiritual reasons are there for our lack of evangelism, and what does the Bible say about our excuses? What can we do to help each other **change our behavior** by a set date on the calendar?

LIES the Devil Whispers into Christians' Minds (as Willing Accomplices)...

- I'M SCARED OR SHY (I.E., FEAR OF REJECTION). Fear God more than men! According to II Timothy 1:7, where does the spirit which fears evangelism come from—God or the devil? After all, they are **not rejecting you**, but Christ. (Mt. 10:28). When Christians *more intensely* believe the things in the Bible than they fear conversing with the lost, **they'll evangelize**.
- I DON'T KNOW ENOUGH OR WHAT TO SAY. **If you know John 3:16 you know enough**. If you can speak about *sin*, the *cross*, and *salvation/forgiveness*, those are the basics. We can teach you, and you can *use materials* to guide you in sharing a message you may not feel fully *comfortable* speaking. Don't let that prevent you from **missing out** on this great blessing of life—to **see lives eternally changed**, and you get to be part of it!
- THAT'S NOT MY SPIRITUAL GIFT. So what? The command is to EVERY Christian. That's like saying, 'They're going to hell, **I know how to stop it**, but because OTHERS ARE BETTER AT helping stop it, I'll let them *fall off the eternal cliff*.' Evangelist-gifted Christians may do it more easily, or see more conversions, but that is no reason for your inaction. Not all have the *gift of giving*, but all are to give. It's not a matter of giftedness but CALLING!
- THIS IS A CHURCH—NOT AN EVANGELISM ASSOCIATION. Evangelism associations (as great as they are) began in the 1900's, before which time the Church **understood** it's (Co-) mission. Now pastors use their spiritual *gift* to DENY their spiritual *calling*, because preaching sermons primarily to Christians is easier than leaving comfortable confines to evangelize lost people face-to-face!
- THAT'S NOT MY ("SALES") PERSONALITY. **Nor is it mine**. We are not relying on our own personality or temperament, but the Person of the Holy Spirit. You don't even have to have an outgoing personality to evangelize. **Just speak** the *powerful* word.
- I DON'T WANT TO. Perhaps **the most honest response—PREDOMINANT**, though rarely admitted to. **Pray to be made willing** and meditate on select Scriptures to get *God's perspective* on this choice you have made.
- YOU'RE SO PASSIONATE FOR EVANGELISM. NOT EVERYONE IS LIKE THAT. I don't care if you *hate* evangelism—**just DO it**. If you ever stopped to consider the plight of the lost after they die, you'd evangelize (which is where you disobey God in this most important matter).
- I'M NOT SPIRITUAL ENOUGH—I NEED TO GROW MORE. Maybe you do need to grow—**we all do**—unless we're perfect. But **any evangelism is better than none**, and even sinful

evangelism, with the right message, is preferable. (Phil. 1:15-18) Remember, False humility is no humility. Dr. Jack Graham says our lifestyles are the number one reason Christians *don't* evangelize. Kevin Max said,

“The greatest single cause of atheism in the world today is Christians: who acknowledge Jesus with their lips, walk out the door, and deny Him by their lifestyle. That is what an unbelieving world simply finds unbelievable.”

- THAT'S WHAT PROFESSIONAL EVANGELISTS ARE FOR. They are for evangelizing *a lot*, but you are called to do part of that work, as well, *if you are a believer*. (Eph. 4:11-13; I Cor. 15:10; Col. 1:24). Also, *bringing* people to EVANGELISTIC CRUSADES is contributing to but not the same as DOING evangelism.
- I DON'T BELIEVE IN THAT. Do you believe in *parenting*, because you're the product of it? If you are saved, you were saved through evangelism. *How can you not believe* in that which caused you to believe in Christ? How do you believe lost people will get saved?
- GOD WILL SAVE THOSE WHOM HE CHOOSES AND WANTS TO BELIEVE. And He'll do it through his Church, unless His Church is acting in sinfulness and open rebellion, like, maybe someone who uses theology to disobey not evangelize? Though I appreciate your emphasis on the fact that God must initiate and call unto salvation, you must equally emphasize and study the verses which call men to believe (and *evangelize* with a purpose)!
- I REGULARLY ATTEND CHURCH, "TITHE," AND TRY TO BE NICE TO PEOPLE. Great, but that's never gotten anyone to heaven, in and of itself. You can't outsource YOUR job to professionals.
- I'M TOO BUSY. Anyone who is too busy for a daily Quiet Time or to evangelize, is MORALLY too busy, and is giving God their second best. That decision amounts to idolatry and NOT loving God as number one (Mt. 22:35-39). Perhaps you should re-establish your values, or learn to say 'no' more often. You have not yet committed to Christ as Lord if *ANYTHING* takes *higher priority* to an obedient walk with Him. (Col. 3:5)
- I EVANGELIZE BY MY GODLY LIFESTYLE. Your lifestyle can never speak the content of the message of the cross, nor does the Bible anywhere tell you that your obedient walk with Christ IS evangelism. What "message" would the world get from the lifestyle of Gandhi or the average Mormon? The message would be VERY ethical but would send them to hell—absent the message of Jesus Christ! See also: Relational Evangelism Errors (in the Appendix). The adage attributed to St Francis Assisi, "Preach the Gospel, and, if necessary, use words," is false doctrine.
- THE PASTOR DOES THAT. I'm *glad* he does, but you encounter many people he will never see, and he was called of God to raise you up to *do the work* of ministry. (Eph. 4:11-13). Also, Evangelizing at church as the primary outlet is like a salesman trying to find new buyers by convincing them of the value of curry powder who primarily goes to Indian audiences (no offense), when more than 99.9% of lost people will remain OUTSIDE your building and events.
- I'M A PASTOR, NOT AN EVANGELIST. Maybe you won't reach as many as evangelists, but being the under-shepherd makes you the ONE role model for your congregation for this most-important ministry, if you're indeed their human '*leader*.'
- I'M A SENDER, NOT A GOER. Regarding *career foreign mission work*, that's likely true, but regarding EVANGELISM, you're ultimately either a DO-ER or a "sin-ner."

- INVITE PEOPLE TO CHURCH. **Great, but that's NOT EVANGELISM for YOU.** Even if the Gospel is preached there, **YOU** are called to share, and it's no legal loophole from obedience to pawn your job off on the professional! *Don't hide behind the preacher—God can see right through* your covering.
- I'VE DONE THAT BEFORE. Great, that's like saying you have **breathed before**. It's a *continuous command* and habit—not a ONE-TIME thing, then you've done your part for life. **People are still lost and dying**, beyond just the *one or two* people you may have reached.
- WHAT WOULD PEOPLE THINK OF ME—THAT I'M SOME SORT OF “RELIGIOUS FANATIC?” Far be it from you to *be any holier or different* from the world and culture (sarcasm, if you didn't notice). Again; According to Gal. 1:10 one cannot be said to be a disciple or bond-servant of Jesus Christ (i.e., fully *committed* to Him) if there is anything more important to them than God.
- ALL OF AMERICA HAS HEARD. **Research does not bear you out**, and even if she had fully heard, we are not instructed in the Bible to leave it at that. If we care that men get saved and go to heaven, we will **try to share as many times as they are willing to hear!** Research says that the average American hears the Gospel 7 times before they respond, so with as few believers as we have working in evangelism, **how MUCH MORE work is needed** to blanket our country SEVEN times! **We need you on the team!** Christianity is no *bench-warmer's spectator sport*. There's an *eternal war* going on, and the frontline troops *get tired*, and need **reinforcements**. After all, it is **not right** to have a ratio of 1:20 frontline troops to *auxiliary/support personnel* (i.e., 5% evangelize while 95% don't).
- ALL AMERICA HAS THE GOSPEL AVAILABLE TO THEM. Doctors can set up shop on any street corner, but **that alone will help NO injured parties**. The benefit of their skills must **reach the hurting**, and the Bible *clearly* teaches that every Christian is to **take the life-giving Gospel message to every lost person** in the world.
- IDON'T WANT TO OFFEND ANYBODY. In the Bible, there are **two types of offenses**—morally offending people by our sinning against them—which we should **NOT** do, and “offending” over-sensitive consciences, or emotional preferences, as in bringing up “religion” with someone *disinterested* in hearing about that subject. That offending, if not done in a morally offensive way, is **totally expected to occur**, and IF anyone ever voices a desire to not continue to speak of eternal things, God has already told us what to **do—shake the dust off our feet and get going to find a prepared heart willing to listen!** You are not guilty of any sin or moral problem before God if that “*emotional offense*” occurs. As long as you witnessed with integrity and ethics and have not offended because you were rude, evil or obnoxious, you have *done well*. Some people consider it rude to ask ANY personal questions. **Take that risk**—they need the Gospel *whether they know it* (or want it) *or not*.
- I WASN'T RAISED THAT WAY. How you were raised is **not** the standard for a Christian, and **will you let people go to hell** because you choose to stay in a comfort zone? I know personal examples of people using this excuse even concerning their closest relatives facing their *death bed*. No one is raised perfectly, and neither culture, denominational tradition and even risk of OFFENDING those on the precipice of eternity are NO REASON not to show this **ultimate act of love**, called evangelism.
- I WILL SOMEDAY. Really? Does the track record of your life so far (as many years as you have been saved) give evidence you are moving toward opening your mouth with the

Gospel? **WHAT'S TAKEN YOU SO LONG** since you were saved? The Bible describes people evangelizing very close to the time of their conversion, and those who were resistant, God in His sovereignty brought to evangelize through **outside PERSECUTION** (**See:** the book of Acts).

The **NORMAL** Christian life is to *evangelize*. To keep this *greatest gift* inside shows serious spiritual illness, and a dangerous spiritual artery blockage only the Holy Spirit can cure. Rest assured, the 5% statistic is a **moral and sin problem** within the American Church, for which pastor-leaders bear the ultimate human responsibility and for which judgment (though not hell, of course) is **VERY POSSIBLE**.

God motivates us from GRACE, and it is a privilege to be able to share your faith! **Just ask those who have evangelized—the joy is something you cannot understand until you participate**. However, grace can be *abused*, when we simply hope that believers respond to the Spirit's leading, even though years pass without evidence that they increase evangelism efforts. Based on Jesus' promise, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men," if one is not fishing (i.e., evangelizing), how closely are we following? **The greatest way we can show LOVE to a lost world is to evangelize them!**

- **PERHAPS ONE IS UNSAVED THEMSELVES**. How can someone tell another the answer to life if they have *not experienced* it themselves? If you have never evangelized, have you ever been saved?
- **I NEVER THINK ABOUT IT**. You escaped Hell by someone telling you the Gospel but you never think of doing the **same** for somebody else? Begin today—**THINK (and Act) ABOUT IT!**
- **I DON'T WANT TO BE TOO PUSHY**. Though you *do* want to be *tactful, sensitive* and *gracious*, as a famous Southern Baptist pastor recently said, "where are you going to push them to—**Hell number two?**"

LIES Christians Believe About Evangelism.

Perhaps it's because we believe what we hear (or what our **experiences** teach us), but only if one chooses NOT to learn Scripture would they hold to the following:

1. Leave it in God's hands (as if evangelizing shows a lack of faith in God)
2. Just plant a seed (NOWHERE in Scripture does it say that **subtle hints** are the SEED, only the **Gospel!**).
3. The *majority* of people are saved through a friend (PROBABLY because **NO ONE** evangelizes strangers anymore, due to the *heretical* book, Lifestyle Evangelism and their **sinful TIMIDITY**). We're too busy **analyzing** results than GETTING results in evangelism!

ULTIMATELY, evangelismlessness is a **SPIRITUAL/HEART MATTER**, and we do the **DEVIL'S WILL** when we don't speak. The devil didn't *make you do it*—he convinced you and is **getting victory** over you in this crucial area of your (Christian) life! His *greatest victory* would have been to stop the cross, so he's had to resort to **Plan B—Stop the Church** from implementing its **effect**, through stifling evangelism!

Remember, if you do not evangelize,
subconsciously you either **disbelieve in hell** or **believe in universalism**.

7a. Pastor Methods to Evoke Lay Evangelism

I have watched many pastors wash their hands of culpability for their congregation continuing to hardly evangelize by having offered a course in evangelism to all who are interested (guess how few that yields!), preaching the Gospel at the end of sermons and at least one sermon a year on evangelism. What ministers have tried for 30 years **HAS NOT WORKED** to nudge the **5%** statistic. As a leader, you must **do more** and **try MORE things**.

YOU CAN'T PREACH YOUR WAY OUT OF THIS PROBLEM—sermons **MUST** be **followed-up on**—**INDIVIDUALLY**—for sermons can never replace the role of Christians **laying God's word on their hearts** and having **godly** Christian *friends* lovingly holding them **ACCOUNTABLE** to apply what was preached (often called “*Relational Discipleship*”).

We can't **just** blame our congregation or use the ‘you can lead a horse to water but can't make him drink’ rationale. **Followers follow LEADERS**. Are **YOU** evangelistic, openly, boldly, regularly, enthusiastically, publicly, and perhaps most importantly **OUTSIDE** your church, where it can be more difficult and is more relevant to laymen's lives? **VERIFY** that change is happening to this **5%** blithe. God's word preached does not come back void, but that same Bible also gives **OTHER methods** for securing **cooperation**. You are making a **LIFE-LONG** commitment to **lead**—not planning a temporary church emphasis to put a “*Band-Aid*” on the problem.

Being just one person, a nobody at that, by God's grace and on several occasions God has stirred many pastors, Seminary students, Bible College students and laymen to go out evangelizing with myself through what He laid on my heart to do and tell them. You can do **at least as much, and more** because of your public position of ‘authority! Rebellious **sin** is the only reason these ideas will likely NEVER be implemented by churches, because *ignorance* of possible solutions cannot be claimed after reading this website (and other, readily available publications).

Whether we disagree over the “tone” of this exhortation or methods suggested, it boils down to: Are you committed to **literally** **COMPLETING** the Great Commission in an **objectifiable** and organized way? If you **are**, you will try, work and endure until God blesses your efforts with fruit. PLEASE don't hide behind the many modern methods which can **complement** but **never substitute** for **humans evangelizing humans**, such as laymen inviting the lost to church, advertising, praying only for the lost's *emotional problems*, blast emailing tracts (or other technologies), doing good deeds toward and making friendships with lost people **without ever** **SPEAKING the Gospel to them**, to name a few.

Some methods God has *laid on my heart* (many of which have been **successfully used**) include the following:

1. On a given Sunday morning, once all the people have arrived, **close down shop** and **go evangelize!** Announce with **joy** that the church is committed to seeing people won to Jesus, and that every person CAN do it, in God's power, then hand out simple Gospel tracts and instruct them to orderly depart and distribute the tracts to local home door knobs or individuals. If they find people *awake*, tell them to say something like ‘our church wants to give you a gift. Thank you.’ *Discuss their results* the next Sunday. **As I tweeted today**

(@JamesMeroney): Pray 4 Janice Kl__n, missing woman my sons & I searched 4 today. Local churches should have shut down to help, even more to save lost people.

2. Have an **inspirational sermon** on evangelism, and extend it to a church-wide three hour retreat or weekend conference focusing on **hearing Bible verses** and **learning other thoughts** on evangelism **motivation**. This could include projecting beautiful *nature scenes* and *upbeat music* in the background, but is primarily a time of **prayerful reflection** and **introspection** where laymen **HEAR** God's promises and instructions on **evangelism**.
3. Use the Bible Fellowship/Sunday School Assignment entitled, "**On Hell**," in **EVERY** Sunday School class! It works, and a *trusted class leader* can give the lesson in sincerity and with credibility **IF they are evangelistic**.
4. Preach a sermon on the **need** for and **priority** of evangelism, then state your **confident expectation** that *everyone* listening is *interested in lost people being saved* and **that you want every one of them to share the Gospel with one person this week**. Hand out a **tract** to *guide* their efforts, and the next Sunday devote the **entire service** to testimonies of *results*—good or bad (i.e., *lessons learned* and *improvements* to be made **next time**).
5. Solicit the involvement of other **cooperating local churches** to **help** your evangelistic members to **reach every person in a given neighborhood**, for *starters*. Then **BROADCAST THAT 100% COMPLETION SUCCESS ANY WAY** and **EVERYWHERE** you can *to encourage other churches to do the same*. Volunteer your evangelistic members to **reciprocate near** the churches that cooperated!
6. Have the pastor and **every** staff member, deacon, Sunday School leader and administrative person (and any other 'leaders') **ask five church members each to go evangelize with them**. **You'll be surprised HOW MANY will follow** your authority, enthusiasm and lead! I've used this method **MANY times** to lead **pastors, Seminary and Bible students and several laymen**, so *don't tell me it can't be done* or 'won't work.' Don't avoid trying something just because you *never have before!*
7. Enlist an *Evangelist*—**NOT** to **preach the Gospel** to invited lost people—but to **inspire** believers with his *zeal*. *Catch the evangelism spirit yourself*—it can become **contagious**. **Don't announce beforehand** that a *guest speaker* is coming or *what he will speak on*, unless you want to **give the devil an opportunity** to keep **hardened laymen at home** that week.
8. Get **creative, pray**, and come up with **other methods**. Add your own **personal touch** in using these ideas. Try **MATURING UP your membership** through "**relational discipling**," as a maturer believer **might** feel more inclined to **DO** this aspect of his faith than one *more carnal*.

Bottom line, if you are not **enthusiastically evangelistic**, how do you **expect lay people** to be? **REMEMBER: If you haven't tried it, you don't know how it can work**, and only the devil's *doubt* will prevent pastors from **trying** different things. The Lord knows we've tried **too few** and our *results* have been too **abysmal!**

7b. Laymen Methods to Evoke Pastors' Evangelism

I have sought to influence Church leaders for over 25 years to **fulfill** the Great Commission. Their **resistance** has been palpable (as detailed in our possible **YouTube** video—Search: “Church Conflicts,” or “James Meroney”). Just some of those methods I encourage you to emulate are:

1. Personally asked, and went out door-to-door evangelizing with pastors (one very famous), Seminary and Bible College students.
2. 4,000 **emails** to 500 of the largest churches world-wide (primarily the USA), with only 2 replies!
3. *Hand-written notes* (to evangelize *more*) left in offering plates when visiting churches.
4. Voicemail left at the church where I was married at (when voting on a multi-million dollar building program), encouraging *at least* 10% of that amount to fund **1040 Window** evangelists.
5. *Applying to church positions* (as my resume details these priorities). **Feel free to send my resume anywhere** (if you lack the credentials to be taken *seriously*)!
6. Gospel Signs saying “Go Evangelize” and “Disciple Your Church Members” taken to churches, Promise Keepers and the National Day of Prayer (pictures in our Appendix).
7. **This website logo’d** on a business casual shirt worn at church (to influence laymen).
8. Handouts to Sunday School leaders exhorting the laymen to implement **3 mile evangelism plan** and church-wide discipling, if the staff won’t soon. I ensured it got to *staffers* too, as it was never expected that many laymen would be zealous to implement what the ‘father ducks’ wouldn’t.
9. **Volunteering** to teach and lead evangelism and discipleship. At my *most recent church*, **eight times** they found reasons why this could not happen, perhaps because they feared I’d teach, among other things, our “On Hell” message.
10. Personally distributing our “**Prioritized Pastor’s Pledge**” to pastors in your own ‘Jerusalem.’

Bottom Line: If they know you’re *serious*, **won’t back down**, don’t care about being popular or receiving donations and *will go public* about the problem, sadly, that reality is often a major factor in their agreeing to make some changes (as at my current church). You won’t be appreciated, but they might respect you (Ac. 5:13), and you know you’ll be pleasing God!

8. A Local Church Plan of Evangelism

(A handout I pray you'll *print* and/or *email* to your pastor!)

LOCAL CHURCH EVANGELISM PLAN

Pastor: In order to be *fully obedient*—at least in our own “Jerusalem”—please patiently read and prayerfully consider implementing the following ideas.

1. Develop, Commit To and IMPLEMENT a Plan to Reach Every Lost Person Within a Set Distance of Your Church (2 to 5 Miles) As Soon as Possible (No Later Than 2 Years).

Depending on the size of your church, your geographical reach could vary **from 2 to 5 miles**. This does not mean that all church members, attendees or visitors come from that zone, or even that your church’s “**target market**” is that community. It is, however, a significant and efficient way to initially *organize* the great task of **ensuring** that we **reach ALL lost people with the Gospel as quickly as possible**. It is certainly a “field” for which your church is *responsible* before God, as no other church has as close a connection (at least geographically) to that field (except for other Christian churches in that area which you may consider *uniting with* to **complete** the project).

You should be able to complete this goal **within 2 years**, *hopefully sooner*, depending on the number and intensity of workers (See #2, below). The larger your pool of *willing* and recruiter believers, the larger your efforts can be, or the quicker your *own field* can be reached.

It is *essential* that you **document results**, so you are **certain** that EVERY lost person over the ‘age of accountability’ has heard an **accurate** presentation of the Gospel in the power of the *Spirit* a minimum of one time, (or at least was offered the Gospel, if they refused to hear). This can be in the form of **names** or merely a description of address residents (Ex.: 2 parents, 1 child). Such a plan needs to be executed every three years or so to thresh the harvest sufficiently often.

AFTERWARDS, other methods of *showing love*, involving them in your church, and re-evangelizing them can occur. **AFTERWARDS**, you can monitor move-ins and move-outs, births, deaths and children reaching a maturity level where they need to be reached, in that area.. But at a minimum, **GOD WANTS ALL LOST PEOPLE TO HEAR THE GOSPEL OF JESUS, A.S.A.P.!** (Mt. 28:18-20; evangelism preceding baptism and discipling)

2. Get as Many Christians as Possible Involved in This 100% Great Commission Completion Project in Your Area!. Broadcast Your Results to Stimulate a GLOBAL MOVEMENT!

Biblical MOTIVATION, through **claiming promises** and *educating* as to the Bible’s teaching on evangelism, is an aspect of *evangelism training* with is usually **sorely lacking**, and perhaps most needed. **It is naïve to think Christians don’t need to be “inspired,”** and an ERROR to teach that this is *emotional manipulation* or beneath the dignity of our people! The historically stable percentage of Christians who evangelize (**i.e., 5%**) shows that the methods we have used in the past have not been very successful!

Pastors, **utilize** every **biblical** and **effective** method to solicit participation, *prayer-backed*, and learn what the Bible teaches about motivating on this subject.

Spread your own motivation and zeal to others or **find people to get you that way** (if lacking) by *catching their contagious* perspective on evangelism.

Consider handing out the following two surveys, and **follow-up** on them both *individually* and *collectively*. Ask members to commit to evangelize *at least all* in their “Personal Plan of Evangelism” levels 1-6, as God leads, A.S.A.P., and *kindly* insist that they follow through with action.

Don't be content with the very SMALL percentage of church members who evangelize, or “graduate” from EE or CWT (or other evangelism programs). Don't leave this essential function to the whims of whether members ever **choose** to join such programs, (or whether those programs' participants **apply** what is taught, **AFTER** they complete the program!)

Lead by example, hang around *zealously evangelistic* folk, meditate on the importance of evangelism to God and the lost—Hell is real and waiting for them!; Develop biblical **urgency**, **take others evangelizing with you**, and **do not evangelize quietly** or *only inside* your church. As a great brother in the Lord; Jason Bessire used to say, “Live Out Loud!” Let your whole church be made aware of your personal efforts at purposefully and **regularly** LEADING out in evangelism and **more of them** will become comfortable getting on the *bandwagon* and following your lead!

Feel free to and **please do** godly and humbly **PROMOTE** having completed evangelizing *everyone* in your area, to encourage other churches to **do the same** (and assist them in that process, if *led* to be that selfless and biblical).

RECRUITING WORKERS CAN BE ACHIEVED BY MANY METHODS, INCLUDING:

- 1) Prayer (the backbone of the entire operation).
- 2) Utilizing EE and CWT and similar program participants and graduates. It is **not enough simply to make programs AVAILABLE** to church members! Leverage relationships to ensure this blessing gets inculcated as a *habit* in each member's life!
- 3) Utilizing Church staffers and lay **leaders**.
- 4) Church leaders themselves leveraging relationships to **invite** and **exhort** people to evangelize. Make it such a *prevailing habit* in your church that those who don't evangelize feel in the minority for a change!
- 5) Evangelizers taking resistant believers with them to **observe and catch** the spirit of evangelism.
- 6) Evangelism **motivational sermons and retreats** (feel free to use this website's materials).
- 7) Execute EE, CWT and other evangelism programs, including ‘borrowing’ para-church organizations' workers and participants (Ex.: Campus Crusade, the Navigators, etc.).
- 8) Seminary and Bible school students and Professors (from ALL theological disciplines).
- 9) **Tract distribution** by *weaker* believers not yet willing to speak the Gospel.
- 10) Using **professional Evangelists**. (Ex.: conducting festivals, crusades, or merely in-house motivating). Premier example: Rev. Greg Laurie (Harvest America)
- 11) Workers from other cooperating churches.

- 12) Identifying all saved people in the area so the precious time and energy of limited workers is not spent trying to “evangelize” them.
- 13) “Multiplication Evangelism.” Those who have been reached are taught to **reach and teach** those they reach to **reach and teach**, *and so on*.
- 14) Other: Study God’s word and *other ministries*. Imitate the good and **be creative!**

REMEMBER TO PROMOTE **COMPLETION RESULTS** TO OTHER CHURCHES, TO MAKE THIS PLAN A **WORLD-WIDE MOVEMENT**, CHURCH BY CHURCH!

3. **To Complete the Great Commission OUTSIDE Your Area, Choose to Adopt an Indigenous Evangelist (i.e., “National”–Native to That Country) in the “10/40 Window”–the Least Evangelized and Likely Most Dangerous Region on the Planet.**

According to the experts it will take an additional **40,000** missionaries, at **\$15,000** per year to reach that area and *complete* the Great Commission. This averages out to only an **annual additional \$375 for every American church!** It is reasonable to expect that churches with above the national *membership average* would be able to proportionately give *beyond* this amount. [Be A Part of It,” pp. 35-36, by Robby and Jackie Butler (U.S. Center for World Evangelism: Pasadena, CA), 1996; numbers needing inflationary adjustment]

This \$375 would be used to fund full-time indigenous evangelists in the 10/40 window–the most needy area for hearing the Gospel. So long as these funds went *directly* for the employment of these evangelists, including recruiting, training and managing their evangelistic efforts, the *specifics* of how a church can budget this item is left to that local congregation. PLEASE don’t be so **ARM’S LENGTH** apart from **direct involvement** that you simply budget more funds for some national denominational organization to *alone* know exactly where and how your additional \$375 is being *used*.

What would one church’s foreign missions obligation be? **Sponsor** part or all of a 10/40 Window Missionary’s salary or adopt a foreign country neighborhood or zip code for *short-term* mission trips.

In Summary, **Take the Great Commission Literally, Seriously and Urgently!**

Think and pray about whether your past and current efforts ensure that **all** hear, or not.

It’s Not Whether We Can, But **Whether We Will**, Which is In question!

–James Meroney (M.Div., J.D., M.B.A.)

P.S.: I have attached two surveys I *hope* will help you lead your congregation to a *deeper walk* with Christ and begin to *manifest* itself in ***regular personal* EVANGELISM**.

CHURCH-WIDE DISCIPLESHIP SURVEY

In an ongoing effort of your church staff to ensure we are “pleasing God in all respects,” and faithfully fulfilling our calling to shepherd His flock toward maturity in following Christ, we have prepared this survey as a guide, both to assess the spiritual condition of our church, our own effectiveness in doing our job before God, and as a tool to help you further your personal relationship with Jesus Christ and learn how it can be strengthened to the glory of God.

(Hebrews 10:24)

*****Please Return a Completed Form in the Offering Plate in the Next 3 Weeks*****

Thank you!

Instructions: Prayerfully consider, then honestly answer the following questions.

NAME (optional): _____

1. Are you certain that you have received Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all your sins (and are therefore a “Christian”), or are you unsure? _____

If you are a Christian...

2. On a scale of 1 to 10, how important is your daily walk with Jesus Christ, 10 being very important to you? (Please circle) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3. Define “Christianity” and “the Christian life” (i.e., life after one is saved) in your own words. What are the elements which make it successful? _____
- _____
- _____
4. How often and for how long do you spend time with God in prayer and Bible study (i.e., a “Quiet Time”)? How regularly? _____
- _____
5. Do you believe that attending Church, possibly Sunday School/Adult Bible Fellowship and Giving (or “tithing”) is the essence/core/HEART of being a Christian? _____
6. Do you know what spiritual gift (or gifts) you possess, and do you regularly use them in a ministry for God? _____
7. How many Bible verses do you know from memory, and how many have you targeted to memorize this year? Approx. _____ Memorized and Approx. _____ Targeted this year.

(Over, Please)

8. Would you say you have a good understanding of the Bible, or in general, parts of it, select subjects, or hardly any of it? Would you like to know more, sooner? _____

9. If being a Christian was compared to a baby being born and then growing, how would you describe your stage of spiritual growth? How long have you been a Christian to have grown that amount? _____

10. Do you feel that God LEADS you, that you know His will, and that you have experienced His power in your life? In what ways has His power been made known to you? _____

11. How often do you tell people how to go to heaven? What things are keeping you from doing this on a more regular basis, say at least once a month? _____

12. Though we are all imperfect (and always will be in this life) do you see evidence of God making you holier, over time, or would you say you are a little bit on the downslide? _____

13. God wants His children to be totally sold out to and committed to Him, and He has prepared an abundant life for those who do.
- a) Are you interested in learning how to “grow up” as a Christian to begin experiencing that life of rewards, blessings, joy and contentment? Yes, no, maybe, or somewhat? _____
 - b) If your answer was either no, maybe or somewhat, please list the things that are keeping you from being fully interested in having a closer walk with God. _____

Thanks for Your Honest Answers and Time Taking This Personal Spiritual Inventory!

Remember:

It's only what we do with and for God in this life that matters in the long run! Every day not lived close to God is a day missing out on His abundant life, a day of less blessings and rewards (both here for eternity) and a disappointing displeasing of the Father.

Make and take the time, as you'll hardly ever find the time.

It's the most important thing to be engaged in in this life!

CHURCH-WIDE EVANGELISM SURVEY

In an ongoing effort of your church staff to ensure we are “pleasing God in all respects,” and faithfully fulfilling our calling to shepherd God’s flock toward maturity and evangelizing the lost, we have prepared this survey as a guide, both to assess the spiritual condition of our church, our own effectiveness in doing our job before God, and also as a tool to help you consider how your relationship with Jesus Christ is being *verbally expressed* to lost people, for their eternal benefit. We want to help you be strengthened in this most important area to the glory of God.

(Matthew 28:18-20)

*****Please Return a Completed Form in the Offering Plate in the Next 3 Weeks*****

Thank you!

Instructions: Please honestly and prayerfully answer the following questions, using check marks or words, as called for.

NAME (optional): _____

1. In assessing your own participation in world evangelism, which statement best describes your involvement and current state of mind about the subject?:

___ I regularly evangelize the lost. About how often? _____

___ I occasionally evangelize the lost. About how many people a year do you reach? _____

___ I rarely evangelize the lost but I have done so before. How many times in your life would you say you have done so? _____

___ I am presently willing to evangelize (i.e., tell the Gospel of Jesus Christ to) lost people.

___ I am willing to evangelize (i.e., tell the Gospel of Jesus Christ to) lost people **if**:

a) I could be trained, and learn how better to do it. ___

b) I were to receive the encouragement of someone to do so. ___

c) Someone asked me to, and laid out a plan where I could effectively and specifically aid in accomplishing a significant move forward for the cause of Christ in evangelism. ___

d) The pastor or a staff member asked me to. ___

e) If someone were to take me out with them and allow me to observe how it is done (without my speaking—only praying, until I am more comfortable). ___

f) I am needed. ___ (**Note:** you ARE needed!)

g) I were taught and “motivated” about why it is important and why I am supposed to do it. ___

h) The methods used were “easy” for me to learn and implement. ___

i) I grow a little more in my faith. I estimate I would be ready by _____ (date). ___

___ I am willing to be made willing to evangelize, so pray for me (as will I) that God would make me willing.

(Over, Please)

___ I do not or “cannot” see myself ever evangelizing. I do not intend or plan to, and am unwilling to evangelize. Please state the reasons which are hindering you from making this important step. _____

2. Would you like prayer for your decisions in the matter of your level of commitment to evangelism for Jesus Christ? _____

3. On the subject of evangelism, **are you personally certain that you have received Jesus Christ** for the forgiveness of all your sins (and are therefore a “Christian”), or are you unsure? _____

4. How did you come to have the certainty that you have received and know Christ personally? _____

Please complete the following chart (at least in your own records), entitled “My Personal Evangelism Plan” to indicate which people you plan to share the Gospel within the next 2 to 12 months.

Thanks for Your Honest Answers and Time Taking This Personal Evangelism Inventory!

Remember:

It’s the most important activity you can be engaged in unto God for the lost, and God rewards us for our obedience in this area!

PERSONAL EVANGELISM PLAN

(a practical personal evangelism model, using common lines of relationships, adapted from the book, Concentric Circles of Concern, by Oscar Thompson)

Before God, and trusting His leadership and power, I commit to *initiating* conversations to spread the Gospel to the following people this next year:

1. Self _____ (If I am unsure whether I will go to heaven, so I will seek out a pastor to speak with)

2. Immediate Family (Ex.: spouse, children)

Name: _____

Name: _____

Name: _____

3. Extended Family (Ex.: parents, siblings, uncles and aunts)

Name: _____

Name: _____

4. Friends

Name: _____

Name: _____

5. Business Associates or School Colleagues

Name: _____

Name: _____

6. Neighbors and domestic workers (Ex.: maid, daycare, garbage person, mailman)

Name: _____

Name: _____

7. Strangers

Name (after reached): _____

Name (after reached): _____

9. A Practical Plan for Great Commission Completion (Within 3 Years)

3-YEAR GLOBAL GREAT COMMISSION COMPLETION PLAN

Would you **PLEASE** prayerfully consider what your part might be in a *global* plan to *ensure* that EVERY living lost person **hears the Gospel** (lovingly; Accurately and effectively) **ONE TIME** within the next 3 years? Resist the devil if your *mind* is telling you this is imaginary dreaming or a crazy, “impractical” idea because allowing those thoughts to not be **taken captive** will ALL BUT destine you to **NOT** be someone we can count on in this *venture*! (II Cor. 11:28)

The **HEART** of such a **PLAN** would include:

1. **EVERY** local church **completely** reaching **all** lost within **3 miles** of their building, (See: Local Church Plan of Evangelism). If ‘**success arrogance**’ prevents any churches from participating, perhaps only the smaller churches would be used of God to get the job **done**.
2. **Helping** other *surrounding* churches do the same.
3. **Broadcasting** results to *inspire* churches further from you across the world.
4. **Recruiting workers** (See: Church-Wide Evangelism Survey).
5. **Raising \$375 per church** to cover Missionaries in the 10/40 Window.
6. **Prayer**-backing, and
7. **Organized**—not duplicitous efforts, or *reaching Christians* with the Gospel!

WORLD-WIDE EVANGELISM NEEDS

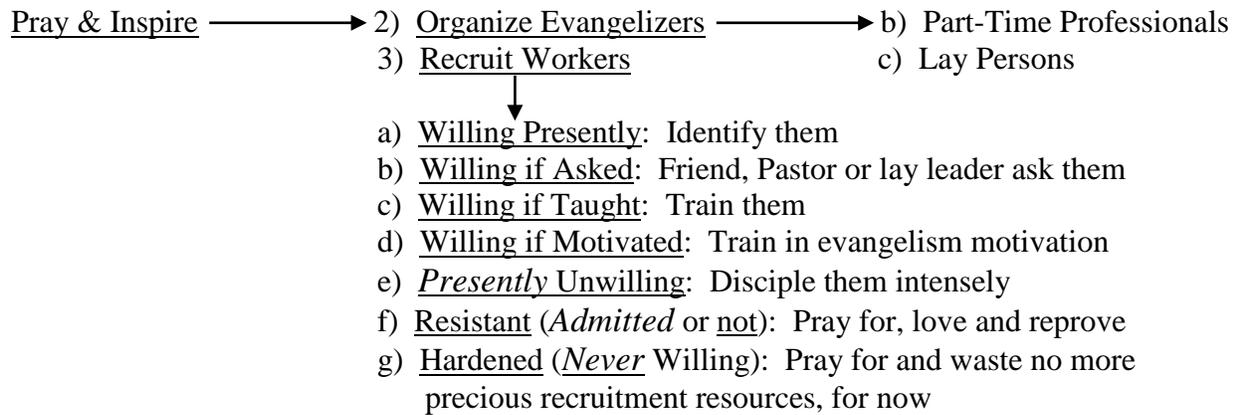
(for *literally* **COMPLETING** the Great Commission in **2 to 3 Years**)

1. ‘Vision Spreading and for the real practicality of completing an *objective* plan for **100% fulfillment** the first stage of the *Great Commission*.
2. Prayer-Backing
3. Recruitment of Workers
4. Identify Evangelistic Needs
 - a) **EVERY** *never-reached* person.
 - b) **EVERY** *unsaved* person who has heard the Gospel but needs re-evangelism.
 - c) **OTHER** (Think hard and come up with *helpful* suggestions to add).
5. **Money** Raised to Fully Support this Cause
6. All Evangelism Efforts Organized and Coordinated with Each Other (to avoid duplicity, evangelizing Christians and to be as efficient as possible at effectively and objectively **COMPLETING** the Great Commission).
7. Exhorting and Inspiring Believers to Evangelize.
8. Resources Readily Available to Handle Challenges (Ex.: Language barriers, apologetic answers, organized opposition, etc.).

GREAT COMMISSION COMPLETION NEEDS FLOW CHART

1) Cast a Vision

a) Full-Time Professionals



GENERAL FOREIGN MISSIONS STRATEGIES

The **most needy areas** of the world for evangelism don't happen to be in our own back yard. Below are some **suggested strategies** for reaching people in foreign lands—many of which are *hostile* to the Gospel. These strategies have been submitted to the Southern Baptist Convention, who informed me that they would not only be seriously *considered* but many *incorporated* into their strategic mission plans, for which I'm eternally THANKFUL.

- **Organize** all existing evangelizers, and train all who are willing to learn how to evangelize. Address the evangelism motivation needs of the *others* in the Church thereafter.
- **Recruit** part- and full-time evangelists (Ex.: *raise funds* to increase their numbers).
- **Establish** a global **economic warehouse** to support *indigenous evangelists* in the **10/40 Window** only as long as it takes them to raise their own support.
- **Recruit** *college* and *high school* students for foreign missions EVANGELISM work.
- Conduct “**World Events**” (Ex.: hands across Texas, etc.)—be creative.
- Conduct **motivational seminars**.
- I've heard of one 10/40 indigenous evangelist who travels around with an American sermon on an old **record player**, letting that recording speak the Gospel to his people.
- **Video tapes** in homes which have video players. (Ex.: the Jesus Video, etc.)
- Perhaps design **universal sign language** to evangelize people of all languages (Ex.: point to the sky, hands out to receive, picture of Christ—as we portray Him—hands out in prayer?). There ARE **universal gestures** consistently applicable in all cultures, as was detailed in a recent national morning news program (which included an associated website).
- **Tracts** in all know languages.
- Promote evangelism-inspiring **books** (in *all* media formats).
- Use cheaper methods, and **learn to live modestly** (**See:** Commitment to a Wartime Lifestyle, from the U.S. Center on World Missions), so 10% of present expenses can FUND world evangelism without even having to **crimp your lifestyle**.
- Print out sheets of **Jn. 3:16 verses** in various (either by nationals preparing them, or converting English versions from such websites as babelfish.com).
- Organize laymen's evangelism efforts **across churches**.

- Use the philosophy to ‘Teach a man to fish’ instead of providing fish to him forever. Applied, **train indigenous Christians** to reach their *own people* with the Gospel.
- Use **technology and media** (to make up for the Church’s lack). A robot, though not *preferred*, would do better than 95% of American Christians!
- Coordinate **city-wide** evangelism efforts, with as many churches involved as possible.
- Do not automatically rule out what seems impossible—**Billy Graham** has conducted crusades in Cambodia, and **Arthur Blessitt** in 2000 completed entry in every country in the world (over the life of his ministry). Pray. It can be done!
- Recruit a **huge evangelism army** (seminary, high school; College, retirees, etc.).
- Witness to **culture groups** in your own city (and train them to *reach* their foreign relatives).
- Christians in business, and especially “Christian businesses” need to provide a lot more decent paying **part-time jobs** to **bi-vocational Evangelists!** I have looked for such for years and they hardly exist. What a ministry that would be from *employers*, because to make a decent living our time would *not be as* consumed with lesser things than evangelism.
- Are there any Christians you know who seem **open to evangelizing**, but have not done it yet? Please **give their names** to any evangelistically-minded member of your church staff to *follow-up on*.
- Though there is no explicit promise that Christ will return immediately upon our reaching the world with the Gospel, and knowing He will come at the Father’s appointed date, we can be hopeful that this **could** be the result, which should stimulate us all the more to get the job done quickly. We CAN hasten the day of His return. (**II Pet. 3:12; Mt. 24:14**)
- Radio evangelism.
- Wycliffe and World Bible Society Bible translators increased, to handle the *world-wide need* for their services
- **Videotape skilled evangelists** and disciple-makers to train indigenous ministers. Cambodian Christians spontaneously decided to do that with our mission group—very wise of them!
- Reportedly, some third world countries hire **American ministers** to teach their people how to evangelize, so the trainees can become **MISSIONARIES TO AMERICA!** Is America so backslidden that the number one missionary sending country in the world now is a **mission field** for those we used to only send missionaries **TO**? [Courtesy of Ronnie Webb]
- One Colorado-based ministry (D.A.W.N.) reportedly has an **evangelism war room**, with multi-colored maps indicating the spiritual need and *conditions* in given areas. Do you know that information about your city?
- We need to be **wiser stewards** in our evangelism efforts and expenditures world-wide. I know of some American-based missionaries who have raised **full-time funds** labeled ‘Missionaries,’ who are only in foreign countries 6 weeks a year! Perhaps they need to fund-raise, and don’t feel called to full-time missionary work, but we can do better than that with the limited funds for evangelism!
- Don’t set up foreign church *polity* exactly like it is in America (necessarily). Let them express themselves in their own cultural traditions, so long as they are **consistent with the Bible.**

- Win a country **one city at a time**—then godly **BRAG**, to stimulate other cities to **do the same**. I am not speaking of the sinful type of boasting. (II Cor. 12:1)
- **Completely thresh the area surrounding YOUR church**, and then **BROADCAST** those successes everywhere, to inspire other churches, world-wide, to **do the same!**
- Ministries which **start churches** as the result of their evangelism need to have ways to monitor its moral and evangelistic health (pray, write letters, let the local missionary check up on it, re-visit it each trip back, etc.).
- One Minister suggested: “Develop relationships with people. Most witnessing occurs one on one, led by **indigenous churches** and locals. One way to minister there is to have a pastor for a month, then *hand off* the task to another. A common way is to ‘*meet needs they know they have so we can meet needs they don’t know they have,*’ and, without a ministry visa, most 10/40 missionaries will need to be tied to their vocation, to have a **right** to live in those countries.” –Paraphrase of Keith Parks, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship meeting at Tallowood Baptist Church, Houston, TX 1998

Foreign Missions Strategies and Suggestions for Closed Countries

Christians in America have it good. There is little chance of any physical violence against us and we are free to worship freely, so we must be thankful, and prayerfully consider how we can support our persecuted brethren around the world, and help them reach their lost fellow countrymen.

The statistics are sad and staggering:

- 163,000 Christians are martyred for their faith around the world every year.
- In 1900, 10, 394 lost their lives, but between 2000 and 2001, there were 1 million.
- Of the 35 million martyrs, to date, over half of which were just in the last century.
- 400 million believers live under the constant threat of persecution, in places like North Korea, Iran, Somalia and China. Things are certainly intensifying, just as Jesus said they would.

For more information, please See:

OpenDoorsUSA.org

Persecution.com

VoiceOfMartyrs.com

–Jarrett Stephens & Dr. Jack Graham (11/11-12/11, *paraphrased*)

Currently Being Done

- Evangelistic Crusades.
- Radio Free America-like ministry.
- Television (Ex.: TBN).
- Smuggling Bibles and tracts (in various forms).
- Training the “underground church.”
- Evangelizing “foreigners” when out of their country to conduct evangelism when they are back home.

- Evangelizing through believers who will do business in closed countries.
- Having a church within walking distance of every person—already the *goal* of global mission strategists.
- Evangelize immigrants to free world countries (they make calls and trips back “home”).
- Economic and medical aid as an in-road to government permission in sharing the faith.
- Bible story-telling leading to evangelism.
- Train indigenous missionaries and helping to fund them.
- Short-term mission trips.
- Evangelism during crises and natural catastrophes, as appropriate (i.e., **at least** *pray* with them—using Jesus’ name—and leave *tracts*).
- Evangelize entire families, often addressing the father first (in strongly paternal cultures)

Continue to or Consider Doing in the Future

- Full-time missionaries leave the comforts of the United States.
- Prayer for the lost and leaders and evangelizers in those countries. Solicit as **many** to pray specifically as possible.
- Trade one day of full access to America for Muslim witness, for one day in Arab countries for Christian witness (if feasible).
- Social charity work (Ex.: fill pot holes, medicine, health experts/nutrition, end poverty) used in conjunction with right to evangelize) or coordinate with U.S. government agencies (Ex.: Global Vision).
- Smuggle Bibles (with marked Gospel verses or Gospel presentation in leaf) by **car or plane drop**, (Ex.: border ministry), and books interpreting the Bible and explaining the Gospel.
- Access people in *closed* countries through the internet.
- Evangelize and train Christian students and businessmen who plan to go to or work in the 10/40 window for secular reasons.
- Pray for change in closed governments’ leaders.
- Have Evangelists continue to try to meet with closed country government leaders.
- Provide physical aid (with tracts inserted).
- Remote control or flying Gospel megaphones? *Think outside the box* for workable, imaginative products!
- Remote control airplane? (Ex.: a drone-like Gospel leaflet dropper).
- Remote-control boats full of Gospel tracts?
- Gospel laser messages in the sky?
- Conduct “world events” in open countries (to make news and possibly get attention in closed countries).
- Hot air balloon evangelism (Ex.: the Gospel message on the side in THEIR language), or stuffed with tracts to be dropped)—likely only in safer countries.
- Fax machine evangelism.

- Voice mail evangelism.
- Internet chat room evangelism.
- Honing Pigeons (or other animals) with tracts on their back?
- Huge lighted cross they can see from their country?
- Missionaries anonymously distribute tracts **at night?** (only safely, of course)
- Government political persuasion to influence closed countries' leaders.
- National celebrities speak of Christ and the Gospel (Ex.: ex-U.S. patriots, abroad or famous nationals).
- Musical concerts interspersed with testimonies or Gospel verses. A secular orchestra was recently was allowed to play in North Korea.
- Preach at the established governmental churches, within governmental guidelines.
- Evangelize nationals in the U.S. and train the converts to evangelize when they return to their home country. (already being done)
- Billboards?
- Chalk board art and drama evangelism?
- Arthur Blessitt cross-carrying method (he successfully infiltrated ALL closed countries!).
- Megaphones on cars (Ex.: in Cambodia a Michael Jackson concert was being promoted this way).
- Airplane streamers?
- Airplane tract drops (Ex.: covert airspace, with government awareness—as they may never see the Gospel again).
- Get free and positive publicity at world events, such as the Olympics.
- Increase full-time American missionaries to the 10-40 window (**recruit and pay for** them), and bi-vocational missionaries.
- Re-shuffle the predominantly **95% Christian** workers in North America to balance out where they are more needed. (Hitherto rejected as a predominant strategy by Missions Strategists).
- Neighborhood Bible studies once trust is gained that nationals will not turn you into the authorities. (already being used)
- Religious leaders interacting with other religion's leaders (mutual opportunity to present case and learn from each other—"Inter-Faith dialogues")?
- Musical tour groups doing evangelizing. (already being done)
- Planes skywriting the Gospel (or at least a cross)?
- Evangelize while on vacation or with foreign exchange students.
- Write evangelistic letters to people (if the government does not *sensor* or confiscate mail).
- Chain letters or chain e-mails?
- Door-to-door evangelism, identified as vacationing guests.

- Create a reputation in cities surrounding those areas of the MASSES flocking to Christ (i.e., preach for results and ‘revival’ which might **pressure** surrounding closed countries).
- Phone calls (if not *censored* by the government).
- Christians teaching English as a Second Language classes (and evangelizing off hours).
- Christian relatives of family in closed countries try to evangelize them when they have contact and opportunity.
- Slip in religion in school curriculum?
- Christians boycott of goods from closed countries, and seeking other American’s boycotting for secular reasons?
- Hire 40,000 indigenous evangelists, and motivate, train, manage and monitor their progress.
- Push for more moderates in closed country government structure.
- Have Christians memorize Gospel verses and re-create them on paper when in closed countries.
- Any other technologies (including UPS package deliveries).
- Try to evangelize the government leadership.
- Technology to produce a tremendously loud message from the skies which many can hear?
- Tracts on oil freighters to and from the Middle East.
- Evangelism *messages* on business documents.
- Donate clothes (Ex.: **shirts with John 3:16** on them, perhaps in English).
- Donate fortune cookies with John 3:16 in them, or other knowingly food stuffs?
- Elect a Christian president courageous enough to privately mention the Gospel to their leaders.
- On foreign hotel stays, leave leaflets as you leave a house or building (to protect yourself from possible harm if discovered).
- Ask nationals of their religious beliefs, and hear them out. Perhaps then they will open up to you to reciprocally hear the Gospel.
- Let the U.S. and European (i.e., Western) Church do **most of the paying** for 10/40 window evangelism, as they can most afford it.

Be Creative!!!

God Can Use Your Renewed Mind to Help Finalize Reaching the Least-Evangelized!

25 EVANGELISM PRINCIPLES I BELIEVE IN

1. With limited resources, don't let the **discipling** of Christians DELAY reaching **ALL** in the world **ASAP**.
2. If only given these two options, I'd rather reach all men for Christ and have a smaller number of *mature* believers than to have a few spiritual giants and **MANY** go to hell untold.
3. Use those willing to be used in evangelism, and **PRAY FOR** (and *motivate*) the others.
4. Evangelize the ripe fruit first, if *possible*.
5. It is *better* to evangelize all men once, than just a few men several times.
6. Evangelism cooperation is better than church competition (i.e., we are *co-laborers*).
7. Until you have **DONE** evangelism, your *criticisms* of or *advice* on methods **don't really count**.
8. Evangelism is like basketball—you learn by DOING.
9. Eliminate as much disorganization and duplicity of effort as *possible*, so ministries **know** who needs to be reached and who is already reaching them (if *anyone*).
10. The Bible teaches a '**go and tell**' *philosophy* of evangelism (vs. a '*come and hear*' one).
11. Evangelism is an **event**, and if it falls within a bigger *process*, that's not your concern—**go TELL!** Evangelism that is never initiated or *intentional* and *purposeful* can only be **accidental** or *non-existent*.
12. Fear of speaking with *strangers* without "befriending" them first, over time, is **NOT** of God, and this issue has nothing to do with your personality or temperament.
13. Most American Christians will **do almost ANYTHING** but evangelize and to avoid evangelizing. Unfortunately, I mean **almost ANYTHING**. Nothing is as **SELFISH** as an evangelistically **mute** believer.
14. It is *easier* to reach the world with everyone doing their part (and we should teach and motivate to that end), but we **cannot count on** that *happening*.
15. If every Christian were to reach the lost and **teach their converts to do the same**, world evangelism could be completed **sooner**, but we **cannot count on** that *happening*.
16. Of all the money pumped into Christianity each year, the **greatest percentage** should be going to **world evangelism**.
17. If we would but **COMPLETE** the **Great Commission** (i.e., reach EVERY soul **one time** with an accurate and empowered message), **we would have the moral freedom** to do all the more entertaining things we **NOW** do more culpably, having **NEVER completed** the task.
18. One of the **main reasons** Christ has not yet returned is because He is waiting on the Church to **get off her duff** and **COMPLETE** His **Great Commission**.
19. You can do all the **social ministry** and live as ethically as possible, but until you **SPEAK the Gospel** you have neither evangelized, or eternally helped a lost person.
20. Evangelism is defined as lovingly speaking the Gospel message to lost people in the power

of the Spirit, praying, hoping, intending and **inviting** that person to *respond*.

21. It is easier to **brand** a *zealous* lay evangelizer a “**fanatic**” than to **face** and ‘**fess up**’ to your own **sinful evangelismlessness**!
22. It doesn’t matter if a lost person indicates they are **interested** in spiritual things or not—they **NEED** Christ, and you are **obligated** to *lovingly* share Him **unless** they **verbally inform** you they **will NOT listen** to anything more. This is not ‘cramming the gospel down their throats,’ but being **graciously PERSISTENT**.
23. One may be able to take evangelism to an **extreme** (i.e., the proverbial ‘witnessing to a light pole’), but that image is **NOT** America’s predominant concern.
24. **Evangelizing those who have *never heard* the Gospel is our MOST urgent need.**
25. **Judgment is upon a *group of people* who LET the world go to hell, and do NOTHING about it!**

STRATEGY CONSIDERATIONS FOR GREAT COMMISSION COMPLETION

- The **goal** is *simply* and *solely* to **document** and **ensure** that **every** living soul has heard an empowered, loving and accurate presentation of the Gospel (or absolutely refused such invitation).
- There is fairly *recent* precedent: I’m sure my college church’s neighborhood was not the only place in the USA where we had **street maps and addresses** (in 1978), and I *personally* witnessed **every** house being reached and results documented (at least where every Evangelism Explosion worker went). To say it can’t be done is to **sing harmony with the devil!**
- The **key** seems to be **pastors**, as they have the authority, education and commitment/responsibility to lead (and influence) others to cooperate.
- Such can be efficiently ‘reached’ (as more of a group) at **denominational headquarters**, or **pastor conferences** or seminaries and Bible colleges (while in training).
- **Christian radio and TV** has the platform to exhort the movement—**IF** they value salvations over ratings.
- It’s easier when we all take **personal responsibility** for our **own ‘field’ first!**
- **Identifying who the current 5% are** and informally and temporarily *uniting their efforts* in given locations eliminates **duplication**.
- An informal and temporary association of **smaller (and medium-sized?) churches** may be just the ones to get the job done (especially if any mega churches are too caught up in chasing church grow to get involved).
- **Gathering all current (and any former, willing) Evangelism Explosion workers** into **one zip code** so we can *announce* one completion would be great! **Evangelists** who have their support raised could help.
- **Start with the willing** and **maximize** their usefulness
- Use “**Multiplication Evangelism**” (at least till it breaks down)

- Disciple people into being *evangelistic*
- Catch the fire: **Rub off** on others if you're evangelistic; if not, hang around those who are!
- Pastors lead by example (**OUTSIDE** their church walls—openly, publicly and **publicize** it)
- For 3 years, re-assign as **many full-time Missionaries** to finish work in the 10/40 Window, or wherever they are needed (IF they feel **led** and are **willing** to do so). Current Missions Strategy does **not** re-direct current Missionaries to the most needy areas, but if for **only 3 years**, and given the eternal and **thorough** purpose for this change; I Think that strategy could be temporarily abandoned. **See:** Be A Part of It, by Robby and Jackie Butler, (U.S. Center for World Mission: Pasadena, CA), 1996
- Statistics show that **95% of all Ministers work in North America**—one of the most plentifully-reached (and **affluent**—any correlation?) areas of the world. Any chance any of these Ministers would take a sabbatical or **MANY** short-term mission trips to help where they're **really needed**? **See:** Be A Part of It, p. 22, by Robby and Jackie Butler, (U.S. Center for World Mission: Pasadena, CA), 1996
- For just **3 years**, couldn't we prayerfully, lovingly and with intentional prioritization have **every Christian denomination WORK TOGETHER** to complete this task? No pride, no ownership, no building construction, no selfish ambition, no claims, no proselytizing to your own ministry, no subject but Christ and evangelism being presented to lost people and no leadership conflicts?
- Use the '**teach a man how to fish**' vs. 'feed a man for life' philosophy of ministry (especially by having *indigenous evangelists* **witness** to their own people, and **funded only so long as it takes** for them to be *financially self-sustaining*).
- Create a world-wide *Great Commission Completion* **Money Warehouse** (which manages, prioritizes and monitors **results** of its spending to support evangelizers).
- Recruit explorer/outdoorsmen types to reach physically difficult to reach peoples (including either linguists, or **technology** to *connect* linguists to those they discover).
- Identify all existing born again believers, so we don't *waste* resources trying to evangelize them (each church, individually, can use their *membership rolls*—updated with this web site's **Evangelism Survey** results for those who are members, yet *lost*). **See:** Church Evangelism Survey
- Where **language barriers** arise, consider some of the following ideas (many of which *I used* in Cambodia):
 - a) A national interpreter
 - b) Gospel Tracts
 - c) Find English as a Second Language teachers to help
 - d) Find English-speaking nationals to help (the Lord led me to a man reading an English Dictionary who was pleased to translate, for it aided his English proficiency)
 - e) National children are eager to help (consider comic book tracts). I didn't care if they were saved or not—only if they were **willing** to pass on a message where there were **so few workers**, because God's word doesn't return void
 - f) **Learn 20 crucial Gospel words in their language**. I used to know 20 words in the Cambodian language. Ex.: Christ, sin, heaven, hell, pray, trust, love, etc.
 - g) Wear a **T-shirt** with which communicates the Gospel to them, and point to it

for them to read if ever *by yourself*

- h) Train nationals to evangelize when you're gone from short-term mission trips
- i) Consider the use of megaphones, public campaigns (Ex.: Billy Graham-like Evangelists or local national celebrity Christians), or 'world event,' ETC.
- QUIT confusing emotional bonding through **charity** work to the lost as an *influence* or required prerequisite to evangelism! If you have God's power, you'll see all that's required of us is to lovingly **SPEAK!** Using our donor- (vs. God-) limited resources on any good activities which delay or increase the cost of completing the Great Commission within 3 years thereby makes them impediments and hindrances to that goal. As Chad Uretsky says, 'charity without evangelism is like paving pot holes on the road to hell.'
- Though perhaps a *great strategy* for indigenous evangelism, **quit considering our Western work done** once a church has been "planted" within a given "people group." **Christ didn't die for "people groups"** but INDIVIDUALS—and **ALL** of them! Make plans that are more specific toward reaching everyone within that "people group." The apostles didn't "*plant*" churches—they **evangelized people**, who then *gathered into* churches as a result.
- Consider creating a global war room to **track evangelism results and needs**.
- Target strategic cities for *full completion*, so results will be more naturally **broadcast** elsewhere (Ex.: London, Beijing).
- Consider '**world events**' to get attention to this 3-year plan, such as public Bible burnings (to emphasize our rarely using them anyway, yet only symbolize such by burning **non-useable** books).
- Use **advertising** and technology to their *fullest* in this global campaign.
- Identify Christian apologetic and world religion evangelism experts to be '*on call*,' as needed.
- Have a one-time FUNDING drive to fully pay for this one-time Great Commission "harvesting" project.
- *After* the job is done, monitor:
 - a) **New births**, needing evangelism when 'of age.'
 - b) People needing re-evangelism (especially those facing old age)
 - c) People needing discipleship. Start with the majority of existing believers!.
- Recruit Missionaries (Ex.: Bible Colleges, High Schools, Seminaries, etc.; it helps a lot to **have funding raised** to get their *attention* for an only 3-year stint). Many young **Mormons** take two years out of their young work lives to serve their faith. Secular analogies exist in the **Peace Corps**. **Why can't the Church lift a finger** for *one last-minute*, possibly **last ditch** effort at Great Commission completion in our day?
- JUST for three years, consider either temporarily curtailing or at least **not increasing** social ministry/charity activities and **funding UNTIL** *every human has been reached* with the *Gospel*.
- Christian **discipleship** efforts, though extremely beneficial, might need to be **maintained** at present level for the 3-year period, as all efforts **but evangelism** can take needed resources away from that **objective** (knowing discipleship will increase workers in the medium- and long-term). If this offends those doing discipleship work, **ADD to** your work, but **also add more evangelism**—you'll need to cut back your paid employment,

perhaps, but what a valuable sacrifice I feel confident you likely won't make.

I hope this website is **proof** to disciplers I am ALL for what you do! I simply fear this particular bullet point will be criticized as an **infringement** on their ministry focus, but before you criticize the suggestion—**have you presently reached every existing believer with Christian discipleship?** If not, why are you mad at me for suggesting you **roll up your sleeves** and evangelize too BEFORE you return to that third stage of the Great Commission which you weren't fully fulfilling anyway?

**Maybe we could 'target' every existing believer for DISCIPLING
AFTER we reach the *entire* world for Christ,
as our *next* big project!**

**World SOCIAL MINISTRY projects could follow.
Think BIG. Act BIG. We serve a very *LARGE* God!**

We have to do them all *contemporaneously*, but we should
especially focus on completing evangelism in 3 years.

- Conduct **city-wide** and **country-wide** Great Commission completion *efforts* (and **broadcast** successes to *inspire* other cities and countries to **do the same**).
- Evangelism resources, as mentioned in this document; Generally refer to “manpower, money and materials.”
- ETC. (Many *follow-through* activities will be needed, but NOT until **stage one** is 100% completed—literally reaching every human with the Gospel)

A GLOBAL PLAN UTILIZING ONLY THE CURRENT 5%

We *hope* and *pray* and trust God for increased workers, but in our planning we must *baseline* with how the 5% who currently evangelize could get the Great commission task completed without increased resources.

Strategic Needs:

1. Communication (**organize** and reduce *duplicity* of efforts and *competition*)
2. Money (I pray this website and Plan of Action increases awareness of your needs)
3. Technology (**use** all that can be effective and suggest inventions for what's needed)
4. Commitment: Agree to NOT do **lesser things** for 3 years (and stay close to God)!

Specific Plan:

I am almost certain the Great Commission will **only** be completed—if ever—by the 5% of evangelistic believers! We can pray and motivate and encourage more participation, but the American Church is **hardened** possibly beyond repair or remedy—though **all things are possible** with God bringing a change some would call “revival.” We should pray and prepare ourselves for such, but also have a solid contingency plan if things continue as they recently have.

BEWARE—**many** believers, when asked to participate in evangelism, will oppose and be defensive against you—even your *completely positive* methods. Some of the most sanctimonious “reasons” will be offered to **justify** her non-involvement, and some of the greatest spiritual warfare will be had if you take on this *behemoth* rock of *resistance*.

Expect severe assessing of every move and motive, every attempted theological argument against your results, methods, “tone,” and at the least a general “difference of opinion” we must agree to *disagree over* as the final way of ignoring and shutting you out of further, future planning consideration. **They need motivation, prayer, discipling/maturing, leadership by example from the top down, and a strong reproof!**

If you ever propose ANY type of DIRECT, *objectifiably* communicated evangelism methods, you will often be shunned as *out-of-touch*, “**ineffective,**” or a radical—by those CLAIMING to represent Christ. Don’t even consider pushing it so far as to expect **speaking** to come from their mouths, especially toward a **stranger!** They would just as soon make friends with every soul in the world themselves, personally, than to be so “*offensive*” as to have to have a conversation with someone they **don’t know**—especially on such a “*touchy*” and out-of-the-ordinary conversation piece as **spiritual things! People are going to hell.** How could anything be too radical to get the church to talk to them?

Can’t you see the **devil** in all this resistant behavior, and how he is achieving his greatest victories by keeping you content in your **silence**—for such oh so very ‘holy’ of intentions and “reasons” (i.e.; Excuses). If you can’t see this, I pray for God to miraculously **remove the scales** from your eyes and for you to BEGIN to read His word, praying Ps. 19:18 *every time* you do!

Because completion of the Great Commission is urgently needed, and knowing the present; General evangelistic hardness of at least the American Church, the following plan is provided should utilizing the presently willing be our ONLY, last hope for achieving that objective:

1. Find the willing, in ALL countries.
 - a) Professionals and lay evangelizers (i.e., already doing the work—trained and experienced).
 - b) Willing if trained
 - c) Willing if asked
 - d) Willing if motivated
 - e) Willing if *any other contingencies* are met
2. Provide them **technology** which can expand their reach and help them “*duplicate themselves*” (Ex.: megaphone, signs, billboards, tracts, phonographs/cassette players, videos, internet website, public viewing area for a film, marked Bibles in their language, etc.), and **pray** for their every move.
3. Organize their efforts, *unless* doing so takes away from already limited resources.
4. Conduct inexpensive evangelism, since most Christian **monies** go to support church operations—not evangelism, per se.
5. As always, trust God in these activities, and for **results** even in *places* we may **not complete** His Great Commission (though EVERY effort needs to be expended).
6. **OTHER:** This plan is **not** exhaustive, and if you have any ideas to better utilize our carnality-limited resources (spiritually unlimited, though rarely fully appropriated), I’d love to hear your comments and add valuable suggestions.

5%’ERS STRATEGY DETAILS

(See also: Our “inspired” Tweet-A-Thons@JamesMeroney on Oct. 29, Nov. 2 and 5, ~Oct. 30-31, 2013)

Issue.

The Great Commission is literal and NOT negotiable for a Christian, and if you can't prove to other humans that you've completed it, you probably haven't.

Need.

- The church universal needs to conduct a one-time through to evangelism push to every lost person (possibly the final offer).
- The only goal of such movement would be evangelism—nothing else, initially!
- At a minimum, reach a specific area to COMPLETELY evangelize, the size of which is large enough to impress other pastors that something significant has been achieved which they can and need to emulate (Ex.: a well-known neighborhood, or especially a doable-sized zip code).
- Then broadcast that that stage one of the Great Commission has been completed in that area (to inspire others to do the same).
- Offer to help them do so, and possibly use billboards to announce the accomplishment (doing so could also generate curiosity among lost people).

Possible Slogan: Adopt-A-Neighborhood (or Zip code).

Principles.

- All evangelism should be prayer-backed, and use as many Christians as possible.
- As a start, evangelize your own field/sphere first responsibility (II Cor. 10:16, etc.).
- Overlapping and sporadic randomness is not the New Testament way (i.e., disorderly).
- We should not evangelize Christians (if we can help it; you can help it if records are kept).
- We should not evangelizing people multiple times AT THE EXPENSE of reaching everyone at least once.
- Re-evangelizing will occur, but it is unrighteous and unfair to leave out anyone!

Motivation.

- It's what Jesus asked, better--commanded us to do! That IS, and should be enough of a reason for very Christian!
- Billy Graham is now going to conduct anymore crusades, and the church should NEVER have been so timid in depending on one person (not neglecting other evangelists, of course) to do such a large amount of work to make up for their lack anyway.
- Research indicates people like to be part of something bigger than themselves, and this plan would fit that description.
- The radical minority of Islam's forced conversion movement is out-doing the church with a wrong method, globally, and not in the Jesus' name.
- Religious cults do thorough proselytizing with a false Gospel.

Conclusion: You're either thorough or you're not serious (or biblically truthful and literal) about individual salvations.

Verses.

a) Foundation: Three Great Commission passages (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-18; Ac. 1:8).

b) Christ Died for ALL: II Cor. 5:9-17; II Tim. 2:4

c) Thorough Evangelism: Ac. 2:4, 4:4 (approximate numbers known), 5:28, 8:5, 25, 40, 13:44, 48-49, 14:6-7, 21, 25, (18:19), 19:10, 26:20

d) Reasons for Urgency:

1. Christ could return anytime—Mt. 25:13, etc.
2. People die daily—(Heb. 9:27, and life experience itself)
3. Signs of prophecy—II Tim. 3:1-9, etc.

e) Every Christian: Ac. 8:1, 4, 14; Eph. 4:11-13

Evangelism IS (also) the pastor's job: II Tim. 1:13, 2:2, 24, 4:5 (i.e., 'pastoral' epistles)

f) If Limited Resources: It doesn't take a lot of people, with God. A handful of disciplined, empowered men turned the world upside down—Ac. 17:6

Potential Methods (non-exhaustive):

- Use emails, voicemails, faxes, letters or phone calls to out-of-state churches (especially pastors).
- Use donated John 3:16 billboards in one city, for a start.
- Take Gospel signs to major gatherings of lost people (**See:** Appendix, for pictures).
- Take Go Evangelize! signs to major Christian events (**See:** Appendix, for pictures).
- Drop by churches unannounced to discuss the 3-mile plan (gatekeepers screen you out otherwise).
- Use YouTube and create DVDs.
- Consider protests of/at denominational headquarters, Bible colleges and seminaries.
- Create a sign to publically challenge pastors to a debate on the literalness of the Great commission—to a person.
- Prop up Gospel Signs as you climb highway embankments for exercise (with a Gospel T-short, for passers-by). Lk. 14:23

Summary: Use every medium available (full list found at Building a Billionaire Business).

10. Contact ‘Us’

Have You Decided to Trust Jesus Christ for Your Eternal Salvation?

Do You Have Questions, Comments or a Speaking Opportunities you need assistance with?

Please fill out the following information, and I will *attempt to respond as quickly as possible*.
Should a subject receive enough inquiries, this website *may be updated* to address new topics.

Do you have comments about the website? Please let us hear from you. _____

11. About ‘Us’ (Ex.: Personal Testimony, Evangelism Experience & Resume, References)

Thank you *sincerely* for bearing with the length of these materials, and I *pray* the Lord impresses on your heart the biblical centrality of these four most-needed ministries—**Evangelism, Relational Discipleship, “Body Life” and Social Ministry, especially helping the poor**). I also hope He convicts you to IMPLEMENT them to the glory of God.

—James E. Meroney, New Millennium Commentary: New Testament, © 2008



PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I was **saved** at age eight and became **totally committed** to Christ at age eighteen.

Having experienced the gracious love of a persistent Christian as a freshman in college, who showed me interest and kept **insisting** I have a *Quiet Time* with him, my somewhat *rebellious will* finally **consented**. Though having gone to church all my life, for the **first time** I understood that my relationship with Jesus was to be maintained and developed, and that *Christ-like character* grows from **meeting with Him daily**, in Bible study and prayer. That *intimacy* **SURPASSED** the value of all lessons and sermons I had ever been taught!

After about a month, my commitment to this pleasurable investigation grew, and during the last three years of college, Bible study frequently lasted 3 or more hours a day. It *helped* to seriously date a gal whose denominational beliefs differed from mine, and whose father *challenged* me to **prove-up** what I believed and did not believe!

Shortly thereafter God called me into professional ministry. In 1982, I attended seminary and earned a Master of Divinity degree in **Missions-Evangelism** from Southwestern Seminary. Later I studied Theology and New Testament at **Dallas Theological Seminary**.

In 1981 God called me (i.e., laid on my heart) to **write a Commentary** on the New Testament, which I have researched and written the past 25 years. Now over *5,000 pages long*, the Commentary is a verse-by-verse interpretation; Explaining various interpretive *options*, and describing the *most likely* and best choices, given standard hermeneutical principles, with *reasons* given for such choices, and extolling both the positives and negatives of the various *alternative* interpretations.

To supplement this understanding, a **Topication** was concurrently written (rough-draft), in which **EVERY New Testament verse** (and *select* Old Testament verses) on **EVERY** New Testament **subject**, alphabetically listed, has been gleaned, and put into categories teaching the **Same, Similar, Different or Seemingly Opposite** thing as the other verses, then summarizing that topic in a **range** of organized sub-teachings and **harmonizing** those subjects where *seemingly opposite* teachings are found. This Topication provides the “**forest-like**” understanding of a given Bible topic, when one reads a controversial or difficult verse, while

interpretation in the Commentary is more of a “**tree-like**” view, with the ability to cross-reference that *fuller* subject when faced with any *specific* verse on that topic.

The most important portions of these two books are the topics of **Evangelism** and **Discipleship**. Having spent **YEARS** in personal and public evangelism, having been discipled by 2-3 people and associated ministries, my materials are the result of **YEARS** of intense search for the **most immediately and significantly impactful** subjects on Evangelism and Discipleship found in God’s word. This website is the **BEST OF** all that research!

Once my active career reaches retirement age (when I again take up the task of editing my Commentary and Topication; ~age 70), I would consider starting or joining a ministry *actively engaged* in COMPLETING the Great Commission. If God should **raise up** enough believers who believe in the contents of this website, I would be **more than happy** to spend my final days (along with truly relaxed retirement days in-between), full- or part-time doing **any** and **as many** of the following *evangelistic* activities as possible (especially as a crusade evangelist, like my hero, Billy Graham):

P.S.: When I turned **fifty**, the *continual* track record of 5% who ever evangelize finally got to me enough that I pledged to PROTEST (*passively or otherwise*) ANY pastor who would NOT, **1)** reach every lost person within 3 miles of their church building, or, **2)** discover objectively whether they had that same percentage of members who ever evangelize. I have already been led to *one of the largest churches* in America, so like Paul in Jerusalem, I tried to “bloom where I was planted.” Needless to say (as you will see in our **Church Conflicts** section), as such I was for years **not well-watered** and **all but uprooted** for my NEEDED efforts.

POSSIBLE EVANGELISM MINISTRY

1. **Strategically** engage in Personal Evangelism door-to-door and/or face to face (i.e., where people are):
 - a) With **Pastors** (as I’ve done several times)
 - b) To **train** laymen (their only observing, smiling and praying—initially).
 - c) With cameras, for *evangelism training* on the internet (Ex.: GodTube, YouTube, MySpace).
 - d) To complete one neighborhood at a time, in a given city or town (possibly videotaping it for internet training and to inspire other communities to do the same).
 - 1] By myself (if *no one else* will join the effort)
 - 2] With evangelizers (my *preferred* manner)
2. **Gospel Sign Ministry**— Take my **Gospel Signs** to public events and religious/Christian events, to promote the Gospel and evangelism. These are 5 metal signs, 3 to 4 feet square, with professionalized exhortative messages either promoting Christian evangelism or stating the Gospel in approximately 15 words. [Website pictures to be later added].

Already, THOUSANDS have read the Gospel at many events (usually 3,000 or more attending), and large Christian churches and events have read strong exhortations reproving our 5% evangelismlessness *disgrace*.

I’d be willing to do this **full-time**, if needed and effective. **Arthur Blessitt** started his ministry with such a method (for a lifetime)! They could be taken to:

- A) Churches—the Major 25 across Dallas-Fort Worth (My two sons and I did this at one of Dallas’ **largest churches** yesterday, for 1.5 hours, 2 hours after my 5 year old got saved! (*imagine that*—my **5 year old** the day of his conversion has done **more for evangelism**

than **most American adult Christians!**).

- 1) Saturday Nights (alternating between my Sunday School class)
- 2) Sunday Mornings (as I attend church on Saturday evenings).
- 3) Wednesday Evenings?
- B) Denominational Events (Ex.: Pastor's Conferences), and
- C) Major "Christian Events" (Ex.: 6 Flags Christian Day, Promise Keepers, National Day of Prayer events, Christian rock concerts, big events at churches, etc.)
- D) Major Secular Events—Texas Motor Speedway, State Fair, Mavericks' playoffs, Cowboys' opening game, political events, parades, (See: internet), Byron Nelson Golf Classic, etc.
- E) Major Traffic Build-Up/Street Corners (Ex.: rush hour)
- F) Major Companies (as the majority arrive to or leave from the parking lot/garage).
3. Get *video* of the Gospel Signs—but more importantly **personal evangelism experiences**—on my Website, U-Tube and GodTube (Digital Video), for training and motivational purposes.
4. Recruit Gospel Sign holders to man multiple church parking lot exits and exhort and evangelize at multiple, simultaneous churches. (i.e., I have signs to evangelize the lost, and signs to exhort Christians to evangelism—two ministries at one public location!).
5. Conduct **motivational seminars** for evangelism.
6. Meet with pastors to encourage execution of and offer a plan to reach every lost person within 3 miles of their church.
7. **Recruit evangelizers** in a given city to *converge* to **complete** the first stage of the Great Commission in **one neighborhood at a time**, and BROADCAST those successful results to encourage others to do the same (using various media).
8. **Recruit, train and manage** evangelism results of the additional **indigenous evangelists** needed in the **10/40 window**, to ensure monies are not being squandered and that their efforts are as effective and *efficient* as possible.
9. Serve as Interim Pastor or Substitute (i.e., fill-in) Pastor to exhort to and **train on evangelism**.
10. Send materials to many churches suggesting they **consider starting a Minister of Evangelism** (and Discipleship) position—on a TEMPORARY basis, or working for up to 3 churches at a time in these two vital ministries.
11. **Apply** for Pastor positions, in order to implement the Pastor Priority Plan listed in the "Bless the Evangelists!" section of this website.
12. Speak as a *special speaker* to **every Sunday School class** in my home church (for starters). Unfortunately, possibly I have volunteered to conduct my "**On Hell**" lesson to take classes out evangelizing immediately, and am not willing to reach just a **hand full** who might be *interested* in evangelism, my services have yet to be needed. I've also volunteered to help **implement** the 3 mile Local Church Plan for Evangelism, with no reply, to date. Our head Pastor has been wonderful in preaching significantly on our need to evangelize—I'm simply seeking **accountable implementation** of his sermons!
13. Complete and publish my fuller book on *evangelism* and *discipleship* (and the New Testament) for more **wide-spread** publication of the need for these two ministries.
14. Associate with **Evangelism Associations** to try to coordinate efforts to avoid *duplicity* and flood an area with the Gospel (Ex.: live, teleconferenced, multi-venued crusades).

15. **Raise \$375 per American church** to fund the 10/40 evangelists needed to complete the Great Commission in this *least evangelized* part of the world.
16. Improve this website with more of my and others' evangelism materials, including upgrading the Apologetics section.
17. Promote prayer-backing of world evangelism, and encouraging pastors in person to adopt a church-wide personal recruiting campaign to take laymen out evangelizing with them.
18. **E-mail chain letter** (and fax and/or voice mail) campaign to reach Christians with evangelism exhortation and lost people with the Gospel.
19. Midnight **Door Hanger tracts** (for more efficient distribution, given so **few** workers), or leaving evangelism exhorting tracts on church cars.
20. **Organize 'world events'** to get *media attention* for Christians standing for evangelism and promoting the Gospel message.
21. Teach ministers evangelism (including motivation).
22. Preach Crusades or doing "front man" duties for Evangelists.
23. Coordinate Great Commission completion projects for individual churches.
24. Speak on evangelism motivation at churches, seminaries, and groups of believers, pastor conferences, denominational gatherings, etc.
25. Possibly teaching Evangelism at 3 local seminaries, Ad Junct (i.e., part-time), or one-time speak at Bible Colleges and Seminary chapel services).
26. Coordinate follow-up efforts and enlisting a **prayer-backing** campaign.
27. Coordinate laymen evangelism efforts to avoid unnecessary *duplicity* can be avoided. Find and organize the efforts of evangelizers per given churches and attack one neighborhood at a time—(Broadcast the results!). Find Evangelism Explosion-type (i.e.; Actual evangelizers) people in DFW (then other cities) and take a neighborhood for the Gospel or conduct a public evangelism event.
28. Identify saved people in areas, so we know who not to "target," in order to maximize limited evangelism resources.
29. Lead short-term mission trips. Recruit and train indigenous evangelists while there.
30. Increase the efficiency of Evangelists (i.e., strategic planning).
31. Take this ministry to other cities via the **internet** and **traveling** for speaking engagements! One of my most revered Bible teachers just implemented live weekly **video-teleconferenced** teaching sessions. Perhaps this technology could be used to exhort cities in evangelism-remotely(?).
32. **Other.** Doing any other significant duties (utilizing any skills or experience I have) **directly causing increased evangelism** efforts and affecting results. I will take your **suggestions** and **comments** into consideration to add to these duties, should I have the privilege of so doing.

If you're embarrassed about *personal evangelism* representing your church, rest assured **I never tell any lost person anything about any church**—unless they ask for a suggested church to attend after they get saved. If they ask what church I go to or am from, I tell them I attend church, but am *not here talking about going to church* but **going to heaven**, forever.

[Website logo'd shirt below:]

Before writing ALL these books.



After. *See*-writing IS stressful, hard work!



JAMES MERONEY

Plano, Texas

AAorg2020@gmail.com

TEMPORARY EVANGELISM MINISTER

Evangelist, Disciple-Maker, Religious Author and Experienced Bible Teacher. Taught Evangelism and New Testament at an accredited Bible College. Dual seminary trained (DTS, SWBTS), along with a JD and MBA. Former Youth Minister. Consulted Pastors and trained laymen in Evangelism and Discipleship. Authored 5,000 page New Millennium Commentary and Topication: New Testament. Authored Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org covering the highest and most-needed Christian Church priorities.

VISION

IF your church is committed to FULLY evangelizing ALL lost people within three miles of your church building(s), I would love to help them achieve that goal. Once that is completed, I will seek employment elsewhere (and use your results to inspire churches world-wide that it must, should can and will be done, by God's grace)! I wish to serve in this capacity only temporarily, and with a body of believers who understands that biblical church practice does NOT minimize the "EDBS" priorities:

E: Fully evangelizing ALL lost people nearest to their own church building ASAP (at a MINIMUM). It is biblically the pastor's job to lead in role modeling and training the laymen to do ministry work.

D: Fully relationally discipling all church members, using multiplication (described at our website).

B: Allowing laymen to use any legitimate spiritual gifts they possess as part of the family within the main church service (applying the "one another's of Scripture). I am not suggesting tongues!

S: Significant involvement in helping solve the world's large social issues, especially poverty (as was a major concern of Jesus).

EXPERIENCE

- Wrote and made freely available one of the most biblical (former) websites on God's top priorities, our Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org (2007-Present).
- Impacted several U.S. ministries for Evangelism, Discipleship, Body life and Social ministry (EDBS) by God working through myself on Twitter (AmericanAnswers.org, @JamesMeroney, 2013-Present).
- Helped one major U.S. church get significantly committed to evangelism (2007-2012).
- Evangelized thousands at public events with a Gospel Signs ministry. Exhorted Hundreds of believers to evangelize with other Evangelism Exhortation Signs. (See website, 2002-2008)
- Wrote a 5,000+ page New Testament Commentary and Topication, funded by working as an Attorney, Management Consultant and Advertising Broker (P-T 1996-2004), with a total of twelve books, covering business, prophecy, politics, innovation, architecture and idioms.
- Taught Bible College students as Adjunct Professor of Evangelism and New Testament at a local accredited Bible College--the College of Biblical Studies, Houston, TX.
- Personally evangelized hundreds of lost people one on one.
- Trained people in door-to-door evangelism (recruiting from business contacts, friends,

JAMES MERONEY

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family, seminary students, Christian lay persons and church staff members. (1999-2000, and sporadically since then).

- Personally volunteered to lead and encouraged pastors of six large West Houston churches to implement a plan to reach all lost people in West Houston as soon as possible. (1999-2000)
- Taught Discipleship materials to Cambodian pastors, and daily evangelized in Phnom Penh, Campuchia. (Global Missions Fellowship, November 1-12, 1996)
- Engaged in personal evangelism in Huntsville, TX prison crusades. (Prisoner's Bible Institute, 1985-1986)
- Discipled and taught teenagers as a Southern Baptist Youth Minister (1985-1986), and three adults. (1997-2000)
- Mission Trip to California Baptist College in College. (1978)
- Taught college Bible studies (1979-1980), and evangelized my Professional Business Fraternity, as Chaplain. (1980-1981)
- Licensed to the Ministry by First Baptist Church, Houston, TX. (August 13, 1980)

EDUCATION

- ◆ M.Div., Southwestern Seminary, Fort Worth, TX (1985)

Dean's List

Graduate Studies: Dallas Theological Seminary, Houston Extension Campus (1996-2002)

- ◆ J.D./M.B.A., Texas Tech University, Lubbock, TX (1993)

Licensed to the State Bar of Texas (Inactive)

Legal Research Board

Mock Trial Octafinalist

Moot Court Octafinalist

- ◆ B.B.A., Baylor University, Waco, TX (1981)

Dean's List

Sigma Iota Epsilon Business Honor Society

Alpha Kappa Psi Professional Business Fraternity (Chaplain)

EMPLOYMENT

RELIGIOUS AUTHOR & ENERGY BROKER

Plano, TX

2009-Present

RELIGIOUS AUTHOR & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL

J & D Interests, Superior PG, Inc., et al, Houston, Texas

1996-2008

MANAGING ATTORNEY

Swisher & Associates, Houston, Texas

1995-1996

MANAGEMENT CONSULTANT

Ernst & Young LLP, Houston, Texas

1993-1995

YOUTH MINISTER

First Baptist Church, Deer Park

1985-1986

THANK YOU'S

Special thanks go out to the *exceptional* discipleship I received from association with people teaching materials from **Alpha and Omega Ministries**, Austin, TX, The **Navigators, Campus Crusade** for Christ, Jamie Lash and the **3-day crash course** I received from **Rev. Tom Eckman** (while he was sick—picking his brain every night past midnight; the **BEST** source for my initial discipleship knowledge). I was also extremely blessed by the *teaching* sermons of Dr. **John R. Bisagno** (1st Baptist Church, Houston, TX), and the maturity and **Body Life** sermons taught at the *mature* church, Highland Baptist Church, in Waco, TX., by **Rev. Don Crossland**, during College!

Second only to the thanks I give the **LORD** for saving me at age 8, is that I express for my family, especially my **adorable wife**, who has **stuck with me** through the *struggles* of and *opposition* to researching my 5,000 page book! The verse is true, **some people meet angels unaware**—I just happened to be **aware** of it, and **married one**.

God bless my *three adorable* children, as well, whom God has **blessed** me with, as it has not been a *money-maker* to spend **7 years full-time writing**, funded by *part-time* employment. Y'all's **sacrifices** will be **rewarded in heaven**, and *hopefully* here as well, soon.

THANK YOU ONE AND ALL!

As the old song says, “*I’m not religious—I just love the Lord.*”

REFERENCES

I have a select few *well-established, well-known* and extremely **mainstream** and **godly conservative** Ministers who have agreed to be references for me in the past. However, because some of the things said on this website are “**CONTROVERSIAL**,” as they *challenge Christian status quo* and actually **reprove** some of our most *abhorrent* sins which hurt God and lost people, **I have chosen to take the heat** for these words, and not drag these blessed men into **frays they may not have known could be coming**.

I truly believe *any* issues raised in this website are **serious** and **important**, and are too often **ignored** or **overlooked** to **the detriment of the Church’s spiritual health** (or I would not have written them). I will never discuss on this website (though perhaps in e-mails) *differences* or *disagreements* less important than my **3 key issues** complained about concerning American Christianity—**little to no** EVANGELISM, DISCIPLING or “BODY LIFE.” Also, the above-mentioned references can be made available if any **church feels led** to consider myself for a **Minister of Evangelism and Discipleship** position.

Biblical Evidence for a Prophetic Voice (SO Needed today!)

In case you’re wondering, I AM aware of the adage, ‘You can catch more bees with honey than you can with vinegar,’ have read Proverbs 15:1, and I have read Dale Carnegie’s **How To Win Friends and Influence People**. It does NOT bring me personal joy to have to be the mouthpiece of such negative news!

Unfortunately, today in America, if something is true but of a serious nature or especially if it’s negative, the public generally rejects it. How would the prophets of old warn Americans of impending doom? It is not what they want to hear, and though we need to hear it we reject what we do not want to hear.

If you never hear these passages in a church sermon, do your own Bible study on the following references:

Mt. 3:7, 12;34, 21:12-13, 13:57, 23:33; Lk. 6:26; Ac. 5:31; Gal. 1:8-10, 2:11-13; II Tim. 3:16-17, 4:1-5; Tit. 1:12-13, ETC.

For but *one* example among many, John the Baptist **served God's purpose** and met the need of his day, though few would accuse him of being an encourager or edifying believers. We're all gifted and called *differently*—**don't miss God's message** for you because you prefer (but don't need and can't handle *just*) a softer touch!

If you're a **pastor** and *offended* by my **TRUTHFUL** criticism of *many* churches, you can prove yourself innocent of matters raised by starting today on a 3 year 3 mile *thorough* evangelism campaign around your building, and be well on your way (if not *finished*) reaching every *saved* church member with **relational discipling** by then. If not, the message clearly applied to you—you just didn't *like* or *want* to hear it, though very needed and *well-earned*. **If any pastor in America heeds this warning** of *urgent* need to implement these priorities, and completes them in the next three years, I hope—though you may feel led to a different style—you'll **help us cure the Church of this 5/10/13 ill** after you yourself see the *value* in our biblical solutions proposed.

P.S.—Had my highest priority been to become pastors' best friend, gained a deaconship or a Sunday School teaching class, much less change (for evangelism and discipleship) would have occurred, so I sincerely don't mind the **anonymity** and **disdain** detailed in the "Church Conflicts" section of this site.

Reader Beware: If God ever leads you to reprove the Church for its long-standing departure from the top priorities described in this book; Expect the most horrific of motives to be projected onto you, and you will likely be accused of being 'harsh, divisive, arrogant, judgmental, mean, critical, hypocritical, a 'grumpy old man,' lashing out from hurt or being a fault-finder (if not a false prophet). Severe reproof on the HUGE omission of the most important issue in life is **NEEDED**, though often unwelcomed.

In many ways the leaders of God's New Testament people are like many of the leaders of God's Old Testament people whom Christ often reprovved (usually for hypocrisy). And if you try to motivate many of the congregants positively toward evangelism, they'll think you crazy, and if you are led to a more John the Baptist reprovving route, they won't "like your tone." A (spiritually) DESIGNED catch 22 just like Mt. 11:16-18. Either way they answer you, they fail to obey in this *critical* issue.

They may call you a *condemner* or *accuser* (Implied, fleshly/evil), or even *complement* the messenger (who is nothing, and NOT the issue—trying to make some emotional connection to gain control and silence him or her), but the church is near being judged, and **needs** the warning! The devil would NOT attack the 5/10/13 problem*—he **LOVES** it, and wants it to get even bigger! Just please and obey the Lord, know there are rewards for suffering and that church-as-a-business personnel will keep profits flowing at the expense of **hearing the TRUTH**.

Critics: As my W-2's show, the first half of my work life has cost me *dearly*, writing over 10 books with no profit to-date, all for the good of mankind (10 of those years full-time). I am *not* a hypocrite about church **giving** by sweat equity (as a valid *money* alternative), and social *give back*, politically—*exclusively* by the grace of God! I trust the second half will be more lucrative.

I'm too negative and critical? **GOD HELP US** if *future* generations lose the needed voice of reproof, like the *second greatest Christian* of the 1900's, to me...

ACCUSATIONS THIS MINISTRY HAS WEATHERED

1. You Condemn Christians.

Answer: I severely reprove them, as their historically horrible omissions merit, just as many in the past have been led to do just before (what I predict will be soon) judgment. Ingesting PC and PMA (political correctness and positive mental attitude) more often than the Bible would lead you to think that way.

2. We Hate Your ‘Tone,’ and Reject Your Message Based on It.

Answer: Ignore the message being received to your peril, because not only are you wrong that my tone is unbiblical, more importantly, the behavior you freely choose to ignore is so unbiblical, swift judgment is surely certain.

3. You Rarely-to-Never Put Responsibility on Lost People for Rejecting the Gospel.

Answer: Because unless and until they absolutely will no longer listen, it is the Church’s job to pursue them for salvation.

To spare you surprise (should you ever engage such ministry), you might be called: a jerk, arrogant, attacking (or demeaning) God’s Church, building a platform, condemner, contentious, disobedient, divisive, exposing family business, fighting intellectual warfare (vs. claiming Christ’s blood and testimony), grumpy with age, harsh, heresy hunter, in love with his calling more than God, mocking or insulting, needing character, negative Nelly/ Debbie downer, not a pastor (so unable to speak authoritatively), not applying the Bible, not positive or encouraging, online hypocrite, picking fights, poor people skills, ranting railer, rude, time-waster, to be shunned, unaccountable, unfriendly, unsubmitive, unwilling to confront people privately, worse than an infidel, etc.

Jesus Commands Us to Go, by Keith Green

(a hero whose theology was not always right, but whose heart WAS!)

Jesus commands us to go
But we go the other way
So He carries the burden alone
While His children are **busy at play**
Feeling so called to stay

Oh, how God grieves and believes
That the *world can't be saved*
unless the ones He's appointed obeys
His command and His stand for the world
That He loved more than life,
oh He died, and **He cries out** tonight

Jesus commands us to go
It should be the exception if we stay
It's no wonder we're moving so slow
When His church **refuse** to obey
Feeling so called to stay

Oh how God comes as He starts
the great judgment of fire
So He can gain, His greatest desire
'Cause He knows that the souls of the lost
They can only be reached through us,

we're His hands and His feet

Jesus commands us to go

It should be the exception if we stay

It's no wonder we're moving so slow

When God's children refuse to obey

Feeling so called to stay.

12. Evangelism Methods

I am not ‘pushing’ a particular “**method**” of evangelizing. I AM saying that if you are a Christian, **purposefully, intentionally and consciously SPEAK** the Gospel to a **human being today!** How you do that and how you get into such conversations is *between you and God*. I can teach you how I do it, and experts write “Relationship Evangelism” books on how you can get to that point weeks down the road, but I will **not argue with ANY MEANS you use** to effectively and **ORALLY communicate** the Gospel with a lost person. Do it TODAY! (and many times thereafter—a life-time, lifestyle habit you *need* to develop, and are *eternally, temporally* and **greatly** rewarded for).

Biblical Evidence for DIRECT Evangelism: Jn. (3:1-21), 4:7-42; Ac. 2:14, 22, 3:12, (4:1?), 4:8-13, (19-20), 31, 5:28-29+, 42, 6:(10), 7:2+, 8:4-6, (12), 25-31, 35, 9:19b-20, 22, 27-28, 10:28+, 34, 11:(1), 19, 21, (24), <12:24-25>, 13:5, 14-16+, 46-49, 14:1, 3, 7, (9), 21-22, 25, 15:<13>, 35, 16:13-14, (25?), (30-32), 17:1-4, 10-13, 16-19, 22+, 18:4-5, 8-9, 11, (13), 19, 19:8-10, 20:(18-21?), 21:(20-21), 22:1+, 23:1+, 24:10+, 25:8+, (11), 26:1+, 27:<10, 21+>, 28:17+, etc.

Of course, once you fully evangelize an area, you wouldn’t use direct evangelism again—as a whole church—for years. That would be *foolish*. It’s just the **foundation** we haven’t laid in 30 years.

Sample Evangelism Methods:

(Stimulate your own ideas through this list!)

Having a church’s primary evangelism method be giving invitations after sermons is like Coca Cola trying to reach everyone in the local market near their headquarters by hiring a public speaker to address Coke employees and any visitors who happened to be there. The majority of their ‘prospects’ will never visit. —**J. Meroney**

1. Phone banks calling with the Gospel (like political campaign volunteers).
2. Technology: Websites, faxes, Gospel signs, person to person.
3. Business cards with the Gospel on them.
4. Tracts placed on cars in public parking lots.
5. Messages atop barn roofs for low-flying airplanes?
6. **World events**—farmer crop circles (Jn. 3:16) in 10 places (Ex.), or ‘Hands Across the World’ event.
7. Scrolling church signs (with the Gospel message)—2nd Baptist, Houston; Ex.
8. Blimps scrolling the Gospel message.
9. Airplane streamers.
10. Skywriters (Jn. 3:16 by way of a cross).
11. Cable TV ads.
12. Radio commercials.
13. TV commercials (Billy Graham; Ex.)—why not during the Super Bowl in 3 unique and split up 10-second ads (something DIFFERENT)? (Ex.: 1. JESUS; 2. LOVES; 3. YOU themes).

14. Tract in a bag, weighted with rocks on peoples' yards.
15. Free newspaper or magazine, delivered.
16. Email with Message. Subject title example: "Daemon source, 'message not delivered'" subject, with a play-on-words that *Demons* convince Christians not to deliver the Gospel message.
17. Accessories: Lapel pin, cuff links, tie tacks, logo on business shirt ("Receive Jesus" ex.).
18. T-shirts with the Gospel on them (non-code languaged and unambiguous).
19. Midnight tract distribution or door hangers (church name on them?).
20. Video distribution (Jesus Video ex.).
21. Bumper stickers and car window decals.
22. Jn. 3:16 car license plates (i.e., customized).
23. Printed Gospel on church buildings' side (professionally done and sophisticated—we do it on downtown Dallas buildings for secular products).
24. Billboard campaigns with the Gospel on it! **Don't try to be clever but clear** (ambiguous and clever attempts exist).
25. Contact with e-mail via MySpace.com and switchboard.com, or anywho.com.
26. You-Tube video of preachers? (Ex.: **GodTube.com**).
27. Text (and Instant) message **chain letters** of the Gospel?
28. Auto-generated phone messages to phone answerers or their voicemails: "You are loved, so don't go to hell when you die; pray to receive Jesus for the forgiveness of all of your sins!" Politicians and companies (even libraries and churches) do it—why not evangelizers?
29. Get free phone books for all major cities and/or look up emails of residents using Google or Yahoo or Anywho.com phone books.
30. Find Christian "relationship cogs ('network nodes') per city and church to forward Gospel e-mails and Christian evangelistic tracts and emails to their contacts.
31. Secular pop music sung by a youth choir to draw a crowd to half-way through hear Gospel songs (no group does this better than Prestonwood Baptist High School Choir).
32. Reach non-e-mailers other ways.
33. *Brief* Gospel messages in a nutshell: Pray to Receive Jesus—All Your Sins forgiven! Or "Receive Jesus—Sins Forgiven!" in whatever format you can think of.
34. Gospel tracts in Christmas letters.
35. **Dr. Roy Fish** taught a concept called "salty talk." If it is your outgoing personality to do so, he recommended throwing in a few clever statements in conversation to get the other person to ask about spiritual things, like, "that's about the *second most important* decision you'll ever make" (regarding a conversation about marriage or career). He also bridged conversations into evangelism, using analogies, like talking to a baker about the Bread of Life, etc.
36. Live, **nationally-simulcast** stadium evangelism crusades to homes and churches. Ex.: **Harvest America's** Greg Laurie had *15,000* salvations in 2012 (one of a FEW pastors who truly SEES our Great Commission need).

37. Have an evangelistic CD, ask a friend if they have 20 minutes to listen to it, then invite them to coffee a week later to discuss it. –**J John** (Philo Trust)
38. Entertainment event crusades (such as concerts, jump houses, sports competitions, etc.). Ex.: Luis Palau (a great man I strongly respect). [Because we so rarely GO TO the lost in public settings, but invite to ‘come and hear,’ and we believe our *culture has changed* so much the lost won’t come to a simple evangelistic campaign anymore, like Billy Graham has already done]
39. Inviting lost people to church (or evangelism campaigns)? Though this is **NOT** doing evangelism, and therefore is **NOT** an evangelism method, it IS *participating* in evangelistic efforts, and hopefully will lead the laymen to ACTUALLY evangelize them after the service (beyond what the church staff will do).
40. One Evangelist said he was saved by someone giving him a Bible, and after having him read it for eight sessions, asked him if he sensed Christ knocking on the door of his heart (Rev. 3:20).

ETC.: Let your *regenerated* mind go wild with **ALL you can do for Jesus!** (Individually and collectively)

A friend offered a great, wise response to a “no soliciting” objection: If something is worth dying for, it’s worth living for. I have something that consequential to speak to you about.
–**Nitin Christopher**

Personal Testimony

On a mission trip to Cambodia (ending 2 hours before my wife’s water broke for my first son), the Lord led me to discover at least five ways to evangelize among people using a foreign tongue:

1. I had written down in their language the key 20 words of the Gospel (God, love, sin, hell, Jesus, cross, pray, receive, etc.)
2. He led me (as the others were touring Phnom Penh) to an ESL teacher national studying an English dictionary who wanted to use what he read there in real conversation.
3. There were tracts and evangelistic cartoon pamphlets I could distribute to the kids (who FLOCKED Americans), which were handed out for them to read (later).
4. God led me to ask the excited children to read their cartoon booklet to others throughout the day.
5. And, of course, at night, most of us were given an interpreter—especially those of us who spoke publicly.

I even tried to use sign language, at times, to display God, love/heart (etc.), but I’m not sure that message really went very far. I should have thought to use the video camera I brought to record a national giving the Gospel and wish I had had access to a tape recorder (for that same purpose).

And in evangelizing in America, the way I was able to secure nearly 100% cooperation in going door-to-door witnessing with people from pastors, to Bible college and seminary students to laymen was that:

1. I knew them, and
2. I said: Would you PLEASE go evangelize with me—you will not have to say one thing—just observe, pray, smile and act (and dress) normal. You just have to act like a mime. You may want to tell them your name, but that’s all the speaking you’ll have to do.

It worked like a ‘charm’ for about 15 people, evangelizing with top religious leaders to laymen to seminary students, pastors and others. Try it. You might empower, inspire and embolden another who otherwise—statistically speaking—is unlikely to *ever* evangelize one person in their entire life!

FALSE METHODS

The American church is so influenced by culture more so than **the Bible**, they *misrepresent* the Gospel in the following BUMPER STICKER slogans (and other methods):

- **Try Jesus**—If you don’t like it, the devil will always take you back (very Lordship Salvationist and informing of an apostasy option, as if you test drive salvation or are committing to a lifestyle the natural mind would never be interested in until reborn; You don’t try salvation—you receive it or you don’t).
- **Real men follow Jesus** (very Arminian and Lordship Salvationist, as if evangelism is a macho taunt, and salvation is fully a matter of will power commitment to sanctification vs. a free gift of grace and God’s Spirit’s power through the Gospel).
- **Know Jesus, Know peace. No Jesus, no peace** (T-shirt). Man’s need is not **peace**, but **SALVATION**. His problem is **SIN**—not **lack of peace**. Many lost people *feel* very peaceful (*falsely*-based), so they won’t respond to a (*falsely*-based) appeal to **peace**.
- **Hurting? (Come to) named church** (DFW billboard). What about those who are **NOT hurting**, or are thriving/succeeding—but are still LOST? Salvation is not the end of hurt but the end of a future **eternal hurt** in hell. Christ is NOT just for **emotionally-weaker people**, but **EVERYONE**.
- Relationship evangelism efforts to have lost people get in the habit of **hanging around Christians** and Christian events (as if salvation can be absorbed by *osmosis*, or it’s a lifestyle you need to get used to over time—a Lordship Salvationist viewpoint).

Evangelism is NOT sales. Absent any small talk you may engage, you have about one sentence with which to lovingly broach the subject of spiritual things with a lost stranger, and this is the ULTIMATE spiritual warfare. You are trying to eternally secure someone’s rescue out of the arms of the enemy. The devil is itching to give them an excuse to not listen to your presentation. Don’t blow such a sacred opportunity by asking them general philosophy questions, like do you believe in God, what kind of God do you believe in, or what do you think God expects of us. God NOWHERE commands believers to give their testimony or to poll the lost person’s opinions about this subject, but to TELL THEM THE Gospel.

We are quite chicken in these matters, but the first century church even used open-air preaching as a method that we are horrified to consider in our “sophisticated” culture.

No wonder we resort to so many more unique methods—we have **no POWER**, or **accuracy** in our message, or *belief* those two things are truly ALL WE NEED. Representing God with naive theological ignorance—to *fit into culture*—is APPALLING. (I Cor. 1:17)

13. Apologetics

13A. Simple Apologetic Responses

Before addressing specific issues, it's important to know two things about the study:

1. You don't *prove* the Gospel with apologetics, but provide intellectual evidence for it (i.e., it always takes a miracle of the *Spirit's conviction* for our evangelism to be effective), and
2. You don't *lead* with apologetics any more than a salesman would start with objections (i.e., before they were raised—**if ever**).

Simple Apologetics Answers

The study of “**apologetics**”—objective, external evidences to attempt to prove Christianity or disprove allegations attacking it—can get very *complicated*, and many books have been written handling individual *intellectual questions* of lost people. If one is to **evangelize with confidence** as a **HABIT of life**, he will *do well*—if he never studies anything else in Apologetics—to memorize or *paraphrase* the following three alternatives (or combinations thereof) for use in *real life*:

1. **“I don't know but I will try to find out.” Until then...** [return to your Gospel presentation]—and DO try to find out.
2. **“That's a good question and good answers exist...**
but unless getting the answer right now is precluding you from hearing how to go to heaven and not hell, let me continue with what I CAN tell you... [return to your Gospel presentation]
3. **“I don't know, personally, but what I do know is...”** [return to your Gospel presentation]—anticipate and welcome a possible follow-up question re-addressing their issue.

13B. Simple Responses to Other Religions

Note to Other Religions:

For any **religious people** who are **NOT** members of Christianity: Christians who ask you about *going to heaven* and receiving Jesus for that purpose are **NOT** trying to change your **culture, traditions, history, or family values**—we simply LOVE you enough we **don't want anyone to go to hell**, and Jesus Himself said that's what will happen to any who have not received Him personally. We are *not meaning any insult* of the religion you have been a part of, and respect your intentions and desires in following God in that way, but again, we simply must

follow our convictions that Jesus told the truth, and said that other paths to His Father will disappointingly shock you by their **failure to get you to heaven** without Him.

No one is trying to force you to our point of view, or cram our beliefs down your throat—just lovingly inform you WHAT JESUS SAID, with His track record of authority and truth-telling. I hope you can see our only concern is your **eternal well-being!** IF you accept His heavenly invitation, there are **MANY** things about your background that are consistent with His teachings that He would approve of, but He alone is **Lord** and is to be served as such by those He calls His children. Some of us will, out of fundamental fairness, be willing to let you *present your current beliefs* to us, if that will allow us the opportunity to give you an invitation to hear how to **miss hell**, from *JESUS'* perspective.

Possible Responses (to Other Religions):

1. **It's good to hear you fear God and try to please Him!** As a [Buddhist, Muslim, Hindu, etc.] **are you SURE that if you died today you would go to heaven?**

I am not presenting religion, but a **personal and eternal relationship** with God. Christ provides salvation to **all men** as a GIFT which none of us *deserves*, or can earn or **work for**. His standard is **PERFECTION**, and He does not balance our good and bad deeds, or allow anything **evil** or **unclean** into His *perfect* heaven. Only when we receive **Christ's perfect status**, by being **forgiven of ALL of our sins** can we go there—all because of **Him**, and *not* ourselves.

2. **May I ask you... In YOUR faith, do you know for SURE you will go to heaven?**

"I'm not trying to get you to change your cultural traditions, but to have a **direct and Personal relationship with God**, through the Lord Jesus Christ.

[i.e., We are **NOT** promoting a particular church or **church activities** (or rituals) but **one-on-one connectedness** with **JESUS—the eternal God of *this* life and *universe***].

3. ["I'm a Muslim, Mormon," etc.]

Well, are you a SINNER too? Have you ever done anything wrong?

[i.e., have you ever committed even one evil deed, such as **lying, cheating or stealing?**...]

Then I have **GOOD NEWS** for you—**Not** about pushing a religion, but about how **you can KNOW GOD** and have a *personal relationship with Him*.

Apologetic Answers to 250 Questions

*****(See further answers at pp. 675-710)*****

New

APOLOGETIC QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS OF NON-CHRISTIANS

(MOST POPULAR QUESTIONS: * = Paul Little's; * = Dewitt's; # = Little's and Dewitt's; + = Larry Moyer's)

GOD

#1. How do you know God exists and that Christianity is true? God is dead.

2. If God existed, He would be impersonal.
3. Who made God? Where did God come from?
4. Do Christians believe in three gods or one? The doctrine of the “Trinity” is irrational.
5. Is the God of the Old Testament different from and meaner than the One of the New Testament?

CHRIST

6. Did Jesus Christ actually exist, historically (i.e., in time and space)? Is the Christ of history the same as the Christ of faith?
7. Was Jesus Christ God/divine deity? Did Christ fulfill the attributes of God?
- *8. Did Christ resurrect (i.e., rise, raise, arise) from the dead? Was Christ’s death a sham and His resurrection a hoax? Was Christ’s body really absent from the tomb?
- *9. Is Christ the only way to God? Isn’t it the height of arrogance and exclusivity for Christians to claim to have the only truth regarding how all men are supposed to get to heaven?

MAN, SIN AND EVIL

10. If God made us, our moral failings and sins are His fault.
- #11. Why does God allow so much evil in the world and why do the innocent suffer, if He’s a God of love, and totally in control?
12. Christians have a low, negative view of humanity. Not every person acts like Hitler.

THE BIBLE AND GOSPEL, SCIENCE, EVOLUTION AND MIRACLES

- *13. Is the Bible God’s Word, true and completely accurate and “inerrant?” Are the Bible documents reliable? How accurate? Isn’t the Bible just a myth or fairy tale, full of contradictions?
- *14. Does the Bible conflict with Modern Science? Evolution has proven the Bible to have errors.
- #15. Are the miracles of the Bible real, or possible?
- *16. Does the Bible conflict with archaeology? Does archaeology confirm or contradict Christ’s biographies?
17. Don’t pleasant, near-death experiences of non-Christians disprove Christianity?
18. Specific difficult passages (Ex.: God is a male; baptism for the dead; seeming inconsistencies in the same Gospel accounts)

SALVATION, FAITH AND ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

- *19. What about those (i.e., “the poor native”) who have never heard of Christ: will God judge them?
- *20. Can anyone be sure of his salvation (i.e., that he’s going to heaven)?
- *21. Isn’t salvation by faith (“just believing”) too simple/easy?
- *22. What does it mean to believe? Isn’t faith contradictory to reason and logic?
23. Why would God require faith vs. just making Himself obvious, and ask for obedience?
24. Why bother to pray?
25. To be a true, genuine Christian is almost impossible—the required standards are too high, and are beyond me, or it costs too much to become a Christian.
26. I am so weak.
27. I cannot break from my sins.
28. I am afraid I cannot hold out.

WORKS/RELIGIONS

- *29. Can good deeds get us to heaven? What is the role of good works in salvation?
30. It doesn’t matter what you believe—only if you believe it sincerely.
31. The person who sincerely asks for pardon will never be refused.
32. All named Gods are really just the same Person/entity.
33. All religions are good, or about the same. Have you researched all other religions to see which is best so you can make an informed decision (i.e., have you conducted a comparative religion study)? We all believe the same...be good and love people (let God handle the details—we can’t force Him to accept us into heaven anyway)
34. We cannot know who’s right and who’s wrong in religious matters.
35. You want me to change religions?
36. What about the “law of attraction” teaching, (Ex.: focused faith causes change, God is in you, you cannot fail, see yourself having whatever you want and ask the universe for, etc.)?

CHURCH/CHRISTIANITY

- *35. If Christianity is true, why are there so many hypocrites in the Church? Your behavior is contradicting your claim to be a Christian. There are too many hypocrites in the Church. Your message's credibility is downed by the fact that Christians sin (and some, greatly)
- 36. A professing Christian wronged me.
- 37. Christian "superstars" are (only) after money.
- 38. Christians are bigoted, racist, sexist and homophobic.
- 39. Religion has sparked wars and exploitation. What about the Christian Inquisitions and Salem Witch trials?
- 40. Many non-Christians are more moral than many claiming Christians.
- *41. Is Christianity rational? Is truth knowable, logical (or illogical, and totally emotional)?
- *42. Isn't Christianity just a psychological crutch for weak people? That stuff is only for societal losers and down-and-out'ers.
- 43. Christianity is out-of-date.
- 44. Christianity is on the decline.

PERSONAL

- 45. Isn't death the end of it all, with no afterlife? Why doesn't God just snuff out and annihilate everyone? We all just decay when we die.
- 46. I hate God.
- 47. I'm answerable to no one. I am my own boss.
- 48. I don't need religion. I don't need God.
- 49. What's in it for me? Why should I become a Christian?
- 50. I'm not convinced.
- 51. I don't believe that.
- 52. I have no feeling.
- 53. I'll think about it.

127 OTHER QUESTIONS ASKED OR STATEMENTS MADE BY NON-CHRISTIANS

GOD

- 54. The Trinity belief arose in the 1300s.
- 55. God loves all men, so He wouldn't destroy them (i.e., in Hell).
- 56. Why didn't God create only those He knew would follow Him?
- 57. God is going to save "the elect." If I'm one of the elect than God will save me; if I am not, then it really doesn't matter what I do.
- 58. Hell is a state of mind—not a place.
- 59. How can God send children to hell?
- 60. Why does everyone suffer the same in hell?
- 61. Why are people punished infinitely for finite sins, or crimes?
- 62. Can't God force everybody to go to heaven?
- 63. How can hell exist alongside heaven?
- 64. Is God an environmentalist?

CHRIST

- 65. Who was Jesus?
- 66. Was Christ really convinced He was the Son of God?
- 67. Was Christ crazy (or deluded) when He claimed to be the Son of God?
- 68. Did Christ—and Christ alone—match the identity of the Messiah?
- 69. Why is Jesus better than other religious leaders and teachers?
- 70. Was Christ seen after His death on the cross?
- 71. Christ was only a good man.
- 72. Christ was only a moral teacher.
- 73. Jesus sinned (i.e., turning over the temple tables, or reproving the Pharisees).
- 74. Jesus was culturally biased for whites.

MAN, SIN AND EVIL

- 75. What is the origin of evil?
- 76. What is sin?

77. There is no evidence of sin in the world (or the evidence disproves God)
78. Sin in the world is not why men die, but their bodies obey the law of entropy (i.e., wear out)
79. Everyone sins every once in awhile.
80. I am a sinner, but so are you, Christian--what's the difference?
81. You are still going to sin after you get saved.
82. God will weigh my good deeds against my bad deeds, and I'll be fine.
83. The sins I have committed are not serious--I never killed or raped anyone.
84. I am as good as others.
85. My sins are small, so why worry?
86. I have never sinned (i.e., the rich young ruler excuse or attitude). I am not a sinner. Why am I blamed for something I didn't do?

BIBLE/GOSPEL, SCIENCE AND MIRACLES

87. Is truth absolute or relative? What happens when absolutes conflict?
88. I can write something and claim it as inspired, as well.
89. Do Christians engage in circular reasoning (i.e., I believe the Bible is God's Word because it says it is).
90. The Bible was written to make Christ look like He fulfilled prophecy.
91. Men decided the contents of the biblical canon. Why do we have no original manuscript autographs?
92. Hasn't the New Testament been changed since it has been copied and recopied throughout history?
93. Is the best way to interpret the Bible to interpret it literally?
94. There are so many different interpretations of the Bible, why should I believe yours?
95. Don't the two Creation accounts' orders contradict both themselves and what we know from modern science (Gen. 1-2)?
96. Where did Cain get his wife, and how were they able to populate an entire city?
97. Why doesn't the Bible record the existence of prehistoric man or dinosaurs?
98. What is the probability that Noah's Flood actually occurred, given what we know from modern science and archaeology?
99. Is the existence of the Jewish nation proof of the Bible's inspiration as a fulfillment of prophecy?
100. The Gospel is irrelevant (i.e., for social issues/too heavenly minded/suicidal argument).
101. The Gospel message has been disproved.
102. Luke-Acts was written before the Gnostics allowed the Book of John to enter the canon. The message of the Synoptics differs from John's Gospel, and the Synoptics are the true Gospel.
103. Jews wrote the New Testament (presumably meaning they were inaccurate or biased).
104. The biblical writers were biased/partial.
105. The Gospel's appeal is based on the ultimate fear tactic (hell) vs. the love of God.
106. Which Bible do you believe in? (Ex.: Jews' O.T., Catholics' Apocrypha, Christians' O.T. and N.T., Muslim's Koran; KJV-only believers, etc.).
107. Can the biographies (Gospels) of Jesus be trusted? Do they hold up under scrutiny? Were Jesus' biographies preserved for us?
108. Is there credible evidence for Christ outside the biographies of Christ?
109. The Bible is not intellectual enough for me (i.e., it's too simplistic).
110. The Bible is a story book. That stuff is for children.
111. The Bible has some weird beliefs and ethics (Ex.: God is male), including belief in miracles.
112. You call yourself educated, yet still believe in a literal 6-day Creation story and a 6,000 year old earth?
113. I'm going to live forever through electro cryonics or time machines.
114. Do you believe in the Shroud of Turin?(i.e., that it's authentic/the real thing/Christ's burial cloth).

SALVATION, FAITH AND ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

115. Why did Christ have to die on a cross for me to go to heaven?
116. Why did Christ have to shed blood?
117. How can the death of one man 2,000 years ago help me today?
118. What is salvation?
119. Why would God give you the only reward which alone motivates men to live good?
120. What must I do to be saved?

121. Should Christians give away all their possessions?
122. What makes Christian conversion valid? Can't it be explained psychologically?
123. Can Christianity be proved?
124. That's naive, easy believism that isn't intellectually honest and clings mindlessly to the Bible, even when facts dispute and challenge the beliefs. You mean I can believe for, say, five minutes, then return to a life of sin?
125. There have to be strings attached to this "gift."
126. Is baptism necessary for salvation?
127. There are things I must do before I become a Christian.
128. God can save people without human intervention in the process (Cf.: lifestyle evangelism and Rom. 1)
129. Isn't God going to save everybody in the final analysis, anyway?
130. What's the big deal about salvation—you may lose it later anyway?
131. I think you're making too big a fuss about this.

PSEUDO-THEOLOGICAL/PHILOSOPHICAL/RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS

132. What do you know of Greek, Hebrew of textual criticism? (i.e., are you a Bible scholar?).
133. You can know God without "receiving Christ," or being "born again."
134. Why are we here? Why did God make us?
135. Heaven and hell are not real (symbolize euphoria and punishment/judgment for evil). Hell is only a state of mind. I don't believe in heaven or hell
136. The devil is not real. Are you one of those who believe there's a demon behind every doorstep?
137. If Satan does exist, so what?
138. Isn't demon-possession really mental illness?
139. Respect others' beliefs (i.e., "tolerance").
140. Religion is whatever you feel is right.
141. That's your opinion.
142. Everyone has God in them (i.e., Universalism/Secular Humanism/New Age Movement).
143. Everyone must live by his own moral compass (moral relativism).
144. I am seeking, but I cannot find Christ.
145. Wouldn't the world be boring if all believed the same and no one had any fun (i.e., sinful type)?
146. Jesus is going to solve every problem and I'll enjoy a life on a bed of roses thereafter (i.e., pie-in-the-sky philosophy).
147. All Americans know the story of Jesus (i.e., America as a "Christian" nation theory).
148. I know God already. I attend church regularly. I am already a member of a church.
149. I believe in God (i.e., intellectual assent only)...For example, the Apostle's creed. I already believe in God—I'll choose Him later.
150. I used to be a Christian, but that was last week (i.e., I lost my salvation or salvation as a temporal experience). I tried Christianity once.
151. I did that when I was a little boy.
152. I have tried before, and failed.
153. I ask forgiveness for my sins everyday (i.e., Catholic penance, and confession to human "fathers").
154. I was born a Christian. I was raised a Christian.
155. I'm Catholic, or Jewish.
156. I pray to Mother Mary daily.
157. My mother is a saint.
158. I'm going to purgatory. Why doesn't God give man a second chance?
159. I may be punished, but not eternally.
160. I'm an agnostic (or atheist): I don't know if you can know there's a God. The bottom line is I just don't know.
161. Are you one of those Jehovah's Witnesses (i.e., are you a cult member?). You've been brain-washed.
162. Look at the Mormons (religious and moral, but you call them a cult).
163. Jesus is going to make me become a monk, be unmarried, miserable, poor or a foreign missionary.

WORKS/RELIGIONS

164. God grades on the curve. I'm a good person and have hurt no one (i.e., the 10 Commandments, or Golden Rule argument).
165. I am good enough as I am.

166. Works are required for Christians.
167. What do you think about the various alternatives to Christianity, such as Agnosticism, Atheism and Humanism?
168. What is the difference between a cult and a mainstream church?
169. Does Christianity welcome or reject 'New Age' teaching?
170. Have you been around the world and seen how different cultures believe different things (variant morays) change.
171. I'm going to be reincarnated in the after-life. Isn't reincarnation more reasonable than hell? Fulfillment, peace, meaning and satisfaction in New Age (meditation, hypnotism, inspirational audio tapes, retreats/seminars, unification movements, men's movement, etc.).
172. God's name is Allah
173. You've never read the Koran, so how do you know?

CHURCH/CHRISTIANITY

174. Don't you really just want to increase your church membership (ulterior agenda/motive argument).
175. Have you ever known a good preacher's kid (offered as proof that the more serious one takes our "religion," the more its morals fail?).
176. Christian theological disputes and church splits (Lordship vs. Saviorhood Controversy ex.).

PERSONAL

177. I'm too bad to be/get saved. I am too big a sinner. God could not love me.
178. I think I have committed the unpardonable sin.
179. I am afraid Jesus will not receive me.
180. I am not respectable enough to be a Christian.
181. I have no encouragement at home.
182. I'm afraid of persecution
183. I've heard that so many times before.
184. I don't know enough yet to make that decision.
185. I cannot understand.
186. You need to speak to my wife (pawning you off method).
187. I'm really busy right now.
188. I'll deal with that subject (and with death) when I'm older (i.e., the death as a million-to-one odds argument).
189. I'm too young or too old.
190. I do not think I am old enough to make a decision.
191. I'll take my chances.
192. I'll worry about that in the next life.
193. Would not suicide be the best way out of my trouble?
194. I see no harm in worldly amusements.
195. I'm happy, and like my lifestyle, living in sin. Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die. I like my life as it is presently, thank you.
196. There is too much to give up.
197. I would like to be a Christian, but I cannot forgive my enemies.
198. My friends mean so much to me.
199. People would laugh.
200. Does this have to be done publicly?
201. I'm Not Interested.
202. Please do not talk to me about it.
203. My parents preached religion to me so much, I want nothing to do with it.
204. I'm just not ready yet.
205. I want to get established in business first. After that, I'll become a Christian.
206. Door slammed in your face (rudeness). **[RARE, in my experience!]**
207. Sharing one's faith is too personal.
208. That's none of your business: keep that to yourself.
209. I prefer to remain open-minded.
210. Moralistic, dogmatic Bible-beater fanatic extremist/fundamentalists turn me off.
211. I'm not religious.

212. I'm trying to be a Christian.
213. I'm already religious.
214. I am doing the best I can.
215. Can I be a Christian without losing my moral integrity?
216. You're trying to convert/proselytize me. Oh, no, he's talking about God; He'll probably try to convert me to try to make me live right and believe as he does. Are you one of those "born-again"-type Christians? (as if that's bad)
217. Are you pushing a religion or denomination?
218. I don't like your method/approach.
219. The Gospel is for poor people.
220. God will make me be poor, like a Monk. "Will I have to drive a Cavalier?"
221. You can't have any fun as a Christian. Christianity is just a bunch of prohibiting rules.
222. Didn't that Discovery Channel filmmaker find Jesus' crypt and bones Feb. 26, 2007 (or the 2012 Resurrection Tomb Mystery)?
223. Have you ever sincerely thought something (to be true), only to discover later that it wasn't? That is, have you ever changed an opinion, or been wrong? Ill.: the bowing pillars of Egyptian landmarks look straight from a distance. I just simply don't believe.

APOLOGETICS UPDATE:

Responses to Issues Raised in Bill Maher's movie, "Religious"...

224. The virgin birth and a talking snake are not credible, and years of Christ's life are unaccounted for.
225. New Testament prophecy (Ex.: "Revelations") was written by those who knew Old Testament.
226. Those who wrote of Jesus never met Him, and the Gospels should all have the same accounts.
227. Religion is just selling the invisible—which is easy.
228. Religion shuts off rationality and impedes human progress—grow up already.
229. There's no proof Christ existed. He's like Santa Claus and Jack and the Bean stalk.
230. It's fishy that God spoke privately to His prophets instead of simply audibly to everyone. And isn't it a low emotion that God is a jealous God?
231. Fully surrendering to "God" just opens one up to manipulation by men with agendas (such as money, control over other's hopes, adoration by the masses, etc.).
232. Why don't the 10 Commandments include rape, child molestation and torture? All men could agree with no stealing or murder, without the need for religion.
233. If God's all powerful, why doesn't He eliminate the devil and solve the problems? God is to blame for everything negative or evil as he could have stopped it (illness, lost legs in war, etc.)
234. Many ancient gods were born on December 25—Christ's not unique.
235. The Gospel is a story of God birthing Himself through a virgin, as His Son and Himself/God. The trinity is not monotheistic.
236. Religion just makes men arrogantly feel they have the answers to all life's questions. Doubt is more humble.
237. Christians call coincidences "miracles," and many have a low threshold for identifying miracles.
238. The Old Testament has non-credible parts, such as Lot being a holy man who offering his daughter to be raped, God killing off a lot of people in the first 5 books, Jonah inside a big fish for 3 days, a 900 year old man and 39 acts being guilty of the death penalty.
239. Doubt is a luxury for those who have. Those who are desperate cling to faith, as a jailed inmate or someone in a fox hole.

Additional Questions

240. If Christ is God, how was he omnipresent while on earth? Can one be both God and yet not possess all God's powers?
241. Isn't Christianity just true for you, or because you were raised to believe it by what your parents told you?
242. You cannot prove God exists without seeing Him, hearing His audible voice, a video of the same or the testimony of eye witnesses.
243. Don't the good deeds/lifestyle of Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons prove their theology is superior?
244. Doesn't the sinful ("carnal") deeds and lifestyle of so many claiming Christians disprove their claimed beliefs?
245. The writers of the Bible were biased, and wrote their stories to prove the conclusion they sought to prove.
246. How do we know Christ literally lived on our earth?
247. Anyone can claim their Scriptures are perfect and from God. Claiming is much easier than proving the claim.
248. Many religious leaders have taught ethics, performed miracles, and many other men have claimed to be God.

249. Christ studied the Old Testament from childhood. He could easily have chosen His life path to fulfill prophecies about Messiah, and made claims based on those verse He already knew.
250. Don't Christians have 2 separate/different Gospels? Is God's word that confusing?

250 APOLOGETIC ISSUES ANSWERED

GOD

#1. How do you know that God exists? Is there a God? Can you prove God exists or that Christianity is real/true? God is dead (i.e., a philosophy). I don't believe there is a God. There is no God.

Bible Reference(s): Rom. 1:18-32, Ps. 14:1, 53:1, Ac. 17:27, Ac. 14:15, Ps. 97:6, 50:6, Ecc. 12:1

Response(s):

- Your conscience and your intuition just from observing the greatness of the created order tell you you know there is one. Perhaps, some time in your past, you chose to shut off the sensory messages being preached to you by these two sources.
- "God has placed inside all His human creatures a knowledge of His existence, or, as some may call it, a "God-shaped vacuum." —David Strawn
- How do you know that He does not exist? Can you prove it either way, or is there evidence to sustain your claim?
- Because I have personally MET Him, through the experience of salvation in the factual, historic life of His Son, who died on the cross for my sins and yours, some 2,000 real/actual years in our past.
- If you truly believe there is no justice outside that meted out in this world, why haven't you become as selfish and evil as you could possibly imagine (Cf.: Holy Spirit's general restraint in the world).
- What type of God do you believe does not exist, because I may agree with you? That is, describe the traits of a "god" you assert does not exist.

Answer(s): Tests of objectivity; Bisagno tape on God is dead (obituary, etc.)

The Nature of General Revelation.

General Revelation answers the question, "What can man know about God?" General revelation is non-propositional; that is, not disclosed in verbal truth statements. It is:

- a) Universal; i.e., accessible in some sense everywhere in creation: Ps. 19:1-6.
- b) Available to (and to some extent innately understood by) all mankind: Mt. 5:45, Ac. 14:17, 17:27, Rom. 1:20, I Cor. 11:14.
- c) Accessible by conscience, the senses and by reason. Albeit marred by the fall, the image of god is 'defaced but not erased.'

"General Revelation" may be defined as that which is revealed about God to people of every time and culture, through nature, common history and greater humanity.

Definition of "Proof."

- A. Not Possibly True—a Hoax, Myth or Lie/Deception.
- B. Unlikely, Unreasonable, Very Doubtful.
- C. Beyond a Reasonable Doubt/More Likely Than Not/Tipping The Scales (civil standard).
- D. Clear and Convincing Evidence (criminal standard).
- E. Beyond a Shadow of Doubt.
- F. Scientifically Provable Fact.

Note: At any stage of strength of evidential weight, men may choose to reject the conclusions the evidence most reasonably leads one to make (J.W. Montgomery and **Illustration that dead men do bleed**—a moral vs. evidentiary issue).

The Five Traditional (and Two Other) "Theistic Proofs" for God's Existence

1) **Ontological (God Concept)**. Because man has a concept of a Being who is the greatest of all conceivable beings—perfect, holy, loving and just—therefore that Being must exist, or else He would not be perfect. (First five arguments from Thomas Aquinas, 1125-1274).

Pros:

Cons: Ill.: Cindy Crawford may have tremendous physical assets, but such may not be recognized in worlds which are unaware of her existence.

2) **Cosmological (First Cause/Cause-and-Effect)**. The universe is an extraordinary effect that necessitates an adequate cause; the first and ultimate cause is an intelligent Creator. Stated another way (as a syllogism), (1) every effect has a cause (there cannot be infinite egress), (2) every effect depends on a cause for its existence, (3) the universe or nature cannot originate itself. Therefore, there must be a First Cause, and that cause is God.

Four Possible Responses:

- a) Something in a fundamental sense (energy, space, time) always existed; our universe came into existence by pure chance (atheism).
- b) Everything that exists is God; the universe is an emanation of an all-inclusive cosmic force (pantheism).
- c) All that exists was brought into being out of absolutely nothing (ex nihilo) by an intelligent Creator (theism).
- d) Nature was self-created. Something came out of absolutely nothing, with absolutely no external force or God (evolutionism?).

Pros:

Cons:

3) **Teleological (Design and Order)**. The apparent purpose, order and design in the universe would necessitate an intelligent Creator. The amazingly intricate order, micro and macroscopically, implies a Designer.

Pros:

Cons: Darwinism arguments.

4) **Anthropological (Man's Capabilities)**. Man is an intelligent, volitional and emotional being with innate capacity for both ruling and relationship, and again with a sense of eternity. These extraordinary human characteristics reflect a superior personal Creator.

Pros:

Cons: One can posit a moral and rational God, or a concept of no God at all.

5) **Moral Argument (Innate Right and Wrong)**. Man's apparently innate sense of right and wrong—together with man's universal cry for justice (i.e., punishment and retribution) when injustice is committed—powerfully indicate that man is made in the image of a moral God. (Rom. 1:32-2:16, esp. 2:14-15).

Pros:

Cons: Hitler, and man's equal capability to do tremendous evil could be used to argue that men were created by a personal devil, using that logic.

6) **Universal Religious Experience**. Humankind, until the 20th century, has nearly always and in every culture believed in some deity, afterlife and final justice. Not a few atheists have become quite religious in a foxhole or on the operating table. (From: A.E. Taylor and Richard Swinburne):

Faith and Reason, by Richard Swinburne (Oxford University Press: Oxford), 1984

The Faith of a Moralist, by A.E. Taylor (London), 1937

Pros:

Cons: Some (though a small minority) people and groups have no apparent religious experience. Sincere, real jailhouse conversions?

7) **The Wager (Happy Life Loses Nothing)**. Given the options of belief in the Christian God and a life of obedience versus disbelief and a life of sinful pleasures, the reasonable choice would be obedient belief in God. (From: Blaise Pascal, 1623-1662).

Pros:

Cons: Satisfaction of sinning, if there is no ultimate consequence when all's said and done.

SUMMARY: The value of the major natural arguments is not that they necessarily prove the existence of God, but rather they (1) point toward the need for further investigation, (2) demonstrate the rationality of the faith, and (3) are tools of general revelation that the Holy Spirit can use.

Source: Adapted and excerpted from Dr. Scott Horrell's Trinitarianism class notes, 1999, pp. 5-8.

See also: Philosophy of Religion, by Norman L. Geisler

One Further, More Modern Evidence for God's Existence.

---Some proffer the effect of Christianity in society and individually changed lives. (Josh McDowell, etc.); Cf.: common sense, logic/analysis ability; and God-shaped vacuum?

Response:

The Bible teaches that God exists and that He has made Himself known at all men through His general revelation in:

- 1) Creation (Ps. 19:1-4, Rom. 1:18-20).
- 2) Conscience (Rom. 2:14-16).
- 3) History and Experience (Ac. 17:24-26; Rom. 1:18-32), and holds them accountable to respond to this knowledge.

---If there is no God, then how do you explain the origin, order, complexity and balance of the world and yourself? Without God, there is really no meaning and purpose in life.

---In fact, God has put into every person a longing for and desire to know Him (Ecc. 3:1-14, Ac. 17:27-28).

---If you truly seek God, He will let you find Him (I Chron. 28:9).

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, pp. 124-125, by Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

Answer(s):

Van Til's Apologetic

"1. If God does not exist, the world is unintelligible.

2. God does not exist.

3. Therefore, the world is unintelligible...

Since it is agreed that the world is intelligible, then God must exist. However, Frame points out that the same argument can be stated in a positive form:

1. If the world is intelligible, God exists.

2. The world is intelligible.

3. Therefore, God exists."

Source: Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, p. 755, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

Can we prove God exists? ...if a person is intellectually or spiritually closed to the question, he will not respond to the evidence. ...Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin illustrated this mentality when he returned from orbiting the earth and said, 'I didn't see any God out there.' This is somewhat like scraping the paint off a portrait to find the artist inside. The painting points to the artist just as the cosmos points to the Creator, but we must remember that the Creator is distinct from His creation. ...The scientific method of controlled and repeatable experimentation is useful for achieving a great deal of knowledge... There are other kinds of knowledge (historical knowledge, philosophical knowledge, moral knowledge, personal knowledge, religious knowledge), and these lie outside the scope of scientific inquiry. I'm Glad You Asked, p. 25, by Ken Boa (Chariot Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1977

For Further Study:

I'm Glad You Asked, pp. 21-47, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moody (ChariotVictor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982

A Ready Defense, pp. 405-406, by Josh McDowell, (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

Defending Your Faith, pp. 19-31, by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

Answering the Tough Ones, pp. 119-121, by David A. Dewitt, (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

The Existence of God, by John W. Montgomery (Cassette)

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 46-49, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

When Skeptics Ask, pp. 15-25, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1990

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 36-44, 154-156, 160-165, 253, 275-283, 289-296, 318-320, 399-401, 498-501, 554-564, 606-608, 670-674, 714-721, 722-723, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

The Open Bible, p. 1348 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

The God Who is There, by Francis Schaeffer

Evidence for Faith: Deciding the God Question, by John W. Montgomery

www.probe.org

2. If God existed, He would be impersonal.

Response(s):

---And how, or, based on what authority, do you know this for certain?

---How could an impersonal being create a personal being, if personal is more valuable?

---You are making an absolute statement about something you are not even absolutely certain exists, so how could your conclusion be certain, if the object of your conclusion is not even certain, in your own mind?

---How can there be an absolute trait that you are absolutely certain of, for an entity you are doubtful exists?

---Taking your fault-ridden premise that you doubt His existence, that would be as absurd as me confidently asserting that the Easter bunny is yellow.

---If man is made in God's image, and mankind is personal, doesn't that sort of destroy your way of thinking?

---If He were impersonal, what benefit would relating to Him be for humans?

---Why do you believe that? Do you know with certainty that personality is exclusively limited to man and

animals? It is conceivably possible that the Creator imbued His creatures with amoral attributes He did not possess, but as the Bible says that mankind is made in the image of God, I find it much more plausible that He bestowed upon us several features and aspects different in quality from yet, nevertheless, like unto His own Self, just like personality (i.e., mind, will and emotion). Also, the Bible directly teaches that God does have personality and is personal God, as well as the fact that I know Him that way too. Being made in His image implies just the opposite of that conclusion as to impersonalness.

--You state that with authority--what is your authority?

--Is it sensible that the creatures created by such a God would not share many traits of God, such as being personal, as it's better/preferred to be personable vs. aloof and impersonal?]

For Further Study:

Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/

Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pp. 111-140, by Josh McDowell, (Here's Life Publishers, Inc.: San Bernardino, CA), 1979

Why I Believe in a Personal God: The Credibility of Faith in a Doubting Culture, by George Carey

3. Who made God? Where did God come from? God's just a figment of your imagination. What is the logic in a self-existent God concept?

Bible Reference(s): I Chron. 16:36, Heb. 13:8, Gen. 1:1, Dan. 7:9, Isa. 40:28, Ecc. 12:1

Response(s):

--No one--He is self-existent (Gen. 1:1; Ex. 3:6, 13-15). If something or someone had made "God," that something or someone would, in fact, be God, as God is the Creator, not the created/creature, by nature of His own being, existence and nature.

--That question is like asking what or who invented inventing. The nature of the concept itself innately implies the Creator was not created, or He would not be Creator, but creature.

--Men's minds certainly did not invent the idea of God to meet some deep psychological need. Our innate or intuitive knowledge that God exists comes as standard equipment in the consciences of people who have (at least not yet) not chosen to disregard and block out that evidence, because it does not fit well with their desires and aspirations.

--By pure definition, or description of "god," He would have to have never been birthed, or born/created at all, by anyone, or that other party would have superior powers, and He therefore could not be God. Also,

--The nature of God is, in part, understandable by we mere mortals, and in another sense so far superior and greater than any of our human capacities, to try to limit and shrink His greatness/gloriousness into a finite mind, requiring Him to not be eternal, is to make the creature into the structure or form of the creature/created, which is a sad reversal in logic.

--If anyone or anything created God--THEY would be God, originator/creator, and not He who has made us.

--That's like asserting what came before the beginning.

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, p. 68, by Josh McDowell, (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

Reason to Believe, pp. 111-113, by R.C. Sproul, (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1978

The Complete Book of Bible Answers, pp. 65-96, by Ron Rhodes (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997

When Skeptics Ask, pp. 26-34, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1990

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 283-288, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

4. Do Christians believe in three gods or one? The doctrine of the "Trinity" is irrational.

Response(s):

--One God in three Persons. They are not three gods, and there is not just one Person. It is the divine Godhead, or "Trinity," and, if you search the Scriptures and fairly evaluate the evidence, you can come to no other consistent conclusion (which happens to be the historic Christian position down through the centuries).

--Not everything/all concepts are purely logical to our limited and fragile/depraved human minds. God is, to some extent, beyond our full comprehension (transcendent and accommodation)...

--There is a difference between rational, irrational and that which is higher than or beyond rationality, such as miraculous spiritual truth. That's the category in which this doctrine belongs.

--One God, not three.

---Almighty God has no room for a competitor's power or influence (Ex.: omniscience, omnipotence and omni-presence), and there is but one true God. There is but one God, but, from a Christian and biblical perspective, by what he has revealed we know that that fact does not mean that Jesus or the Holy Spirit are any less divine, as they are three Persons of the one Godhead.

Answer(s):

The facts of the biblical revelation are these: There is one God. This one God has a plural nature. This one God is called the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, all distinct personalities, all designated God. We are therefore led to the conclusion that the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are one God, and that comprises the doctrine of the Trinity. Dr. John Warwick Montgomery offers an analogy to help us understand this doctrine better: 'The doctrine of the Trinity is not 'irrational'; what is irrational is to suppress the biblical evidence for trinity in favor of unity, or the evidence for unity in favor of trinity. Our data must take precedence over our models—or, stating it better, our models must sensitively reflect the full range of data.' A Ready Defense, p. 411, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

For Further Study:

Defending Your Faith, pp. 99-108, by Dan Story, (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

A Ready Defense, pp. 409-411, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

www.probe.org

5. Is the God of the Old Testament different from and meaner than the One of the New Testament?

Bible Reference(s):

Response(s):

---If that premise/theory were true, there would be two Gods, yet Scripture tells us there is but one. What that question can imply is a misunderstanding of the fact that God differs in/varies His dealings with mankind, in certain ways and at given times, and because He has, apparently, deemed to execute more of His direct, evident judgments in the Tribulation period, at least on those out of covenant with Him, than He did in the Jews O.T. theocracy (wherein He disciplined His people seemingly more visibly often and more physically severely—as well as executing final physical judgment on His enemies in evident ways the people could NOT misunderstand, as we may be prone to do), in no way implies a different Person acting in the New Testament, nor that God has changed His ethical positions or character. To understand these differences, and some of the reasons for them, will give you a great insight into more clearly understanding His book, the Bible.

---He is exactly the same God. Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever. However, as that was as different time/dispensation, primarily the Jewish people He was directly dealing with, and the progress of God's revelation had not been fully unfolded (not to mention the different maturity and advancement of mankind at that time), God did seemingly act more often in direct intervening fashion than we typically expect in our day—and for good reason(s).

---Examples of God's judgment in the N.T. include: Mt. 23:37-38, Ac. 5:1-11, 12:18-23, 13:8-11, I Cor. 5:1-5, 11:27-32, I Jn. 5:16-17, Heb. 12:25, 29, Rom. 1:20-24.

---Admit and don't hide or deny the fact that judgment is in the O.T.: Ex.: Ps. 7:12, 78:35-72, Deut. 9, etc.

---Examples or verses indicating God's love, grace, mercy, forgiveness and patience in the O.T. include: Ps. 103:8-18, Deut. 7:7-8, Gen. 18:20-33, The Lord returned from His anger, II Sam. 24:25, Pv. 3:33-34, Ps. 30:1-4, 78:35-38, Num. 25:11, Ac. 17:30 (referring to O.T. times).

---Examples of both the kindness and severity of God: Ex. 34:6-7, Heb. 3:15-18, Rom. 11:17-23, Ex. 12:12-13. The presence of both of these traits within the same God does not teach a schizophrenic personality (as mercy is almost, if not always patiently shown before punishment is inflicted), but does teach that we should love God as our intimate Father, yet, at the same time, fear and revere Him as God, and avoid the errors of either being scared and afraid of Him, or taking Him lightly, or for granted.

---God always judges righteously, and though He has righteous indignation, He never judges out of sinful or uncontrolled anger, and it is always needed and deserved/earned/called for.

---A picture of Jesus often under-emphasized, overlooked, ignored or unknown is the picture of Jesus as Judge in the Book of Revelation. If God's wrath appears to be at its zenith in the flooding of the earth, so much so that He promised never to flood the earth in that fashion again (reminded to us every time we see a rainbow), 'you haven't seen anything yet,' when you read of God's terrifying and horrific wrath, judgment and punishment He is presently holding back, until the day mankind's sins store up deserved judgment and He unleashes the seven year Tribulation. God may, in our dispensation, be

showing even more patience and restraint, in waiting to give every last person one final chance to receive His Son, but once His extreme patience comes to its end, it will LITERALLY be all over (Heb. 12:26, Rev. 4-20)

Answer(s):

“The Old Testament allegedly depicts only a God of wrath, while the New Testament allegedly depicts only a God of love. The Old Testament contains stories of God’s commanding the destruction of Sodom and the annihilation of the Canaanites, and many other stories of God’s judgment and wrath” allegedly in contradistinction to “the advanced teachings of Jesus to love one another and to turn the other cheek, as contained in the Sermon on the Mount.” “...a moment’s reflection” will show that these two concepts are not in direct conflict.

1. “Jesus Himself declared that the Old Testament may be summed up by the commandment to love God and love your neighbor. (Mt. 22:37). He also observed that, in the Old Testament, God had continually desired love and mercy rather than sacrifice. (Mt. 9:13, 12:7).”
2. “God would have not destroyed certain nations except that he is a God of justice, and their evil could not go unchecked or condoned.” Ex.: **Eze. 18:23.**
3. “The proper Old Testament picture is one of a very patient God who gives people untold opportunities to repent...and only when they continually refuse does He judge and punish them for their evil deeds.”
For example:
 - a) God gave the Amorites hundreds of years to repent, yet they would not (**Gen. 15:16**).
 - b) Also, Noah preached 120 years to his generation before God brought the great flood (**Gen. 6:3**).
4. In actuality, and contrary to popular opinion, “the strongest statements of judgment and wrath in the Bible were made by the Lord Jesus Himself. ...In Mt. 23, for example, He lashed out at the religious leaders of His day, calling them hypocrites, and informing them that their destiny was eternal banishment from God/s presence.” (**Mt. 23:1-39, See also: Mt. 10:34-35**).

“We find judgment as well as love scattered profusely throughout the New Testament, and love and mercy as well as judgment throughout the Old Testament. God is consistent and unchanging, but different situations call for different emphases. Therefore, when the two testaments are read the way they were intended, they reveal the same holy God who is rich in mercy, but will not let sin go unpunished.”

Source: A Ready Defense, pp. 407-408, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville, TN), 1993

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 69-70, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

CHRIST

6. Did Jesus Christ actually exist, historically (i.e., in time and space)? Is the Christ of history the same as the Christ of faith? How can a person today come to really know who Jesus is?

Response(s):

- What year is it/What is the date on your calendar? Isn’t it proper to add to that number the initials, “A.D.?” If most of the civilized and scientific world is willing to plan their lives based on a calendar rendering of time, centered totally on the date in which a certain Man of history was either born or died, do you think any intelligent person would want his life’s chronology judged based on a fictitious cartoon-like mythical being?
- Why would non-religious, secular, or “neutral” historians have written of Him, if they would lose credibility as being accurate if they had written in historical fashion about a mythical figure (and especially if they never noted that such person was merely a historically believed myth)?
- People don’t sinfully cuss with expletives like Santa Claus or Pinocchio.
- Do you take the calendar date of A.D. 2002 seriously? Do you think that the millions of people over the centuries who have “followed Christ” have simply been following mythical beliefs about someone who never even existed in history? If so, how peculiar it is that such a fairy tale usually leads them to changed lives, for the moral betterment of both themselves and our society.
- I’m quite sure you’re aware that Jews in our generation, for the first time in 2 millennia, have been returning to their homeland of Israel, Right? If you have no reason to question THAT fact, and even if you did, you know that that history could be researched, WHY would you exhibit a stronger doubt about historical facts occurring in the same area at nearly the same time-frame, just because they are recorded in a “religious” book, the Bible, along with other secular book sources? Is that a bias you cannot understand, or is there a good reason for it?
- Do you believe Socrates or Abe Lincoln existed? Why is it that when it comes to morals and God, People doubt His historical appearance, but not for lesser Persons? Could there be a spiritual battle going on (behind the scenes)?

Testimony: As a college business fraternity chaplain, at a youthful age I actually used the dollar bill’s ‘in God we

trust,' 'on nation under God,' and the fact that the calendar year was the number of years from Christ's time in history as a basis for a sermon on considering God in your business practice and personal life. Very basic (or primitive) apologetic evidence!

Answer(s):

“Otto Betz concludes that ‘no serious scholar has ventured to postulate the non-historicity of Jesus.’...

2B. Non-biblical Sources for Historicity of Jesus

CORNELIUS TACITUS (born A.D. 52-54)

LUCIAN OF SAMOSATA

FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS (born A.D. 37)

SUETONIUS (A.D. 120)

PLINIUS SECUNDUS, PLINY THE YOUNGER

TERTULLIAN

THALLUS, THE SAMARITAN-BORN HISTORIAN

PHLEGON, A FIRST CENTURY HISTORIAN

LETTER OF MARA BAR-SERAPION

JUSTIN MARTYR

THE JEWISH *TALMUDS*” Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pp. 81-87, by Josh McDowell (Here's Life Publishers, Inc.: San Bernardino, CA), 1979

The fifteenth edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica uses 22,000 words in describing this person, Jesus. His description took more space than was given to Aristotle, Cicero, Alexander, Julius Caesar, Buddha, Confucius, Mohammed or Napoleon Bonaparte. Concerning the testimony of the many independent secular accounts of Jesus of Nazareth, it records: ‘These independent accounts prove that in ancient times even the opponents of Christianity never doubted the historicity of Jesus, which was disputed for the first time and on inadequate grounds by several authors at the end of the 18th, during the 19th, and at the beginning of the 20th centuries.’ --**Josh McDowell**

For Further Study:

Ready With an Answer, pp. 23-66, by John Ankerberg (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997

A Ready Defense, pp. 191-208, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pp. 115-120, by Josh McDowell, (Here's Life Publishers, Inc.: San Bernardino, CA), 1979

I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, pp. 221-223, 236, by Norman L. Geisler (Crossway Books: Wheaton, IL), 2004

The Case for Christ, pp. 110-128, 261, by Lee Strobel, (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 42-43, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

The Case for Faith, p. 265, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

The Complete Book of Bible Answers, pp. 97-130, 141-152, by Ron Rhodes (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997

When Skeptics Ask, pp. 101-117, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1990

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 135-150, 381-385, 708-709, 759-764, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

Defending Your Faith, pp. 75-86, by Dan Story (Kregel: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

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Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 36-37, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000
www.probe.org

7. Was Jesus Christ God, divine deity? Did Christ fulfill the attributes of God? Was Jesus uniquely innocent and sinless?

Response(s):

---Yes. He both humbly admitted it by not denying it, lived a sinless life, and exhibited the exact traits of the father/God. His followers, and the human writers of the Bible claimed and affirmed it, and His resurrection from the dead, never to die again, further and finally sealed the evidence.

---Of all the alternative choices for what Christ was (Ex.: a good man, prophet, etc.) do any of those alternatives fully and accurately match the Bible's description of both Christ's words and deeds, honestly?

---Yes, as shown by His claims, miracles, sinlessness, prophecy fulfillment, quality of teaching, effect on lives, and fulfillment of all of the divine attributes (save for any self-limiting brought about by the incarnation).

---In a word, YES, Jesus fulfilled the attributes of God. Omniscience (Phil. 2 limitations), omnipotence,

omnipresent, perfect, sinless, holy, claims, miracles, etc. Proof/Evidence:
God is...spirit (Jn. 4:24), Creator (I Pet. 4:19), sustainer of the universe (Col. 1:16, Heb. 1:3, Ps. 47:7, Dan. 5:21), personal (Ex. 3:14, Ps. 103:14), judge (Heb. 12:23; Ps. 7:11), sovereign (I Tim. 6:15), only-wise God (Rom. 16:27), good (Ps. 86:5), one (Mk. 12:29; Gal. 3:20), blessed (I Tim. 6:15), holy (I Pet. 1:15-16), just (Lk. 7:29?; Heb. 6:10), loving (I Jn. 4:8), faithful (I Cor. 1:9, 10:13, II Tim. 2:13, II Th. 3:3), merciful (Lk. 6:36, Ps. 86:15, 145:8), ever-present (Ps. 50:10-12, Ex. 3:13-14), unchangeable/immutable (Heb. 13:8, 6:18, Ps. 102:25-27), all-knowing (Jn. 21:17, Ps. 139:26, Isa. 40:13-14), all-powerful/almighty (gen. 17:1), immortal, invisible, living/alive (Rom. 9:26?), feeling (Heb. 4:15), thinking/intelligent (Isa. 55:8-9), compassionate (Deut. 4:31), authoritative (Mt. 28:18-20), sensible/reasonable, beyond man/our thoughts (Isa. 55:8-9), accommodation (Phil. 2:5-11), predestining (Ac. 9:28-30), foreknowing (Ac. 2:23), choosing/deciding (Eph. 1:4), peaceful (Phil. 4:9), non-confusing (I Cor. 14:33), the same yesterday, today and forever (Heb. 13:8), honest (Tit. 1:2), above all (I Chron. 16:25, Jn. 3:31, Eph. 4:6), in all and through all (Eph. 4:6, 1:23), triune (Mt. 28:18-20), perfect (Deut. 32:4, Mt. 5:48), true (Jn. 3:33), gracious (II Chron. 30:9), kind (Rom. 2:4), jealous (Jas. 4:5), mystery? (Isa. 55:8-9, Ex. 3:14), free (Job 41:11), infinite (Ps. 147:5, I Tim. 6:16, Rom. 16:26), self-existent (Ex. 3:13-14, Ps. 50:10-12), self-sufficient (Ex. 3:13-14, Ps. 50:10-12, Col. 1:16), united (Mk. 12:29, Mt. 28:19, II Chron. 13:14), outside of time (II Pet. 3:8), unlimited (Gen. 18;14, Jer. 32:27), able (Mt. 3:9), in heaven (Mt. 6:9), all things sum up in Him (I Cor. 15:28), not a man (Num. 23:19), God of gods (Deut. 10:17), safety (Deut. 33:27), power > man (Job 33:12), mighty (Job 36:5), the Lord (Ps. 33:12), indignant (Ps. 7:11), wrathful/angry (Rom. 1:18, Rev. 4-20), patient (II Pet. 3:9), gentle (Ps. 18:35, disciplines/self-controlled (Ex.: Gen. 18:24), compassionate (Jas. 5:11), love (I Jn. 4:8), truth (Ps. 31:5, Jn. 17:3), holy (Levit. 19:2, I Pet. 1:15), eternal/everlasting (Ps. 45:6), helping (Ps. 54:4), near/close by (Lk. 21:31), impartial (Ac. 10:34), a consuming fire (Heb. 12:29), light (I Jn. 1:5), sinless/cannot be tempted (Jas. 1:13), hearing/seeing, detailed and general, delegatory and directly involved (Cf.: laissez faire v. micro-manager), trusting?, trustworthy, lovingkindness, planner, spontaneous, generous/benevolent, efficient?, effective, rich, sharing, caring, a rewarder, a motivator, thorough?, thoughtful, affectionate?, affable?, friendly?, knowable, ruling/reigning, preserving, persevering, constant, viable, protector, provider, responsible, moral/ethical, forgiving, remembering?, full of glory/glorious, hard-working, the only eternal being in the universe, supreme, knowable, personal, male?, etc. See Psalms for attributes to praise, especially attributes personally beneficial (Ex.: for and with us). God is most holy, and has no equal. God alone holds the power of salvation. He is the supreme being (Gen. 17:1),
God is not...lonely, dictator/hard man?, proud/prideful, pretentious (any sins list), she, it, dead, errand boy, Santa clause, just there to rescue when you get in trouble, myth, superstition, imagined hope, slack/lazy, irrelevant, mysticism, hands-off/detached, forgetful, mechanical, etc. **1 attribute per alphabet letter.**
(Cf.: Christ is author and finisher of our faith—relate God attributes to Christ to show Christ's deity).
Answer(s): See also: Answer to Question # 8, Above.

The Deity of Jesus Christ (i.e., divinity/godhood)

“BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,” which translated means, “GOD WITH US. (Mt. 1:23)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. (Jn. 1:1-3)

And He is the radiance of His [God's] glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. (Heb. 1:3a-b)

Before Abraham was, I am. (Jn. 8:58)

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. (Col. 1:16-17)

For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him. (Col. 1:19)

What Did Jesus Claim?

“As you read the words of Jesus, ask yourself, what kind of mere man would say them?

I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life. (John 8:12)

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies. (John 11:25)

No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven—the Son of Man. (John 3:13)

For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world... I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty. (John 6:33, 35)

When a man believes in me, he does not believe in me only, but in the One who sent Me. (John 12:44-45)

You call Me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. (John 13:13)

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with Me that you also may be where I am. (John 14:3)

I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)

My teaching is not My own. It comes from Him who sent Me. If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether My teaching comes from God or whether I speak on My own. (John 7:16-17)

I and the Father are one. (John 10:30)

Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. (John 14:9)

All that belongs to the Father is Mine. (John 16:15)

You are from below, I am from above; you are of this world, I am not of this world. (John 8:23)" Ready With an Answer, pp. 26-27, by John Ankerberg (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997 [*emphasis mine*]

Such claims led C.S. Lewis to posit that Jesus was either a liar (deceptive and untrue), a lunatic (crazy), or Lord (God/deity). Others have added clown (entertainer or provocateur). Reading about Him, and becoming aware of His perfect moral character, teachings and miracles, you must make a decision about which of these conclusions applies, and if the latter, you cannot avoid or ignore the things He says about your afterlife.

Liar. If when Jesus made His claims, He knew that He was not God, then He was lying and deliberately deceiving His followers. But if He was a liar, He was also a hypocrite, because he told others to be honest, whatever the cost, while He Himself taught and lived a colossal lie... Many will say Jesus was a good moral teacher. Let's be realistic. How could He be a great moral teacher and knowingly mislead people at the most important point of His teaching—His own identity? You would have to conclude logically that He was a deliberate liar. This view of Jesus, however doesn't coincide with what we know either of Him or the results of His life and teachings. Wherever Jesus has been proclaimed, lives have been changed for the good, nations have been changed for the better, thieves are made honest, alcoholics are cured, hateful individuals become channels of love, unjust persons become just.

Lunatic. ...for someone to think himself God, especially in a fiercely monotheistic culture, and then to tell others that their eternal destiny depended on believing in him, is no light flight of fantasy but the thoughts of a lunatic in the fullest sense. Was Jesus Christ such a person? Someone who believes he is God sounds like someone today believing himself Napoleon. He would be deluded and self-deceived, and probably he would be locked up so he wouldn't hurt himself or anyone else. Yet in Jesus we don't observe the abnormalities and imbalance that usually go along with being deranged. His poise and compassion would certainly be amazing if He were insane. ...In light of other things we know about Jesus, it's hard to imagine that He was mentally disturbed. Here is a man who spoke some of the most profound sayings ever recorded. A Ready Defense, pp. 242-245, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

Laugh-Generator (Clown). Some also add laughingstock, or clown. If you've read Christ's words, there is a somber sobriety and seriousness to many issues He addressed which quickly dissuade that allegation holding any credibility.

Lord. See Answers above

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 39-41, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pp. 89-102, 111-140, by Josh McDowell (Here's Life Publishers, Inc.: San Bernardino, CA), 1979

The Case for Christ, pp. 155-170, 261, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998

Ready With an Answer, pp. 67-97, by John Ankerberg (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997

A Ready Defense, pp. 246-267, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/

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***8. Did Christ resurrect (i.e., rise, raise, arise) from the dead? Are there any supporting facts that point toward the resurrection of Christ? Was Christ's death a sham and His resurrection a hoax? Was Christ's body really absent from the tomb?**

Response(s):

--Yes, the Bible says He did, He had predicted He would (and He never lied or was in error), eye witnesses attested to the fact, even biased opponents made note of the undeniable fact, Christians today will testify of His being alive and having changed their lives, and lastly, has anyone ever found His bones in any grave in the Middle East?

---YES, there are supporting facts pointing to the resurrection.

---Has anyone ever found His gravesite with His bones inside? How do you explain the influence a supposedly dead man has had on people throughout history, and continues to have, and NOT simply because they read about His moral life of 2,000 years ago?

"The Easter bunny, Santa Claus, the tooth fairy--in our society Jesus Christ is often relegated the same accord. We may stick plastic images of him on our dashboards; his silver form may grace our jewelry. His face sometimes beams out from heavy-metal rock albums stacked in record stores. We "believe" in him, but ...surely much of what people say about him is myth. Yes, he was a man with intense spiritual insight, no doubt. Yes, he died on a cross.

But did he rise again? Impossible. It's a myth, a legend, a figment of the gospel writers' imaginations. Resurrection defies the laws of nature. It's absurd. Anybody who has faith in its reality is merely deluded. They're pipe dreaming. They're believing in the unseen, the extraordinary.

But that's what faith is, isn't it? Belief in the unseen. Belief in the power of a God to do the humanly impossible. Believing in the unseen--that's the essence of faith. Faith is the "assurance of things hoped or, the conviction of things not seen," said the writer of the book of Hebrews (Hebrews 11:1 NASB). But what about the seen? No twentieth-century Christian saw the crucifixion of Christ; none of us walked into his empty tomb, beheld his linen wrappings, touched his resurrected body--yet we believe. Is it some fairy tale in which we're placing our trust? The answer is no.

My point is this: when we place our trust in the truth of the resurrection, we are not believing in the unseen. You and I did not witness the risen Lord, but hundreds of eyewitnesses did. You and I did not journey to the empty grave, by many did. You and I did not place our fingers into the wounds on his hands and side, but others did. You and I did not drink and dine with him, but several did.

Is the resurrection real? Oh yes, it's well-documented. Scores of skeptics--General Lew Wallace, lawyer Frank Morison, and law student Josh McDowell included--have been converted to Christianity while trying to disprove the legitimacy of Christ's life, death, and resurrection. The fact is, if Jesus were tried on the charge of being resurrected from the dead, he'd be found guilty in any of our courts. The evidence of his resurrection is far more than circumstantial. His resurrection was essential." --**Rev. Don Anderson** (4/9/12)

Easter Bunny? "We must call for *substantiation*. Anyone can *make* a claim, but to justify it is not so simple. When Christians make a claim that Jesus rose from the dead, they have a wealth of historical evidence on their side—quite unlike the rumors about the relatively recent deaths of JFK or Elvis." --**Paul Copan**

Answer(s):

Missing Body Theories:

"1. The disciples stole the body. "As it happens, they were too confused, frightened, and dismayed for such a plan. In addition, the Gospel accounts, Acts, and the New Testament epistles bespeak a sincerity and integrity on the part of the disciples that rules out their being imposters. Furthermore, the disciples initially did not believe the women who reported that the tomb was empty (Luke 24:9-11). Moreover, if the disciples stole the body, why would almost all of them die martyr's deaths for what they *knew* was a lie? And why start preaching in Jerusalem, where such a lie could most easily be exposed?

2. Jesus' enemies stole the body. The problem here is that these enemies could easily have produced the body of Jesus to silence the bold preaching of the apostles. Also, the Jewish leadership began circulating the story that the *disciples* had stolen the body (Matthew 28:12-15), which meant that the Jewish leaders didn't have it.

3. The women went to the wrong tomb. No, the women *knew* where the body had been placed (Luke 23:55), and the angel told them that Jesus was not in the tomb, because he had risen. Peter and John went to the tomb and checked it out themselves because they didn't believe the women (Luke 24:11; John 20:3-8). And if the disciples had gone to the wrong tomb, Jesus' enemies would conveniently have pointed out the right one!

4. Jesus didn't really die. He swooned, and the coolness of the tomb revived him. Roman soldiers knew when their victims were dead, and crucifixion meant a virtually certain death. The water that flowed from Jesus' pierced side was probably the pericardial sac surrounding the heart, which fills up only when a person has died. To top this off,

Jesus' tomb was sealed, covered with a large stone, and guarded by Roman soldiers. It's beyond farfetched to think that Jesus—who had been severely beaten and then crucified—could wrangle free of his linen wrappings, move the stone, slip past the guards, and then appear to the disciples looking as good as new.

5. The disciples were hallucinating. The problem with this view is that hallucinations are only the result of what is already in the mind. And according to first-century Jewish thought, 'resurrection' implied *a corporate rising at the end of human history*—not an individual resurrection like Jesus'. Also, his resurrection was no wish fulfillment; the disciples were simply *not* expecting it and on at least three occasions didn't recognize Jesus. This would have been a strange sort of hallucination! Hallucination, besides being unlikely to be experienced by two or more people at the same time, *still* could not account for the empty tomb! Both friend and foe admitted Jesus' tomb was empty.

6. Jesus rose from the dead even though his body remained in the tomb. To the Jewish mind, an 'empty grave' that contained a body would be a contradiction. Moreover, the disciples and hostile Jewish leaders acknowledged that the tomb was empty. Also, scholars who argue that the disciples saw *non-bodily visions* of Jesus (e.g., the Jesus Seminar) must *still* account for an empty tomb.

7. Jesus' death and resurrection are just like the other ancient dying-and-rising gods. Unlike mythical gods that died before winter and rose again in the spring, Jesus' death and resurrection were historical events that took place in early April, probably, A.D. 30. Hebrews 7:27 reminds us that Jesus' death and resurrection took place once and for all. Furthermore, none of these pagan 'savior' gods are purported to have died (1) *voluntarily*, (2) *as punishment for sin*, or (3) *for someone else*. And the Old Testament background to the Gospels provides the sufficient background to account for the theological significance of Jesus' death and resurrection." True For You, But Not For Me, pp. 112-113, by Paul Copan (Bethany House Publishers: Minneapolis, MN), 1998

For Further Study:

Defending Your Faith, pp. 87-98, by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

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The Case for Christ, pp. 191-257, 262-264, by Lee Strobel, (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998

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Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pp. 179-263, by Josh McDowell (Here's Life Publishers, Inc.: San Bernardino, CA), 1979

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Christianity: Hoax or History?, pp. 13-44, by Josh McDowell (Tyndale House: Wheaton, IL), 1971

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***9. Is Christ the only way to God? Isn't it the height of arrogance and exclusivity/elitism for Christians to claim to have the only truth regarding how all men are supposed to get to heaven?**

Bible Reference(s): Jn. 14:6, Ac. 4:12, Jn. 3:16-18; Jn. 10:9 and Mt. 7:13.

Response(s):

---The Bible and Jesus Himself say "yes." One of the reasons this is so is because His sacrificial death on the cross as a payment for sins was done on behalf of all men. No man is excluded, so the once-for-all provision has been made, and there is no other plan God has instigated/initiated whereby a person can be saved (Ac. 4:12).

---If there were more ways than one to approach God for eternal life, God would be inconsistent, and Jesus would not have had to die to pay the penalty for your sins.

---If science determined that the only way to cure Polio was through Penicillin, would you think them arrogant or naive to shun other methods attempting but failing to solve the problem?

---Sometimes in life there are several ways to approach a problem, but when reality (or God, more importantly) determines an exclusive way, I would propose that it is we who are arrogant to try to tell God either that He's mistaken/wrong, or to try to create and invent another way.

---Christ was a prophet (Mt. 13:57; Jn. 3:2), and prophets never lie/always tell the truth, and He Himself said He was the only way. Being all-knowing, surely He could have proposed another way, if it had existed, as He would have

- all that knowledge.
- I'm sorry, but God gave us only one way, and anything less, however close, is as far off in effect as if we had been totally off track.
- If there were another way, do you think God would have required His only Son to die and suffer so much?
- There are MANY ways to the "god of this world," Satan, and his eternal hell, but only one way to the God of the universe and His eternal dwelling.

Answer(s):

...we did not invent the idea of Jesus being the only way. This is not our claim; it is His. A Ready Defense, p. 408, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993
A Ready Defense, p. 411, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

For Further Study:

The Case for Faith, pp. 145-167, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000
I'm Glad You Asked, pp. 149-171, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moody (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982
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www.probe.org

MAN, SIN AND EVIL

10. If God made us, our moral failings and sins are His fault.

Response(s):

- That assertion would be true, if there had been no intervening event, known as the sinful choice and fall of man. That is to say, the way Adam and Eve lived and behaved, before THEY succumbed and gave into Satan's temptation, IS the way God made man to live. It is, however, because of the wrongful, warped way man chose to exercise the (relatively) free will God had given them which is to blame for every sin ever since.
- God made us, but he did not make us as sinners. That choice was ours, through our original parents, and more specifically through Adam (though we condone and participate in that type of decision every day).
- With that way of thinking, am I to credit Satan with any good we seen in the world?
- Only if He made us exactly in the state we presently exist/find ourselves, which would be to deny and ignore man's sinful Fall, in Adam.

For Further Study:

The Complete Book of Bible Answers, pp. 153-174, by Ron Rhodes (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997
Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/
Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 120-123, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

#11. Why does God allow evil? If there is a God, why is there so much evil in the world? (i.e., the "Problem" of evil in the world--Ex.: "acts of God"). God is evil to allow sin and evil in the world (i.e., doubting God's character). How can a kind, loving God allow so much suffering, evil and injustice in the world? Why does God allow the innocent to suffer, if He's a God of love and totally in control? Isn't evil really good in disguise? Why do bad things happen to good people?

Response(s):

- The Bible does not say?
- God allowed for the possibility of evil, but never created or wanted it, and though He is powerful enough to have forbidden it, He also deemed that man (and Satan) would be imbued with a somewhat free will.
- God allows it, but not forever, and will you be ready when God says, "enough is enough? He cares about man's pain? an chose to bring it into the world moral agents, therefore, or only Adam?); not God's perfect will, but man's doings (don't blame God; allowing is not commissioning?); not a cosmic

dictator with moral robots down here (who can't save selves)—world, body ill & decaying (must work); devil me do it? No you allowed him to deceive you (will of man!?)

---Why, in your question, is the blame directed toward GOD, for actions clearly committed by man? Can man say that he was coerced and forced (Ex.: at gunpoint), and even if he feels lured, be assured that it is not God, but His arch rival—the devil—who is in that business. God is pure, and has nothing to do with and cannot even look on sin and evil (Hab. 1:13). We are not moral robots, or puppets, and though God is in complete control and nothing occurs without His knowledge and permission, that does NOT mean that He specifically engineers every detail of every move to achieve His moral will purposes—obviously not. Take Hitler, for example. That was allowed, but opposite what God wanted to happen, as it was immoral and God's will is moral. The devil is allowed a degree of freedom to work, for a time, and he really works hard to not only produce evil, but to solicit man's cooperation in it, and even to get man to believe that God authored that evil.

---Let me ask you a question...are there certain sins that you particularly like to engage in? Though that is admittedly evil, aren't you a bit glad that you are not immediately terminally judged, and at least allowed some freedom to decide to engage or not (not that you should, but recognizing your freedom as choice as a gift)?

---Why do you do evil? Is anyone making/forcing you to do it?

Answer(s):

- All evil, suffering and injustice in the world is the result of sin—it is not caused by God. (Gen. 3:13-24, Ps. 53:1-3).
- God, in fact, loves kindness, righteousness and justice. (Jer. 9:23-24, Ps. 33:5).
- God, in His own way and time, will right all wrongs, reward righteousness and punish evildoers. (II Pet. 3:3-13, Rev. 21:1-4, 22:1-5).
- Nevertheless, God still can and does use suffering, evil and injustice to cause people to turn to and trust Him, and to accomplish His purposes. (Gen. 50:19-20, Phil. 1:12-14, II Cor. 1:3-11).

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, pp. 127-128, by Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

For Further Study:

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The Case for Christ, pp. 25-56, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998

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12. Christians have a low, negative view of humanity. Not every person acts like Hitler.

Response(s):

---You are correct that not all men act like Hitler, but are in error in asserting that Christians have a low view of humanity. In fact, believers believe that man was created in God's image, as one of His highest creations (lower only than angels?). Christians have an accurate view of man's inner self/spiritual capacity, given that they are totally estranged from God. This does not mean that the image of God remaining yet tainted by the Fall, in man's heart, as well as the continuing restraining presence of the Holy Spirit in the world (as well as peer pressure, self-motivation and government laws) do not prevent

men from experientially behaving as evilly as could be possible. That is, not all men act like Hitler, or worse, though, before God, we are guilty as if we had committed all sins imaginable, many times over, even if we have only committed one sin in our life. That's what we mean by the term, "total depravity."

--Christians do not think that, experientially, ever human chooses to exercise his sinful nature in as severe ways as Hitler did, but we do speak of latent potential for evil (and, technically, no ability to produce good before God or meritorious good works), as evidenced in all the external manifestations thereof, of which merely one sin, biblically, classifies us in the status of sinner, before God (as opposed to saint).

--Total depravity does not mean... (**See:** Gromacki).

For Further Study:

Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/

THE BIBLE & GOSPEL, SCIENCE, EVOLUTION & MIRACLES

***13. Is the Bible God's Word, true and completely accurate and "inerrant?" Are the Bible documents reliable? How accurate is the Bible? Isn't the Bible just a myth or fairy tale, full of contradictions and errors? Christ's story has been disproved. There's no evidence to believe the Bible. You don't believe those stories do you? Those stories are in there to teach moral lessons. What are the guidelines for handling difficult passages? Why should I accept the Bible as final authority?**

Response(s):

--Yes. Read it for yourself, and pray that God would show Himself powerful unto you, and I'll be praying the same thing as well. Soak up its contents. Does the deepness of its pages strike you as just another novel you can skim lightly through in your spare time? The Bible itself claims to be the Word of God. That claim would either be a lie, misguided error, or absolutely and certainly true. By the grace of God I am blessed to know with all certainty that the latter is the only valid choice.

--Before passing judgment on a matter, it is fair and important to know the facts concerning the matter. Similarly, I would suggest that you thoroughly investigate the contents of the Bible, before too quickly jumping to any conclusions as to its truthfulness, or errant nature--isn't that reasonable?

--Yes, in the autographs (i.e., original writings). Completely inerrant and inspired in the original manuscripts.

--The Bible is accurate enough for you to believe in Christ, and to hold you morally accountable for rejecting God's offer so to do.

Answer(s):

How Can We Know the Bible is the Word of God?

First, we would expect certain things to be true about a book from god, Such characteristics would include the following:

- It would claim to be God's Word.
- It would be historically accurate when it speaks on historical matters.
- The authors would be trustworthy.
- The book would be thematically unified and without contradictions.
- We would have received accurate copies of the original manuscripts.

...Second, because God is unique, His book would bear characteristics that could be true of it alone. These characteristics would include the following:

- It would make statements that would reveal knowledge about the way things work beyond the knowledge of its day.
- It would make predictions about the future that could not be known through natural means.
- The message would be unique.
- The messengers would be confirmed by miracles.
- The words would have a transforming power.

The Bible is amazing in its unity amid its vast diversity. Even though the Bible was composed by man persons of diverse backgrounds and in different time periods, nevertheless it manifests a unity that would indicate there was one Mind behind its writing. Consider the diversity of the Bible:

- It was written over a period of some fifteen hundred years or more (from at least 1400 B.C. to A.D. 100).
- It is composed of 66 different books.
- It was written by some 40 different authors.
- It was composed in three languages--Hebrew, Greek, and some Aramaic.

- It contains discussions of hundreds of different topics.
- It was written in a variety of different literary styles, including historical, poetic, didactic, parabolic, allegorical, apocalyptic, and epic.
- It was composed by authors of many different occupations.

In spite of all this vast diversity, the Bible reveals an amazing unity. First, it is one, continuous unfolding drama of redemption from Genesis to Revelation; from paradise lost to paradise regained; from the creation of all things to the consummation of all things (Sauer, *Dawn and Triumph*).

Second, the Bible has one central theme—the Person of Jesus Christ (Luke 24:27). In the Old Testament, Christ is seen by way of anticipation; in the New Testament by way of realization. In the Old Testament He is predicted, and in the New Testament he is present (Matthew 5:17-18). The Old Testament expectation of Christ came to a historical realization in the New Testament.

Third, from beginning to end the Bible has one unified message: humanity’s problem is sin (Genesis 6:5; Romans 3:23), and the solution is salvation through Christ (Luke 19:10; Mark 10:45).

Such incredible unity amidst such great diversity is best accounted for by a God who stands outside time and history and who is therefore able to direct the writing of the Bible. The very same Mind that the writers of Scripture claimed to have inspired them also appears to have superintended them, weaving each of their pieces into one overall mosaic of truth.

Reliability of the New Testament Documents

AUTHOR/BOOK	TIME GAP BETWEEN THE ORIGINAL AND THE COPY	NUMBER OF COPIES
Herodotus, <i>History</i>	ca. 1,350 years	8
Thucydides, <i>History</i>	ca. 1,300 years	8
Plato	ca. 1,300 years	7
Demosthenes	ca. 1,400 years	200
Caesar, <i>Gallic Wars</i>	ca. 1,000 years	10
Livy, <i>History of Rome</i>	ca. 400 years ca. 1,000 years	1 partial 19 copies
Tacitus, <i>Annals</i>	ca. 1,000 years	20
Pliny Secundus, <i>Natural History</i>	ca. 750 years	7
New Testament	Fragment of a book: +/- 50 yrs. books of the NT: 100 yrs. most of the NT: 150 yrs. complete NT: 225 yrs.	5366

Source: Norman L. Geisler. *The Compact Guide to World Religions*, pp. 252-259 by Dean C. Halverson (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1996

Is The New Testament Historically Reliable?

1. Do we have early testimony? Generally, the earlier the sources, the more accurate is the testimony.
2. Do we have eyewitness testimony? Eyewitness testimony is usually the best means of establishing what really happened.
3. Do we have testimony from multiple, independent, eyewitness sources? Multiple, independent eyewitnesses confirm that the events really occurred (they are not fiction), and provide additional details that a single source might miss. (true independent sources normally tell the same basic story but with different details. Historians sometimes call this ‘coherence with dissimilarity.’)
4. Are the eyewitnesses trustworthy? Should you believe them? Character matters.
5. Do we have corroborating evidence from archaeology or other writers? This adds further confirmation.
6. Do we have any enemy attestation? If opponents of the eyewitnesses admit certain facts the eyewitnesses say are true, than those facts probably are true (for example, if your mother says you are brave, that might be true; but it’s probably true if your archenemy says the same thing).
7. Does the testimony contain events or details that are embarrassing to the authors? Since most people do not like to record negative information about themselves, any testimony that makes the author look bad is probably true. I Don’t Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, p. 231, 275-291, by Norman L. Geisler (Crossway Books: Wheaton, IL), 2004

“Almost all the so-called contradictions in the Bible are due to differences in the perspective of the biblical writers when there is more than one account of a particular event...

There are three basic causes for apparent errors in the Bible: sources, text, and interpretation.

(1) The biblical and extrabiblical *sources* are incomplete, and this can lead to the appearance of error.

(2) Errors have crept into the biblical *text* through scribal mistakes and modernization.

(3) Faulty *interpretation* of the biblical text and extrabiblical data can also cause the appearance of error.

I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, pp. 112-113, by Norman L. Geisler (Crossway Books: Wheaton, IL), 2004

Geisler and Nix make the following comment about how the textual variations are counted: ‘There is an ambiguity in saying there are some 200,000 variants in the existing manuscripts of the New Testament, since these represent only 10,000 places in the New Testament. If one single word is misspelled in 3,000 different manuscripts, this is counted as 3,000 variants or readings.’ Although he was dealing with fewer manuscripts than we have today, Philip Schaff in *Comparison of the Greek New Testament and the English Version* concluded that only 400 of the 150,000 variant readings caused doubt about the textual meaning, and only 50 of these were of great significance.” Evidence That Demands a Verdict, p. 44, by Josh McDowell (Here's Life Publishers, Inc.: San Bernardino, CA), 1979

Evidence for Reliability from Historical Geography. A Ready Defense, pp. 81-84, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

Astronomy and the Bible. <https://answersingenesis.org/bible-questions/does-the-bible-say-anything-about-astronomy/>**For Further Study:**

I'm Glad You Asked, pp. 88-120, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moyer (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982

Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pp. 15-28, 39-65, 267-323, by Josh McDowell (Here's Life Publishers, Inc.: San Bernardino, CA), 1979

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“Inerrancy of the Bible,” by John A. Witmer, from Walvoord: A Tribute, (Donald Campbell, ed.), pp. 114-121, (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1982

The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable, by F.F. Bruce (InterVarsity Press: Westmont, IL), 1943

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The Complete Book of Bible Answers, pp. 13-42, by Ron Rhodes

Our God-Breathed Book—The Bible, by John R. Rice (Sword of the Lord Publishers: Murfreesboro, TN), 1969

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I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, pp. 256-259, by Norman L. Geisler (Crossway Books: Wheaton, IL), 2004

Is the Bible Inerrant?, By Norman L. Geisler (Cassette)

Questions and Answers on Biblical Inerrancy, by Norman L. Geisler (Cassette)

Philosophical Presuppositions of Inerrancy, by Norman L. Geisler (Cassette)

The Reliability of the New Testament Documents, by John W. Montgomery (Cassette)

The Book of Books, By John R. Bisagno (Cassette)

Bible: Right or Wrong?, by John R. Bisagno (Cassette)

The Open Bible, pp. 1348-1349 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

Philosophical Presuppositions of Biblical Inerrancy, by Norman L. Geisler

Inerrancy, by Norman L. Geisler

Biblical Errancy: An Analysis of its Philosophical Roots, by Norman L. Geisler

Ready with an Answer, pp. 291-368, by John Ankerberg (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997

How We Got the Bible (Rose Publishing: Torrance, CA), 1998

When Skeptics Ask, pp. 141-162, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1990

Christian Apologetics, pp. 305-328, 353-378, by Norman Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1976

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 91-96, 527-538, 548-553, 586-588, 608-609, 674,
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Christianity: Hoax or History?, pp. 45-64, 81-84, by Josh McDowell (Tyndale House: Wheaton, IL), 1971
True for You, but Not for Me, pp. 96-99, by Paul Copan (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1998
Reasons Skeptics Should Consider Christianity, pp. 13-100, by Josh McDowell (Tyndale House: Wheaton, IL),
 1981
From God to Us: How we Got our Bible, by Norman L. Geisler
Historic Evidence of the New Testament: An Inductive Study in Christian Evidences, by S.L. Bowman
 (microfiche)
The Credibility of the Majority Text Theory and It's value for Apologetics, by Maurice Robinson
 (photocopy)
 www.probe.org
NOT the heretical allegations by nobodies to God (who happen to have a Ph.D.) seeking to make a name for
 themselves by shock and controversy (Bible Secrets Revealed. –History.com; The ‘Jesus Seminar’).

+*14. Does the Bible conflict with Modern Science? Evolution has proven the Bible to have errors. What about the eternal earth option?. In this scientific age, haven't we outgrown Christianity?

Response(s):

- No, the Bible, accurately interpreted, does not contradict any conclusion of science, accurately and objectively (vs. biasedly, with a presuppositional agenda) arrived at..
- As has been said, “all truth is God’s truth,” (as God cannot lie), so all real and honest and accurate scientific conclusions will be consistent with all real, accurate and honest interpretations of God’s holy Word. Viewpoints of scientists with political, economic or philosophical-moral agendas are not to be placed in the same category of veracity as those sincerely and accurately presenting reality as we find and know it.
- Man comes from apes? I’ll be a monkey’s uncle (or I already am)!
- The Bible sometimes uses phenomenological language and is first and foremost a religious text.
- Really? Evolution has proven the Bible to be wrong? That’s quite a feat, given that it is just a theory, assumed things unreasonable to assume, and presents as its greatest tenet that the order we see all around us randomly came into existence, as a fluke of luck, from a chaotic explosion.
- The Bible only disagrees with junk science.
- If we’ve outgrown God and the Bible, why are our morals declining vs. maturing/improving?
- Every honest scientist still refers to Evolution as a “theory.” How can you prove something when you weren’t there, and can’t re-test the idea? Evolution is a hypothesis, which is lower than a theory (though secularly taught as proven fact). –**Dave Strawn**
- Creation (Ex.: man and the earth, etc.) was created full-term, so attributing their existence to a slow development process is a mere scientific hypothesis. Earth has the appearance of maturity, just as Adam and Eve were created fully formed.
- God created the heavens and earth in a developed/adult/mature form, which at the Evolution theory’s pace would look like took it ‘billions and billions’ of years to develop, pre-Fall and pre-Noahic flood.
- God created the heavens and earth in a developed/adult/mature form, which at the Evolution theory’s pace would look like took it ‘billions and billions’ of years to develop, pre-Fall and pre-Noahic flood.
- Salvation isn’t dependent on one first becoming an intellectual nerd or science expert. Faith is not illogical, or foolishness, but ultimately, faith based on evidence, is required for biblical revelation, as it goes beyond mere rules of logic, as it is supernaturally sourced. “Rom. 1:19-20 says if you are honest with yourself, your conscience knows God created all things.” –**Creation Research Institute**
- There is no debate, like Al Gore saying ‘climate change’ is a fact? In 1975 Time magazine declared that climate cooling would destroy us in 10 years. –**Dave Strawn**
- Scientists have made many claims in the past that were later proven incorrect. –**Dave Strawn**
- We’ve been told mankind came from both apes, a big bang or a primordial soup. Which flavor-of-the-month answer will they give us next?
- Creationism is not completely provable or disprovable, even by science, as none of us were there and our theories cannot be replicated in a laboratory.
- God has so arranged our world that belief in creationism requires some element of faith, though He has also offered enough evidence to make man without excuse before Him.
- Earth and mankind evolved upwards, though the law of thermodynamics (and our own experience with life) teaches that things generally deteriorate over time?

- Where did the big bang elements come from?
- Monkeys are immature human development?
- The theory of changed species requires belief in a tremendously long period of time, simply because we never see (nor can our minds reasonably fathom) such things as an ape father birthing a human child.
- Who did your parents come from? Their parents? Theirs? Our lineage and genealogies never list any animals or inbetweeners—ever. Kind begets kind.
- Paleontology shows evolution’s fallacies. The fossil record in the earth’s strata more clearly shows massive and sudden deaths the world over, in a short period of time. [“Punctuated equilibrium”]. **–Dave Strawn**
- Soup left out over time leads to mildew (it’s a scientific law of thermodynamics).
- One law of thermodynamics says that things deteriorate over time—not soup turning into orderly, beautiful earth, or a bomb, or animals devolving into humans.
- Macro evolution (i.e., change from species to species) and micro evolution (i.e., changes within a species). Genesis on seven times says He made animals “after their kind.” **–Dave Strawn**
- No one has ever seen evidence of one kind changing into another, different kind. **–Creation Research Institute**
- We don’t see evolution occurring before our eyes, as we would expect were evolution true, so millions and billions of years had to be conceived in order to explain this problematic omission. **–Dave Strawn**
- The science of mathematical probability places the chances of our earth evolving from a Big Bang as equivalent to a tornado running through a junk yard full of metal and creating a 767 airliner, or the odds that a random explosion in a printing factory would create the Webster’s Unabridged Dictionary.
- We have no evidence of any transitional forms (like from amphibian to reptile), and no proof of transmutations (Ex.: one species changing into another, like a dog into a cat). There were not even any transitional changes found on Darwin’s famous Galapagos island. **–Dave Strawn**
- No one would find a Swiss watch and assume it was randomly put together by nature.
- Fire cracker debris, left alone for a long time, simply disintegrates—not becoming something grander.
- It takes years to build extravagant architectural monuments, so it had to take years to establish the earth? Who’s the random builder?
- Adam named nearly 17,600 animal species—not the image of a dumb rock club-wielding “caveman.” **–Dave Strawn**
- Why is the human genome identical across the globe if humans evolved? **--Jon Gardner** (Creation Science Institute)

Answer(s):

Although I believe in Creationism as a personal religious belief, I am never afraid or opposed to all truthful scientific evidence and investigation. As they say, ‘all truth is God’s truth.’ I do not believe it took God billions of years to create the earth, nor do I deny that things change and mature, though not always to a better state, however (Ex.: not all political decisions of man are “progress” toward a better condition).” When you account for creatures (i.e., mankind and animals) and matter (i.e., plants, trees, etc.) having begun full term, as well as the ‘unnatural’ effects of the intervention of a global flood, it’s easier to see how the evidence is in a form which would have taken “billions and billions” of years were it to have been started and grown in the way and at the pace we now observe human beings to develop or “evolve.”

I am no expert on this subject, but there are scientists and theologians much more well-versed, and they are not all Evolutionists. There’s even the mediatory position between Darwinism and Intelligent Design, where some people believe evolution was how God created the world. People are free to disagree on these matters, but always remember that evolution is a theory—none of us were there to testify with absolute certainty from having witnessed how it all began.

In summary, ask yourself these questions:

1. When you observe the aftermath of a bomb (Ex.: Hiroshima), is your ‘natural’ inclination to think that a Swiss watch might come forth from that explosion (as opposed to having existed and endured it)? Then why would a “Big Bang” create the complexity of our universe, the sophistication of the human body and order of our regular days and nights? [By the way, how can a ‘certain’ theory have changed from bang to soup, like global warming changed to climate change, when some counter-evidence of cooler temperatures surfaced? Might we be a bit too confident than the evidence allows?].
2. When eating a bowl of Campbell’s Soup, wouldn’t it be ridiculous if a friend suggested that it can turn into a Self-sustaining computer-automated robot? Well, just as when we study ancient history, our minds relate much less, so if we add in the concept of “billions and billions” of years to the mix, somehow a primordial soup transforming into the body human becomes more believable.
3. When you see natural wonders like the Grand Canyon (on our website), Rocky Mountain National Forest, or any great scene, isn’t there some though that enters your mind—if only for a second—that this came to us in ways outside the natural process?

4. As Rev. John Bisagno said, “If you teach a man he comes from animals, he’ll act like it.” (*paraphrased*). If I derive from an ape, I’ll be a monkey’s uncle! And, by the way, why are there still apes and monkeys—very slow-learning relatives?

Many evidences of daily life confirm what the Bible says about origins, the fallenness of man and our world, and human nature. For instance,

- a) Why do most people not go out in public totally nude, besides public decency laws? The majority wouldn’t want to, even if it was legal.
- b) When you do genealogy studies, the further you go back, the more united all sources become, ultimately back to only 2 ancestors.
- c) Why do most people have an instinctive disdain for thinking about their own mortality and date with death? Why do people staring their demise straight in the face often feel the need to try to clean the moral slate of their lives?
- d) Why don’t most people kill others regularly, besides criminal laws forbidding such behavior? Could it be there really is an image of God resident within sinful beings? How does Evolution explain these ‘moral’ forces?
- e) Why does every person choose to do morally wrong? Why after supposedly millions of years can’t we have evolved far enough to delete that portion of our DNA?
- f) Why are there two separate and distinct categories of human and animal, with their differences in intelligence, consciousness, conscience, communication and creativity skills? Have you ever seen an architectural structure designed or built by any animal?
- g) Why is there such order and beauty, yet there are also destructive acts of nature in that same system?
- h) Why do things tend toward deterioration over time (Ex.: dust, rust, worn out or broken products, wrinkles and hair loss, beer bellies), if we are constantly improving, evolving and progressing?
- i) Why will mankind never in this era find a way to completely eliminate all diseases, thorns in roses, lethal snakes and wild animals that attack and bite humans? Are these mere anomalies to the otherwise positive and inevitable and progressive evolving of the human race? No, they are the effects of a fallen world since the choice of Adam and Eve, which will never be fully prevented or ended until after the Tribulation has ended.

“Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth! Tell Me, if you have understanding, Who set its measurements, since you know? Or who stretched the line on it? On what were its bases sunk? Or who laid its cornerstone, When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy? Or who enclosed the sea with doors, When, bursting forth, it went out from the womb; When I made a cloud its garment, And thick darkness its swaddling band, and I placed boundaries on it, And I set a bolt and doors, And I said, ‘thus far you shall come, but no farther; and here shall your proud waves stop? Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, and caused the dawn to know its place; that it might take hold of the ends of the earth, And the wicked be shaken out of it?’” (**Job 38:4-13**)

All these questions are clearly explained in God’s word, which is more than can be said about Darwin’s theory.

—**J. Meroney** (Winter 2010)

“To this day **I have never had one individual show me one error or contradiction**. All we are doing, many times, is reciting something we heard someone else say, and it becomes terribly embarrassing when we discover that that person never carefully read the Bible. You would be wise to check the facts for yourself.

But there is something else you are missing that you should consider. What part of the Bible are people most likely to question? It is portions of the Old Testament which describe supernatural events. It is interesting that **it is just such events that Jesus Christ acknowledged as true in the New Testament!** If Christ is God—if Christ is who He says He is—all of these events are true. If He isn’t, none of them really matter. In other words, **the Bible stands or falls with the person of Christ**. If He is who He says He is, you had better listen to what He is saying. If He isn’t, it doesn’t matter. Thus, we end where we begin. The real question is, “hat will you do with Christ?” (Jn. 5:39).

Source: Adapted from N.E.T.S., pp. 108-109, by Larry Moyer (EvanTell, Dallas, TX), 1992

---No; in fact, true science corresponds to and corroborates true interpretation of God’s Word, as “all truth is God’s truth.”

---Regarding evolution: (Rom. 1 worship creation/mother earth and fool said no God exists)

- a) Intuition, common sense and your own gut, or conscience tells you humans are different from animals, so we are not from monkey ancestors (J. Meroney). To say such could explain or justify your acting as such. (John Bisagno)
- b) Why are today’s monkeys not advanced to humans?

- c) No fossil evidence of species transforming into a different one—mutations and cross breeding, yes—species transformation, NO.
- d) [Have you studied the philosophical, scientific, archaeological and physical evidences for Evolution, or are you taking a (biased) professor’s opinion?]
- e) almost anything seems possible when you retrogress billions (huge numbers) of years, until you take that regression slowly, day by day and year by year
- f) Scientific proof requires laboratory re-testing, which is impossible for both the Evolutionists and the creationist
- g) Look at the beauty found in our world, the orderliness, balance and stability of natural laws, then tell me that a bomb exploding could cause such non-chaos (ill. Find a watch in the desert, you assume an intelligent designer vs. happen-chance over time put the parts together).
- h) You’d better be right—huge risk of hell to rely on Darwin vs. the fish logo on your car.
- i) ETC. See my notes at chapter end on subject (Boa?)
- j) Evolution is a theory asserted as proven fact. No way to test Big Bang scientifically, as cannot re-create it in a lab.
- k) Study the size of the universe, the complexity of DNA, and research how many years it would take for amino acids becoming complex DNA and the odds take more faith to believe that occurred than Creation (scientist radio caller, The Voice, 700 A.M., Houston)

Honestly and objectively (i.e., open-mindedly) ask yourself these questions:

1. Where did the primordial soup come from?
2. The laws of thermodynamics say that over time, things deteriorate. How would a solar system of order and beauty come from the chaos of an explosion, and how would a human species of more advanced order come from a lower primate if those laws are true?
3. How could scientists have confused theories of both a soup and an explosion, when their effects are so different (sort of like Global Warming, then Climate Change)? Pre-conceived biases and assumptions?
4. Who made the apes from which man evolved?
5. What are modern-day apes? Radically slow developing pre-humans millions of years behind their peers?

Wickramasinghe [*who is an atheist*] said, ‘believing that life came by chance is like believing that a Boeing 747 resulted from a tornado going through a junk yard.’ I Don’t Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, p. 143, by Norman L. Geisler (Crossway Books: Wheaton, IL), 2004

If the scientific method were the only method we had for proving facts, you couldn’t prove that you watched television last night or that you had lunch today... The other method of proof, the *legal-historical proof*, is based on showing something is a fact beyond a reasonable doubt... Legal-historical proof depends on three kinds of testimony: oral testimony, written testimony, and exhibits (such as a gun, a bullet, or a notebook)... The scientific method can be used to prove only repeatable things. It isn’t adequate for proving or disproving questions about persons or events in history... Did George Washington live? Was Martin Luther King Jr. a civil rights leader? More Than a Carpenter, pp. 43-44, by Josh McDowell (Living Books: Carol Stream, IL), 2009

The generally accepted scientific narrative goes something like this: The Earth coalesced from rocks and other material that were left over after the formation of the sun [how?], which itself formed 4.5 billion years ago from a collapsing cloud of cold gas [where did it come from? How did it make the sun?]. Earth was bombarded by other rocks for another billion years or so [such order from a rocks dart game?], some of which might have delivered water and ingredients that life is known to use [rocks deliver elemental gifts?]. At some point, complex molecules kindled life [how? A camp fire roast?], which took another few billion years to evolve from bacteria to algae to dinosaurs, mammals and us [how’d they change species?]. It’s simple! [simple-minded]. **–Popular Science** (7/15/16; *emphases mine*)

...the Scriptures make it plain that God did not create the world in the state that it is now—evil came as a result of the selfishness of man. The Bible says that God is a God of love and he desired to a person and eventually a race that would love Him. But genuine love cannot exist unless freely given through free choice and will, and thus man was given the choice to accept God’s love or to reject it. This choice made the possibility of evil become very real. A Ready Defense, p. 412, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

It was 1916 and Albert Einstein didn’t like where his calculations were leading him. If his theory of General Relativity was true, it meant that the universe was not eternal but had a beginning. Einstein’s calculations indeed were revealing a definite beginning to all time, all matter, and all space. This flew in the face of his belief that the universe was static and eternal... In 1929 Einstein made a pilgrimage to Mount Wilson to look through Hubble’s telescope for himself. What he saw was irrefutable. The *observational* evidence showed that the universe was

indeed expanding as General Relativity had predicted. With his cosmological constant now completely crushed by the weight of the evidence against it, Einstein could no longer support his wish for an eternal universe. I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, pp. 73-74, by Norman L. Geisler (Crossway Books: Wheaton, IL), 2004

The ASTRONOMICAL EVIDENCE for God *must* be strong when atheistic physicists admit that 'the universe exploded out of nothingness,' and agnostic astronomers claim that 'supernatural forces' were so at work in the beginning that scientists are led back to 'a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries' (see chapter 3)... Isaac Newton (1642-1727)... wrote, 'This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets, could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful Being.' Yet it was William Paley (1743-1805) who made the argument famous by his commonsense assertion that every watch requires a watchmaker. Imagine you're walking along in the woods and you find a diamond-studded Rolex on the ground. What do you conclude is the cause of the watch: The wind and the rain? Erosion? Some combination of natural forces? Of course not! There's absolutely no question in your mind that some intelligent being made that watch, and that some unfortunate individual must have accidentally dropped it there. Scientists are now finding that the universe in which we live is like the diamond-studded Rolex, except the universe is even more precisely designed than the watch. In fact, the universe is specifically tweaked to enable life on earth—a planet with scores of improbable and interdependent life-supporting conditions that make it a tiny oasis in a vast and hostile universe. I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, pp. 95-96, by Norman L. Geisler (Crossway Books: Wheaton, IL), 2004

Experts:

Law of Thermodynamics. Scientific Creationism, pp. 37-45, by Henry M. Morris (Creation-Life Publishers: San Diego, CA), 1974

Systematic Gaps in the Fossil Record. Scientific Creationism, pp. 78-90, by Henry M. Morris (Creation-Life Publishers: San Diego, CA), 1974

How to Date a Rock. Scientific Creationism, pp. 131-136, by Henry M. Morris (Creation-Life Publishers: San Diego, CA), 1974

Evidence for a Young Earth. Scientific Creationism, pp. 149-159, by Henry M. Morris (Creation-Life Publishers: San Diego, CA), 1974

...it is impossible to *prove* scientifically any particular concept of origins to be true. This is obvious from the fact that the essence of the scientific method is experimental observation and repeatability. —**Dr. Henry M. Morris**

Creation cannot be proved.

A. Creation is not taking place now, so far as can be observed...

B. It is impossible to devise a scientific experiment to describe the creation process...

Evolution cannot be proved.

A. If evolution is taking place today, it operates too slowly to be measurable, and, therefore, is outside the realm of empirical science.

B. The small variations in organisms which are observed to take place today are irrelevant to this question, since there is no way to prove that these changes within present kinds eventually change the kinds into different, higher kinds.

C. Even if modern scientists should ever actually achieve the artificial creation of life from non-life, or of higher kinds from lower kinds, in the laboratory, this would not prove in any way that such changes did, or even could, take place in the past by random natural processes. Scientific Creationism, pp. 4-5, by Henry M. Morris (Creation-Life Publishers: San Diego, CA), 1974

For Further Study:

The Ultimate Proof of Creation, by Dr. Jason Lisle (New Leaf Publishing Group: Green Forest, AR), 2009

The Case for Faith, pp. 87-112, by Lee Strobel, (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

Scientific Creationism, by Henry M. Morris, (C.L.P. Publishers: San Diego, CA), 1974

I'm Glad You Asked, pp. 109-110, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moody (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982

Defending Your Faith, pp. 131-150 by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

Ready With an Answer, pp. 143-207, by John Ankerberg (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997

"Creation and Evolution: The Continuing Confrontation", by Frederick R. Howe, from Walvoord: A Tribute, by Donald Campbell, ed., pp. 145-156 (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1982

Know What and Why You Believe, pp. 210-220, by Paul Little (InterVarsity Press: Westmont, IL), 1980

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 100-101, 104-105, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

Reason to Believe, pp. 22-24, 106-111, by R.C. Sproul (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 1978

Science and the Bible, by Henry M. Morris, (C.L.P. Publishers: San Diego, CA), 1986

Scientific Creationism, by Henry M. Morris (Creation-Life Publishers: San Diego, CA), 1974

Creation & Evolution (Rose Publishing: Torrance, CA), 1999

When Skeptics Ask, pp. 211-232, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1990
Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 102-106, 165-177, 180-186, 234-235, 270-273, 488-490, 567-571, 671-702 by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999
The Case for Christ, pp. 87-112, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998
Reasons Skeptics Should Consider Christianity, pp. 101-230, by Josh McDowell (Tyndale House: Wheaton, IL), 1981
The Evolution of a Creationist, by Dr. Jobe Martin (Biblical Discipleship Publishers), 1990
Creation vs. Evolution, by Norman L. Geisler (cassette)
What About Evolution, by John W. Montgomery (Cassette)
Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 14-15, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000
A Scientific Basis for the Creationist's View of Origins, by Norman L. Geisler
Origin Science: A Proposal for the Creation-Evolution Controversy, by Norman L. Geisler
Darwin's Leap of Faith, by John Ankerberg
God and Science: A Quest for Christian Credibility, by Arthur Peacocke
Evolution: An Old Religion, by Ludwig Otto (Franklin Publishing: Arlington, TX), 2011
Science and the Bible—
www.icr.org/article/young-earth-creationist-bibliography/

#15. Are the miracles of the Bible real, or possible? Miracles are against and contrary to science. Isn't Christianity based on supernatural miracles like the Virgin birth and bodily resurrection of Jesus, which are not reasonable for the modern mind to accept? Are miracles possible, credible, scientific, historical, mythological, definable or valuable? How do biblical miracles differ from other accounts of the miraculous? Were the biblical miracles magic tricks which fooled simple, primitive people?

Response(s):

---If someone has a presupposition, or biased agenda against the belief in God's existence, certainly they will never consider the possibility of miracles to be rational, no matter what evidence they may be shown.

---Are miracles normative today is a related but different investigation.

Answer(s):

When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water they were frightened: they would not have been frightened unless they had known the laws of nature and known that this was an exception. If a man had no conception of a regular order in nature, then of course he could not notice departures from that order. —**C.S. Lewis**

- Miracles authenticated Jesus as to both His Messiahship and His message. (Ac. 2:22-24, 10:36-43).
- Since the God of the Bible is supernatural, miracles are perfectly natural for Him. What is supernatural to natural man is natural to supernatural God. (Job 5:9, Ps. 77:13-14, Lk. 18:23-27).
- The natural mind cannot accept the things of God. (I Cor. 2:12-14).
- One is not asked to believe in the miracles, but in the God who performs them. (Jn. 20:30-31). (**“believe the works or because of them?”**)
- Faith in God enables the human mind to believe. (Heb. 11:-13, Rom. 1:16-17).
- Faith is not a blind leap in the dark, but a bold step of trust in the light of who God is. (Ac. 27:25, Gen. 15:6, Heb. 11:11).
- The reality of God is spiritually discerned. (Mt. 16:13-17, Jn. 1:12-13, II Cor. 4:4-6).
- Do you live such a deprived and boring life that you cannot envision miracles happening ever? Unless you are all-knowing, you cannot legitimately rule out their possibility.

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, pp. 127-128, by Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

For Further Study:

The Case for Faith, pp. 57-86, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000
I'm Glad You Asked, pp. 48-74, 115-117, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moyer (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982
Defending Your Faith, pp. 151-166, by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997
A Ready Defense, pp. 123-125, 187-190, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993
Ready With an Answer, pp. 211-257, 291-367, by John Ankerberg (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997
Know What and Why You Believe, pp. 202-209, by Paul Little (InterVarsity Press: Westmont, IL), 1980
Miracles and Modern Thought, by Norman L. Geisler (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1982
Answering the Tough Ones, pp. 27-33, by David A. Dewitt (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980
Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 74-81, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

Is There Evidence for Miracles?, by John W. Montgomery (Cassette)
The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable, by F.F. Bruce (InterVarsity Press: Westmont, IL), 1982
In Defense of Miracles: A Comprehensive Case for God's Action in History, by Gary R. Habermas
When Skeptics Ask, pp. 75-100, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1990
Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 449-468, 472-488, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

The Case for Christ, pp. 57-86, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998
www.probe.org

***16. Does the Bible conflict with archaeology?**

Response(s):

---No, and in fact, many formerly disputed biblical matters have in recent years been uncovered and discovered to fully vindicate and corroborate the text of God's Word. Consistently, over time, archaeological discoveries continue to corroborate and verify biblical data—not debunk them. There are many books you can read about that subject, if you're willing. And if getting that information is a requirement you need before you are willing to pray to receive Christ, I would strongly suggest that you do just that.

---The archaeological verification of excavations world-wide likely far exceed any corroboration of any other book in history.

---No, and if you will check the historic record, it is the proponents of the viewpoint that the Bible does conflict with archaeology who should be called on the carpet to explain the many incidences where their former colleagues or heroes made such assertions on specific Bible incidences, which were later uncovered and found to verify the biblical account.

---Only with pseudo-/junk archaeology.

Answer(s):

Unlike other books that claim to be Scripture (such as the Book of Mormon), the Bible's accuracy and reliability have been proved and verified over and over again by archaeological finds produced by both believing *and* nonbelieving scholars and scientists. —**Ron Rhodes**

Old Testament archaeology has rediscovered whole nations, resurrected important peoples, and in a most astonishing manner filled in historic gaps, adding immeasurably to the knowledge of biblical backgrounds. —**Merrill Unger**

Selected Archaeological Evidence Supporting the Old Testament

The Black Stele, David's conquest of Jerusalem, Authenticity of the Book of Daniel, The Mari Tablets, The Nuzi Tablets, Laban's Stolen Images, Doors in Sodom, The Five Cities of the Plain... The use of camels, The Amarna Tablets, The Lakish letters, The Gedaliah Seal... The Dead Sea Scrolls, Etc. A Ready Defense, pp. 94-107, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

For Further Study:

The Case for Christ, pp. 92-109, 260-261, by Lee Strobel, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998

Defending Your Faith, p. 47, by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pp. 65-78, by Josh McDowell (Here's Life Publishers, Inc.: San Bernardino, CA), 1979

A Ready Defense, pp. 92-122, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

Ready With an Answer, pp. 259-289, by John Ankerberg (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997

I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist, pp. 263-268, by Norman L. Geisler (Crossway Books: Wheaton, IL), 2004

Know What and Why You Believe, pp. 194-201, by Paul Little (InterVarsity Press: Westmont, IL), 1980

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 23-24, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

Answering the Tough Ones, p. 43, by David A. Dewitt (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

The Case for Faith, p. 264-265, by Lee Strobel, (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

Archaeology and the Bible (Rose Publishing: Torrance, CA), 2002

Baker Encyclopedia of Apologetics, pp. 46-52, by Norman L. Geisler, (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

When Skeptics Ask, pp. 179-210, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1990

17. Don't pleasant, near-death experiences of non-Christians disprove Christianity? Did you ever hear people describe the white light in their out-of-body experiences?

Response(s):

---No. All they can ever "prove" is that the subject had an unusual, subjective and/or mind-altering experience of some kind.

- Near-death experiences simply prove one had a near-death experience.
- The devil can come as an angel of light, and if someone has not the Holy Spirit of God, they are inadequately equipped to accurately discern the difference (which is precisely what they devil wants to happen to them).
- Yes I have, and one of them was the Apostle Paul, who agrees with God that all men need to receive Jesus Christ for their personal salvation (II Cor. 12:1-10, etc.)

Answer(s):

For Further Study:

Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/

18. Specific or technical difficult passages and arguments (Ex.: God is a male; baptism for the dead; seeming inconsistencies in the same Gospel accounts, God does not hear the prayers of sinners). What does this passage (i.e., obscure or difficult) mean? What are the guidelines for handling difficult passages?

Response(s):

- See also:** Answers to questions numbers 80-83, below.
- List specifics YOU have problems with, and then I can address or research them.
- Do you conclude based on the exception or the rule/majority (i.e., of clear teachings and passages)? Do the small number of alleged difficulties disprove the majority of clear teaching, or might the balance of presumption be that we simply have not yet come to conclude how they are to be properly interpreted?
- If you are not a scholar, and I am not a scholar, let's at least study their findings before passing judgment with less-than-informed reasonings.

Answer(s): [(Ex.: on-line, Archer, and two other books and McDowell)]

Principles of Interpreting Difficult Passages:

- Make sure your interpretation is made within the context of the paragraph, chapter, book theme and whole of the Bible.
- Obscure teachings should be less believed as the bulk of passages with clear meanings.
- Investigate all the definitional possibilities, before concluding that an odd interpretation must be right. Look for the same grammatical phrase (especially that used by the same human author), do a word search and look to Bible Commentators for more soundly thought-out ways to handle the passage, if the way you are leaning appears to be quite weird to your common sense.
- The Bible will never contradict itself, so if your "new/novel" idea on a passage's meaning does not coincide with but conflicts with clearly established truths elsewhere in the Scriptures, more than likely you have come to a wrong conclusion.
- ETC.

For Further Study:

I'm Glad You Asked, pp. 112-114, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moyer (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982

Generally:

When Critics Ask, by Norman L. Geisler and Thomas Howe (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1992

Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties, by Gleason L. Archer (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1982

Answers to Tough Questions, by J. Carl Laney (Kregel: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

The Complete Book of Bible Answers, by Ron Rhodes (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997

735 Baffling Bible Questions Answered, by Larry Richards (Revell: Grand Rapids, MI), 1993

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 82-99, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

When Skeptics Ask, pp. 163-178, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1990

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 74-80, 150-153, 430-435, 527-538, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

SALVATION, FAITH AND ASSURANCE

***19. What about those (i.e., "the poor native") who have never heard of Christ: will God judge them? What about those who have heard?**

Response(s):

- Most Christians need to worry less about them and more about reaching them so that this question becomes irrelevant.
- That question is superseded in importance of the question I would ask those who HAVE heard the Gospel, such as yourself, concerning what do you think God will do to those who HAVE heard the

message, thereby having the opportunity to receive salvation, and snub their noses at God in rejecting His free gift.

---Romans 2:12-16 seems to give a very good description of how God will likely judge them.

---In addressing this theological question, there is one danger which must first be addressed. If we find any biblical evidence that they have any hope of heaven, having never heard the Gospel, due to no fault of their own, we must concurrently not use that evidence to at all de-motivate Christians from making every attempt to reach those people with that Gospel as soon as possible.

---Some have said that if one is seeking to know God, God has promised that—some way or another—He will be found by them, usually or likely by Christians getting to them. I have a slight disagreement with this, as, if there are remote people civilization has never learned of, or absolutely cannot physically reach, does that mean all of that people group were not seeking for God? I don't think so.

---[See quotes from Dr. Tan's Bible Illustrations book].

Answer(s): Rom. 4--you worry about having heard; Rom. 1 gen. Revelation.

- All men are born in a state of sin, are sinners by nature, commit acts of sin (by choice), and stand condemned before the Holy God. (Rom. 3:9-20, 5:19, Eph. 2:1-3).
- People who have heard about Jesus Christ will remain lost or be saved, depending on whether they choose to believe or reject Him. (Jn. 3:36, I Jn. 5:10-12).
- People who have not heard the Gospel will be saved or remain lost depending on how they respond to what God has revealed of Himself to them. No person ever goes to hell based on not having heard the Gospel. People today who have not heard of Christ are like Old Testament people before Christ came to the earth. (Rom. 1:18-25, 2:8-11).
- People who do respond in a positive way to God's truth will be given the light of special revelation in Christ and the Bible. (Heb. 11:6, Pv. 8:17, I Chron. 28:9, Ac. 10:30-43).
- God will always deal justly with each person, individually, not holding them responsible for what they do not know, though all men are given a general revelatory knowledge of God, principally through creation and conscience. (Rom. 1:18-32, Gen. 18:25, Eze. 18:4, 20:32).
- Hearing the Gospel is a help to salvation, not a hindrance. (Jn. 1:14, 17-18, Rom. 10:8-21).
- Better: What about those who have heard and reject, among which, I trust, you will not be found, or those who otherwise might have responded affirmatively, if the Christians had been doing their job (which, again, I hope you are not found to be among).

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, pp. 129-130, by Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

For Further Study:

I'm Glad You Asked, pp. 172-194, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moyer (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982

Defending Your Faith, pp. 121-129, by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

A Ready Defense, pp. 416-418, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

Answering the Tough Ones, pp. 60-68, by David A. Dewitt (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 129-132, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

Reason to Believe, pp. 50-51, by R.C. Sproul (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 1978

never heard—

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 303-307, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

True for You, but Not for Me, pp. 123-144, by Paul Copan (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1998

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 10-11, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing), 2000

***20. Can anyone be sure of his salvation (i.e., that he's going to heaven)? How do you know? How are you sure?**

Bible Reference(s): I Jn. 5:11-13, Jn. 3:16-18, 36; I Jn. 2:12.

Response(s):

---The Bible very clearly teaches that one not only can know he has eternal life, but that he should make sure that he knows for sure, as to be (permanently?) unsure can be a sign that one has not been born again. The Spirit within testified that we are sons of God, and if one is not sure, walk them through God's promises for eternal life if they will believe, ask them if they believe what God has stated, then ask them to conclude—based on what God's Word says—what God says as to whether they currently have eternal life. If there is any persisting doubt, have them pray again, and ask Christ to forgive all their sins and make them a new person.

---If you are NOT sure, you had better be very concerned (or worried), as, not only is that a completely

unstable foundation to build your entire life upon, it can have devastating and eternally negative consequences on the other side of the grave).

---If we cannot be sure, we will live our lives in fear and uncertainty, and we cannot believe that Christ's death secured anything for us.

---Jesus Christ, Who was raised from the dead (and is, therefore, deity), said that you could, so unless He was lying, uninformed and misguided, or a crazed lunatic (which no source—religious or otherwise suggested he ever was), He must be right.

---How can you live your life NOT being sure where you're going when you die, which could be anytime?

For Further Study:

I'm Glad You Asked, pp. 245-263, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moyer (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982

Free and Clear, by Larry Moyer, (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

Christian Certitude: It's Intellectual Bases, by E. Diggs La Touche

The Complete Book of Bible Answers, pp. 175-232, by Ron Rhodes (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997

***21. Isn't salvation by faith ("just believing") too simple/easy?**

Response(s):

---The Bible never condones a flippant attitude of accepting the gift of eternal life lightly. In fact, it requires faith in Christ "with all your heart." Apart from that one criterion—faith—however, God has made it very simple, likely because it is hard enough to get men to do that, and if He had complicated the matter, hardly anyone would ever be saved. Christ, in fact, has done ALL the work for us—we simply accept/receive a (free) gift. There are no works required, as, if there were, our sinful pride would want to claim merit and demand salvation—an obligation God is never under to anyone.

---God has made the foolish things to confound the wise. (I Cor. 1:27). Graciously and thankfully, God is so concerned for our salvation, He did not invent salvation as a complex math formula for the intellectually elite. Our finite and fallen minds have enough trouble grasping salvation in Jesus Christ in all its simplicity.

---Well, yes—let's tell God He needs to make some changes from His imperfect plan for us (ha-joke).

---What's hard is trying to work your way there yourself. In fact, it's impossible (unless you would assert that one could live perfectly all their life, without sin, as did the only One in whom you can place your trust for eternal life).

Answer(s):

- Christ died in vain if we must do anything other than believe/trust Him. (Gal. 2:17-21).
- If anything were required on man's part other than faith, then man could claim credit for his own salvation. (Rom. 4:1-3).
- Believing is the one thing which everyone can do—therefore, anyone can be saved. (Ac. 10:43).
- Actually, believing is very difficult—you must believe what you can't see or touch. (Heb. 11:1-6).
- Salvation by faith alone may seem easy, but it cost God the ultimate price of His own Son. It may be easy for you, but it was not easy for the Father (or the Son). (Rom. 5:8-11, 8:32, I Jn. 3:16, I Pet. 1:18-21).

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, p. 132, by Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

For Further Study:

I'm Glad You Asked, pp. 228-233, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moyer (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982

Answering the Tough Ones, pp. 55-57, by David A. Dewitt (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

***22. What does it mean to believe? Isn't faith contradictory to reason and logic? Isn't it against our rational makeup to have blind faith, as Christians do? I can tell you there are holes in the moon—would you believe that too? You mean I can believe for, say, five minutes, then return to a life of sin?**

Bible Reference(s): Heb. 11:1.

Response(s): See also: Cocoris quotes in Appendix—Lordship Salvation Errors.

---To fully trust, depend, rely on (illustrated as leaning on or against, expecting and needing the other to support or hold you up, or you will fall down, as its their strength that is making you capable of standing).

---There are verifying, historic, factual and intellectually sound bases for the faith we place in the risen Lord, and there is no connection between selling someone a bridge in the Florida swamps, except in the

- mind of the unlearned, who know nothing of the meaning or reality of biblical faith.
- Faith is not just a passing feeling; The somewhat “momentary” experience of receiving Christ by faith lasts a lifetime, and beyond, and the Spirit dwelling within maintains that event’s effects, even in times when we don’t feel so.
 - Sitting on a chair illustration.
 - To fully rely on (100%, from the heart), as in the amount of faith you exercise in sitting on a chair, or falling into a catcher’s arms (i.e., your full weight relying on the object’s ability to support you without harm).
 - Faith isn’t fact. That’s a fact. Faith is to be based on fact, and that is what the Bible offers—spiritual facts/Truth.

For Further Study:

- I’m Glad You Asked, pp. 235-244, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moyer (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982
- Answering the Tough Ones, pp. 105-111, by David A. Dewitt (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980
- The Case for Faith, pp. 247-262, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000
- Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 239-243, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999
- Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 52-53, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

23. Why would God require faith vs. just making Himself obvious, and ask for obedience?

Response(s):

- I do not believe the Bible answers this question, but, since that is not how God chose to do things, the better and more relevant question is, what are you going to do about the way God HAS determined that man—that includes you—can be saved?
- You’ll have to ask Him, if you are blessed to be going to heaven vs. hell, through salvation which is through faith in Jesus Christ.
- There would be no test of character, with no decision involved. Those who went to hell or heaven would only be going there because God deemed it to be that way, with zero involvement of human beings (though our actual involvement is minimal).
- I don’t know, but what I do know is that we must face the facts and deal the hand which was dealt us, and if you don’t get in line with the only thing God has said one must do to inherit eternal life, you will be sure to miss it.

24. Why bother to pray?

Response(s):

- Prayer is the vehicle or instrument through which we both communicate our desire to be saved and forgiven, and through which we express to the Object of our faith the fact that we are indeed fully trusting Him so to do. Praying does not save people, or those mourning and wailing (and even beating their bodies in repentance) in Arabian countries or the rosary would have the power to give us eternal life, even if we never trusted Christ for our eternity. But one can hardly get saved, through asking for forgiveness, in faith, without communicating with the Party sought for to give that forgiveness. Also, we are not heard for our many words, but a sincere heart full of trusting reliance upon God, through the work of Jesus Christ on the cross.
- That’s like asking, why should I communicate with God? Prayer expresses the faith you sincerely exercise in God’s saving promise and power.
- Why bother to breathe? You don’t need to eat (food), do you? Prayer is life sustenance.
- What ‘bother’ is it to engage the privilege of speaking with the eternal God of the universe?

For Further Study:

- Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 54-55, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

+25. To be a true, genuine Christian is almost impossible—the required standards are too high, and are beyond me, or it costs too much to become a Christian. It’s too big a commitment for me to pay. I don’t know if I could live the Christian life.

Response(s):

- To work your way to heaven by a life of good deeds which you think and expect will cause you to deserve entrance into heaven IS impossible, simply because God’s standards allows for not one moral mistake—so you’re already disqualified, using that approach. On your own, salvation IS impossible (Mt. 19:26), but the great news is that God has not left us on our own/alone—Christ has provided the way for every man to be able to go to heaven, if we will trust Jesus Christ for our personal salvation.

Not only is salvation through Christ not impossible, because He is God, it is totally possible. The question is, are you going to let Him save you and take Him up on His offer? Since the cross, it is no longer a matter of possibility or impossibility, but of willingness to receive the gift of eternal life. ---Yes and no. Too big for you to be able to pay so Christ did it for you. He offers it to you, not to lightheartedly accept but to soberly understand and accept because of your severe need for that which you are helpless to do for yourself. (avoid discussing Lordship theology if you can?)

Answer(s):

You must remember one thing. God is not asking you to be perfect; He is only asking you to receive His pardon. Once you receive His forgiveness, He will help you put into your life what should be there, and take out what should not be there. At this point, **He is not asking you to live the Christian life; He is asking you to enter the Christian life.** There is a lot of truth in the bumper sticker which reads, “Christians are not perfect—just forgiven” (Phil. 2:13).

Source: Adapted from N.E.T.S., pp. 107-108, by Larry Moyer (EvanTell: Dallas, TX), 1992

For Further Study:

Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/

26. I am so weak.

Response(s):

---You are not only morally weak, with failures and occasional human-side “moral” successes, you are in fact dead in sin, and totally/100% unable to please God or do any act which God (vs. man) considers meritoriously good, as regards your entrance into heaven. You are a sinner, and the power under which you, by birth and nature, live, spiritually, is massively more powerful than anything you could muster up on your best day, as that power is Satan himself—the spiritual father of all lost people, even without their consent or even knowledge. That’s one of the reasons you so desperately need the power of God within your life, which comes through trusting Jesus Christ for your eternal destiny. ---Great, and congratulations! You are just discovering the fact and condition all men suffer from. You are not alone.

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1342 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

27. I cannot break from my sins.

Response(s):

---You are absolutely right. Even if people do break certain habits, many revert, or have occasional lapses, and, because God’s standard for acceptance into heaven is perfection, all our so-called successes in moral change will not ultimately benefit us, because no one can break 100% from sin itself, residing within, and if one could ever become perfect at the stroke of midnight, still they would have to expunge their sinful record before God from their pre-midnight life—which it is impossible for us to do, unless God chooses to wipe it clean through the forgiveness which is found in Jesus Christ. ---God does not ask you to, in your own power, and first things first—you need those sins forgiven first, before you deal with ceasing their frequency! ---Neither can I, and the good news is I don’t have to try—God is the one who changes me from the inside, so He can enable me to see changes on the outside thereafter.

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1346 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

28. I am afraid I cannot hold out.

Response(s):

---I admire that you want to be faithful to live for God, and that you are the type of person who only commits to something when he is ready to make a quality decision. However, I have to agree that your fear is well-founded, because you are a human. No one can hold out on God, and even if one could, they would still need forgiveness. Even Christians cannot hold out for God, in their own power, so God has instructed us all to rely upon Him. One thing I must warn you, however, is that to delay the decision to receive Jesus Christ because of a confusion or misunderstanding about what god is now requiring of you—to trust Jesus Christ for your eternal salvation—could mean that one would miss heaven and gain hell over a wrong understanding of God and His salvation—something which need not happen, as today is your day to understand correctly, and believe. ---Don’t be afraid. Be accurate and confident in the fact that you truly cannot hold out, and realize that God will be causing and empowering you to endure. He provides grace for that which, in fact, we

CANNOT do—hold out to the end.
---I'm certain you can't; neither can I/I'm afraid for you too...

Answer(s):

“The Bible says, ‘To as many as receive Him to them GAVE HE THE POWER to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.’ (John 1:12). The Apostle Paul said, ‘I am persuaded that HE IS ABLE TO KEEP that which I committed to Him against that day’ (II Timothy 1:12). It is God’s job to give men power to become His sons and to keep them once they have.” Go Tell: The Soul Winner’s Encyclopedia, by Freddie Gage, p. 46 (Freddie Gage Evang. Assn., Euless, TX), 1980

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1345 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

Works/Religions

***29. Can good deeds get us to heaven? What is the role of good works in salvation? I believe if there is a God, all He would require is that we try to be good.**

Response(s):

---A clear, firm, biblically authoritative—NO! I will go even further and tell you that if you think your will, and you are relying on them to, you will go to hell, guaranteed. First, all of your “good works” are like filthy rags to God, and are sin-tainted because you, a sinner, performed them...they were not “wrought of God” (**Jn. 3:20-21**). Secondly, God is the debtor of no man; you cannot merit or earn your own salvation, and it is the height of insult for God to have sacrificed His only Son, only to have one of that act’s beneficiaries choose not to be its recipient, but to think they have a better way than the one God has chosen. Thirdly, no matter what a great moral hero anyone should ever aspire to become, they still have sins they have committed, and God’s standard for entry into heaven is perfection. Just ONE sin makes any man accountable before God as if he had broken every law in the “Good Book.” No, works are a good thing among men, and for believers, and even lost people should live righteously, but those relatively (or so-called) “good” (only God is truly good) deeds will never be able to add to, undo or countermand the loving and merciful act of God is securing your salvation by the death of His Son on the cross, if we will but receive that free gift and finished/final atoning work.

---“Good deeds” can only get you to heaven if heaven is less than perfect, as a perfect standard is required for a sinless place.

---Only if God has lied to us, while the Bible says that it is impossible for Him to do so.

For Further Study:

I’m Glad You Asked, pp. 208-227, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moyer (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982

Answering the Tough Ones, pp. 88-90, by David A. Dewitt (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 143-144, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

True for You, but Not for Me, pp. 63-68, 86-90, by Paul Copan (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1998

30. It doesn’t matter what you believe—only if you believe it sincerely. You believe what you believe, and I believe what I believe (respect for others’ opinions only/Open-mindedness with no stance taken). Does it really matter what I believe?

Response(s):

---There will be many sincere try-ers, wanting to go to heaven and trying sincerely to follow their (“innocent?”) beliefs, who will, nevertheless end up in hell, because they never trusted the Object of saving faith—Jesus Christ.

---[Do you really believe the words you are saying? If I was to entrust all my assets for financial counsel, investment advice and safe-keeping, to a person who knew nothing about finances, that person could have persuaded me that he was a Wall Street expert, and I may fully believe in his skills, but would my faith have been worth anything?]

---Tell that to the guy who sincerely believed he could, and ended up dead. Also, you can not only sincerely believe a lie, through the devil’s delusion, if everyone believed their own religion, and their beliefs were not crazy, what do we do with all the inconsistencies and contradictions between their differing beliefs, especially about God and salvation?

---[What if I told you I sincerely believe I need to jump off a cliff to relieve my headaches?] Faith is not foolishness.

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 149-151, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

Reason to Believe, pp. 89-90, by R.C. Sproul (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 1978

A Ready Defense, p. 418, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993
True for You, but Not for Me, pp. 145-146, by Paul Copan (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1998
Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 12-13, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

31. The person who sincerely asks for pardon will never be refused. God knows my heart/intentions/desires.

Response(s):

- Sincerity, as opposed to lying to God, is a wonderful and commendable thing, and I would encourage it strongly. However, one can be sincere in his heart, and in error in the way in which he pursues the wrong thing/object, and end up sincerely wrong. That is, if you only sincerely ask for forgiveness, but are thereby seeking entrance into god's eternal kingdom apart from Christ, and His work on the cross, that sincerity will only lead you to hell, because Christ is the only way to heaven. Sincerely trust God to save you, through Christ's sacrifice, and you will have properly channeled your God-given sincerity in a way that has eternal benefit and value to you. Many a person has sincerely believed a lie, and found out too late that they needed not only sincerity, but a proper understanding of what to be sincere about, and before and through Whom.
- Yes, if the forgiveness requested is based on and through Christ's death on the cross. That is, repeatedly asking for particular sins to be forgiven, without the new birth experience, though close, will not land you in heaven.
- Only God knows? The last two words are correct—God does know, and He has chosen for us to also know that if we trust His Son, we can know we are going to go to heaven and live with Him forever.

Sincerity is *necessary* but not *sufficient* for salvation.

Jesus was put to death by sincere religious people. **–Paul Copan**

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1347 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

32. All named Gods are really just the same Person/entity.

Response(s):

- That would be like saying that all football players are the same person.
- How is it, then, that Buddhists worship a man, Hindu's have about 33 million Gods and one main God who is impersonal, while Christian have one God in three Persons and Jews have one God in one Person? These religions differ in their beliefs as to His attributes, in some respects, give Him different names, attribute different ways to salvation to Him, and have many other and differing opinions as to this supposedly same "god." How can we reconcile all these differences, opposite and varyingly different, if we are speaking of the same party? Truly, the general aspiration to a higher power is in common, but that is about where the commonality ends, and if we are not referencing the true creator God, our "gods" are, in fact, emanations of the imagination, or representatives of Satan.
- I would recommend that you compare the attributes depicted by the given "gods," and you will quickly see that it is impossible for them to be describing the same Being. Both their names, deeds and ethical standards are variant, and the lack of consistency (though some traits are in common) show a reasonable person that they truly are different "gods," as sincerely as their followers believe they are following the one true God.

For Further Study:

Jesus Among Other Gods: The Absolute Claims of the Christian Message, by Ravi Zacharias

33. All religions are good, or about the same. Have you researched all other religions to see which is best and so you can make an informed comparison and decision (i.e., have you conducted a comparative religion study)? There are so many religions—how could anyone know which one is right? Have you read the Koran? What's wrong with Buddhism? Aren't there many ways to heaven? Why should we reject religious writings other than the Bible? Have you studied the religion's own writings or their original writings, or have you only studied what Christians (or others) say about the religion's beliefs? Why discount other religions in favor of Jesus Christ?

Response(s):

- On the surface, these type questions appear to require you to have a detailed knowledge of every religion—something few if any will ever have or do. As with many religions of man (man-made), ask your God-given intellect and intuition/gut/conscience—does it make sense that an overweight man

could ever attain godhood or already be God, and if not, why would you take the word of and follow someone who is not God? Could a cow possibly be of a higher order than man with all his God-given capabilities, even to the point of tending to the cow, and not vice versa? Do not most thinking Americans consider statements by people claiming to have been a certain person or profession 100's of years ago to be a sham and a wacky way to believe and live one's life? It does not naturally ring true to us in our general understanding of life, experience thereof, nor our God-given preceptors of truth. This is not to insult major religions of the world, but is to ask you to use your thinking abilities to assess the comparative truthfulness and validity of belief systems claiming to compete with the reality of Jesus Christ.

--Have you investigated many religions, yourself, because you will quickly see that they offer different concepts of God, of man's problem, of whether man is sinful, of how to get to heaven and even whether there is a place called heaven (and hell). They hold differing views on their value placed on Jesus Christ, have different religious leaders and holy books, espouse differing practices and somewhat different ethics, and all of them are absolutely sure that at least their way of getting mankind to heaven is right. Common sense alone would tell any honest and rational being that they cannot all be either right, or "going to the same ultimate destination, just getting there down different paths." Think about the implications of the beliefs to passionately espouse, and have a basis in fact and authority, before you risk your eternal destiny on the confidence you hold in these views.

--In the sense that most religions have leaders, holy books, traditional practices/rites/rituals, beliefs, and try to teach their adherents to obey God, be good and be faithful practitioners of their religion, there is commonality between most religions. However, when you actually go to compare the different beliefs, ethics codes and opinions about God—His name, character, and way to reach Him for a life in the afterlife, one could hardly continue to make such a claim. Just do a cursory investigation of the five largest world religions, and you will quickly see a picture of people worshipping different Gods, in different ways, with, at times opposing viewpoints of thought and ethical actions. The statement simply does not hold water when you begin to examine any depth of detail or particulars.

--There are around 4,200 religions of man in our world today. What kind of God would require anyone to study each and every one of them to be able to decide which one was right, and how to get to heaven? [Ex.: a maze]. Even if one were to go to that much trouble, their salvation would be based on their works—the work of seeking out knowledge—and I would know of no one who would end up in heaven.

--What would people think of a judge who let off an admitted rapist or murderer with no punishment? Christianity is the only religion where justice for bad deeds is fully addressed. —**Andrew Medford** (*paraphrased*)

Answer(s):

- World religions are man-made. According to the Bible, the only way to a right relationship with God is through Jesus Christ (Ac. 4:10-12, I Tim. 2:3-6, Col. 2:20-23, Jn. 4:19-26, 14:6).

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, p. 127, by Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

Other religions have some truth, much good and many good educational influences for society, but they are not salvific. —**Peter Kreeft** (*paraphrased*)

There are many differences in doctrine in each religion... Consider the doctrine of God—the most fundamental doctrine of any religion. Jesus taught that there is one and only one personal God who is triune in nature (Mark 12:29; John 4:24; 5:18,19). Muhammad taught that there is only one God, but that God cannot have a son. Confucius was polytheistic (he believed in many gods). Krishna believed in a combination of polytheism (belief in many gods) and pantheism (the belief that all is God). Zoroaster believed in religious dualism—that is, he believed there is both a good god and a bad god." How can it be said that these religions are teaching the same basic truth when their respective leaders set forth such utterly contradictory and diametrically opposing concepts of God? --

Ron Rhodes

The Jews believes he gains salvation by turning back to God and living a moral life. There is no assurance of salvation since it will be determined by man's own efforts. The Muslim tries to earn his own salvation by believing in the five doctrines of Islam and by performing the duties of the Five Pillars of faith. But it all depends on his behavior, so he cannot be sure. The Hindu believes he achieves his desired state of oneness with Brahman through a series of reincarnations. The law of karma says a Hindu reaps in the next life the rewards or punishments of the present life. The Buddhists believes he earns his own release from the endless chain of reincarnations by following the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. Four of these five religions seek salvation through human effort, but the effort is different for each... The major religions differ in their perspectives of God, man's destiny, and the means of salvation, and they are all narrow as well. They all claim to be right. Christianity is not the only religion with exclusive claims. Jews, Muslims, and Buddhists all believe they have found the only true way to God. Hindus

are the only ones who may equivocate on an exclusivity clause. I'm Glad You Asked, p. 159, by Ken Boa (Chariot Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1977

For Further Study:

Defending Your Faith, pp. 63-73, by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997
Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 108-109, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980
Ready With an Answer, pp. 17-34, by John Ankerberg (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997
A Ready Defense, pp. 168-171, 271-402, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993
Handbook of Today's Religions, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville, Atlanta), 1983
When Cultists Ask, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997
I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist, by Norman L. Geisler (Crossway Books: Wheaton, IL), 2004
Sharing Your Faith with a Muslim, by Abdiyah Akbar Abdul-Haqq (Bethany Fellowship: Minneapolis, MN), 1980
Cults, World Religions and the Occult, by Kenneth Boa (ChariotVictor: Colorado Springs, C), 1990
Understanding Non-Christian Religions, by Josh McDowell (Here's Life Publishers: San Bernardino, CA), 1982
The Compact Guide to World Religions, by Dean C. Halverson (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1996
World Religions Made Easy, by Mark Water (Hendrickson: Peabody, MA), 2000
Buddhism, Taoism, & Other Far Eastern Religions, by J. Isamu Yamamoto (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998
Hinduism, TM & Hare Krishna, by J. Isamu Yamamoto (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998
Christian Science & Unity School, by Todd Ehrenborg (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1995
Mormonism, by Kurt Van Gorden (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1995
Are You Catholic? Are You Sure?, by Julio Voirin (Viorin Foundation: San Antonio, TX), 2000
The 10 Most Important Things You Can Say to a Catholic, by Ron Rhodes (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 2002
Answering Mormons' Questions, by Bill McKeever (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1991
Jehovah's Witnesses, by Robert M. Bowman, Jr. (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1995
The Complete Book of Bible Answers, pp. 318-356, by Ron Rhodes (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997
When Skeptics Ask, pp. 39-58, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1990
Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 783-787, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999
Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 8-9, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000
Christianity, Cults & Religions (Rose Publishing: Torrance, CA), 1995.
www.probe.org

34. We cannot know who's right and who's wrong in religious matters. How do you know? Prove it.

Response(s):

- You better know your beliefs are right, before you die, as your eternal destiny depends on it!
- If you find things/elements of a given religion which are untrue, you can rightfully assert that, at least on those matters, that religion is not right vs. wrong.
- Judgment day will determine who was right and who was wrong, and I'll take the word of a man who was God Himself and eternally existed, lived a perfect life--never sinned, performed miracles, fulfilled prophecy from thousands of years previous, claimed to be God, has influenced billions of people for good, and resurrected from the dead before I take any lesser authority on the subject of right and wrong.
- We can know the truth, as God has revealed it in the Person of His Son, who evidenced both His being from God, truthfulness, and, in fact, being the sinless God incarnate/in person, physically. I could easily say that that statement is wrong, in which case...
- Is Jihad--Koran-sanctioned killing of innocents, because your belief system considers them "infidels" RIGHT? Is worshipping someone who could never get you to heaven, and not hell, such as Buddha or Mohammed or Sung Yung Moon RIGHT?

CHURCH/CHRISTIANITY

+*35. If Christianity is true, why are there so many hypocrites in the Church? What about all the hypocrites in the church (Ex.: TV Evangelists)? Your behavior is contradicting your claim to be a Christian. There are too many hypocrites in the Church.

Response(s):

- Congratulations--you obviously see things the way they are, and because your conscience works, that bothers you. As we have documented in our "Church Conflicts" section, even leaders can get corrupted by the hypocrisy bug. Rest assured, hypocrisy is a sin, and there are many imposters, but the only matter that should be of ultimate concern to you is what you are going to do with the only perfect one, Jesus Christ, who shares your disdain for

His people's hypocrisy.

--And I apologize and am not proud of that, but please see beyond me to the one who is morally perfect, as I'm not the one for you to base your decision as to your eternal destiny, but what Christ lovingly did on the cross for you—I can't save you, but I'll sure try to act more like Christ and am thankful God forgives my sins and has forgiven all my sins (re-forgiveness? No?). The issue is you and Christ (people do a lot of stupid things for many different causes, but that is not part of the Gospel and has nothing to do with what you are going to do about God and with Christ)—stay on the point/subject.

--Forgiven, not perfect (error reprobable and ashamed of, but issue is Christ and you)

--Some, if not all hypocrites go to hell. That is to say, hypocrites who are such because they have never personally received Jesus will go to hell, and those who know Him, but act hypocritical in their behavior as Christians will be under divine discipline, at least in this life. God never condones hypocrisy, and it is a good thing that you see what a bad sin hypocrisy is. Don't be guilty of that sin yourself, in knowing how to go to heaven, and not doing what you now know you must do. Finally, there is a distinction between Christians' weaknesses (or, areas in which they have not yet been matured), and hypocrisy. As someone said,

Going to church doesn't make you a Christian
any more than standing in a garage makes you a car.

--Hypocrisy is saying one thing and doing another. Few if any Christians say they are perfect, so their imperfection, by itself, does not make them hypocrites. Hypocrites are those who display an outer righteousness, to impress and please men, which is not genuine on the inside. Christians who so behave, are sinning, and God will deal with them. However, people who do not yet even know Him, should they not choose to receive Christ, will not avoid hypocrites by such rejection, but will, in fact, do the opposite, in ensuring that they spend eternity with the very people who offend them—the true hypocrites! (**Rev. 22:14-15**).

--Because even Christians still have a sin nature resident within them. Some, sadly, give into it more than they submit to their faithful Creator, and, rest assured, their deeds will be dealt with/punished. You would make a big mistake and I apologetically ask on all of our behalf, as we are all imperfect, that you not attribute to our Leader the failings we alone are responsible for.

--The whole world is full of hypocrites, and the church always has room for one more! There are no perfect people.

--Because it's not easy to live righteously in this world, and is probably easier to go to church on Sunday for an hour or two, dress well and act "nice," than to live a holy life 14/7.

--How are you spiting an imperfect Christian who wronged you by choosing to go to hell?

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I once *BRIEFLY* worked for Salem Communications (KKHT, Houston)—a so-called "Christian" publicly-traded radio station. If ever there was evidence **the Church is OFTEN in the pockets of the love of money...** They taught we sales persons what to say, which is to say, in certain instances, they *trained us to LIE*. 3 specifics: When I asked what our listenership numbers were, they said **they don't subscribe to the service** that measures that. Truth was, there were **FEW listeners**, yet I was *not to tell that* to potential clients. When I brought in four of the most name-brand and high-class/sophisticated clients they had *ever had*, they were impressed, and I only credit God and my *godly* manager (vs. head execs) for such results. However, even he taught us to go to clients and tell them **we were not there to sell anything**—that we had long admired their company and just wanted to *meet the person* in charge of such results. Again, a LIE. The station bought a very nice circular table to impress clients who visited the station, to give them the **appearance of success**, and when clients asked about the station's clout, we were to mockingly analogize their fears as some *cheesy Christian station* with a small antenna and reach (using our index finger to simulate a **weak antenna**), and the reception room was available if we needed to dissuade their (*legitimate*) fears. Again, **LYING to please Wall Street** with demanded numbers/results—NOT "Christian" ETHICS!

Answer(s):

- The whole world is full of hypocrites, and the church always has room for one more! There are no perfect people.
- The fact that some people's deeds don't live up to their words should not keep anyone from coming to Christ. (Mt. 23:1-4, Gal. 2:11-15). [i.e., He is the Person you deal with?].
- The greatest hypocrisy of all is pretending that God does not exist, and that we are not lost in sin. (Ps. 14:1, Jn. 8:31-41).
- There are always Christians whose lives are godly examples—you can be part of the solution, instead of part of the problem. (Heb. 13:7-8, I Tim. 4:12, I Cor. 11:1, Phil. 4:8-9).

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, pp. 131-132, by

Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

“Make this decision in the light of your own life and not the lives of others, ‘So every one of us shall give ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF to God.’ (Romans 14:2). If you really dislike hypocrites you should accept Christ and live for Him; otherwise you will spend eternity with them. Hypocrites are lost.” Go Tell: The Soul Winner’s Encyclopedia, by Freddie Gage, p. 46 (Freddie Gage Evang. Assn., Euless, TX), 1980

Unfortunately, that is sometimes true. But the validity of Christ’s offer does not stand or fall on the reputation of Christians. **God is not asking you to trust Christians; they cannot take you to heaven. God is asking you to trust Christ.** And, rest assured, He is not a hypocrite, because a hypocrite would not die on the cross to pay for your sin (Rom. 5:8).

Source: Adapted from N.E.T.S., p. 108, by Larry Moyer (EvanTell: Dallas, TX), 1992

For Further Study:

I’m Glad You Asked, pp. 195-207, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moyer (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982

Defending Your Faith, pp. 209-215, by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

Answering the Tough Ones, pp. 96-99, by David A. Dewitt (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

A Ready Defense, pp. 414-415, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 42-43, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

The Open Bible, p. 1342 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

36. A professing Christian wronged me. I knew some Christians once, and they wronged me.

Response(s):

---I’m very sorry that that happened to you, and you can rest assured that Jesus was not the one leading him to do that to you. You are not the first lost soul to be sinned against by a claiming believer. Our problem, as believers, as is your problem is that we do sin...the difference is that all our sins are covered/forgiven, and that God gives us the power (and motivation) to lessen that quantity daily as we develop our closeness to Him. There is nothing that can justify their deeds against you. At the same time, there is no justification for spiting a non-Christ-like believer, and trying to get back at him by rejecting the God He personally knows, thus going to hell to not live with Him in heaven. That’s much worse logic than merely cutting off your nose to spite your face!

---Not all professors are possessors, and not all possessors always exhibit the God who possesses them.

---That was sinful, and I apologize on behalf of him or her, but will you let their error keep you from inheriting eternal life?

---Christ is the Gospel/good news—not His imperfect followers.

For Further Reference:

See also #25 hypocrites question reference books!!!

The Open Bible, p. 1342 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

37. Christian “superstars” are (only) after money. The Church is always asking for money.

Response(s):

---If you are defining “superstars” as the TV and famous preacher sin America, sadly, I must agree with you, and admit that they often are in it too much for the money. God’s ministers do not have a love of money, and are not ministering for “filthy lucre.” This is not to say that true ministers of the Gospel cannot be tempted, but it is to say that false teachers of the devil follow in the error of Balaam, and I can assure you that too many of those you may have in mind have little to no idea what the terms frugality, moderation, humble means (not a permanently required status) or a simple and quiet life mean (though God’s Word certainly teaches these ideals. But, as I have said before, don’t let the sinful errors of other men impact where you will spend eternity. You cannot know with certainty where others will end up, but you can settle your own eternal destiny this day, by praying to personally receive Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all your sins.

---Some are. Most may be. A few may not be. Whatever the truth/case, their abuse of the truth does not imply/mean that the truth is wrongful, but their twisting of it! Satan “always” counterfeits, and takes elements of truth, to present his lies. God will judge the charlatans. You simply address yourself to concern over the fact that He will also judge—eternally so—all those who never received His Son.

---Money-loving, money seeking and hungry ministers are NOT in God’s will, and are unqualified to lead as pastors or ministers. (I Tim. 3:3; Tit. 1:7). You see, even your God-created conscience has found agreement with the eternal truths of God’s word, and you haven’t even necessarily read that part of it yet!

---Many are, and that’s sin/sinful. Please try to overlook their sins, and view the Lord who they may or

may not know and be trying to serve, because He will never fail you, leave or forsake you, loves you, and has never sinned.

For Further Study:

Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/

38. Christians are bigoted, racist, sexist and homophobic.

Response(s):

- Assertions are easy to make confidently and authoritatively. They are much harder to substantiate, or prove. Admittedly, some Christians (and some non-Christians) exhibit these bad traits, but these characteristics are certainly not intrinsic to one being a believer in Jesus Christ. It is possible, and in some cases, it is a fact, that some of those who support participating in these sins do not want anyone to say that they are engaged in sin, and as a defense mechanism, they generally accuse and name-call those exposing their deeds for what they are, mischaracterizing them as evil-motived and evildoers, simply because those people—who often are Christians—point out these facts and speak the same as what God has said about this behavior, in His Word. This is an emotional argument, inconsistent with fact, and, though the believer is to love the lost person—homosexual or not—and would be sinning himself to not love them it is nevertheless that homosexuality is both a sin, and contrary to nature—a deed abhorrent to God, which mankind should never participate in.
- Some may be. The majority are not. Don't make the logical fallacy of redefining terms and mischaracterization by confusing bigotry with accepting Christ's exclusive claims as the only way to heaven, racism as Christians believing that unsaved people of any race. Creed or religion (Jews and Muslims included) means they are against these needy victims of Satan's lies, that God having told us that men are to lead the Church means we are against women being all that God wants them to be, or that Christians standing with God in His abhorrence with the sin of homosexuality and lesbianism means that Christians either hate or fear homosexuals, because God is not the author of confusion. Sometimes these intellectual mistakes are made by accident, but some leaders in our culture, especially the more liberal ones, purposely try to distort and blur these distinctions. Think for yourself, know the truth, and don't be led down the blind path of buying into their politically-charged, agenda-based rhetoric.

For Further Study:

Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/

39. Religion has sparked wars and exploitation. What about the Christian Inquisitions and Salem Witch Trials?

Response(s):

- Technically, "religion" has done no deeds—people perhaps following religious beliefs, have, and those sorts of deeds are not only sinful, but do not correspond to any legitimate religion's teachings, so "religion" cannot be said to have instructed them to act so evilly, if the religion was valid (as consistent with the Bible).
- Those were terrible and sinful historic events. One man's sin does not negate the truthfulness of the message he preaches to you and imperfectly tries to live out. That just confirms the fact that believers are not perfect—not that the Gospel is. Not perfect though saved
- Consider, as well, that true religion has done many, many good things in society, so one must conclude, if they are honest, that the concept of "religion" has been used to justify both good and evil. The real issue is whether you have a personal relationship with the living God through the Lord Jesus Christ, and then to make sure you never let His name be used for such evil, sinful practices, both in your own life and in the life of His Church and its members you have influence over.
- Many different "religions" have been based for disputes between human beings. Apart from sinfully straying "carnal" Christians, or imitation ("professing") Christians ("tares"), no true and godly saint of God would ever resort to violence or war to win the spiritual battle for men's souls, especially since that could never produce the God-originated miracle and heart change of salvation, and they would know that with just a cursory study of the Bible.
- "Religion" is not the same thing (necessarily) as a personal "relationship" with God. [explain].

For Further Study:

The Case for Faith, pp. 195-221, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

The Case for Christ, pp. 195-222, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998

40. Many non-Christians are more moral than many claiming Christians. Won't God accept non-

Christians who are very religious and totally sincere?

Response(s):

- Sadly, in some cases this is a fact. Those so claiming and so acting should not live like that and need reproof, and likely will soon be under the judgment of God, if they are indeed true believers. However, even if they are children of God and are caught in gross sin, the fact that they possess the great gift of grace of eternal life is ultimately what separates the sheep from the goats, and though lost peoples' "good" deeds may cause less torment than otherwise (doubtful), they will, nevertheless go to hell, eternally, because they chose never to receive the free gift of forgiveness through Jesus Christ.
- At least sometime in the recent past, there were adult Americans who sincerely believed that all television pictures of men walking on the moon were staged, Hollywood mock-ups. Back in history a further bit, some people sincerely believed in a flat earth. These peoples' "sincere, heart-felt" belief gained them nothing, just as any sincere faith and belief you presently have has never been placed in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ for your eternal salvation.
- The moral-acting non-Christians may be generally "blessed" and rewarded in this life, and the sinfully-acting Christian will be dealt with/disciplined by God, in this life (as well as lost rewards in the next), but, in the long-run, for the lost moralist who never receives Jesus Christ, it is ultimately all in vain, as he ends up in hell. This is not to say he should stop living morally, but that he should receive Christ.

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 133-134, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

***41. Is Christianity rational? Is truth knowable, logical (or illogical, and totally emotional)? Is Christianity sensible, or mere wishful thinking? What's the relationship between reason/facts and faith?**

Response(s):

- Rational, nothing IRRATIONAL, but some things (especially given the nature of a miraculous God beyond His creation) which are beyond our full understanding (accommodation, anthropomorphic language, My thoughts are higher than yours, the hidden things of God are His (at least until we get to heaven, if you do, ETC.).
- In many, many ways, God's revelation/truth is fully consistent with the rules of logic, common sense and general experience and common conscience values He has instilled in men. However, His opinion, as expressed in His Word determines ultimate truth, so we truly understand our experience(s) and thoughts best, only as we get His perspective. With that in mind—experience and logic subservient to God (who created all things), there are some things our finite human minds would hardly or never comprehend or understand/deduce apart from direct revelation. All information contained in God's word requires us to trust Him about it, but certain issues in the Scriptures are more difficult for us to intellectually grasp or accept. It is not that these subjects or portions are illogical, but that God is communicating with His fallen creatures, who, as smart as they may be and as high their I.Q., still suffer from the effects of sin and a spiritual blindedness among those unsaved people. For this reason, it is always safe to trust the Lord's superior knowledge and wisdom in matters which you do not yet fully understand. (Ex.: the Trinity, love your enemy, give thanks for all things, joy in trials, abstinence pre-marriage, etc.).
- Let me ask you a question...Is it rational to live your whole life NEVER preparing for what will come in the life hereafter? We plan our investments, retirement, career, weddings, but live most of our lives completely preparing for eternity—save possibly purchasing a burial place for our ashes/body. [Strawn take-off].

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 139-142, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 741-745, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

When Skeptics Ask, pp. 255-272, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1990

***42. Isn't Christianity just a psychological crutch for weak people? That stuff is only for societal losers and down-and-out'ers. Don't only weaklings need Christianity?**

Response(s):

- Even if lost people can, humanly-speaking—live "successful" lives of diligence and hard-work, never asking for or leaning on God for anything, can you honestly say that they were better off, not having relied on anyone but their own selves when, because they would not rely on God for their eternal salvation, they are thrown into a burning hell to live there forever, due to that stubborn and prideful

resistance to god's gracious salvation offer? You can be "macho man" in this life—maybe for its entire duration—but you are not stronger than God, and you will be without hope and helpless to resist being thrown into hell, and your will power will ultimately fail you, in the saddest and most life-wasteful of ways, if you continue in unbelief in Jesus Christ.

- The so-called "strong" man who can handle his indebtedness and sinfulness before God on his own, with that prideful self-reliance, WILL truly take it like a man, with no help from God, in paying for his sins, without help, in hell. Better to humble oneself and realize the facts/truth that we cannot overcome either our sinfulness or our needed punishment. As to using Christ to get one through emotional problems and difficult times, again, the pridefully self-reliant person who spurns God's offered help/assistance (better, power), may have the willpower strength to endure them all, but he is lonely in that pursuit, gets no rewards for such so-called bravery, and is thereby, in fact, sinning, to spurn God and think that you do not need God. Whether for the next life or also for this life, man was created to be in relationship with God, and to not be in such condition is unfulfilling, empty, and ultimately sinful and judgment-worthy. Be careful confusing "boot-strap-ism" in comparison to other people helping you, as opposed to God's spiritual power, which we All need.
- That's surprising—some of the strongest people I know are Christians (Christ, Paul ex.). Paul even said, to be weak in the Lord is to have the strongest position of power in life (II Cor. 12:10).
- The Gospel is offered to all who are broken enough to reach out for help, and some people's pride keep them from reaching out to be saved from hell. Therefore, it is true that some Christians, I must admit, ARE the down-and-outers of society, but that is in no way indicative of what is required for someone to become a Christian.

For Further Study:

I'm Glad You Asked, pp. 75-87, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moyer (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982

Defending Your Faith, pp. 217-228, by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

Answering the Tough Ones, pp. 69-72, by David A. Dewitt (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

A Ready Defense, pp. 418-420, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 125-126, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

Reason to Believe, pp. 73-75, by R.C. Sproul (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 1978

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 40-41, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

43. Christianity is out-of-date. The Gospel is old-fashioned.

Response(s):

- Culture and society has fads and trends which ebb and flow. What's "in," or "hot" today may be "out" or "un-cool" tomorrow. The fact that many in America think that Christianity is old-fashioned and not in touch with modernity, morally-speaking (Ex.: live-ins, abortion, homosexuality, love of money, etc.) proves, in fact, just the opposite that Christianity is not up-to-date, as the Bible itself predicted 2,000 years ago that which you now assess to be the latest and greatest—that is, that most people's love (i.e., of God) would grow cold, and that men would hold to a form of righteousness, but deny its power. To show you how permanently ahead of you God's Word has been all these years, it not only predicted its own unpopularity, but it speaks with certainty to the fat of your own eternal future...that, if you choose not to receive Jesus Christ, known or unbeknownst to you now and in the near future, you WILL go to hell. God knows where you will end up, and has already written about where it will be (if you trust or reject Christ), so your being "cutting edge," and slandering Christianity as being old-fashioned does not really match up with the facts.
- 2,000 years Old, unchanging, no need for improvement/evolution, living and active (Person), tried and true. test of time, good wine ill. Some things are old fashioned in life, and some things are timeless. Cultural aspects of Bible may seem "old-fashioned," but not it's spiritual, eternal truths. Some things with a pedigree/lineage/aged wine get
- Wearing sandals or bare feet, carousing lamps, and other cultural elements described in the Bible but NOT prescribed for its readers may and in fact are old-fashioned. However, the theological and moral instruction of the "Good Book" are as relevant today as they will be if man ever inhabits Mars! Cultural morays and personal moral standards likely will continue declining, and man may deem such decay "progress," but such misnomer in no way makes the eternal moral principles and absolutes old-fashioned. It simply shows man that in his legitimate progress (educationally, technologically, etc.), he has misunderstood the difference between moral progress and moral decline. Old-fashioned is not in and of itself a bad thing, as for example believing that men and women were created for each other, and to express their sexual needs in the institute of marriage. Even in our society, at times culture does

make moral gains/strides, and, though often not acknowledging the Bible's contents, by their behavior do agree with and conform more to its teachings that they would like to admit (though denying the power of that form of godliness)—Ex.: slavery banned, women accepted as equals, tolerance of people with differing views, being in shape, nationalism (World Trade center bombing) and “family values” in seeing that work is not the end-all of life. Still, in many other ways, society continues its moral decline.

--“Out-of-date” is terminology speaking of trends, fads or fashions—things which end in 20 years or less. What kind of religion would you have and how truthful could it be if it got re-invented every 10 years or so—that's no solid foundation.

For Further Study:

Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/

44. Christianity is on the decline. If Christianity is so great, why are there so few Christians? If Christianity is so wonderful, why are there so few Christians?

Response(s):

--**See also:** Answer to Question #35, above.

--This is exactly what God said would happen. There is nothing unexpected, or confusing about the low numbers (**Mt. 7:13-14**). Most people love their sins more than the Lord, and have been so duped by Satan that they are all but certainly heading to hell—unless there is the intervention of God's salvation. It is contrary to man's nature to like or be interested in and want to be involved with spirituality (unless and until they get saved), and most people are primarily concerned only with the matters of this life, with little care for the grave and beyond. What IS popular, in this fallen world, is sex-filled mediums (television, movies, internet), money-lusting activities, drunken activities, and many other sinful practices which God said would be the predominantly popular activities. No, man's departure from true religion did not catch God off guard. The only person caught off guard might be the one who thought things would be any different.

--The answer is precisely because men are sinners. Christianity is fulfilling and “wonderful,” yet men do not want to cease from their lifestyle of sin. It is absolutely no wonder that so many sinful men do not choose to become related to God—that's their nature. God said both that few would there be, and that sin would increase in the end times. The miracle is that he has saved any. The devil blinds the mind from seeing Christianity as wonderful, as one has to experience it to truly understand. Finally, and a sad commentary, I personally believe that more people would become Christians if they saw more Christians living the life they are called to, and if the Church would do more evangelizing!

--It is totally consistent with the nature of fallen man that he would reject the truth, and avoid a “religion” which asks of moral improvement, in deference to a lifestyle of ignoring God and living as we please, with unbridled pleasures and living for the here-and-now/moment. In fact, only by God's grace is there the miracle that any people are saved.

--Satanism is on the rise—does that fact have any bearing on the value, morality/credibility or soundness of any religious movement?

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 135-138, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 44-45, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

PERSONAL

45. Isn't death the end of it all, with no afterlife? Why doesn't God just snuff out and annihilate everyone? We all just decay when we die.

Response(s):

--Our bodies decay—not our souls (so says the Bible). You run a greater risk if you are wrong in your belief than I do in trusting God and His word, telling us that we ourselves live forever—either in heaven's bliss, or eternally tormented in hell. In fact/actually, when you read God's word, you will see there is no risk and the decision to believe God is no calculation of probabilities. It is divine and absolute certainty, given by God's Spirit through the word. No one can scientifically prove what happens to the soul—only that the body decays to ‘dust.’

--That may be an expression of either your hope of expectation, but I must inform you that it is not going to be your future reality. God is loving and patient, and does not enjoy or want to destroy His creatures, but He will, in time, as He is also faithful to judge and punish sin. It is only by grace that He has patiently withheld man's ultimate judgment, so that, perhaps, a few more might get saved, such as

yourself.

---The Man who has experienced death, and come back to tell us about it, and who knows all things says that heaven and hell await every person, and that death is NOT the end of it all.

---That would be nice, wouldn't it. I can understand how one would want that to be true, but you sure better be certain that you are right, because being on the wrong side of that risk taken will be eternally deadly.

---You may hope so, but...

Answer(s):

- After physical death, all men will exist forever, either in God's presence, or eternally separated from Him, in Hell. (Mt. 25:46, Jude 7, 21, Dan. 12:2).

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, p. 129, by Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

For Further Study:

The Case for Faith, pp. 183-185, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

Reason to Believe, pp. 145-149, by R.C. Sproul (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 1978

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 22-24, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

46. I hate God. I'm mad at God.

Response(s):

---Tell me about that experience (care; usually is mad at the devil and blaming God).

---Let's assume that God actually did to you what you claim. Knowing that He is a loving God, and does what is best for us, are you going to be bitter to the point of volunteering for an eternal hell to stand your ground on this issue you feel God has wronged you in?

---I am absolutely sorry that you must have had some bad experience(s) which you have attributed to evil behavior on the part of God.

- a) Will you describe the "god" you are mad/angry at? (I may hate that type "god" too).
- b) Can you tell me what those may have been? If I had had those things occur to me, I might be temporarily angry at people too (until I was able to forgive them). I can assure you that God was NOT the source of evil events which may have caused your bitterness/anger
- c) It is possible that your concept of God does not fully jive with what the Bible teaches, that you have been mis-taught concerning God's character and nature, which is causing a false transfer of blame for something more likely originated in just the opposite source--the devil.

For Further Study:

Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/

47. I'm answerable to no one. I am my own boss.

Response(s):

---That is your opinion, and likely a predominant attitude you live your life according to. However, I must inform you, that even despite your feeling that way/having that opinion, all men are accountable to God for the way they lived their lives. Some may choose not to face that fact, at least in this life, but the Bible says that ALL men WILL have to deal with God in the next life, on judgment day, even if they choose to ignore Him in this life (in which case that meeting will not be pleasant).

---That may be true in all your human affairs, but the Bible reveals that every knee WILL bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is God. You can do it now, in repentant reliance upon Him for your personal salvation, or you can remain obstinate, and he will MAKE you do so in the life hereafter, just before He sentences you to an eternal hell. When do you want to do it?

---Have you been hurt sometime in your past by an abuse of authority or people not respecting you as a person?

---Tell that to your employer today... Tell that to the cop who pulls you over driving 95 m.p.h. [etc.].

For Further Study:

Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/

The Open Bible, p. 1343 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

48. I don't need religion. I don't need God.

Response(s):

---You can get to heaven alone (maybe through life?, but not eternity).

---I agree with you that you do not need religion--you need a personal relationship with God, through the

Lord Jesus Christ. I cannot agree with you not needing God, because if you never avail yourself of His resources of forgiveness of the sins even that you have already committed, you will need Him in a desperate time, in hell, and no help will be forthcoming. The man that lives as though he never needs God, will forever need God, and get no relief.

---You're right, you don't IF you plan to spend forever in the burning fire of Hell.

Answer(s): See Answer to Question #34, above

For Further Study:

Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/

49. What's in it for me? Why should I become a Christian?

Response(s):

---Because you are facing an eternity in hell without Jesus, in your current condition.

---Because you are spiritually hopeless, helpless, etc. [**former identity paper**]

---Because God has commanded that you believe. (**I Jn. 3:23**).

---Because God desires you to be saved, and went to all the trouble and pain of sending His Son to die—and would have done so just for you to benefit from it.

---Why shouldn't you? (tell of sin's temporal pleasures, judgment and offense to God and harm to self).

---How about, just for starters, peace, security, wisdom, guidance, eternal significance, morals, blessing, answered prayers, love, and heaven to boot, just for starters! What do you have without God?

---What's in it for you to reject God? Despair, futility, purposelessness, fear of death, loneliness, emptiness, spiritual oppression and ultimately, hell forever.

---I've spoken to you about eternity in Heaven, as a freely-offered gift, and you haven't yet seen what's in it for you? Where did I mess up in my presentation?

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 127-128, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

50. I'm not convinced. I'm not sure—I still have doubts, so I can't be a Christian. I want to be saved, but I cannot believe. Can Christianity help me—I'm a doubter?

Response(s):

---Can you tell me any specific points I have covered with which you are not fully sure or convinced?

---The Bible says that faith comes from God—it is not something we work/conjure up—so I would be happy to address the issues you may have, by, with your permission, identifying them and giving you a fuller addressing of those issues from more Bible verses than we have at this point covered.

---Many people started out un-convinced, yet, as they sought the Lord, prayed for Him to help their unbelief, and studied His record, God granted them to believe, and, in fact, some have even set out to disprove the Bible, only to be overwhelmed with God and His reality and turn to Christ in the process

---I would encourage you to retain an open mind and continue to search out what the Bible says about your way—and only hope—to get to heaven and miss out on hell.

---That's O.K.? For the time being?

---In the Bible, there were always two different types of doubt—that of Jesus' father and that of Jesus' mother. Should you sincerely lack the conviction, but be on your way toward believing that the things of God's word are true, our praying and your continuing study of the Bible should help. If, on the other hand, there is a willful denial of what is true, either because one does not want to believe it, or stubbornly refuses to do so, that is another moral matter entirely. I will try to assist you to build up your faith, if you are willing.

---What particular part of the message I have conveyed to you were you not convinced about, because, perhaps there is an understanding, or more information or evidence I can proffer to help you with that problem/decision.

For Further Study:

The Case for Faith, pp. 223-245, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 64-65, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

The Open Bible, p. 1348 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

Modern Unbelief: It's Principles and Characteristics, by C.S. Ellicott

Why I am a Christian: Leading Thinkers Explain Why They Believe, by Norman L. Geisler

Dealing with Doubt, by Gary R. Habermas

The Gift of Doubt: From Crisis to Authentic Faith, by Gary E. Parker

Help Me Believe: Direct Answers to Real Questions, by Cliffe Knechtle

Why Christian?: For Those on the Edge of Faith, by Douglas John Hall
The Case for Christ, pp. 223-246, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998

51. I don't believe that. Frankly, I am skeptical about the whole matter.

Response(s):

- Well, are you open-minded to further information, study and to investigating important evidence which can help persuade you as to which side you ought to take/come down on? If one is opposed to the facts, he virtually cannot be helped. If, however, one sincerely seeks to know the truth, he has a great chance of finding it, because it has already been revealed to us in the form of the word of God.
- Do you want to believe it, but think you can't, or are you completely disinterested or turned off to the whole subject?
- Well, if you'll maintain an open mind, I think I can help you with that. What particular aspect of what I've told you causes you to be tripped up/stumble?
- Healthy skepticism is valuable, in some contexts, but when it comes to your eternal destiny—whether in heaven or in hell, forever—it is important enough for you to investigate long enough to allay your doubts and follow the evidence, wherever that path may lead.
- I've read of skeptics who, on their deathbeds, finally abandoned their pride, and feared the God who controls their future, and got saved. It's much wiser to get through that game earlier than later in one's life, as we never know when our last days on this earth will hit. **Quotes of Dr. Tan**

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, pp. 1343 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

52. I have no feeling.

Response(s):

- Feelings come and go. Facts remain constant. Choose to believe the eternally solid and stable facts of God's word, whether you feel so/like it or not; and, if and when the feelings are there, even then do not rely on them as feelings are just that—feelings. Nothing else. But God's word is a lot more and much more than a sensory impression! I may not feel like being married (or even that I am), but that does not change the fact that I am (and that I had better behave according to that fact, even when I do not feel like it).
- You could feel an emotion and use that to confirm your decision, and it could have been the result of indigestion, or worse—Satanic deception. If ANY feeling does not line up with the word of God, you should reject it, not depend on it, and decide what you know to be right, whether you feel anything or not.
- Do you believe/Are you one of those who believes that every decision requires you to feel something before you'll make it? Have you ever made a decision that you KNEW was the right one, but your feelings were either numb/neutral, or even contrary?
- Fine. Do you have any understanding of what I have just been telling you?

Answer(s):

“God begins with facts. Next God asks for faith, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.’ (Acts 16:31). Finally, after FACTS and FAITH in Christ and experiencing forgiveness of sin, THEN you will have FEELING—a feeling of joy, peace, love and gratitude! The world isn't run by feeling; but by necessity. Doctors don't deal with disease because they feel like doing so, but because of necessity. You must consider the necessity of receiving Christ.” Go Tell: The Soul Winner's Encyclopedia, by Freddie Gage, p. 46 (Freddie Gage Evang. Assn., Euless, TX), 1980

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, pp. 1341-1342 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

53. I'll think about it.

Response(s):

- Feel free to think through and examine with an open mind the evidence God has provided for you (principally the Gospels), but I must caution you to not wait too long, as none of us have even the promise of another tomorrow, and if the day we meet our Creator (or Christ returns) occurs before we come to a conclusion, hell will be inescapable.
- I appreciate the fact that you say you will “think” about it. Too many people let the devil delude and deceive them into having a closed mind, or into deciding based on how they “feel.” If you conduct an honest, intellectual search of the biblical record, I am convinced that you will come to the same conclusion that millions of Christians have come to, as God extends His grace for you to see who the

real/true Christ is (and how that can change your life and eternity). I'll be praying for you, and that you come to that conclusion "sooner rather than later."

--I would urge you, that, as the Bible says, "today is the day of salvation." However, if you WILL truly think about and NOT forget the contents of the Gospel, I will be praying that God would reveal Himself through your thinking and reading of His word, so that you might soon choose to trust His Son for salvation, as, a decision to delay is, for the time being, a decision not to accept Jesus Christ, and we never know how much time we have to decide or before it's too late.

--I must soberly caution you that the decision to delay IS a decision NOT to accept Jesus Christ—at least not at this time, and we never know how many other chances God will give us to make that decision.

For Further Study:

Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/

GOD

54. The Trinity belief arose in the 1300s.

Response(s):

--The reality of the Trinity has eternally existed. The concept of the Trinity in man's mind may not have been formally adopted as an official doctrine of the Church until a given date (325 AD), but that does NOT mean that the concept was not there all along, in the Scriptures, and even more clearly, perhaps, in the New Testament canon. To insinuate that the idea arose by some imaginative idea of men much later than the apostles simply does not correspond to the facts or reality. Our understanding of what God has said can take years to articulate, work out in detail and to agree on, but that time is NOT the date at which the concept first arose in the experience or reality of either God, His Word or mankind. Don't let a particular date of official indoctrination, one way or the other, have any effect on the fact that you need to receive Jesus Christ, or you will spend eternity away from the presence of that Triune Godhead.

--The codification and formal expression of the belief and its implications may have taken time to develop and finalize, but that says nothing of the origins of the belief itself, or the reality behind it!

--Clarification and establishment of that truth as a formal doctrine of the Church occurred in 325 AD, but that is NOT the same as the belief arising that late!

Answer(s):

The doctrine of the Trinity is not 'irrational'; what is irrational is to suppress the biblical evidence for trinity in favor of unity, or the evidence for unity in favor of trinity. --**John Warwick Montgomery**

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 71-73, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

Defending Your Faith, pp. 99-108, by Dan Story (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications), 1997

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 730-737, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids), 1999

The Trinity (Rose Publishing: Torrance, CA), 1999

+55. God loves all men, so He wouldn't destroy them (i.e., in Hell). If God is so good, why does He send people to Hell? I believe God is too good to damn anyone.

Response(s):

--Loving does not mean lack of discipline, or punishment, and it does not mean, as is often assumed in America, "being nice." Though God is never mean or cruel, His righteous anger at sin, patiently restrained throughout latter day history will one day be unleashed, and no soul will rightfully be able to accuse Him of any wrongdoing. Also, it would prove helpful to develop a fuller and deeper biblical understanding of the seriousness and awesome implications of just one sin (take Adam's, for example). It would be un-good and un-loving to let people's sins run rampant and ultimately unabated, and God would no longer be righteous or just, but licentious and unjust, which He is not.

--The Calvinist may differ with your statement that He loves all men, but I do not. John 3:16 clearly affirms that, and corroborates and affirms that your belief is right on that part of your evaluation. However, the fact that he loves you does not save you, and many God-loved souls will be in hell because they never took Him up on His gracious offer of eternal life.

--What father do you know who truly loves his child, and does not punish wrongful behavior, but lets it go unabated, and gives his children free reign to do whatever they please (ex>: run out in the street, put their hand on an open flame, etc.)? That establishes the fact that punishment is not the result of hate. The next question would be why sin has to be punished, and why eternity is required to pay off

deeds committed in a finite world. First, God has said so, and He establishes the rules, and it is His nature not only to be loving but to exercise judgment and justice. Evil doing will not go unabated, ultimately. Also, in mercy, He has done so much to make all men's salvation possible, so they're not choosing to take Him up on it is NOT His fault. Finally, in our finite and limited, sin-tainted ways of thinking, we often fail to realize that the Bible says that just one sin makes a person guilty of all sins. If but one sin merits that standing, think about how many times over we have merited an even greater guilt. However, it's even more than that—the eternal relationship between God and man was broken by Adam's (one) sin. One sin made eternal life no longer a reality for man, one act of kindness (of Christ on the cross) can reconcile the two and solve the problem (though our trusting Him), and, yes, one sin, therefore caused all men to deserve hell as the natural consequence of their separation from God, if they don't accept His provision in Christ. We fail to realize the total impact of just one sin—Adam's, and our own one sinful act of rejecting Jesus Christ. However, we needn't be ignorant, and I'm here to tell you that by the one simple act of trusting Jesus Christ as your personal Savior, God has promised that you will not have to face that punishment you heretofore believed to be unjust or undeserved. Will you do that today? I can assure you that if you choose to reject Christ, any excuses about your thinking that hell is unfair will be falling on deaf ears, as you are falling, or better, being thrown into that place you thought it was unfair for you to go. There are no second chances after the grave.

---Spurned love yields one no eternal heavenly future.

---a) That's not what the Bible says.

b) you discipline your children (retort: but we don't destroy them).

c) We humans often fail to fully comprehend the seriousness of but one sin. One sin caused our relationship breach with God!

d) He gives plenty of and adequate warning(s) to rejecting men, so that, in the end, you knowingly choose to go to hell (by rejecting Jesus Christ). His justice would demand it though it might break His heart if not personally angered at particular party; God had mandated that hell will be one's destiny, and that command won't change despite His totally loving you. He's already done all He can or has to do to prove His love, it is your lack of responding that causes Him to have to do what I hope He does not have to do to you at life's end...don't blame God argument

Answer(s):

- God does not send anyone to Hell—men choose to go there by rejecting God by refusing to believe in Jesus Christ. God desires that none should perish. (II Th. 1:5-10, 2:10-12, Rev. 9:17-21, Jn. 3:16-21, II Pet. 3:8-9, Eze. 18:3-4).

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, pp. 128-129, by Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

Two things are important to realize. One, the loving God does not send anyone to hell. **When a person goes to hell, it is not because God has rejected him, but because he has rejected God.** Scripture tells us, "He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name" (Jn. 1:11-12).

A second thing which must be understood is that **not only is God loving, but He has to do what is right.** That means that sin has to be punished. Our punishment is separation from God, in hell, forever. But, once more, we have incurred our own punishment through sinning. He has not put undue punishment on us.

Source: Adapted from N.E.T.S., p. 109, by Larry Moyer (EvanTell: Dallas, TX), 1992

For Further Study:

The Case for Faith, pp. 169-194, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

The Open Bible, p. 1344 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

56. Why didn't God create only those He knew would follow Him?

Response(s):

---God has not chosen to tell us so we will never know for sure. What we do know is that He did not make moral robots, but gave man (relatively) free will, and that He can receive glory even through a man's rebellious use of that will.

---A better question might be, why don't men more readily choose to accept God's free gift of eternal life, so as to do what you are asking why God did not force on them?

---Have you ever made the choice to follow Christ in salvation, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to fulfill that which you state by your question you know God to be desiring of you, and all men?

---He could have, but He didn't, and we must deal with the effects of His reality—not speculation which has no relevance (or application) to our lives.

---Wouldn't the world be boring? God chose His ways, and apparently He would receive less glory that

way, and, after all, what would life be for us with no moral challenge—only the mechanical working out of the only choices we could make?

---[How boring would that be—robots.]

For Further Study:

The Case for Faith, pp. 186-188, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

57. God is going to save “the elect.” If I’m one of the elect than God will save me; if I am not, then it really doesn’t matter what I do. Relatedly, Christ died for all men, so He has already paid for my sins, so why do I need to do anything?

Response(s):

---Nowhere in the Bible does it teach anyone to rely on that for their personal assurance of salvation.

Quite contrarily, repeatedly the Scripture tells us we must trust Jesus Christ as our personal Savior. It is faith in Christ, not hoping that you are on some secret list, or hoping that God will save you apart from your having trusted Jesus Christ, that is the instrumentality by which man gets saved. Nothing more, and certainly nothing shy of that will do.

---That is an often believed error, which misunderstands biblical election (See my paper on Compatibalism). The fact that Christ paid for your sins, does not at all mean that God has personally reckoned that payment as yours, or credited the payment to your moral account before Him, unless and until the time you, by grace, pray to receive it for yourself, personally.

Answer(s):

- Only God knows who are the elect, and, while His choice is based on mercy and not merit, it is also based on foreknowledge of who we are and how we will respond. (Rom. 9:10-18, Eph. 1:4, I Pet. 1:1-2).
- Humanly speaking, according to scripture, no one will be saved who does not exercise saving faith in God. (Jn. 1:11-13, Rom. 10:9-13, Phil. 3:9).
- Election is God’s responsibility; responding by faith to His call is ours. (Gal. 3:6-9).

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, pp. 130-131, by Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

For Further Study:

58. Hell is a state of mind—not a place. If it’s a place, why can’t a spacecraft find it? If it’s invisible, how could anyone say there was a fire, as fire is seen?

Response(s):

---That is a serious confusion of figurative vs. literal speech, and the two are not the same, in this instance. You are meaning to say that experiences in life can be bad—can be “hell”—which is, implicitly agreeing that hell is a bad place, but, at the same time, is a confusion of a state of mind with a spiritual place/location. Because it is spiritual, and invisible to mortal eyes, it could never be found by a spacecraft, or seen with the naked eye, but, rest assured, if you have never received Christ—unfortunately—you will both see and personally experience it for yourself (but then it will be too late to change your mind as to understanding that it was not merely a state of mind).

---How do you know that? You would be the first person who has concrete proof of that, as God’s word—the eternal truth of God—completely disagrees with your opinion/assessment.

---Both heaven and hell are in another dimension—the spiritual realm—and just as human bodies must undergo a change to enter heaven (and hell?), no spacecraft man can ever make can be retrofitted to enter the invisible yet real spiritual realm. It is a fire which is seen only in that spiritual realm, but, just like you don’t now see electricity (only its effects), if you continue to reject the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ, unfortunately you will have to learn the hard and impossible-to-reverse way that hell’s fire is truly real. One man went there, and begged for just a drop of water, and was denied. (Lk. 16:24).

---Don’t confuse the colloquial expression and definitional sense of the term “Hell” with the spiritual reality of a fiery place of torment and eternal punishment!

---That’s like saying Texas is a state of mind. Granted, Texans do have pride in their state, and there is a Texan attitude, but that in no way negates the reality of our state in the Union.

For Further Study:

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 310-315, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

The Case for Christ, pp. 169-194, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998

59. How can God send children to hell?

Response(s):

- I'll have to disagree with your premise, rather than trying to address a question not based in fact.
- Who ever said that He does? Children who are mature enough and mentally developed enough to understand the Gospel message, and choose to reject it, should they die "prematurely," will go to hell. But that is the case for men of any age. Though all men are sinners, even infants, I believe the Scripture to clearly teach that young ones who have not yet attained to the mental maturity enough to consciously understand and respond to the Gospel will not be sent to hell, not because they chose Christ, but because they did not yet have the opportunity, through developed ability, to respond either way. Certainly there are no morally perfect, or "innocent" babies, but the attitude of trust/reliance/dependence and child-likeness is innately within them, and I do not believe the Bible teaches that they are held accountable for their sinfulness, until such time as they can understand such a concept (though, even so, their response would have to be the work of the Holy Spirit).
- God has the right to do that, and even babies are sinners, worthy of death, but I believe you have heard a certain teaching that goes around in certain circles that leads you to that conclusion which I believe to be contrary to Scripture (and God's nature). That having been said, please do realize that no child (save Jesus) is 100% innocent of sin(s), and even one sin merits a deserved fate in hell—biblically.
- How can you—not being a child—let yourself be sent to hell, by choosing to reject God's offer of eternal life?

For Further Study:

Safe in the Arms of Jesus, by Robert Lightner

The Case for Faith, pp. 178-179, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

60. Why does everyone suffer the same in hell?

Response(s):

- I'll have to disagree with your premise, rather than trying to address a question not based in fact.
- Being in hell, which is a place of eternal punishment, condemnation, damnation, judgment and torment—a place of literal flames, yet amidst utter darkness, where men would beg for a drop of water and where the worm is not extinguished, indicating that there is no annihilation there—is certainly a somber, serious and drastic end to any life that ends up there, and it's fierce and wrathful impact cannot be minimized. However, I am not certain that there are not more severe-by-degrees punishments awaiting there, to differentiate between Gandhi and Hitler. I am not sure about it, and would like to make further study, but if we are truly rewarded, "according to our works/deeds," this conclusion at least seems plausible. Whatever the case ends up being, make sure you are not one of the unfortunate (not "unlucky," as it will be the destination you chose—by rejecting Jesus Christ) souls who spend forever there!
- I am not at all sure that the Bible teaches that that is the case. You are making assumptions. Certainly, and confinement and sentencing to hell is atrocious, and there can be no let-up in the pain anyone will eternally undergo. However, it is my studied opinion, especially in light of His dealing with us "according to our deeds" that there certainly could be degrees of punishment (if indeed a fiery dark absence from God's presence were not enough in itself).
- Where did you learn/hear that the Bible teaches that? The punishment of going to hell, without having received Christ in this life IS equal, and there's no denying that that punishment is severe. However, the Bible also talks about an accounting and judging of our deeds, which certainly could imply that, just as there are degrees of rewards in heaven, there could be degrees of suffering in hell—though even the slightest penalty, being in hell, would be unbearable!

For Further Study:

The Case for Faith, pp. 179-180, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

61. Why are people punished infinitely for finite sins, or crimes?

Response(s):

- See:** Answer to Question #45, above.
- In many states, we give the death penalty for only one—though a very heinous and serious one—sin, and our sins have caused a death to our relationship and fellowship with God. Adam's one act of disobedience made all men accountable and judgment-worthy of hell—one sin. Also, it is not the number of sins, so much as the effect even one sin has and does to our relationship with God. A much better question to ask is why would anyone in their right mind choose hell—an eternal punishment for their "finite" sins—when the free gift of eternal life was offered them and available to all?
- A quick thought to add thereto is that our thoughts are not those of God's, and at best our view of our own sinfulness is but a token of the reality which it is to God—the One offended (**Isa. 55:6-9**), and one

does not have to suffer that horrible fate, unless he so chooses, by failing to receive Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior! Don't blame God for your poor decisions, just as you cannot take credit for His great decision to save all who will believe.

- That was God's determination, and only He could rightfully make it. He did not trick man into choosing to disobey, knowing full well the severe and eternal consequences. Don't blame or accuse God for being faithful to what He promised the father of the human race before he chose to go the other way. Plus, as has been said before, one sin is much more heinous to God than to most if not all of us. Fortunately, there is grace, or none of us would make it/survive. That is not to teach being scared of God, but a healthy reverential "fear" is always in order.
- One sin makes you guilty as if you had committed all sins, and only one sin severed man's relationship to God, resulting in hell as our only eternal home without that separation being removed.
- Only one sin, committed by Adam, resulted in all of mankind losing the eternal life and relationship with God they were created to have. Sin is more serious than we humans give it credit for, in God's perspective. And Adam's sin was of the nature of one act of disobedience in eating forbidden fruit. How much worse are some of the things you and I have already committed if we were perfectly honest and up-front about our secret failings.
- Also, labeling mankind "sinners" does NOT mean they all sin equally. In fact, it only means we certainly sin once, which yields us a status before God as if we have committed them all. (Jas. 2:10; Gal. 3:10-13)

For Further Study:

The Case for Faith, pp. 181-182, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

62. Can't God force everybody to go to heaven?

Response(s):

- Ability and capability are not always the same as the choice one makes. Certainly, God is capable of doing anything but evil. However, since He has not chosen to force all people to hell, or even any, for that matter, you have got to get in step with the program He has established, because if you don't, you are guaranteed to miss out on heaven, and to have chosen the path that leads to ultimate destruction. Rather than worry about speculative questions about alternatives previously available to God, it would be far more beneficial to concern yourself with what God has said you must do, in order to live with Him forever.
- He can do a lot of things He does not often if ever choose to do (self-limiting vs. lack of capacity). We have to deal with how He behaves and has revealed Himself—not in a slew of what if, speculative hypotheticals which will rarely to never be practical in our lives before God.
- Presumably He could have, just like He could, presumably, have forced man not to sin. But He has obviously not chosen so to do, so getting more into the practical and less into the unrealistic hypothetical will benefit us both more, in our service of God.
- God can do anything, but what matters is what He has revealed that He WILL and DOES do, and He has promised to save all who will trust His Son for eternal life.

For Further Study:

The Case for Faith, pp. 182-183, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

63. How can hell exist alongside heaven? How can I reconcile the doctrine of hell with the Christian's God of salvation?

Response(s):

- Do you mean the fact that they are completely opposite in nature/character? Are you assuming that God created hell (which He did)? Do rest assured that there is a physical gap between them. (Lk. 16:26), and it is of necessity that those who do not enter the kingdom of heaven go to the exact opposite fate, as Christ made that division between those who would receive His free gift of life, and those who would spurn and reject His sacrificial death on their behalf.
- Because that's what the Bible teaches, and if God has not told us why, in that source, it is not ours to discover. We can speculate, but we had better respond to what we know for sure, and leave questions which cannot be answered, in this life, at least, to those we may ask Him in the next life IF we belong to Him.
- Is it that hard to conceive of opposites existing in life? Many things have exact opposites. So also with heaven and hell.
- [Perhaps your concept of the nature of God is flawed, or out of sync with the God of the Bible(?).]

For Further Study:

The Case for Faith, pp. 185-186, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

64. Is God an environmentalist? Christians support environmental vandalism.

Response(s):

---Biblically, God does care that we humans maintain His creation in responsible ways, but as far as fanatical, almost worship of the earth as our “mother” or a god, no way. We are to worship the Creator, not the creature (Rom. 1:21-23). Finally, we need to keep perspective in this matter, as spiritual things are clearly more important than the physical. In fact, this blue orb we temporarily reside on will, itself, ultimately be burned up and replaced. God has commanded man to work to earn a living, so He is not opposed to the activities which allow man to achieve that end, but He is opposed to materialism, the love of money, workaholicism, and/or irresponsible resource management which would pillage over, destructively pollute or otherwise unduly or unnecessarily and prematurely bring death or harm to this planet He created, out of nothing, by the word of His mouth. God is not an “environmental whacko,” and certainly true “vandalism” or crimes against His creation are wrong.

---God created it all, and does expect mankind to adequately both rule over it and preserve it. However, He has also commanded to make his living by the sweat of his brow in working upon it, and God is not unreasonable in what it takes so to do. In perspective, the earth will ultimately be destroyed, so an extreme attitude toward the earth (tree hugging, don’t kill any insects, “mother” earth, etc.) are not consistent with God’s revealed, accurate view of the value of His earth, and our responsibility toward it.

For Further Study:

Defending Your Faith, pp. 197-207, by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997
Issues That Make Christians Squirm!, by Grantley Morris, net.simplenet.com/

CHRIST

65. Who was Jesus (Cf.: Time magazine articles). What evidence did Jesus give to support His claims?

Response(s):

---Jesus was the sinless Son of God, fully God and fully man, the second person of the Godhead, who was eternally pre-existent, born of the virgin Mary, lived a sinless life of perfect morals, the highest teachings and many miracles, who was betrayed by Judas Iscariot, delivered up to Pilate, handed over for the Jews to the Roman authorities, was spat on, mocked, beaten, crowned with thorns, falsely accused and suffered, stripped, carried His cross (part way), was hanged on it, died, was speared in the side (with legs left unbroken), was buried (in a rich man’s borrowed tomb), raised from the dead (three days later), saw more than 500 people after His resurrection (on more than 15 occasions?) in a post-resurrection body (glorified?), and He has physically ascended into heaven, where He is presently seated at the right hand of God (i.e., highest place of authority and prominence), where, as Lord, He reigns and intercedes for believers, and will soon be physically returning to our earth to literally reign on earth (in Jerusalem) for 1000 years, after which time He will submit all things to His Father so that He might be all in all.

Answer(s): See also: Answer to Question #7, above.

For Further Study:

Ready With an Answer, pp. 23-66, by John Ankerberg (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997
The Case for Christ, pp. 264-267, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998

66. Was Christ really convinced He was the Son of God?

Response(s):

---He made humble claims as such, and lived in the confidence that that fact was so/established. It is not so much that He was convinced, as if someone or He had to be encouraged to believe it—He was God, and knew it, well before even His miraculous virgin birth. Also, He was not God’s Son in the same sense that believers are. He was uniquely the “Son of God,” which, in Scripture, is a title regarding His full deity, though fully a man, as well.

---First, please realize that the definition being applied to that phrase means that Christ would be “convinced,” or know, that He was in fact/indeed God. I would not call it so much “convinced,” as if He had been talked into believing it, but He knew that He was (and had been from eternity past). The evidence of His humble attitude, yet true understanding of His divine Personhood is as follows:

---Would you hold it against a person for being humble, and use that virtue against them as not as aggressively asserting things true about themselves as others may have?

Answer(s): Jesus made claims for himself that no other religious founder did; to forgive sins, to be the judge of all people, to always be present with his followers, to hear their prayers, etc. –**Paul Copan**

For Further Study:

The Case for Christ, pp. 131-143, 261, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998

Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pp. 103-109, by Josh McDowell (Here's Life Publishers, Inc.: San Bernardino, CA), 1979

A Ready Defense, pp. 214-245, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

The Case for Faith, pp. 265-266, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

67. Was Christ crazy (or deluded) when He claimed to be the Son of God?

Response(s):

---(Evil) men asserted that He was (Jn. 7:20), but those men were the ones who were either wrong, or “crazy.”

A “crazy” person is one who believes something so preposterously in error, that every rational thinking, common sensible person knows the thought he believes is clearly a fantasy, or worse, an errant delusion. Clearly those who knew Him best did not consider Him to have fell into that category—in fact, many of them gave their lives as martyrs, in their full conviction as to His deity, and He who knew best and who never lied one time in His life, knew who He was, and showed all the credible evidence of a clear-thinking person, with no signs indicating insanity. The interesting point is, that each individual person has to decide within their own heart what they think of Him, and if one does not come to realize Him for who He truly is, and receive that God-man for their own personal salvation, psychoanalyzing His mental state the rest of one's life will never personally benefit the investigator, because Christ was not only God, He is the soon-coming judge of all mankind.

---A deluded person would show signs of being naive, ignorant, show evidence of stupidity or of being easily swayed by others, even if the others are not telling that person the truth. Do these Bible references show any evidence of this being the case with Jesus.

---Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines “crazy” as mad, insane. A “crazy” person would evince/ evidence signs of not just abnormal behavior, but that which is extreme, opposed to human nature, radically absurd, etc. Do you see any Biblical evidence of Christ saying or doing anything “crazy?”

For Further Study:

The Case for Christ, pp. 144-154, 261-262, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998

Christianity: Hoax or History, pp. 5-12, by Josh McDowell (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers Wheaton, Ill.) 1989

Defending Your Faith, pp. 75-86, by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

A Ready Defense, pp. 214-245, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pp. 103-109, by Josh McDowell (Here's Life Publishers, Inc.: San Bernardino, CA), 1979

The Case for Faith, p. 266, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 26-27, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000
www.probe.org

68. Did Christ—and Christ alone—match the identity of the Messiah?

Response(s):

---In a word—yes. You would need to know some things about what the Old testament said about the Jews' expected messiah, but when you do that research you will see that Christ fulfilled all the prophecies associated with that expected character.

---Yes. More so than any man could, has or ever will, as He claimed to be, attested to be and was the Messiah of God. Proof (verses OT v. NT). Cf.: Isa. 53.

---Do you have any other candidates you think even come close to filling those credentials?

---Are you aware of what the Jew's Old Testament signs and credentials for their Messiah are and were?

If you want to know the answer to your own question to me, it will help if you are aware of more specifics concerning that topic, so that when I give you the answer(s), you can test their validity.

Answer(s):

“Jesus had various credentials to support His claims to being Messiah, God's son. One credential often overlooked, one of the most profound, is the fulfillment of prophecy in His life. Over and over again Jesus appealed to the prophecies of the Old Testament to substantiate His claims as the Messiah.” (**See:** Lk. 24:27, 44, Jn. 5:46, 8:56; See also: Gal. 4:4).

“The apostles, the New Testament writers, etc., constantly appealed to fulfilled prophecy to substantiate the claims of Jesus as the Son of God, the Savior, the messiah...” (Ex.: Ac. 3:18, 17:2-3, I Cor. 15:3-4).

“In the Old Testament there are sixty major messianic prophecies and approximately 270 ramifications that were fulfilled in one person, Jesus Christ. [332 total prophecies, according to Dr. Jarrett Stephens]

PROPHECY FULFILLED

The following list of Old Testament predictions and New Testament fulfillments regarding the life of Christ demonstrate how thoroughly His coming was foretold: (1) born of a woman (Gen. 3:15; Gal. 4:4); (2) born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25); (3) a descendant of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 22:18; Matt. 1:1; Col. 3:16); (4) from the tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10; Luke 3:23, 33); (5) of the house of David (2 Sam. 7:12; Jer. 23:5; Matt. 1:1; Luke 1:32); (6) born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Matt. 2:1; Luke 2:4-7); (7) His way prepared for a forerunner (Isa. 40:3-5; Mal. 3:1; Matt. 3:1-3; Luke 3:3-6); (8) anointed by the Holy Spirit (Isa. 11:2; Matt. 3:16-17); (9) preaching ministry (Isa. 61:1-3; Luke 4:17-21); (10) speaking in parables (Ps. 78:2-4; Matt. 13:34-35); (11) healing ministry (Isa. 35:5-6; Matt. 9:35); (12) a prophet (Deut. 18:18; John 6:14; Acts 3:20-22); (13) a priest (Ps. 110:4; Heb. 5:5-6); (14) time of His appearance and death (Dan. 9:24-27; Luke 19:44); (15) triumphal entry (Zech. 9:9; John 12:12-16); (16) betrayal price (Zech. 11:12-13; Matt. 26:15; 27:7-10); (17) abandoned by His disciples (Zech. 13:6-7; Matt. 26:31; Mark 14:50); (18) silent before His accusers (Isa. 53:7; Matt. 27:12-14); (19) beaten and spat upon (Isa. 50:6; Mat. 26:67); (20) mocked (Ps. 22:7-8; Luke 23:35); (21) hands and feet pierced (Ps. 22:16; John 19:16-18); (22) crucified with transgressors (Isa. 53:12; Mark 15:27-28); (23) lots cast for His garments (Ps. 22:18; John 19:23-24); (24) cry from the cross (Ps. 22:1; Mat. 27:46); (25) no bones broken (Ps. 24:20; John 19:31-36); (26) pierced in His side (Zech. 12:10; John 19:34, 37); (27) buried with the rich (Isa. 53:9; Mat. 27:57-60); (28) resurrection and exultation (Ps. 16:10; Isa. 52:13; 53:10-12; Acts 2:25-32); (29) ascension into heaven (Ps. 68:18; Acts 1:9; Eph. 4:8); (30) seated at the right hand of God (Ps. 110:1; Heb. 1:3). I'm Glad You Asked, pp. 105-106, by Ken Boa (Chariot Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1977

29 Old Testament Prophecies Christ Fulfilled within 24 Hours [Statistical odds of it happening?]

Jesus Christ fulfilled a total of 335 Old Testament Messianic prophecies, 29 of which occurred between His betrayal and death. These include:

<u>Prophecy</u>	<u>Old Testament</u>	<u>New Testament</u>
1. Betrayed by a friend	Ps. 41:9	Mt. 10:14
2. Sold out for 30 pieces of silver	Zech. 11:12	Mt. 26:15
3. Blood money thrown into God's house	Zech. 11:13	Mt. 27:5
4. Price paid for a potter's filed	Zech. 11:13	Mt. 27:7
5. Forsaken by His disciples	Zech. 13:7	Mk. 14:50
6. Accused by false witnesses	Ps. 35:11	Mt. 26:59-61
7. Silent before His accusers	Isa. 53:7	Mt. 27:12-19
8. Wounded and bruised	Isa. 53:5	Mt. 27:26
9. Hit and spat upon	Isa. 50:6	Mt. 26:67
10. Mocked	Ps. 22:7-8	Mt. 27:31
11. Fell under the weight of the cross	Ps. 109:24-25	Jn. 19:17, Lk. 23:26
12. Hands and feet were pierced	Ps. 22:16	Lk. 23:33
13. Crucified among thieves	Isa. 53:12	Mt. 27:38
14. Interceded for His persecutors	Isa. 53:12	Lk. 23:34
15. Rejected by His own (people)	Isa. 53:3	Jn. 7:5, 48
16. Hated without cause	Ps. 69:4	Jn. 15:25
17. Friends watched from afar	Ps. 38:11	Lk. 23:49
18. People shook heads at Him	Ps. 109:25	Mt. 27:39
19. Was stared upon	Ps. 22:17	Lk. 23:35
20. Garments rent and lots cast	Ps. 22:18	Jn. 19:23-24
21. Suffered thirst	Ps. 69:21	Jn. 19:28
22. Gall and vinegar offered Him	Ps. 69:21	Mt. 27:34
23. Cry of forsakenness	Ps. 22:1	Mt. 27:46
24. Entrusted Himself to God	Ps. 31:5	Lk. 23:46
25. Bones were not broken	Ps. 34:20	Jn. 19:33
26. Heart broken open	Ps. 22:14	Jn. 19:34
27. Side was pierced	Zech. 12:10	Jn. 19:34
28. Darkness over the land	Am. 8:9	Mt. 27:45
29. Buried in a rich man's tomb	Isa. 53:9	Mt. 27:57-60

Israel's Messiah was also prophesied in Gen. 49:10, which was fulfilled when Israel's scepter was removed before the temple's destruction in 70 A.D. Indeed, Israel's Messiah has already come.

Source: Adapted from chart by Carol Hoehn (unknown publication)

<u>Prophecy</u>	<u>Old Testament</u>	<u>New Testament/Fulfillment</u>
Born of the seed of a woman	Gen. 3:15	Gal. 4:4
Born of a virgin	Isa. 7:14	Mt. 1:18, 24-25, Lk. 1:26-35
Son of God	Ps. 7:2, I Chron. 17:11-14, II Sam. 7:12-16 22:70, Ac. 13:30-33, Jn. 1:34, 49	Mt. 3:17, 16:16, Mk. 9:7, Lk. 9:35,
Seed of Abraham	Gen. 22:18, 12:2-3	Mt. 1:1, Gal. 3:16
Son of Isaac	Gen. 21:12	Lk. 3:23-24, Mt. 1:2
Son of Jacob	Num. 24:17, Gen. 35:10-12	Lk. 3:23, 34, Mt. 1:2, Lk. 1:33
Of the tribe of Judah	Gen. 49:10, Mic. 5:2	Lk. 3:23, 33, Mt. 1:2, Heb. 7:14
From the family line of Jesse	Isa. 11:1, 10	Lk. 3:23, 32, Mt. 1:6
Of the house of David	Jer. 23:5, II Sam. 7:12-16, Ps. 132:11	Lk. 3:23, 31, Mt. 1:1, 9:27, 15:22, 20:30-31, 21:9, 15, 22:41-46, Mk. 9:10, 10:47-48, Lk. 18:38-39, Ac. 13:22-23, Rev. 22:16
Born in Bethlehem	Mic. 5:2	Mt. 2:1, Jn. 7:42, Mt. 2:4-8, Lk. 2:4-7
Presented with gifts	Ps. 72:10	Mt. 2:1, 11
Herod slays the innocents	Jer. 31:15	Mt. 2:16
Pre-existence	Mic. 5:2, Isa. 9:6-7, 41:4, 44:6, 48:12, Ps. 102:25, Pv. 8:22-23	Col. 1:17, Jn. 1:1-2, 8:58, 17:5, 24, Rev. 1:17, 2:8, 22:13
He shall be called Lord	Ps. 110:1, Jer. 23:6	Lk. 2:11, Mt. 22:43-45
He shall be Immanuel (God with us)	Isa. 7:14	Mt. 1:23, Lk. 7:16
He shall be a prophet	Deut. 18:18	Mt. 21:11, Lk. 7:16, Jn. 4:19, 6:14, 7:40
Priesthood of Jesus	Ps. 110:4	Heb. 3:1, 5:5-6
Jesus as Judge	Isa. 33:22	Jn. 5:30, II Tim. 4:1
King Jesus	Ps. 2:6, Zech. 9:9, Jer. 23:5	Mt. 27:37, 21:5, Jn. 18:33-38
Specially anointed with the Holy Spirit	Isa. 11:2, Ps. 45:7, Isa. 42:1 61:1-2	Mt. 3:16-17, 12:17-21, Mk. 1:10-11, Lk. 4:15-21, 43, Jn. 1:32
Zealous for God	Ps. 69:9	Jn. 2:15-17
Preceded by a messenger (John the Baptist)	Isa. 40:3, Mal. 3:1	Mt. 3:1-3, 11:10, Jn. 1:23, Lk. 1:17
Ministry to begin in Galilee	Isa. 9:1	Mt. 4:12-13, 17
Miraculous ministry	Isa. 35:5-6a, 32:3-4	Mt. 9:35, 32-33, 11:4-6, Mk. 7:33-35, Jn. 5:5-9, 9:6-11, 11:43-44, 47
Taught in parables	Ps. 78:2	Mt. 13:34
Entered the temple	Mal. 3:1	Mt. 21:12
Entered Jerusalem on a donkey	Zech. 9:9	Lk. 19:35-37a, Mt. 21:6-11
Would be a stone of stumbling to the Jews	Ps. 118:22, Isa. 8:14, 28:16	I Pet. 2:7, Rom. 9:32-33
Light to the Gentiles	Isa. 60:3, 49:6	Ac. 13:47-48a, 26:23, 28:28
Resurrected	Ps. 16:10, 30:3, 41:10, 118:17, Hos. 6:2	Ac. 2:31, 13:33, Lk. 24:46, Mk. 16:6, Mt. 28:6
Ascended	Ps. 68:18a	Ac. 1:9
Seated at the right hand of God	Ps. 110:1	Heb. 1:3, Mk. 16:19, Ac. 2:34-35
Betrayed by a friend	Ps. 41:9, 55:12-14	Mt. 10:4, 26:49-50, Jn. 13:21
Sold out for 30 pieces of silver	Zech. 11:12	Mt. 26:15, 27:3
Blood money thrown into God's house	Zech. 13:11b	Mt. 27:5a
Price given for a potter's field	Zech. 11:13b	Mt. 27:7
Forsaken by His disciples	Zech. 13:7	Mk. 14:50, Mt. 26:31, Mk. 14:27
Accused by false witnesses	Ps. 35:11	Mt. 26:59-60
Silent before His accusers	Isa. 53:7	Mt. 27:12
Wounded and bruised	Isa. 53:5, Zech. 13:6	Mt. 27:26
Hit and spat upon	Isa. 50:6, Mic. 5:1	Mt. 26:67, Lk. 22:63
Mocked	Ps. 22:7-8	Mt. 27:31
Fell carrying the cross	Ps. 109:24-25	Jn. 19:17, Lk. 23:26, Mt. 27:31-32
Hands and feet pierced	Ps. 22:16, Zech. 12:10	Lk. 23:33, Jn. 20:25
Crucified with thieves	Isa. 53:12	Mt. 27:38, Mk. 15:27-28
Made intercession for His persecutors	Isa. 53:12	Lk. 23:34

Rejected by His own people	Isa. 53:3, Ps. 69:8, 118:22	Jn. 7:5, 48, Jn. 1:11, Mt. 21:42-43
Hated without cause	Ps. 69:4, Isa. 49:7	Jn. 15:25
Friends stood afar	Ps. 38:11	Lk. 23:49, Mk. 15:40, Mt. 27:53, 56
People shook their heads	Ps. 109:25, 22:7	Mt. 27:39
Stared upon	Ps. 22:17	Lk. 23:35
Garments split and lots cast	Ps. 22:18	Jn. 19:23-24
Suffered thirst	Ps. 69:21, 22:15	Jn. 19:28
Offered gall and vinegar	Ps. 69:21	Mt. 27:34, Jn. 19:28-29
Cry of forsakenness	Ps. 22:1a	Mt. 27:46
Entrusted Himself to God	Ps. 31:5	Lk. 23:46
Bones were not broken	Ps. 34:20	Jn. 19:33
Heart was broken	Ps. 22:14	Jn. 19:34
Side pierced	Zech. 12:10	Jn. 19:34
Darkness fell over the land	Amos 8:9	Mt. 27:45
Buried in a rich man's tomb	Isa. 53:9	Mt. 27:57-60

Old Testament Predictions Which were Literally Fulfilled in Christ:

<u>Prophecy</u>	<u>Old Testament</u>	<u>New Testament/Fulfillment</u>
1.	Ps. 41:9	Mt. 10:14
2.	Zech. 11:12	Mt. 26:15
3.	Zech. 11:13	Mt. 27:5

We take 10¹⁷ silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly...Blindfold a man and tell him...he must pick up one silver dollar...What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have of writing...eight prophecies and having them come true in any one man. —**Peter Stoner** (*Science Speaks*, p. 100-107 (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1963

For Further Study:

Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pp. 141-177, by Josh McDowell (Here's Life Publishers, Inc.: San Bernardino, CA), 1979

A Ready Defense, pp. 209-214, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

The Case for Christ, pp. 171-187, 262, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998

The Case for Faith, pp. 266-267, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

69. Why is Jesus better than other religious leaders and teachers? Did Jesus really claim to be any more than just a first century rabbi?

Response(s):

---Why is best better than good or alright?

---Why is the Creator superior to the/His creatures?

---Yes. None of them were ever perfect. Yes, though His perfect humility made it often a little more veiled than an all-out, direct claim. (etc.)

---It is not my intention to slander any other religious figure in history. I respect men's attempts to be moral and holy, and who lead others so to live. However, the fact is that all men are sinners—save one—the God-man, Jesus Christ. That reason alone would answer your question satisfactorily.

However, there are even other reasons. He's the only one who died for you, procured your opportunity to get saved, and whose teaching will get you to heaven, rather than deceiving you into ending up in hell. His love and ethics were superior, as were His teachings, deeds, miracles—in a word, both His life and His death and resurrection are superior, as He is superior, as he is God. Etc.

---Is God greater than any and all His creation and creatures, including mankind? Then Jesus must be greater than His created beings—religious leaders or plain sinner lay persons.

---No other religious leader was ever sinless, performed the amount of quality of miracles He did, nor taught such high morals with such loving credibility as the lifestyle He consistently lived.

---To maintain Christ's humility—an ethical virtue—He often accepted men's appellations and titles, whether they be less than divine, and even when He was considered (or accused of) as deity. That is not the same as denying and correcting people's opinions as to One's divinity (which an honest/moral person, such as Christ, would have done, to keep the record straight).

---Do you know of any other religious leader who lived a perfect moral life, claimed to be eternal God, and rose from the grave to prove His power over death? Neither do I (and you'll never find one, no matter

how hard you search). Also, His miracles, ethical teachings and the way He continues to change lives attest to His being who He claimed to be, and who you asked whether he is—divine God.

70. Was Christ seen after His death on the cross?

Response(s):

- Yes, the Bible says so. [any extra-biblical sources corroborate this?].
- Biblical listing of post-resurrection appearances:
- People who could have disproved this: Romans at the tomb, Jews who would lose credibility if the “deceiver” had raised up, as He claimed to them He would, etc.
- If He was not seen, let’s go to His grave, dig Him up and see His frame now. [if a myth, couldn’t]

Answer(s): See also: Answer to Question #8 , above.

For Further Study:

The Case for Christ, pp. 225-243, 263, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998
Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 32-35, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

71. Christ was only a good man. Was Jesus more than a carpenter?

Response(s):

- The only problem I have with your belief is the word “only.” Christ certainly was a “good man,” but that term misses the breadth of His Personhood so far as to almost be an insult to Him. He was fully a man, and 100% good, but because he was also God, to treat Him as if He was just a morally high aspiring human being is to negate the fact that He alone could have achieved that degree of sinless perfection pure and simply because He was “also” God!
- Would a “good man” lie to people about His identity and about how they can get to heaven through Him?
- Every and all so-called “good men” have some sin in their lives—Christ had none. Claimed Lord: Liar, lunatic, joking, or deluded/deceived?
- Have you ever even heard or conceived of what men call a “good man” being in any way in the same category and field of moral attainment as Jesus Christ? Even Gandhi and Mother Theresa don’t come close to being comparable to the moral standard—perfection—Jesus exhibited. That success rate by itself should tell you that here was a human being like no other (because He was also God incarnate).

For Further Study:

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 28-29, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000
True for You, but Not for Me, pp. 107-109, by Paul Copan (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1998
When Skeptics Ask, pp. 128-140, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1990

72. Christ was only a moral teacher. I think that Jesus Christ is only one of the great men in history.

Response(s):

- See:** Answer to Question #62, above.
- This statement differs from question #62, above, only in regard to Christ also being a teacher, besides also being a good, or moral man. With this we agree, that Jesus did teach great morals, but even the nature of His teachings show the honest observer that He was much more than a mere “moral teacher.” No one has ever spoken as did he, because the words He spoke were the very words of and from god, as Christ was sent from god, and was, in fact, God.
- What about His claims—both implicit and humbly self-constrained yet more explicit, to being God?
- That’s amazing that you could imagine that a sinless Person, who taught the greatest moral code, healed many, claimed to be one with god and from heaven, and RESURRECTED FROM THE DEAD is merely a “good” human. How “good” could he be if He lied to us about His divinity, and said that eternal salvation is found ONLY in Him?
- Have you ever seriously considered both the miracles and deity claims of Christ? As Josh McDowell has suggested, such a person would have to be either a liar, lunatic or Lord.

For Further Study:

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 24-25, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000
The Open Bible, p. 1345 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

73. Jesus sinned (i.e., turning over the temple tables, or reproving the Pharisees). Christ died for a crime and sin He committed.

Response(s):

- That assertion simply shows me that your understanding of ethics, righteous indignation/godly anger are based not on the word of God, but on what some people feel to be right. In fact, it is just the opposite of the truth to assert that, when reproof is needed, you love someone when you withhold it from them. The world teaches always be “nice,” sweet, “cool, calm and collected.” You parents either did discipline you, or let me out of this room because you may be a horrible criminal. Punishment, discipline and rebuking serve godly purposes, when done in love, and I sure trust that your earthly parents understood that. God, my heavenly Father, certainly does.
- Can you list specifically for me, from the Bible, the actions you allege Jesus undertook which constitute sin?
- Righteous indignation and verbal reproof are not sin. God and His Word—not we men—determine what constitutes sinful behavior, and the biblical record clearly attests to the fact that Jesus Christ was not only perfect, but He was sinless, which means that He never committed one sin.
- Even in American civil law (which is not unique or originated in America) truth is always a defense to slander, and Christ’s harsh words to the hypocritical Pharisees, though harsh, were true, and were motivated out of righteous indignation—not sinful anger; there is a biblical difference in these two emotions. And as the head and God of the Jews’ temple, He of all men had the right and authority to clean up its abuses. In fact, he is the one who will judge the world, and if He had sinned, He would have been disqualified as the perfect sacrificial Lamb, and would have lost credentials to execute the judgment He will surely and shortly render.
- Where? When? What evidence/proof do you have to substantiate your allegation/assertion/claim? Anyone can make a statement, but it takes verification to give it credibility (and to be worth the time spent answering it).

Answer(s): (Mt. 3:7, 21:12, Mt. 23:23-33)

74. Jesus was culturally biased for whites. Christianity is cultural. You believe it because you were raised that way (i.e., upbringing).

Response(s):

- Christ loved and died for all men—even those who accuse Him of the sin of partiality. How can one claim Jesus was biased, when He treated all men as equals? If you are saying that American Christian expression favors whites, in some cases there may be claiming believers who are prejudiced against black people, but Christ never condoned such behavior, and as far as I know and the last time I checked, every Protestant church was fully accessible and available for any and all men to be welcomed visitors and church members. Perhaps I do not understand your issue, as I am unaware of any benefits of Christianity which are not equally available to members of all races.
- How so, when He began and primarily conducted His ministry in the Middle East, and was Himself a Jew. There are mentions of black people associated with Jesus, as well as foreigners to Israel, and the fact that, historically, many Arabs have not received the Lord Jesus Christ does not mean that He is not available to them, or that they have been discriminated against by God.
- Are we going to admit that we believe that because Jesus was a Jew, He showed favoritism to Jews? Because of the incarnation, His body had to be born with a human and cultural identity, and God chose it to be that of His chosen people. That has nothing to do with how He lovingly treated all people.
- Much anti-Semitism is harbored in the hearts of Anglo Saxons. To accuse whites to have been favored by the Jew’s Messiah would be to fully equate Gentile white people with Jewish people.]

For Further Study:

True for You, but Not for Me, pp. 82-85, by Paul Copan (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1998

MAN, SIN AND EVIL

75. What is the origin of evil?

Response(s):

- Apparently, from the biblical record, sin originated with the devil, when he chose to use his will contrary to/against God’s will for his life, as recorded in Isa. 14:12-15.

Answer(s):

“The original appearance of evil in the creation of God came through the choice of Satan. —Kenneth Boa Evil Was Not Created and is not Permanent.

“The Scriptures make it plain that God did not create the world in the state in which it is now—evil came as a result of the selfishness of man. The Bible says that God is a God of love and he desired to create a person and eventually a race that would love Him. But genuine love cannot exist unless freely given through free choice and will, and thus

man was given the choice to accept God's love or to reject it. This choice made the possibility of evil become very real. ... The world was not designed with evil in mind; God does not desire evil nor does He ever condone it—He hates evil.”

Source: A Ready Defense, pp. 412-413, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

---The devil's choice to rebel against God, when he was thrown out of heaven before Gen. 1:1, because free will allowed the possibility of its' beginning with a wrongful choice.

---Either God made it (NO), with no intention or desire that man ever personally experience it (Ex.: tree of the knowledge of good and evil—TRUE), or we don't know (NO), or it existed on its own (NO, as would be eternal and independent and therefore not controllable by God).

For Further Study:

I'm Glad You Asked, pp. 141-148, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moyer (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982

Reason to Believe, p. 119, by R.C. Sproul (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 1978

The Roots of Evil, by Norman L. Geisler

76. What is sin?

Response(s):

---Doing evil. Straying/transgressing/breaking God's moral law. Missing the mark. Moral imperfection. Evil in thought, deed, intention, attitude, motive, tone of voice or desire. Sin is the exact opposite of moral good, righteousness and holiness, and the exact opposite of God and His character (and is supposed to not be the habitual practice/lifestyle of the believer).

---May I ask you if you seriously do not have an idea what the word "sin" means? If you don't, it means anything less than morally perfection. That is, moral imperfection/having ever done anything wrong, bad, evil, contrary to God's perfect nature, etc.

---What do you think sin is? (if they have no idea, go to the immediate bullet point above).

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1344 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

77. There is no evidence of sin in the world (or the evidence disproves God).

Response(s):

---Joke: A punch in the face in response to this uninformed, naive or otherwise dumb statement might prove him wrong, but would be sin for the doer.

---Will you truly, sincerely look me in the eye and assert that nonsense after two World Wars, Adolf Hitler and the World Trade Center bombings? Try again! Perhaps you want to think sin is not a problem this world has, or that you have before God, but you would only be deluding yourself and being deceived by Satan.

78. Sin in the world is not why men die, but their bodies obey the law of entropy (i.e., wear out).

Response(s):

---Where did that law of entropy come from? Doesn't evolution teach that things evolve and progress, vs. regress to destruction? Why do we find things deteriorating if evolution is true and sin is not the answer for our physical demise?

---Do you sincerely believe that scientists could, someday, reverse the aging process, whereby we would never physically die, though we be sinners? That is an overly-high view of science and the ability of mankind.

79. Everyone Sins every once in awhile. I'm only human.

Response(s):

---That's true, and many people sin much more than only once in awhile. The distinction/difference is that Christians' sins have already been forgiven, and sins of others, if left un-forgiven, through receiving eternal forgiveness in Christ, will be eternally paid for by the person committing them.

---The "I'm only human" excuse, though we are just that, can be abused to excuse our bad behavior and not cause us to strive to be morally better. It's sort of like the "that's natural" excuse for such things as sex outside of marriage, etc. That sort of "logic" is easily refutable by consistently applying it where it obviously will not fit. For example, going to the bathroom is "natural," but I wouldn't do it in public. It's "natural"(as you are born this way) to be without clothes, but I don't recommend it in public. Likewise, you are only human, but there is both the evil and good potentiality within man—not before God, but sociologically-morally speaking—and to not make attempts toward the positive, by hiding

behind the easier way of sin (since it comes naturally) is an abuse of what a human is and is to be. You're only human, but humans have been given some degree of self-discipline capability, and though we can never be perfect, don't plead on our mercy for sympathy when you repeatedly "blow it" as a routine practice, hiding behind that flimsy excuse, because Christ within can and does give one the power to live a godly life. The problem is, perhaps, that Christ is not in your life, or at least not living His life fully through you(?).

---Christians are given the power for sin to no longer be their task-/slave-master—a power a lost man does not yet possess. Therefore, it is expected that Christian's amount of sinning will diminish, as they follow Christ, and the sins they do commit affect their fellowship with god—not their relationship with Him. However, all sins of the lost man are against a relationship which does not personally exist, as man is naturally separated from God. The ultimate sin which "seals the deal" of one's destiny in hell is to reject God's free offer of salvation in Jesus Christ. [**wages lead to death, for lost and saved?**]

For Further Study:

Reason to Believe, pp. 121-122, by R.C. Sproul (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 1978

80. I am a sinner, but so are you, Christian—what's the difference? How do you say I'm worse off than you?

Response(s):

---For one, ALL my sins are forgiven, and I know God personally, and for eternity. All your sins remain to be judged and punished, you do not personally know God, and that lack of relationship will continue eternally, if you never accept His sacrifice to pay for your sins. The sins Christians commit affect the equality of their ongoing relationship—"fellowship sins"—but do NOT affect the reality of their eternal relationship and connectedness to God ("relational sins").

---You are clearly worse off because I am going to heaven when I die, and, at present, your destiny will be hell. What's the difference? Only that I have Jesus Christ living/abiding in my heart, and you have yet to let Him in yours.

---Technically and only because I have been saved by God, the way God views us—which is the only perspective which matters—my status before Him (due only to the work of Jesus Christ in saving my soul) is one known as a "saint." Biblically, all people who have not yet received Christ are termed "sinners." That does NOT mean that Christians never sin, or, for that matter, that lost/unsaved people never do anything good, and are all like Hitler. What it does mean and does put the focus on is that God's grace has changed the Christian, and given him an eternal gift, and all other people still need that gift, if they are to have any hope of avoiding all men's deserved punishment in an eternal hell.

81. You are still going to sin after you get saved.

Response(s):

---**See also:** Answer to Question #67, above.

---Yes, but the difference, besides an expected lessening of the quantity of sins, post-conversion, is that believers' sins have been forgiven, whereas lost persons' sins, left un-forgiven, sentence them to an eternal separation from the presence of God, in hell.

---Yes, but you won't go to hell because of them (though they do have negative consequences).

---Yes, and maybe no. Sin as a lifestyle, not necessarily, as God gives the desire to live for Him. Occasionally (and for some, maybe many, a lot), Christians do make moral mistakes, or even willfully rebel, or sin, against God. This is evil, and cannot be denied or condoned. Even still, those sins, bad as they are, will not be punished in hell, like those of lost people will be.

82. God will weigh my good deeds against my bad deeds, and I'll be fine.

Response(s):

---How do you know that (for sure)?

---If missing hell is so important to your life, do you keep a detailed record of what good and bad deeds you commit, to make sure you are ahead of the game?

---Unfortunately, such a belief is not congruous with what God has said, and anyone who relies on himself to save himself through his deeds will not only be severely disappointed, he will be eternally damned without Jesus Christ in his life.

Answer(s):

- No one can be good enough on his own to please God. Good works will never overcome the sin problem. (Isa. 64:6, Eph. 2:8-9, Rom. 4:4-6).

- If good works could save then salvation would depend on man, not God. The standard would be “relative or comparative righteousness” between men—not the absolute righteousness of God. Only God can provide the required righteousness, through Christ. (Mt. 5:20, 48, Phil. 3:4-9, II Cor. 5:21).
- Scripture does not teach salvation by good works or personal merit, but by God’s grace through faith, motivated by God’s love. (Rom. 3:19-26, Jn. 3:16, I Jn. 4:9-12).
- Salvation is the free gift of God, who is indebted to no man. It cannot be bought or earned. If salvation was the result of works, God would be obligated to save. (Rom. 3:23, Eph. 1:6-7).
- Can you substantiate that claim from God’s Word? By what authority do you base that conclusion regarding so important a matter as your eternal fate? [**Cf.: MacArthur’s verses of rewarded according to their deeds**].
- You are 100% relying on that belief to be true, so you had better know that it is accurate, and not a lie you have been deluded into being. Where did you learn that God “grades on the curve,” and where did you read or what authority tells you that God weighs our deeds, because the truth is that that is an errant belief. I fear for you continuing to live by its errant assumption.

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, p. 126, by Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

For Further Study:

83. The sins I have committed are not serious--I never killed or raped anyone. I know I’m not perfect, but I’m not all that bad, either—what’s the big deal about sin?

Response(s):

- Do you agree that murder, armed robbery, rape and incest are serious crimes and sins? Do you know, from Scripture, that in God’s eyes (the only viewpoint that matters) even if the only sin you have ever committed is a “white lie” (a non-biblical term, and likely unbiblical concept), before God—the Judge of all—you are thereby guilty as if you had committed all sins, including rape, murder, etc. That’s how serious just one sin is to God. For example, just one sin by your ancient ancestor, Adam, caused all sin, illness, and every other curse in our world, especially the fact that all people who die without having received Jesus Christ for their personal salvation will spend eternity in hell based on that choice of rejecting Him.
- In your own mind you are not all that bad. You need to see what God thinks of you, as He (and perfection) is the standard, and the one who ultimately determines what is true. Let’s look at some verses which state, not only what you are like in your innermost, spiritual person, but all who have ever been born as humans...

Answer(s):

Sin is not measured in relationship to other people but to God Himself. Sin is anything which is contrary to the character of the Holy God.

Sin is:

- Missing the mark.
- Transgressing God’s law.
- Disobedience
- Iniquity
- Rebellion
- Lawlessness
- Being your own “god”
- Living independently of God. (Ps. 51:1-11, Gen. 3:1-7).
- Whatever is not from faith
- Any and all evil

Only when you realize that you are lost can you be saved (Rom. 3:9-18, 23).

Sin is devastating:

- It severs our relationship to God, and separates us from God
- It carries the penalty of death (both physical and spiritual). (Isa. 59:1-2, Rom. 6:23, Eph. 2:1-3, 11-12, II Th. 1:5-10).

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, p. 125, by Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

84. I am as good as others.

Response(s):

- Before God, you are the same as others—a sinner. Even before mankind, there are likely people “better” and worse than you (Mother Theresa ex.). What matters, and alone matters is God’s opinion of you, and He considers you a beloved sinner in need of salvation. Your own “goodness” will get you nowhere in the life to come, and as to any meritorious value to be considered as to whether you will enter heaven, the Bible calls any goodness you may possess to be “filthy rags”—that is worthless toward and credit toward whether you will enter—you will NOT, without Jesus Christ having saved your soul. This is not to discourage you from behaving morally, but to show you the eternal limitations to relying on those deeds to keep you from hell.
- That statement may be true...I’m not here to debate it. The problem is, if every person were as good as you, they would still all go to hell without Christ, because ALL people are sinners, and unforgiven sinners get what they deserve.
- I am not sure how you (or someone else) will define “good,” and it has nothing to do with God’s definition, but I would still say that it is likely that there are experiential gradations of how humanly “good” given people are. For instance, are you saying you would think you were co-equal with Mother Theresa, or perhaps Gandhi? Even if you were, it wouldn’t help you (much) in the long run, because unless you are morally PERFECT, you end up in hell, without Jesus Christ in your heart.

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1341 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

85. My sins are small, so why worry?

Response(s):

- Ask yourself, am I absolutely sure that the God of this universe—not me in my own opinion—believes my sins are “small,” because if I’m wrong about what He (vs. I) thinks, it could be an eternally fatal miscalculation. You need to “worry” because hell is real, and is a serious and negative destiny, and any sins you have committed, no matter how small the number, left unforgiven by salvation in Jesus Christ are as bad as if you had done all evil things all your life, because only one sin merits hell for anyone, and I’m quite sure you would agree you have already qualified for having done one. Don’t risk such a serious matter by not checking with the Judge to see what He says about what it takes to clear your account with Him of any sins you have committed, and pay attention to His opinion of you and your sins—not your own opinion, based likely on no particular authority for its reasoning.
- I truly would advise you to worry, even if your sins only total ONE, your entire lifetime, because the Bible says that if anyone is guilty of having committed one break of the law of God, he is guilty before God as if he had broken all of God’s law. The reason is, once again, because God’s standard for entry into heaven is simply perfection—nothing less. He does not grade on the curve, or lessen His standard. That’s why you have a problem, even if you truly have been living like a saint.
- How do you define a “small” sin? Would it bother you to know that your definition varies from what is true—what God has said about sins, big and small?
- Even a statement such as that indicates an overblown opinion of one’s own righteousness, which should qualify as the sin of pride. Or, perhaps you have never taken the time to compare your behavior with God’s standard, the Bible. Take for a starter, the 10 commandments. Then move from there to the thousands of other ethical commandments, and you will quickly see how you really appear to god, and should turn immediately to a merciful God who gladly forgives your sins through His gracious Son, Jesus Christ.

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1344 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

86. I have never sinned (i.e., the rich young ruler excuse or attitude). I am not a sinner. Why am I blamed for something I didn’t do?

Response(s):

- Are you pretty proud of that record? <YES> Well, I hate to inform you that pride is a sin, too.
- You are going to honestly tell me that you have never sped in your car, lied, stolen, angrily yelled, cussed, has sex before you were married, lusted (Ex.: Playboy, X-rated movies), been late to a commitment, been impatient or lazy, insulted someone, retained bitterness rather than forgiving someone who had wronged you...Need I go on?
- In so saying, you just lied (accidentally or purposely), which is a sin. Pride could also be at play, which is a sin. You have lied, cheated, stolen, said evil things, and a host of other examples I could name—you just don’t often think in those terms. Learn what God says sin is, and I’m sure you’ll move away from your position of claimed innocence. Try the 10 Commandments—just for a start. Have you ever

skipped school, been late to work, sped in your car, etc.?
---[Really, then you must be Jesus]

Answer(s):

“I remind them of Romans 3:23... Occasionally I’ll have the person read Romans 3:9-19... A friend of mine uses this question in confronting those who feel they are good enough and don’t need salvation, ‘Wouldn’t you like to know for sure that your ultimate home will be in heaven?’”

Source: How To Win Others to Christ, pp. 131-132, by Jerry Wiles (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1992

For Further Study:

Reason to Believe, pp. 96-98, by R.C. Sproul (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 1978

The Open Bible, p. 1341, (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

BIBLE/GOSPEL, SCIENCE AND MIRACLES

87. Is truth absolute or relative? What happens when absolutes conflict?

Response(s):

---The truth of the Bible, as a whole, is absolute. The moral absolutes are applied by faith, as believers are not under the law, so less-than-perfection does not make believers personally guilty for having sinned (if they obeyed the commands they had been given by God the Spirit), but even as we apply absolutes, prayer- and Spirit-based wisdom will weigh the many factors in making a decision.

---Many, if not most, truth(s) are absolute. Some absolutes are properly applied relative to other absolutes. What is absolutely true is that life is not composed of all relatives, where anything goes, morally. The Bible teaches what ethics vs. sins are, and to the extent it teaches a range of ethical choices, there is freedom, as led specifically by God and your maturity level. Though a bit hard to understand or explain, until you have read more and been led of God more, a simple summary is that absolutism in content, applied under grace, mercy, patience and accommodation (without compromise) to the growth level you have attained is what life is all about—morally speaking.

For Further Study:

True for You, but Not for Me, pp. 23-25, 41-45, 52-55, by Paul Copan (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1998

When Skeptics Ask, pp. 273-290, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1990

88. I can write something and claim it as inspired, as well.

Response(s):

---That’s true, but you are neither God, nor inspired by God, as determined by factors which verify the credibility of your errant claim. **[what are those standards?].**

---A humanly-contrived story can be evaluated and analyzed, and fairly quickly be seen to have errors, contradictions, or claims which do not square with the truth. The Bible has none of those problems—you can try it for yourself.

---Can you do that over a period of centuries, through several independent authors, in three separate languages and maintain a fully consistent teaching on all the major subjects the Bible addresses?

---Yes you could, but proving your claim could be very difficult, and your assertion could be easily refuted.

---We (humans) speak of an emotional “inspiration” we feel when strongly moved, say by a dramatic presentation (like an inspiring movie). Let me assure you, when it comes to the written word of God, we are speaking of the superintendence of God’s Holy spirit over human writers—not just a bunch of guys writing from a temporary and unintelligible emotional experience. We need to keep the two definitions of “inspired” distinguished in our understanding of this issue.

---May I suggest a book to you about a well-known attorney of his day who set out to prove the Bible to be incorrect, using all his lawyerly skills, and ended up a Christian?

(add to this)

For Further Study:

A Ready Defense, pp. 176-178, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

89. Do Christians engage in circular reasoning (i.e., I believe the Bible is God’s Word because it says it is, or I believe God exists because He does, and I believe it)? What does it mean that the Bible was “inspired?”

Response(s): (add to)

---[Maybe some have in the past, from your experience. But they do not innately do so. That is, our belief that the Bible is God’s Word or that God exists do not exist as beliefs in our heart solely because we feel these things to be true. We have credible evidence to substantiate our beliefs, enough so that the burden

of proof goes to you to investigate and disprove the evidence I am prepared to offer you to review (cite bibliography)].

--It is NOT circular, 1) if it is true in fact, 2) if they believe it based on other confirming evidence, and 3) if the Bible itself reveals evidence that it is not biasedly presenting its contents in the light most favorable to its inspired human authors and characters.

--Have you ever read the Bible? Did it strike you as just another book, with no mystery or magnificence setting it qualitatively apart? Perhaps you could use another, updated reading.

--Christians' opinions on the Bible do not change the fact of what the Bible is in fact and reality.

However, a sincere Christian's opinion will be submitted to God's view of His book, so, as you would expect, their opinion will see His book as inerrant. Therefore, if their reasoning seems circular, first, they did not start with a bias that it was inerrant, but that it was what it was. Secondly, if one is open-minded to information, and can justify their viewpoint with outside evidence, their reasoning is not circular. Something is only circular if you use a claim to prove the claim, and nothing else (and even God's claim within His word is true, if no other evidence is mustered, though that may cause you to stumble, needing outside evidence).

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 147-148, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

A Ready Defense, pp. 174-178, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

90. The Bible was written to make Christ look like He fulfilled prophecy. Does fulfilled prophecy verify the authenticity of the Bible? Didn't Jesus just try to fulfill prophecies?

Response(s):

--Who told you that? Where did you get that notion? It would be humanly impossible for prophecies codified and written down thousands of years before their fulfillment to be orchestrated in retrospect as applying to events in the life of Christ, which occurred in history, time and space, those thousands of years forward. That would be an astounding thing for someone to believe, and takes more faith (and less reasoning power) than to observe how Christ fully fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about His future life on earth as the Jews' Messiah. Please protect your dignity, and don't repeat that slogan again, as I want people to treat you as the intelligent person I believe you to truly be.

--Do you truly believe Christ only "looks like" He fulfilled Old Testament prophecies, or that the human authors of Scripture manipulated the words and facts to make Christ only appear to fulfill them? Have you read either the accounts of His life, or the prophecies of His Messiahship? If not, I would suggest first-hand knowledge of facts asserted in your allegation, before you come to confident (and errant) conclusions.

--That would be amazing, because the historical events of mankind would have to have been manipulated for Christ to have fulfilled the O.T. prophecies that He did.

For Further Study:

Defending Your Faith, pp. 37, 46-47, by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pp. 267-323, by Josh McDowell (Here's Life Publishers, Inc.: San Bernardino, CA), 1979

Ready With an Answer, pp. 211-257, by John Ankerberg (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997

A Ready Defense, pp. 56-73, 84-86, 209, 213-214, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

The Complete Book of Bible Answers, pp. 253-300, by Ron Rhodes (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 609-617, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

91. Men decided the contents of the biblical canon. Why do we have no original manuscript autographs?

Response(s):

--Yes, and they had standards. These decisions were no mystical or mere subjective choosing according to what men wanted or liked. Study the thought patterns and analytical criterion and critiques offered for and against those books which made the canon, and you will soon discover that your implication that almost anything could have been let in--because imperfect men were a part of the process--is in error.

--Men did--Spirit-led men. Do you demand that God throw His Word down in a book lowered from heaven, in order to accept his message as truly being His?

--[Have you fully read the resulting contents of that group decision, to see how the text itself testifies (and God's Spirit can witness the fact, as well), that they made the right decisions, as led by that

same Spirit?]
--Were you expecting angels or aliens to do the job? Certainly humans were the instruments of that decision. But does that mean that ever human in every circumstance always makes mistakes or sins in his choices. Could God-filled and led men have actually made a prayerful decision, based on valid criterion, and NOT done so with political, selfish or evil intent, motives or results? I am certain that, by God's grace, that's exactly what happened.

Answer(s):

When the church *formally* recognized what books belonged in the canon, there were five primary tests that were applied.

1. Was the book written or backed by a prophet or apostle of God?
2. Is the book authoritative?
3. Does the book tell the truth about God as it is already known by previous revelation?
4. Does the book give evidence of having the power of God?
5. Was the book accepted by the people of God? The Complete Book of Bible Answers, pp. 28-29, by Ron Rhodes (Harvest house Publishers: Eugene, OR), 1977

For Further Study:

I'm Glad You Asked, pp. 114-115, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moyer (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982

Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pp. 29-38, by Josh McDowell (Here's Life Publishers, Inc.: San Bernardino, CA), 1979

A Ready Defense, pp. 34-41, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 80-86, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

92. Hasn't the New Testament been changed since it has been copied and recopied throughout history? [a question likely to be raised by Muslims]

Response(s):

--There are several translations, which are simply different ways of saying the same thing and in interpreting the same original sources, following common rules of grammar and interpretive principles. There are also, variants in the historical record, in non-substantial matters, such as scribal errors, etc., which can be overcome by examining the cumulative evidence...

--It is virtually intact, the same as the original manuscripts, and to the extent that less than one percent is at variance, that smidgen is not on any subject of substance, and is usually attributable to obvious scribal error, or other minor infractions which other manuscripts can quickly clear up and expose as variants.

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 4-6, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

Answering the Tough Ones, pp. 43-45, by David A. Dewitt (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

A Ready Defense, pp. 137-161, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

The Case for Faith, p. 264, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

93. Is the best way to interpret the Bible to interpret it literally? (Ex.: cut hands and feet off).

Response(s):

--Yes, if you understand what we mean by the literal, historical-grammatical principle, and do not misconstrue what we mean with such stereotypes as wooden literalism, etc.

--Yes, and might I first define the terms and meanings I am attaching. According to Dr. Bernard Ramm, this is neither a "wooden literalism" nor a figurative/spiritualizing definition

What I mean by "literal," is, according to a definition by Dr. Charles Ryrie, grammatical, literal, normal, common meaning of the words plain, normal, usage, accounting for clear figures of speech.

--When I say I believe in a literal interpretation, I mean that one takes the Bible literally, giving consideration to the various literary genre used within its covers. For instance, when Jesus said that He was the door, I certainly understand that to mean what He literally meant it to mean—not that He has a doorknob near His appendix, but that He is the way/opening, opportunity for access to God and entry into God's presence. The context (defined as the surrounding topical circumstances) will usually let you know when a given literary device is being used.

Answer(s): See: Council of Biblical Inerrancy Position on what literal means and does not mean (i.e., abuses).

For Further Study:

I'm Glad You Asked, pp. 107-109, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moyer (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado

Springs, CO), 1982
Defending Your Faith, pp. 49-61, by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997
A Ready Defense, pp. 179-184, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

94. There are so many different interpretations of the Bible, why should I believe yours?

Response(s): See also: Answer to Question #78, above.

- There may not be as many as you are thinking--can you give me some specific examples?
- Some people who interpret the Bible are not saved, so they are all but bound to go astray.
- Some people don't want to rightly know what God has said, disagree with it, and consciously want to misconstrue His message, or go to Scripture to prove their presuppositions, rather than submitting to what it reveals, and making up their beliefs accordingly.
- THE (one) interpretation would be consistent, true, and make sense, given both God's revealed character, truth and in light of context and all biblical information given on the subject.
- Do you believe that all the many interpretations floating around there are all right/correct, or could be? Have you ever asked yourself of the degree of study, analysis, logic, care, training and thorough explanation the various proponents espouse in support of their opinions, or is any opinion given the same weight, under your assessment standard. Maybe everyone has an opinion--but they are NOT all of the same weight. Consider the source, check the credentials, and study for yourself to verify the true from the massive number of false interpretations (and seek God's guidance, using standard hermeneutical principles of interpretation).
- We all bring our personality, I.Q., and biases/past experiences to our encounter with the Bible, and though these factors NEED NOT influence the interpretation process, sometimes some people let them do so.
- Some "interpreters," though saved, and relying on God's Spirit, need some objective, formal training, and would benefit from learning a little bit from other people more knowledgeable than they
- Some people who interpret the Bible are saved, but do not rely on the illumination of His Spirit.
- Some Christians rely so heavily on the Spirit, their thinking becomes subjective (what they think it means), and they poo poo formal Bible training, teaching or principles of hermeneutics.
- Some (relatively few) verses are harder to understand than others, and scholars have provided us several credible interpretive options, which we must prayerfully accept as our own conviction of truth, knowing we may have chosen a less than perfect, valid interpretive option.
- Some things we do not agree on will be resolved with more work and research, or only in heaven.
- Many (quantity vs. percentage) people who interpret the Bible are simply in error, as we all can, from time to time, be guilty of--we must admit our failings, and not let pride preclude us from being freed by the knowledge of the truth (as there is only one interpretation, at least by God's perspective).
- Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines "interpret" as "to explain or tell the meaning of: present in understandable terms." Note that the meaning is within the text, not brought to the text by the interpreter, and that his explanation requires understandability, for which there are principles we can discern, to separate that from illogical or absurd viewpoints.
- There is only one true interpretation (II Pet. 1:20-21). The reason men have so many (not really a whole lot) different interpretations can stem from several reasons:
 - a) Men are imperfect, and the devil wants confusion, so men will not know the truth and be freed.
 - b) Some people do not honestly approach the Scripture with an open and honest mind-set, devoid of presuppositions. Some people want to justify their own beliefs, and go to Scripture to buttress their own ideas.
 - c) Some people, in relying on the Holy Spirit as teacher (a biblical thing to do), either have never learned or fail to apply commonly-accepted rules of literature and biblical interpretation (context, define terms, major on the majors, obscure verses interpreted by the clearer; New Testament perspective on Old Testament?, etc.).
 - d) There may be other reasons not solicited here.
- You may want the Bible to be subject to everyone's own interpretation, but then it would mean nothing at all, and the Bible itself says that it is NOT a matter of individualistic interpretation. (I Pet. 1:21?).

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 13-14, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980
True for You, but Not for Me, pp. 26-28, by Paul Copan (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1998

95. Don't the two Creation accounts' orders contradict both themselves and what we know from modern science (Gen. 1-2)? Were the days in Genesis one twenty-four hours or a long period of time?

Response(s):

- No. One version is descriptive, of concepts–pictorial, while the other is intentionally chronological, to show when these events occurred.
- Have you read the two accounts recently? What specific features of what you have read lead you to see a distinction, or seeming contradiction in the two accounts? (Better to address the specifics, knowing the answer, than to assume they have not read it or do not know the distinctions, as you may get caught without knowledge).
- Have you taken the time to study scientists evidence CONFIRMING the Genesis accounts? May I suggest a few books for you to read? Creation Science (Morris, Creation Institute, etc.)

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 102-103, 170-196, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

96. Where did Cain get his wife, and how were they able to populate an entire city?

Response(s):

- He must have married his sister, at a time when that act would have been O.K., because the genetic problems would not have yet been detrimental, in part, because there were no other people with which to marry, as the commandment to “be fruitful and multiply” has just begun to be implemented.
- May I first assure you that Christians have already addressed this issue, and that the answers exist. I would be happy to try to get you in touch with those resources, but before we do, let me also tell you that the answers to that question have no real impact on the fact that you are a sinner, who is in need of a Savior, because, as things stand, you will face God in judgment as one deserving of hell, as will all men who have never personally received Jesus Christ for eternal salvation. Let's deal with first things first, then we can have the luxury of examining matters which do not affect whether we go to heaven or hell–the most important question you need to answer.

Did Adam and Eve's children birth children from incest?

- Males must have married their sister(s), for a time, and possibly until God significantly differentiated human kind at Babel.
- At that time such acts would have been morally O.K., because the genetic/DNA problems would not have yet been detrimental, in part, because there were no other people with which to marry, as the commandment to “be fruitful and multiply” has just begun to be implemented.

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 98-99, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

97. Why doesn't the Bible record the existence of prehistoric man or dinosaurs?

Response(s):

- Have you not read the verses certain theologians espouse as saying that the Bible DOES refer to such creatures? (Better to address the specifics, knowing the answer, than to assume they have not read it or do not know the distinctions, as you may get caught without knowledge).
- Regarding dinosaurs, there very well could be such biblical evidence, simply not using the terminology we are used to (e.g., “dinosaur”), but regarding so-called “prehistoric man,” the Bible does not reference him because he never existed in reality–only Adam, Eve and their progeny. **[What of prehistoric man's bones?]**.

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 94-95, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

98. What is the probability that Noah's Flood actually occurred, given what we know from modern science and archaeology?

Response(s):

- A very high probability–higher than that it did not...Have you personally reviewed the evidence, or at least investigated the conclusions and summaries of those who have?
- The exact probability that the Bible is inerrantly God's Word.
- I'm no statistician, and I assume you are not, but what I can tell you, on the authority of God's Word, that it happened, and I can point you to data, research and evidence to corroborate that claim. **[they**

provide evidence to the contrary?]

---The rainbow is one of several evidences.

---I am no statistician, as I assume you are not, but, no matter the mathematical answer one could muster to your question (and I can forward you to that data), it will not be relevant or matter, because since the event did happen, the reality is 100%.

For Further Study:

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 258-259, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

99. Is the existence of the Jewish nation proof of the Bible's inspiration as a fulfillment of prophecy?

Response(s):

---It very likely could be, or is. That is, we do not know for certain that the Jewish nation cannot disband, before the Tribulation begins, then it may be just a precursor for Israel's final gathering in the land. It does seem likely that the Jewish state will stay intact, indefinitely, and it is very likely, as you review the signs of the times, that Christ's "secret" return to the earth (that is, the Rapture) will occur before there could be a dismantling of the nation of God's chosen people.

---Many scholars believe that it is. They base it on Ezek. 38-39, and other verses. Certainly, end-time prophecy does and will center around activities taking place in that region of the world, and no one can deny the amazingly quick and profound return of Israel to her promised land (some would call it miraculous).

---I believe that it is, and if it is, what might that tell you regarding both the accuracy of the Word of God and your need to do what it tells you to do—and soon—regarding your own eternal destiny?

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 31-33, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

100. The Gospel is irrelevant (i.e., for social issues/too heavenly minded/suicidal argument).

Response(s):

---Please and seriously tell me how an educated person like yourself can assert that what happens when we die—especially if heaven and hell are real—has no bearing to how you live your life down here? If your daily choices are sinful, and sin gets punished, or your deeds are righteous, and God rewards goodness (though not with heaven) where is the irrelevance? It appears to me to be much more true that there is a direct relevance, and to live as if your relating to God is unimportant, not valuable and "irrelevant" only shows me that you are not yet worried about a hellish future which COULD start at any time. THAT'S a foolish decision/lifestyle—NOT the one that builds the life here and now based on a certainty of their ultimate destination. It is the epitome of short-sightedness (and even the stock market and planners tell you that's a bad thing) to ignore the finish line, and only concentrate on your next few steps, especially if you are not even looking to the right end marker, and thereby are off course, or even running the exact opposite direction. The Gospel is only irrelevant to people who life-long consider it so and who God will consider irrelevant in His decision as to where they spend eternity.

---Would you dare tell that to God on the day of your eternal judgment? Can you with clear conscience tell Jesus that His suffering death on the cross for your sins was not important? I advise you firmly to rethink your assertion, as it is a severe insult to a loving and powerful God, who is your Judge.

---Have you read the whole of the Bible, or New Testament? That would be a great starting point for one to have an informed opinion, stated as seemingly authoritatively as you have done, because as soon as you read, especially the New Testament, you will see that the devil has duped you into believing exactly the opposite of what is true.

---Society not suffering from sin, your life has eternal purpose, you're right with God or not to die?

---If you are alive, and your body will one day die (after which you will face an eternal judgment), the farthest claim from the truth would be to say it is irrelevant.

---How is your eternal future irrelevant to how you live today? You budget and plan for retirement, which you are less sure will happen than the fact that you WILL die, and I'd recommend that unless and until a man knows where he is going, he is just wandering around without aim or purpose.

101. The Gospel message has been disproved.

Response(s):

---Really? Where did they find Christ's bones? How did they prove they were His?

---Can you cite for me one scholarly and commonly accepted work, book or other documentation in which that conclusion has been proved? Where did you hear that claim, and what moral/integrous

- credibility does that source carry?
 ---Easier said than proven. Authoritative confidence does not make a statement true. Can you substantiate your claim?
 ---[How would someone be able to prove that God either existed or did not exist?]
 ---Where, when and by whom? Please prove your claim and provide me with documentary evidence.

102. Luke-Acts was written before the Gnostics allowed the Book of John to enter the canon. The message of the Synoptics differs from John's Gospel, and the Synoptics are the true Gospel.

Response(s):

- There are different emphases, but they are in harmony, and do not conflict one another.
 ---That is a myth and allegation/accusation made by opponents seeking to discredit the Word of God. Can you identify for me the subjects and places where this supposed rift in agreement exists? The all teach the same thing, as God's Word is consistent, and the most important matter that all the Gospels agree on is that you, along with every other person, are a sinner, in need of God's forgiveness in Jesus Christ if you are to have any hope for the certain to occur afterlife.
 ---What evidence can and do you cite as documentation of your contention that any Gnostics had anything to do with the process of Scripture canonization? Which members of the Council do you assert were Gnostics?

Answer(s):

[Regarding Gospel differences, Professor] Reicke states: 'The explanation lies in the principle of supply and demand, that is, each synoptic writer had a certain material at his disposal which had been transmitted and formulated in various ways among the Christians and which he took up, eventually rearranged, or limited according to his interests. A Ready Defense, p. 78, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

103. Jews wrote the New Testament (presumably meaning they were inaccurate or biased).

Response(s): cite extra-biblical corroborating materials to the Gospels--McDowell

- Gentiles also wrote it (Luke).
 ---To the extent your statement is true, so what? Is their culture innately intellectually inaccurate or biased and deceptive?
 ---Why would a (good) Jew write materials which revised and claimed to fulfill the Old Testament—their Testament—knowing the penalties to adding to God's word and believing the O.T. to be the final revelation, unless it were true? Why did they risk and suffer social, political and religious ostracization to begin a sister/related sect, if they were in error? And, there is no evidence that they were anti-Semitic, or turncoats to their heritage—in fact, they remained loyal to its true tenets, so they saw nothing in Christianity which required them to become un-Jewish—only more fully so, in Christ.

104. The biblical writers were biased/partial.

Response(s):

- See also:** Answer to Question # 88, above.
 ---They were in favor of Jesus, but unjustly biased people don't usually state their own faults, or show negative events or statements (give examples).
 ---This question may differ from question 88 in that the claimer may not be attributing bias to many writers' Jewish culture. However, the assumption of biased is, nevertheless, in error, whether blamed on the authors' close ties to Jesus or their cultural background.
 ---Would a biased author show their friends and human (as opposed to divine) heroes' frailties and failures? (Ex.: Christ's indignation, tears, Peter's denials, Thomas' doubts, the 12's return to their own life after the cross, the sons of thunders' ego, Peter's cutting Malchus' ear off, the 11's doubts despite years of being told Jesus would suffer and die, Peter's failure at the end of walking on water, etc.).
 ---Would a man give up his life as a martyr for something he knowingly believes is a biased and partial exaggeration?
 ---It was neither socially nor culturally beneficial to the authors to write and preach the things they did, regarding the Lord Jesus Christ, especially those who were completed Jews living among the Jews.
 ---ETC.

Answer(s):

I can trust the apostle's testimonies because eleven of those men died martyrs' deaths because they stood solid for two truths: Christ's deity and his resurrection. These men were tortured and flogged, and most finally suffered death by some of the cruelest methods then known.

1. Peter, originally called Simon, was crucified.

2. Andrew was crucified.
3. James, son of Zebedee, was killed by the sword.
4. John, son of Zebedee, died a natural death.
5. Philip was crucified.
6. Bartholomew was crucified.
7. Thomas was killed by a spear.
8. Matthew was killed by the sword.
9. James, son of Alphaeus, was crucified.
10. Thaddaeus was killed by arrows.
11. Simon, the zealot, was crucified. More Than a Carpenter, pp. 89-91, by Josh McDowell (Living Books: Carol Stream, IL), 2009

Who would die for a lie? Muslim martyrs? ...here's the contrast: in the early days of Christianity, might be killed for becoming Christian; in the early days of Islam's growth, you might be killed for not becoming a Muslim! --**Norman L. Geisler**

What About the Crusades? ...the Crusades did not begin until nearly 1100, more than 1,000 years after the origin of Christianity. And the original rationale for the Crusades was to take back the land the Muslims previously had seized by military conquest from the Christians... Now, one can understand why a religion spreads when it takes over militarily.

But why does a religion spread when its adherents are persecuted, martyred, and killed during its first 280 years? --**Norman L. Geisler**

Throughout history, many people have died for what they thought was the truth. However, for Jesus' disciples—most of whom were martyrs for Christ—if the Resurrection had not happened, they would have known it. --**Josh McDowell**

105. The Gospel's appeal is based on the ultimate fear tactic (hell) vs. the love of God.

Response(s):

- It is no "tactic" for one to tell another the truth. A tactic is a manipulation of thoughts and emotions to bring about an intended result. If we had dreamed up or imagined/created the concept of hell, we would be rightfully guilty of using that doctrine to scare people to Christ. As it is, and as the facts have it, hell is your sure destiny, without Christ. As has been said, 'it's hell to live without Christ.'
- Ultimately it's based on God's love, though it is truly sobering to me at least to contemplate hell (actual place described as...)
- Some things in life are fearful—not just because you are emotionally impressed. For a human to not be fearful about a place where they will eternally be tormented with fire, with no relief forever, is to show signs of crazy-like tendencies—not that the Christian, warning of its severe and serious danger, is using oppressive "tactics" to try to persuade you. Someone near the Niagara Falls could yell at an unknowing swimmer: You're going to die!, or be careful—there may be some danger ahead. Which is more appropriate to the circumstances, and would the first person rightfully be accused of using a "fear tactic?"

106. Which Bible do you believe in? (Ex.: Jews' O.T., Catholics' Apocrypha, Christians' O.T. and N.T., Muslim's Koran; KJV-only believers, etc.).

Response(s): See Geisler on why not other holy books

- Both the Old and New Testament, but it is not so much a matter of which holy book I believe in, but which one is true, why, and therefore which one you must rely on with your eternal destiny being at stake.
- [Christ claimed to be the truth, and spoke the truth (without lying), and only the Bible, especially the New Testament, record His life experiences accurately and authoritatively].
- Not the Koran, Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price, Book of Moroni, Koran, etc.
- I say in all humility and trust in God, the only right one. The Catholic Bible, where its core coincides with the New Testament, and the Muslims do not have a Bible (or library of books, as that word is defined).

[Note errors in Apocrypha]

For Further Study:

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 28-36, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

Defending Your Faith, pp. 63-74, by Dan Story (Kregel: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

107. Can the biographies (Gospels) of Jesus be trusted? Do they hold up under scrutiny? Were Jesus' biographies preserved for us? How can anyone believe the New Testament account of the life of Jesus, seeing that it was written long after His death?

Response(s):

---First, before I answer your question, let me discover whether we are both speaking from first-hand knowledge. That is, have you ever read in their entirety both Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? I could (and will) answer your question, but unless you have read them the answer to your question will have little meaning for you.

---Yes, they can be trusted. Read them for yourself, and come back and tell me whether they appear trustworthy or reliable (or show me the places where they cause you to doubt, and we'll discuss your findings).

---Yes, and even the miracle of their preservation shows signs/evidence of God's protectorate of His divine book.

Answer(s): See also: Answer to Question # 13, Above.

For Further Study:

A Ready Defense, pp. 74-91, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 7-8, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

The Case for Christ, pp. 19-72, 259-260, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998

The Case for Faith, pp. 263-264, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

True for You, but Not for Me, pp. 100-106, by Paul Copan (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1998

www.probe.org

108. Is there credible evidence for Christ outside the biographies of Christ?

Response(s): See Answer to Question # 6, Above.

---Wouldn't you expect such of a credible and historical event as influential and amazing as the miraculous life of the Lord? Your answer is yes...

---Yes. I have not yet studied them first-hand (in fact, the originals may be located in museums or libraries in other nations), but I can refer you to writings which are based on having studied them or which refer you to the sources themselves. The point is that those documents do exist (in various forms, as old as they now are).

---Yes there is, which is. There are objective, neutral and outside observers who wrote of Christ, which is all the more reason you need to pay attention to what the eyewitnesses to His life had to say about Him—especially as it relates to your own eternal salvation and His role in it.

---If there weren't, that would not necessarily show them to be false, but the good news is that there actually is such evidence(?).

Answer(s):

If one discards the Bible as unreliable historically, then he or she must discard all the literature of antiquity.

More Than a Carpenter, p. 87, by Josh McDowell (Living Books: Carol Stream, IL), 2009

For Further Study:

Defending Your Faith, pp. 45-47, by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

The Case for Christ, pp. 73-91, 260, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1998

The Case for Faith, p. 264, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

The New Testament Documents: Are They Reliable, by F.F. Bruce (InterVarsity Press: Westmont, IL), 1943

The New Testament: Its Background, Growth and Content (James Clarke & Co.: Cambridge), 2003

109. The Bible is not intellectual enough for me (i.e., it's too simplistic).

Response(s):

---I know people with 7 or more college degrees, and they have studied and written volumes of materials about the Bible, and related studies. It strikes me that you may take caution in reading what God has written concerning one seeking man's wisdom, and considering His message of salvation to be foolish, and to see that, in the end, it is God's opinion of you—not your opinion of Him or His word, that will be the final determining factor as to your eternal fate. A man can have both all the material assets and all the knowledge of the world, and lose it all if they never trust Jesus Christ for their eternal salvation. It's not how intellectual or knowledgeable you are—in this case, it IS Who you know!

---Have you read the Bible?

---If so, have you ever studied the original languages, theological issues such as the relationship between

divine sovereignty and the will of man, or the “problem passages?” Are you also aware of apologetic materials surrounding the Bible, historical and archaeological documents supporting the Bible, as well as the study of harmonizing teachings from different parts of the Bible? Don’t make claims which are not based in fact, because God wants you to love Him with all your mind, and I can assure you that He can fully utilize your every mental capacity, even in evangelism, if you are one of His children.
--[Is it possible that perhaps you could have a problem with ego, or pride, in the mental capabilities GOD has given to you?].

110. The Bible is a story book. That stuff is for children.

Response(s):

- There are distinctive evidential differences between myths and history.
- Stories are truly in the Bible—true stories and historical life events. Indeed the truth of the Gospel is simple enough for a child to understand and believe; yet, contemporaneously, it’s profundity is so deep as to confound the wise and knowing among this world’s adults. It truly may sound simple, but the idea that man cannot work himself to heaven has seemingly escaped all other ways/traditions/religions in which men seek to get right with God, and to comprehend how one person’s life sacrificed on behalf of another secures the benefit for the party sacrificed is a truth/concept not lacking in maturity of wonder. Your sin choices are sober mature evil; simple but profound
- This stuff is for child-like, humble, open-minded, sincere and trusting individuals. The features of children (innocence, wonder-lust to learn and explore) cannot be sloughed off as meaningless virtues which adults should avoid. In fact, we need to re-learn them, and the Bible honors those traits, and they are essential for understanding the profound yet often simply stated truths contained therein.
- God opposes myths presented as spiritual truths. (1 Tim 4:7, 2 Tim 2:15-16, 23, 2 Pet 1:21)

For Further Study:

A Ready Defense, p. 162, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

111. The Bible has some weird beliefs and ethics (Ex.: God is male), including belief in miracles.

Response(s):

- Can you cite/list for me some examples you might have in mind?
- Death penalty for homosexuals, unique rituals and sever restrictions on Jews, harems/polygamy, animal sacrifices, God as Father v. Mother, virgin birth, eat Christ’s flesh, etc.)
- Farm out particulars to the answers provided by Norman L. Geisler, etc.
- [Miracles are unique and abnormal to the laws of nature and physical/natural laws—but are not “weird”].

Answer(s):

People of biblical times did know enough of the laws of nature to recognize bone fide miracles. As C.S. Lewis put it, “When St. Joseph discovered that his bride was pregnant, he was ‘minded to put her away.’ He knew enough about biology for that...” When the disciples saw Christ walking on the water they were frightened: they would not have been frightened unless they had known the laws of nature and known that this was an exception... The Complete Book of Bible Answers, pp. 304-305, by Ron Rhodes (Harvest House Publishers: Eugene, OR), 1977

Significantly, the miracles of the Bible are actually clustered around three relatively brief periods associated with the giving of new revelation by God: the times of Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, and Christ and the apostles. These miracles were irrefutable signs from God that were designed to authenticate God’s revealed Word (The Law, the Prophets, and the New Testament). These three periods were separated by centuries in which only a very few miracles were recorded. The gap between Joshua and Elijah was about 540 years, and the gap between Elisha and Christ was about 830 years. The Bible is not a record of one miracle after another; its miracles were singular events that produced a profound response in those who were privileged to observe them... Those who object to the possibility of miracles usually assume that the natural laws of the universe cannot be overruled by some outsource force; it is a closed system. This antinatural assumption has profoundly influenced many scientists who argue that a universe open to miracles would be orderly. But scientific inquiry is not threatened by the occurrence of miracles, because they are by definition unusual events that involve a very brief suspension of the normal processes of nature by a higher power. The real issue behind this question is whether God exists. I’m Glad You Asked, pp. 52, 60, by Ken Boa (Chariot Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1977

For Further Study:

I’m Glad You Asked, pp. 110-112, by Kenneth Boa and Larry Moyer (Chariot/Victor Publishing: Colorado Springs, CO), 1982

112. You call yourself educated, yet still believe in a literal 6-day Creation story and a 6,000 year old earth? How can you believe the earth was created around 4004 B.C.?

Bible Reference(s): I Cor. 8:1, II Pet. 31-7, etc.

Response(s):

- A hundred college degrees do not negate the truth of God's Word. In fact, one can get so much knowledge, or pridefully think he is so intelligent that he rejects the revealed Word of God. Faith in God's Word is not a matter of intelligence, or lack thereof, so much as an openness to the evidence proffered, and the result of God's revealing miracle.
- Your assumption/presupposition is that all educated people deny a six-day creation. THAT presumption is "uneducated," as it is not true or consistent with reality... After all. Evolution is only a theory. Truly educated people avail themselves of all information and evidence that might shed light on their opinions and beliefs, and are not scared off or closed to subjects, just because their personal desires are not favorable to the particular discipline. (I Cor. foolishness made wise).
- Majority does not make authority. Secular scientists are incentivized to explain reality absent ANY belief in the Bible.
- Secular scientists *have* to envision millions of years, because what was created full-term—at the pace we observe things change—would *have* to take that long, if it truly 'evolved.'
- You call yourself educated, and believe that all species and all the created order evolved from one huge and random explosion, even when there is no evidence of any micro-evolution (species change), etc.(?)
- I will grant you one concession in this matter—not even the most educated person in the world knows all disciplines or sciences, so even though you and I are both educated, I will not presume that you know a lot about, say, micro biology, just like I may know little about anatomy—I never studied it in college. Therefore, let's begin by admitting that one's educatedness bears little resemblance to the areas in which one is educated, or lacking knowledge. In this case, I will assume that you have little knowledge about what the Bible teaches on the subject, and we both could learn more from experts on the evolution-creation debate, and if the answer to this issue keeps you from going to heaven, I would suggest that you endeavor to study and pursue some books I can send you to which can broaden your education, as letting that issue keep you from heaven is a huge problem for you. My knowing I will be going to heaven does not cause me near as much discomfort in trying to settle all aspects or fully investigate that debate as your condition should, as, if evolution is false, and God is real, you've got a real problem on your hands.
- First, if one "calls" themselves "educated," and they are indeed accredited as having a higher (or even extensive education), just because we may disagree on a particular matter does not negate one's educatedness. A faith based on evidence, over and as opposed to merely an opinion, possibly not researched and unsubstantiated with evidence, is always a better position to hold (don't you think)?

Answers(s):

The evidence does not speak for itself—it must be interpreted. You can offer proof, but neither theory is absolutely provable. —Dr. Jake Hebert (conversation with)

The billions of fossils found in the same layers the earth over verify a catastrophic event, like Noah's flood. —Dr. Jake Hebert (Creation Research Institute)

For Further Study:

Defending Your Faith, p. 143, by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

113. I'm going to live forever through electro cryonics or time machines.

Response(s):

- You have a confidence in science and technology which I cannot say that I can fully embrace. However, even to the extent that scientists become able to extend or prolong lives, no one will ever be able to escape the inevitable and tragic end which awaits all men—death, followed either by eternity spent in heaven or hell, depending (humanly-speaking) on whether the person received Christ as his or her personal Savior.
- The Bible assures us that "it is appointed unto man once, and then comes the judgment." It also states that through the death of one man (i.e., Adam) death came to all men. You may learn how to prolong life a little—not in God's reckoning of your appointed date with death/the grim reaper, but in our own understanding of our earthly experience—but you will not escape the reality and fact of physical death (even as many Americans live as though it will never happen to them, and try to block that negative, unpleasant reality from their conscious thinking. Funerals and mortuary processions should give you a sober taste of and encounter with reality).

114. Do you believe in the Shroud of Turin? (i.e., that it's authentic/the real thing/Christ's burial cloth).

Response(s):

- It is possible, but I have not studied the evidence enough to make my own conclusions. However, may I refer you to some writings of men who have done more extensive study, so that you may benefit from their research? Whichever way you conclude on this matter, what really matters is your position on the Man who may or may not have worn that face cloth—have you ever personally prayed to receive Jesus Christ into your life for the forgiveness of all your sins?
- The Bible says, whether corroborated by the Shroud of Turin or not, that Christ indeed did die, was buried, and rose again, and is alive now desiring to save your eternal soul. Have you ever asked Him to do so/let Him?
- It may very well be. Certainly, unless Christ's burial cloths were destroyed, or deteriorated/decayed/disintegrated, we should expect that they both existed and could still exist.
- I have not studied the evidence well enough to form a conclusion, but the subject I have studied concerns your eternal salvation...

For Further Study:

- The Signature of God, by Grant Jeffries (Whitaker House Publishers: Benton, NY), 1997
- Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 155-169, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980
- Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 705-706, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

SALVATION, FAITH AND ASSURANCE

115. Why did Christ have to die on a cross for me to go to heaven? How could someone else die in my place/stead?

Response(s):

- Because God has always required a just payment for offences done against Him, though the instrumentality of the shed blood of a sacrificial Lamb. Death is the cost for our sins, and though all men will physically die, because of Christ's death on the cross in our place and on our behalf, we need not suffer eternal and spiritual death in hell, because Christ has provided us the way of access to an otherwise offended and separated holy God and Creator, with whom we can now be intimately and lovingly related, by having received His free gift of salvation which no human works could ever have achieved of their own selves. That's why God chose to bridge the gap for us, and the love shown in that one, historical event is exactly why I would encourage you to make sure that you personally appropriate the gift Christ's death has provided for you, if you will believe.
- To understand the answer to your question would require you to know some information from the Old Testament concerning what God has revealed about His character, and His view on the need for sacrifices, as a way to atone or amend the rift caused by men's sins, and between man and his maker...
- In human criminal justice, another person cannot take the payment for your wrongdoing. When we move to the spiritual dimension, that's the only hope you have, because 1) God has provided it for you, and it is the only way to be reconciled with Him, and 2) because a human can never pay his own debt to God and escape hell, as hell IS punishment for our sins. The only hope we have IS that God would forgive our sins, and not account/reckon and enforce justice against us. We desperately need His mercy, or there is no hope.
- Are you familiar with the Old Testament concept of sacrifice, or what theologians call "atonement?" If not, I can sure see why that confuses you. let me give a brief sketch of the process/concept.

116. Why did Christ have to shed blood? Why do I need the blood? What are the origins and reasons for a blood sacrifice?

Response(s): See Answer to Question #115, above.

- The Bible says that "the life is in the blood." When blood is shed, that term represents the dying of a person, and God's anger at sin is only allayed by His punishment falling on something or Somebody, as God is just. Because He is also merciful, analogous to and as a full and final completion of the Old testament sacrifices, Jesus was that spotless, blemish-less lamb, sacrificed for YOUR sins, both so you would not have to pay your own debt, and also as a demonstration of His love for you, as the punishment you were and are guilty of has to fall on someone...God does not just ignore the problem.

For Further Study:

- The Open Bible, pp. 1348-1349 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

117. How can the death of one man 2,000 years ago help me today?

Response(s):

- Because that same sacrificial Lamb/Man is alive today, ready to give you the same life he gave people back then.
- Exactly because that same human being and Divine Person, Jesus Christ, is still alive, in heaven, today. Not only did His work on the cross for your benefit/on your behalf work to allow heaven to be yours as a free gift, He also is actively working to convince you to accept it for yourself, personally, to put His standing before God into your “spiritual bank account,” as it were. If Christ had not resurrected from the dead; that is, if He were still dead, your question would be a valid objection to the message I am presenting to you. Also, God’s view—not His accounting--of time differs from ours, in that 2,000 is just a drop in the bucket of time lapse for the One who eternally is.

For Further Study:

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 62-63, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

118. What is salvation?

Response(s):

- Salvation is an eternal “transaction” (better, event or experience) in which God does all the work of “saving”, when man relies on Him so to do, to eternal change the person’s status before a holy God, and the consequences and ramifications/implications of that sinful condition, by forgiving them all of the sins and offenses they have (and will) committed against Him, solely based on His merciful and gracious kindness in having sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty and price for those sins which men would otherwise have had to pay for themselves, ultimately in hell.
- Salvation is the experience you need, and every person needs, in which our sinful status before God is wiped clean by His forgiving us all of our sins based on the shed blood of Jesus Christ on the cross. When we ask Christ to forgive us and live within, God changes the account, puts His Spirit within us and makes us new persons on the inside. The Bible calls this being “born again.” There is nothing more important, and it changes one’s eternal destiny forever. That is New Testament salvation in Jesus Christ!
- The miraculous establishment of an eternal, personal relationship with God, where He forgives all of man’s sins, and indwells and empowers such changed believers with Himself.

119. Why would God give you the one reward which alone motivates men to live good?

Response(s):

- For one, because God has the power, by saving you, of motivating from a different perspective—to please Him and because of what He did for you (thankfulness) rather than MAN’S thinking that fear of hell or hope of heaven motivates morality. Neither could be true, as the standard is perfection, so living sinfully would merit fear of the future, as would living holy, because no one can live perfectly holy from birth to death, so the end result is the same—legitimate, credible fear of the future.
- He had His reasons, but it is likely centered around the fact that he knows that even a motivated lost person will sin, and never be perfect, so it is not a matter of motivation, but instilling a new capacity, or nature, so that the Christian, by the power of the Holy Spirit, can more and more live the type of life God intended every man to live unto Him. Truly, you don’t think that eternal rewards in heaven, and the satisfaction of actually bringing pleasure to and pleasing God are motivating—IF you have the capacity so to do? I certainly find it revving on a daily basis.

120. What must I do to be saved?

Response(s):

- Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. (**Ac. 16:30-31**). That is and means, pray to ask God to forgive all your sins and to make you a new creature through Jesus Christ. Trust/lean/rely completely on God, based on the promises in His Word, to do what He says He will do, when He says.

For Further Study:

Free and Clear, by Larry Moyer

Absolutely Free, by Zane Hodges

So Great Salvation, by Charles Ryrie

The Open Bible, p. 1349 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

121. Should Christians give away all their possessions?

Response(s):

- God may have that in His plan for some people. However, more likely than not, most people must deal with how important possessions are to them, in their values, priorities and attitude—not innately in the assets themselves.
- There is a lot of wisdom in both being charitable and in wisely and adequately providing for one's own family. If money is an idol to a believer, God may have them break that habit, and on rare occasions this form of breaking might be the way he leads, but I would think that more often, it would be through adverse circumstances that teach them not to cling to the bank account. Also, even if you give away all your possessions, you will not solve all the world's problems, and you will then become a drain on society—which is not as good thing—unless God specifically tells you you must (sort of like the question should I go do evangelism in Afghanistan). Even the Scriptures state that you could give everything away, have no love, and gain nothing by so doing. As is often the case, it is the internal motivation and attitude more than the external act which matters to God.
- Not necessarily. It depends...

For Further Study:

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 58-59, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

122 . What makes Christian conversion valid? Can't it be explained psychologically?

Response(s):

- First, because it is real, and God makes it a valid experience.
- Second, the enduring results make it different. Thirdly, a decision empowered by God's Spirit is innately different from a New year's resolution to become a better person. Fourth, judgment day will ultimately prove it out—but that's too late if you wait that late to find out.
- Paul and Peter's change as example (Peter's after the resurrection, from an abandoner to powerful preacher). Martyrs rarely take such drastic measures if they are not fully convinced they are dying for a real vs. delusional cause (though Heaven's Gate is a testimony to suicidal delusion, Christian martyrs showed no signs of delusional insanity).
- Testimonies of "really bad" jailed prisoners? Don't knock it until you've tried it/walked in my moccasins argument? **[testimonies of self-improvement/New Years' resolution changes appear to counter some of the argument**, though the breadth of change is significantly different—not merely one or two habits, but many—a lifestyle change over a lifetime). Ultimately, you cannot prove it, as it is a sovereignly revealed miracle from the heavenly Father.
- Testimonies of our experience, even though the experience was real and is valid, is not the power which can change our hearers' lives—it is the Gospel which has such power, so get that message before them, as God's Word never returns to Him void. Though apologists have taught that "no one can argue with your 'testimony,' the objective is always superior to the subjective, though the subjective MUST have been experienced, if one is to preach the objective message (and not just to do so effectively—there is serious spiritual warfare danger potential for claiming to be "of God" and seeking to utilize His power, when you do not possess it inside; Ex.: Ac. 19:13-16). If God's Spirit is "working on" the person you are witnessing to, he will "know" (i.e., have the Spirit's borne witness) that what you speak is truth, even if he does not then and there receive/accept/respond to it.
[Retort?: "Millions" (from varied walks of life?) have testified Buddah (i.e., their religion) has given them peace and a meaning in life; answers to prayer or comparing god's powers like Mount Carmel valid way to demonstrate god is greater, today? Also, back-sliders, carnals and fall always tend to diminish some credibility, as their behavior contradicts the reality within them if indeed it ever was]
- The extreme certainty of salvation, not to the point of testing the Lord by running out in a freeway, but in confidently facing death, or opposing men (as in Acts) gives evidence supporting its reality. One could say that confidence could be misplaced, ignorance or self-deception, but Christians with such conviction can usually be tested with psychological examinations and show that they are sane, sober thinking individuals, who evidence no signs of delusional thinking, wild imaginations, hearing voices, etc. There is a qualitative difference between a decision to make changes in one's life for the better and toward more responsible living, and the lifestyle of a committed believer.

Answer(s):

"Many of you are saying, 'Christ changed your life, so what?' One thing that has confirmed to me the resurrection of Jesus Christ two thousand years ago is the transformation of the lives of millions of people when then became

related by faith to the person of Jesus. Although they are from every walk of life and from all the nations of the world, they are changed in remarkably similar ways.”

“Some say it is just wishful thinking, or they simply excuse it by saying it doesn’t prove a thing. For a Christian, behind his subjective experience is an objective reality as its basis. This objective reality is the person of Jesus Christ and His resurrection.”

“There are two questions or tests I apply to a subjective experience.

1. First, What is the objective reality for the subjective experience?
2. Second, How many other people have has the same subjective experience from being related to the objective reality?”

Example: A student claiming a stewed tomato in his shoe has changed his life, giving him peace and the ability to run the 100-yard dash in 10 seconds flat. It’s hard to argue when one can back up his claim. “A personal testimony is often a subjective argument for the reality of something. Therefore, don’t dismiss a subjective experience as being irrelevant.

Now, to apply these two tests to the Christian experience...

1. The objective reality or basis for my subjective experience of a changed life was the person of Jesus and His resurrection.
2. How many others have had this same subjective experience from being related to the object, Jesus Christ? “The evidence is overwhelming. Truly millions of people, from all backgrounds, nationalities and professions...” To those who say it is a delusion, then WOW! What a powerful delusion! “...From the first century A.D. down to the present, Jesus Christ has been radically changing the lives of individuals from all walks of life.” (**See:** example testimonies in pp. 430-466).

Source: A Ready Defense, pp. 427-429, by Josh McDowell, (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 119-120, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

Evidence That Demands a Verdict, pp. 325-361, by Josh McDowell (Here’s Life Publishers, Inc.: San Bernardino, CA), 1979

A Ready Defense, pp. 427-466, 13-19, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

123. Can Christianity be proved (i.e., scientifically)?

Response(s):

--**See also:** Answer to Question #86, above.

--It can be proved about as soundly as it could be disproved(?). As in other such issues, one must assess and judge the weight of the evidence and make a reasoned decision, based thereupon. It is the foolish person and the unwise one who would shrug off Christianity without ever making a serious inquiry into both its claims and evidences.

---Just as with trying to disprove Christianity, the quality of evidence and nature of scientific “proof” differs from that achieved by repeated testing under the scientific method. God has so arranged things that He has rarely in history “personally shown up” in manifestations one could hardly doubt, yet, those few times when He has, namely in the Person of Jesus Christ, His miracles, the giving of the Law (etc.) bear substantive evidence attested to by eye witnesses for us to accept as reliable the writings he later inspired them to pen.

--God has mercy on some doubters, but it is more blessed to not see and yet believe, so may I recommend that you spend more time reading God’s Word—especially the Gospel of John—than in attempting to search down the many details associated with extra-biblical evidence which substantiates the message found therein.

---Christianity cannot be either disproved or “proved,” in the scientific definition of that term, yo888888

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 145-146, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980

A Ready Defense, pp. 421-423, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

124. That’s naive, easy believism that isn’t intellectually honest and clings mindlessly to the Bible, even when facts dispute and challenge the beliefs.

Response(s):

--On the issue of Christianity being “mindless,” see the answer to question #33, above.

---As to the charge of “easy-believism,” (amazingly, often charged against Christ’s Church by those claiming to be members thereof) see the answers to questions #21, 102 , above.

---As to whether it is naïve to believe in Christ or intellectually dishonest so to do, it is in fact, quite the opposite that is true. A willful non-believer must intellectually disregard credible, solid and numerous

evidence for salvation in Christ, in order to hold onto things he can only hope are true, as if they were to be true, he would be justified in remaining in his sinful lifestyle (possibly a deeper motive for his belief). Rather than stick one's head in the sand, as the evidence points a direction the skeptic is not going or living, what is truly naïve is to be gullible enough to accept—without further investigation—the devil's lie that Christianity is just a lie, myth or a hoped for reality (I Cor. 15:19). The intellectual dishonesty is committed by people unwilling to be open-minded enough to explore the evidence for Christ, who accept hook line and sinker the thought that they will be O.K. in the afterlife remaining as is—without Christ.

--We are not claiming that our case is such a lay-down, hands-down clear one that no one could possibly doubt it (like as unto the claim that human beings live on earth—a claim of whose quality would leave no room for faith), but we are suggesting that the weight of the evidence is in the favor of Christianity, and that it is often more a moral problem than an intellectual one, when one makes such accusations as is found in this question.

125. There have to be strings attached to this “gift.”

Response(s):

--You speak from the experience of only this life—not from having experienced God and His character in giving. Many times, in this world, strings are attached. Yet, God is not beholden to the way sinful man conducts their transactions, so to take that analogy of giving and apply it to God is totally inappropriate.

--If the offer/transaction which God initiated were a purely human and secular offer, as with all other offers which enter our lives as options, on a daily basis, your point would be well-taken, as fallen men seem to hardly ever be able to even come close to emulating the Father, in making a truly gracious offer which does not benefit the offeror financially. However, that “truth,” derived from dealings in this world, has no legitimate carryover to spiritual things, and we must not run the risk of insinuating that God has to behave as men do, as He is wholly other. The fact of the matter is, even if contrary to our ordinary experience, that the Bible does teach God's unconditional love, and His totally free offer of eternal life, apart from any works of man at all. ‘Believe it or not,’ you must ‘believe it or’ your will ‘not’ receive its benefits.

--If your contention does not square with the revelation of Scripture, you must abandon preconceived ideas of what is true in regard to God.

--[Strings were the cords with which Christ was beaten?]

126. Is baptism necessary for salvation?

Bible Reference(s): I Pet. 3:21, I Cor. 1:17.

Response(s):

--Although you may meet claiming Christians who would answer this question affirmatively (namely, Church of Christ), and though one could find a handful of verses which might lead one to tend to think that could be the case, the vast majority of verses teach and the truth of the matter is that water baptism is NOT required for salvation. It is a necessary first step of obedience for believers, but would constitute a work of man in addition to the non-work of faith/trusting Christ, which alone secures salvation, and salvation, is clearly, not of any works of man. **(Eph. 2:8-9).**

--It is not necessary for salvation, but it is an essential first step toward sanctification. It is the outward manifestation of the inward change of heart brought about by the residing Spirit's presence and baptism, and is God's expected first act of obedience of all true believers.

--You can say that it is not required for salvation, but if one is seeking to avoid being water baptized. It might cause others to wonder why a child of God would want to avoid pleasing their heavenly Father immediately upon His gracious saving of their soul.

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1346 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

127. There are things I must do before I become a Christian.

Response(s):

--You may have a misunderstanding of salvation. God will get your moral “issues” resolved, once He is in your life. Your (greatest) need is Christ—not trying to clean up your act and make yourself presentable to Him. You can never be morally acceptable, no matter how hard you try. That's why you need Him. Plus, a decision to wait, even if for moral-sounding reasons, is a slap in the face of God and a willful rejection of His offer. How could such a decision truly be a moral one, though it can sound so

by appearing to say you will tidy up first. Technically, even that is sin, as you are spurning God and independently trying to do things your own way. Besides, who knows for sure that there will be a tomorrow, or that God will give you a second or third chance? Behold, today is the day of salvation. --You may feel the need to get things right with people, or earn a certain amount of money before, or a number of other things—even good things—which will produce a procrastination of the decision, even if your motives are for moral reasons, but on the authority of the Word of God I can assure you that there is nothing at all needed or preventing you—today—from trusting Jesus Christ for your personal salvation. It is also equally true, that, spiritually speaking, the sort of thoughts which cause a man to delay this most crucial of life decisions, ultimately may be traced back directly to the devil, as he would just love you never to make the decision, to see you die before you made up your mind, as he wants to steal, kill and destroy as many human beings as he can possibly deceive.

128. God can save people without human intervention in the process (Cf.: lifestyle evangelism and Rom. 1).

Response(s):

- See also:** Answer to question #51, above.
- God's ability can be quite different from what He chooses to do. We must operate off of what He has revealed to us, and that is that it is the Church's job to tell the world about Jesus and the lost man's responsibility to respond to God with faith in Jesus Christ. Relying on God to act in a fashion He does not apparently often do, is a sin for the Christian and a sinful delaying tactic, which could have eternal consequences, for the lost person.
- God could send all people to hell or heaven. So what? What matters is what will He do and what does He do, based on what His word says.
- God is *able* to do many things He apparently does rarely to never. One thing we can be perfectly clear about, from our reading of Scripture, is that God has chosen to use men to evangelize the world, and that the multitudes of lost in the world need the message we have no excuse but to bring to them! History and Scripture reveals that it is the exception rather than the rule that God uses methods other than human intervention through evangelism, and it would be a mistake of gargantuan proportions for any true believer to feel much sense of peace and al-rightness, in thinking about an ability God possesses, that He apparently rarely uses, to in any way make us feel anything but miserable about the pitiful track record most have in God's Church in the most important venture of all (as far as lost men are concerned)—evangelism. Quit even holding the thoughts of god sending angels or other means, until the Rapture, and let your mind be set on an attitude of commitment to avidly be about the task. This same spirit of Calvinism is the same spirit very well known for minimizing calls for lost people to pray to receive Jesus, just as that same spirit so often engenders apathy, indifference or lack of concerned motivation for Christians to be radically committed to evangelism—the fruits and description of which should show any regular Bible reader the source from whence it comes, given God's repeated and cumulative emphasis on lost men's putting faith in Christ, and saved men's need to be about the work of evangelism (and in a big way).
- [Ability yes; choice, rarely Tell me the Gospel you know from looking at creation (I'm here to speak it to you; i.e., don't test the Lord?)]

129. Isn't God going to save everybody in the final analysis, anyway? (i.e., Universalism).

Response(s):

- Whatever gave you that impression? Where did you pick up such an idea? Have you ever seen any emphases in Scripture which would lead you to that belief, or have you not been reading a lot lately? Nowhere in Scripture is Universalism taught, and if it were true, God could have secured it without the death of his Son (i.e., by universal fiat), or our involvement in evangelism, and there would be no need for a literal hell—but that is not the case at all. No indeed! Men are most definitely going to be in hell, and, sadly, that fact applies to the majority of human beings (**Mt. 7:13**).
- No He is not, and wherever you got that idea, I can 100% assure you that it was not from God or from the Bible. Ultimately and spiritually, the thought comes from Satan/hell, because it is both false, and dangerous, in leading lost people to a false sense of security that things will be alright, when they will actually be terribly not alright—and that, forever. If all will be saved, why trust Jesus Christ and His sacrifice on the cross? Why so many exhortations so to do? Are they meaningless statements, or mere formalities God has to put in His book to cover all the bases?

Answer(s):

- Scripture does not teach universal salvation. Christ died to render all men “savable,” but only those who believe and appropriate what He accomplished on the cross will be saved. (Jn. 3:16, 36, Ac. 10:43, I Jn. 2:2, Rev. 20:11-15, Isa. 59:20).

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, p. 131, by Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

For Further Study:

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 746-750, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

130. What’s the big deal about salvation—you may lose it later anyway?

Response(s):

---To think that it is not such a big deal is to have under-appreciated both its value and the seriousness of your present condition before God. Also, if you are graced to possess eternal life, you do not lose it.

After all, it is called (and is by substance), “eternal” (vs. temporal) life!

---1) It is first a big deal because you are going to hell, if nothing changes in your life, and 2) it is also a valuable big deal, because salvation is forever. Contrary to what some who name the name of Jesus may have told you (known as Arminians of various denominations), you will never lose the eternal (vs. temporal) salvation (after all, it is called “eternal” life) gift, unless, of course, you never possessed it, which is the case of all who have never prayed to receive Christ for salvation. No one loses salvation, but some people, unwisely choose never to take God up on His most gracious offer—a pitiful decision they will kick themselves all of eternity for having made (if, of course, one can kick one’s self while contemporaneously fending off flames, in hell—not to be too dramatic but accurate in graphical depiction).

---To ask, “what’s the big deal,” in the same sentence as salvation, indicates to me that you do not know very much and have not yet begun to grasp the full content of the Gospel, your own helpless position as a sinner, and the immeasurable and invaluable worth of freely being graciously allowed to miss out on a punishment no one will be able to withstand, and which, understand it or not, now awaits you and will be faced by you at an unknown (to you) time which could even happen today. Do you not fear The Lord enough to recognize your penniless plight of moral corruption, and severe need of His salvation this instance? Should these realities have escaped you, I ask for the privilege of reviewing again with you the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Answer(s):

- Since you didn’t earn your salvation by works or personal merit, you can’t lose it by doing bad or not doing something good, either.
- Salvation is by grace through faith alone, based on God’s mercy.
- You don’t have the power to save yourself, and, conversely, you don’t have the power to unsave yourself.
- Salvation is secured by the very power and person of God. (Eph. 1:13-14, I Pet. 1:3-5, Jn. 10:27-30, Tit. 2:11-14, 3:4-8, Rom. 8:31-39).

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, p. 133, by Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

He gave you ETERNAL vs. Temporal life, and He says you have/possess it NOW.

For Further Study:

Salvation is Forever, by Robert Glenn Gromacki, Chicago: Moody Press, 1973

131. I think you’re making too big a deal about this.

Response(s):

---The allegation of going “overboard” about salvation, though conceivably a behavioral possibility, is hardly ever a problem American Christians suffer from. It would be difficult to over-state the importance of making sure you do not go to hell, when you could be leaving for that destination at any time, and especially when you read in the Bible about what hell will be like for you, maybe even today. In evangelism, there is both an urgency and a sober seriousness that can never be detached from the activity of evangelism, if you are conducting Biblical evangelism.

---Tell me honestly...How big a deal will it be when you die, and face God on judgment day, and where you spend the rest of eternity is up for grabs—heaven or hell? How is that date of transaction any more serious then, as now, when you do have the opportunity to positively respond to the offer that the destination be heaven, and not hell, rather than on that day, when the choice will have already been made for you, by your non-response in this life?

- If death, heaven and hell, sin, life and God/Jesus Christ are not big issues, what is your definition of a “big” issue?
- If you think I am over-blowing the proportionality of this subject’s importance, or if I am accurately giving it its proper perspective, but that action makes you uncomfortable inside—either way, you may choose to decide to drop the subject, and let time “heal all,” but it is my responsibility before God to at least warn you that I do not consider it a light matter (or even a matter one can easily over-emphasize), and that you leave this subject having been warned of the potential consequences if you never do settle the matter in your heart, before God, to whatever extent you do consider it important, as a man without Christ in this life is a man without any hope in the next.

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1343 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

PSEUDO-THEOLOGICAL/PHILOSOPHICAL/RELIGIOUS OBJECTIONS

132. What do you know of Greek, Hebrew of textual criticism? (i.e., are you a Bible scholar?).

Response(s):

[If you know some, use that asset to your credit, as human leverage].

- Though I do not personally know any/much of those languages, by God’s design I do have full access to a great number of works and reliable scholars who do, and who have properly translated (something different from interpretation) the original languages, and there are so many helps/resources to aid my understanding that my lack of knowledge of those languages—especially with the presence of the Holy Spirit resident within—makes the difference practically negligible. This is NOT to say there is no value in learning the languages, or that certain nuances and more details can be derived there from. I simply do not feel that God has lead me—yet—to make such a study, as I am fully able to learn the Scriptures as they presently stand, and since I have no intentions in going into the career ministry profession.
- Have you studied them? Perhaps your studies have uncovered some information I really need to know about that would make the clear translational works provably 100% wrong. If that is so, I want to know about it, as I am not going to follow an untruthful religion.
- yes or no, but more importantly I personally know the Author who inspired the Greek and Hebrew originals... 1. What do you know of them? Are you able to discuss the matter intelligently enough to be able to understand the Bible in ways significantly different from what learned scholars have diligently slaved over to produce in the form of our English version Bibles? Does the Bible require that one know those languages expertly before they can understand “Jesus loves me, this I know,” or the verse, John 3:16? It does not take becoming a scholar (as important as that is) to understand the basics of Christianity, especially to act on the Gospel’s invitation to invite Christ to forgive all your sins and come live in your heart. There are scholars who are experts in these areas, and I would be happy to refer you to them—and maybe they’d contact you about any concerns you have which would legitimately be keeping you from placing faith in Christ. A study of the original languages can be rewarding and impactful, but is not necessary for you or I to intelligently discuss the message most important for you to hear. Truth is communicated through words, and God is fully capable of communicating through English, as He has in all other languages (tongues ex.), so the barrier to great understanding of what He wants to tell you is not so much in the intricacies of linguistic differences, but in the sinful resistance and rebellion of the fallen human heart. “If anyone will hear My voice/is willing to do His will, He will make Himself known...” (Jn. 7:17).
- If you’re a layman/layperson, like myself, probably as much as you. (~joke).

For Further Study:

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 86-91, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

The Case for Faith, pp. 19-130, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2002

133. You can know God without “receiving Christ,” or being “born again.”

Response(s):

- You can know about God, or have a feeling or experience after which you think you know God, but the Bible clearly teaches that no one can know god apart from a saving relationship to Jesus Christ. Period, and no exceptions.
- The only Christian that exists is the born-again type. Anyone claiming to be a Christian, who has never been born again, is “Christian” in name or denomination only—which serves no eternal purpose

- toward any access to heaven or God in the afterlife. (Cf.: “**Christendom**” and **Protestantism?**).
- A person can know about God, have learned facts about Him, but it is completely unbiblical to hold that anyone can relationally know God (in the salvific sense of that term) without both being born again and receiving Christ—both synonyms of the same necessary experience for anyone to see the kingdom of God. To say it another way, if you have never received Christ or been born again, rest completely assured that you are facing an eternity separated from God, and that you have yet to know God in the biblical way God has intended for you to “know” Him.
 - Not according to God and His Word, and I’ll take His word as final on the matter rather than a mere man’s.
 - Don’t be confused—man can know the “god” of this world—the devil—just by being physically born. But to know the God of the universe requires one to personally put their faith in Him, through Jesus Christ, to forgive all their sins and give them eternal life.

134. Why are we here? Why did God make us?

Response(s):

- May I suggest to you that if you do not yet know the answers to these two questions, finding the answers would be the most important thing you could do from here on out. How can you live your life not knowing what life is all about and why or how you are to live it?
- If you do not hold the Bible to be your ultimate authority for truth in this life, I would guess that question appears baffling and to be a good one to ponder. However, the Bible is not unclear as to the answer to your question one bit, and might not even consider such a question to be “philosophical” in nature, as it is simply asking for information the Bible contains. As can readily be seen from the life of our spiritual forefather, Adam, man was created to live in reliant/dependent relationship with the heavenly Father; that is, to walk by faith. Nothing could be clearer, and this answer explains how both the obedience that faith walking engenders, and the resultant effect which benefits God—both before men and within Himself—that of being glorified thereby, explain very clearly the answer to your question. Some will say man was made “to glorify God and enjoy Him forever,” but I believe that to glorify God is done but walking obedient to the faith He gives, and our mindset ought to be intent on doing His will, knowing He will receive glory there from. Also, whether we enjoy the experience all the time, or sometimes wrestle with the issue of being faithful, it is our “job” to do God’s will, by faith, as recipients of His gracious salvation through Jesus Christ. Joy is to be the expected outcome of such a walk, but our purpose in life is to do God’s will, in my own yet studied opinion.
- You have no idea what the answers to those questions are, yet you are predisposed to question the Christian answers to your questions?
- God created us to have eternal and intimate fellowship with Him, which no person unrelated to Him, spiritually, can do.

135. Heaven and hell are not real (symbolize euphoria and punishment/judgment for evil). Hell is only a state of mind.

Bible Reference(s): See Answer to Question #58, above.

Response(s):

- Not according to the Word of God—the Bible. (improvable?). Tell that to Lazarus and the rich man. Tell that to all the people you have known who never trusted Christ and are now deceased. The Bible says otherwise. Sure, your experience can be a figurative hell, and you can think in extremely negative ways, but that is not the same thing as what you will literally, spiritually face when you die—an eternal flame, darkness, where the worm does not die and you are totally separated from God forever.
- Are you more knowledgeable and honest than Jesus, because He said that they were?
- How do you know? Where did you get that opinion, or who told you so? Unfortunately, ultimately and spiritually, that lie is from Satan, and I would caution you to re-think your opinion, lest you personally experience hell for yourself, with no hope of extraction, because you stubbornly and conveniently chose to continue to hold that wrong but comforting viewpoint.

Answer(s):

- Scripture teaches the absolute reality of both heaven and hell. Heaven is a place of conscious and eternal blessing in the Lord’s presence, while hell is a place of conscious torment, eternally separated from God. (Mt. 25:41, II Th. 1:8-9, Lk. 16:19-31, 22:33-43, Rev. 20:7-22:21).

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, p. 129, by Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

For Further Study:

136. The devil is not real. Haven't we outgrown belief in the devil? Are you one of those who believe there's a demon behind every doorstep?

Response(s):

- Just the opposite, your stating a belief that he is not real just goes to show he's not only real, but successfully doing his job to your detriment. Just because you cannot see something does not mean it does not exist. The evidence of his workings is everywhere, and, though it takes supernatural revelation to know about him, we have that revelation, if you choose to believe what God has said, over and above your own, less-informed (than God) opinion as to the devil's existence.
- He's so real he's already worked his deceptive magic on you, because you're merely mimicking beliefs he wants you to hold (to your own destruction—Jn. 10:10).
- The devil is a personal, powerful, created yet fallen creature whose intent is only and always evil, even as regards what he desires to do to even to you. (**See: doctrine of the devil**).

For Further Study:

The Complete Book of Bible Answers, pp. 241-253, by Ron Rhodes (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997
Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 683-684, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 18-19, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

137. If Satan does exist, so what?

Response(s):

- So what? Since he does exist, if you know anything about his goals for life and work/activity, you will quickly see how important and serious a matter it is that he and his forces are at work in our world, to evoke and produce evil. That question is sort of like saying they just let loose a thousand rabid bulldogs onto our town—so what, or, there is a convoy of hazardous nuclear material transport trucks out of control, without drivers, heading for the city—so what?
- You know, unfortunately you and your question are prima facie evidence of his work in this world—not that you are not sincere in wanting to know if the devil exists, but in the fact that he has already deluded your heart into having little concern for what impact his reality could have on you. Don't you see that he has already influenced you negatively, in your thinking that his existence is of no consequence. Let me tell you frankly, his existence is extremely relevant, as his plan is to take you eternally to hell with him, and for anyone to doubt his existence, or to doubt his evil intentions already bears witness that he is not only alive, but that his evil schemes are working, at least to a certain extent.
- The “so what?” question can easily be answered in/with the question of where the devil will eventually live, forever, according to the Bible, solely because that same place or torment is the promised eternal abode of all who reject Jesus Christ, which I hope you will not do for the rest of your life here on earth.

For Further Study:

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 22-23, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

138. Isn't demon-possession really mental illness?

Response(s):

- I am not a psychologist, or Bible historian, but it appears to me that sometimes the two can be essentially the same, only re-named, but it is even more clear to me that most mental illness of today never reach the point of seriousness as those demon-possession experienced catalogued in the Bible. Soul and spirit are different, yet tied together, and when one is predominantly the cause, to the lessening of the other, is not often easy to tell. However, the effects and manifestations of demon-possession do not often line up with the behavior we typically see in the modern-day mentally ill.
- In some cases, it may be the same thing. Clearly in others there is a marked difference. The distinctions may not always be obvious to the casual observer, but certainly God knows the difference, and I would presume that psychologists, ministers, psychiatrists and others who have ever witnessed the real thing would be able to discern the difference between “normal crazy,” if you will, and demon-possession.
- Some Bible opponents have alleged that the New Testament writers were simply describing mental illness without the sophistication and knowledge that we now possess. However, that view would not be taking into account that those authors were inspired of God, and so what they wrote was true and accurate, as God would not call one thing X, if it were in fact NOT X, but Y. Certainly, I shy away from fellow brethren's viewpoint that there is a demon behind every doorstep, and that every cough or

hic-up is demonic. However, I DO take seriously the Bible's injunctions when it instruct us as to the spiritual condition of certain ill people it labels demon-possessed.

For Further Study:

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 20-21, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

139. Respect others' beliefs (i.e., "tolerance").

Response(s):

- I will agree with you that we ought not to disrespect others' sincere if not misguided or errant beliefs. The attempt at believing something is humanly noble, yet we are not required to not allowed to buy into or accept beliefs which are not consistent with the Word of God. There is a difference between respecting one's right to their opinion, and having the right to be wrong.
- Respect does not require accept and/or Other Religions they are Wrong? don't try to convince
- You can respect the believer and not need to show respect for the devil's doctrines. Do not make the adherent feel as if they are stupid for holding such a belief, but see them as victims of Satan (which they are) and try to help them and give convincing reasons and evidence to try to get them, by grace, to change their views.
- Respect is not the same as accepting, or obedient responsibility to reprove false doctrine, as God tells believers to do.

Wrong Religious Beliefs: The following list is **not** given with any intention of *insulting* or *criticizing* anyone, but to educate you as to what beliefs simply are **not true**...

#1: Good works earn you salvation. Also, universalism, perfectionism, annihilationism, cessationism, reincarnation; atheism, agnosticism, secular humanism, hedonism, narcissism, nihilism, Jesus was the devil's brother, there are only 144,000 people to be in heaven, blood transfusions are evil, it is evil to celebrate holidays, cows are to be worshipped, ancestor worship, multiple gods, multiple celestial wives on your own planet, secret handshakes, temple diapers, Book of Mormon and Moroni (i.e., all extra biblical revelation); Jesus was just a good man or a prophet; baptismal regeneration, it is evil to have musical instruments in worship, all dancing is evil, the New Testament *requires* a tithe, Christians cannot drink at all, etc.

Pagan Practices Introduced into the Church

- AD 300--Prayers for the dead
- AD 300--Making the sign of the cross
- AD 375--Worship of saints and angels
- AD 394--Mass first instituted
- AD 431--Priests began dressing differently from laymen
- AD 526--Extreme unction
- AD 593--Doctrine of Purgatory introduced
- AD 600--Worship services conducted in Latin
- AD 600--Prayers directed to Mary
- AD 607--Boniface III made first pope
- AD 709--Kissing the pope's foot
- AD 786--Worship of images and relics
- AD 850--Use of "holy water" began
- AD 995--Canonization of dead saints
- AD 998--Fasting on Fridays and during Lent
- AD 1079--Celibacy of the priesthood
- AD 1090--Prayer beads
- AD 1184--The Inquisition
- AD 1190--Sale of Indulgences
- AD 1215--Transubstantiation
- AD 1220--Adoration of the wafer (Host)
- AD 1229--Bible forbidden to laymen
- AD 1414--Cup forbidden to people at communion
- AD 1439--Doctrine of Purgatory decreed
- AD 1439--Doctrine of seven sacraments affirmed
- AD 1508--The Ave Maria approved
- AD 1513--Jesuit order founded
- AD 1545--Tradition is granted equal authority with the Bible
- AD 1546--Apocryphal books put into the Bible

AD 1854—Immaculate Conception of Mary
 AD 1864—Syllabus of Errors proclaimed
 AD 1870—Infallibility of pope declared
 AD 1930—Public schools condemned
 AD 1950—Assumption of the Virgin Mary
 AD 1965—Mary proclaimed Mother of the Church
Revelation: Illustrated and Made Plain, pp. 43-44, by Tim LaHaye (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1975
 [Also unbiblical are: calling someone “Pope,” or “father;” confessionals to priests, and penance].

In short, **ANYTHING** contrary to the word of God is, by definition, **false doctrine**, no matter how *well-intentioned*.

For Further Study:

True for You, but Not for Me, pp. 35-37, 78-81, by Paul Copan (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1998

140. Religion is whatever you feel is right.

Response(s):

---At least for a time, Charles Manson likely believed what he did felt “right.” But did that misguided feeling have any basis in fact? If one’s “feeling” that his way is right, when it is contrary to what God has said about salvation only in Christ, which do you truly believe must give way/yield. Remember, the Bible says that “There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.” (**Pv. 14:12**). **See also: Judg. 17:6.** “The popular adage in America, “if it feels good, do it,” has no place in determining biblical and ultimate truth!

---That may be what you define as “religion,” but that experience or concept is nothing like biblical, true religion, as its contents are set and established, and what you feel about its truths and ways has no effect toward their changing one iota. Adolph Hitler certainly believed in his cause...but was he “right?” He probably felt he was, but we have in the Bible objective criterion to say unequivocally that he was dead wrong. In immoral relationships, the unmarried male may feel abortion of his illegitimately conceived child is right, while the mother may feel just the opposite. Can their feelings about morality both be right at the same time, and if so, how could you implement both alternatives?

---Hitler, Jim Jones and suicidal Jihad terrorists felt that way too. Were they right?

141. That’s your opinion. [a very popular modern American slogan/response].

Response(s):

---It IS my opinion, but it was not at all first MY opinion. It is God’s opinion—I simply, later on, adapted it as my own as well, but the sheer grace of God. It now is my own opinion—but my opinion is BASED on something—not just a view I hold just because I happen to feel or hold it for no particular reason, or because someone told me I should. What are the bases for the opinions you hold on this subject, and have you ever checked into and analyzed the truthfulness and evidence supporting any bases you may assert?

---You are correct in asserting that that thought is my opinion, yet you are wrong if you believe that it is solely my opinion, as opposed to being accurately consistent with and reflective of what God says in His Word. If I have derived my own, personal opinion, by merely accepting and believing what God has said is the case, and true, the truth is, at the same time, God’s word on the matter, as well as my own personal opinion, which, you must face up to, is the case in point on this matter we are discussing.

---There are standards for determining truth, and though it is my opinion, it is not just my studied opinion, it demonstrably complies with the many rules for determining truth—does yours?

---Opinion isn’t fact. That’s a fact, but opinions can also be factual, and in my case, since my opinion about eternity is based on God’s word, it does coincide/jive with spiritual fact(s).

142. Everyone has God in them (i.e., Universalism/Secular Humanism/New Age Movement).

Bible Reference(s):

Response(s):

---If God is in everyone, why is everyone a sinner? Trust me, the Bible says God is not in lost people, so the only thing deep within that you could tap into or rely on would be the deceptive representation of God by the father of lies—the devil. Don’t be deceived or deluded by him.

---If, as you assert, God is within me, why do I do wrong, and will that alone get me to heaven—God’s home?

---Don’t confuse the image of God still resident within even lost men, with God already existing within men. God is morally perfect, so if He is within them why are they so evil? The Bible teaches that none

only has Christ resident within if they receive the forgiveness of all their sins through placing faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

---Spiritually, all men have within them is a sin nature, being sinners, and their only spiritual father is the devil.

For Further Study:

Reason to Believe, pp. 88-89, by R.C. Sproul (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan), 1978

143. Everyone must live by his own moral compass (moral relativism).

Response(s):

---What about the deranged psychopath? Do you truly want him to live by his “own moral compass?”

What if two people’s compasses have opposite magnetic readings, as when two lovers disagree as to whether abortion is the proper decision for the life of their illegitimate, unborn baby? Will fully living out your own subjective moral standard end you in heaven or hell? Will you ever achieve moral perfection (the standard required for heavenly entrance) by living that way? If not, then the philosophy loses its value, as an ultimate rule for life.

---The image of God” still, in part at least, generally resident in man, whereby we are not all Hitlers in our moral experience, may serve, by the general work of the Spirit’s restraint in the world, as a hedge against our experientially fulfilling the true depths of our soul’s moral depravity, but that does not negate the fact of that fallenness, and as “moral compasses” vary from individual to individual, culture to culture (etc.), how could there be no absolutes to determine right and wrong? For instance, what if my moral compass tells me to force castration on young virgins is a virtue—is that decision for someone else solely a matter of my opinion, or where my “compass” may lead me, as opposed to many others, who believe that act to be inhumane and not your right to force on another?

---Man living by his “own moral compass” will only land him in an eternal hell, as even our best instincts fall short of God’s standard of perfection (and glory). (**Rom. 3:23, Jn. 3:16-18, 36, I Jn. 5:12, Rom. 3:10**).

For Further Study:

The Necessity of Ethical Absolutes, by Erwin Lutzer (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1981

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 501-502, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

144. I am seeking, but I cannot find Christ.

Response(s):

---Then you obviously have been searching in the wrong places, because we find in the Gospel and in the Bible the fact that Christ is discoverable, and quite easily, as you understand the Gospel message.

---Well then, perhaps you need to change the approach of HOW you are “seeking,” because the Bible promises that God will be found by ALL who seek Him. May I suggest that he can only be found in the Person of Jesus Christ, by positively responding to His message of the Gospel. God is no mystical experience or emotional state, and the only way to approach or “reach” Him would be to be on His stated and revealed terms, as laid out in the Bible. After all, He authored the Book.

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1348 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

145. Wouldn’t the world be boring if all believed the same and no one had any fun (i.e., sinful type)?

Response(s):

---You are assuming that all Christians believe the same, and that there is no room for alternative viewpoints on some theological matters. Also, how bad would it be for all men to believe in being kind to your brother? Boo hoo—no more fights, wars or meanness... would you miss that. Much more seriously errant is your assertion that Christianity prohibits people from having fun—that’s the devil’s lie. The difference is that, when you are born again, the things which make for fun change, in many ways, if “fun” is described as doing immoral things (drunkenness, sexual immorality, etc.). Until you have experienced it, the Bible says that there is a veil and blindness on your heart where you could never understand how ceasing from doing those sorts of things could be fun. I will not try to supersede that spiritual principle...only try to testify that, from my own experience, it is true, and I prayerfully wish salvation upon you.

---I’m sorry to have to inform you, but if you do not like the prospects of all people behaving morally and understanding the truth fully, you will not feel at home in heaven, and that could be a sign that is not

- yet your spiritual home.
- Christianity is not opposed to people having fun. The problem often arises when we use semantic games to name something evil with a positive term, as in when we warp the concept of wholesome “fun” to be such things as drunkenness, immoral sex games, and the like.
 - You hardly need to worry that anyone will ever fully agree with anyone else in this life, even among Church members. Quite the opposite is too often true and the case we see, as the American spirit of independence often squelches God’s desire for sincere Christian unity and fellowship in the (one) truth.
 - Yes it would be; we’d all work hard, enjoy this earth, have no wars, crime, hatred, be at peace dress differently and have different hobbies and interests and treat each other rightly--wouldn’t that be less preferable to today’s world (sarcasm).

146. Jesus is going to solve every problem and I’ll enjoy a life on a bed of roses thereafter (i.e., pie-in-the-sky philosophy).

Response(s):

- This is not Pinocchio, and whoever taught you that falsehood did not get it from the Bible.
- In this life, even for a believer, God has nowhere promised a trouble-free life, and any such characterization of the Christian life is misleading at best, and a fraud at worst. However, it may be a fairly apt description for the believer’s afterlife, and it is true that when Christ returns, He is going to make all things right and new again.
- Are you sure you’re going to have that type of life, past judgment day? [**saints sin, by 100% standards**]

+147. All Americans know the story of Jesus (i.e., America as a “Christian” nation theory).

Response(s):

- First, it is very likely some have never heard the message. More importantly, it benefits you little (and nothing, eternally) to have merely heard the message. One must receive it into your heart/life, personally, before it will do you any eternal good. If by your statement you are asserting that the message is worn out, boring, and nothing new for you to hear or learn, that would be like the guy dying of sickness who had heard about the drug that would cure his ill, but, because he had already heard about the drug—but never taken it—he was disgruntled to have a caring doctor again “hassle” him with news of its existence.
- First, you would have to have conducted a 100% poll of every American citizen, and been able to be assured that all responses were forthright and honest, for your statement to stand. Secondly, nowhere in Scripture does God teach us to aspire to the bare-bones minimum, of simply making sure your country has access to the Gospel, or merely has heard it one time. The Great Commission does not end with evangelism, but begin there, and many more waves of harvest are yet to be done, here in America, especially in light of the fact that it is extremely doubtful that a genuine first wave has successfully been fulfilled to-date, in our generation.
- Have you gone door-to-door (i.e., person-to-person) and personally experienced the fact that MANY people will listen, benefit from hearing it again, or believe false theology, especially about works getting you to heaven? Having heard it once is not the goal/end—getting them, by the Spirit, to receive/accept the message is the issue, no matter how many times they hear it. There are various degrees of accuracy of presentation, God could have been working in their lives to prepare their hearts to hear it this time, and “most” Americans having heard it (if they have) certainly has not benefited enough/the way God wanted/intended, because most Americans are not believers (yet).

Answer(s):

But to someone in your same shows Christ said, “You must be born again.” And you are born again by trusting Christ as your Savior, not by trusting your church membership to get you to heaven. Taking a car to a garage doesn’t make you a mechanic any more than putting a person in a pew makes him a Christian. The fact that a person is a member of a church doesn’t prove he is on his way to heaven (Jn. 3:1-15).

Source: Adapted from N.E.T.S., p. 107, by Larry Moyer (EvanTell: Dallas, TX), 1992

148. I know God already. I attend church regularly. I am already a member of a church.

Response(s):

- If by this statement you are equating “knowing God” with being a church member, you could not be farther from the truth. Going to church, even regularly, no more makes one a Christian that frequenting your garage makes you a car (Chad ill.). Do note that it is neither in the church membership decision, nor the practice of regularly attending the church one is a member of, when

- ensures ones entry into heaven.
- Can you please relate to me the exact circumstances and date upon which you came to personally “know God?”
- So that we understand each other properly, can you please tell me what you mean by the term, “know God?” The Bible uses that term to describe the experience of salvation.
- For a more thorough description and/or definition of what is meant by the term, “salvation,” please see the answer to question #101, above.**
- If you have never personally prayed to and received Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all your sins, you do not know God PERSONALLY, and, at best, you simply know of Him—which will never get anyone to heaven.

149. I believe in God (i.e., intellectual assent only)...For example, the Apostle’s creed (though never appropriated). I already believe in God—I’ll choose Him later.

Response(s):

- There is a difference between intellectually assenting to the truthfulness of a given set of facts, and personally trusting Jesus Christ for one’s eternal salvation. As has been said, the difference between head faith and heart faith is not 12 inches, but the distance of the gap between heaven and hell, forever. The demons believe in God! The issue is, do you rely upon Him, in a dependent/leaning/trusting sort of way. That definition of the English term “believing,” is what the Book of John (whose purpose is to get people saved) is all about. The Bible requires believing on Jesus Christ “with all your heart.” Have you ever done so?
- Are you aware of or can you at least conceptualize the difference between what is referred to as “intellectual assent,” and “biblical, heart faith?” That is, do you see as the same agreeing to certain propositions, say that the earth is round, as compared to actually trusting a doctor with a scalpel to incise your abdomen? You may believe that the doctor is qualified to operate, but until you let him so do, you have not fully “trusted,” and that letting him do his work is what the Bible refers to as the faith that saves—God being the One who does the saving, in response to our faith (which he inspires).

150. I used to be a Christian, but that was last week (i.e., lost my salvation or salvation as a temporal experience). I tried Christianity once.

Response(s):

- By the way you have stated this assertion, I am very concerned that either someone has taught you a wrong concept about what it means to be a Christian, has taught you a wrongful view about the duration of salvation, or that you have otherwise misunderstood a properly presented Gospel presentation. May I be allowed to tell you exactly what God, in His Word, wants you to hear and understand regarding the eternal, one-time with eternal effects type of salvation Christ has secured for all who will “believe in Him?”
- Technically and biblically, what you say has happened to you is impossible. Either you lost something you really never possessed, or you feel like you have lost it, possibly corroborated by some misbehavior, and your understanding is merely lacking as to eternal verities regarding the salvation you do in fact possess (if indeed you do). Let me explain...
- Salvation is not a temporary experience, so if you had something last week, but have lost or misplaced it in the ensuing week, I would suggest that we review again just exactly what you heard and did the day you believe that you got “saved,” and lets finalize both our understanding as well as the reality before God of that eternal experience/transaction.

151. I did that when I was a little boy.

Response(s):

- Please allow me to clarify—Are you certain that if you were to die today, you would go to heaven?
- <response> That is simply another way of probing exactly what you means as well as what you did or did not experience as a child. To ask it another way, when you “did” it as a little boy, exactly what did you do? Can you give me your testimony and tell me what happened to you as a boy that day? Did you personally pray to and receive Jesus Christ as your Savior? Did you place your faith on Him alone for your heavenly access? If that is true, you need not and must not merely see that experience as a point in time decision and experience which has no effect on you now. The Bible teaches that that one experience changed your life, literally forever, and that we are to allow that experience to daily impact our behavior, as we learn more about it, by reading God’s Word and prayer. One who was saved as a child, and does nothing more with God in his life (as was my own testimony for 10 years, until

someone took the time to explain the Bible more to me) is living a life which is displeasing to the Lord, and which both insults His saving work, and causes the one so living to be rightfully expecting few if any rewards when he does arrive in heaven. God has a great plan for your life, and wants/desires to be intimately involved in your life. May I share with you a few minutes how that fact can become a reality in your life?

- Are you telling me that when you were younger, you sincerely and fully trusted Jesus Christ to save you from all of your sins, and that he, therefore, lives within you (and has ever since that experience/time)? To state it another way, are you certain, or were you certain back then, that God saved you? (because once God has made the eternal transaction, He never un-does His work, though we may lose our confidence that He is still there and working, especially as we drift farther from Him, through sin).
- WHAT did you do, specifically, when you were a little boy? Please tell me your story/testimony of when you say you were saved at a young age.
- Do you begrudge your decision—are you now dissatisfied that you responded to God?
- I could be wrong, but the way you say that makes me sense there could be some disconnect between your present experience of God, and what happened to you as a small child. Is that true? Tell me about it. Do you wish that difference didn't exist (it need not be that way)?

152. I have tried before, and failed.

Response(s):

- What did you try (to do)?
- You “tried” to fully trust Christ for your eternal salvation? Trying is not what is called for—trusting Jesus Christ is.
- Excuse me for having to be the person to point this out to you, but if your moral failures, as a Christian, are the reason you feel you have either never been saved or lost your salvation, either your theology/thinking is wrong, or you were relying on your continued commitment to good works/living to get and keep you right with God, which would never work in the first place—None of us can live up to God's standard, on our own, and no one lives perfectly, and, worse than that, that is the wrong way to approach God, depending on your good deeds, as the Bible teaches that salvation is a free gift from God. So, let's start at the beginning, and try to get and do it right this time, because your eternal future lies in waiting.
- If you were indeed saved at that time, the Bible teaches that you are still saved, and will never lose that status before God. However, your “failure” is a problem in maintaining a good, on-going friendship with the Father, which, if that is your case, I would be happy to try to assist you with to get your walk/life with God back on track.

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1347 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

153. I ask forgiveness for my sins everyday (i.e., Catholic penance, and confession to human “fathers”).

Response(s):

- I would like to clarify that I am not referring to a repeated set of acts of asking forgiveness of the one and only Father God. Salvation is not a process of good works. What I am referring to is what the Bible calls being “born again,” or “saved.” And, just as one is physically born only once, with life existing thereafter (until physical demise), spiritual death is a one-time act, with consequences which have no death, or end, but it is a one-time event of becoming right in one's standing before God, by asking God to forgive all your sins, and for Christ to come live within you to eternally save you from your sins. Has there ever been a point in your life where you know you have done this, and, as a result, that you can say with confidence that you are sure that you will go to heaven when you die?
- Let me be very clear about this... The Bible never teaches serial repentance as the way to get to heaven. That is, it never teaches anyone that by repeatedly asking God for forgiveness of certain sins to-date (known or unknown), you are saved up to that point, so long as you maintain asking for continual forgiveness. What it does teach is that salvation, or being “born again,” is a one time, once-and-for-all experience of being completely washed and forgiven of all sins you have committed, are presently engaged in or ever will commit—period. After you experience that pardon, by asking Jesus Christ to forgive and come live within, the Christian WILL ask for forgiveness, to keep a short/clean account with his newly-related Father, so the lines of communication, or “fellowship,” do not get blocked or broken down by sin. That type of forgiveness, what theologians refer to as “fellowship” sins, differs from any other, all or even the same sins committed by someone not yet related to God, commonly

known as “family” or “familial” sins. Let me give you an example—I will always be my father’s son—I cannot lose that relatedness; However, if I beat up my mom, or cuss out my dad, our friendship (not our relatedness) will be severely affected. What it means for the Christian is that the blessings and power and joy of walking with God daily will be lessened/dampened. No, one does not come to God, like unto a Catholic practice of continually confessing their sins to a human priest, to absolve themselves till they get another washing. That would truly be a salvation based on works—the work of continually maintaining one’s forgiven status. The Bible teaches a once and for all relatedness experience, with eternal consequences and benefits in this life, which I would love to tell you how to enter into. (Jn. 13:9-10)

--Well, are you yet fully sure that you are eternally saved and secure with God? Does that philosophy on how to relate to God give you the calm assurance that you will for certain end up in heaven? The Bible teaches that you can daily live with that assurance, and not have to wait to the end of your life to find out whether you were fully faithful to keep confessing specific sins. Even if one were able to and did do that, what happens to unknown sins, or sins committed after their last “absolving,” which occurred just before their death, and before they had opportunity to confess them—perhaps on a deathbed. If salvation were based on those works, that person would have a great big problem with entry into heaven, because one sin makes one guilty of all. (Jas. 2:10). Fortunately, God has not laid out/designed His plan of salvation that way. May I now please tell you what the Bible DOES say about how you can be sure you will go to heaven?

154. I was born a Christian. I was raised a Christian (or in America, or the West).

Response(s):

--I think I know what you are trying to say...You were raised belonging to a family of either all or primarily/mostly Christian people. That’s a good environment to be raised in, if those Christians were living for God, but the Bible says that all men are BORN sinners—not Christians. Becoming a Christians happens by asking Jesus to come live within, make you a new person and forgive all your sins. You may have been raised being taught Christians beliefs, and you may have been born to Christian parents, but you, like every other human being (except Jesus, who was fully human but also fully divine) were BORN a sinner. Finally let me underscore that one does not get “raised” a Christian, as if becoming a Christian is a process sort of like osmosis, that it slowly creeps into your life until some point you feel it has settled, or you are somehow “confirmed” as having arrived at the condition of being saved. No, salvation is a definite time in a person’s life, when, by the grace of god they choose to place their trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for their eternal salvation. The distinction in these concepts is no mere semantic difference, but the difference between having personally received Jesus, and relying on one’s parent’s spiritual condition or the way that they raised their kids can end up being the difference between where you spend eternity, if you do not properly understand the Gospel message God has for you.

--Let me be very clear about this one fact—you, like every other human being, save Christ—were BORN a “sinner.” The Bible tells us that. What you may have meant to say was that you were born in a so-called “Christian” family, where at least one, and likely both of your parents were Christians. The problem with relying on your religious heritage is the same problem in logic you would face if a person came to you and said that he was a car, because he had stayed in the garage a very long time. Just being born into a Christian family, or even being raised to learn and intellectually believe the orthodox doctrines of the Christian faith does NOT mean you yet are a Christian, because the Bible teaches that salvation comes as a free gift which we are to accept, based on letting God forgive us of all our sins based on Christ’s sacrifice for us on the cross. Unless and until you do that, though your religious past is helpful to make you amenable to hearing these truths (or the opposite—could have turned you away from the faith), that history has nothing to do with whether you have ever personally prayed to receive Jesus Christ and the forgiveness and eternal life He freely offers. Do you know of a time where for sure that transaction took place, because, if it has not, I would be happy to tell you what you need to know, to make that decision his day.

--From what you have told me, I am assuming you were raised going to Sunday School/Bible Study and church on a fairly regular basis—is that true? I need to warn you that, though that is a great way to raise up a child, it is not the same as that child, for him or herself, personally praying to God to forgive them of all their sins and invite Jesus Christ to come live eternally in their heart. One act is preparatory, humanly speaking, but if the latter invitation is never made by you, you have not yet come into a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, and you need to have that if you plan on spending eternity in heaven.

- You would be the first person in history born a Christian, because all people are born sinners. We become Christians by... [tell them the Gospel and invite them to respond].
- You may have been raised to believe right things from the Christian faith/religion. the problem is, right thinking will not get you to heaven. It is a good foundation, but a right relationship with God through trusting Jesus Christ for your eternal salvation is the only thing that will get anyone to heaven.
- I was, but I did not hear and respond to the Gospel because my parents told me to, but because God called me and I responded.
- I was, but even more recently that is no guarantee. Our culture is getting even more intolerant of Christianity. My salvation in Christ is because I personally met Him—not because it has ever been the cool thing to do that everyone else as doing or supported.

155. I'm Catholic, or Jewish.

Response(s):

- See:** Evangelizing Religions paper.
- I respect the fact that you are following a faith or religion, and are seeking to be faithful to god. We certainly need more people not living for sin and their selves. However, may I please inform you that, no matter your religious affiliation, God desires to have an eternal personal relationship with every person, and He has promised that if you will admit you are a sinner, and ask Him to make you a new person on the inside by receiving His Son for the forgiveness of all your sins, you will have that right relationship with Him, and can start living according to that right relationship. This is not “religion” in the sense of an organized set of beliefs and practice, per se—the issue in your and everyone’s life is do you personally know God, by having received the forgiveness of all your sins. Stating it another way, no matter what your religious background—I’m not trying to get you to join any particular church—do you know for sure if you died today that you would go to heaven?
- [To Jews: That’s great that you are a practicing Jew. Jesus was a Jew, and gave meaning to prophecies directly addressed in the Hebrew Scriptures. In fact, my own faith is directly tied to Judaism, and wouldn’t exist apart from it]
- Have you ever found anywhere in the Bible where being a Catholic will get you to heaven?
- I would much rather place my faith for my eternal destiny in what the Bible says, rather than any human leaders of any world religion!
- Oh, really? I used to be/my mother was a Jehovah’s Witness [if TRUE; builds common ground]. Here’s why I am no longer in that faith...
- Really? I’ve recently been studying that religion... (if TRUE).
- [As a _____ (name the religion)], I’ve got a question for you... When I (regularly) do this, can you guess how many people from different religions I may encounter? I could never know enough about over 100 religions to talk to everyone in detail about their religion, but what I do know is that Christ paid all the punishment you’ll otherwise pay for your sins when He died on the cross, and if you’ll only pray to...

156. I pray to Mother Mary daily.

Response(s):

- Mary was blessed to be able to house the son of god in her womb the term of her pregnancy, but, like all other strictly/only-human beings (i.e., Christ was both human and divine), she was a sinner, and the Bible nowhere says that God chose her to bear her Son because she was perfect, or even holier than all the rest (necessarily?). God alone answers our prayers, and He alone is the object and Person we are to address our prayers to. Mary, though I believe her to be in heaven, as she exercised saving faith in her Son, can no more help you or answer your prayers as any other believer now in heaven, and to try to seek her or any other deceased believers/saints’ blessing or answers to prayer is clearly contrary to the Word of God, and will not result in God answering a prayer only He can answer. You ought to curtail that practice, confirm from your own study that what I am teaching you is true, and then you can really start enjoying the benefits of truly answered prayers, and begin to have the kind of attitude toward Mary that she wants you to have: “Whatsoever He (Jesus Christ) tells you to do—do it (**Jn. 2:5**), and He said to pray to the Father God (alone). Also, there is no credit offered anyone for using beads in our prayers. Jesus and the apostles never did such, and never asked anyone to do so, and I would suggest that if you really want to see answered prayers—even miraculously answered prayers, you go directly to God with your concerns, leaving behind the beads, and having no man come between your direct access to the father, if you are one of His spiritual children through the new birth.
- [Revered?, blessed woman, but a sinner; Mary is only the mother of Jesus—not our “holy Mother” and certainly not a part of the Trinity, or to be worshipped or “venerated” to “sainthood”]

- As ethical as Mary was, I must respectfully tell you that that will get you nowhere.
- Praying to Mary for your salvation, as close as she was to the Lord, is as far away from helping you as if you had asked the devil, because, though moral opposites, neither have been authorized by God as the way to get you to heaven—only by asking Jesus Himself.

157. My mother is a saint.

Bible Reference(s): Jn. 1:12,

Response(s):

- That either means that she is deceased, or that she is a living, born-again believer in Jesus Christ. Which definition of that term are you using?
- If I may, may I please let you know that the term, “saint,” can be used in at least two different ways. In the Bible. God’s Word, the term refers to all people who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. That is, it describes all “Christians.” Finally, there is a belief prevalent now days which teaches that some people are so personally holy in their behavior that they achieve some level of status before God that men should obviously notice that above-the-norm achievement by officially dubbing them “saints”—a term used within this belief to set special persons apart from the crowd, as, we might say, “super-holy.” The Bible nowhere makes such a classification, would decry such a focus on man (which leads to the pride of self-accomplishment), and teaches that even our so-called “good” deeds are rubbish before God, if not brought about—not by our great efforts to merit favor before Him, but His great power to those of us who know Him, and who rely on Him to change our lives. Whatever you may have meant by referring to your mother as a saint, I hope you now know that God says (through His word) that no man is perfect, has reason to boast before Him, that our works can never merit favor or make God indebted to us—even as Christians, and that if your mother was a born-again believer in Jesus, that was great for her, but will help you none unless you follow in those same steps of faith.
- I want to make sure that you realize that any spiritual position our family members hold—be it lost or saved—has absolutely no relation or impact on whether any other person, for themselves, has ever personally received the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

158. I’m going to purgatory. Why doesn’t God give man a second chance?

Response(s):

- God gives every man plenty or sufficient enough chances to receive his Son, that there will be no tongue standing in His presence on judgment day which can say that they are going to go to hell for reasons other than they stupidly chose or allowed their selves to end up there. No one will be allowed to pin that destiny on any lack of effort on God’s part. As if it were not enough, He has already slain His sinless Son on your behalf; yet, He still is pleading with you to receive Him for eternal forgiveness. No, our ending up in hell for rejecting God’s Son is purely and solely for us to take the blame, as we consciously or unconsciously listened to and followed the deceptive tricks and will of the devil.
- The Bible nowhere teaches any such concept as Purgatory, and, in fact, it would require me to warn you that if you are relying on any “second chance” or time to “mend your ways” after your body is six feet under, you can know with certainty that, instead, you will spend eternity in hell, because you obviously had never solely trusted Jesus Christ as your personal Savior in this life. As far as making a decision to accept God’s offer of salvation, we have only this life, and we have no promise or certainty as to when it will end. As the Bible says, “Behold, today is the day of salvation.” (**II Cor. 6:2**).
- How can someone go somewhere that does not exist?
- If you didn’t respond to God here on earth, you wouldn’t and won’t be allowed to do so after. God gives us enough and all the time we need and will ever get, in this life.

Answer(s):

- Scripture does not teach a second chance to believe after death. (Heb. 9:27-28, Lk. 16:25-31).

Source: Adapted from Bible Training Centre for Pastors: Missions, Evangelism, Discipleship, p. 131, by Dennis J. Mock, Sept. 1991, Atlanta GA

159. I may be punished, but not eternally.

Response(s):

- And how do you know that? By what authority are you confident that that belief is correct?
- If the Bible states that one sin makes you guilty of all; therefore you are as guilty as a mass murderer, and even we human beings kill them through the death penalty, how can you escape a worse fate, being guilty of much more than they ever dreamed of actually doing/committing?

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, pp. 1344-1345 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

160. I'm an agnostic (or atheist): I don't know if you can know there's a God. The bottom line is I just don't know.

See also answers to # 20, above.

Response(s):

--**See:** Evangelizing Religions paper.

--What is the process we humans undertake in order to know anything that we know with certainty? If you value your eternal soul enough, and have a healthy self-love enough to care where you will spend eternity—either in heaven or hell—or even if you can conceive of the intellectual possibility that there could be some information available to those who take the effort to seek it out which could show you that possibly either you are wrong, or that I may be right, I would suggest that you invest the effort to at least investigate further—at least if you value your soul enough to put some effort toward such a critical and important matter.

--How do you know that? What authority source are you using and 100% relying on to risk eternal damnation on the truthfulness of their assertions?

--Well, why don't you find out? If there IS a God, you're in a heap of trouble to have not discovered that fact, because you will face eternal punishment for your (unforgiven) sins, and if there IS a God, you will have missed out on so many blessings and joys, and rewards in the life hereafter. Let's get going, and not remain ignorant when knowledge, information and evidence exists for you to investigate—if you value your life, and life hereafter.

--That sounds like an innocently and harmless neutral position to be in, but the truth of the matter is that God holds everyone responsible for knowing of His existence, through all the evidence (“Hints,” if you will) which He has provided (Rom. 1:18-32). On the day of judgment, if simply will not do to plead ignorance, and I care enough about you to let you know ahead of time, so you don't find yourself in an eternal predicament/”pickle” for having not known of both His existence, and way provided for your salvation. [Proceed to tell them Bible revelation on these two subjects].

--You had better find out soon, or you'll be a fatally “igno agno.” Wouldn't you agree there's knowledge you have yet to know?

--That seems to be a genuine, honest answer, but it is an insufficient for facing your own mortal demise or even as a basis for living a stable life before you meet your Maker. Learn and study more—it doesn't take more knowledge that child-like faith can engender.

--Why did you become an atheist? What experiences led you to that belief?

For Further Study:

Christian Apologetics, pp. 13-28, by Norman Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1976

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 3-4, 10-14, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

161. Are you one of those Jehovah's Witnesses (i.e., a cult). You've been brain-washed.

[I have been asked this question on a few occasions, despite the fact that I wore no white shirt, dark slacks and no tie; the door-to-door method may be associated with the Jehovah's Witnesses, but it needn't be, and God's Church needs to reclaim this holy and effective method!]

Bible Reference(s): Ac. 26:25.

Response(s):

--No mam, I am not a member of either the Moonies, Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses. I am simply going door to door on behalf and on the instruction of my Lord Jesus Christ to tell everyone I can what God says in His word about how you can know for certain that if you were to die today, you would be in heaven.

--Mam, if you will allow me just five minutes of your time, afterwards, you may feel free to ask me any question you think would help prove to yourself that I have in fact *not* been brain-washed. Let me begin by asking you, do you know for sure that if you were to die today, you would go to heaven? Later: Brain-washed people often follow one human charismatic leader, can only think about a limited number of tunnel-visioned topics, and usually have a dazed glare in their eyes, and the intonation and inflection in their tone commonly expresses to their hearers that they are merely repeating phrases they have learned and memorized from someone else's thinking. I trust you are able to discern that, by God's grace, that is not the condition you find me to be in today.

--[No, words of sober truth Ac.]

162. Look at the Mormons (religious and moral, but you call them a cult).

Bible Reference(s): II Cor. 11:14, Mt. 7:15-20,

Response(s):

--First, what constitutes “the real thing,” in religion, from a false system, is what God’s Word says about the subject, related to both their beliefs and practices. Because Jesus, who was God, said that He was the only way of salvation, and because Mormon doctrine does not teach that faith alone in Christ the Lord alone for forgiveness of all sins and eternal life is how one gets to heaven, for that reason alone we should refer to their system as false. Also, if you examine both their official dogma/doctrine/teachings, and compare them to Scripture, as well as if you are able to get your hands on information as to some of their secret ceremonies, handshakes and other very private, unannounced activities within the temple walls, again you will see just how far off they are from what God says is the real thing. Groups espousing “holy” books in addition to and on par with, supplementing or even superseding the Bible also run afoul and violate clear tests of Scripture for what a “true” Christian is (supposed) to do, as opposed to what the Mormon church does regularly. Also, under the standard definitions of a “cult” (**See:** “Cults Generally”), using the tests and descriptions of what constitutes a genuine “cult,” one would have little trouble discerning from that criterion that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints fits the bill. Of course, this is not to say that there could be no true Christian believers among the church members, or even to say that the average Mormon is not what we humans would call a “good person.” One could hardly deny that the typical Mormon aspires to and to some extent achieves a high moral lifestyle, which we find extremely commendable. There are many moral issues in which Christianity agrees with Mormonism, and, too often, the moral achievement level they attain (possibly, in part, due to motivation to secure their version of “heaven,” and to miss hell, by continual good works—unbiblical motivation and false teaching, though it produces dead but appearing to men to be “good works”), puts to shame the average Christian—and this is shortcoming among God’s Church is wrong, deplorable and should be reproved (if we had many spiritual “leaders” with backbone enough to care more about the flock’s morality than whether the pastors may lose some carnal church members, and especially the chance at receiving their Jewish “tithe”). Those weaknesses of our own behavior being admitted (**See also answer to question #28**), the truth still remains that an organization which purports to be representing God, whose efforts and message lead people to hell (even if the biblical falsity of their beliefs is unbeknownst to the average Mormon), can and must accurately be labeled a false religion and deceptively harmful to humanity, despite their many other humanly-called “good works,” which we do commend. To say so is not “un-Christian” (better: un-Christ-like) behavior, as it is exactly what God has told us we must say about their system (not necessarily individuals, but the religion itself, primarily in its beliefs, but also in some of its practices), and to do otherwise would be biblically irresponsible, morally weak and uncourageous, and to hide the truth, even though doing so is not a popular undertaking in politically correct and “tolerant” America, and its pervasive influence in the anemic American “Church.” We do and should and must continue to love Mormon people—that is not in question and is a totally separate issue, and you will get no disagreement on that point. However, contrary to the emotionally-charged, societally-defined mushy depiction of “love” we are all too familiar with, which does not correspond to biblical love, biblical love care enough and stands for the truth enough to reprove, where necessary, and to not hide behind a facade of being “kind,” and “not hurting people’s feelings,” to expose and identify false doctrine, a major reason being due to its biblically harmful effects and influence on God’s Church.

--I don’t disagree that their adherents try to live moral lives. But, as a religious system, is it moral to be part of a system, which ultimately sends people to hell, by not rightly teaching people how to avoid hell?

163. Jesus is going to make me become a monk, be unmarried, miserable, poor or a foreign missionary.

Response(s):

---Your fear is not based in fact, as you have no idea whether that is true! God may call you into full-time ministry (He has no biblical ministry of “monk”)—possibly even foreign missions work—and He may not. Statistically, at least if Christians are being obedient to God, He does not call a lot. And, even if He does, He will give you the grace to find full contentment and joy in that calling—but you must first be rightly related to Him to know, either way. We’re getting the cart before the horse, as, until you have your eternal destiny settled, it doesn’t really matter what could have been your rightful service to the Lord!

--God has a biblically wide-range of financial plans for individuals, ranging from some in the Bible who

were godly and wealthy, and many who were also godly, and were moderately to poorly situated. Whatever God's specific plan is for your financial future, you can rest assured that He has a far better plan for you than your current spiritual father, who wants only to steal from, kill and destroy you. You can trust that God knows what is and has His best in store for you, but, once again, we are getting the cart before the horse, as you could die tonight, unexpectedly, and it would have benefited you none at all to have known about God's provision and plans, because you will not be spending eternity with Him until you settle the issue of what you will do with his Son.

--On the authority of God's Word I can say that the charge that God may want you to be miserable is totally false. God gives joy to His people, and Scripture clearly teaches that misery is not His plan for His children's lives.

--As to whether God may have you be celibate, if He were to call anyone to that lifestyle, He would also give the grace to live it content and joyous, because, after all, the Bible says that it is a preferable lifestyle even to the blessing of marriage—though, the Bible declares, only those called to such could have the grace to see things that way. I give you no guarantee, but at least statistics will bear out that very few appear to be called to such a lifestyle today (unless many are rebelling to their calling), but, whatever His decision is for you in this matter, you can and are to trust that He has the very best in mind for your particular life, and to miss God's best is to have missed out on something great.

WORKS/RELIGIONS

164. God grades on the curve. I'm a good person and have hurt no one (i.e., the 10 Commandments, or Golden Rule argument (likened to the rich, young ruler). Won't God accept me?

Bible Reference(s): Mk. 10:17-27, Eph. 2:8-9, Jas. 2:10

Response(s):

--The Bible nowhere says that God compromises His standard of moral perfection, or grades on any sort of "curve." That belief is the fallacy of superimposing secular realities to spiritually revealed truth, and works about as well as mixing oil and water. There is no curve in the entrance requirements for heaven. And if, by the way, you are thinking about passing the exam, or how else you may gain entry, let me assure you that you will be unable to make it to heaven on your own, despite all good intentions and best efforts. As was said before, the standard is perfection, and you are already disqualified. However, God desires for me to tell you His good news of how you can gain admittance anyway, totally based on His Son having paid your debt of sin on the cross, 2,000 years ago. The Bible says that if you will pray to receive that full and eternal gift of forgiveness of all your sins, God will save your soul, based on His Word, and you will enter the kingdom based on the merits of (or, using a political/presidential analogy, riding the coat tails of) His sinless and perfect Son, Jesus Christ.

--[I sin leads to hell]

For Further Study:

A Ready Defense, pp. 420-421, by Josh McDowell (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1993

165. I am good enough as I am.

Bible Reference(s): Rom. 3:10-18, 23

Response(s):

--Let me ask you, have you ever done anything wrong? Have you ever lied, cheated or stolen, for example? God's standard for entrance into heaven is PERFECTION—that's why men can only enter based on the merits of the perfect Son of God, Jesus Christ, who died to pay YOUR sins' penalty.

--I am so honored to be in the presence of one who is PERFECT, because unless you are, God says you are NOT good enough. (Rom. 3:23).

--What are you good enough for? Do you know anyone in history who was morally superior to you (take, for example, Mother Theresa)? Do you have any evidence or authority which tells you that there are gradations in God's standards for entry into eternal life in heaven, because He has revealed in His Word, the Bible, that He has only ONE standard, and that is the moral perfection standard only His Son has accomplished (for us).

--Would you mind telling me the deeds or traits you possess which give you that confidence that you'll be O.K. on judgment day? I hate to be the bearer of bad news, but even your confidence in those accomplishments the Bible calls sin, in that pride and self-reliance are not virtues before God. Therefore, we come back to the realization, which the Bible tells us of, that, just like every other person on earth, you too are a sinner before God, and have need of resolving that problem if you are to have a

future hope, being the certainty of eternal life (vs. death) through Jesus Christ.

Answer(s):

“The Bible says, There is none righteous, no not one’ (Romans 3:10b). ‘For by grace are you saved through faith and THAT NOT OF YOURSELVES, NOT OF WORKS, LEST ANY MAN SHOULD BOAST’ (Ephesians 2:8, 9). It is not your righteousness that salvation concerns but rather your sin.” Go Tell: The Soul Winner’s Encyclopedia, by Freddie Gage, p. 46 (Freddie Gage Evang. Assn., Euless, TX), 1980

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1341, (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

166. Works are required for Christians. Aren’t works automatic once you’re a Christian?

Response(s):

- That is true, but bears no relation to the issue you are now facing, because one has to BE a Christian before that adage applies! We in no way minimize the importance of good works in a Christian’s lives (though, technically, they are not exactly the same as “good works” produced by lost people, in part because of the new nature and access to God’s power which a believer possesses), but to discuss “good works” before one is sure that he will go to heaven is getting the cart before the horse. It is only after you have experienced the new birth in Jesus Christ that we can accurately and with full and experiential understanding be able to discuss the role of “good works” in the lives of believers. Your most immediate need right now is making sure you are in the family of God. That question can be settled, first, by my asking you “do you know for sure that if you died today, you would go to heaven?...”
- Regarding the issue of whether good works happen automatically for every believer in Jesus Christ (i.e., with no effort at all on the believer’s part), **See:** Lordship Salvation paper.

167. What do you think about the various alternatives to Christianity, such as Agnosticism, Atheism and Humanism?

Response(s):

- For more specific responses to given religions’ beliefs, **See:** the Evangelizing Religions paper.
- Frankly and as lovingly and gently as I can be out of deference to the individuals following those belief systems—as Christ has died for their souls as well as my own—I know and believe their teachings to be absolutely false, and ultimately attributable to the devil and his deception, by trying to keep people lost and heading toward hell, so that they will not personally know the joy and liberation of being fully at peace with, forgiven by and rightly related to God, through the Lord Jesus Christ. I have studied those philosophies somewhat, and knowing that Jesus Christ—who is God—said that salvation for men is *only* through Him, I can therefore, on the authority of God’s Word, easily conclude that any teaching other than that which Christ has announced is both false, accursed, and will lead a person knowingly or inadvertently to an eternal hell, because salvation is through exercising faith in Jesus Christ as one’s personal Savior—not faith in anyone or anything else, and not even Christ plus something else added to Him. I am certain that there are sincere and even right-motivated followers adhering to those beliefs, but one can be sincerely and DEAD wrong, as is the case of all who do not know Jesus personally!
- Should the thought ever enter your mind that such an exclusive claim to truth in Jesus is exclusivistic, narrow-minded or elitism (even though the gift and message is available to all who ask, thus countering completely any such claims, spiritually originated in the gates of hell), **See:** answer to question #9, above.
- Despite any and even all positive aspects of those belief systems, on balance/in the end, they present their adherents a huge and irresolvable problem, in that following those systems will lead the followers to hell, because none of them teach the individual to place their faith in Jesus Christ alone for their eternal salvation.
- How would you expect me to answer that question? What do you think I will say? What do you want me to say, because if you are willing to hear the truth—if you can “handle the truth,” as they say—I will tell it to you. What I will not do is to deceive or lie to you on such an important matter as this.

Answer(s):

I once heard a pastor tell the story of a famous minister (Rev. Blackstone?) who was challenged to a debate on the street, who asked the rival how many lives atheism had changed from bad to good, homelessness to being a law-abiding citizen, for for every one he might come up with, the pastor could show him 100.

...raise the issue as to how he or she *knows* there is no God. ...one would have to be omniscient (all-knowing) to be able to say from his or her own pool of knowledge that there is no God.

The Complete Book of Bible Answers, p. 306, by Ron Rhodes (Harvest House Publishers: Eugene, OR), 1977

For Further Study:

Answers to Tough Questions, pp. 106-107, by Josh McDowell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1980
When Skeptics Ask, pp. 37-38, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1990
Christian Apologetics, pp. 215-236, by Norman Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1976
Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 55-58, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

168. What is the difference between a cult and a mainstream church?

Response(s):

- First and foremost, the Church is comprised/composed of true believers in Jesus Christ, who are striving to follow Jesus Christ from the day of their salvation forward. Cult leaders, and their duped followers, in some form or fashion, are NOT doing the same thing, either because they are following a human leader, a misrepresentation of Jesus or His teachings, or other bizarre, non-normal practices which the Bible forbids or does not condone. This is NOT to say that all Church members live like saints, or that all cultists live like the devil—many of them are sincerely striving for the truth and to live for God. The problem is, they are failing to achieve their goals, and, inadvertently or consciously, end up fulfilling the devil’s whims, usually through false doctrine and sometimes from straying off track through unbiblical practices.
- From a purely secular definitional perspective, Webster’s New Collegiate Dictionary defines “church” as ‘a body or organization of religious believers/the whole body of Christians,’ while it defines a “cult” as “a religion regarded as unorthodox or spurious; also: its body of adherents.”

For Further Study:

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 56-57, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

169. Does Christianity welcome or reject ‘New Age’ teaching?

Response(s):

- We accept New Age adherents, and respect some aspects of their desired intentions and aspirations (Ex.: get in touch with the spiritual world, realizing that this life is not all there is, and having a desire for some form of “religion,” or “spirituality”). What we do not condone, nor should we, is commitment and adherence to any belief system which will eternally damn a person’s soul to hell, because what it teaches about how to get to God and heaven is in error—something which New Age teaching and all other false systems of philosophy or religion do. We simply do not want and hope to refuse to let the devil keep any human creation, or physical “child of God,” miss the opportunity to go to heaven, because of misguided leaders or mis-instruction. Do you see anything wrong in our desire to help people avoid going to hell by a mistake they need not commit?
- What particular/specific teaching do you have in mind? What do you know about New Age teaching, [and what subjects which it teaches do you agree with?].
- I’m just curious, and, to get to know you better, if you’ll let me ask you, do you THINK Christianity would have a problem with New Age teaching(s), and why? What do you know about Christianity, especially as it differs from what you know of New Age teaching(s)?
- As a system—that is, the complete package of beliefs and practices—since following it will NOT get one to heaven, we reject it. That is NOT to say that every aspect of it is abhorrent. (the devil usually puts some truth in all his lies).

For Further Study:

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 16-17, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

170. Have you been around the world and seen how different cultures believe different things

Response(s):

- 1) God nowhere requires anybody to have to spend the money it would take to “go around the world” to learn how to go to heaven. 2) One can learn quite a bit about other cultures both from books, television, and talking with people from different backgrounds. 3) I have investigated and studied somewhat the various religious options available around the world, yet I needn’t have even done so in order to have concluded that if Jesus, who was and is God, said that He is the only way to salvation and heaven, no matter what other research or traveling I may undertake, it would not change the fact or impact of his words on the subject.
- Different cultures DO believe different things. That’s a given. But, as regards how a person can end up in heaven, do they all believe the RIGHT things, and does their non-agreement on the answer to that issue cause us any need to worry that what God has said in the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ, might have really been a lie coming from His sinless mouth? You can “search the world over,” and become a

cultural anthropologist, if you would like, but a lot of what you would find is that the devil is a powerful and influential being, and to the extent that many people in given cultures choose to believe in anything but Jesus Christ alone for their salvation, at least for the time being, the devil has been (successfully) at work duping the poor souls, and attempting to keep them in darkness until the day, he hopes, they will join him in hell. We have the message that can free them all from such a future, and it is both my job and your job –if you are a Christian–to get the message of forgiveness in the Gospel to them. If you are not already a Christian, the message is for you today, and you need no longer face an eternity of fellowshiping with the devil (in hell) either. One does not have to be a member of a third-world country to need this message and our evangelistic efforts. If you are not–today–absolutely certain that you would go to be with Christ if, God forbid, an 18 wheeler were to boll you over today, you need to admit your sinfulness, and call upon the name of the Lord to forgive all your sins, and trust Him to save you right now!

--Our sophisticated and highly educated American culture values “open-mindedness” and the “man about town/world traveler” wisdom of those rich or intellectually gifted persons who have that background, but salvation is not to the wise and powerful, but to be found in the humble, seemingly foolish and yes, even offensive message of Jesus Christ, which tells men that they cannot get to heaven on their own (**I Cor. 1:19-29**).

--I am fairly well read, have watched many Television programs on other cultures, so first-hand exposure to those countries by spending much money travelling would have gained me no more insight needed to make my decision than learning from them second-hand.

--Group peer pressure, from family and others like you (i.e., your countrymen and “culture”) can be strong, and the “sheep” mentality that can come with it can influence most in a group to do wrongful things, if the majority approve of it, but that fact in no way changes the reality of right and wrong.

--[There are some absolutes(i.e., they don’t change: 4 laws)]

--Have you? How cruel a God He would indeed be if He required every person to go to that much trouble and expense simply to learn how to get to heaven and avoid hell! I’d venture that no one person has ever done such a feat, and surely if that were necessary, basically no one could ever go to heaven (and I do not believe that).

171. I’m going to be reincarnated in the after-life. Isn’t reincarnation more reasonable than hell? (i.e., fulfillment, peace, meaning and satisfaction in New Age (meditation, hypnotism, inspirational audio tapes, retreats/seminars, unification movements, men’s movement, etc.).

Response(s):

--On the basis of what firm and credible authority do you base that opinion? Are you willing to consciously take the huge gamble and risk that that future is absolutely certain to be yours, weighed against and in light of what the sinless, perfect Son of God, Jesus Christ, has said regarding the actual, literal and certain fact of the existence of a fiery hell where everyone who rejects Him as their Savior will live (in torment and punishment) forever? That’s a pretty bold confidence to have, and I would think it more “reasonable” to at least have investigated an authority on the subject, to make sure it was right (THE authority, of course, being the God of all creation). Christ, having conquered death through His resurrection, is certainly in a better position to tell you what is “on the other side” than any source you may cite to give you your hope that things are not going to turn out for you the way I have described.

--Not according to Christ who is Lord of the dead. How do you know and are you certain? Based on what valid authority do you make that claim, as, if you are wrong, and just living off a whimsical opinion, self-derived, the consequences can and will be devastating.

--How is it “reasonable” to conclude that you have lived in the past (i.e., before your birth into this world), that a cow or monkey could be a fallen relative who did not learn the lessons in his past lives, that the somberness of a funeral is all fake–because we simply move into a new life and new beginning)?

For Further Study:

Defending Your Faith, pp. 179-195, by Dan Story (Kregel Publications: Grand Rapids, MI), 1997

The Case for Faith, pp. 189-191, by Lee Strobel (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 2000

When Skeptics Ask, pp. 233-245, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1990

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 639-644, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

172. God’s name is Allah.

Response(s):

---Abba is a name used by those close to and familiar with God, but nowhere in Scripture is such a name attributed to Him (YHWH).

For Further Study:

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 96-99, 368-374, 502-514, 621-629, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

173. You've never read the Koran, so how do you know?

Response(s):

---I actually have (if true) skimmed through it for some time, but even were I to become a Koran expert, Jesus is the source of life and standard for truth—no one else, nor any other writing but His word.

CHURCH/CHRISTIANITY

174. Don't you really just want to increase your church membership (ulterior agenda/motive argument).

Response(s):

---You are always welcome to visit our church, and we would welcome you and love to have you, but what matter much more, both to us and to yourself, is settling the matter of where you will spend your eternity—either with God, in heaven, or in hell, with the devil. Whether you ever step foot in my church is of no significance compared to the importance of this urgent question.

---If after you're saved you decide to join the fun, love and excitement of our church, we'd consider that a blessing and appreciate another family member; God meets our needs, with or without increased membership?

---Some people in ministry—even some you may have encountered—want you to join their church, for wrong motives. All I can tell you about our visit today is that we have taken time out of our schedule just to make sure that you do not end up in hell when you die. May we please tell you how to make sure you will go to heaven?

175. Have you ever known a good preacher's kid (offered as proof that the more serious one takes our "religion," the more its morals fail?).

Response(s):

---To the extent that you have identified a problem many pastors encounter, I agree with you that it is not a good thing which you see. However, **it would be better to know for sure you were going to end up in** heaven, and have to deal with a rebellious child, than to have an angel of a child, and go to hell, because one neglected to ever put their trust in the lord Jesus for eternal, personal salvation.

---"Good" preacher's kids have lived (Ex.: Billy Graham's son). Not all 'P.K.'s' end up in the stereotype you are depicting. Certainly any "minister" of the Lord who neglects his family at the expense/forfeiture of his child has radically failed to truly serve God, and we know that people can, on their own, independently rebel—especially if they have "grown up" with religious teaching, perhaps been over-exposed to it, or simply when they reach the age when they seek to express their independence, and some rebellious teen-aged times when kids get a glimpse of wilder lifestyle choices (being exposed to such by some classmates in school, for example) and choose to.

176. Christian theological disputes and church splits (Lordship vs. Saviorhood Controversy ex.).

Response(s):

---Church splits are not a pretty thing, and show us none of us is perfect. However, it would be a poor choice indeed to let the failings of a church member to be used for you to decide to go to an eternal hell, just to avoid such people as that. That would be cursing your eternal soul to spite someone who probably does not even know you. Don't make such a misguided sacrifice of an eternity in hell, in order to not be like a church-splitter. Get saved, join a church, and become part of the problem, rather than a critic and bystander on his way down the road that leads to hell.

---Generally speaking, church splits and theological debates are not a pretty thing. However, sometimes they are necessary, and can occur in a godly manner of agreeing to disagree agreeably. The issue, as far as you need to be concerned, is where are you going to spend eternity—not which side of a debate or split you will side with, as you can be on the wrong side of an issue or dispute and still end up in heaven if you never pray to receive Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all your sins.

---No two people on earth agree exactly on every issue with anyone else, so, as the issues become more personal and serious—as with where you will spend your eternity—people get emotional, and

sometimes they conclude that it would be better to separate, so as not to constantly have to hear teachings with which they disagree. The issue, for you, is whether if you were to die tonight, you know for sure you would go to heaven. What others do will not matter one little bit when you face god on judgment day, and He asks whether you ever trusted his Son for eternal life.

PERSONAL

+177. I'm too bad to be/get saved. I am too big a sinner. God could not love me.

Response(s):

- Christ's death covered each, every and all the sins of men, so that would include whatever you have done.
- It's good that you do not feel right or proud of the bad things you have done, but you need to be forgiven for those sins, and full forgiveness is available for all who ask.
- Excuse or belief? If belief, 2 thieves on the cross, and Paul saved ex. Poor self-esteem: faith in Bible fact; no doubt of the Bible. Glad to know you are sensitive to how wrongfully you may have acted in your life, and to know those things are evil, but no sin is outside the radar range of God's love and the work of the cross.

Answer(s):

I can prove to you from the Scripture that that is not true. **One thing we learn from God's saving the apostle Paul is that there is no one beyond the reach of God's saving power and ability.** Paul, in essence, said, "God saved me to show how patient He is." Whatever you have done, it is not nearly as bad as what Paul had done, since he was responsible for the death of Christians. If God could save him, He can surely save you (I Tim. 1:15-16).

Source: Adapted from N.E.T.S., p. 108, by Larry Moyer (EvanTell: Dallas, TX), 1992

"I usually say, 'You may say that... Other people may have told you that. But that's not what God says.' I usually share one or more of these verses with the person: I Jn. 1:9, Rom. 5:8, Rom. 8:38-39."

Source: How To Win Others to Christ, p. 131, by Jerry Wiles (Thomas Nelson, Nashville 1992)

"Christ said, 'I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance' (Matthew 9:13). 'The Lord is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance' (II Peter 3:9). Also refer to I Timothy 1:15, Luke 19:10, John 6:27, Isaiah 1:18 and Romans 5:6-8." Go Tell: The Soul Winner's Encyclopedia, by Freddie Gage, p. 46 (Freddie Gage Evang. Assn., Euless, TX), 1980

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1342 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

178. I think I have committed the unpardonable sin.

Response(s):

- I would like to be the first person to give you relief and good news...If you fear that you are guilty of the unforgivable sin, the fact that that worries or bothers you shows me signs that God is still working with your heart, so you truly have not (yet) committed it. If it's not an embarrassingly personal one, What sin did you commit, which you fear will eternally separate you from God?
- Do you know what the unpardonable sin is? Then how could/did you come to think you had committed it?
- No matter what you've done, are you willing to face death/the grim reaper with no further attention to this matter, and risk an eternity in hell, because you are THAT certain that you have committed the unpardonable sin? That is, if you had not committed it, but felt or thought you had, is it worth the risk of hell not to make sure you had or had not committed that sin?

Answer(s):

"Some people do have a concern about whether they have blasphemed the Holy Spirit. It's pretty amazing to me that of all the statements that Jesus made, the one in which He speaks of the unpardonable sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit seems to be the one most people remember if they are in the category of 'I'm too bad to be forgiven...' You can always assure people that if they are concerned about the question, they haven't committed the unpardonable sin. The Holy Spirit is still working in their lives. In fact, He has brought them to this very point where their question can be answered, the issue can be settled, and today is the day they can know the reality of Jesus Christ in their lives. You can readily say, 'I'm here as living proof to you that God still cares about you. He's still reaching out to you...'

Source: How To Win Others to Christ, pp. 132-133, by Jerry Wiles (Thomas Nelson: Nashville), 1992)

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1347 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

179. I am afraid Jesus will not receive me.

Response(s):

- Why are you afraid Jesus will not accept you?
- Have you ever read in the Bible where Jesus accepted the thief on the cross, the woman caught in adultery, and the greedy, manipulative tax collector? Surely, whatever your sins be, you could be in no greater company than these who received forgiveness.
- What is it that you believe about what God requires for someone to be able to receive forgiveness.
- You seem sincere and repentant concerning whatever it is you have done wrong. It's great for you to have reached the point where you know that you have sinned before God, but I have GOOD news--not the bad news of God shunning you--to announce to you, especially because you obviously know that you have done things wrong, and therefore need a resolution to that problem (through the forgiveness of Jesus Christ).
- Please be informed that fear--at least that type of fear--is not from God, but is from Satan. The devil would like nothing more than to keep you in his eternal family, and ultimately reside with you in the place he's destined to stay forever--hell. So don't let him deceive you as to the free, available grace and forgiveness God has provided to and for all men through the death of His Son on the cross as payment of the punishment duly owed all sinful men, both you and I.
- Have you ever heard or read anywhere in the Bible anything that leads you to believe He would not accept you?

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1347 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

180. I am not respectable enough to be a Christian.

Response(s):

- Just how much respectability does God require, and how do you know?
- God is not looking for respectability, but a repentant heart which acknowledges its sinfulness and seeks and relies upon Him to deliver them from that condition through the forgiveness which is found in Jesus Christ alone.
- Do you know any people who claim to be Christians, who are not very respectable, or at least not as respectable as others who claim to be Christians? Might those facts lead one to reasonably conclude that it is not a matter of a certain amount of 'respectability' which God is looking for or requires, for men to be rightly related to Him? If this is not the case, certain people claiming to be Christians are not (which IS a possibility), and to the extent you ever see any differences in respectability levels among Christians, God has an arbitrary, or at least unclear range of standards for entry into heaven, and He indeed does "grade on the curve."
- I sincerely appreciate your honesty and candor with that statement. I'm taking it that you are saying that you know you are not yet able or ready to live fully committed to being a holy person, at least at this time, is that right?
- Do you know any respectable human beings who claim to NOT be Christians? I do! If respectability is the issue as to entry into either heaven or hell, what will God do with those people?

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, pp. 1346-1347 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

181. I have no encouragement at home.

Response(s):

- That's a tough situation to be in, and I feel with you (and will pray for you) about that setting. However, as I once told a teenaged boy, are you going to let your family's distaste for Christ sentence YOU to hell? As the old adage goes, don't cut off your nose to spite your face. Each individual is personally responsible before God for their OWN life, and when you choose to pray to ask Jesus into your heart to forgive all your sins, there are certainly plenty of new spiritual family members who will pray for and support you in your difficult circumstances, especially when you find a good local church to join. Don't let discouragement from those outside your heart keep you from doing what you must do to accept God's eternal salvation, whether or not they ever see the light.
- I have personally witnessed believers in Muslim countries shunned from family and friends because they chose to trust Jesus Christ and go to heaven--the devil HATES it when he loses one of his children. That same elderly lady was so full of joy and peaceful contentment, somehow I came to believe God had given her an extra measure of grace to deal so victoriously with that situation. And He

- can (and will) do the same thing for you.
- When it comes to eternity in heaven or hell, ultimately, life is NOT a group decision or a team effort. It can help one to have a supportive Christian family, but, when all is said and done, when we all face God in judgment, it will be a matter of whether each individual personally accepted Jesus Christ for their forgiveness, or whether they chose to reject Him, for whatever reason(s).
- Just so I understand you properly, you mean that you have little or no encouragement toward or for what? For accepting Jesus? For living life as a Christian? I first want to know what you mean, so that I can adequately know how to respond to you...is that fair?

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1341 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

182. I'm afraid of persecution.

Response(s):

- Let me assure you, first, that nobody naturally likes or necessarily enjoys persecution. I have experienced it and it is not enjoyable/fun. Secondly, persecution is promised to EVERY believer in Jesus Christ. Sometimes we think that because we live in America, persecution and suffering for our faith only occurs in far off places—but that is not the case. And finally, not in any way to frighten you, but to be sure your thinking is sound and sober, it is much more worth suffering for a little while in this, than to spend eternity with those persecutors, who are promised and assured to endure eternal suffering and punishment, with no let up, in hell. One may escape some persecution in this life, by rejecting receiving and living for Christ here and now, but the trade-off is in no way comparable to the suffering and duration or intensity of the judgment they will face for having rejected the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ (which can bring with it persecution, at times). You've got to weigh your options, and not be deceived by temporal pleasure now in exchange for eternal pain later, without end.
- If you were to welcome persecution with open arms, I might send you to a psychiatrist! Just realize that the Bible teaches that to the degree that any believer suffers for Christ's name, there are both rewards for so doing, and a whole host and company of fellow believers experiencing the same things in this world. You are never alone in it—God will always be for you, and believers will always be sharing in it with you (and the “payoff,” if you will, far outweighs the short-lived pain).

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1345 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

183. I've heard that so many times before.

Response(s):

- Great. Since you know the message, perhaps this time you will listen with an attentive heart, and respond to this all-important message of eternal life.
- Is there any good reason why you never responded to the message you have heard?
- Great! Do you know why you didn't you respond, or what's wrong with message what were you told?
- Repeating a message can benefit your understanding, and, at the same time can turn you off to what you're already familiar with (i.e., over-exposure), but the information/message is not given just to educate you, but to elicit a response (which you have already told me you have not done).
- Well, have you ever heard it in your heart and responded to it? No great message will ever personally benefit you unless you act on what you have heard.

184. I don't know enough yet to make that decision.

Response(s):

- Let me assure you that everything you need to know to ensure that you will go to heaven, by God's grace I am prepared right now to share with you. And, in fact, it is not as much information as you may think—you think. **(I Cor. 15:3-5).**
- Don't risk missing out on heaven over an issue of being uninformed. It does not take a Ph.D. to teach you, and I certainly do not have one, but I do know the message which can bring you eternal life. May I share it with you?
- Tell me what you do know, and we'll fill in any gaps you may have. I wouldn't want the devil to steal your opportunity for heaven over something that easily resolved.
- Would you please I'll tell you more about what particular aspects of what I've been speaking to you that you feel you could use more information concerning? what don't you know/understand

Answer(s):

“You must exercise simple childlike faith.” ‘Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all.’ (Lk. 18:17). “Must you master electricity to turn on the lights? Would you refuse to eat until you understand the digestive system?” Go Tell: The Soul Winner’s Encyclopedia, p. 46, by Freddie Gage, (Freddie Gage Evang. Assn., Euless, TX), 1980

185. I cannot understand.

Response(s):

---Well, I have the time, let’s go over it again until you do get it.

---Is there any specific thing which I have said that you can identify that you did and did not understand? What part of the message I just told you didn’t make sense to you?

---I will be happy to re-visit God’s greatest message in life, so that you CAN understand, but please do realize that it is only by God’s Spirit that anyone can understand the message to the point that they will respond to it, and I am praying, as I explain it to you again, that He will graciously open your eyes to His revealed truth(?).

---I know this may be one of the first times you have ever heard these things. Fortunately, the Bible says that a child can understand enough about God’s saving message to respond, so I am certain that if we go over the parts that you do not understand, God will allow you to understand to the point of being able to respond. The willing is up to you.

---[Do you desire to understand, and simply need some more clarification?].

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1342 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

186. You need to speak to my wife (pawning you off method).

Response(s):

---I would love to speak with your wife, but may I first ask you a question...Do you know for sure that if you were to die today, you would be in heaven?

---I will welcome speaking with your wife, but before I do, as the head of the household/man of the house, may I ask you...If you were to die today, do you know for certain that you would go to heaven?

---[**I would love the opportunity to speak with your wife, but before I do, let me assure you that what I have to tell you affects you directly, as all men need to learn how to go to heaven and to avoid hell—it’s not just for others, women and children.**]

187. I’m really busy right now. Not Now. [one lady was getting married the next day—a valid excuse; others will lie to avoid the God issue]

Response(s):

---I understand! I have a lot of things going on too, but I just wanted to make sure to take the time to tell people how to go to heaven. Is there a better time when we could discuss this further?

---I’m sorry to have bothered you while you are busy, is there a better time when I could return.

---[if you discern a hard heart] I’m sorry I interrupted you...is there a better time for me to tell you how you can go to heaven and not go to hell when you die?

---I didn’t mean to interrupt you—would it be better if I returned next Saturday or next Sunday? [**sales technique you may or may not be comfortable using**].

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, pp. 1342-1343 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

188. I’ll deal with that subject (and with death) when I’m older (i.e., the death as million-to-one odds argument). I am going to have a good time in this world and let the next world take care of itself. I want to wait awhile.

Response(s):

---What day will you die? How old are you going to reach in this life? How certain are you that you will absolutely be alive tomorrow, and not hit by a car, drop dead of a heart attack—in other words, be careful presuming on God’s mercy, in delaying till later a decision you should make today, as if you know the end from the beginning as to the certainty of how long you have to make this decision. do you have a good life insurance policy, psychic or 3rd sense that you are the first person to know for sure when they’re going to die? a bit harsh).

---What would you say if I told you that the type of “fun” and “playing” you most likely are referring to—the type you are allowing to keep you from God—has consequences, and though you choose not to face them yet, you WILL face them, and it will only be worse and harder for you to get saved (due to

- hardness/callousness of heart from rejecting God's message) the longer you wait?
- Are you "older" today that you were last year? Are you absolutely certain that you will live to the ripe old age of, say, seventy-five? How do you know that? I'd love to buy stock in your life, as I've never known anyone so sure of the future.
 - I have heard many Christians who met God later in life, and regretted they had not done so earlier, and spent the remainder of their days in an intense commitment to make up for time lost. Don't let yourself be one of those.
 - A person can put off the decision as to where they will be buried, and what their tombstone and plot will be like, but no one can safely put off the decision as to where they will go after that, and be certain that the option will be left in their hands indefinitely.

Answer(s):

The Bible says, 'Do not boast about tomorrow, For you do not know what a day may bring.' (Pv. 27:1. 'behold, now is "THE ACCEPTABLE TIME," behold, now is "THE DAY OF SALVATION"'—(II Cor. 6:2d-g. "God said TODAY. To say some other time is to say 'NO' to Christ. (See also James 4:13, 14). God's Spirit will not always strive with man (Genesis 6:3).") A man who hardens his neck after much reproof Will suddenly be broken beyond remedy." (Pv. 29:1) Go Tell: The Soul Winner's Encyclopedia, by Freddie Gage, p. 46 (Freddie Gage Evang. Assn., Euless, TX), 1980

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1343 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

189. I'm too young or too old.

Response(s):

- To Kids: If you are old enough to understand my message, and delay it till you're more mature, you're held morally responsible for having heard and rejected God's message.
- How could anyone be too old to secure their future in heaven? To not do so IS to secure for oneself a life in hell, in just a few short years. If you are old, yet still mentally competent, you can still pray to receive Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all your sins—and you need to do so soon, as time (and your life) are running short.
- What does age have to do with it? You have a huge need, and God has a gracious solution. If you are breathing, it's not too late.
- I must warn you, whatever you may mean by that statement, that there are no credible excuses which will stand up on judgment day, for having willfully rejected God's offer of eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Too old for what? Perhaps it would help you understand what God requires of you if I might have the privilege of re-sharing with you the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ...
- [You are not too old, but I hope your thinking is not slipping, as that statement makes no sense.]**
- [Will you have the audacity to actually tell God on judgment day that you willfully rejected His gift of eternal life because, though you were able to accept it, your age played some legitimate role in spurning His gracious offer?. Are you capable of still receiving Christmas gifts from your grandchildren? Your excuse has vanished.]**

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1345 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

190. I do not think I am old enough to make a decision.

Response(s):

- Do you understand what it means to do the right thing, as opposed to doing something that is morally wrong? To state it another way, have you (or are you aware that you have) ever done anything which was wrong, bad or evil? Then you are clearly old enough, my friend.
- Everybody comes to their own "age of accountability" at different chronological ages, but I have never heard of anyone not having reached such maturity by age eight, and I know that you, pretty as you are, are older than that. (Isa. 7:15)
- I have a son who, when he was four years old, knew enough and was aware enough of his own sinfulness and desire to go to heaven when he dies to have made the decision. Smart as he is, he is no Einstein, as it does not take any more capacity than that, and I am sure that you know well more than those essentials.
- Do you realize that to make that statement you are MAKING a decision to reject Christ. If one is old (or mature) enough to reject Christ, they certainly are old (or mature) enough to accept Him, as they are simply rejecting the offer, which shows that they knew or understood it was an offer which they did not

want to take.

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1345 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

191. I'll take my chances.

Response(s):

For Further Study:

- That confession shows the utmost lack of love for oneself, to risk burning in eternity, rather than to at least further investigate the things I am telling you from God. **[Didn't your mother raise you better than that?]**
- Are you a professional gambler or loan shark, because I've never seen someone so nonchalantly make the biggest gamble of their eternity and life, in so short a period of time with so little thought given to their wager.
- You will not be taking any chance at all, as there is no uncertainty about the consequences of so grave a decision. The Bible is clear that inaction on your part, as regards the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is and amounts to direct rejection, guaranteed to seal your eternal fate in a place a truly thinking person would not consciously choose to go to.

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1343 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

192. I'll worry about that in the next life.

Response(s):

- I assure you as sure as I'm standing here, on the authority of God's word, that if you wait that long, it will absolutely be too late, and you will be damned, with no further chance of deliverance from an eternal hell. God gives you plenty of time and opportunities in this life, and if you do not choose to take him up on His offer, His patience eventually runs out. There are no second chances for those who forever spurn the grace of Christ in this life.
- There is punishment awaiting those whose lives are devoid of God in this world, and a preoccupation with the things only of this world is the epitome of short-sightedness and foolish living with blinders on, as we all face death and God's judgment day!
- There are no reincarnations in the afterlife—The Bible speaks only of a resurrection to either death (i.e., in hell) or life (i.e., in heaven, if one knows Christ).

193. Would not suicide be the best way out of my trouble?

Response(s):

- Absolutely not! That would only exacerbate their problem, as the problem would not have gone away, but that act would have ensured that they could never correct the problem between them and God, as they would have sealed their own fate, as there are no decisions as to Christ ever to be made post-mortem.
- Not in the least! It is not just one's physical demise which sin hath wrought upon the human race, and God's punishment for our sins is never ended simply when the body expires. Death, in the biblical sense, also includes eternal death and separation from God, in hell, which is a fate all people without Christ face, whether their body gave out, or was snuffed out by that selfish act of sin. It doesn't matter how you died, but how you lived—either knowing Jesus Christ personally, or not!
- The devil would like you (and many other people) to believe that, but it is simply not true. What good would that do? God is not concerned with your leaving this world, but with you living in this world and leaving this world rightly related to Him, through His Son.

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1347 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

194. I see no harm in worldly amusements.

Response(s):

- Some "worldly" amusements are truly morally harmless. Take, for example, a roller coaster. But many are harmful to the moral and spiritual health of an individual. The issue is not so much what one does, or what they do not do, but who they know. That relationship will affect what they do or don't do from that day forward.
- So that I am clear, what particular "worldly amusements" do you have in mind?
- We could discuss what worldly amusements are morally good or morally bad, but our focus would have

shifted/changed from what God has done to secure your eternal salvation (a God-focus) to what you have done or not done (a pridefully human-focus), and I would rather spend my time talking with you about how you can go to heaven, rather than specific acts you can do to temporarily “clean up your act,” especially since that clean-up job will not suffice to keep you from going to hell.

- I would not for an instant want you to be under the errant notion going around that Christians have no fun! I have had more fun, fulfillment and enjoyment since walking with the Lord, than any of the temporary pleasures the devil brought my way before Christ affected my living. [Can I tell you more about it?].
- It is the devil who has spread the rumor that Christians are fuddy-duddies, who are stoic and have no thrills in life. True, some misguided Christians take their moral stances too seriously (Ecc. 7:16), but far too often I think you will find claiming Christians taking too much liberty and participating in sinful activities, abusing the security they find in Jesus.
- There are many wholesome and even exciting things that Christians can engage in, and when you live your life knowing that you are engaging all of your activities alongside the eternal Creator of the universe, there is nothing more fulfilling or exciting as that!

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1346 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

195. I'm happy, and like my lifestyle, living in sin. Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die. I like my life as it is presently, thank you. Won't Christianity cramp my style?

Response(s):

- There may be many aspects of your chosen habits of life which are amoral or moral, which do not need changing once you become a Christian.
- Don't let the devil deceive you by “the passing pleasures of sin” and sin's deceptiveness (Heb. 11:25, 3:13), as “there is a way which seems right to a man, but the result thereof is death” (i.e., in hell—Pv. 14:12, 16:25).
- Are you willing and prepared to pay the price and accept the consequences of that choice? Can you endure hell? Have you ever stepped into a scolding hot tub you neglected to add enough cold water into, and found that to be the way you'd like to spend your eternity?
- What authoritative basis do you have and have you consulted or read that guarantees you this confidence that there will be no judgment after you die? I'd like to meet that authority myself, because I have met Him, and He says exactly the opposite.
- If you are determined to maintain that position/attitude, at least let me pray for you, and I must warn you that you will end up in hell if you continue down that lifestyle path without receiving Jesus into your life.
- Will you be happy (vs. sorry/regret) with the consequences, ultimately? There is nothing intrinsically evil about having fun. Christ experienced joy, attended a wedding in Cana, dined with sinners, and God gives believers “all things to enjoy,” but to live for having fun (hedonism?)—that is, to have one's main or sole aim and purpose to acquire wealth and things and to be primarily or exclusively focused on this life only (i.e., as priority one, or greater than the spiritual world and life to come) is evil. This life is only a glimpse and a smidgen of time all of us will live (one place or the other). To live for pleasure, as opposed to enjoying pleasures with/in God, is to live for the devil, and this philosophy (and Bible verse) speaks to one living his life based on having a good time and only concentrating on the here-and-now.

For Further Study:

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 38-39, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

196. There's too much to give up.

Response(s):

- What, specifically, do you believe you have to give up?
- God is speaking of your receiving something. The only thing you will be “giving up” is a future in hell, and faith, if you have any, in anything else but Christ to get you to heaven. [Of course, this does not mean God will call you to give up sins, as you are sanctified].
- What do you have to lose, and what is so important to hold onto, which can never qualify you to avoid hell and obtain heaven? Is that obstacle important enough to you—temporary as it is—to risk going to hell forever for what you deem to be a pleasure, which, at best, will last you another ___ (choose a number) years?
- Really? Like loneliness, lack of peace, fear of death and the frightening and certain thought that one day you will face your Creator and be held accountable for every deed and word you have ever committed, to pay their punishment yourself?

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1342 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

197. I would like to be a Christian, but I cannot forgive my enemies.**Response(s):**

- As important as it is for people to forgive their enemies, you do not yet have the spiritual capacity to do so—at least not nearly the same capacity as once God lives within you.
- God has instructed mankind to forgive their enemies, but He has not conditioned His free gift of salvation upon your so doing. That would be a salvation based on your works—works you are ill-equipped to perform. Said another way, that would also mean that your forgiving men earned you the right to get saved by God.
- I would not expect you to be able to forgive them. Wait until God changes you on the inside, and thereafter leads and empowers you progressively to do so.
- Where have you learned (or heard) that God requires that to occur first, or He will not forgive you?

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1348 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

198. My friends mean so much to me.**Response(s):**

- Are you feeling that if you become a Christian, your present friends will desert or abandon you? If they would do that, 1) they were never true friends, and 2) I can assure you that the friends God would replace them with will be of a superior quality of friendship you have yet to experience—if you get lined up with sincere and committed, godly believers.
- Your friendships will last, at best, the remaining number of years you have to live on this earth. A friendship and relationship with God lasts forever.
- Do you value your friends' relationship so highly that you would choose to follow them to hell—assuming they are not Christians—in order to remain their friend, so long as that friendship would last? Stated another way, are your friends worth more to you than your eternal destiny? A friend can be an asset to you for a few years. There is a Friend who is closer than a brother, and can be such for the rest of time to eternity, Jesus Christ. That is, are you willing to let friendships with humans send you to hell, by valuing their opinion of you more than God's view of you, on judgment day, when he will determine whether you will spend eternity in heaven or hell?
- Why, or where do you get the impression that you will lose all your friends if you become a Christian? Tell me about it/that. That fear may be ill-founded, both because your friends may not abandon you, as well as the fact that you may have, somewhere, gotten the idea that God will absolutely require you to give up all friendships with all friends—something which may be based on a misunderstanding of certain doctrinal subjects covered in the Bible.

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1343 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

199. People would laugh.**Response(s):**

- What would they laugh at? Who, or what type of people would laugh?
- Would it affect/impact your decision to know that anyone who would laugh at your becoming a Christian is a nobody to God, and evidences the fact that they will not be going to heaven with you?
- Better to endure a little persecution in this life, than a lot more punishment in the next, and for eternity!
- God has promised rewards for those who suffer for His name's sake, and the joy of pleasing God is superior in value to the comfort one may feel from having evil persons support their sinfulness.
- Let me be honest with you...the Bible does address the fact that in some cases, immoral friends of believers may mock them and wonder at their no longer desiring to live a life of sinful pleasure. However, those who do such things are not worthy of the kingdom of God, and would not be the type that you would be wise to retain as close friends.
- Is that the real definition of a true friend...Someone who would insult you for finding the greatest gift a man could ever discover? It may not be "cool" to be a Christian in our modern and sinful country, but it is a lot cooler than the heat one will certainly feel in hell, without Christ.

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1342 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

200. Does this have to be done publicly?

Response(s):

- Biblically, it does not have to be done publicly, but it is very beneficial to do so, as a testimony to others, and as a way to cement your experience before God, in your heart. Also, when you are publicly baptized, that act is an external picturing of the work God does in your heart internally.
- It is not absolutely mandatory, but I would wonder if there is some reason why you would not want to share such a joyous experience with others?
- Are you proud of what Jesus Christ has done for you, or a little ashamed? He died on the cross publicly, and it is of value to follow in His footsteps.
- Some people have argued from I Tim. 6:12 that this is the case, and, though I disagree with their interpretation of that verse, I do agree with them that there is valuable psychological benefit for so doing (though it is not biblically required—Joseph of Arimathea was a secret disciple).

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1346 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

201. I'm Not Interested.

Response(s):

- You are not interested in avoiding hell and going to heaven by having all your sins forgiven? May I ask, what is it about that offer that is not interesting to you?
- That's your decision, but I must warn you that people who reject God's free offer do end up in a literal hell.
- Well, I'll be praying for you [and do], because you don't want to leave this world without Jesus Christ.
- I wasn't interested in God either, until someone took the time to personally introduce me to the God of the Bible, and accurately explain how I could be sure I would go to heaven. Is that what you thought I was going to discuss with you?
- [Bad answer: OK, thanks anyway.]
- Well (tell me), what would you do if you were me and you knew the most important message in the world about how all men can have eternal life, and you encountered disinterested people?
- You're not interested in avoiding a sure future eternity in hell? What's un-interesting about missing a certain hell in the future?

202. Please do not talk to me about it.

Response(s):

- Is it uncomfortable to face the reality that you are headed to hell when you die, with no knowledge of how to get out of that jam?
- Oh, you don't love yourself enough to be willing how to save your soul from an eternal punishment?
- Is there a personal reason why this subject is discomfoting to you?
- The God of the universe has sent me here to tell you how to go to heaven, and if you do not want to hear about that, I certainly cannot (nor could anyone else) help you.
- The devil gives many people a similar emotion of desiring to avoid the subject, so that they will spend eternity in hell with him.
- I have been commanded by God to tell the good news about heaven's availability to you, but I have not been instructed to let you in on that opportunity if you stubbornly insist on going to hell, so I will respectfully leave your premises.
- Are you afraid that, perhaps, you MIGHT open up, and end up going to heaven instead of where you otherwise will be going... hell?

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1343 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

203. My parents preached religion to me so much, I want nothing to do with it.

Response(s):

- I'm sorry your parents may have over-sold you on the greatest gift a man can ever received, and thereby turned you off. However, there are many Christians who do not over-preach, whose company you need to get yourself within, because to let a sin of one's parents influence our lives to the point we let ourselves end up in hell—before God—not a valid excuse for willfully rejecting God's free and gracious gift of love. The issue if your response to the death of Christ for you/on your behalf—not what good or bad things anyone else has done to you. Because you, as we all, are a sinner, YOU must deal with God on the terms He has established for getting right with Him. No person will be able to cover or

vouch for you on judgment day, and you will not be able to do so for anyone else, even your children. Each man is personally responsible for either accepting or rejecting Jesus Christ, and you would not make a wise decision to reject a loving and perfect Savior because of something He had nothing to do with—that's illogical, and a damning mis-conclusion.

--Will you choose to spend eternity in hell, just to spite and rebel against your mother? That's not a very intelligent decision/response.

+204. I'm just not ready yet.

Bible Reference(s): II Cor. 6:2, Heb. 3:15, 19, Mt. 25:10-13, (Mt. 24:37-40—(Today is the day—do not delay); Heb. 9:27, Jas. 4:13-14 (death is imminent, for all men).

Response(s):

- Not ready to receive the greatest gift of all, and to make sure you will go to heaven and not hell?
- I understand, and will not force the issue, but I do want inform you of the risk you take upon yourself should, God forbid, anything happen to you before you're ready, as none of us know the day we will meet our maker.
- What are you expecting to happen or change, before you think you would be ready?
- Please know that it is completely possible to wait too long, and God's Spirit give up striving with you. Feel free to think it over, but the bible says that 'today is the day of salvation,' so don't take too long, put it off or procrastinate on such an important decision. (ill.: the people in Noah's day who wouldn't enter the ark)
- We humans (often) feel we can always make the decision, but not so, as God will not forever strive with us to offer eternal life.

Answer(s):

Sometimes that is true. Sometimes when people hear the good news about Christ, it is so simple they need time to think it over. But, **it is easy or you to practice the things that are not important and procrastinate on the things that are important.** Therefore, you put off the most important decision of your life, which you ought to make, until it is forever too late (Lk. 12:16-21).

Source: Adapted from N.E.T.S. p. 107, by Larry Moyer (EvanTell, Dallas, TX), 1992

205. I want to get established in business first. After that, I'll become a Christian.

Response(s):

- What does becoming a Christian have to do with the progress of your career? That is, how is becoming a Christian a barrier to the successful achievement of valid goals for oneself?
- You do need to be alerted to the fact that the Bible says that God will not strive with man forever/indefinitely, and, though you may think and it may feel like the decision is totally in your hands, to do with as you please anytime you choose, there is a hardness which creeps in when a soul rejects God's truth, and there will come a day—no one knows when for any given person—when God WILL give up on YOU, and after that time, you could not trust Him for salvation even if you wanted to/were inclined to do so.
- Being established in business is a worthy ideal. God is in the business of helping His children do His will in business. However, you can be more certain of the uncertainty of when you will meet your Creator than you now feel certain that you will establish yourself in business over a given period of time. Go with the sure thing, as you may not even be around long enough to see your goals through, no matter how successful you become, but you can rest assured you WILL be around on judgment day, and you could settle that issue in your life here and now.

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1341, (Nelson Publishers Nashville), 1985

206. Door slammed in your face (rudeness). [RARE, in my experience—can happen, but don't fear it! They're rejecting Christ—not you, personally]

Bible Reference(s): Mk. 6:11, Eze. 3:18-19, Mt. 7:6; **Personal Promise:** Tit. 3:10-11, Lk. 21:17-18.

Response(s):

- Be warned—you choose to go to hell if you knowingly/willfully reject this message/Christ
- God loves you, but you will go to hell if nothing changes in your life.
- Pray to receive Jesus or you will go to hell!
- Hell is a severe/serious and eternal risk!
- Literally shake the dust off your hands and shoes, and say "I'll be praying for you."
- God bless you. (**may show love, or turning of the cheek, but no Gospel or warning given**)

---Don't shut the door of your heart to God! You'll seal your fate in hell forever.
 ---the fool has said in his heart, 'there is no God.' (**rude?**)
 ---Do you really want to go to hell? (**rude?**)
 ---I'll play the door stop if I can stop you choosing to go to hell.
 ---"You're doing to me what you're doing to God in your heart--shutting the door to your heart." (Rev. 3:20).
 ---Say: "Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me (Mt. 5:11)." "I'm blessed!"
Answer(s): (combinations of the following may be appropriate, but time is of the essence):

207. Sharing one's faith is too personal.

Bible Reference(s): II Cor. 4:13, II Tim. 1:7-8, (Mt. 10:32-33?);
 Jn. 19:38 (silent disciple exception, to save/spare his life?)

Response(s):

---if the greatest and most important thing in one's life is too personal to speak about, and one does not desire to share their joy over their experience with another who has had the same experience, one could rightfully wonder either how joyous it was for the person, or whether he had, in fact, yet received that gift.
 ---Then, it seems to me, your "faith" is too personal (i.e., in an immoral and overly-subjective sense), because the Bible does not teach about a salvation that is too personal to share--in fact, having experienced salvation, we are told to share it regularly, to help out those who still do not know God (and to edify those who have). Don't deprive a fellow Christian of the joy of camaraderie.
 ---I understand that you may be shy, and, ultimately God knows your heart--just make sure that you have received the gift of eternal life, as all will be revealed and exposed someday--but then it will be too late.
 ---If what you say is true, then Christ lied and sinned in speaking His final words before His death, known as the Great Commission and addressed to those who know that they belong to Him (Mt. 28:18-20).
 ---If salvation is that personal, how will anyone ever discover how to be saved?
 ---If salvation is that personal, how will a Christian be able to contain his joy in having gained eternal life, if he is not allowed to share that great joy because of some supposed rule of impersonableness?

208. That's none of your business: keep that to yourself.

Response(s):

---I respect that you feel that way, but God and His Word tell me I am to care enough about you to make sure that you get the opportunity to go to heaven by my telling you how.
 ---Don't let yourself go to hell, eternally, because of defensiveness, pride or ego. Then the devil will really win the battle for your life/soul.
 ---I'm sorry you feel offended speaking about God--I merely care about you and your destination beyond this life
 ---If you've got eternal life already figured out and are assured you will go to heaven, great. I'll be praying for you.
 ---Sir/Mam, I was not asking you intimate questions which invaded your personal space, or life--I'm just trying to make sure that you do not end up in hell, as so many people are going to because they will not listen to God's message of how that fate can be avoided.
 ---Well, may I leave you some materials which you could study on your own? [NO]. Then, clearly, privacy and the subject being too personal is not your true objection. Be warned not to ignore God's message forever.
 ---Very unfortunately, if no one ever makes where you will spend your eternity enough of a concern to them that they make it an issue they bring up to you, you will go to hell. It was God's business to send Jesus to die in your place, and He has commanded me to lovingly ensure that you are aware of His gift of eternal life offered to all who will trust Jesus Christ to save them.
 ---Your finances, and whatever you do inside your own home is none of my business, and I prefer to know nothing about that, but, simply because you are a human, it is my commissioning by God, in His Bible, to tell you how to live forever with God, if you will listen.

209. I prefer to remain open-minded. I want to be absolutely neutral about this matter.

Bible Reference(s): Josh. 24:15, II Cor. 4:4, Mt. 12:30; II Cor. 6:2.

Response(s):

- A life-long open-minded man will end up in an open-ended pit in the Lake of hell. You simply have to come to grips/deal with and face up to the Lord—in this life, with forgiveness through Jesus Christ, or in the next, with only judgment and eternal punishment. Better this life than the next.
- I respect open-mindedness, and after a man investigates the claims and evidences of Jesus Christ, God holds him eternally accountable for what he did with that knowledge.
- Open-mindedness is certainly a virtue in many areas of life (as opposed to closed/narrow-mindedness), but your experience will tell you that in most areas of life, when action is to be taken, we must make our best decision, based on the facts, and take action on the thoughts we have opened our minds to evaluate, and your eternal destiny is one matter—to be sure—you cannot remain neutral about, as indecision is decision, to end up in hell.
- You have not remained open-minded about your spouse, career, health or financial well-being, why would you take such a risky, non-committal attitude toward your eternal destiny?
- Evaluate the evidence and investigate the facts—God’s word can stand up to scrutiny—but please realize that if you never conclude or decide, you have, by inaction and default, chosen to remain in your lost condition, which ultimately leads to hell. That is ‘the repentance (i.e., change of mind) which leads to life.’ (**Ac. 11:18**).
- Riding the fence, in the matter of eternal salvation, only leaves one sore between the thighs, and eternally separated from God’s heavenly presence. It’s like trying to live on a highway center stripe!

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1343 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

210. Moralistic, dogmatic Bible-beater fanatic extremist/fundamentalists turn me off.

Bible Reference(s): II Cor. 5:10-11, 14-15, 20, Mt. 5:16, (II Cor. 6:3; Eph. 4:15).

Response(s):

- They turn me off too. However, it is easy to choose guilt by association in labeling anyone who will speak to you about eternal life as fitting into that category, because of some inner desire not to address/deal with the issue of your own mortality and place of residence after death. Would you say you are open to hearing the message of eternal life in Jesus Christ, or are there inner turmoils the devil uses to keep you in his kingdom?
- That’s bad, and I’m sorry that happened to you, but please know that on judgment day, the only issue God will be dealing with you about is what you did with His Son, Jesus Christ. If anyone has wronged you, that will be between them and God, but if you have not received forgiveness of all your sins through the death of Christ on the cross, any excuse that people presented the message is a less-than-perfect way will not save your soul from eternal torment.
- They turn me off too, and their manner (not necessarily their message) is wrong. Please hear the message, which God has intended for you, because you need to hear it despite any failed means men may have used to get that message of eternal life to you. After all, no one is perfect, except Jesus, who wants to save your soul.
- There are a very few people I have met who can only think and talk about religion—and that’s an over-emphasis, but that does not at all negate the importance of the message you need to hear about how you can have eternal life through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Truly, those people need to learn how to better, and more lovingly, share the message of eternal life, which is precisely/exactly what I would like to do with you right now, if I may...
- Radical or militant religionists are not serving the God of heaven. On the other hand, sometimes others appear to us to be “zealots,” simply because our consciences are unclear due to the apparent increased commitment we see in others, compared with that within ourselves. Be clear which type of “extremist” you are referring to.

211. I’m not religious.

Bible Reference(s): Jas. 1:26-27, II Tim. 3:1, 5, (Mk. 7:6-9).

Response(s):

- Religion is man reaching up to God. Christianity is God reaching down to man, in the Person of His Son, so that man can have an eternal relationship with Him, and I desire to speak with you only about the latter.
- Neither am I. Religion is what man does to try to please or appease God. I’m here to tell you how you can have an eternal personal relationship with God, through the Lord Jesus Christ.
- In many circles of our American culture it is not “cool/hip” to be “into religion,” but following that philosophy is like sheep following each other over a cliff or to the slaughter, because every man will

give an account of himself to God, one day, and to have been ashamed of or to have ignored God in this life does not at all bode well as an indication of where one is heading in the next life. Remember, when it come to worrying whether men think you're cool, it's more important to concern yourself with what God thinks of you. (**I Cor. 15:33, Lk. 6:26, Gal. 1:10, I Cor. 4:5**).

- God cared enough about you that He sent His only Son to die in your place to pay for your sins--what's not cool about that?
- I am not here to try to sell you on "religion," but to introduce you to the Creator of the world!...
- I'm not exactly sure what you have in mind when you use the word, "religious," but I can assure you that rituals, fancy ceremonies and ornate buildings with Gothic, dry music and a lifestyle in which there is no fun or joy does not turn me on either, and is NOT what I am here to offer you today...

212. I'm trying to be a Christian.

Response(s): know you are saved verses.

- I appreciate the fact that you are seeking to please God and behave like a Christian, but I need to inform you, according to God's Word, the Bible, that one does not become a Christian through a process of doing good works, but through establishing a personal relationship with God, by praying to ask Christ to forgive all your sins and to come live within. Good works will follow, but one must possess eternal life as a free gift--something we could never earn or work for.
- So, you would describe yourself as a "seeker" of God? May I please have the liberty of showing you from Scripture that we are all sinners, and that no one rightly and sincerely seeks God, which is precisely why He sent His only Son to die in your place, on the cross, so that God could find you, through your praying to receive Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of all your sins. (**Rom. 3:10**).

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1344 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

213. I'm already religious. I am religious.

Response(s):

- To understand you fully, how are you describing or defining the term, "religious?"
- Be clear, sir, that I am not asking you to become religious--either more religious or less. I am speaking about establishing an eternal relationship with the God of the universe, through Jesus Christ, His Son.
- By "religious," many people speak to intellectual beliefs and certain rituals or behaviors they perform, often in a church, synagogue or mosque. Is that what you are referring to?
- Being "religious" has never ushered anyone into the presence of God, in heaven.
- Depending on the particulars of what you are calling "being religious," there are some practices (or beliefs) you may presently do or hold which are not contrary to the Christian faith. God is neither asking you to discard those, or to rely on them as your reason(s) to believe that you will end up in heaven. What He is telling you is... [go into the Gospel, here].

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1344 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

214. I am doing the best I can.

Response(s):

- Even if you were to do the best that any human being ever has, the remainder of your life, it would not be enough.
- God does not ask you to do your best. We are all sinners, so the "best" we can do, ultimately, is sin and sin-tainted.
- If God was asking you to do your best, Christ would never have had to have given His best.
- I'm sure that is true and that you are sincere. The problem is, none of us has the ability to do enough, as our very best falls short of God's standard, which is moral perfection.
- Are you aware of the fact that "doing your best" focuses on what you can do for God, rather than what God has already done for you, by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die for your sins so that you can be eternally related to God? (Eph. 2:8-10).
- Would it disappoint you to know that a person who does their best, but does not have Jesus Christ in their life, will suffer the same fate of confinement to an eternal hell as a person like Adolph Hitler? Both of them rejected God's free offer of eternal life in Jesus Christ, and, although there may be degrees of suffering in hell, any suffering there is torment, unbearable and forever.
- That is noble, but does not get you the results you are striving for. Let me explain...

For Further Study:

The Open Bible, p. 1342 (Nelson Publishers: Nashville), 1985

215. Can I be a Christian without losing my moral integrity?

Response(s):

- It's funny that you would ask that question, because, when you are more grounded in the beliefs of Christianity you will come to realize that it is the exact opposite experience that you will have...becoming a Christian, and thereafter living for Christ will heighten and support, not take away from your integrity.
- You must have had some really weird experiences with Christians in your past, to ask that question. If, in your mind, becoming a Christian lessens your integrity, you have either learned from or observed Christians who were not living as such, or who merely claimed the name.
- I can assure you that whatever your moral standard of integrity is, if it is consistent with what common sense thinking people would call "ethics," the Bible nowhere asks you to less than that, once you become a Christian. [Can you tell me what specific standards of behavior and conscience you fear you may have to compromise, as a Christian? Ex.: scientific integrity to data and verifiable knowledge?].

For Further Study:

Hard Questions About Christianity Made Easy, pp. 50-51, by Mark Water (John Hunt Publishing) 2000

216. You're trying to convert/proselytize me. Oh, no, he's talking about God; He'll probably try to convert me to try to make me live right and believe as he does. Are you one of those "born-again"-type Christians? (as if that's bad, or as if there is any other kind of Christian!)

Response(s): Jn. 3:3, 7, Mt. 18:3.

- Sir, I absolutely do not have the power to convert you to God. I am, however, trying to speak with you about how you can know for sure that when you die, you will go to heaven. Is that the sort of morally offensive good news message one should, naturally, recoil at hearing? [**implied, hard heart warning**].
- May I please accurately inform you that God and His Bible know of no other type of Christian than one who is "born again," and that everyone who does not become born anew will spend eternity separated from God and His glorious, heavenly presence.

For Further Study:

True for You, but Not for Me, pp. 38-40, by Paul Copan (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1998

217. Are you pushing a religion or denomination? (Ex.: Mr. Hunter down on Baptists).

Response(s):

- Absolutely not. In fact, I would usually never tell you about where I attend church, because I am here to make sure you don't go to hell but that you do go to heaven by receiving God's forgiveness of all your sins through the payment made by Jesus Christ, God's Son.
- No Sir/Mam. God may want you in a different denomination than He has me in (so long as its Bible-believing). I'm trying to tell you how to make sure you end up in heaven, no matter what church you ultimately join. It is not where you go but who you know, and unless you personally know Jesus Christ as the Savior of your sins, you could attend church(es) the rest of your life, in vain, as you would not end up in heaven.
- "Denominations" are man-made (**I Cor. 1:12-13**), based on divisions over specific beliefs and practices. I am non-denominational [**if you are**], and am here to speak to you about how you can become a member of God's eternal family...
- I do not offer you pressure or coercion—I am simply giving you the opportunity to hear a message which will inform you how you can know for certain that when you die, you will go to heaven.
- If one feels "pressured" just by having another person speak with Him about Jesus, I would suggest that that "pressure," perceived as a negative experience, reflects more on the condition of the heart before God, and the "pressure" not to listen, I can assure you is directly from the devil.

218. I don't like your method/approach.

[I have NEVER heard a lost person raise this objection—it's usually raised by believers, who either don't evangelize, or do evangelize so infrequently that they are intimidated that anyone would actually use a biblical (i.e., a bold) way to speak Gospel words to lost and dying people.

Response(s):

- To lost people: If you would suggest to me a better way for me to get the opportunity to tell you how you can have eternal life and go to heaven, and not hell, when you die, I'd be open to trying a different

approach.

--To complaining believers (borrowed from Larry Moyer?): That's fine; tell me about what method you regularly use and I'll consider learning a new approach. [if no response...] I like my method better than yours!

The following was actually said to me by a pastor one day, regarding my Gospel Signs, held 50+ yards away from any Mormon person, at their temple's Grand Opening, a week after a sermon stating that each church member must do their part to make sure each person in the given locality hears the Gospel..."We don't do that 'in your face' evangelism." As Larry Moyer has said, I like my method better than that.

219. The Gospel is for poor people.

Response(s):

--It's for all people, and especially the poor, in that they are especially receptive as they have less security and assets to cling to.

--Trust me, sir, whether you know it or not, the Bible assures me that you are absolutely poor, as is everyone who is hopelessly and helplessly lost without God in this world (and the next).

--To consider poor people as one's inferior is to reflect an attitude of pride, which indicates that there is at least one sin we need forgiveness of, as it takes only one sin to qualify a man to go to hell—Jas. 2:10.

--In heaven's terms, even if you're a billionaire in this life, you are spiritually poor before God.

--Not poor in financial matters, but poor in spirit—humble—which impoverished people can exhibit, maybe more than most rich people, or at least self-reliant ones.

220. God will make me be poor, like a Monk. "Will I have to drive a Cavalier?"

Response(s):

--How do you know that? Most likely you are simply (verbally) expressing a fear/phobia you have, or at least a misunderstanding of Christianity that the devil has propagated—that god will call every believer to the remotest parts of jungle life if they really get committed to Him.

--Do you have any idea how many Christians there are in the world? Compare that number to the number of monks in the world, and you will quickly see that your argument does not hold water.

--God does not say whether poverty, riches or a modest lifestyle will be your particular calling—all such financial statuses are possible callings for the believer. The key is serving God with a full heart, and not loving money more than you love the Lord.

--I have known rich Christians and I have known poor ones, and what they share in complete harmony/common—if they are committed to following Him—is the joy, peace and blessings they both share, no matter their lot in life, from knowing God personally.

--Just because one Christian is led to drive a car you do not value does not have any bearing on how god will lead you. I will tell you, however, that if you admire too much, or idolize material assets over God, He may BLESS you by not allowing you to have that which you want, but do not need. He has promised to meet our needs—not all of our wants and desires, as He is not a divine errand boy.

--Better to live poor in this life and rich in the next, in heaven, than to live well in this life, and be poor in heaven—or worse, to be in hell. There is some biblical evidence for the truth that some people spend all their blessings in this life, to the impoverishment and detriment of the next (See Lazarus and the rich man parable). To be deceived—that is, unknowledgeable of what the Bible says—that this life is the main thing, and to neglect the much more important next life, is to be poor and unwise indeed. After all, what gain has a man to gain the whole world and lose his soul?" (Lk. 9:25). It is NOT the one who dies with the greatest amount of toys who wins, but who often loses. Rather, it is, in fact, the one who ends up with the most faithful service to God who is indeed rich in life.

221. You can't have any fun as a Christian. Christianity is just a bunch of prohibiting rules.

Bible Reference(s): See Answer to Question #145, above.

Response(s):

--Really? Then I must not be a Christian, even though God lives within me, because I sure do have fun.

--As a Christian, you may experience a change in your desires and interests, and God may redefine what you consider fun once you're related to Him, but it is not true that you will not have any fun if you do pray to receive Christ.

--That is a misconception that several people fall prey to, which bears no connection to reality.

Christianity is not a bunch of rules to prohibit you, but a personal relationship with the God of all

- creation, whereby He enables and empowers you to live the way He would have you live.
- In fact, the exact opposite is actually the case...the same book some people think of as a bunch of negative rules itself says that the more you come to know its truthful contents, the more freeing (vs. confining, or binding) your life will be. (Jn. 17:17).
- Really? Then you must please describe for me what your definition of Christianity is. Are you one of those uninformed persons who believes that Christianity is, basically, not drinking, gambling, smoking, dancing or going to 'R'-rated movies, because I can assure you that that is a very narrow and somewhat off-track understanding?
- You may be surprised to learn this, but some, if not many of those people who you think are Christians, because they are stoic, strict and basically mean--aren't.
- In fact, the most joyous and "fun" life anyone can live is to live the exact lifestyle that God has created man to live, in full pleasing of His Creator in every activity he engages in. What could be more fun than being yourself, within the guidelines of serving God, and knowing that such behavior reaps eternal rewards?
- In your upbringing, have you ever been exposed to strict training, because I'm trying to see why you would think that way?

222. Didn't that Discovery Channel filmmaker find Jesus' crypt and bones Feb. 26, 2007 (or the 2012c Resurrection Tomb Mystery)?

No, that was a bogus Hollywood claim. Those were rich person's crypts, those first names were common, it could have been a hoax from back then or now, and DNA can be connected to no one--God is spirit.

223. Have you ever sincerely thought something (to be true), only to discover later that it wasn't? That is, have you ever changed an opinion, or been wrong? Ill.: the bowing pillars of Egyptian landmarks look straight from a distance. I just simply don't believe.

- We're not talking about pillars, and we are able to examine God's word up close--not from a deluded far away distance! An unrelated truth (i.e., that those pillars appeared straight from afar) carries no weight as a corollary analogy.
- Do you have reasons why you don't, because I have reasons why I do.

APOLOGETICS UPDATE:

Responses to Issues Raised in Bill Maher's movie, "Religious"...

224. The virgin birth and a talking snake are not credible, and years of Christ's life are unaccounted for. See also answers to #s 7 and 15, above.

Response(s):

- If you are predisposed to disbelieve in miracles or to deny the Bible's truthfulness, there is little hope you will believe these two accounts.
- The fact that God did not see fit to mention anything of Christ's life between age 12 and 30 could never mean those years never happened. His ministry started at age 30, and what we do know of Him is what's most relevant to what we need to know about Him and for our own lives.

For Further Study:

Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, pp. 759-764, by Norman L. Geisler (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1999

225. New Testament prophecy (Ex.: "Revelations") was written by those who knew the Old Testament.

Response(s):

- The prophetic sections of the New testament have many new revelation details that are compatible but not repetitive of Old Testament prophecy sections. John received the book of Revelation as a vision, so he was not referencing Old testament prophecies when he wrote what he heard and saw. The truest test will be when all prophetic events transpire and God's doubters have to endure the Tribulation unto hell.

226. Those who wrote of Jesus never met Him, and the Gospels should all have the same accounts.

Response(s):

- Pure factual inaccuracy. Peter, Matthew, Mark and John met Christ. Luke got his account first hand from one who met Christ and even Paul met Jesus directly on the road to Damascus.

227. Religion is just selling the invisible—which is easy.

Response(s):

---There is evidence for Christianity (See: Evidence That Demands a Verdict, and More Evidence That Demands a Verdict, by Josh McDowell), and invisible things can be real—take electricity and wind.

---It's easier to “sell” a product the “buyer” can investigate, observe and test out.

228. Religion shuts off rationality and impedes human progress—grow up already.

Response(s):

---Many aspects of the Bible are completely compatible with logic and rationality of thought. Other parts require faith, as they are more supernatural in nature.

---I hope that some of the books I have written demonstrate that, in fact, the exact opposite is true. God calls believers to love Him with all their mind, and accuracy is the essence of proper biblical interpretation—which requires great brain power.

229. There's no proof Christ existed. He's like Santa Claus and Jack and the Bean stalk.

See also answers to # 13 and 226, above.

Response(s):

---No rational nation or government has ever constructed their entire calendaring based on a non-historic myth.

Answer(s):

We must call for *substantiation*. Anyone can *make* a claim, but to justify it is not so simple. When Christians make a claim that Jesus rose from the dead, they have a wealth of historical evidence on their side—quite unlike the rumors about the relatively recent deaths of JFK or Elvis.” --Paul Copan

What evidence best accounts for (1) the empty tomb, (2) Jesus' post-resurrection appearances, and (3) the origin of the Christian church? --Paul Copan

230. It's fishy that God spoke privately to His prophets instead of simply audibly to everyone. And isn't it a low emotion that God is a jealous God?

See answers to # 23, above.

Response(s):

---If He spoke audibly, faith would not be needed, and faith is the one criteria for salvation god requires of man (perhaps because to doubt Him is a high insult, calling Him a liar in what He has written). God's jealousy is based in his love of His people—not envy from lacking anything others possess.

231. Fully surrendering to “God” just opens one up to manipulation by men with agendas (such as money, control over other's hopes, adoration by the masses, etc.).

See also answers to # 37, above.

Response(s):

---Total surrender to Christ only subjects one to His control—no man needs to be involved. In fact, it is when humans intervene in one's direct relationship and fellowship with Christ that false doctrine and sinful motives can get entangled/intertwined.

---It is true that false prophets and corrupt minister do and have abuse their authority, but an honorable Christian will study the Scriptures and test everything being asked of them by that standard alone.

232. Why don't the 10 Commandments include rape, child molestation and torture? All men could agree with no stealing or murder, without the need for religion.

Response(s):

---If you love God and man (the two greatest of the 10), you will not do those related antithetical sub-acts.

233. If God's all powerful, why doesn't He eliminate the devil and solve the problems? God is to blame for everything negative or evil as he could have stopped it (illness, lost legs in war, etc.).

See answers to # 10, above.

234. Many ancient gods were born on December 25—Christ's not unique.

Response(s):

---They are “gods”—human-imagined beings in the minds of men. He is the only one God and above all. The exact date of His birth is most likely not December 25th, but to set a date to celebrate its having happened is the issue that matters.

---No one claims December 25 is the exact historical date of Christ's birth—in fact, the story of the shepherds tending their fields seems to indicate a Spring time-frame. However, December 25th is the traditional, ceremonial/symbolic date that has been established for millennia.

235. The Gospel is a story of God birthing Himself through a virgin, as His Son and Himself/God. The trinity is not monotheistic.

See answers to #s 4 and 54, above.

Response(s):

---God birthing His Son is not God birthing Himself. Though Jesus is God/deity, he is not the same Person as the Father who birthed Him through a virgin woman. Three Persons of the one Godhead is not contrary to monotheism, but a higher understanding of exactly what the nature of our one God is in His organic essence.

236. Religion just makes men arrogantly feel they have the answers to all life's questions. Doubt is more humble.

Response(s):

---Al contraire—It gives great confidence, yet humble reliance on the One who enables us to learn such matters.

237. Christians call coincidences “miracles,” and many have a low threshold for identifying miracles.

See answers to # 15, above.

Response(s):

---Some Christians do have a low standard for defining “miracles.” Biblical miracles—especially those performed by Jesus—are certainly not in a low category.

See also: Miracles and Modern Thought, by Norman L. Geisler.

238. The Old Testament has non-credible parts, such as Lot being a holy man who offering his daughter to be raped, God killing off a lot of people in the first 5 books, Jonah inside a big fish for 3 days, a 900 year old man and 39 acts being guilty of the death penalty.

See answers to # 18, above.

Response(s):

---For specific responses to every alleged contradiction in the Bible, see books listed in our Apologetics Bibliography.

239. Doubt is a luxury for those who have. Those who are desperate cling to faith, as a jailed inmate or someone in a fox hole.

Response(s):

---In fact, doubt is the riskiest, most foolish assuming man can make, for he knows not the day of his demise, nor what will occur to him devoid a relationship with Christ. Having all the assets in the world will not get one to heaven, so the rich man could be said to be the poorest of all men—relying on his riches in a futile, false confidence. No matter one's material circumstances, a miracle of god's Spirit's conviction is necessary or no man could ever be saved.

---Your financial wealth provides zero protection from the impending wrath of God, and though it may make you feel secure, you're more at risk and vulnerable, being un-forgiven and never knowing when you will meet your Maker, than any other category of people on earth.

240. If Christ is God, how was He omnipresent while on earth? Can one be both God and yet not possess all God's powers?

---He willingly and obediently surrendered access to some of His intrinsic divinity powers in order to live as and identify with man.

241. Isn't Christianity just true for you, or because you were raised to believe it by what your parents told you?

---We are free to believe whatever we want, but that freedom does not make our beliefs equally credible. If Jesus lived, was resurrected—is alive—and said He was coming back to judge unforgiven sinners, that coming event (and fact) is true for all, whether they refuse to believe it for themselves.

---It is no more subjective than all men have sinned and deserve punishment—an objective fact. The subject is universal, not unique to any one individual or group or nation.

Answer(s):

If moral relativism is true, there is no basis for opposing genocide, racism, terrorism, torture, and the like. Moral relativism could never bring about the abolition of slavery or the equal rights of women, but most of us intuitively recognize these as moral milestones. Should we ‘respect’ the ‘right’ of a Nazi Germany to invade relatively powerless nations? True For You, But Not For Me, p. 51, by Paul Copan (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1998

Simply because there are many political alternatives in the world (monarchy, Fascism, communism, democracy, etc.) doesn’t mean someone growing up in the midst of them is unable to see that some forms of government are better than others. That kind of evaluation isn’t arrogant or presumptuous. The same is true of grappling with religion. True For You, But Not For Me, p. 85, by Paul Copan (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1998

242. You cannot prove God exists without seeing Him, hearing His audible voice, a video of the same or the testimony of eye witnesses.

---Can you prove the wind exists, or that love exists? Some things are invisible. The Bible argues creation’s beauty, order and intelligent design (and complexity) as well as the existence of a conscience in fallen man gives us enough ‘proof’ to be held morally accountable before God as rejecting what He has made known of Himself, which merits His judgment.

---If He were to make himself that obvious, there would be no need to require faith from man.

243. Don’t the good deeds/lifestyle of Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons prove their theology is superior?

---It proves’ they are more serious about living morally than lesser-achieving true Christian believers (as you might be if you feared you’d go to hell without them). Their works-based theology, at odds with Scripture, in fact argues against a superior theology, as force or fear and threats of hell are not conducive with the grace-based gospel and nature of God in Christ.

244. Doesn’t the sinful (“carnal”) deeds and lifestyle of so many claiming Christians disprove their claimed beliefs?

---It does prove their lack of taking their beliefs as seriously as they are supposed to, and could potentially prove them to be tares among the wheat.

---Though Christians are forgiven all their sins, they will never be morally perfect in this life. They still have a sin nature, that wars against their mind and a devil who tempts them regularly.

245. The writers of the Bible were biased, and wrote their stories to prove the conclusion they sought to prove.

---The human Bible authors were for Christ, but biased writers hide negative or bad news, including their own weaknesses and moral failings—which these men did not do. Luke was especially scientifically precise, being a doctor who extensively researched the facts before penning Acts (and Luke), and the consistency, detail, and historically, geographically and archaeologically corroborated events of the Bible further illustrate that under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, natural biases can be accurately overcome in favor of accurately presenting Christ’s word.

246. How do we know Christ literally lived on our earth?

---Honest eye witnesses, and even opponents testified to His existence, as well as credible historians.

---Objective, unbiased and independent historians tell us so (Jewish Josephus as one example).

247. Anyone can claim their Scriptures are perfect and from God. Claiming is much easier than proving the claim.

---That’s true, and is why a detailed and thorough investigation of claimed Scriptures is beneficial, as well as corroboration from outside sources, and history, geography, archaeology and other sciences. Such studies have been undertaken and consistently verify the claim, as well as there being no inconsistency in the materials as originally given. As well, the credentials of Christ—miracles, deity claims, morals, teachings and prophecies fulfilled—attest to His right to authoritatively speak for God, as has been recorded in our holy Bible.

248. Many religious leaders have taught ethics, performed miracles, and many other men have claimed to be God.

---To the person, all false prophets who may have done some of these things have never done them all, nor to the extent or quality as Christ alone—nor have any been resurrected from the dead, and changed so many peoples’ lives forever after their purported deaths, based on being alive from the grave.

249. Christ studied the Old Testament from childhood. He could easily have chosen His life path to fulfill prophecies about Messiah, and made claims based on those verse He already knew.

---It's hard to orchestrate people arresting you, placing you on a cross--the exact death instrument prophesied--and other specific prophecies (Ex.: where and how He was born, where His family moved to, etc.) that statistics alone would tell you require more than mere coincidence or intentional choosing to do the prophecies in order to perpetrate a fraud that they were indeed prophecies. Plus, such behavior is inconsistent with the revealed moral character of the Christ.

250. Don't Christians have 2 separate/different Gospels? Is God's word that confusing?

---They certainly have two different gospel invitations and salvation requirements. Otherwise, their message concerning Jesus is essentially the same. However, since the response of man IS part of the gospel--or it is mere information dissemination lacking the most crucial element for the benefitting of the hearer, one could argue they have two separate gospel messages, and the Bible teaches only one can be true--the other a false gospel--an assertion to which I would agree.

For Further Study:

The Complete Book of Bible Answers, pp. 175-232, by Ron Rhodes (Harvest House: Eugene, OR), 1997

Pro-Saviorhood:

Absolutely Free, by Zane Hodges

The Gospel Under Siege, by Zane Hodges

Balancing the Christian Life, by Charles Ryrie

Biblical Evangelism, by Michael Cocoris

Free and Clear, by R. Larry Moyer

Pro-Lordship:

The Gospel According to Jesus, by John MacArthur

Faith Works: The Gospel According to the Apostles, by John MacArthur

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How Christianity Changed the World, by Alvin J. Schmidt (Zondervan: Grand Rapids), 2001

Five Views on Apologetics, by Steven B. Cow (Zondervan: Grand Rapids), 2000

14. God Bless The Evangelists (through the Church)!

You have perhaps been told that Christians are supposed to “tithe” to the local church. Without exception this statement probably came from a pastor, who is the *direct recipient* of that statement. Read the Bible and see what the New Testament says about **giving** and “tithing.” I am certain you will see that **all** God’s ministers need financial support and the New Testament standard for a Christian—a maturer subject some won’t be able to apply yet—is to **give as you are Spirit-led to do so**, and in the amount or percentage **He** instructs. The Old Testament is *fully inspired* and inerrant, but if any changes have been instituted in Christ, they will be found in the *New Testament* (Ex.: the Sermon on the Mount, no more blood sacrifices, circumcision not required, etc.)

Of course, if we have no significant daily walk with Him, this can *hardly be done*, to which many traditional pastors say “if you aim at nothing you are sure to hit it,” or “10% is a good goal to set.” Why compromise God’s standard because of immature attitudes and lifestyles? **Do what God leads you to as He has blessed you**, but **PLEASE** remember that your gift should include those PROFESSIONAL HEROES (in my mind) who are out there *regularly* preaching the Gospel to lost people!

We all know about Billy Graham and his great organization. There are many **other** evangelists whose names you DON’T likely know, who **struggle** to support their family and still reach **MANY** with the life-giving message of Jesus (over 10,000 of which attended an *Amsterdam 2000* Conference sponsored by the BGEA a few years back). They are stuck raising their own support, often by people who like them or believe in what they are doing (**which is a small number of people**, given only 5% of American Christians actively participate in evangelism).

Pastors often see Evangelists’ ministry, if holding “crusades” or “revivals,” as needing to “pay for itself” in converts joining the pastors’ church and **tithing!** Is it not enough that **SOME PEOPLE** are evangelizing the lost **not** for **profit**? I had a staff Pastor admit this to me: the “investment” in hosting an evangelistic campaign rarely ‘paid off’ in this way, so the trend the past 10 years is to *cease* holding revivals. **How selfish** can we be to not see evangelism as a **legitimate and AT LEAST equally important** universal Church function to that of a Pastor, **deserving at least equal respect and support**. In MBA terms, evangelism is “*business required*” for a Church, but it is **SO** much more than just that if you care about lost people more than yourself!

Churches will not (or *rarely*) raise funds for specific Evangelists, and often offer an evangelism course to members, preach on evangelism once a year or so, and often evangelize the mostly saved people who attend every Sunday. **Shouldn’t those who full-time reach LOST PEOPLE** be entitled to **at least** the SAME ECONOMIC DEVOTION by laymen as **Pastors receive**, and **can call for every Sunday?** **DO** pay your church staff, but **PRIORITIZE** with this standard of values in mind: Luke 15:7. I am not speaking this for *myself*, as I am currently **not in professional ministry!** Professional Evangelists **CAN’T** say it because they depend on church member’s private contributions and church speaking engagements, but I can *on their behalf*, and am happy to help these **hard-working** laborers!

I urge you from the bottom of my heart to **contact an “unknown” Evangelist** who is effective and efficient in reaching *numbers* of lost people (or see our Giving section to reach the ‘10/40 Window’ with the Gospel) to see how PART of your giving could go to further the evangelization of the world rather than just to pay for the sermon, fund the buildings, and all the **tertiary** activities modern churches perform to “*attract*” people”. Most of them have yet to address *head-on* the more critical needs for **every Christian–relational discipleship**, becoming **habitually evangelistic**, and **using their spiritual gift** in a **biblical ministry**. *Be devoted to your church*, but have biblical PRIORITIES in your activities; Actions and *giving*!

P.S.: IGNORANCE (that is, not stupidity, but lack of knowledge) is why well-known evangelists get the majority of donations from the general Christian population (i.e., only because they have heard of them), when MANY evangelists are daily doing the work, reasonably paid and not inclined to advertise or promote themselves—just humbly serving the Lord in anonymity. This is not to say don’t give to the famous ones, but knowledgeable Christians who know of these ministries need to educate the Christian laymen.

Disclaimer: Many evangelists today are more clever, funny and entertaining, often because they’re speaking more to saved people (who have heard the Gospel for years) at crusades than lost people. However, God never commands us to adjust the message to cultural desires, and tells us to be straightforward (Gal. 2:14), not clever (I Cor. 1:17), and not ear ticklers (II Tim. 4:3).

On Mega Church Pastor Salaries

I’ve heard of pastors equating their pay expectations to CEO’s of companies with employees with similar number to their church membership. Such men are **HIRELING *false prophets***, to whom I warn that you:

1. Work for a non- or not-for-profit entity (donations going to God’s work—not YOUR pockets),
2. Are biblically DISQUALIFIED as not free from the love of money, and,
- 3) With over 99% of those people not being paid (or even volunteer workers), but mere 2 hour *worship service* ATTENDERS, that is NOT the same leadership responsibility as the same number of full time employees!

To all *laymen* who set the church salary guidelines—those church’s **committees** and **deacons** (functioning like a Board of Directors)—I WARN YOU that your membership should neither be hand-picked as the *pastor’s favorites*, nominated due to their wealth or *giving amounts* to the church, nor should they give in to his abuse of power (and God’s people’s resources) to *get in good with* the man-made and supposed ‘big cheese.’ Remember before your Maker that ‘what the market will bear’ is not always what God wants His true servants to earn—if they’re primary motive is truly to **serve Him, and not mammon**!

Relatedly, those who do the MOST IMPORTANT WORK—Evangelists—are often left off church budgets and required to fend for themselves—the “tithe” being somehow the exclusive purview of the’ pastor’—and this is wrong! They must find the limited few committed believers who will support their work, having to raise their salary one couple at a time, when the nature of their service is primarily to the benefit of God and the lost—not ministering to the needs of saints, who then are more willing to give back in the form of church donations. [The Southern Baptist convention is the only denomination I know wise enough to at least fund their Missionaries (but not if you’re divorced, no matter the reason)].

Such *laymen* also—if they buy into the “tithing theory” of *Churchianity*—must give to Evangelists **over-and-above** that already sacrificial 10%, leaving the Evangelist with **the most valuable work and the least valuable financial situation**. We are ONE body of Christ, and one spiritual gift—*pastoring*—**does NOT BIBLICALLY command control of all of God’s people’s giving**—especially when so few pastors are evangelistic; Excusing that on it not being their spiritual gift or their being pastors, not evangelists. Do we in America REALLY take the Great Commission seriously and literally? I think NOT. These salary arrangements are the *traditions of MEN*—not the ordained plan of the God we *claim* to serve!

15. Evangelism Theology (A Brief Summary)

A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF EVANGELISM

Elementary Principles

1. The *Bible* teaches (and practiced) “**go and tell**” (and *as you’re going*) vs. “**come and hear**” evangelism. (Ex.: “go”—Mt. 28:19, 10:5-7, 22:9; Ac travels examples, etc.). Even the Bible symbol for evangelism is not lips moving so much as blessed FEET (Rom. 10:14). In the only 3 exceptions, people came to Paul because he was *famous* and was **physically unable** to move about any longer, Andrew brought his brother, but **first told him all he knew** about Christ, and Cornelius invited friends and family to hear Peter—because Cornelius **did not know** any message to otherwise tell them. Most of us don’t have **any** of these excuses.
2. **ALL** believers are called to evangelize vs. just some, and that call is not just *subjective* (or if you feel like it). (Col. 1:25-28, etc.; Proof positive is Ac. 8:1, 4, 11:19, where all the Jerusalem church’s laymen evangelized, absent any leaders!)
3. **Evangelizing only ONCE** does NOT fulfill your **lifetime evangelism** obligation! (Ac. 14:7)
4. Doing **anything else** but speaking the Gospel, **IF** the lost person *allows*, **falls short** of the definition and description of “evangelism.”
5. Biblical evangelism has **urgency** and **boldness**, and **SPEAKS**. (Mt. 25:13; Jn. 9:4; Heb. 10:15, 9:27; Eph. 6:20; Ac. 14:3, 18:26, 9:28-29; Phil. 1:20; Lk. 8:1, 24:47-48; I Th. 2:2)
6. Good deeds are to please God, but can serve as evangelism *corroboration*. They are **not evangelism** in themselves, **nor** evangelism *prerequisites*. (I Th. 1:5; II Cor. 5:9-11).
7. Sharing the Gospel with people **IS love** and *loving*. Proof? Ultimate love lays down its life for another. Christ showed *ultimate love* and we must tell others of that deed. Also, how can you “love” someone and NOT tell them how to miss hell and go to heaven? (Jn. 15:13)
8. New Testament evangelism was **thorough**, because Christ died for **every person** (Ac. 1:8, 5:28, etc.). **EVERY** human is to be eventually reached. (Ac. 22:15; Tit. 2:11; Col. 1:28; Rev. 14:6)
9. An accurate and loving Gospel message is to be given in the *leading* and power of the Holy Spirit. (Ac. 1:8, 18:24-26, 13:4, 16:6, etc.)
10. Prayer should *precede* evangelism, and may occur during and after. (**Col. 4:3; Ac. 4:31**)
11. Love is our motive, and **even CARNAL evangelism is better than the NO evangelism** offered by 95% of “Christians.” (Phil. 1:16-18; II Cor. 5:14)
12. God **will judge non-evangelism**, whether in this life or the next. (I Pet. 4:17; Heb. 12:9-11, 10:30; Rev. 3:19; Ps. 135:14; etc.)
13. God **rewards** obedient **evangelizing**, both in this life and the next. (I Cor. 3:7-8; Ps. 126:6, etc.)
14. We present a simple yet *profound* message, and no human cleverness is needed. (I Cor. 1:17-23; ~II Cor. 11:3)

15. The Bible teaches (and practiced) “**direct**” evangelism. New Testament Christians were straightforward about the truth of the Gospel. (Jn. (3:1-21), 4:7-42; Ac. 2:14, 22, 3:12, (4:1?), 4:8-13, (19-20), 31, 5:28-29+, 42, 6:(10), 7:2+, 8:4-6, (12), 25-31, 35, 9:19b-20, 22, 27-28, 10:28+, 34, 11:(1), 19, 21, (24), <12:24-25>, 13:5, 14-16+, 46-49, 14:1, 3, 7, (9), 21-22, 25, 15:<13>, 35, 16:13-14, (25?), (30-32), 17:1-4, 10-13, 16-19, 22+, 18:4-5, 8-9, 11, (13), 19, 19:8-10, 20:(18-21?), 21:(20-21), 22:1+, 23:1+, 24:10+, 25:8+, (11), 26:1+, 27:<10, 21+>, 28:17+; Gal. 2:14; etc.)
16. The non-argumentative, un-sinful type of “**arguing**” can be part of evangelism. (Ac. 9:29 vs. Tit. 2:9 type)
17. We are **not to be ashamed** of the Gospel, and there are **reasons** not to be. (Rom. 1:16; Phil. 1:20; II Tim. 1:12)
18. Discipleship did not always **immediately follow** evangelism. (Ac. 15:36; I Th. 3:5; Phil. 2:19)

For **FOLLOW UP**, the New Testament pattern was people got saved, were baptized soon thereafter, then joined the fellowship of believers, where they obviously gained sanctification teaching. This pattern also occurred when Christianity was new, believers were often persecuted (if not *martyred*) for their faith, an atmosphere of miracles was often prevalent, and Jesus’ actual presence on earth had literally occurred within a generation (or two) of their conversion. *Not exactly the same* as ours today, though still a **good pattern** to follow.

19. Evangelism is **NOT** a **perfunctory formality** we perform which makes no difference and has no *influence* on men’s lives! (Ac. 11:14; Col. 1:28)
20. There are **many ways** to *disciple* people. (Ex.: I Th. 3:5; Phil. 2:19; II Cor. 2:9; Eph. 1:15-19; II Tim. 2:2; I Th. 2:8; Ac. 15:32, 14:28; I Tim. 4:12)
21. The spiritual parent (“evangelizer”) **does not have to** be the discipler—that job can biblically be handed off (for there are **so few evangelizers!**). (I Cor. 4:15; Ac. 8:39)
22. Water baptism does **not have to be performed by the evangelizer**, for even that is a *lesser function* to evangelism. (I Cor. 1:16-17; Jn. 4:2)
23. Evangelism’s purpose is **NOT** to increase local church membership. That is **SECONDARY**, and *MAY* be the outcome if they choose and are **led** to YOUR church. **Care more about men’s souls** than their potential ‘*tithe*.’ (I Th. 2:16; Ac. 8:39)
24. Telling people about your church is **NOT evangelism** (per se and by definition). You, your church and anything other than Jesus are **NOT** the Gospel message. (I Cor. 2:2, 1:21-24)
25. Evangelism is **selfless** (save for receiving rewards for so doing), *especially* if it’s done **without receiving pay**. (I Cor. 10:33; Phil. 1:14-18)
26. Christians can possibly be **positional disciples**, and even *secret disciples* (Jn. 12:42, 19:38), though that is **discouraged** (save in such places as today’s China, perhaps). Carnal Christians might be considered *positional disciples*, but certainly do not meet the experiential requirements of a disciple of Jesus Christ. (**See:** Why Be Totally Committed to Christ section; Jn. 19:38; ~Ac. 19:1; Jn. 6:66)
27. Discipleship is required in sanctification/the Christian life, and though we have been given

the *choice* to cooperate with God, that does not make spiritual growth “optional,” or something we are **free to reject**. (Heb. 12:14; Rom. 6:1, 15)

28. The Great Commission has *three aspects*:

Step 1: “**Evangelism**” (i.e., speaking the Gospel to lost people)

Step 2: **Water Baptism**.

Step 3: “**Discipleship**” (i.e., teaching them to observe all Christ spoke—a life-long process). (Mt. 28:18-20)

29. “Discipleship” and “Evangelism” are **distinct**, and they can be legitimately separated in time and activity **or occur at the same time**. (i.e., they are different, related, **positionally tied** and can be chronologically tied). (Col. 2:6; Rom. 13:14; Eph. 4:24; Rom. 12:1-2; I Pet. 4:3; Gal. 4:19; Rev. 2:4-5; I Tim. 1:20, ETC.–written to Christians!)

30. **Baptism USUALLY** followed **SOON after** salvation (in the New Testament). Also, water baptism by *immersion* is the **most accurate** way to publicly portray what happened to you at salvation (i.e., death, burial and resurrection). Salvation *washed away* your sins like bathing—not like mere sprinkling. Salvation is **FULLY (vs. partially) identifying** with Christ (i.e., the *definition* of “baptism”). (Ac. 2:41, 8:12, 38, 9:18, 16:14-15, 22:16; Col. 2:12-13; I Pet. 3:21; Jn. 13:10; Tit. 3:5)

31. *Some people evangelized* **immediately** upon salvation. (Ac. 9:20)

32. Disciplers/Disciple-Makers can be different from Evangelizers, though **ALL** are called to evangelize. That is, **not all Evangelizers** will fully (or even partially) **disciple every convert** God gives them. They’re too needed among the few who evangelize. (I Cor. 4:15; Ac. 8:39, 15:36)

33. Professional Evangelists are **NOT** to do ALL the work of evangelism. (Eph. 4:11-12; Col. 1:24-25) Or, as has been said:

Evangelism is not a job for religious professionals but for every believer in Christ.

–Jarrett Stephens

34. Pastors/Ministers are responsible to train laymen through *role-modeling* and **LEADING**, and this includes in evangelism. (I Pet. 5:1-3; I Tim. 4:12; Tit. 2:7; II Th. 3:9)

35. God will save whom He saves, but **RARELY IF EVER** will He save people without our (i.e., the Church’s) involvement. (Rom. 9:11; Col. 1:25; Rev. 14:6—only exception, in the Tribulation), and He saves ALL who believe.

36. God desires **EVERY person** to come to Christ, and **Christ died for ALL**. (I Tim. 2:4; II Pet. 3:9; II Cor. 5:15; Jn. 6:51)

37. You can “*save*” no one on your own, and certainly you will ‘save’ no one **if you don’t evangelize!** Also, it is improper thinking to think you saved them, but not unbiblical terminology. (I Cor. 9:19-22; Jn. 6:44; II Cor. 3:5; Jn. 15:5; Rom. 7:18)

38. **Prayer** and **holy living** are **not substitutes** for *evangelism*, just as evangelism is not a substitute for holy living. They work hand in hand, but are *distinct*. (II Cor. 2:14-16; Mt. 5:16—not stated as an evangelism **METHOD**; **I Pet. 3:1**—surely her husband knows of her salvation, so only deeds remain to corroborate its validity)

39. **Power** in evangelism yields results and is a **virtue**. Abrasiveness, argumentativeness and arrogance are **NOT** such power. (I Cor. 4:20; I Th. 1:5)

40. Persecution can embolden and encourage the church to **evangelize**. (Ac. 8:4, 11:19; Eph. 6:20) So can an *evangelistically-zealous* brother. As they say, “evangelism is more ‘caught’ than ‘taught.’”
41. Evangelism results occur because **God works** (in and) through *you*. (Ac. 11:21, 16:14; Ac. 11:21; Gal. 6:14; Rom. 15:18; Jn. 3:21)
42. **Not all people** will be receptive to your Gospel message (but you may be *pleasantly surprised* how many **will be**, if you **TRY**). (Jn. 4:35; Ac. 16:30-31, 7:54, 14:4)
43. Evangelism is a **command**. (Ac. 13:47; Tit. 1:3; Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15)
44. Sometimes people evangelize an area, then **return LATER** to conduct *follow-up* and *discipleship*. (Ac. 15:36)
45. Evangelism involves offering an **invitation to RESPOND**. Don’t JUST *educate* people. (Ac. 16:31)
46. **Biblical evangelism plans** are **THOROUGH**—they leave no man out. (Rom. 15:19)
47. **Forgiveness of sin** is **THE** issue of salvation. (Ac. 17:11)
48. Many times New Testament Evangelizers had an **evangelism custom** or habit. **DO YOU?** (Ac. 17:2-3)
49. **The way you speak**—that is, the words you choose and your godly tone—do have influence, impact and importance, though they are not ‘the clincher.’ There are *degrees of skill* one can possess and **obtain** (with *experience*) in evangelism. (Ac. 14:1)
50. The Great Commission is **unto every land**—not just the United States or the non-closed countries. (Ac. 8:25; Mk. 13:10)
51. One should use **wisdom** in facing **danger** in evangelism. (Ac. 21:13 vs. 9:25, 18:10)
52. **Persuasion** is *involved* in evangelism. (Ac. 19:8, 18:13, 28:24)
53. Evangelism is *effective* when we **rely on God**. (Ac. 14:3)
54. Evangelism can involve **explaining** and **giving evidence**. (Ac. 17:3, 18:28)
55. Evangelism is to **ALL TYPES** and *every group* of people. (Ac. 17:34)
56. **Eloquence** in evangelism is not necessary, but can be **helpful** and used of God. (Ac. 18:24-28)
57. You should not AVOID evangelizing people of **other religions**—they need Christ *too*. (Ac. 6:7, etc.). Relatedly, in one sense Christianity is not a ‘religion’ because it’s a **relationship with God**, but it **IS** termed a “religion” in the Bible. (Jas. 1:26-27)
58. **Refutation** and **reproof** can be part of your evangelism *repertoire*. (Ac. 18:28, 28:26)
59. **Protesting** and **warning willful Gospel rejecters** is morally acceptable and sometimes necessary. (Ac. 3:23, 18:6, 2:40; Lk. 16:28)
60. In evangelism, **do not fear** and **do not remain silent**. God is *with you*, and as has been said, ‘courage is not the absence of fear, but proceeding despite your fears.’ (Ac. 18:9,

23:11; Mt. 10:27-28)

61. **Reasoning** can be part of evangelistic *persuasion*. (Ac. 19:8)
62. Evangelism is to occur in **public** and in **private**, and to be going on in the world **DAILY**. (Ac. 16:5, 20:20)
63. You **never quit** in evangelism until the job is **COMPLETE**. (II Tim. 4:5-8; Rom. 15:19; Ac. 20:26)
64. **Solemnly testifying** and **exhorting** can be part of your evangelism *manner*. (Ac. 2:40, 8:25)
65. Speak to those **willing to hear**, and ‘don’t cast your **pearls before swine**.’ (Ac. 28:28-29)
66. In evangelism, be ‘**wise as serpents** and **innocent as doves**.’ (Mt. 10:16)
67. Do not *withhold the truth* from a lost person to make the message ‘**more palatable**.’ We are speaking to **please God**—not man. (Ac. 5:20; I Th. 2:4-6)
68. Evangelizing *as you live your life* is a perfectly good strategy—**if you do evangelize**. (Ac. 8:40)
69. Evangelism is **proclaiming CHRIST**. We are not *selling* or *peddling* and we are **not preaching ourselves**. (I Cor. 2:1-7; II Cor. 4:5; I Th. 2:8; Ac. 4:12)
70. It is a **privilege** to be able to tell a lost soul how to get to heaven! (Eph. 3:8; I Cor. 3:5-6)
71. Pray for evangelism **opportunities** (i.e., ‘*divine appointments*’) but **don’t wait**, hands folded, for that opportunity to “**fall in your lap**” like manna did. (Eph. 6:19)
72. The Gospel is to be offered **freely** and **clearly**. (Col. 4:4)
73. Speaking the Gospel with someone is **NOT** a **normal**, “*natural*” conversation, so stop trying to *water it down* to be such. It’s **supernatural**, so become more *spiritual* so it comes more ‘natural’ for you. (I Cor. 1:23, 2:13-14; II Cor. 4:4-6)
74. Evangelism is one of the **top 3 priorities** of the Church, and **the NUMBER ONE LEAST executed**. (I Cor. 15:1, 3)
75. There can be (and are) differences in the amount of **effort** individual Christians put into evangelism (and, therefore, differences in **rewards**). (I Cor. 15:10, etc.)
76. Evangelism is to be performed *humbly*, with **reliance upon God**. (I Cor. 3:5-8)
77. Anything which can *distract* or *detract* from an evangelism conversation or evangelizer’s *credibility* should be **avoided** at all costs. Evangelism is a **sacred event** and *entrustment*. (Col. 1:25; I Th. 2:4; Tit. 1:3)
78. The Gospel **has**—and **IS**—**power**! (I Th. 1:5-6, 2:13; I Cor. 1:18)
79. **Faith** leads you to **speak** of the Object of your faith—**Jesus Christ**. (II Cor. 4:13)
80. A legitimate **fear/reverence** of God will lead you to evangelize. Do you, instead, **take Him for granted**? (II Cor. 5:11; Lk. 5:10)
81. The Gospel is the **word of God**—not of *man*—and must be *accepted* as such. (I Th. 2:13)
82. Christ’s **love** will *constrain* you to evangelize, if you have experienced and continue to

experience it. (II Cor. 5:14)

83. Man's salvation is **why Christ came** to earth and died, and **EVANGELISM** is **how** His work is made *effective* in lost men's lives. (Lk. 4:43, 19:10; Duh 101)
84. Evangelism can be by **media means** (Ex.: book, here) (Jn. 20:30-31)
85. In the New Testament at least, **LAYMEN evangelized!** (I Th. 3:2)
86. Christians are instructed—told—to **view humans** as **ONLY lost or saved**. Assessing their *physical appearance*, or other distracting perspectives can *deter* a mind set to purposefully evangelize. (II Cor. 5:16)
87. **Today** is the day of salvation; therefore, **today MUST BE** the day to **go evangelize!** (II Cor. 6:2; Cf.: Heb. 3:7, 15, 4:7)
88. Feet are an unusual and lowly part of the body to be *blessed* by God, but they **represent** the fact that evangelism takes **movement TO people**, after which the mouth is used to *utter* words of eternal life. (Rom. 10:14; Eph. 6:15)
89. We are not pushing myths or opinions, but sober truths and spiritual facts. (Ac. 3:15, 26:25; II Pet. 1:16, etc.)
90. If God does not continue in His *patience*, there is **no hope** for the world. (II Pet. 3:15)
91. **Suffer** in and **work hard** at evangelism. That's normal, and you're no different and certainly *not so special* that you can avoid these unpleasanties by never evangelizing. Evangelism takes **effort!** (I Cor. 15:30; II Tim. 2:3; Phil. 1:14)
92. Our heavenly hope gives us great **boldness** in evangelism. (II Cor. 3:12; Eph. 6:19)
93. Some knowledge of the Scriptures is needed to effectively and practically engage in evangelism; yet, *not as much as you may think*. Do you know **John 3:16?** Get to it! (II Tim. 3:15)
94. There is a window of opportunity for lost people to *respond*. No one knows how long it lasts per individual, but OUR emphasis should always be for them to **decide NOW** and to **not delay!** (Jn. 12:36)
95. Evangelism is the *closest thing* a human can do to snatching another out of the flames of hell. (~Jude 1:23)
96. We are to compel people to come to Christ. (Lk. 14:23)
97. We have been commissioned and given authority to speak the **Kings'** edict. Christ earned that right for us to speak—we needn't earn anything—**just TELL**. (II Cor. 5:20; Mt. 22:1-10)
98. Pray for all men's salvation, and pray for **more evangelism laborers**. (Mt. 9:38)
99. You can be "**evangelical**" and not be "**evangelistic**" (by *definition*). That is, you believe in evangelism—you just don't **do** it. One is a term, the other an action.
100. **Over-work** in evangelism is sometimes if not often NEEDED to **make up for** others in the Church's *lack*. (Phil. 2:30; I Cor. 15:10, 32; II Cor. 11:24-28)
101. Our message is an **eternal** one—not subject to *societal trends, fads or whims*. (Rev.

- 14:6)
102. The fields are always white for harvest to an unknown degree you can only discover by **harvesting it**. (Jn. 9:4, 4:34-37, 6:27)
 103. Be a **role-model** in and for evangelism! (Phil. 1:14; Tit. 2:7)
 104. You **bless** people by evangelizing them, even if you *don't believe it* because your culture yells *otherwise*. (Ac. 3:26; Rev. 19:9)
 105. Each successive generation is to take up the *global call* to world evangelism. (Rom. 10:18)
 106. Do **YOU** ever experience **great sorrow** and **unceasing grief** over the condition of the lost? (Rom. 9:2-4)
 107. Christ gave His **LIFE** and **all** to *save* mankind. The *least* we can do is **TELL them** about Him! Want proof? You can't do **more important** work, but you can certainly do **lesser** things. (Phil. 1:21-22)
 108. If Christianity to you does not mean more than **2 hours of church a week**, with no evangelism... **YOU DON'T GET IT!** (Lk. 9:23-26)
 109. As others *have said*, you can evangelize and not love but you **CANNOT LOVE without evangelizing**. (Jn. 3:16; Tit. 3:4-5)
 110. There will be **no more opportunity** to evangelize once *prophecy* transpires and you are Raptured (if you're saved). (II Th. 2:11, etc.)
 111. We are to be **faithful** in and to do evangelism. (I Tim. 1:12)
 112. Pastors are to **do evangelism** (II Tim. 4:5, 1:6-8), relationally disciple (II Tim. 2:2, 1:13) and teach (II Tim. 2:24-25, 15, 3:16-17; I Tim. 5:17—'pastoral epistles!')—**not** just preach sermons and *manage* the business and *counsel* (carry, marry and bury).

Want more?...

Study the Scriptures and *add your own* propositions regarding **biblical evangelism!**

EVANGELISM ETHICS ("MANNER")

You can evangelize without loving, but you can't **love** without **evangelizing**.

If you love someone, you want what's BEST for them, and hell is **not** the best for *anyone*.

Everyone knows a Christian should evangelize *ethically*. The IDEAL **manner** for how to evangelize would be (among other things):

Lovingly (II Cor. 5:14; Eph. 4:15; I Cor. 13:4-8; Jas. 2:8), eagerly (Rom. 1:15), unashamedly (II Tim. 1:8, 12; Rom. 1:16; Mk. 8:38, ~I Pet. 4:16), boldly—not timidly or scared (Eph. 6:20; Phil. 1:20; I Th. 2:2; II Tim. 1:7), urgently (Mt. 24:44-50; Jas. 4:13-14), wisely and innocently (Mt. 10:16), focused (I Cor. 2:2), with purpose (i.e., not in vain—Gal. 2:2; I Th. 2:1; I Cor. 9:23-27), Spirit-led (**See:** the book of Acts), relying on God through His Word (Isa. 55:11), powerfully (II Tim. 1:7; Gal. 6:10, 14-17; Tit. 3:5-7, ~2:11-15; Eph. 1:14, 2:8-10, 16, 3:8, 4:21, 29, 6:15, 19-20; Phil. 2:12-21; Col. 1:6, 25-29, thoroughly (II Tim. 4:17), committedly (Phil. 2:29-30; Gal. 2:20-21), pleasing God vs. man (I Th. 2:4), **not** flatteringly, nor greedily or seeking after glory (I Th.

2:5-6; Ac. 20:33; I Th. 2:5); Excitedly/motivatedly (I Cor. 9:9-10), clearly (Col. 4:4); Accurately (i.e., good word choices—Ac. 17:10-12, 18:26), truthfully (Gal. 4:16), understandably (Col. 1:6), straightforwardly (Gal. 2:14), **not** with cleverness or the wise words of men (I Cor. 1:17, 2:4), with integrity (II Cor. 6:3, ~I Pet. 2:12), **causing no offense** by misbehavior (II Cor. 6:3, ~I Cor. 9:27), **taking** vs. missing opportunities (I Cor. 16:9; Col. 4:2-6); Expecting suffering (Mt. 10:22, 24:9, ~I Pet. 4:16; II Tim. 1:8-12, 2:3-9, 4:5, 17; I Th. 2:2).

You were taught how to study and interpret the Bible in “How To Have a Quiet Time” and “Why Read the Bible,” so consider taking the above references and seeing what I have only *abbreviated*.

Why should we still be urgent about evangelism? Because people are urgently going to hell.

—Dr. Jack Graham

Do not be boring when you evangelize.

That’s about the most insulting attitude, both to God, the Gospel and the hearer.

EVANGELISM, PRAYER AND THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

For a *brief* discussion on the theologies which *can* teach either that...

1. Christian prayer would have **no effect** on a lost person’s evangelism response.
2. Christian prayer **IS** evangelism, or
3. Even without Christian prayer, lost people respond by their own volition (i.e., not needing the Spirit’s power of conviction to respond, though conviction *forces* no one)...

See: Calvinism and Arminianism Errors

Real-life story...

Hype or Holy Spirit?

I attended one church in which the following set-up occurred in order to bring about hoped-for Easter **conversions**:

Pre-Sermon: “Everyone in this service needs a connection card, because at the *end of the service* we’re going to **do something amazing with them.**” [By the way, record-keeping is never so mundane and strained when there are **RELATIONSHIPS**. **I seriously don’t believe the Church in Acts had membership cards**, but because people knew each other—had “**body life**”—folks could vouch for who was there and general *gestimations* could be made about the numbers (Ex.: “about” 5,000 fed by the fish and loaves). **It is all about PEOPLE**, not buildings, bodies and bucks].

Post-Sermon: “This takes *courage*; you’ll need the Holy Spirit to do it; **on the count of three** I want you to stand up and publicly proclaim your new-found faith in Christ. One, two, three.” [Quite a *childish* motivational method, and, quite *embarrassingly* (and a dramatic let-down—enough so that they quickly had *everyone* stand)—**only 3 or 4 stood** in a huge auditorium, **NOT** due to ANY failure on God’s part, but because **relying on church buildings as your primary venue for evangelism is NOT God’s way.** It’s like **looking for a mate** at a senior citizen’s home or a **convention of nuns** (or, perhaps, a second-time around wedding; what some call fishing in a fish bowl). It can happen, but you are **not fishing where the fish typically are**. There are **MILLIONS** of evangelism candidates **RIGHT OUTSIDE YOUR CHURCH DOORS**, but it’s *more comfortable* and *easy* to preach to the (already saved) choir, I guess.

When you TRULY rely on the **convicting power of God's Spirit**, and TRULY understand **grace**, you don't have to embarrass or "motivate" people's responses, and you never risk anyone making either a decision of the flesh or will of man in response to your biblical invitation to the Gospel. (**Jn. 1:13**) And what of the 97%+ saved church members who filled out the cards? **Salvation IS amazing**, but what did *THEY* do with the cards—and why? The *handful* who stood and/or took their connection card to designated areas did receive a new **Bible**, as a **free gift**.

16. Disclaimers & Objections

1. **You are a Doom-and-Gloom Alarmist-Extremist, or Just Seeking Attention. ‘It’s Not Like It’s the END OF THE WORLD.’ You’re on your Religious ‘Soap Box.’**

Really? The **subjects** I am discussing and the ramifications of our inaction do **lead directly to the “end of the world”** ONLY THE DAY OF WHICH WE DON’T KNOW! Study the Bibles’ ‘signs of the times’ and you’ll learn that it’s **closer than you think**. Prove otherwise if you’ve studied Bible prophecy and have *better insight*. While we *need* a **CODE RED ALERT** for evangelism in the *Church*, most *American* Christians are living life as if nothing serious is on the horizon!

Am I making a “mountain out of a mole hill,” to be so severely righteously indignant at **5% of Christians EVER evangelizing**, and established pastors having allowed this figure to remain constant for over 30 years without *relationally discipling* or otherwise solving it? Isn’t the eternal salvation of mankind an **important enough** subject, at least to God and lost people?

Does the universal Church rarely having a practical plan to ACTUALLY reach EVERY human being, thus disobeying the Great Commission cause YOU any concern? If my concern is *different* from yours, does that make me evil? There are several positive things about modern “church” that I am thankful for and I may address in website updates, but I desire no *patting ourselves on the back* to distract from the NEED to—literally—**COMPLETE** the Great Commission!

Physics teaches us that in order to move a *large (and heavy) object* even a small distance from a state of no momentum to having inertia requires exertion of a **great amount of force** and pressure. The Church of Jesus Christ, being so many million, and especially in the non-evangelistic condition of the United States, needs a **hard bang on the head** JUST to get her to average ONE evangelistic contact a year per Christian.

If you believe my ‘Open Letter’ was ‘too harsh,’ judgmental, bitter or “negative/critical,” I refer you to the following verses (See: Negative-Tending Truths, below), and tell you that after seeing the 5% statistic never change, and **hardly anyone discussing it**, and the consequences for **billions** of souls God loves and Christ died for going to an eternal hell—with no way out, once there—I am determined to be but one God might use to help *change* this **sin**, and I **hope** you will be too!

The hardness of the ground and the length of time no significant change has occurred, coupled with the **complicit culpability of church leaders allowing it to continue** by not trying EVERY conceivable biblical method under the sun (and Son) to affect change makes it **necessary** and **essential** that this message gets out! You probably disagree with my “methods,” probably because the 5% scourge does not bother you enough or as much as it does myself, perhaps because you have yet to fully think it through, or because our culture has taught you to be politically correct and positively mental attituded to an unbiblical extreme, where all negative motivation is seen as not coming from God. **Be biblical, be accurate, and above all, BE EVANGELISTIC!**

You are totally free to **try** as positive of motivational techniques as you can find (i.e., the ‘you can catch more bees with honey than vinegar’ philosophy). I and many others have tried many of them the past 30 years. **American Christians are de-sensitized, deluded, hardened and sanctimoniously content with not having to think about their non-evangelism!** There is

no more *treasonous* mind-set to God and lost people, and Pastors are where the buck stops biblically to bring about maturity and change in the body of Christ. If they **cannot** (i.e., are incapable vs. the task being *impossible*), should they keep their jobs? Do they have Holy Spirit power, or just earned ‘power’ by the office they hold in a religious organization or business?

There are MANY godly pastors, and I believe most American church-going Christians are merely innocently ignorant of God’s word and have been sold a *bill of goods* that they are O.K. in their personal responsibility for evangelism being *re-interpreted* as trying to live holy before unbelievers. However, each of us is responsible before God for our walk with Him, and **this yearly and continued ignorance becomes morally culpable**, especially if pastors ever educate them (as a believer did to myself, in College—**See: About Us**), so that they are *more accountable* and put on notice/record of their need to grow and evangelize.

Did God write His **eternal love letter** to be *spurned and ignored*? **Is the Bible so easy and THIN that we need to buy so many other Christian books for our entertainment?** Should we not just burn our Bibles or throw them away if what is taught therein is insignificant, ‘*boring*’ or untrue? **THINK ABOUT IT—how many verses have you memorized, and how many years have you been a Christian?** *Abhorrent and intolerable*, most likely.

Of course, to those believers who **DO** walk with God, **DO** know the Bible and **DO** evangelize, **you have no reasonable basis for having any opposition to the Open Letter and this website campaign**. I am *confident* the Spirit of God has led you to understand these words of reproof have no application to you. To you, God bless, and continue being faithful till we meet in the life hereafter (though I’d *love* to meet or hear from you beforehand!)

2. You are “Unloving and Arrogant.” You Have a “Critical Spirit.” You are “Confrontational, Negative and Judgmental.” (Implying My Behavior and Words are Sinful, or Should NEVER Be Stated).

I am content, though find no enjoyment in not being liked or *appreciated* for my views and words and “tactics,” even being accused of being mean and arrogant—accusations which can deflect attention **OFF** the message of needed change in evangelismlessness. But God knows my heart, and that of any accusers! (**Gal. 1:10; Lk. 6:26; Mk. 6:4; Ac. 5:13; Gal. 4:16; Ac. 5:29; II Tim. 4:3-5**).

If you think the approach I have been led to use is “*ineffective*,” shouldn’t be used, that I should “be (more) positive,” or that reproving evangelismlessness “does not work,” I appreciate your constructive criticism of methods that have been utilized by no less than Jesus, Paul and John the Baptist. I would be **honored to even be allowed in their presence** if they were here.

Perhaps you ought to consider that you have been raised in a positive mental attitude and politically correct society the past 20 years, and **you might benefit from learning more about what the Bible says than what our culture demands**. I’ll make that easier on you, and spoon feed some thoughts to you to save you having to dig, since our culture seems too busy to **have time for God** and His word and hardly interested in reading at all. (**See:** Negative-Tending Truths, below). In the Bible a man is honored for his knowledge (and associated wisdom), but in America today—even in *Christian churches*, he is viewed as a weirdo, or a **fool**. (I Cor. 4:10)

One mega church pastor whom we addressed, in his most recent book (2013) said ‘negative people put a sour feeling in my stomach,’ and ‘the devil can use men in robes, suits, and even with their shirt untucked [as mine always are].’ (paraphrased)

In summary, I'd rather be **PERCEIVED** as 'meanly' trying to get Christians to keep lost people from hell than to be only positive and nice and allow them to go there uninformed or unwarned.

3. You Are An Accuser of the Brethren, Judging, Critical, Mean-Spirited and Condemning, Because We are Blameless, Because There is No Condemnation in Christ Jesus.

God, alone knows my motives, and who it is who leads my actions, but there is BIBLICAL evidence of such a "**tone**," even though few teach on reproof, correction; Exhortation or rebuking anymore. And as to your 'innocence,' to confuse position and **identity** with **experience** and behavior is to assume for oneself a status they obviously may never have achieved.

4. Why Don't You Just Become an Evangelist?

I WAS a member of an Evangelism Association for a brief period, but it was not to be. *God had other plans* for myself—namely, WRITING—though I *have* been led to do **much evangelism** ('more than the average bear'), by His grace. Perhaps moving the Church (world-wide) to **COMPLETE the Great Commission** is why I was never led to have enough contacts to raise support as a *missionary* or *evangelist* (plus my divorce prohibited a career missionary position with the Southern Baptist Convention).

5. Aren't You 'Forcing' Christians to Evangelize (with your 'On Hell' lesson and suggestion to shut down a church service for the crowd to go evangelize)?

TRY these two methods and you'll see that still not everyone will participate. No one is putting a gun to their head (but exhorting, pleading and imploring them—all **biblical** concepts), and ask yourself: Is your method of **allowing Christians NOT to ever evangelize** because you so respect '*free will*' **better for the LOST person** (vs. Christians' comfort or church attendance)?

NEGATIVE-TENDING TRUTHS OF THE BIBLE

(**TRUTH** is the Standard—Not Positivity!)

Samples.

Gen. 6:3; II Sam. 12:7; Num. 32:23; Pv. 9:8, 14:14, 26:11; Ecc. 7:5; Eze. 3:18; Mt. 3:7, 7:6, 13-14, 10:34, 14:4, 15:14, 18:15-17, 23:33, 37, 24:12; Mk. 6:11, 10:29-30; Lk. 6:22-23, 26, 11:42-44, 46-48, 16:28, 19:45-46; Jn. 8:44; Ac. 7:51, 8:20, 20:24, 26; I Cor. 4:10, 21, 11:17, 15:33, 16:22; II Cor. 6:17, 11:5, 12:11, 21; Gal. 1:8-10, 2:5, 11-16, 3:3, 4:16, 20, 5:12; Eph. 5:11, 16, 6:13, 20; Col. 3:1-2; I Th. 4:1, 10; II Th. 2:3; I Tim. 1:20, 5:19-20; II Tim. 3:16-17 4:1-3; Tit. 1:10-11, 13; Heb. 10:24, 11:25, 12:6-8; Jas. 2:16, 19 (sarcasm and rebuke), 3:10, 4:11, 5:2-3; I Jn. 2:15, (Jude 1:9); Rev. 1-3 (only ONE church never reprov'd!), 3:2, 16, 22:11

Old Testament.

There are Old Testament examples galore. We even teach, 'love the sinner but hate (i.e., don't tolerate) the sin,' and 'all that's required for evil to prevail is for good men to do nothing.' The Bible's so large, and **so few** read it, no wonder so many false impressions of IT are allowed to exist in our congregations! Even a cursory reading of the old covenant (or a review of a concordance) on Israel (and others) having done evil/wrong, listing their sins or warning of judgment yields many instances of what some consider "negative" content.

Prophets.

Isa. 2, 3, 29 (samples only); Jer. 2-3, 5 (samples only), Hosea, Amos, Obadiah; Jon. 1:2, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Heroes.

Not bad company... Jesus (See samples, above), John the Baptist (Mt. 14:4; Lk. 3:7-9), Paul (Ac. 26:25; I Cor. 16:22; Gal. 2:11-15), Peter (Ac. 2:15, 5:8-9, 7:51-53).

Terms.

The following terms are IN the Bible, and not in its sin lists: Correct (II Tim. 2:25, 3:16), reprove (Pv. 9:8, 19:25; Is. 1:17; Mt. 18:15; II Tim. 4:2; Tit. 1:13, 2:15), rebuke (Pv. 28:23; Eze. 3:26; I Tim. 5:20; II Tim. 4:2); Exhort (Ac. 2:40; Rom. 12:8; I Th. 2:11; I Pet. 5:12), implore (I Th. 2:11) and compel (Lk. 14:23, in evangelism).

Revelation.

Rev. 1:14-16, 2:4, 14-16, 20-23, 3:1-3 (Christ didn't complement first before criticizing, here), 15-19. Between the Laodicean church (all criticism, like our generation) and the Smyrna church (no criticism), the peoples' deeds determined Christ's complements or criticisms.

Blow the trumpet (i.e., make a scene or *commotion*—Joel 2:1, 15)! American carnals say 'negative makes me feel bad, while positive makes me *feel good*.' Don't you know that living off feelings deludes and keeps one biblically *ignorant*? Phil. 4:6-8 speaks of setting one's mind on the **TRUTH**, NOT PMA (positive mental attitude) or PC (political correctness).

Passively allowing the 5% evangelizers figure to continue (over 30 years), and indecision in addressing it **IS** a decision and **a sinful one at that!** Relatedly, don't accuse Paul, as so many have, of having had *a bad temper*. We are commanded to be angry (i.e., "righteous indignation"), yet not sin. Does our *peaceful co-existence* with evil follow any biblical pattern, or is it just a **compromise with the world?** (Eph. 4:26-27) Because the American church is so unknowledgeable of God's word, she easily falls prey to the ways of the world, for to be 100% positive is to be unbiblical, or carnal, because we walk by faith—NOT feelings.

And with possibly NO church having fully evangelized their own neighborhood since the 1970's (i.e., with Evangelism Explosion), the 5/10/13 problem*, virtually no relational discipling, body life, helping the poor, these TOP priorities are not like *complaining about the color of a church's carpet* (plus the churchianity, church-as-a-business and mega church obsession with numbers for money, at the usual sacrifice of EDBS priorities)!

3. We Love our Pastor(s)—Aren't You Being Too Hard on Him/Them?

I'm GLAD you love your Pastor(s)! If he is new to ministry work, he should be allowed a period of time to enact discipleship and evangelism strategies targeting **every believer and every lost people**. Those green in the profession are certainly *not guilty or needing reproof* for virtual inaction. For all others (perhaps 90% of pastors) and more and more so the longer they have ministered—no excuse. They likely were not taught relational discipling in Seminary, and have never *experienced it* or heard much about it in their *circle of peers*. But these are **FLIMSY EXCUSES**. Christ did it, and that's all they should have needed to read to be on notice and responsible to implement HIS priorities. The Navigators (in discipleship) and Campus Crusade for Christ (in evangelism) have **been around for DECADES**—para-church organizations that I believe far surpass any accomplishments in these *two critical areas* of most American churches.

I am sorry to have to be so *constructively critical* of the leaders of our churches! I do not find joy in pointing out these things, but **the issues are LARGE**—the TWO LARGEST

omissions in American church life—and **have existed for years**. I have met with many pastors and tried *various* methods to affect change, but now feel led to go *more public*, to, God-willing, **affect even more change**, or maybe just stimulate *serious discussion*. John the Baptist was a loner of sorts, and negative to an extent, and Paul had years of obscurity and times of severe reproving—**argue your case to these men IF you end up in heaven to say *they* were sinning**, could have used more “positive” and “effective” methods, or that their methods “*didn’t work*.” I, for my part, will continue doing as I am LED, trying in God’s power to **shed light on the Church’s lack of evangelism and relational discipling**. I hope you’ll **pray for my endurance**, success, and protection—I will need it—and **come JOIN ME!** God bless you if you do!

4. Couldn’t You be More POSITIVE and Encouraging?

I could, and have, but **it would not work on the MAJORITY of American Christians**. Want proof? The Church has been inundated with positive motivation for 30 years, and the 5% figure remains a TESTIMONY AGAINST US. The Bible is usually *POSITIVE* at the start, but with continued resistance, warning, reproof, rebuke; Exhortation and even righteous indignation are not only *appropriate*, but needed and necessary. 30 years is certainly enough time to have gotten *results* from a more *positive* approach, and the Bible’s pattern is that God is always gracious enough to lead some people to **warn** His people **BEFORE impending doom (or judgment)**, even more so with their continued hardness of heart and stubborn, sinful resistance.

5. Can’t One Ever Relax in Evangelism?

Yes, if you or your church has done your part and God doesn’t call you to go the extra mile to make up for so many others’ lack (Cor. 15:10; Col.1:24). Also, you’ll have time to relax in **heaven**.

6. What if the 5% CAN do 100% of the Work?

First, I would rejoice that all men HEARD the Gospel!

Second, the inaction and disobedience of the *lazy, weak and defeated* 95% would still be morally reprehensible. The ***EXTREME IRONY*** is that we have to *extol* people to do something so positive! It’s not like we are asking volunteers to clean out a *septic tank*—we’re inviting you to **ETERNALLY** bless and forever *positively change* men’s lives and **KEEP them from Hell**. There is no more *enthraling* calling! **If salvation is the greatest GIFT of all, why do so many Christians consider it a CURSE to share?** They treat knowing the Bible well and doing evangelism like one were a typewriter salesman, a teletype operator or had just bought a set of 5" floppy disks—*old-fashioned* and out-of-step with modern (and *hellhound*) trends!

Finally, I am increasingly convicted that **IS** our last and only option (i.e., for the 5% to DO IT ALL), perhaps using technology to *increasingly assist* these few!

God bring ‘revival’ to your *passive* Church!

You’ve done it before, You can do it now—

***MELT* our hearts, O God.**

P.S.—It is instructive to see that Jesus used several methods to address controversy, criticism (constructive or not) and **argumentation**. He **REPROVED** (**See:** References above), **SILENCED** His opponents with wisdom (Mt. 22:23-46, espec. v. 34), **ANSWERED** questions (Mt. 27:11),

REFUSED to answer questions (Mt. 27:12; Jn.8:6, 19:9-10), and answered questions with a QUESTION (Mk. 11:27-33) and **NONE** of these methods were “*unloving*.” Those who say “**WALKING AWAY**” is the “*Christian way*” have little biblical evidence, though we can both agree that we are to “be at peace with all men,” as much as is in our power; Rom. 12:18). **What Would Jesus (REALLY) Do** (and have YOU do)? You have to **ASK HIM**—He **DOES** answer prayers! The correct path is NOT a formula or one set rule, no matter what our *Politically Correct* culture teaches us!

P.S.S.—It is **NOT** “**proof texting**” (or “*legalism*”) to ACCURATELY cite “chapter and verse,” but BIBLE/TRUTH/**GOD AVOIDANCE** to *have NO evidence* to support your claim(s)!

17. Why Read The Bible?

Why Read the Bible?

“The Bible is worth all other books which have ever been printed.”
–**Patrick Henry**

"The secret of my success? It is simple. It is found in the Bible,
"In all thy ways acknowledge Him and He shall direct thy paths"
–**George Washington Carver**

"The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country" –**Calvin Coolidge**

"The existence of the Bible, as a book for the people, is the greatest benefit which the human race has ever experienced. Every attempt to belittle it is a crime against humanity" –**Immanuel Kant**

"I am busily engaged in the study of the Bible. I believe it is God's Word because it finds me where I am "I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good of the Savior of the world is communicated to us through the Book. But for it, we could not know right from wrong. –**Abraham Lincoln**

“The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or ever will be known in the world.” –**Charles Dickens**

"There is no other book so various as the Bible, nor one so full on concentrated wisdom" –**Herbert Hoover**

“The Bible is a book that has been read more and examined less than any book that ever existed.” –**Thomas Paine**

"The study of God's Word, for the purpose of discovering God's will, is the secret discipline which has formed the greatest characters."
–**James W. Alexander**

“One of these days some simple soul will pick up the Book of God, read it, and believe it. Then the rest of us will be embarrassed.”
–**Leonard Ravenhill**

Reading the Bible only 15 minutes a day will get one through the whole Bible in one year, especially if you take 10 minutes in the Old Testament, then 5 minutes in the New. –**J. John** (Evangelist & apologist extraordinaire)

“If Paul were to come to the typical American church I think he’d be **shocked** at how one has to prod, nag, pester and *obligate Christians to read* God’s word! We’ve won the **eternal lottery** with the privilege of having the Bible in our hands! Yet, if you ask **MOST** Christians to READ it regularly, they look at you like you’re giving them a **rotary dial telephone**, a **TYPEWRITER**, or

the chance to **hand-clean** the inside of a used trash dumpster! The PROBLEM is **not** that more positive motivational methods work *better* but that we are a **spiritually dry** Church!” –**J. Meroney**

Many Christian Reformers *suffered*, and some **died** to get the Bible to the masses, yet only 13% of American ‘Christians ‘ read it regularly.

Most American Christians are on the eternity Bible study plan—at current pace, it will take them **an eternity** to know what God has said by just one reading.

To the **majority** of American Christians, God’s **love letter** is as *familiar* to them (and apparently as interesting) as their knowledge of a *foreign language*, like **Latin**.

Why Read The Bible? (External Evidence)

Unique in its Continuity. Here is a book:

1. Written over a 1,500 year span.
2. Written over 40 generations.
3. Written by over 40 authors from every walk of life including kings, peasants; Philosophers, fishermen, poets, statesmen, scholars, etc.:
 - Moses, a political leader, trained in the universities of Egypt
 - Peter, a fisherman
 - Amos, a herdsman
 - Joshua, a military general
 - Nehemiah, a cupbearer
 - Daniel, a prime minister
 - Luke, a doctor
 - Solomon, a king
 - Matthew, a tax collector
 - Paul, a rabbi
4. Written in different places:
 - Moses in the wilderness
 - Jeremiah in a dungeon
 - Daniel on a hillside and in a palace
 - Paul inside prison walls
 - Luke while traveling
 - John on the isle of Patmos
 - Others in the rigors of a military campaign
5. Written at different times:
 - David in times of war
 - Solomon in times of peace
6. Written during different moods:
 - Some writing from the heights of joy and others writing from the depths of sorrow and despair
7. Written on three continents:
 - Asia, Africa and Europe
8. Written in three languages:
 - Hebrew
 - Aramaic
 - Greek

9. Its subject matter includes hundreds of controversial subjects. A controversial subject is one which would create opposing opinions when mentioned or discussed.

Biblical scholars spoke on hundreds of controversial subjects with harmony and continuity from Genesis to Revelation. There is one unfolding story: “God’s redemption of man.”

Unique in its circulation: The Bible has been read by more people and published in more languages than any other book.

Unique in its translation: The Bible has been translated and retranslated and paraphrased more than any other book in existence.

Unique in its survival: Being written on material that perishes..., having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years before the invention of the printing press, did not diminish its style, correctness nor existence. The Bible, compared with other ancient writings, has more manuscript evidence than any 10 pieces of classical literature combined.

Unique in its teachings:

Unique in its influence on surrounding literature: –**Josh McDowell**

“The existence of the Bible, as a book for the people, is the greatest benefit which the human race has ever experienced. Every attempt to belittle it is a crime against humanity.” –**Immanuel Kant**

“The book to read is not the one which thinks for you, but the one which makes you think. No book in the world equals the Bible for that.”
–**McCosh**

Seven Wonders of the Word

1. The wonder of its formation—the way in which it grew is one of the mysteries of time.
2. The wonder of its unification—a library of 66 books, yet one book.
3. The wonder of its age—most ancient of all books.
4. The wonder of its sale—best-seller of all time and of any other book.
5. The wonder of its interest—only book in the world read by all classes of people.
6. The wonder of its language—written largely by uneducated men, yet the best book from a literary standpoint.
7. The wonder of its preservation—the most hated of all books, yet it continues to exist.
–**Paul Tan**

“There are more sure marks of authenticity in the Bible than in any profane history.” –**Sir Isaac Newton**

1. It Reveals Eternal Truth in Life

“The grass withers, the flower fades, But the word of our God stands forever.” (**Is. 40:8**)

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away. (**Mt. 24:35**)

“Voltaire expected that within fifty years of his lifetime there would not be one Bible in the world. His house is now a distribution center for Bibles in many languages.” –**Corrie Ten Boom**

2. Meditating on It and Obeying It Brings a Successful, Blessed Life

“This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will

make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.” (Josh. 1:8)

“But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the law of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man shall be blessed in what he does.” (Jas. 1:25)

“How blessed are those whose way is blameless, Who walk in the law of the LORD. How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart. They also do no unrighteousness; They walk in His ways.” (Ps. 119:1-3)

“O how I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day.” (Ps. 119:97)

Reading the Bible without meditating on it is like trying to eat without swallowing. –**Anonymous**

“If there is anything in my thoughts or style to commend, the credit is due to my parents for instilling in me an early love of the Scriptures.” –**Daniel Webster**

3. It is the Authoritative, Written Breath of God

“All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.” (II Tim. 3:16-17)

“But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one’s own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.” (II Pet. 1:20-21)

Our greatest leaders know the secret...

“It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.” –**George Washington**

“I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this Book that you can by reason and the balance by faith, and you will live and die a better man. It is the best Book which God has given to man.” –**Abraham Lincoln**

“I have always said that a studious perusal of the sacred volume will make better citizens, better fathers, and better husbands.” –**Thomas Jefferson**

“So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectable members of society. I have for many years made it a practice to read through the Bible once every year.” –**John Quincy Adams**

4. It is Pure

“The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times.” (Ps. 12:6)

5. It is Extremely Valuable and to be Extremely Valued

“How sweet are Thy words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (Ps. 119:103)

“Therefore I love Thy commandments Above gold, yes, above fine gold.” (Ps. 119:127)

“How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver.” (Pv. 16:16)

6. It is the Instrument for Setting Us Free From the Bondage of Sin

“How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word. With all my heart I have sought Thee; Do not let me wander from Thy commandments. Thy word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against Thee.” (Ps. 119:9-11)

“Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, “If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” (Jn. 8:31-32)

“And I will walk at liberty, For I seek Thy precepts.” (Ps. 119:45)

“The word of God hidden in the heart is a stubborn voice to suppress.”
–Billy Graham

7. It is the Sword Which Judges the Intents and Motives of Hearts

“And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.” (Eph. 6:17)

“For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Heb. 4:12)

8. It is the Foundational Witness in Evangelism

“The sower sows the word.” (Mk. 4:14)

“And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God’s message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.” (I Th. 2:13)

“For the word of the cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.” (I Cor. 1:18)

“You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life.” (Jn. 5:39-40)

9. Keeping It Proves/Demonstrates Our Love for Christ

“Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.’” (Jn. 14:23)

“Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.” (I Jn. 5:1-3)

10. It Encourages Us and Brings Us Hope

“For whatever was written in earlier times was written for our instruction, that through perseverance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.” (**Rom. 15:4**)

“The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever; The judgments of the LORD are true; they are righteous altogether. They are more desirable than gold, yes, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the drippings of the honeycomb.” (**Ps. 19:7-10**)

11. It is the Instrument Which Sets Us Apart for Spiritual Growth

“They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.” (**Jn. 17:16-17**)

“Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,” (**I Pet. 2:1-2**)

“Therefore putting aside all filthiness and all that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.” (**Jas. 1:21-24**)

12. It is the Basis for Fruitful, Effective Prayer

“If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you. By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My disciples.” (**Jn. 15:7-8**)

“Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence before God; and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.” (**I Jn. 3:21-22**)

“And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.” (**I Jn. 5:14-15**)

13. It is the Revealed Will of God Which Instills Faith

“So then do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” (**Eph. 5:17**)

“But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth. Therefore, laying aside falsehood, **SPEAK TRUTH, EACH ONE of you, WITH HIS NEIGHBOR**, for we are members of one another.” (**Eph. 4:20-25**)

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.” (Rom. 10:17)

14. It Inspires Us to Do God’s Will

“I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy Law is within my heart.” (Ps. 40:8)

15. It Instructs and Disciplines Us to Do God’s Will

“Thy word is a lamp to my feet, And a light to my path.” (Ps. 119:105)

“For the commandment is a lamp, and the teaching is light; And reproofs for discipline are the way of life,” (Pv. 6:23)

“Who decides what is right and wrong in the world? Who has the authority to define morality for all of creation? It is not the courts, congress, the media, public opinion, the "politically correct" police, the "tolerance" brigade or even the church. The only answer has been, is and always will be Jesus Christ. You can find His opinion on a great variety of subjects in His best seller... The Bible.” –Jeffrey E. Ramey

16. It Substantiates the Abundant, Eternal Life Through Straightening our Path

“You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.” (Jn. 15:3)

17. It Gives Us Peace

“Those who love Thy law have great peace, And nothing causes them to stumble.” (Ps. 119:165)

18. It Gives Us Strength Over the Christian’s Enemies

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and burst against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded upon the rock.” (Mt. 7:24-25)

“I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, children, because you know the Father. I have written to you, fathers, because you know Him who has been from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.” (I Jn. 2:13-14)

“Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.” (Col. 3:16)

19. When It is Proclaimed It Accomplishes God’s Purposes

“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth, And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.” (Is. 55:10-11)

20. God Encourages Our Diligent Study, Teaching and Practice of It

“Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.” (**II Tim. 2:15**)

“For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the LORD, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.” (**Ezra 7:10**)

21. It Yields Life and Health to Us (Though Perfect Health is Not Guaranteed Till Heaven)

“My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your sight; Keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are life to those who find them, And health to all their whole body.” (**Pv. 4:20-22**)

“My son, do not forget my teaching, But let your heart keep my commandments; For length of days and years of life, And peace they will add to you.” (**Pv. 3:1-2**)

22. It Works God’s Power Within Us

“And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God’s message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.” (**I Th. 2:13**)

23. It Bears Fruit

“We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the Gospel, which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth;” (**Col. 1:3-6**)

24. The Power of God’s Spoken Word Upholds All Things

“And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high;” (**Heb. 1:3**)

25. It Sets Apart All Food as Clean for the Believer

“For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected, if it is received with gratitude; for it is sanctified by means of the word of God and prayer.” (**I Tim. 4:4-5**)

26. Man Cannot Live Without It

“But He answered and said, ‘It is written, ‘MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.’” (**Mt. 4:4**)

27. It is Established, and is Not to be Tampered With

“Forever, O LORD, Thy word is settled in heaven.” (**Ps. 119:89**)

“Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words Lest He reprove you, and you be proved a liar.” (**Pv. 305-6**)

“You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you

may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.” (Deut. 4:2)

“Here, then, is the real problem of our negligence. We fail in our duty to study God's Word not so much because it is difficult to understand, not so much because it is dull and boring, but because it is work. Our problem is not a lack of intelligence or a lack of passion. Our problem is that we are lazy.” –R.C. Sproul

Saying “I love God, and **Jesus is my best Friend**”, yet you don't read the Bible much is like saying **I love my wife**—I met her in a bar once and could pick her out in a line-up.

It's also like saying the following:

- I love my wife but we only **talk once a week** for about an hour (Ex.: church as your only access to God and His word per week).
- I love my wife but we **communicate through a third party** (Ex.: pastor sermon vs. 24/7 direct access to God).
- I love my wife but we **only have monologues** (Ex.: praying only your worries, as you hardly know the Bible).
- I love my wife but can **write on one page** the total content of all our marital conversations (Ex.: Hardly knowing the Bible). Or,
- I know my wife's **data/statistics** and facts (Ex.: knowing the Bible trivia vs. knowing God through His love letter—the Bible).

PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

When reading God's word, to arrive at **proper interpretation**, there are a few basic *principles* which you would *do well* to keep in mind:

1. **Contextual** Context always *rules* (i.e., read the verses preceding and following the verse being interpreted (i.e., who wrote, who received it, etc.), to get the immediate **perspective** on that verse.
2. **Completeness**. Get the **full counsel** of the Bible (i.e., Old and New Testament, interpreting the Old Testament in light of the New, etc.).
3. **Comparison**. The Bible never **contradicts** itself.
4. **Clarity**. Doctrine is **not** based on **obscure** texts (i.e., remote interpretations with *no other corroborating* verses supporting that interpretation).
5. **Content**. Interpret the Bible literally (i.e., grammatical, literal, **normal**, common meaning of the words). That is **not** to say that we take things in a woodenly literal way, or ignore literary genre (figures off speech), such as *idioms, similies, metaphors, proverbs, allegories, parables, types, prophecy and apocalyptic literature*. And some commands are given only to select individuals, **inapplicable** to others (Ex.: Abraham called to sacrifice his son).
6. **Cultural-Historical**. *Seek* to find the author's original, **intended meaning** for words or phrases.
7. **Consultation** Check your *conclusions* by reputable **commentaries** (Ex.: Greek words and grammatical rules, etc.). If a verse seems to be quite odd, it could be intended for figurative

interpretation, could be ‘dispensational’ or could be literal, requiring more faith (at least for you). Further investigation is in order.

Adapted from Kay Arthur’s, How To Study Your Bible and Don Anderson’s, Bible Teacher Training Course

DISPENSATIONAL TRUTHS

For proper biblical interpretation, always keep in mind that some activities, commands and practices were unique to their day and time, and have less to no application in ours. Some proffered examples include animal sacrifices, the Jewish temple and festivals; Levites, the death penalty for homosexuality, miracles as normative, and some say tithing (etc.).

DEBATES

(vs. Progressive Dispensationalism & Covenant Theology)

“...the dispensationalist’s consistent employment of normal or plain or historical-grammatical interpretation, and it reflects an understanding of the basic purpose of God in all his dealings with mankind as that of glorifying Himself through salvation and other purposes as well... This does not preclude or exclude correct understanding of types, illustrations, apocalypses, and other genres within the framework of literal interpretation.

Two is the dividing line, for most covenant theologians hold to two at least and vigorously object to more. ...Berkhof equates the two basic dispensations with the Old and New Testaments...

Most dispensationalists see seven dispensations:

1. Innocency/freedom. (Gen. 1:28-3:6)
2. Conscience/self-determination. (Gen. 4:1-8:14)
3. Civil government. (Gen. 8:15-11:9)
4. Promise/Patriarchal rule. (Gen. 11:10-Ex. 18:26)
5. Mosaic law. (Ex. 19:1-Ac. 1:26; with 613 commands)
6. Grace. (Ac. 2:1-Rev. 19:21)
7. The Millennium. (Rev. 20:7-9)”

Dispensationalism Today, pp. 40-41 48, 57-64, by Charles C. Ryrie (Moody: Chicago), 1965

PERSONAL NOTE

For an excellent tool to help you understand and properly interpret the New Testament, in context, please consider purchasing our New Testament Color Charts, which among other features includes the following helps:

JAMES: Maturity--Means and Manifestations

(Milestone Markers)



Perfected in Righteousness: Process and Practice

Divisions	Sections	Sub-Themes	Chapters	Source:	Structural Details		
ETHICS	Seeming Non-Gifts, Non-Gifts & Gifts (I.e., Trials, Temptation & Salvation+)	v. 2 Trials (Growth by Passing)	1	God	Key Themes: Humility v. Pride Faith Bible Rich v. Poor Speech		
		v. 13 Temptations (Growth Stunted by Failing)	1	Devil			
	Faith in Action (Faith & Works/Do the Word!)	v. 17 Good Gifts/Salvation (are From God)	1	God			
		v. 19 Bible Sanctification vs. Anger	1	Holy Bible			
	Speech & Thoughts (I.e., Words & Wisdom, including Teachers)	v. 22 Doers of the Word (v Sin/Pride/Anger) v. 27	2	2			
		Favoritism (Rich v. Poor Man in Church Illustration)	2	2			
	Church Ethics (Including Individual Ethics)	v. 14 Faith and Works (The Poor Man, Demonic Faith, Abraham, Rahab)	2	2			
		v. 26 Teachers (Few, Tongue Control)	3	3			
			v. 3 Speech/Tongue Control (Fiery/Destructive Little Instrument)	3		3	
			v. 13 Wisdom (Traits of Worldly v. Godly) v. 18	4		4	
		Worldliness & the Church (Problem)	4	4			
		v. 7 Commitment & Ethics (Solution)	4	4			
		v. 13 Riches: Warning to Aspirants v. 17	5	Come Now (4:13)			
		Riches: Warning to Achievers	5	Come Now (5:1)			
		v. 7 Suffering Patiently (Laborer Ethics)	5	5			
		v. 13 Prayer (Elijah Example; Body Life)	5	5			
		Christian Discipline v. 20	5	5			

Key Themes

Bible/Truth--1:18, 21-23, 2:23	Love--1:12, 16, 19, 2:5, 8
Blessed/Cursed--1:12, 25, 3:9-10, 5:11	Lust--1:14-15, 4:2
Crying/Weep/Mourn--4:9, 17, 5:1,	Neighbor--2:8, 4:12
Death/Life--1:10-12, 15, 2:17, 26, 3:6, 4:2, 5:5-6, 20	Partiality/Favoritism--2:1, 3-4, 9
Demons/Devil--2:19, 3:15, 4:7	Patience--5:7-8, 10
Doers--1:22, 25, 2:12, 4:11	Perfection/Perfecting--1:4, 17, 25, 2:22, 3:2
Double-Minded--1:(6-7), 8, 4:8	Prayer--1:5-8, 4:2-3, 8, 5:13-18 generally
Endurance--1:3-4, 12, 5:11	Prophecy--2:5, 3:1, 4:12, 5:1, 3, 5, 7, 9
Ethics/Sanctification--1:4, (5, 12, 15), 20-21, (25), 2:8, 14, 16-17, 21-22, 3:2, (3), 4:7, 12?, 17, 5:7-9, 11-12	Purity--1:11, 26-27, 3:17, 4:5, 8
Faith--1:3, 6, 2:1, 5, 14, 17-20, 22-24, 26, 4:15, 5:15	Rich/Poor--1:9-11, 2:2-3, 5-7, 4:13-5:6
God's Will--1:18, 4:15	Righteousness--1:20, 2:23, 3:18, 4:17, 5:6, 9, 16
Hearing--1:19, 22-23, 2:5	Sim--1:13, 15, 21, 2:4, 9-11, 3:1, 9, 14, 16, 4:1-5, 8, 16-17, 5:15-16, 19-20
Humility/Pride--1:9, (10), 21, 2:3, 3:13-14, 4:6, 10, 13-17	Speech/Tongue--1:19, 26, 2:3, 7, 12, 14, 16, 3:1, 5-8, (9-10), 4:11
Judgment--2:4, 12-13, 3:1, 4:11-12, 5:1-3, (4-6), 9, 12	Suffering--5:7-11, 13
Justification--2:21, (23), 24-25	Trials--1:1-8, 12
Knowledge--1:3, 19, 2:20, 3:1, 17, 4:4, 17, 5:20	Wisdom--1:5, 3:13-18
Law--1:25, 2:8-12, 4:11-12	Works--2:14, 17-18, 20-22, 24-26
Life--1:10-12, 3:6, 4:14, 5:5	Worldliness--1:27, 2:5, 3:6, 4:4
See Also: God, Christ, Lord, Contrasts (3:5-12, 4:9, etc.)	

Prohibitions Toward the Brethren:

- Speaking Against (4:11-12)
- Complaining (5:9)
- Swearing (5:12)

Reader/Recipients

1:1, 9, 16, 19, 2:2, 5, 21, 3:1, 10, 4:11, 5:7, 9-10, 19

Proof of Book Theme: Sanctificational Terms Used in James (Many by Implication vs. Direct, Explicit Terms--Ex: Maturity)

Perfection and Completion/Perfect Man, Approved, Life vs. Death, Save Soul, Achieving Righteousness, Doer vs. Hearer Only, Useful Faith, (Not) Stumbling, Fulfilling the Law (and Law of Christ/Liberty), Decreased Fleshliness and Worldliness, True & Useful Religion, Wisdom(?), Commitment and Humility/Repentance, Friend of God(?), Submission to God, Turning a Sinning Brother Around, Various Ethics injunctions, etc.



Key Book Theme Verse(s): 1:4 (1:2-3)
Key Memory Verses: 1:2-4, 13-17, 22, 25, 2:22, 3:17-18, 4:3, 7-8

Author: James **Book Type:** General Epistle



JAMES
Maturity: Means & Manifestations

Divisions:

- I. Ethics: Gifts & Non-Gifts (1:1-18)
- II. Ethics: Faith & Works (1:19-2:26)
- III. Ethics: Speech & Wisdom (3:1-18)
- IV. Ethics: Sin & Solutions (4:1-12)
- V. Ethics: Rich & Poor (4:13-5:12)
- VI. Ethics: Prayer & Church Discipline (5:13-20)

Book Outline:

- I. Gifts & Non-Gifts (1:1-18)
 - 1:1 Introduction
 - 1:2-12 Trials: Seeming Non-Gifts (From God)
Non-Gifts (From devil)
Gifts--Salvation #1 (From God)
 - 1:13-16 Temptations:
 - 1:17-18 Good Gifts:
- II. Faith & Works--Beliefs & Deeds (1:19-2:27)
 - 1:19-27 Doers: Doers vs. Hearers Only (Of Word)
 - 2:1-13 Riches: Faith & Rich People
 - 2:14-26 Works: Faith & Works
- III. Speech & Wisdom--Words & Thoughts (3:1-18)
 - 3:1-12 Speech: Of Teachers & Believers
 - 3:13-18 Wisdom: Worldly vs. Heavenly
- IV. Sin & Solutions (4:1-12)
 - 4:1-6 Problem: Worldliness in the Church
 - 4:7-10 Solution: Repentance & Commitment
 - 4:11-12 Ethics: Slander
- V. Rich & Poor (4:13-5:12)
 - 4:13-17 Rich Aspirers: Boastful Speech (RE: making money)
Reproof & Judgment (Of rich)
Patient Endurance
(Of poor, suffering by evil rich)
 - 5:1-6 Rich Achievers:
 - 5:7-12 Poor Believers:
- VI. Prayer & Church Discipline (5:13-20)
 - 5:13-18 Church Prayer: For the Suffering & Sick
 - 5:19-20 Church Discipline (Conclusion)

18. Pointers For Prayer

Pointers for Prayer

I. Priority: Why Pray? (Famous Quotes)

“What would you think of a man who had \$1,000,000 in the bank and only drew out a penny a day? That’s you and me, and the sinner is blinder than we are.

The throne of grace is established. There we are to get all the grace we need. Sin is not so strong as the arm of God. He will help and deliver you if you will come and get the grace you need.” –**Paul Tan**

“The Church has not yet touched the fringe of the possibilities of intercessory prayer. Her largest victories will be witnessed when individual Christians everywhere come to recognize their priesthood unto God and day by day give themselves unto prayer. –**John R. Mott**

“When I pray, coincidences happen, and when I don't pray, they don't.”
–**William Temple**

“The potency of prayer hath subdued the strength of fire; it hath bridled the rage of lions, hushed anarchy to rest; Extinguished wars, appeased the elements; Expelled demons, burst the chains of death; Expanded the gates of heaven, assuaged diseases, repelled frauds, rescued cities from destruction, stayed the sun in its course, and arrested the progress of the thunderbolt. Prayer is an all-efficient panoply, a treasure undiminished, a mine which is never exhausted, a sky un-obscured by clouds, a heaven unruffled by the storm. It is the root, the fountain, the mother of a thousand blessings.” –**John Chrysotom**

“The prayers of holy men appease God’s wrath, drive away temptations, resist and overcome the devil, procure the ministry and service of angels, <*rescind the decrees of God.*> Prayer cures sickness and obtains pardon; it arrests the sun in its course and stays the wheels of the chariot of the moon; it rules over all gods and shuts the storehouses of rain; it unlocks the cabinet of the womb and quenches the violence of fire; it stops the mouths of lions and reconciles our suffering and weak facilities with the violence of persecution; it pleases God and supplies all our need.” –**Jeremy Taylor**

“If we could only know and understand what happens when we pray, we might well have difficulty doing other things that now occupy our main attention. Prayer is a miracle. It has all the credentials of a miracle. Give your favorite definition, and prayer qualifies as a miracle every time. ‘An earthly event with a heavenly explanation.’ Prayer passes through that gate with no difficulty. ‘A happening that is not governed by laws of time and space.’ –**Jack Taylor.**

“More things are wrought by prayer than the world dreams of....” –**Alfred Tennyson**

“The men who have accomplished most for God have been men of prayer. John Wesley was wont to spend at least two hours each day in prayer. Samuel Rutherford rose at three o’clock each morning to wait upon God.

John Fletcher was said to have stained the walls of his chamber by the breath of his prayers. The greatest missionaries have been uniformly men of prayer.

Think of David Brainerd dying at the age of twenty-nine, and Henry Martyn at the age of thirty-one, and yet their names stand out among the brightest stars in the missionary firmament. These young men exerted a profound influence not only upon their own generation, but upon all succeeding generations as well. It was not by their actual labors, which were soon cut off, so much as by their prayer life and their resultant saintly characters.”

–**Gospel Herald**

“**GEORGE WHITEFIELD**, famous English evangelist, said, ‘O Lord, give me souls, or take my soul.’

HENRY HARTYN. Missionary, cried as he knelt on India’s coral strands, ‘Here let me burn out for God.’

DAVID BRAINERD, missionary to the North American Indians, 1718-1747, declared, ‘Lord to Thee I dedicate myself. Oh. Accept of me, and let me be Thine forever. Lord, I desire nothing else; I desire nothing more.’

THOMAS A. KEMPIS, 1349-1471, said, “Give what Thou wilt, and when Thou wilt. See me where Thou wilt, and deal with me in all things as Thou wilt.’

DWIGHT L. MOODY implored, ‘Use me, then, my Savior, for whatever purpose and in whatever way Thou mayest require. Here is my heart, an empty vessel, fill it with Thy grace.’

MARTIN LUTHER prayed on the night preceding his appearance before the Diet of Worms: ‘Do Thou, my God, stand by me against all the world’s wisdom and reason. Oh, do it! Thou must do it. Stand by me, Thou true, eternal God.’

JOHN MCKENZIE prayed as a young missionary candidate as he knelt on the banks of the Lossie: ‘O, Lord, send me to the darkest spot on the earth.’

‘**PRAYING HYDE**,’ a missionary in India, pleaded, ‘Father, give me these souls, or I die.’”

“**Satan**: Blessed is he who has no time to pray, for he will become an easy prey.” –**Paul Tan**

“Seven days without prayer makes one weak.” –**The Bible Friend**

II. **Prayer Defined: (Speaking with God... a 2-Way Street)**

“Perfect prayer is only another name for love.” –**Francois Fenelon**

“Prayer is not overcoming God’s reluctance, but is laying hold of His highest willingness.” –**Archbishop Trent**

“Prayer should be the breath of our breathing, the thought of our thinking, the soul of our feeling, and the life of our living, the sound of our hearing, the growth of our growing.’ Prayer in its magnitude is length without end, width without bounds, height without top, and depth without bottom. Illimitable in its breadth; Exhaustless in height, fathomless in depths and infinite in extension.” –**Homer W. Hodge**

“Prayer is the Living Word in lips of faith.” –**E.W. Kenyon**

III. Prerequisite: (Born-again believer in Jesus Christ)

“We know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is God-fearing, and does His will, He hears him.” (**Jn. 9:31**)

IV. Patterns: (Model–The Lord’s Prayer)

“And it came about that while He was praying in a certain place, after He had finished, one of His disciples said to Him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray just as John also taught his disciples.’ And He said to them, ‘When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.’” (**Lk. 11:1-4**)

“Pray, then, in this way: ‘Our Father who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil. <For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.>” (**Mt. 6:9-13**)

V. Principles:

“What satisfaction must it be to learn from God Himself with what words and in what manner, he would have us pray to Him so as not to pray in vain! We do not sufficiently consider the value of this prayer; the respect and attention which it requires; the preference to be given it; its fullness and perfection; the frequent use we should make of it; and the spirit which we should bring to it. ‘Lord, teach us how to pray.’” –**Adam Clark**

1. Start Off Your Day in Prayer

“In the morning, O LORD, Thou wilt hear my voice; In the morning I will order my prayer to Thee and eagerly watch.” (**Ps. 5:3**)

“Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?” –**Corrie Ten Boom**

2. Pray for Spiritual Understanding as you Read the Bible

“Open my eyes, that I may behold wonderful things from Thy law.” (**Ps. 119:18**)

3. With Devotion, Alertness and Thanksgiving

“Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;” (**Col. 4:2**)

“The end of all things is at hand; therefore, be of sound judgment and sober spirit for the purpose of prayer.” (**I Pet. 4:7**)

“Enter His gates with thanksgiving, And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him; bless His name.” (**Ps. 100:4**)

4. Develop Intimacy With God Through Prayer

“But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord GOD my refuge, That I may tell of all Thy works.” (**Ps. 73:28**)

“Whom have I in heaven but Thee? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and

my heart may fail, But God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.” (Ps. 73:25-26)
“I stretch out my hands to Thee; My soul longs for Thee, as a parched land. Selah.” (Ps. 143:6)

“There is not in the world a kind of life more sweet and delightful than
that of a continual conversation with God.” –**Brother Lawrence**

5. Pray Seeking to Get to Know God Better

“Seek the LORD and His strength; Seek His face continually.” (Ps. 105:4)

“Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, And the unrighteous man his thoughts; And let him return to the LORD, And He will have compassion on him; And to our God, For He will abundantly pardon.” (Isa. 55:6-7)

“Those who know God the best are the richest and most powerful in prayer. Little acquaintance with God, and strangeness and coldness to Him, make prayer a rare and feeble thing.” –**E. M. Bounds**

“Some people pray just to pray and some people pray to know God.”
–**Andrew Murray**

6. Delight in the Lord

“Delight yourself in the LORD; And He will give you the desires of your heart.” (Ps. 37:4)

“What the wicked fears will come upon him, And the desire of the righteous will be granted.” (Pv. 10:24)

“Thou wilt make known to me the path of life; In Thy presence is fullness of joy; In Thy right hand there are pleasures forever.” (Ps. 16:11)

7. Out of Unhindered, Consistent Fellowship (“Walk”) with God

“pray without ceasing;” (I Th. 5:17)

“Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan.” –**John Bunyan**

“When thou feelest thyself most indisposed to prayer yield not to it, but strive and endeavor to pray even when thou thinkest thou canst not pray.” –**Arthur Hildersham**

8. Obediently, and to Please God

“and whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight.” (I Jn. 3:22)

“When Thou didst say, “Seek My face,” my heart said to Thee, “Thy face, O LORD, I shall seek.” (Ps. 27:8)

9. Proving God’s Will and Praying Accordingly

“And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him.” (I Jn. 5:14-15)

“He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, Even his prayer is an abomination.” (Pv.

28:9)

10. Asking (i.e., Do It)

“Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will he give him a stone? Or if he shall ask for a fish, will he give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!” (Mt. 7:7-11)

‘Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.’ (Jer. 33:3)

“There is a general kind of praying which fails for lack of precision. It is as if a regiment of soldiers should all fire off their guns anywhere. Possibly somebody would be killed, but the majority of the enemy would be missed.” –**Charles Haddon Spurgeon**

11. Humbly Admitting Your Needs and Cares

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,” (I Pet. 5:6)

“Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.” (Jas. 4:10)

“Cast your burden upon the LORD, and He will sustain you; He will never allow the righteous to be shaken.” (Ps. 55:22)

“But as for me, I would seek God, And I would place my cause before God;” (Job 5:8)

“I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised; And I am saved from my enemies.” (II Sam. 22:4)

“Pray, and let God worry.” –**Martin Luther**

“Do not pray for easy lives. Pray to be stronger men. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers, pray for powers equal to your task.” –**Phillips Brooks**

12. Unselfishly, to Bring Glory to God

“You lust and do not have; so you commit murder. And you are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel. You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures.” (Jas. 4:2-3)

“Is the Son of God praying in me, or am I dictating to Him?.... Prayer is not simply getting things from God, that is a most initial form of prayer; prayer is getting into perfect communion with God. If the Son of God is formed in us by regeneration, He will press forward in front of our common sense and change our attitude to the things about which we pray.” –**Oswald Chambers**

“Our ordinary views of prayer are not found in the New Testament. We look upon prayer as a means for getting something for ourselves; the Bible idea of prayer is that we may get to know God Himself.” –**Oswald Chambers**

13. Fervently, Sincerely and Honestly

“Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.” (Jas. 5:16)

14. With Expectancy

“But as for me, I will watch expectantly for the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.” (Mic. 7:7)

“If God will do whatever He wishes, regardless of whether we pray or not, then we do not need to pray at all, and the Lord's instructions on praying for the Kingdom and the Will are superfluous. But the truth is that God waits for a Remnant to rise up and to pray in agreement with His Purpose before He does anything—He will do nothing apart from the Church. Apart from HIM, we CAN do nothing; apart from US, He WILL do nothing.” —Chip Brogden

15. Believing and Thanking God, Waiting Patiently for the Answer

“And Jesus answered[^] saying to them, ‘Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and cast into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you.’” (Mk. 11:22-24)

“Faith in a prayer-hearing God will make a prayer-loving Christian.”
—Andrew Murray

“One can believe intellectually in the efficacy of prayer and never do any praying.” —Catherine Marshall

16. With a Clean Slate in Your Relationship with God

“If I regard wickedness in my heart, The Lord will not hear;” (Ps. 66:18)

“We lean to our own understanding, or we bank on service and do away with prayer, and consequently by succeeding in the external we fail in the eternal, because in the eternal we succeed only by prevailing prayer.”
—Oswald Chambers

17. With a Clean Slate in Your Marital Relations

“You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.” (I Pet. 3:7)

18. With a Clean Slate in Your Human Relations

“For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.” (Mt. 6:14-15)

19. In Private and Consistently/Regularly/Habitually

“And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words.” (Mt. 6:7)

20. Not Hastily, Anxiously or Overly-Wordy (i.e., Verbosity)

“Do not be hasty in word or impulsive in thought to bring up a matter in the presence of God. For God is in heaven and you are on the earth; therefore let your words be few.” (Ecc. 5:2)

21. Alongside Fasting (if Led to Fast)

“So we fasted and sought our God concerning this matter, and He listened to our entreaty.” (Ezra 8:23)

22. As a Life-Long Quest

“I love the LORD, because He hears My voice and my supplications. Because He has inclined His ear to me, Therefore I shall call upon Him as long as I live.” (Ps. 116:1-2)

Priorities:

1. Pray for Peace (Phil. 4:6-7)
2. Pray for Forgiveness (I Jn. 1:9; Neh. 1:6)
3. Pray During Temptation (Mark 14:38; See also: Heb. 4:15-16)
“I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had absolutely no other place to go.” —**Abraham Lincoln**
4. Pray for Endurance of God’s Discipline (Zeph. 2:3; Heb. 12:5-11)
5. Pray for Christians’ Persecutors (Mt. 5:44)
6. Pray for All Men (I Tim. 2:8)
7. Pray for All Christians (Eph. 6:18-19; See also: Jas. 5:16)
8. Pray at Meals (I Tim. 4:5)
9. Pray for Your Country (II Chron. 7:13-14; See also: Ps. 33:12)
10. Pray for Opportunities to Evangelize (Col. 4:4)
11. Pray for Others’ Spiritual Growth (Phil. 1:9-11; See also: Eph. 1:15-19)
12. Pray for the Sick (Jas. 5:14)

19. Why Be Totally Committed to Jesus Christ?

On Total Commitment

10% of American Christians are committed; According to Barna research.
–**Dr. Jack Graham** (*paraphrased*)

The world has yet to see, and... “No one can sum up all God is able to accomplish through one solitary life, wholly yielded, adjusted, and obedient to Him.” –**D.L. Moody**

“What is total dedication? It is giving, totally and wholly, of time, talent, resources and oneself to a task. Dedication is selling out to a task. The men and women who break and set world athletic records, win championships, win Olympic gold medals are not necessarily the best athletes. But, they are the best trained athletes. They spend hours, and hours, and hours training. Their secret is dedication to a goal which they have set before themselves.” –**Freddie Gage**

Contrary to popular **myth**, going to church regularly and *tithing* does not make one a committed Christian. Barna research that only 10% of American Christians are committed believers proves that—even my own childhood testimony *corroborates*—one can be at church all the time and still be a **carnal** Christian.

1. Discipleship Requirements

“Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for My sake shall find it. For what will a man be profited, if he gains the whole world, and forfeits his soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and WILL THEN RECOMPENSE EVERY MAN ACCORDING TO HIS DEEDS.” (Mt. 16:24-27)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal.” (Jn. 12:24-25)

“And as they were going along the road, someone said to Him, ‘I will follow You wherever You go.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.’ And He said to another, ‘Follow Me.’ But he said, ‘Permit me first to go and bury my father.’ But He said to him, ‘Allow the dead to bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim everywhere the kingdom of God.’ And another also said, ‘I will follow You, Lord; but first permit me to say good-bye to those at home.’ But Jesus said to him, ‘No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.’” (Lk. 9:57-62)

“Jesus said, “Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the Gospel’s sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life.” (Mk. 10:29-30)

“That we ought to give ourselves to God with regard to things both temporal and spiritual, and seek our satisfaction only in the fulfilling His will, whether he lead us by suffering, or by consolation, for all would be equal to a soul truly resigned. Prayer is nothing else but a sense of God’s presence.” –**Brother Lawrence**

“The Bible parable says that while men slept, the enemy sowed tares among the wheat. A boy who rises at 4:30 to deliver papers is considered a go-getter, but to urge our young people to rise at 5:30 to pray is considered fanaticism. We must once again wear the harness of discipline. There is no other way.” –**Leonard Ravenhill**

2. The Cost of Commitment

“If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and take counsel whether he is strong enough with ten thousand men to encounter the one coming against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks terms of peace. So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions.” (**Lk. 14:26-33**)

“For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” (**I Cor. 3:11**)

“He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.” (**Mt. 12:30**)

“The Christian ideal has not been found tried and found wanting, it has been found difficult and left untried.” –**GK Chesterton**

“If you have not chosen the Kingdom of God first, it will in the end make no difference what you have chosen instead.” –**William Law**

“Until you have given up yourself to Him you will not have a real self.”..
–**C.S. Lewis**

3. Spiritual Reproduction (Evangelism)

“And He said[^] to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’” (**Mt. 4:19**)

“Everyone therefore who shall confess Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever shall deny Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.” (**Mt. 10:32-33**)

4. Humble, Sincere Obedience

“And why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?” (**Lk. 6:46**)

“His mother said to the servants, “Whatever He says to you, do it.” (Jn. 2:5)

“saying, ‘Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done.’” (Lk. 22:42)

“So you too, when you do all the things which are commanded you, say, ‘We are unworthy slaves; we have done only that which we ought to have done.’” (Lk. 17:10)

“Having confidence in your obedience, I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say.” (Phm. 1:21)

“Nothing is really lost by a life of sacrifice; everything is lost by failure to obey God's call.” –**Henry P. Liddon**

5. Avoid Luke-Warmness

“I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot; I would that you were cold or hot. So because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of My mouth. Because you say, ‘I am rich, and have become wealthy, and have need of nothing,’ and you do not know that you are wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked, I advise you to buy from Me gold refined by fire, that you may become rich, and white garments, that you may clothe yourself, and that the shame of your nakedness may not be revealed; and eye salve to anoint your eyes, that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline; be zealous therefore, and repent.” (Rev. 3:15-19)

“Therefore, salt is good; but if even salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?” (Lk. 14:34)

“But I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lamp stand out of its place—unless you repent. (Rev. 2:4-5)

“The word ‘Enthusiasm’ is derived from two Greek words: ‘en’ meaning in and ‘theos’ meaning God. Enthusiasm is literally ‘God in us.’ The enthusiastic man is one who speaks as if he were possessed by God. This quality is the most effective, the most important, factor in getting things done.

The largest advertiser of any single product in the world—Wrigley Chewing Gum—came to Chicago with less than fifty dollars in his pocket. Wrigley now sells thirty million dollars’ worth of his chewing gum every year, and on the wall of his private office hang the framed words of Emerson: ‘Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.’” –**Dale Carnegie**

“Alexander McLaren wrote: ‘It was not Erasmus, the polished, learned, scintillating intellect of his time, who made Germany over; it was rough, rugged Martin Luther with a conviction and compassion as deep as life.’ It is the day of Erasmus again. God give us a Luther!” –**Paul Tan**

6. Our Exciting Inheritance/Salvation Gift

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the

working of the strength of His might” (Eph. 1:18-19)

“but just as it is written, ‘THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND WHICH HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM.’” (I Cor. 2:9)

“For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name, that He would grant you; According to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.” (Eph. 3:14-19)

“When He asks for and receives our all, he gives in return that which is above price—His own presence. The price is not great when compared with what He gives in return; it is our blindness and our own unwillingness to yield that make it seem great.” —**Rosalind Goforth**

7. Stay Awake and Alert

‘Wake up, and strengthen the things that remain, which were about to die; for I have not found your deeds completed in the sight of My God.’ (Rev. 3:2)

“For this reason it says, ‘Awake, sleeper, And arise from the dead, And Christ will shine on you.’” (Eph. 5:14)

(“Behold, I am coming like a thief. Blessed is the one who stays awake and keeps his garments, lest he walk about naked and men see his shame.”) (Rev. 16:15)

8. Some Sober Warnings

“Therefore, let us fear lest, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard.” (Heb. 4:1-2)

“Take care, brethren, lest there should be in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from the living God.” (Heb. 3:12)

“It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” (Heb. 10:31)

“For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and THE FURY OF A FIRE WHICH WILL CONSUME THE ADVERSARIES.” (Heb. 10:26-27)

“But we are not of those who shrink back to destruction, but of those who have faith to the preserving of the soul.” (Heb. 10:39)

“Holiness has never been the driving force of the majority. It is, however, mandatory for anyone who wants to enter the kingdom.” —**Elisabeth Elliot**

9. Knowing that Christ is in You; Proving/Demonstrating Your Calling

“Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this

about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you—unless indeed you fail the test?” (II Cor. 13:5)

“to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27)

“Therefore, brethren, be all the more diligent to make certain about His calling and choosing you; for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble; for in this way the entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ will be abundantly supplied to you.” (II Pet. 1:10-11)

10. Following/Walking with Christ

“As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,” (Col. 2:6)

“Even so consider yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus. Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body that you should obey its lusts, and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?” (Rom. 6:11-12, 16, 18)

“Jesus tapped me on the shoulder and said, Bob, why are you resisting me? I said, I'm not resisting you! He said, You 'gonna follow me? I said, I've never thought about that before! He said, When you're not following me, you're resisting me.” —**Bob Dylan**

11. Sin's Vain Emptiness and Our Bond-Slave Obligation

“So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—” (Rom. 8:12)

“For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.” (Rom. 6:20-21)

“The famous preacher Charles Spurgeon said that whenever he looked at the portrait of Henry Martyn, these words seemed to ring in his heart: “Don't trifle!”

The reason the minister felt this way is easy to understand. Martyn had graduated from Cambridge with honors in both mathematics and the classics, and had the prospect of a brilliant academic career. But he chose to serve the Lord in India. He was almost 25 when he arrived there, and at the age of 31 he died. Yet in those 6 years he translated the New Testament into three languages—Hindustani, Arabic, and Persian.” —**Paul Tan**

12. Faith's Relation to Sanctification/Christian Works

“What use is it, my brethren, if a man says he has faith, but he has no works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is without clothing and in need of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and be filled,” and yet you do not give them what is necessary for their body, what use is that? Even so faith, if it has no works, is dead, being by itself. But someone may well say, “You have faith, and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that

faith without works is useless?” **(Jas. 2:14-20)**

“But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.”
(Jas. 1:22)

“For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”
(Eph. 2:8-10)

“The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.” **(Lk. 6:45)**

“Preaching is to much avail, but practice is far more effective. A godly life is the strongest argument you can offer the skeptic.” –**Hosea Ballou**

“One can believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ and feel no personal loyalty to Him at all—indeed, pay no attention whatever to His commandments and His will for one's life.” –**Catherine Marshall**

13. Faith's Relation to Words

“for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.” **(Rom. 10:10)**

“But having the same spirit of faith; According to what is written, “I BELIEVED, THEREFORE I SPOKE,” we also believe, therefore also we speak;” **(II Cor. 4:13)**

“For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.” **(Heb. 2:1)**

14. Sowing and Reaping

“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.” **(Gal. 6:7-8)**

“For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.” **(Rom. 8:5-8)**

15. Heaven is Watching You—Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

“Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also lay aside every encumbrance, and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” **(Heb. 12:1-2)**

“No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier.” **(II Tim. 2:4)**

16. Grow and Mature Spiritually

“Therefore, putting aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babes, long for the pure milk of the word, that by it you may grow in respect to salvation,” **(I Pet. 2:1-2)**

“but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.” **(II Pet. 3:18)**

“For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for someone to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food. For everyone who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil. Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,” **(Heb. 5:12-6:1)**

“And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to babes in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able, for you are still fleshly. For since there is jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly, and are you not walking like mere men?” **(I Cor. 3:1-3)**

“Maturity doesn't come with age; it comes with acceptance of responsibility.” –**Ed Cole**

“A vital requirement for growth is heat. A tree may be flooded with light but unless the temperature is about 40 degrees Fahrenheit, there will be little growth.

When trees grow at very high altitudes on mountains or on the fringe of the true Arctic zones they are dwarfed and stunted by growth... But the cedars of Lebanon have the benefit of being native to a warm and sunny climate. They enjoy a long growing season during which the weather is balmy and conducive to growth most of the year.

There are innumerable Christians with stunted, dwarfed characters like a tree at timberline. They may have been exposed to a tremendous amount of light all their lives but there has been virtually no growth. In fact, some have literally stood still, unmoving and unchanged, from the time of their beginning a new life in Christ.

However, when action and zeal are added to the light of God's revelation, the tiniest timber can grow up to fashion the mightiest temple for the Most High.” –**Paul Tan**

17. Obedience and Your Identity (i.e., Who You Are) in Christ

“As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, ‘YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY.’” **(I Pet. 1:14-16)**

“‘I have found,’ David Livingstone early wrote in his diary, ‘that I have no unusual endowments of intellect, but I this day resolved that I would be an uncommon Christian.’” –**David Livingstone**

18. Put off Sins and Put on Christ-Likeness (i.e., the New Self)

“But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts.”
(Rom. 13:14)

“But you did not learn Christ in this way, if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, just as truth is in Jesus, that, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.” **(Eph. 4:20-24)**

“Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them. But now you also, put them all aside: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive speech from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its evil practices, and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.” **(Col. 3:5-10)**

“Many Christians have what we might call a "cultural holiness". They adapt to the character and behavior pattern of Christians around them. As the Christian culture around them is more or less holy, so these Christians are more or less holy. But God has not called us to be like those around us. He has called us to be like himself. Holiness is nothing less than conformity to the character of God.” –**Jerry Bridges**

“Christianity does not consist in any partial amendment of our lives, any particular moral virtues, but in an entire change of our natural temper, a life wholly devoted to God. –**William Law**

19. Bear Fruit by Abiding in Christ

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it, that it may bear more fruit. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you.” **(Jn. 15:1-2, 4, 7)**

“And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.” **(I Jn. 2:28)**

20. Love God with all You Are/Keep His Commandments by Faith

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.” **(Jn. 14:15)**

‘AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.’ **(Mk. 12:30)**

“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.” **(I Jn. 5:3)**

“And such confidence we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are adequate in

ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, who also made us adequate as servants of a new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.” (II Cor. 3:4-6)

21. Sacrifice Your Own Passing Pleasures and Do God’s Will

“I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice; Acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” (Rom. 12:1-2)

“Jesus said[^] to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.’” (Jn. 4:34)

“And after He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, ‘I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will.’ For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, fell asleep, and was laid among his fathers, and underwent decay;” (Ac. 13:22, 36)

“And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.” (I Jn. 2:17)

“If you teach men that God is the source of their pleasure and sin is the source of their pain, they will run to God and away from sin.”

–Jacquelyn K. Heasley

22. Working Together with God/Disciplining Yourself for Godliness

“So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” (Phil. 2:12-13)

“And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain—for He says, ‘AT THE ACCEPTABLE TIME I LISTENED TO YOU, AND ON THE DAY OF SALVATION I HELPED YOU’; behold, now is ‘THE ACCEPTABLE TIME,’ behold, now is ‘THE DAY OF SALVATION’” (II Cor. 6:1-2)

“But have nothing to do with worldly fables fit only for old women. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness; for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness is profitable for all things, since it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come.” (I Tim. 4:7-8)

“For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 1:6)

“Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass.” (I Th. 5:24)

“One person with a belief is equal to a force of 99 who only have interest.” –Paul Tan

23. Christ Living His Life Through You

“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered

Himself up for me.” (Gal. 2:20)

“according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I shall not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ shall even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (Phil. 1:20-21)

“Wesley was once asked how he got the crowds. He replied, ‘I set myself on fire, and the people come to see me burn.’”

24. Consider Yourself Dead to Your Own Life

“But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the Gospel of the grace of God.” (Ac. 20:24)

“More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish in order that I may gain Christ, and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith,” (Phil. 3:8-9)

“The decision to grow always involves a choice between risk and comfort. This means that to be a follower of Jesus you must renounce comfort as the ultimate value of your life. –John Ortberg

25. Live for God and Walk in Newness of Life

“For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life that He lives, He lives to God.” (Rom. 6:10)

“Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, in order that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life.” (Rom. 6:4)

“and He died for all, that they who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.” (II Cor. 5:15)

“For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself; for if we live, we live for the Lord, or if we die, we die for the Lord; therefore whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living.” (Rom. 14:7-9)

“He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.” (Col. 1:18)

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own?” (I Cor. 6:19)

“Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.” (II Cor. 5:17)

26. Be Prompted by Prophecy

“But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned

up. Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, on account of which the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat!” (II Pet. 3:10-12)

“But this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none; and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess; and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the form of this world is passing away.” (I Cor. 7:29-31)

27. Heavenly Rewards and Blessings, and Judgment of Deeds

Perspective:



(Government housing in Heaven)

Don't live in an outhouse all your (eternal) life!

“Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you, for on Him the Father, even God, has set His seal.” (Jn. 6:27)

“knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.” (Eph. 6:8)

“If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.” (Jn. 13:17)

“Blessed are those slaves whom the master shall find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them.” (Lk. 12:37)

“His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful slave; you were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’” (Mt. 25:23)

“Watch yourselves, that you might not lose what we have accomplished, but that you may receive a full reward.” (II Jn. 1:8)

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body; According to what he has done, whether good or bad.” (II Cor. 5:10)

“And the nations were enraged, and Thy wrath came, and the time came for the dead to be judged, and the time to give their reward to Thy bond-servants the prophets and to the saints and to those who fear Thy name, the small and the great, and to destroy those who destroy the earth.” (Rev. 11:18)

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done.” (Rev. 22:12)

28. Simple, Undistracted Devotion/Commitment

“And this I say for your own benefit; not to put a restraint upon you, but to promote what is seemly, and to secure undistracted devotion to the Lord.” **(I Cor. 7:35)**

“But I am afraid, lest as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.” **(II Cor. 11:3)**

“yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.” **(I Cor. 8:6)**

“but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;” **(I Pet. 3:15)**

29. Spiritual Accountability and Sin’s Error

“For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps there may be strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances;” **(II Cor. 12:20)**

“For to this end also I wrote that I might put you to the test, whether you are obedient in all things.” **(II Cor. 2:9)**

“My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and will cover a multitude of sins.” **(Jas. 5:19-20)**

“I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, in order that you might not suffer loss in anything through us.” **(II Cor. 7:9)**

30. God on your Side/God as Friend (vs. Enemy)

“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?” **(Rom. 8:31)**

“FOR THE EYES OF THE LORD ARE UPON THE RIGHTEOUS, AND HIS EARS ATTEND TO THEIR PRAYER, BUT THE FACE OF THE LORD IS AGAINST THOSE WHO DO EVIL.” **(I Pet. 3:12)**

31. Union with Christ–Faithful Fidelity

“You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you think that the Scripture speaks to no purpose: ‘He jealously desires the Spirit which He has made to dwell in us?’” **(Jas. 4:4-5)**

“For I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy; for I betrothed you to one husband, that to Christ I might present you as a pure virgin.” **(II Cor. 11:2)**

“But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.” **(I Cor. 6:17)**

32. Eternal vs. Temporal Mindedness

“Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.”

(I Jn. 2:15-17)

“For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things. For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;” **(Phil. 3:18-20)**

“All these died in faith, without receiving the promises, but having seen them and having welcomed them from a distance, and having confessed that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For those who say such things make it clear that they are seeking a country of their own. But as it is, they desire a better country, that is a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He has prepared a city for them.” **(Heb. 11:13-14, 16)**

“If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God.” **(Col. 3:1-3)**

33. Gratitude, Thankfulness and Awe over Our Inheritance

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,” **(I Pet. 1:3-4)**

“Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe;” **(Heb. 12:28)**

34. Avoid Idols and “Aspire Higher” (i.e., Priorities and Values)

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” **(Mt. 6:19-21)**

“Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life’s span? And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of little faith? Do not be anxious then, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘With what shall we clothe ourselves?’ For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.” **(Mt. 6:26-33)**

“For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall be content. But those who want to get rich fall

into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.”

(I Tim. 6:7-10)

“No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other, or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” **(Lk. 16:13)**

“Let no one imagine that he will lose anything of human dignity by this voluntary sell-out of his all to his God. He does not by this degrade himself as a man; rather he finds his right place of high honor as one made in the image of his Creator. His deep disgrace lay in his moral derangement, his unnatural usurpation of the place of God. His honor will be proved by restoring again that stolen throne. In exalting God over all, he finds his own highest honor upheld.” –**A.W. Tozer**

35. Suffering Rather Than Sinning

“Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. And in all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you; but they shall give account to Him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.” **(I Pet. 4:1-5)**

“If the dead are not raised, LET US EAT AND DRINK, FOR TOMORROW WE DIE. Do not be deceived: ‘Bad company corrupts good morals.’ Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.” **(I Cor. 15:32c-34)**

“By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter; choosing rather to endure ill-treatment with the people of God, than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin;” **(Heb. 11:24-25)**

“If thou art willing to suffer no adversity, how wilt thou be the friend of Christ? –**Thomas à Kempis**

36. Run/Live Your Life with a Purpose

“Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but only one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may win. And everyone who competes in the games exercises self-control in all things. They then do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Therefore I run in such a way, as not without aim; I box in such a way, as not beating the air;” **(I Cor. 9:24-26)**

“Not that I have already obtained it, or have already become perfect, but I press on in order that I may lay hold of that for which also I was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of it yet; but one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and reaching forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” **(Phil. 3:12-14)**

“but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the head, even Christ,” **(Eph. 4:15)**

“Knowing that we are fulfilling God's purpose is the only thing that really gives rest to the restless human heart.” –**Chuck Colson**

37. Be Useful vs. Useless and Futile

“This I say therefore, and affirm together with the Lord, that you walk no longer just as the Gentiles also walk, in the futility of their mind, being darkened in their understanding; Excluded from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;” **(Eph. 4:17-18)**

“Therefore, if a man cleanses himself from these things, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified, useful to the Master, prepared for every good work.” **(II Tim. 2:21)**

“Nothing disciplines the inordinate desires of the flesh like service, and nothing transforms the desires of the flesh like serving in hiddenness. The flesh whines against service but it screams against hidden service. It strains and pulls for honor and recognition.” –**Richard Foster**

38. Walk in a Worthy Manner and Please the Lord

“For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;” **(Col. 1:9-10)**

“for you were formerly darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness and righteousness and truth), trying to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.” **(Eph. 5:8-10)**

“And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.” **(Heb. 11:6)**

“Therefore also we have as our ambition, whether at home or absent, to be pleasing to Him.” **(II Cor. 5:9)**

“For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;” **(Col. 1:9-10)**

“For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, ‘THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED THEE FELL UPON ME.’” **(Rom. 15:13)**

“There is no peace in the border lands. The halfway Christian is a torment to himself and of no benefit to others.” –**Earnest Worker**

39. Revere and Fear the Lord

“And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who

is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Mt. 10:28)

“for our God is a consuming fire.” (Heb. 12:29)

“And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man’s work, conduct yourselves in fear during the time of your stay upon earth; knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.” (I Pet. 1:17-19)

“Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men, but we are made manifest to God; and I hope that we are made manifest also in your consciences.” (II Cor. 5:11)

“AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.” (Lk. 1:50)

“Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.” (II Cor. 7:1)

40. Persevere in Doing Good—Be Steadfast to the End

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.” (II Tim. 4:7-8)

“awaiting eagerly the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (I Cor. 1:7b-8)

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your toil is not in vain in the Lord.” (I Cor. 15:58).

ONE DISCLAIMER:

Though rarely *if ever* a problem in America—the opposite usually being the case—there are limits/boundaries to how seriously you should focus on ethics:

“Do not be excessively righteous, and do not be overly wise. Why should you ruin yourself? Do not be excessively wicked, and do not be a fool. Why should you die before your time?” (Ecc. 7:16-17)

“If you are walking with Jesus, in the Spirit, you need not fear going too far. No believer has gone as far as God wants him to go.” –A.A. Allen

A religious radical is only definable by behavior. Christians are supposed to be zealous for God, but if they don’t fit the norm—just tepid or culturally normal—they often get labeled as ‘religious nuts.’ Heaven will ultimately prove which people were nut cases and which were just in the spiritual minority, loving and serving the Lord with reckless abandon, or as the Bible calls it—“with all your heart,” unconcerned whether the sheep herd was following or merely following someone else off the proverbial cliff.

As my best friend in College used to say:

“An ‘extremist’ is usually someone who is more committed to Christ than you are.”

–Rev. Tom Eckman

REMEMBER:

Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life. (**Pv. 4:23**)

Or, as has been said,

“Watch your thoughts, for they become words.
Watch your words, for they become actions.
Watch your actions, for they become habits.
Watch your habits, for they become character.
Watch your character, for it becomes your destiny.”

BIBLICAL MOTIVATION

(non-exhaustive, carrot & stick examples)

Accountability (Rom. 14:10-12). Avoiding false theology (Gal. 5:3). Church’s goals (Heb. 10:24; Tit. 3:8). Commanded (Lk. 17:10). Compelled (Ac. 4:20). Debt (Phm. 1:19). Duty (I Cor. 7:3, marriage context). Encouraged (Heb. 3:13). Exhortation (Heb. 10:36). Fairness (II Cor. 8:13, 7:2). Fear of punishment (Col. 3:6; Ac. 17:31; II Cor. 13:10). Free willed (Phm. 1:14). Godly jealousy (Rom. 10:19). Hope (I Pet. 1:6; Rom. 15:4). Limited time (I Pet. 4:7). Love (the morally greatest motive—I Cor. 4:14). Must/Have to (Conviction)—(Lk. 4:43). Not to disappoint (Rom. 10:11). Not to lose rewards (Rev. 3:11). Obedience (Ac. 26:19). Participation with God (I Cor. 9:23). Perspective (Jas. 5:3). Pity (Phm. 1:9). Please parents (Eph. 6:1, family context). Pride (vs. lose face)—(I Cor. 6:7; II Cor. 9:2). Proud in eternity (I Th. 2:19). Reason (Jas. 3:17). Relationship leveraging (Phm. 1:17). Reproof (Tit. 2:15). Reputation (I Tim. 3:13). Rewards (perhaps the biblically most referenced—Heb. 11:6; II Jn. 1:8). Right thing to do (Phil. 1:7; I Cor. 7:35). Role modeling (I Th. 2:7, 11; Heb. 11:26; Lk. 9:56). Thankfulness (I Th. 5:9). Unashamed (Rom. 6:21). Witnesses watching (Heb. 12:1). Your (new) nature (I Th. 5:7; Eph. 5:1).

OTHER (Etc.)—Read the Bible for yourself and come up with *many* more!

Personal Testimony

In college, having been saved since age 8, after having spent months engaged in the habit of having a daily Quiet Time (after a gentleman nagged me for over a month), I once found a girlfriend cheating on me. God used that devastation to cause me to totally surrender my life to Him, as I prayed, “Lord, I’m willing to do **WHATEVER, WHEREVER,**” as I cried in my lonely dorm room. That very night it was so obvious to me He empowered me with His Spirit, and two weeks later I felt called into the Gospel ministry. I would never wish any crises on anyone, but if that’s what it takes to get you fully committed to God, it’s totally worth going through any commitment-generating bad experience!

20. The “Upsides” & Downsides of Being a Carnal Christian

Why do so many American Christians ‘ride the fence’ between God and the world?

If your heart takes more pleasure in reading novels, or watching TV, or going to the movies, or talking to friends, rather than just sitting alone with God and embracing Him, sharing His cares and His burdens, weeping and rejoicing with Him, then how are you going to handle forever and ever in His presence?... You'd be bored to tears in heaven, if you're not ecstatic about God now!" –**Keith Green**

To live carnally:

1. YOU CAN SIN MORE, though those activities are merely “*passing pleasures*” (**Heb. 11:25**), will be **judged**, qualify you to incur a greater risk of *premature death* as punishment.
2. YOU CAN BE MORE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE, and enjoy being a sheep—better, a **goat**—and not have to risk *suffering* or *ridicule* for living as a believer rather than the hypocrite which that lifestyle produces.
3. YOU CAN LOSE OR HAVE NO REWARDS IN HEAVEN—wait, I must be confused, that’s not a positive; **sorry**.
4. YOU CAN HAVE THE ‘BEST OF BOTH WORLDS’ and ‘your cake and eat it too,’ with all the “advantages” of getting the **devil more involved in your life**, having God opposed to you (experientially), being *wishy-washy* and double-mindedly unstable, and own the eternal moniker of one who was **not pleasing** to God. (Jas. 4:6, 1:5-8; II Cor. 5:9, etc.)
5. YOU CAN REMAIN JUST AS YOU (and millions of other Christians) ARE, so **no effort** or change will have to occur, which also allows you to **continue pursuing riches more than** God, with all the blessings those assets provide, **TEMPORARILY**. (Mt. 6:24)
6. YOU CAN STILL GO TO CHURCH, dress and act holy and ignore the preached words because the music is so uplifting and the people are nice to you for those brief minutes! No need for deep relationships, biblical fellowship, or, God forbid, **real ministry** to be done by **YOU**.
7. Perhaps best of all, NONE OF YOUR FRIENDS WILL KNOW—especially the non-believers whom you never tell about Jesus. Leave those fanaticisms to extremists and the professionals—your cushy, comfy life is *just alright with you...* till you face God in judgment. Who cares? America is myopic (i.e., short-term oriented) anyway, and even though we plan for our retirements, who needs to extrapolate **BEYOND** those hoped-for ‘*golden years?*’

Enough sarcasm... You see from these words that the **only reason** so many Christians are carnal is either ignorance or willful rebellion—both of which result in a **life wasted**, displeasing to God, and subject not to blessings but the **disciplining** of the Lord.

IF YOU WANT REASONS TO STOP LIVING AS A “NOMINAL” CHRISTIAN, please go to the

“Why Be Totally Committed to Jesus Christ” section.

I think you’ll *enjoy* those pages more!

Consequences For Carnality

A Christian who habitually lives only for himself, or regularly lives sinfully, does NOT go unpunished. In fact, if their life looks like they're getting away with it, they probably are not saved (Heb. 12:8). What consequences does God's Word teach for believers who live just like everyone else?

- Displeasing the Father and immediate loss of fellowship and the Spirit's power. (Heb. 11:6; I Jn. 1:6-10)
- Shame (or sorrow), at least temporarily, in heaven. (I Jn. 2:28-29)
- Loss of rewards in heaven. (I Cor. 3:10-15, etc.)
- Loss of blessings in this life.
- More or severer trials than would otherwise be the case. (Heb. 12:1-11)
- Lack of answered prayers. (Ps. 66:18; Mt. 6:14-15)
- A bad reputation among men, thus potentially giving Christ a bad name.
- Unnecessary incidences of sickness. (I Cor. 12:29-30)
- Possible premature physical death. (I Cor. 12:29-30)

From the above (non-exhaustive) list you can see that from milder to severe consequences, **God does not take lightly** the sinful behavior of His redeemed people (I Pet. 1:15-16; II Tim. 2:19).

P.S.: The belief that a Christian is to be good (or "nice"), go to church and "tithe" (i.e., 'Churchianity') is **OFTEN** responsible for CHRISTIAN CARNALITY, for it doesn't involve **personal Bible ingestion, prayer, or faith-walking DAILY**, by definition (which are the most effective and important ways to build an intimate relationship with God and Christ). Checking off these three boxes may *salve our consciences*, but does little good toward MATURING as a Christian (as there is not even proof we remember sermons' contents *three hours later*—much less **meditate** on any Bible verses expounded, and **applying** them).

21. Quiet Time

Why Have a Quiet Time?

Because it is important for every Christian to *daily* walk with and obey God, it is *essential* that we meet with Him daily in a time of commitment and worship, commonly referred to as a “*Quiet Time*.” No one can doubt our Lord walked with and knew God, as evidenced both by His praying (Mt. 14:23; Lk. 6:12) and knowledge of Scripture (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10, 22:31-32, etc.). The believer can *hardly* expect to be vitally, spiritually sustained without proper *daily nourishment*. (Jn. 4:34; I Pet. 2:1-2; I Tim. 4:6; Jn. 6:68)

Scripture indicates that Christ often began His days in prayer, and we see many instances of His living and ending His days with God. **Spending time with Him is the best way Christians can begin our days**, and mornings appear to be preferred, unless one *cannot* meet with God until later. (Ps. 5:3, 88:13).

All men have the same number of hours in a day, so it is not that we do not have the time, but that we do not *take* or *make* the time to get to **know God**. Nothing is more important for a believer, and **one claiming to be “too busy”** for a Quiet Time is in fact **busier than God wants him to be**; otherwise stated: **SINFULLY OVER-BUSY**, and **not prioritizing God**. (Eph. 5:16; I Cor. 7:29-31).

“I have so much to do that I spend several hours in prayer before I am able to do it.”—**John Wesley**

“To become Christ-like is the only thing in the whole world worth caring for, the thing before which every ambition of man is folly and all lower achievement vain.” —**Henry Drummond**

We are not SPIRITUAL CAMELS who can be nourished and fed only one to two hours a week on the weekend, then function all week without meeting with God. To grow, we must *daily* meet with Him, spending approximately half the time in prayer and half meditating on **God’s word**. In my and many others’ opinion, a “Quality Time” or “Quiet Time” is **the KEY** to a *victorious Christian life*—at least it’s the *foundation*. Other principles exist which help ensure spiritual success, but I have found that **great joy** comes once you establish Bible reading and prayer as an enjoyable lifestyle—not just a *discipline* you are *supposed* to do. That experience should be yours, through prayer and the provision of God’s Spirit, as you repeatedly *practice* and become exposed to these two activities until the *habit* is formed.

“You may pray for an hour and still not pray. You may meet God for a moment and then be in touch with Him all day.” —**Fredrik Wisloff**

“Prayer is not so much an act as it is an attitude—an attitude of dependency, dependency upon God.” —**Arthur W. Pink**

“My prayers seem to be more of an attitude than anything else. I indulge in no lip service, but ask the great God silently, daily, and often many times a day, to permit me to speak to Him. I ask Him to give me the wisdom, understanding and bodily strength to do His will. Hence, I am asking and receiving all the time.” —**Dr. George Washington Carver**

Mere skim reading of the Bible's contents, without meditation and memorization is almost a *waste of time* for changing one's life and behavior. The word says, "Thy word I have laid on my heart that I might not sin against Thee" (Ps. 119:11) and the one who looks *intently* at the word (as opposed to looking at it as in a mirror—leaving and forgetting what you learned) will be **blest**. (Jas. 1:22-25) From the original languages, the word picture of meditation is that of a cow burping up its cud, then **re-eating it**, and repeating this process over and over (i.e., **regurgitation**; Ps. 1:1-3), and the saying is true, 'you are what you eat,' or better, "as a man thinks in his heart, so is he." (Pv. 23:7). *Garbage in—garbage out*, and vice-versa.

"Reading the Bible without meditating on it is like trying to eat without swallowing." —**Anonymous**

The key is to meet God through the Bible and prayer, and this is no mere exercise in fulfilling *intellectual curiosity*, nor rote, meaningless *recitation* of prayers—you are **speaking to the living God**—your Lord and Savior—and it is hoped that you will learn to let Him speak to you, personally (through His "*still small voice*," as your *spiritual senses* are trained in the good Word of God).

"The Bible is not an end in itself, but a means to bring men to an intimate and satisfying knowledge of God, that they may enter into Him, that they may delight in His Presence, may taste and know the inner sweetness of the very God Himself in the core and center of their hearts." —**A. W. Tozer**

"The longer you read the Bible, the more you will like it; it will grow sweeter and sweeter; and the more you get into the spirit of it, the more you will get into the spirit of Christ. —**Romaine**

A "Quiet Time" consists of both an upward and a downward aspect—praying is *our* speaking to God (Ex.: an upward viewpoint), and meditating on God's Word is *His* way to speak to us (Ex.: a downward viewpoint). **It can take as little as 10-15 minutes a day**, and its rewards and blessings *far outweigh* any sacrifice to our earthly schedules.

It is recommended that you begin your private worship meetings by praying Ps. 119:17, trusting God to lead you as to *which verses* (among the 5-15 you will read) He is dealing with/speaking to you about, and His *conviction* as to which to memorize and **apply**. **THIS is** grace living!

The following is a *simple format* suggested for you to get into the Quiet Time **practice**. Research indicates that a habit is best established after **thirty consistent days** of execution. Because God wants His Bride, the Church, to be mature, holy, loving and evangelistic, I pray that *each one of you* consistently takes on the **lifelong joy** of **daily meeting with God**. Your rewards in **heaven** will be great, as with your blessings down here.

QUIET TIME FORMAT

A. FACETS OF PRAYER

- 1) **Focus**—Address God by name, and humble yourself before Him. Be still and know that He is God. (Ps. 46:10)
- 2) **Praise and Adoration**—VERBALLY attribute worth to God. Tell Him how wonderful He is based on traits/attributes of His character. *Singing* can be a form of *praise*.
- 3) **Thanksgiving**—Thanking God for all His blessings, in His word and in your life.

- 4) **Confession**—Admitting your sins and asking that they be forgiven. (I Jn. 1:9)
- 5) **Intercession**—Prayer requests made for others (Bible-based, claiming *promises*).
- 6) **Supplication**—Prayer requests made for yourself (based on Bible *promises*).

It is helpful to start a **Prayer Diary** to record prayer requests, **answers** and dates, with a *brief description* of how God answered them.

“Our sanctification does not depend upon changing our works, but in doing that for God’s sake which we commonly do for our own. The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer. Prayer is nothing else but a sense of the presence of God.”

—**Brother Lawrence**

“Be sure you look to your secret duty; keep that up whatever you do. The soul cannot prosper in the neglect of it. Apostasy generally begins at the closet door. Be much in secret fellowship with God. It is secret trading that enriches the Christian.

Pray alone. Let prayer be the key of the morning and the bolt at night. The best way to fight against sin is to fight it on our knees.”

—**Philip Henry**

“We hear it said that a man will suffer in his life if he does not pray; I question it. What will suffer is the life of the Son of God within him, which is nourished not by food but by prayer...Prayer is the way the life of God is nourished.” —**Oswald Chambers**

B. **FACETS OF BIBLE STUDY & MEDITATION**

“Understanding is the reward of obedience. Obedience is the key to every door.” —**George MacDonald**

“This book will keep you from sin, or sin will keep you from this book.” —**Anonymous**

“A Bible that's falling apart usually belongs to somebody who isn't.” —**Anonymous**

In a notebook, *do* and *record* the results of the following steps:

- 1) **Read & Re-Read**—Read the text through, then read it again slowly, thinking of the meaning of *significant* words. Emphasize certain and different words each time you re-read. Usually you should choose between three and ten verses at a time, so as to not *bite off more* than time and *serious attention* will allow. (Ps. 119:18 sample prayer)
- 2) **Paraphrase & Title**—Summarize in your own words what you read, and create a descriptive heading for the given passages to help you *remember* their contents later on.
- 3) **Cross-Reference(s)**—Make a note of any Bible verses you are familiar with which have a similar subject or *broaden* what you learned. Remember that information which comes immediately before and after what you read gives “context” or perspective to the verses you are seeking to interpret.
- 4) **Memory Verse(s)**—Choose **one or two key verses** which were especially *meaningful* to

you, to commit to memory (likely on small flash cards).

- 5) **Ask & Write Questions**—Ask *questions* about the text to broaden your understanding, and note any questions you have, for further *study* or *clarification*. Know that there are many reference books to help you with difficult interpretations.
- 6) **Personal Application**—Perhaps *most importantly*, prayerfully **ask God how He would have you apply what you learned today.**

God cannot be contained in a building, and *doesn't want* to be in your life just 1 to 2 hours a week. And like indulgences of old, you can't outsource your ministry obligation to professionals or your obligation to spend time with God by 'tithing,' so **going to church and 'tithing' are not the whole standard for true Christianity.**

You need no human intermediary between you and God (in Christ), and having pastor sermons be your only weekly ingestion of the Bible is like having a **chaperone on your honeymoon.**

Remember, meditating on (i.e., *thinking deeply about*) God's word is **spiritual food** and sustenance, and is the means by which we come to **know** the revealed **God**. (Josh. 1:8; Jas. 1:25; Ps. 1:1-3). Ultimately, aspire to **daily meditate** on the *Bible* and **daily walk in prayerful attitude** toward God—it's a life-long process!

BIBLE FELLOWSHIP IN-CLASS QUIET TIME ASSIGNMENTS:

Romans 7:15-25	Romans 8:1-11	Ephesians 1:3-14	I John. 1:5-2:2
John 1:1-14	Philippians 2	John 10:7-15	John 15:1-17
John 17:13-26	Ephesians 6:10-18	Philippians 3:7-16	Colossians 1:9-20
James 1:2-15	Psalms 119:129-152	Colossians 3:1-17	Revelation 21:1-27

RECOMMENDED READING SCHEDULE FOR NEW CHRISTIANS

(or Christians new to reading the Bible)

Books:

New Testament

Stage 1A: Ephesians; Philippians, I John; Colossians, John, James; Romans; I Peter, Acts

Stage 2A: Mark; Galatians; I Thessalonians; II Timothy; I Timothy; I Corinthians, II Corinthians, Luke; Titus, Matthew

Stage 3A: II John, III John; Hebrews; II Peter; II Thessalonians; Philemon; Revelation, Jude

Old Testament

Stage 1B: Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Proverbs

Stage 2B: Ruth, Jonah, Job, Isaiah; Genesis; Exodus, Daniel, Ezekiel,

Stage 3B: Joshua, Deuteronomy, Joel, Song of Solomon, Judges, I Kings, II Kings

Stage 4: I Samuel, II Samuel; Ezra, Esther, Jeremiah, Hosea, I Chronicles, II Chronicles, Nehemiah, Micah, Amos, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, Obadiah, Nahum, Habakkuk; Leviticus, Lamentations, Numbers

Chapters:

Stage 1: Eph. 1; Ps. 119; Rom. 8; Pv. 3:5-7; Ps. 1, John 1; Gal. 5:16-26; Rom. 7:7-25; Phil. 3:4-21; I Jn. 1, 5:10-15; I Cor. 13:4-8a; Col. 1; II Pet. 1:3-11; Heb. 11; Eph. 6:10-20; I Cor. 15; Mt 13; Phil. 2:1-13, John 10; II Cor. 5, John Chs. 15, 17; Eph. 4; Rom. 1:15-32, I Cor. 1:18-31, 3:10-16; Jas. 3; I Jn. 3:1-11; Col. 3:1-4:6; Jas. 2:14-26; I Jn. 2:1-17; I Pet. 1:3-2:10; I Tim. 6:6-19; II Tim. 1:6-12; I Tim. 2:1-7, 20-22; Mt. 4:1-11

Stage 2: Ac. 2; II Cor. 8-9; Jn. 3-4; Mt. 26-28; Rom. 1; Mt. 5-7; Rom. 5; Heb. 1, I Cor. 12; Rev. Chs. 19-21, 1, 2-5; Rom. 14; I Cor. 8; Heb. 2; Heb. 12

Verses:

Please note that for verses on specific topics needed for application (Ex.: sin problems unique to the given believer), such listing of verse references can be obtained from Concordances or Topical Bibles. The following are mainly of a more *general* nature. Underlines indicate great initial verses to memorize.

22. Scripture Memory Plan

Key Memory Verses

Stage 1:

Mt. 1:21, 23, **4:**4, 19, **5:**13-14, 16, 39-42, 44, **6:**7,9-13, 19-21, 24, 26, 33, **7:**7-8, 12, **9:**37-38, **10:**16, 37-39, **11:**28-30, **12:**35, 50, **13:**57, **16:**18, **18:**11, 20, **20:**27, **22:**21, 37-39, **24:**14, 27, **26:**41, **28:**18-20;
Mk. 1:8, 11, 17, **4:**14, **6:**11, 34, **9:**23, 40, **10:**27, 29-31, 45, **11:**22-24, **12:**30-31, **13:**31, **14:**36, **16:**6, 15-16;
Lk. 2:10-11, 52, **6:**12, 27-29, 31, 38, **9:**23-25, 58, 60, 62, **11:**13, **12:**15, **14:**11, **15:**7, **17:**10, **18:**29-30, **21:**28;
Jn. 1:1, 12, **2:**5, 3:3, 13-15, 16-17, 27, 36, **4:**14, 24, 34, 35, 36, **5:**24, **6:**27, 35, 63, **7:**38, **8:**12, 31-32, 36, 58, **9:**4, **10:**9-10, 27-29, **12:**24-26, 32, **13:**34-35, **14:**1-3, 6, 13-15, 27, **15:**4-7, 9-13, **16:**13, 24, 33, **17:**3, 17, **20:**30-31, **21:**25;
Ac. 1:8, **2:**21, **4:**12, **5:**29, **6:**4, **10:**38, 43, **12:**24, **16:**31, **20:**20, 24;
Rom. 1:3-4, 16-17, 18, **2:**29, **3:**23-24, 28, **4:**3, **5:**1, 5, 8, **6:**6, 11, 23, **7:**20, **8:**1-2, 5-6, 9, 14-15, 28, 33-34, 37-39, **10:**9-10, 13, 17, **12:**1-2, **13:**14, **14:**7-8; **15:**1-2
I Cor. 1:17-18, 30, **2:**14, **3:**6-8, **4:**5, 20, **6:**11-12, 17, 19-20, **8:**6, **9:**19, **10:**13, 23, **13:**4-8, **15:**1-4, 10, 33, 51-52, 55-58;
II Cor. 1:12, 20, **2:**11, 14, **3:**3-6, **4:**3-4, 18, **5:**7-10, 17, 20-21, **6:**17, **7:**1, **9:**6-7, **10:**3-5;
Gal. 1:10, **2:**16, 20-21, **4:**7, **5:**1, 5-6, 13, 16-18, 22-25, **6:**8-9, 14;
Eph. 1:3-13, **2:**8-10, **3:**12, 20-21, **4:**4-6, 23-24, 30, **5:**18-19, **6:**10-18;
Phil. 1:6, 21, **2:**3-13, **3:**7-11-14, 16, 18-20, **4:**4, 6-8, 13, 19;
Col. 1:14-19, 28-29, **2:**6, 9-10, **3:**1-2, 14-17, 23-24, **4:**2, 5-6;
I Th. 1:5, **2:**4, 7-8, **4:**11, 16-18, **5:**8-9, 16-19, 22-23;
II Th. 1:11-12, **2:**16-17, **3:**3, 13, 16;
I Tim. 1:5, 15-16, **2:**3-4, **4:**8, **6:**6, 10-12;
II Tim. 1:7, 12, **2:**1-4, 15, 22, **3:**16-17, **4:**7-8;
Tit. 1:15, **2:**11-14;
Phm. 1:6, 12, (14, 19), 21
Heb. 1:3, **2:**18, **4:**12, 14-16, **5:**8-9, 14, **7:**26, **9:**14, 27-28, **10:**21-23, 35-38, **11:**1, 6, **12:**1- 5, 6-7,11, **13:**5-8;
Jas.1:2-4, 13-17, 22, 25, **2:**22, **3:**17-18, **4:**3, 7-8;
I Pet. 1:2-5, 22-23, **2:**1-2, 16, **3:**15, **4:**1-2, 7, **5:**6-10;
II Pet. 1:2-4, 20-21, **3:**9, 18;
I Jn. 1:1-2, 5-7, 9, **2:**15-17, 25, 28, **3:**1-2, 16, 22-24, **4:**4, 9-10, **5:**3-4, 11-15;
II Jn. 1:9;
III Jn. 1:2;
Jude 1:24-25;
Rev. 3:20, **5:**12b, **11:**15d, **12:**11, **21:**4, 6;

OLD TESTAMENT: **Gen.** 17:1; **Num.** 6:24-26; **Deut.** 4:29, 10:12-13, 18:22, 29:29; **Josh.** 1:8, 23:11; **Job** 13:15; **Ps.** 1:1-3, 5:3, 8:1-4, 19:1, 27:1, 37:3-6, 42:1-2, 5, 46:10, 73:25-26, 100:3, 119 (entire chapter, especially vv. 9-11), 18, 38; **Pv.** 3:1-2, 5-7, 13-15, 4:23, 9:10, 11:30, 14:12, 15:16, 16:25, 18:24, 23:4-5, 27:17; **Ecc.** 2:24-25, 7:20, 12:13; **Song** 8:7; **Is.** 1:18, 26:3, 40:8, 28-31, 53:1-12, 55:8-9, 11, 59:2, 64:6; **Jer.** 29:11-13, 31:3, 33:3; **Lam.** 3:21-23; **Dan.** 3:18; **Mic.** 6:8; **Hab.** 2:20; **Zech.** 4:6;

BEST MEMORY VERSES OF THE BIBLE

(60 Total)

Assurance of Salvation

(Jn. 3:36) "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

Bible

(Jn. 8:31-32) Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

(Mt. 4:4) But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'

(II Tim. 2:15) Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth.

(II Tim. 3:16-17) All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

(Ps. 119:9-11) How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word. With all my heart I have sought Thee; Do not let me wander from Thy commandments. Thy word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against Thee.

Body

(I Cor. 6:19-20) Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.

Commitment

(Mk. 10:29-30) Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he shall receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age to come, eternal life."

(Lk. 9:23-25) And He was saying to them all, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?"

(Ac. 20:24) But I do not consider my life of any account as dear to myself, in order that I may finish my course, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify solemnly of the gospel of the grace of God.

(Rom. 12:1-2) I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice; Acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

(Gal. 2:20) I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me.

Confession

(I Jn. 1:9) If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Deity of Christ

(Jn. 1:1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Evangelism

(Mt. 4:19) And He said[^] to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.

(Mt. 28:18-20) And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

(Rom. 1:16-17) For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "BUT THE RIGHTEOUS man SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

Faith

(Mk. 11:22-24) And Jesus answered[^] saying to them, "Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it shall be granted him. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they shall be granted you."

(Rom. 10:17) So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

(Heb. 11:1) Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

(Heb. 11:6) And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.

Faith-Walking

(II Cor. 3:5) Not that we are adequate in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God,

Fellowship

(Phm. 1:6) and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ's sake.

Gospel

(Rom. 3:23) for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

(Rom. 5:8) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

(Rom. 6:23) For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

(Isa. 1:18) "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool."

Grace

(Rom. 8:1-2) There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.

Identity

(II Cor. 5:17) Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

Knowing God

(Jn. 17:3) And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.

Love

(Jn. 13:34-34) A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.

(I Cor. 13:48a) Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails;

Meditation

(Josh. 1:8) This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.

Mind-Set

(Col. 3:1-2) If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.

Money

(Lk. 12:15) And He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions."

(I Tim. 6:10) For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and pierced themselves with many a pang.

Needs

(Phil. 4:19) And my God shall supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

Peace

(Jn. 14:27) Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

Power

(Phil. 4:13) I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.

Prayer

(Mt. 7:7-8) Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened.

(Phil. 4:6-8) Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely,

whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.

Priorities

(Mt. 6:19-21) Do not lay up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

(Mt. 6:33) But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.

(Jn. 10:10) The thief comes only to steal, and kill, and destroy; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.

(I Jn. 2:15-17) Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

Promises

(II Cor. 1:20) For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes; wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.

Salvation

(Ac. 4:12) And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.

(Eph. 2:8-10) For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

Sanctification

(I Cor. 15:10) But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

(II Pet. 1:3-4) seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For by these He has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust.

(Pv. 3:5-7) Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.

(Ecc. 12:13) The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.

Spirit-Filled

(Gal. 5:22-25) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness; Gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Temptation

(I Cor. 10:13) No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it.

(Jude 1:24) Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy,

Trials

(Jas. 1:2-4) Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

Victory

(Rom. 8:28) And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

(Rom. 8:37-39) But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Warfare

(II Cor. 10:3-4) For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh, for the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses.

(I Pet. 5:7-9) casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.

Homework Handout:

PRINCIPLES OF BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

1. Unless otherwise made *obvious*, employ the **normal, natural, literal** meaning of words.
2. Use *normal* rules of literary grammar.
3. Let **clear** verses interpret less-clear ones.
4. Let **doctrinal** verses interpret experiences and opinions.
5. Remember ‘there is **one** interpretation but **many** applications.’
6. Use cross-referenced verses and ask questions of verses.
7. Be firm about meanings of clear verses, and more **open** about the more *difficult* ones.
8. Let biblical **revelation** be preeminent to logic, and let **logic** rule feelings about interpretation.
9. Learn from others: Knowing the original languages can be helpful, as with history, culture, audience, book purpose, author, time-line/date, literary genre, book type, etc.
10. Try to distinguish between truths applied eternally from those uniquely “**cultural**.”
11. Major on the **majors** and minor on the minors, and learn to disagree agreeably.
12. Seek the whole counsel and wisdom of God (vs. “*cherry picking*”).
13. Seek more insight from having **applied** Scripture.

14. Keep your subjective leadings *consistent* with objective **interpretation**.

OLD TESTAMENT HIGHLIGHTS

It would be a *disrespectful disservice* to imply that so great (and thick) a portion of the Bible as the Old Testament could be “*summarized*,” and the Bible itself warns against adding to or subtracting from it. (Rev. 22:18-19). The following **event reference** is given primarily to guide those **not raised in church** an overview of several famous events many Christians are familiar with, for use in your own study of them:

Adam and Eve (**Gen. 2:4-25**)

Birthright Sold by Esau (**Gen. 25:19-34**)

Cain and Able (**Gen. 4:1-24**)

Calling of Abraham (**Gen. 17:1-27**)

Christ’s Sufferings Predicted (See: Suffering Servant)

Circumcision of Abraham (See: Calling)

Covenant with Abraham (See: Calling)

Creation (**Gen. 1:1-2:3**)

Daniel in the Lion’s Den (**Dan. 3:1-30**)

David and Bathsheba (**II Sam. 11:1-13**)

David and Goliath (**I Sam. 17:1-58**)

Enoch Never Died (**Gen. 5:21-27**)

Esau Sells His Birthright (See: Birthright)

Fall of Man (**Gen. 3:1-7**)

Flood (See: Noah)

40 Years of Wandering in the Wilderness (**Num. 32:13; Ex. 16:35, etc., See also: Manna**)

400 Years of Egyptian Bondage (**Ex. 5:1-7:7**)

Giving of the Ten Commandments (See: 10 Commandments)

Jericho’s Walls Fall Down (See: Walls)

Job’s Lot in Life (See: Suffering)

Jonah and the Whale (See: Book of Jonah)

Joseph and the Coat of Many Colors (**Gen. 37:1-36**)

Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife (**Gen. 39:1-23**)

Joseph Interprets Dreams (**Gen. 4:1-57**)

Joseph Sold into Slavery (See: Joseph and the Coat)

“Let My People Go” (See: Pharaoh)

Lintels Covered with Blood (See: Passover Angel)

Lot’s Wife Turns to Salt (**Gen. 19:26**)

Methuselah (**Gen. 5:21-27**)

Moses’ Birth (**Ex. 2:1-10**)

Moses Parts the Red Sea (**See: Parting**)
 Moses Slays a Man (**Ex. 2:11-25**)
 Moses' Stammering Tongue (**Ex. 4:1-17**)
 Moses Strikes a Rock (**Ex. 17:5-7**)
 Noah and the Flood (**Gen. 6:1-8:19**)
 Oldest Man in the Bible (**See: Methuselah**)
 Parting of the Red Sea (**Ex. 14:1-22**)
 Passover Angel (**Ex. 12:1-36**)
 Pharaoh of Egypt ("let My people go")—(**Ex. 5:1-7:7**)
 Pillar of Fire Leads by Night (**Ex. 13:17-22**)
 Rahab and the Spies (**Josh. 2:1-24**)
 Remnant Drinking From Their Hands (**Judg. 7:1-25**)
 Ruth's Gleanings (**Ruth 2:1-23**)
 Samson and Delilah (**Judg. 16:1-34**)
 Samson Fights the Philistines with Fox Tails (**Judg. 15:1-8**)
 Satan's Fall (**Isa. 14:12-15**)
 Sodom and Gomorrah (**Gen. 18:1-19:38**)
 Spies in the Land of Milk and Honey (**Num. 13;1-14:45**)
 Suffering of Job (**See: Book of Job**)
 Suffering Servant (**Isa. 53:1-12**)
 Ten Commandments (**Ex. 20:1-26; Deut. 4:44-5:33**)
 Ten Plagues and the Miracles Challenge (**See: 400 Years**)
 Three Men in the Fire with Daniel (**Dan. 3:1-30**)
 Tower of Babel (**Gen. 11:1-9**)
 Walls of Jericho Fall Down (**Josh. 6:1-27**)

Other: God's covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15, 17); Sarah and Hagar (Gen. 16); Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 19); Jacob steals the blessing (Gen. 27); Jacob and Rebekah (Gen. 29); Joseph's brothers identify him (Gen. 42-44); The burning bush (Ex. 3-4); Moses' rod turns into a snake (Ex. 7); Battle of the plagues (Ex. 8+); Manna from heaven (Ex. 16); Sexual prohibitions and abominations (Levit. 18); Passover (Deut. 16); Gideon (Judg. 7); Ruth and Boaz (Ruth 4); King Saul (I Sam. 9-10); Saul against the Philistines (I Sam. 13); Solomon builds the temple (I Ki. 5-6; II Chron. 2-4); Elijah raptured (II Ki. 2); Elisha (II Ki. 8); Israel's Babylonian exile (II Ki. 25); King Solomon (II Chron. 1); God's glory filled the temple (II Chron. 7); Queen Esther and Mordecai (Esth. 2); Christ's coming prophesied (Isa. 11); Hosea marries a prostitute (Hos. 1)

An *excellent* resource for getting a mental understanding of the "**big picture**" of the **Bible books** is the following two *seminars*:

- **Walk Through the Old Testament**, and
- **Walk Through the New Testament** (Walk Thru the Bible Seminars, 61 Perimeter Park, N.E., P.O. Box 80587, Atlanta, GA 30366)

TOP 'HIDDEN' VERSES OF THE BIBLE

(200 total; **Bold** = emphases mine)

With the increasing rise in prophesied claiming Christendom moving away from Scripture (II Tim. 4:1-4)—be it through theological liberalism, Charismatic subjectivity (i.e., that's *your* interpretation, or what it means to *me*) or more *entertaining* sermons especially among large, conservative evangelical churches, and so many American Christians rarely reading their Bibles (only 13%), MANY of God's truths will never be known, or preached. It is those Bible verses **least** likely to appear in modern sermons—the ones that might not draw an audience as well—which this section purposely addresses.

Note: For a thorough and deeper exploration of all New Testament verses' interpretation (including difficult ones), as well as their relation to all others (including highlighted Old Testament verses), see our upcoming New Millennium Commentary: New Testament, and associated Topication.

Old Testament (67)

- Levit.** 18:22 (homosexuality is an abominable sin), 19:15 (government is not to favor the rich or poor), 19:28 (tattoos are not, objectively, moral),
- Deut.** 22:5 (cross-dressing is an objective sin)
- I Sam.** 2:7 (God can make people rich and poor, as can the devil, though greed or laziness),
- Job** 2:10 (accept good and bad from God)
- Ps.** 10:4 (arrogance prompts atheism), 39:4 (humans are temporal), 62:10 (don't set your heart on riches), 66:18 (contemplating sin thwarts prayers), 71:15 (daily evangelism), 90:10-12 (man is given 70 to 80 years, so number your days), 96:2 (daily evangelism), 97:10 (commanded to hate evil), 99:8 (God avenges evil), 115:16 (earth given as man's domain), 116:15 (precious death of a godly saint), 118:8-9 (don't fully trust men or government), 127:1-2 (workaholic mocked), 135:14 (God will judge His people), 150:4 (dancing is not innately evil, nor are musical instruments in 'God's house')
- Pv.** 3:1-2 (Bible extends life), 6:16-19 (seven things God detests), 8:5 (naïve and gullible are not synonyms for faith), 10:19 (verbosity leads to sin); 10:22 (God's blessing makes rich), 10:24 (what the wicked fear will transpire), 12:10 (animal abuse is a sin), 13:22 (inheritances for grandchildren are moral), 16:16 (Bible wisdom is more valuable than money), 17:17 (brothers born for adversity), 18:24 (a man of many friends comes to ruin), 20:1 (foolish to be intoxicated), 20:29 (grey hair is an honor), 22:1 (a good reputation is more valuable than wealth), 22:4 (wealth through humility), 22:9 (wealth by generosity to the poor), 22:15 (parents dare to discipline their kids), **23:4-5** (don't weary yourself for or think of wealth), 25:17 (don't be in your neighbor's house too often), 26:18-19 ('I was just joking' can be a sinful lie, as can be shuffling one's feet), **28:22** (one with an evil eye hastens after wealth), 30:8-9 (give me neither poverty nor riches), 31:13-16 (women are allowed to work vs. just be homemakers)
- Ecc.** 2:24-25 (no joy without God); Ecc. 3:1, 8 (war is not always immoral, though always a less than ideal bad thing), 4:9-12 (strength and wisdom in numbers), 7:20 (all men sin—even Christians), 8:11 (delayed punishment encourages evil), 9:10-11 (chance affects 'success'), 11:10 (youth is fleeting), 12:13-14 (everyone should keep God's commandments)
- Isa.** 7:14-16 (Christ's age of accountability), **45:7** (God causes well-being and calamity), **45:15** (God hides Himself), 50:6 (Christ, apparently, had a beard), 63:10 (sin can make God your enemy)
- Jer.** **4:22** (God's people are stupid and don't know Him) **6:10** (some willfully won't hear God's

warnings), 9:23 (rich aren't to brag), **17:5** (cursed to trust man), 22:15-16 (pleading the cause of the down-trodden is what it means to know God; Ex.: Democrats), 50:31 (arrogance punished)

Mic. 7:5 (don't fully trust neighbors or friends)

Dan. 1:8 (decision to not do evil)

Hab. 3:17-18 (failure does not prove God's not blessing—trust God)

Mal. 3:8-10 (not giving to God is robbing Him, and God distinguishes between those who do and don't serve Him).

New Testament (133)

Mt. 5:22 (don't call people "fools"), 5:37 (don't swear), 5:48 (the aim is to be perfect/mature), 6:3 (left hand not to know what right hand does in giving), 6:24 (can't serve God and money), 7:15-20 (you will know them by their fruits refers to false prophets vs. is a perfect test of whether one is saved), 7:21-23 (not everyone who claims to be a Christian is), 10:34 (Christ didn't come to bring peace, but division), 11:18 (alcoholic abstinence is not the only moral option), 16:1-3 (Jesus reproved those not knowing prophecy's timing signs), 16:23 (man's interests > God's are Satan's), 19:9 (divorce exception), 17:25-26 (Christians—technically—don't owe taxes, yet must), 18:15-17 (church discipline is a biblical practice), 21:28-31 (changing your mind), 22:29 (mistake not to know the Bible and God's power), 23:9-10 (call no one 'father,' or 'leader'), 24:36-39 (no one knows prophecy's day or hour), 26:29 (Christ will again drink wine)

Lk. 6:24-25 (the rich are receiving their reward in full in *this* life), 8:1-3 (Christ "had it all together," supported by women?), 8:10 (Christ didn't speak in parables to make truths clear by analogies), 10:41-42 (fellowship with is greater than service to Christ; 11:21 (self defense vs. only turning the other cheek), 11:27-28 (Bible obeyers are more blessed than Mary; Cf.: 1:42), **12:15** (avoid greed—life doesn't consist of possessions), 12:49 (Christ will bring judgment to the earth and its inhabitants), 12:54-57 (know the signs of the times), 14:12-14 (Christian parties should sometimes include the down and out, if safe to do so), 16:24-26 (hell evens out possessions), 9:46 (churches are to be reputed as a house of prayer)

Jn. 1:1 (Christ is God/deity; Cf.: 8:58, 10:30; Col. 1:19), **6:29** (doing God's work is that you believe), 6:63-65 (Spirit alone gives Bible understanding), 7:24 (we are commanded to judge, with righteous judgment), 9:3-4 (work before the prophetic day of life expires), 14:6 (Christ is the only way to heaven; Cf.: Ac. 4:12), 17:3 (eternal life is knowing God), 19:38 (there has been at least one secret disciple/Christian)

Ac. 2:44 (voluntary communalism; Cf.: 4:30-31), 3:6 (Peter was broke and blessed), 5:13 (spiritual leadership does not always make one popular), 5:41-42 (joy at persecution), **6:2** (all ministries are important, but ministries have priorities, and humble pastors don't waste time on lesser important ministries), **6:4** (pastor priorities are the Bible and prayer), 10:38/Rev. 1:13-18/Jn. 2:13-17 (Jesus meek and mild is not His only biblical description), 11:4 (Peter not always emotional), 17:30-31 (every human should repent), 20:34-36 (more blessed to give than to receive)

Rom. 2:4 (God's kindness leads one to repent), 2:9-11 (trouble will befall all who sin), **4:4-5** (faith is not a work), 4:20-21 (faith doesn't deny evidence), 12:18 (you are not fully in charge of being at peace with everyone), 12:20 (heaping coals on enemies' head by doing good to them), 13:1-5 (capital punishment is not always evil, and no fear of government if you do good), 15:4 (value of the Old Testament)

I Cor. 3:8/Heb. 10:35/11:26/II Jn. 1:8 (God giving Christians rewards for sanctification is not innately selfishly evil for the believer), 4:11 (homeless Paul had it all together!), 4:20

- (God's kingdom consists of power), 5:5 (severe church discipline), 5:1 (Christians can act more evilly than lost people; Cf.: Jer.9:2-3), **5:11** (don't associate with evil believers!), 7:3-5 (sex as a marital duty), 7:8-9 (singleness is better than being married—if you have self-control and that calling), 7:10-11 (remarrying after a divorce is, objectively, a sin), **7:29-31** (live as though you did not have possessions and don't fully use this world), 9:5 (ministers can be married, so prohibiting such is unbiblical), 11:14 (long hair is a disgrace to a man), 11:28-30/Jn. 9:2-3 (sickness can be caused by sin, or can be of God), 11:30 (sin can cause death)
- II Cor.** 1:9 (near-death suffering teaches you to trust in God vs. yourself), 4:13 (faith speaks; Ex.: evangelism), 5:10/Rom. 2:6/14:11-12 (every person will be judged for their deeds), 5:16 (only recognize people as saved or unsaved), **6:10** (Paul was poor but had everything), 6:17 (be morally separate from the world), 8:12-14 (giving is according to what you have vs. don't have and inter-church equality of contributions), 11:28 (concern for all the churches), 12:14/I Tim. 5:4 (children aren't financially responsible for their parents, but roles shift later), 12:21 (To say God will never humiliate anyone is incorrect)
- Gal.** 2:11 (reproof is biblical, and therefore, not 'mean' or 'unloving'), 2:16 (good works get no one to heaven), 3:10 (perfection required seeking salvation by works)
- Eph.** 4:11-13 (laymen are to do the work of ministry), 4:26 (we are commanded to be angry, yet not sin), **5:11** (expose evil), **5:16** (don't waste time)
- Phil.** 2:30 (near-death service for Christ), 4:12 (Paul content, even when poor, trusting Christ)
- Col.** 3:25 (evil has consequences), 4:12 (one can fully stand in God's will, and yet be imperfect)
- I Th.** 2:16 (extra judgment on evangelism forbidders), 2:18 (Satan can thwart believers, temporarily), **4:11-12** (lead a quiet life)
- II Th.** **3:6** (avoid believers living an unruly/lazy life)
- I Tim.** 2:11-12 (the Bible forbids female ministers teaching and exercising authority over males), 3:3 (money-loving pastors are disqualified for ministry; Cf.: Tit. 1:7), 4:1-3 (vegetarianism prophesied, and not morally required), **6:8** (be content with food and covering), 6:10 (loving money leads to sin and ruin), 6:17-19 (rich are to generously give—it doesn't speak of poor or middle class—Ex.: politics; it's OK to enjoy your possessions)
- II Tim.** 2:19/I Sam. 16:7/Rom. 8:16/I Tim. 1:2 (God knows who is saved, but He doesn't have to be the only One), 3:5 (political correctness may have been prophesied), 3:12 (persecution will befall the godly liver)
- Tit.** 1:12-13 (heed even false prophets' truthful criticism of believers, 3:9 (foolish vs. valuable controversies)
- Phm.** 1:6 (inheritance knowledge leads to effective fellowship)
- Heb.** 5:12 (spiritual maturity expected after time to grow), 9:27-28 (only two futures await the two types of men—unforgiven and forgiven in Christ), **10:30** (God will judge His people for their sins), **13:5** (be content with what you have, and be free from the love of money; Ex.: American mega churches)
- Jas.** **1:9-10** (poverty is a high position before God; riches are lowly), 1:27 (pure religion abstains from the world's ways), **2:5** (God chose to bless the poor), 2:10 (one sin makes a person guilty of all, before God), 4:4-5 (worldliness makes God your enemy, Christian—know the definition; I Jn. 2:16—sex and money lust, and pride), 4:13 (example of not trusting God in business), 5:12 (Christians are not to swear)
- I Pet.** 1:19-21 (with Scripture, there is only one interpretation, though there may be many

applications), 3:21 (water baptism does not save)
II Pet. 2:8-9 (God can deliver you during temptation; Cf.: I Cor. 10:13)
I Jn. 2:15-17 (if you love the world, you don't have God's love within), 3:22 (holiness leads to more answered prayers), 5:3 (love means obeying God's commandments—it is more than a mere feeling)
III Jn. 1:5-6 (churches are to be good (and give) to ministers who are strangers to them), 1:10 (false use of church authority)
Jude 1:23-25 (God can keep you from sinning)
Rev. 2:2 (test claiming ministers), 2:4 (people can look holy and not have Christ as number one in their life), 3:1-4 (strengthen eternal things, as your deeds are incomplete), 3:15-20 (churches can appear 'successful' and be miserably broken and in need of Christ within them), 11:18 (God is for reasonable ecology)

DIFFICULT PASSAGES

Be looking for our upcoming; Exhaustive book, The New Millennium Commentary & Topication: New Testament (in the coming years—currently being edited for publication). Along with commenting on how the 'argument' of New Testament books' flow, interpreting key and confusing verses, addressing all topics that are better interpreted by comparing one passage with another, identifying the top 3 to 5 interpretations of difficult passages (assessing the strengths and weaknesses of each one, concluding with the best or most likely interpretation) and offering insights for application, a sample of more "difficult" subjects it will address includes:

1. Does the New Testament teach tithing?
2. Does God promise 100% healing for every Christian?
3. Does the Bible have any errors?
4. Can anyone lose their salvation?
5. Did Christ go to hell before His heavenly ascension?
6. What was meant by Christ drawing all men to Himself?
7. Are there degrees of sin and degrees of punishment?
8. Is it evil for promised rewards to inspire moral obedience?
9. What are women's head coverings, and are they for today?
10. What are the biblical exceptions to the prohibition against divorce?
11. Are we to give thanks for bad things that happen to us?
12. If Christ is the Savior of all men, will everyone go to heaven?
13. What about those who have never heard the Gospel? Will they all go to hell?
14. Is pre-marital sex or "shacking up" a sin?
15. Is the death penalty moral?
16. Will the earth come to an end, or is it eternal?
17. Is submissiveness the same thing as being dominated (or a doormat)?
18. Is the Sermon on the Mount (or the law) the ethical standard for Christians today?
19. Can Christians be "carnal," or does that term only apply to lost people?
20. Is glorifying God man's ultimate purpose?

21. Are white lies a sin?
22. Does God hear the prayers of lost people?
23. Is it wrong to refer to a person as “father” or “leader?”
24. Can Christians be demon-possessed, or only demon-oppressed?
25. Is it wrong to fully enjoy possessions this life?
26. Is it God’s will for all Christians to be rich, or ever a sin to be rich?
27. Is judging always a sin?
28. Are there any moral absolutes in life?
29. Is harsh language always a sin?
30. Is anger always a sin, or are there two types of anger?

23. “Body Life” (Defined, Described & Defended)

“BODY LIFE:” LAY PARTICIPATION IN WORSHIP SERVICES BIBLICAL CHURCH IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT!

(i.e., How to add *some* Spirit-led spontaneity and Lay Involvement; See also, Body Life, by Ray Stedman)

The *third highest priority* usually *omitted* by most American churches (evangelism and ‘relational discipleship’ being the top two) is personal involvement in church worship services by the laity. The existence of mega churches is not unbiblical (Ac. 2, 4), but first century mega churches had personal relationships where it was more of a family and people knew one another. They cared about one another and did not just turn around a pew for two minutes or less shaking hands with strangers they may never see again and likely never know well. This was not a **CULTURAL** tradition—this **IS** biblical love!

For the spiritual health of gathered believers, I believe churches need to allocate between 10 and 15 minutes of a church service for biblical fellowship and layperson “interaction.” Having church “*fellowships*,” where masses eat and talk together may be a great idea, but unless our Sunday School parties or other “fellowship” gatherings have spiritual thoughts and shared personal experiences and lessons from walking with and serving God, they are, at best, **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES**—not spiritual koinonia or “fellowship.” Plus, all indications are this was done in the **main** worship service—not a sub-group we now call Bible Fellowship or Sunday school, especially since “Body Life” exhortations are to the group of gathered believers. “Love feasts” seem to have also been out of church social and/or fellowship gatherings.

Besides my studies in Acts and the Epistles, and reading the above-mentioned book, I have been at a church that had “body life” and it was superior to cold, detached, or even good-hearted and well-meaning but biblically uninformed churches—collections of Christian strangers watching the professionals or special lay persons sing and preach, while the majority sit by and watch!

It is also an excuse and a mistake to pawn off this ministry of the family of God to **Sunday School hour** or Adult Bible Fellowship. These groups, though smaller, are great for what they accomplish, but can become cliquish, while “**body life**” involves the whole body, and all ages. We do not need MORE meetings in ever more personal settings, constituting what some call “*Churchianity*” (i.e., Christianity by church activity). With our *fast-paced* society and *multi-tasked, busy* lives people don’t need more events to feel close to their brethren—they need quality and friendly biblical **TRANSPARENCY** (i.e., friendly openness).

Lay involvement/”Body Life” should also not be reserved for the more spiritual, who choose to stay an extra hour for Sunday School. It should also not be omitted for fear that *some* in the congregation might be scared or offended by it as “**different**” or too “mature” for them. No, it should occur within the main weekend gathering/meeting of believers. Our culture has changed, **as has every other culture** since biblical times, but **loving people**, having **friendships** and **relationships**, and showing our **oneness** as Christians—not as spectators watching on the sidelines being taught and/or entertained by professionals—will **NEVER** go out of fashion—at least with God.

Although I believe certain of the more “miraculous” spiritual gifts will not likely be manifested today, the atmosphere described in certain *corporate worship* passages of the New

Testament still paints a picture of **interaction** between the parts of the body of Christ, as described in such places as I Cor. 12-14; Jas. 4; Eph. 4; Ac. 2 and 4, and *elsewhere*. There is something inescapably **appealing** and **attractive** in seeing a group—even a very large one-meeting each other’s needs, praying for individuals, sharing victories and testimonies, and relating to people of all ages—not just those within their age bracket in Sunday School. I’ve seen and experienced it, as have others, and will **never accept** the lesser alternative, nor be as committed to or excited about a church which operates with **less** than this type of Christian relating between the various parts of the body. **THIS** is the best way the world will know we are Christians—when we love one another. (**Jn. 13:35**)

A sample of lay activities in worship services I have *seen*, read about or known of include the following, non-exhaustive list:

- Spiritual praise songs (perhaps even written by a church member—if the quality is good).
- Allowing lay testimonies (Ex.: an open microphone, within limits).
- Discussion groups or prayer amongst groups of three or four **during the service**.
- Individual prayer requests and *specific praying* for needs *expressed* (cautioned to avoid “TMI”/too much information or too personal of details!).
- Short teaching lessons by laymen from Quiet Time lessons they have recently learned (pastors gently *correcting* any theological errors, afterwards, if needed).
- Relating evangelism success stories (Ex.: Ac. 15:3).
- Publicly expressed answers to prayer (i.e., thanksgivings and “praise reports”).
- *Blessing* other members with a verse of Scripture God may lay on their heart for that other person (only if it will edify/bleed the group as a whole—not subjectivism or authoritatively pronouncing ‘*thus sayeth the Lord*’).
- Laymen singing solos or playing a song on an instrument God may have “given them” to write.
- Words of corporate encouragement or needed moral cautioning.
- Public repentance of **general** (vs. specifically identifying) sins.
- Reverse passing of the offering plate for the needy to *take what they need* (if not abused or done too often).
- **Meeting each other’s needs** (Ex.: I once saw an older man give his used car to a needy college student, as she expressed her prayer request for transportation—right there in the “body life” portion of Sunday morning church!).

This IS loving one another!

Representative Bible Verses Indicating this Manner of Relationship or “Body Life”

Ac. 4:31-37; Rom. 12:3-21, 14:13, 19, 15:7; I Cor. 12-14; II Cor. 13:11; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 2:20-22, 4:2-3, 11-16, 25, 32, 5:19-21; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:12-17; Heb. 3:13, 10:24-25; Jas. 4:11, 5:9; I Pet. 4:9, 5:5d-g; 10; I Jn. 5:11, 13b, 15, etc.

One of the best arguments for this church lifestyle being part of the **main** gathering event—not segmented off for a select few, by age group, or to only small groups—is the *large number* of “**one another**” commands addressed to the **entire** Church of God—no less than **all**

believers *treating each other* in this way, both in the church building, and in “real life” (i.e., outside the church gathering). This is not *hippie communalism*, **old-fashioned** idealism or only for smaller, *rural* churches—**this IS biblical Christianity**, and anything else is less than the standard!

The “One Anothers” of Scripture

- Members of one another. **(Rom. 12:5)**
- Devoted to one another. **(Rom. 12:10)**
- Honor one another. **(Rom. 12:10)**
- Be of the same mind with one another. **(Rom. 15:5)**
- Accept one another. **(Rom. 15:7)**
- Admonish one another. **(Rom. 15:14)**
- Greet one another. **(Rom. 16:3-6, 16)**
- Serve one another. **(Gal. 5:13)**
- Bear one another’s burdens. **(Gal. 6:2)**
- Bearing with one another. **(Eph. 4:2)**
- Submit to one another. **(Eph. 5:21)**
- Encourage one another. **(I Th. 5:11)**

Finally, if we look deeper into Ac. 2, 4; I Cor. 12-14 and Jas. 2, 4 and 5 (among other passages), we will see that a group of gathered Christians is SUPPOSED to be something that, by God’s grace and power, might **amaze** visiting lost people, because it is **real, supernatural** and full of **genuine love**, relationship and **power**—not *spectatorship*! The church members do not need to vote for it or even **want** it, for it **IS** what New Testament “church” **IS**.

See also: Building Up One Another, by Gene A. Getz (Victor Books: Wheaton, IL), 1979

‘Body Life’ in Traditional & (More) Charismatic Churches

(P = Prestonwood; H = Highland—both Southern Baptist)

Though churches address the issue differently, and two churches are certainly not a representative sample, I have personally witnessed the following two versions of having aspects of ‘body life’ implemented in a church (the former quite recently):

- Laymen testimonies or insights by a controlled (i.e., pastor standing near and gently correcting if needed) open microphone (H) or videotaped (P). Example: Highland started by encouraging prayer requests and telling the congregation a Bible verse God had particularly impressed them with that week.
- People expressing prayer requests during a smaller group service that grew into the worship service (H), or in Sunday School (P; though I Cor. 14 sets it as a corporate setting).
- Small groups of two or three gathering for prayer (H, P), coming forward for ministers’ prayer during the service (P, H), or the whole church taking a ‘season of prayer’ during the service (P)—not just having one person on stag pray as the crowd listens.
- Prayer for healing during the worship service (H) or available elsewhere afterwards (P; including ‘anointing with oil’).

- Caring for the needs of the poor by reverse collection plate passing (later sending people to aid advisors first; H) or a ministry separate from the service with tight restrictions (P).

How we address the above-referenced chapter (and Ac. 2, 4; Jas. 5; I Cor. 12-13; Eph. 4, the ‘one another’s’ of Scripture and ‘church’ being described as a ‘family’ and members of a ‘body,’ as opposed to age-group segregated groups—or not at all) seems to be the major difference, as with the venue being small groups (Ex.: Bible fellowship) or the corporate worship service. I Cor. 14 as a primary methodology chapter for Rev. Crossland (formerly at Highland), absent the tongues for many denominations (and myself; despite verse 39, given their purpose as known languages to teach foreign language speakers of God, and this not being the first century, when the canon of Scripture was being completed).

Finally, the more mature you raise your congregation, the more freedom there is for their cooperation so that order is maintained and doctrinal or experiential ‘insights’ remain sound. Rev. Crossland suggests starting this with a smaller, core group on Wednesday or Sunday night; Accurately training the congregation in spiritual gifts is still, giving it time to develop (with discernment and understanding “in the Spirit”), and he still sees great richness and growth from such services (and my own testimony is that the spiritual quality and pleasing God in our worship services at my current church has been enhanced by these changes). No matter how far one takes application of verses mentioned, it should be clear from their reading that mere stand and “shake hands with a stranger” only maintains the anonymity and lack of family feeling the church should experience (though some churches don’t even do that).



Highland Baptist Church, Waco, TX

24. “Relational Discipleship” (Defined, Described & Defended)

RELATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP: WHAT IT IS AND HOW TO DO IT

(II Tim. 3:14; II Th. 2:7-8; Ac. 15:36; I Cor. 4:15; II Cor. 11:2, etc.)

The men who followed Him were unique in their generation. They turned the world upside down because their hearts had been turned right side up. The world has never been the same.
–Billy Graham

The **SINGLE most important** ACT any Christian can do for the good of their own life is to **daily read the Bible** for *ten minutes* for thirty days, until that habit has been formed, and the **SINGLE most important method** of growing up another believer (i.e., discipling) is to have another believer study the Bible with you for 10 minutes a day for thirty days, until that *habit* gets formed.

But, for these purposes, when speaking of “discipling Christians,” I have a specific **methodology** in mind, which originated with **Christ**, apparently was performed by Paul at times, has been *mastered* by many para-church organizations (Ex.: the Navigators, Campus Crusade for Christ, etc.), but is **virtually ignored** by most churches, even though it is arguably the **most effective** way to **grow up believers** in the Lord in the shortest period of time! I personally learned more on how to grow in Christ in a few weeks’ time as the recipient of this method than with years of hearing Sunday School lessons and sermons.

Jesus Christ Himself took 12 men, and by **spending time with them** and personally teaching them from His life and heart (“pouring His life into them”)—often truths the *multitudes* were not taught—by His power these men “**turned the world upside down**” in a short period of time. Christ “**duplicated Himself**” to a great degree in these men before He left earth, as should we in our discipleship ministries! You will *note* that Christ’s group was small, and He had differences in the level of relationship/intimacy from that with John the beloved, with Peter and James and Christ to the other nine.

Just as human babies cannot feed themselves but need their parents to nurture them as they learn to **crawl, sit, stand, then walk**, all *new* Christians (and long-time *stunted-growth’d* or “**carnal**” Christians) need a spiritual parent *figure*; Acting as a “**tutor**,” to TEACH and TRAIN them till they can **walk with God on their own two spiritual feet**. The spiritual baby’s milk is the Bible (I Pet. 2:2), and one of the main goals of discipleship is to get Christians to know how to walk by faith (i.e., be led by the Spirit and do God’s will), and ready for the meatier truths of the word of God, from having **regularly applied it** to their lives, under grace, through the habit of a Quiet Time. (I Cor. 3:1-3; Heb. 5:12-6:1)

If churches never systematically and consciously (i.e., intentionally, organizedly and personally, including grace-based **accountability**) teach the “**basics**” of Christianity to believers—either because they have never identified them or because they believe church members have a lifetime to discover them—how do we expect our churches to grow spiritually mature or grow up at any acceptable rate? This sporadic, random approach is in part responsible for the **majority of American Christians living in carnality**, either innocently (through lack of knowledge on how to grow or the need to do so), or willfully (i.e., letting our

culture and the “world” dominate, or even compete with the One Master alone man can serve—God). Statistics show that it takes only **4 or 5 ‘generations’** of 1 on 12 training (where the 12 train others) to reach any size church, so **churches have zero excuses** (like being “too big”) for not implementing this *better way* to grow mature believers.

It is not just the topics covered which are important, but **HOW** those truths are conveyed to the hearers’ hearts. Specifically, training/mentoring, or as I like to call it, “**pouring your life into someone**,” involves at least four important elements: (**See:** I Th. 2:8; II Tim. 2:2)

1. An Experienced, Spiritually Mature Leader.

A “discipler” (teacher/leader) who knows the important growth topics *from the heart and life experience* through having walked with Jesus *awhile*. He (or she, when women disciple women) is not merely reciting information he/she studied the night before or other men’s thoughts, with no **personal insights** or illustrations for how the truth played out in his or her own experience.

2. Personal and Individualized: Not Just Information Dissemination.

- A) The group can maximize at around twelve persons per training session (i.e., *smaller groups*), so the **personal attention** and aspects of biblical Christian caring can be fully realized.
- B) Biblical “Church,” ultimately, is the responsibility of the pastor (I Pet. 5:1-3), so under the chain of authority (i.e., pastor, staff and elders, deacons, lay leaders and teachers and committed believers) each “leader” should be encouraged and instructed to “**leverage their relationships**” to invite people they know to be part of the group (Ex.: pastor disciples any spiritually needy family and friends, including ensuring all disciplers in the church-wide program are properly executing the program). Once trained, the “graduates” become the new teachers of another group. Thus, **spiritual multiplication** by discipleship occurs; Generation to generation.

3. RELATIONSHIPS are Built Through Planned Social Interaction.

The leader/discipler should make it a point to have at least **one social event** with each individual (or small group of individuals) to show that he **truly cares** about their life and spiritual success, and is not just *disseminating information*. Relational Discipleship should be a long-term, ongoing program within the church, though participants needn’t repeat this short-term process, save possibly to train more to become leaders/teachers/”disciplers” themselves.

The *ultimate* goal of discipleship is to produce Christ-likeness in Christians, and getting that person on his own two spiritual feet is goal number one. Achievement of that goal is exemplified in part by their having **formed a daily Quiet Time habit**—a term you rarely hear discussed or recommended in sermons, though it is the **key** to a *close* walk with God!

4. FOUNDATIONAL Truths are Taught and Applied.

- A) Training is hands-on and action-oriented *implementation of truth*... not just learning information without using it in one’s lifestyle. Testimonies and asking questions about how certain truths can and have been understood and *incorporated* into one’s life are **certainly** part of the training, and **daily** “homework,” such as a Quiet Time lessons should be required.

“Disciples” are to be **taught to disciple others** (i.e., “multiplication discipleship” or “duplication”), and on an important technical note, no one is the disciple of any other

human—only Jesus Christ. The discipler’s role is more that of a mentor or tutor in the faith.

- B) ***Scripture meditation and memorization*** are ESSENTIAL requirements of a good discipleship “program.” This author suggests, at a minimum, the following **memory verses**: **Josh. 1:8; Pv. 3:5-7; Mt. 6:19-21; Mk. 11:22; Jn. 3:16; Rom. 1:16, 3:23, 6:23, 8:37, 12:1-2; I Cor. 10:13, 13:4-8a; II Cor. 5:17; Gal. 5:22-24; Eph. 2:8-9; Phil. 4:6-8; Col. 3:1-4, 2 Tim. 1:7, 2:15, 3:16-17; Heb. 11:6, 13:5; Jas. 1:2-4; I Pet. 5:7-9; I Jn. 1:9.**
- C) Finally, the CONTENTS of what is taught are *essential*. Having studied the Bible for more than 30 years and researched an over 5,000 page New Testament Commentary and Topication focused on **evangelism** and **discipleship**, I have sought the Lord to determine *the most pertinent and powerful truths in His Word* to grow up Christians as quickly as possible.

The criteria used to determine these topics included their intrinsic subject matter value, the quantity of verses addressing that subject, Bible author’s identifying them as key/essential/foundational, historic discipleship programs having used them, and the Bible’s own description of how these specific truths have *transformed* lives. Though the Bible is fully **inerrant**, and all of it is **equally inspired**, there are distinctions made, even by the Bible itself between what is appropriate for babes vs. maturer men, and **common sense** can distinguish between some subjects which are less pertinent to rapid spiritual growth! The selected topics appear to be *not easily* arguable as **essential** and **important** to the quickest and most successful Christian growth in the life of a believer. **See:** 18 Discipleship Topics Overview, below.

Once a church’s *majority* have become committed to Christ, the others will feel natural peer pressure to get on the disciple bandwagon themselves (or switch membership to a more carnal church). A church that has successfully implemented a program like this should **use and promote their success** to help encourage other pastors and churches do the same at their churches, as we are co-laborers in Christ—not competitors. By the way, pastors, maturer Christians generally get more involved than surfacy ones, including the area of giving.

Application

God *blessed me* with the encouragement that there are still **SOME** people who understand the *value* of and do relational discipling. In conversing with Ken Horton (former Pastor at McKinney Bible Church of Ft. Worth, now with **Ministry Catalysts**), his version involves discipling around 15 men a year, each *one on one*, between 6 and 8 months, answering all their questions, teaching them (usually businessmen) the basics and meeting in the early weekday mornings. He agrees it is not a church “program,” and tells of one man who disciplined 6 men in a Methodist church, where now the Pastor is inquiring about the ministry, due to the zeal, understanding and involvement of the participants. It is not enough to have *experienced* this type of ministry, as I have, to have *done* it, as I have to 25 men, to *write* about it, as I have, or even to *exhort pastors* to do it, as I have—it must get to EVERY church, because it’s the best way to grow up believers (Christ’s example to the 11 as Exhibit A).

25. The 18 Most Important Discipleship Subjects

BIBLICAL DISCIPLESHIP

Introduction

30 years of studying the Scriptures trying to correctly interpret their meaning has now yielded a rough-draft 5,000 page Commentary and Topication. This website is the **HEART** of those materials, with many details and explanations left for later. However, over those years, I have felt consistently convicted that the following **18 subjects** are the **most impactful** and **efficient** for believers to know and apply in order to lead successful Christian lives. They are *transformative* (i.e., life-changing), not *trivial* truths (Ex.: numbers of cities found in Acts).

Sadly, some think these topics are too heavy or deep for many believers, but from what I read in Scripture these are the BASICS. As such, we have no right to teach *lesser* things before every Christian has mastered the “milk” and learned to independently walk with Christ. I hope you will find joy in reading these materials, and start your own investigation beyond just what is presented here.

DISCIPLESHIP

1. Definitions

- a) “**Disciple:**” A learner or student of something or someone.
- b) **Bible Illustrations:** The Bible refers to believers as sons, bond-slaves and students, among other things. Each of these word pictures shed light on our role in learning from God (i.e., as our Father, Master and Teacher). (**Gal. 4:6; I Pet. 2:16; Mt. 10:24**)
- c) “**Discipleship:**” The life-long process of following Christ and increasing in moral and spiritual growth. “Making disciples” (**Mt. 28:18-20**) is a three-step process, but *HERE* we are not referring to evangelism or baptism—those steps are *assumed* to have already taken place (though that fact will be confirmed during an appropriate lesson).
- d) **Venue(s):** The Biblical evidence is that most ministry to Christians occurred at “church” (whether in a building, home, or other venues). Our challenge is to get new converts to join us *wherever* we can disciple them, because, in Acts, new believers gathered, in part, because Christianity was new, they were in the minority and persecuted, there were miracles, awe and excitement, and Jesus had just departed the earth. Our modern church practice does not have most of these “lures.”

2. Requirements

In order to be a disciple of Jesus Christ one must be totally committed to Him *without reservation*. Such devotion usually produces involvement in **ministry**, and certainly manifests itself in an increasingly **moral life**, by God’s power. To be ‘on the fence,’ half-hearted or carnally-minded about one’s Christian spirituality **DOES NOT** and cannot qualify as meeting the conditions for being either a disciple of Jesus Christ or filled with His Spirit. (**Lk. 9:23-26, etc.**). In fact, intimacy with God is the NUMBER ONE priority in life. (Deut. 34:10; Pv. 3:32; Ps. 11:27, 16:11, 27:4, 73:25-26, 145:18)

A wonderful para-church organization is famous for teaching that the three critical personal requirements of a disciple are to be “F.A.T.”—Faithful, Available and Teachable. (the Navigators, I believe).

3. **“Relational Discipleship” (i.e., “Pouring Your Life Into Others”) Defined and Described**

Although several means were employed to produce Christian disciples in the New Testament (Ex.: Church Elders/Pastors—**I Tim. 1:3-4**; Letters—**Rom-Rev.**; Messengers—**I Th. 3:5**; Prayer—**Eph. 3:14-17**; Sermons—**Ac. 5:32**; Other Disciples—**I Cor. 4:15**; Commendation to God—**Ac. 20:32**; and even NO action—**Ac. 8:39**), “**relational discipleship**” appears to be the **MOST effective**, given Christ’s model.

Relational Discipleship is the unique method of discipling which Christ used to train 11 apostles to eventually turn the world upside down for the Gospel (**Ac. 17:6**). It is marked by His spending time with them, teaching them truths more explicitly than what the crowds often received, and multiplying Himself and His ministry through pouring His own life and experience into those He loved so dearly. (**II Tim. 2:2**; **I Th. 2:7-8**, etc.)

Applied today, Relational Discipleship is the ministry of **leveraging relationships** to bring believers into an focused time of intense spiritual development, personally and lovingly administered (as described in “Elements,” below).

4. **Goals**

a) **Short-Term**: Getting believers “on their **own two spiritual feet**.” (**Gal. 4:19**; **Col. 2:6-7**; **II Pet. 1:19**; **I Pet. 2:1-3**; **I Jn. 2:12-14**; **Heb. 5:12-13**). A newborn doesn’t feed himself, nor should an eight year old still be drinking from a bottle. (**I Cor. 3:1-3**) Growth is *expected* by God, over time. (**Lk. 13:6-9—three to four years**) Christ spent three years with the men who *changed* the world. (**Ac. 17:6**)

b) **Long-Term**: A life-time of continual sanctification, or moral growth in Christ. (**Mt. 28:18-20**)

c) **Bottom Line**: At a MINIMUM, discipleship should ensure that believers have established the habit of having a **daily Quiet Time**. Research shows that habits are formed after 30 days of *persistent practice*, and developing the *joy* of a daily Quiet Time should be no different. For an excellent and effective way to bring this about in the lives of *individuals*, please see how I was *pushed* to this lifestyle by a loving brother, at “About ‘Us’/Personal Testimony.”

5. **Elements**

a) **Small Group**: Christ disciplined 12 men more deeply than all others. There is a sacred intimacy of *fellowship* and ability to be honest, open and *personal* with people in that size of group.

b) **Intimate/Personal (i.e., Customized and Individualized)**: Disciples are not speaking “at” people, but “to” them, looking eye-to-eye and sharing their experiences of applying the word of God. Disciples can see our heart, sincerity and zeal, and know we truly care about them and personally know them as human beings—not just people in a crowd or names on a church membership roster.

c) **Caring/Social**: Every discipler in a relational discipleship ministry should have at least one one-on-one **social event** with each disciple, not only to get to know (and help) them, but

especially to make it apparent that disciplers are not **JUST** interested in them as *spiritual beings*.

d) Intense: Relational discipleship has a prioritized curriculum. It is not like memorizing the “begats” sections of the book of Numbers, inspired as they are. This is a **grace-based** spiritual “boot camp” of sorts, where we have a unique opportunity to jump start and turbo-boost men’s spiritual lives in ways the normal pace and time of church life **cannot**. Disciplers need to use this *precious time* wisely and strategically to achieve that goal.

e) Accountability: Politicians “throw money at problems;” Preachers often “throw sermons” at problems. No pastor can ensure that his church members are **APPLYING** what he is preaching (as led by the Holy Spirit) unless there is **FOLLOW-THROUGH!** One-on-one and lovingly, disciplers are able to *INQUIRE* and learn about laymen’s evangelism and Quiet Time habits.

Pastor, don’t leave sermon results to chance, or *hope* personal discipleship is getting done. You can’t ‘wash your hands’ of **leadership responsibility** by just having given them the word! Give them **YOURSELF**, your staff, deacons and lay leaders as personal disciplers. Show your congregation how important discipleship and evangelism are to God and yourself by ensuring that some discipler is *personally* responsible to “hand hold” and “spoon feed” disciples into a successful beginning to their spiritual life.

We would no more **tell an infant** how to obtain and drink milk for himself as we can preach to believers and **never ensure** they get their needed, daily nourishment! *Show* them **HOW!** **MANY** Christians are in this infant stage, no matter how long they have been Christians!

f) Short-Term: Christ spent 3 years with His men, and then they were ready for their mission (though they did not think so). There are **too many** Christians needing spiritual growth to make relational discipleship a long-term course for the few. The Bible itself indicates that a *reasonable time* having passed is *sufficient* for Christians to grow up and be able to “bottle feed” on their own. We may serve as their tutors, or spiritual parents for a time, but **you don’t breast feed five year olds!** (**Heb. 5:12-13; I Pet. 4:1-3**)

g) Impactful Subjects: I trust with exposure to the Bible you will see the wisdom of the selected 18 relational discipleship topics for producing the most effective and efficient **spurred** (vs. *stunted*) spiritual growth in believers. *Rest assured* I am *not* the only minister to have recognized their importance! **See:** 18 Discipleship Topics Overview, below

h) Leveraged Relationships: A church should NOT rely on offering a discipleship “program” only to *those interested*. Few will attend, and God wants **ALL** believers to be discipled! Pastoral leadership should *ensure* that deacons and lay leaders engage the relational discipleship process and **leverage their existing relationships** until every person has been through the program and reached 12 others (or so), and ensured that those twelve have reached 12 others, until an entire mega church (as the case may be) has been personally, intimately and relationally discipled. The first two churches were mega churches, and had **no problem** experiencing maturity and “body life,” and a *change of culture* is **no excuse** to miss out on this great ministry! (**Ac. 2, 4**)

i) Duplication: (i.e., “Multiplication Discipleship”): No discipleship ministry is fully on track or successful until those who **complete the program** continue training and teaching it to others (the process continuing indefinitely for many spiritual generations of “spiritual grandchildren” to come). You don’t explicitly “graduate” from this “program” or have any status before men—your success is demonstrated in increased moral growth (Quiet Time as the basis), habitual

evangelism for a lifetime and an “each one teach one” philosophy of ministry, *continuing* to pass on what you have learned to *others*.

j) **Faithfulness:** Participants are asked and expected to complete **every** session and faithfully do their ‘homework.’ Sessions missed can be made up by listening to tapes (if made) or reading class notes, but the topics should be important enough to not want to miss them.

6. Content

As previously touted, here is a list of what I believe to be the most important subjects all believers should KNOW *in practice*:

18 Discipleship Topics Overview

1. **Discipleship** (Theology, Overview; Expectations, Subjects)
2. **Gospel** (Contents, Tract, Key Verses, Three Tenses of Salvation, Baptism)
3. **Salvation Requirements** (10 “Additions to Faith, Faith Alone Verses and Lordship Salvation Critique, Bibliography, Gospel Misstatements)
4. **Eternal Security** (Assurance of Salvation, Key Opposing Verses, Reasons for Assurance)
5. **Quiet Time: Bible Study** (Why and How to Study the Bible)
6. **Quiet Time: Prayer** (How to Effectively Pray and Why)
7. **Faith-Walking** (Defined and Described, Claiming Promises, Mind-Renewal)
8. **Identity in Christ** (and Our Inheritance, Role of in Sanctification)
9. **Lordship Commitment** (Reasons to “Totally Sell Out”)
10. **God’s Will** (Spirit-Filled and Led Living, 4 Types of Men)
11. **Grace Living** (vs. Law/Legalism or License/Lawlessness, Freedom, Gray Areas/All Things Lawful)
12. **Trials, Temptation & Suffering** (and Other Challenges, Defined and Differentiated)
13. **Spiritual Warfare** (Weapons, Devil Schemes, Victory in Christ)
14. **Doctrine I** (God/Trinity, Christ, Holy Spirit, Bible, Salvation/Sanctification)
15. **Doctrine II** (Man, Sin, Devil/Angels/Demons, Church, Prophecy)
16. **Spiritual Gifts** (Theology and Identification of)
17. **Spiritual Gifts** (Used in Biblical Ministry, Body Life and the Ideal Church)
18. **Evangelism** (and Follow-Up)

OTHER: Various Proffered Key Topics ***Briefly*** Addressed:

Love, Spiritual Anatomy, Godly Relationships, Fear of God, Humility, Fasting?, Praise?, the Obedience of Faith, Worship and Fellowship, Biblical Giving, “Body Life.”

7. Homework

- a) Most importantly, ***daily*** have a Quiet Time.
- b) **Read Handouts** (Ex.: On Charismatic, Calvinism, Relational Evangelism and Lordship Salvation Errors, and any other Handouts developed).
- c) **Memorize** the identified **20 Scripture verses** during the length of the program.

8. Outcomes

a) Significant progress toward spiritual maturity (i.e., building up life-long spiritual momentum). (**I Pet. 2:1-3; II Pet. 3:18**)

b) “Multiplication Discipleship.” (i.e., participants growing into being able to train others after they have been trained themselves). (**II Tim. 2:1-2, etc.**)

9. Clarifications

a) RELATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP is **not necessarily** for church services (i.e., sermons) or Sunday School/Adult Bible Fellowship classes, *principally* because it is **intimate** fellowship and teaching and applying the word of God in **individuals’** lives (not something conducive for mass, corporate application). Also, because it is a uniquely *focused* and short-term event and supports interaction between members of **all** groups within the church (disciples preferably hand-selected by the discipler), Bible Fellowship does not seem to be the ideal venue either.

b) RELATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP does **not** condone cliquiness, even though deep **spiritual** bonds may begin between participants because of how personally they get to know each other’s spiritual (and moral) lives, struggles; Accomplishments and prayer *needs*.

c) RELATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP is not a **denominational “program,”** or one which you graduate and get a certificate from (or any other official acknowledgement for that matter). Success is achieved if the “program” prompts a life-long habit of **evangelism** and **discipleship**—the program being merely the **beginning** of that that life-long process.

d) RELATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP is not an *optional* course for those who may be interested. Neither is it **mandatory** in order to be a church member. Gracious **leveraging of relationships** and use of leadership *authority* is what brings about involvement or so-called “compliance.”

e) RELATIONAL DISCIPLESHIP is NOT people sharing “too much information” or ***too personal*** of information, nor is it anything other than **supportive of all other ministries** and leaders of the church!

10. Disclaimers

a) As was stated before, no man is a disciple of any person—only of Jesus Christ. Disciplers merely help and assist in developing that growth process in disciples. Even these *materials* are not replacements for following Christ through EVERY verse in the Bible! (**Mt. 10:24-25; Ac. 20:27**)

b) Relational discipleship does not require the “spiritual parent” of a disciplee (i.e., the person who brought them to Christ) to be their discipler. Disciplers serve as “tutors,” coaches, trainers and spiritual mentors to whoever is under their charge. Of course, a “spiritual parent” would *do well* to disciple **all** of their converts!—which I hope number **MANY**. (**I Cor. 4:15, etc.**)

See also:

Pv. 27:17; Mt. 10:37-39; Jn. 8:31-32, (Ac. 20:20); Col. 1:28-29; Eph. 3:14-17; I Tim. 1:5

THE GOSPEL

Definition

The word, “Gospel,” means “good news.” The Gospel is the **good news** that because of Christ’s *sacrificial death* on the cross as **payment** for man’s sins, everyone who trusts Him can immediately and eternally receive the forgiveness of all their sins, as a gift of God’s benevolent grace. That payment means we do not have to serve our own *deserved sentence*, in hell. (**Lk. 2:10; Ac. 13:32; Rom. 10:15; I Cor. 15:1-4; Eph. 1:6, etc.**)

Importance

The Gospel is no *old-fashioned* or *impotent* message, **nor is it like any other religious message**. All other religions condition entry into heaven upon good works by man. The Gospel is the **ONLY** message by which men can be saved, and this message we speak to lost people **IS** God’s power unto salvation. It contains words of *eternal life*, and speaks of our **only** way to God. The Gospel is clearly **the most important message mankind has ever heard, or ever will**. We have the privilege of taking it to otherwise hell-bound individuals! (**Jn. 14:6; Ac. 4:12; Rom. 1:15-16; I Cor. 1:17-18**)

Message

At a **minimum**, what do we tell lost people when we *evangelize*? We could trace the message back to Abraham, the Garden of Eden, and give *much more* detail, but what is the core Gospel message without which our message would not be “the Gospel?”

I propose that there are **three essential elements**, but a total of four to five which make it *understandable* and *actionable*. They are (the **essential ones** having the *asterisk*):

1. God’s Motive: GOD LOVES YOU.

It is wise to start a “*good news*” presentation with positive news! This element presents **God’s heart and motive** for offering Christ as the solution to man’s sin problem, and gives **hope** that our condition can be solved. (Pv. 16:25; Jer. 31:3; Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8; Eph. 2:4-5; Tit. 3:5; I Pet. 1:3; I Jn. 4:10)

2. *Problem: YOU ARE A SINNER.

All men have sinned, and even just **ONE** sin makes a person guilty of having committed ALL sins against God. *Not fair* you say? That standard simply shows how evil sin is (at least to God)! God does not balance our “good” and bad deeds on a scale.

His standard for heaven is **moral perfection**, and only Christ passed the test. Salvation is **NOT** by works, and all men’s so-called “good” deeds are filthy rags before God—external only, sin-wrought and tainted, and *non-meritorious*. If those sins are not forgiven, the individual **WILL** be punished—eternally—in **hell**.

If anyone *denies* they have ever sinned, ask them if they have ever lied, cheated or stolen. That question will usually silence their *over-blown opinion* of their morality. (Ecc. 7:20; Isa. 1:18, 64:6, 59:2; Rom. 3:10-12, 19-20, 6:23; Gal. 3:10; Eph. 2:8-9; I Tim. 15; Jas. 2:10, etc.)

3. Consequences: SIN LEADS TO DEATH.

We are not merely speaking of *physical death* here.

- a) In this life, there is an un-bridgeable **absence of FELLOWSHIP** between the lost person and God.
- b) There are *natural consequences* for their sins in this life.
- c) All men die, but that is *just the beginning* of a **HORRIBLE eternity** for lost people—ultimate punishment in the *Lake of Fire* (Hell).” There is **no** reincarnation, Purgatory, annihilation or cessation of life—it just continues, only *worse*, “on the other side.” (Rom. 2:16, 3:23-24; II Cor. 5:10; Heb. 9:27, 2:15; Rev. 20:14-15, etc.)

4. *Solution: CHRIST DIED FOR YOUR SINS.

The **GOOD NEWS** is that God has a **solution** to our sin problem. The *innocent* Christ *paid our debt* to God through His *sacrificial* death on the cross. Christ, figuratively speaking, went to spiritual jail to pay our death sentence!

That’s the best news you’ll ever hear and the core of the Gospel message—**Christ’s death, burial and resurrection** (i.e., what Christ has done for us). (Isa. 53:6; Rom. 4:6-8; I Pet. 2:24)

5. *Action: YOU NEED TO RECEIVE JESUS CHRIST BY FAITH.

Hearing about Jesus will not benefit you until you “*appropriate*” it (that is; **Accept it by faith**). You need to ask Christ to save you and forgive all of your sins so you can be *eternally forgiven*, and have **Christ living in you**. **No Gospel presentation is complete without inviting people to respond!**

The sins you may commit *thereafter—hopefully ever decreasingly*—do not affect your relationship with God—only your **fellowship** with Him (like if a husband were to slap his wife—he’s still married but there’s a disruption in their getting along until it’s **remedied**). When a believer sins, he needs to **admit it**, ask **forgiveness**, and pray to be **re-filled with God’s Spirit** (I Jn. 1:9; Eph. 5:18). This is *not* to *encourage* or *minimize* sin but to explain what to do when a Christian has sinned.

See: Jn. 1:12, 3:16-18, 36; Ac. 16:31; Rom. 10:11, 13; post-salvation ‘familial’ sins: Jn. 15:3, 13:10; Ac. 15:7; Col. 1:14, 2:13; Heb. 4:2; I Jn. 2:12, 1:9, etc.)

See also: Lordship Salvation Errors

THE THREE TENSES OF SALVATION

Upon receiving Christ every Christian is ***forever saved*** (“**salvation**”). How they live out that salvation is commonly called “**sanctification**.” When we reach heaven, that phase is commonly called “**glorification**.” A famous illustration makes this *very* clear:

- 1st Tense—Justification, or Salvation: Saved from the **Penalty** of Sin (spirit)
- 2nd Tense—Sanctification: Saved from the **Power** of Sin (soul)
- 3rd Tense—Glorification: Saved from the **Presence** of Sin (body)

Interpreting Scripture shouldn’t be *confusing*, and is usually not *extremely* difficult if we keep some distinctions clear. The following chart can aid in your understanding of when the same term is being used for a different “tense” of salvation:

THREE TENSE TERMINOLOGY

TERM	Past	Present	Future
Adoption	Eph. 1:5	Gal. 4:(5)-6	Rom. 8:23
Justification	I Cor. 6:11	Jas. 2:21	Basis for Heaven
Redemption	Gal. 3:13-14	Tit. 2:14	Rom. 8:23
Glorification	Heb. 10:10	II Th. 1:12	I Cor. 15:43
Sanctification	I Cor. 6:11	I Th. 4:3; Jn. 17:17	Separation in Heaven
Salvation	Eph. 2:8	Jas. 2:14; II Cor. 2:15	Heb. 9:28
Forgiveness	Heb. 10:18	I Jn. 1:9	Rom. 4:8
Mercy	I Pet. 2:10	Heb. 4:6	Jude 1:21
Grace	Eph. 2:8-9	Ac. 13:43, 20:32; Rom. 5:2	I Pet. 1:13
Blood	I Pet. 1:2, 18-19	I Jn. 1:7	Rom. 5:9

WATER BAPTISM

These discipleship materials assume the reader has been saved and baptized in water. For any who have *not*, the **Gospel** is first presented, and the subject of baptism is appropriate thereafter:

Water baptism never saved anyone. It is the first act of obedience for the Christian, and *symbolizes* our death, burial and resurrection with Christ at salvation. No other means but full immersion adequately portrays what God did for us, as we were *fully washed* of our sins by His forgiveness and cleansing.

The word “baptism” means to *immerse*, and when Christ *fully immersed* Himself in the experience of mankind, He had a “*baptism*” to undergo—**full and complete** death on the cross. Baptism is not a matter of *denominational preference* but our proper public demonstration—to witnesses and before God—of what God has done for us on the *inside*. The way to illustrate that experience is through immersion in water. (Mt. 3:6, 14-15; Ac. 8:35-39; I Pet. 3:21, etc.)

SALVATION REQUIREMENTS

When we speak of **the MOST important subject in life—THE GOSPEL**—what exactly is required of man in order to be *saved*? This question is *not academic*, for determining the correct answer affects what message and invitation we offer in *evangelism*. It can also *potentially* affect whether lost people **respond** to that message and the **legitimacy** of their responses. **Giving the wrong Gospel message** is about as *serious a sin* as one could *imagine*, as Paul noted in Galatians 1:8.

Several acts (or decisions) have been proposed by believers to answer this question. An example of how **all over the map** Christians are on the subject can be found by reading the “Statements and Misstatements of the Gospel” at the very bottom of this lesson. One thing we can *all agree* on is that **man has a sin problem** between himself and God, and **Jesus Christ is the answer** to that problem.

There are essentially **2 Gospels** circulating *within* the Church, which could **NEVER** be the same, be fully harmonized, or both be true. One of them *must be false*, as the chief advocates on both side agree [we will address them beginning with sub-point 8 (and in the lesson entitled “Lordship Salvation Errors”)]. This issue is “*controversial*” because it cuts to the heart of our salvation, our Gospel and our evangelism. Yet, it **needs** to be understood, confronted and addressed in the open (and **not just** by theologians and academics!) if we are to **evangelize accurately** and be **sanctified properly** (i.e., on the correct basis and by the correct means from the outset—Gal. 3:3).

We will start by addressing several “additions” often added to “sola fide” (faith alone). The first seven proffered conditions of salvation are significantly *easier to debunk* than the last three. Almost every one of the ten is a **very good deed for Christians to do**, and even **expected** in the Christian life. But our focus of inquiry is whether these specific acts are biblically required to obtain salvation. That is, **would I go to hell if I did not do these acts?** Viewed another way, if we omit them from our Gospel presentation when evangelizing, would we be guilty of preaching a false Gospel?

ADDITIONS TO FAITH

1. Water Baptism

Does a lost person have to receive water baptism in order to be saved? If he believes in Christ, but **has not yet been baptized**, is he saved? If he **never** gets baptized, will he go to hell? In *theological* terms, is water baptism “salvific?” (that is, does it save you?)

The main verse *touted* by those who believe the answer is “yes” is Ac. 2:38. Peter gives his hearers the first 2 steps of the Christian life—become a believer, then be water baptized. The phrase “for the forgiveness of your sins” refers to *step one*—repenting (defined in sub-point 8 as “a change of mind”). You get your sins forgiven and then are baptized **BECAUSE of**—not *in order to get*—that forgiveness. Baptism outwardly demonstration our internal change.

It’s like someone saying, “Say ‘**I do**’ and go on your **honeymoon** in order to be married.” No one believes the honeymoon makes you married though it naturally follows, and that point is lost on *no one*.

Ac. 22:16 may be asserted, but using it to assert water baptism is required for salvation *breaks down* when **the verse says** that sins are washed away by calling on Jesus' name—a synonym for trusting Christ—not by water baptism. Paul simply encourages them to be baptized—something they **need to do AFTER** calling on the Lord.

The clearest way to refute the “*baptismal regeneration*” contention is found in these passages:

I Cor. 1:17. Paul, perhaps the *greatest evangelist* of all time **won so many people to Christ, yet baptized so few**, and he explains *why*, here... **Christ sent him to preach** the Gospel—the message of salvation—**NOT to baptize** (i.e., he did not participate in something of *lesser importance* to evangelism, as it is not essential to *evangelism* or the *salvation* it produces). The few exceptions that he did baptize could be counted on one or two hands, but you could not find enough hands to count ‘his’ **converts**.

Jn. 4:1-2: Relatedly, **Jesus did not do the baptizing of saved persons**—His disciples did. **Would Jesus OMIT** something ESSENTIAL to men’s salvation, given *all that He did* for our salvation on the cross?

I Pet. 3:21: Yes, “baptism saves you,” if you understand, as this verse clearly states, that **the saving baptism is our baptism with the Holy Spirit**—our salvation—in which our *consciences are cleansed* of their guilt from unforgiven sin, through a faith-based appeal to God. **The verse itself STATES that the baptism which saves is not the baptism which washes the body.**

Lk. 23:39-43: Jesus clearly promises the **thief on the cross** he would be with Him that day in Paradise, though that thief **never received any form of baptism**.

The **clarity** of these three passages compared to the anomalous interpretation offered by the other viewpoint in direct contradiction of the **great weight of biblical evidence** makes it clear to an honest Bible interpreter that baptism FOLLOWS salvation but does not **secure** it. It is our first act of obedience, but it does NOT save.

Verses on Spiritual (vs. Water) Baptism: ~Ac. 19:3-5; Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27; Eph. 4:5; Col. 2:12.

Other Key Challenge Verses: Ac. 22:16, ~Tit. 3:5; Heb. 10:22.

2. Verbal Public Confession

Does one have to publicly tell people of their conversion before they are saved? If they prayed to receive Jesus (i.e., trusted Christ) but were suddenly struck with a heart attack and died, where would they go—to heaven or hell?

The main verse proffered by those who believe the answer is “yes” is Romans 10:9-10. A *very similar grammatical pattern* happens as was found in Acts 2:38. The confession naturally follows, as is addressed in verse 9. However, when verse 10 details the process *more precisely* we see the *exact* breakdown, where **faith** leads to **justification**/salvation (“righteousness”), *confession following* as expected in **sanctification** (i.e., second-tense “salvation”). Furthermore, v. 11 only mentions believing, v. 12 talks of calling on Christ (a synonym for faith), v. 14 more specifically indicates that when you believe, you call on Him through prayer, v. 16 speaks of heeding the Gospel (i.e., believing the message), and v. 17 mentions faith alone. The clear conclusion is that **faith alone** saves, and confessing one’s faith to others is an ongoing and needed act of *sanctification*.

If a person trusted Christ and *is confessing Him* to others, **WE** (as compared to God) believe they are saved, because their **internal** change is being **externally expressed** (as with *water baptism*). **Heart faith** got them saved, and **verbal confession** makes them more Christ-like—the **expected outcome** of a true salvation (whether testifying to conversion or actual evangelism).

Another verse often cited to claim that public confession is required for salvation is Mt. 10:32. This verse is addressed to **believers**, in a discipleship/*sanctification* context (vv. 24-25, 34-39), and teaches that if a Christian denies Jesus in this life (i.e., in sanctification), Christ will **deny his prayers, and him blessings**, as a result. And as we see in the confession of II Tim. 2:11-13, even if we deny Christ in this life, **God remains faithful**, for He cannot deny Himself (i.e., “eternal security”). He has made a promise and commitment to Himself to *save to the uttermost* those who trust in Christ, and He will not go back on his word, even though we, like Peter three times before the cock crowed, may **deny Him**.

Public **confession is a great thing** to do, and **faith naturally speaks**. However **speech is the outgrowth** of faith, **not its synonym**. Believers are **commanded** and **called** to confess Christ, and **we should!** But doing so **apart from trusting Christ** will **never save anyone**. Tares, false brethren and “confessors” as opposed to possessors confess a salvation they have never experienced. **We, on the other hand, confess what we believe**, but one **must believe before** they have something to **speak** about. (II Cor. 4:13)

See also: Jn. 12:42 (where people believed/were saved, yet were NOT confessing Christ).

3. Good Works

Are there any *good deeds* a person *has to* perform **before** he is a Christian? Besides trusting/receiving Christ, **must a person do any deeds** in order for **God** to consider **him saved?**

The main verse espoused by those who believe the answer is “yes” is **James 2:21-25**. That book was **written to Christians** (1:1, 9, 16, 19, 2:2, 5, 21, 3:1,10, 4:11, 5:7, 9-10, 19)—**not** to tell **lost people how to get saved!** As we learned in the “Three Tenses of Salvation” section, the word “justified,” **here**, refers to **middle-tense** salvation (i.e., “sanctification;” vv. 21, 24-25).

The book of James’ **over-arching purpose** is to show **believers** how to be **sanctified** (i.e., how to *grow up* in the Lord). James uses the following **word pictures** to demonstrate that **purpose**: Perfection/maturity and completion, approved, life vs. death, saving the soul; Achieving the righteousness of God, being doers of the word, useful faith, not stumbling, fulfilling the Law, living by the law of Christ and liberty, decreased fleshliness and worldliness, true and useful religion, godly (vs. worldly) wisdom, commitment, humility and repentance, being the friend of God, submission to God, turning a sinning brother around, various specific ethics injunctions, etc.

Although mere **intellectual assent** to a set of beliefs or propositions does not save anyone (vv. 19-20), those advocating that James 2 teaches works are required for one’s faith to be true should back off that assertion when they read that their view would teach that **giving food or money** to a needy Christian brother is **required for salvation** (vv. 14-17). And as we have said before, giving it to a “brother” means the giver is already a “brother,” or Christian (i.e., saved).

History also **confirms** this interpretation. **Abraham was saved 30 years or so earlier** than the **event mentioned in vv. 21-24**. He was **matured** by his later offering of Isaac *test*, but his

salvation (evidenced as a *first* in that day, by **circumcision**) came **much EARLIER**. Having faith from God to do a certain thing, and not doing it is sin for a believer. However, if we obey the faith God gives us we are thereby **matured** up into greater Christ-likeness, and pass that test. And, as my friend Tom Eckman has noted concerning v. 26, a dead and dormant body had to have at one time had life and the spirit within it, even though it does not presently.

The Bible teaches that salvation is NOT earned by works. **To require a lifetime of works in order to qualify for salvation IS salvation by works** and would cause Christianity to lose one of its most distinguishing features from all other **religions**—salvation as the *free gift* of God. Christians are expected and enabled to live **unto** good works all their lives, but that is because they **WERE** saved—not in order to get saved. (Rom. 3:20, 31-4:8; I Cor. 4:7; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-10, etc.)

4. Tongues

Does the Bible teach that *everyone* who gets saved **will speak in tongues** as proof of their salvation? Will you go to hell if you didn't speak in tongues upon conversion? *If* that were a salvation requirement, all Christians of all ages would have spoken in tongues, and those who didn't would go to *hell*.

The main verse advocated by those who believe that tongues are required for salvation is Mark 16:15-18. Their position is easily refuted by noting how many times in Acts (not to mention the Gospels) a person got saved and **did not start speaking in tongues**.

Mark 16 speaks to evidence some believers exhibited at the *initiation* of the Church to corroborate their experience to people who might *doubt* it yet have no New Testament with which to confirm or deny the claims. **Manifestations** of salvation (in any form) can never be *substituted* or *confused* with **requirements** for receiving it. And if you read all the book of Acts, it is only the minority of evangelism encounters which manifested this gift—NOT the norm!

It's also interesting that those who cling to this verse for support **never** seem to *fully follow* it in resurrecting people from the dead, and few of them ever **drink poison** or **handle snakes**. Also, the verse says these are **signs** which **ACCOMPANY** those who HAVE believed. Even if they were to have been normative experiences, faith (and hence, salvation) **precedes** these signs of faith' *existence*.

The **clearest of all refutations** is found in I Cor. 12:28-31, where the Greek (i.e., original language) makes it clear that the answer to, “all do not speak in tongues, do they?” is **emphatically “No!”**

5. Baptism of the Spirit (as a “**Second Blessing**”)

Does the Bible teach that a person must experience a “second blessing” of receiving the Holy Spirit and His **power AFTER** salvation? Is the initial experience of being indwelt with the Spirit all that's required to be a Christian, or is a *second work* of grace necessary, sometimes with *miraculous* manifestations?

Those who espouse the “*second blessing*” theory usually **confuse** indwelling with infilling, and **misuse the historical examples** of the only recorded times when anyone received the Spirit post-conversion.

The Bible records **four distinct events** where the Spirit fell upon new believers **AFTER** they had believed in Christ. Theologians generally agree God was telling mankind that salvation is for every person, because the Spirit fell in this *unique way* on the **four major groups of people in that day**—full-Jews (Ac. 2:1-13), half-Jews (Samaritans—Ac. 8:14-17), fully-informed Gentiles (Ac. 10:1-46) and half-informed Gentiles (Ac. 19:6-7). [to paraphrase the category types from a sermon by the great Rev. John Bisagno of First Baptist Church, Houston, Texas]

It is very clear from the doctrinal sections of the New Testament—the Epistles—that **the Spirit’s reception is contemporaneous with receiving Christ**. When you receive Jesus you receive His Spirit. Also, it is always best to interpret experience in light of CLEAR doctrinal teaching, and to not make blanket conclusions from isolated, non-normal Bible events.

There certainly is a blessed and continual experience of the Spirit’s power in believers’ lives, typically called being “**filled with the Spirit!**” But a *second blessing of power after having trusted Christ*, though *special*, is **NOT salvific**, nor to be confused with the Spirit’s eternally sealing and forever *immersing* or **baptizing** us in one body at salvation. (I Cor. 12:13; Eph. 4:5, ~Gal. 3:26-27; I Pet. 3:21, etc.) The following verses *make it clear* that the Holy Spirit is received at salvation. (Rom. 5:5-6, 8:9, 16; I Cor. 12:13, 2:12; II Cor. 1:21-22; Gal. 3:1-3, 26-27; Eph. 1:13, 4:30; II Tim. 1:14; I Jn. 5:11-13, etc.)

6. Endurance

Does a person have to live a lifetime of holiness before we can be sure they were saved OR *can you be sure* of your salvation **the moment you receive Jesus**? Do other Christians have the right to doubt your conversion (or at least not encourage you to have assurance of salvation) until you are on your *deathbed*?

If so, how bad does one have to get before these doubts are appropriate? What about *occasional lapses*? Backsliding? **Serious sins**? Habitual serious sin? If ‘serious and habitual’ is your STANDARD, what about the many examples of Christians in the New Testament behaving quite morally reprehensibly where their salvation is not questioned? **See:** ADDITIONS/REPENTANCE/On Saviorhood Salvation

The primary passages used to claim endurance (i.e., life-long perseverance in good works) is *required* for salvation come from prophecy contexts. Enduring to the end is natural for and expected of a believer, but **not guaranteed**. God having saved us **IS** guaranteed, but our persevering in sanctification takes faithful effort. (Mt. 10:22, 24:13; I Cor. 6:9-11; 15:10; Phil. 2:2, 3:3-17; I Tim. 4:7; II Pet. 1:5⁺; II Cor. 6:1; I Th. 4:1, 10; Tit. 3:14, etc.)

It is not that believers are not expected to endure to the end, but **their enduring is not what saves them**—Christ saves them upon believing faith. Their salvation status before God WILL persevere to the end of life, and to eternity. However, the Bible *repeatedly* exhorts us to **make every effort** to be able to say, as did Paul, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. (II Tim. 4:7-8).

If a lifetime of good deeds is required to be saved, salvation is the **result of good works**, and not by grace through faith.

7. Other (Various & Sundry Traditions)

I hope my former challenges to asserted “additions to faith” will make it obvious that acts in this “Other” category are also **not required** for salvation. Most if not all of these are **never stated** as required, but lost and newly-saved people *could get the impression they were*, as they are often *insisted upon* in *public* evangelistic presentations.

Examples:

- Walk the aisle and come forward to *speak with a preacher*.
- Publicly confess specific sins you have committed.
- Raise your hand (i.e., to indicate you have *prayed to receive Christ*).
- Close your eyes and bow your head, before saying “*the sinner’s prayer*” **word for-word** as the preacher states it.*
- Make restitution with people you have offended.
- Get your life “straightened out.”
- Seek the Lord (a great thing to do; tell them **how** to actually **FIND** Him by telling them the Gospel, and invite them to respond!).
- Attend our church before you can hear the Gospel (never stated, but the clear though implied “message” of much of what is nowadays called “evangelism”). **See:** Relationship Evangelism Errors
- Get to know a Christian *decently well* before you can **hear** the Gospel. Another clear but implied message. Again, **See:** Relationship Evangelism Errors
- Study world religions (so you can supposedly make a more informed and ‘objective’ decision).
- Take a course or hear a Bible study on the Book of John before you are “**prepared**” to hear the Gospel. **God prepares hearts**, and we should pray for that, but don’t withhold the Bread of Life to a spiritually **starving person**, waiting until he knows more than is necessary... the contents of the Gospel, *powerfully presented in love*.
- Tell God you’re sorry you’ve sinned against Him and **promise you won’t do it again**. You can’t fulfill that promise *perfectly*, so you’d be lying, and God does not require you to sin in order to be saved. He never asked you to **feel** anything, but to **trust** His Son for *eternal life*.*
- Etc.: Feel free to add to this list as you, **sadly**, hear other *misrepresentations* of the Gospel.

* The only issues listed above I wish to address more specifically are the “**sinner’s prayer**” and “**tell God you’re sorry**” concepts. These two do get close to being biblical, if properly interpreted and defined.

a) **On the “Sinner’s Prayer.”** There is no prescribed prayer one recites in order to get saved. However, when a sinner sincerely from his heart wants and is asking for salvation to be given him, **this is done, by faith, through prayer**. Whatever the words—if based on an accurate Gospel presentation and proper understanding—the content of that prayer is commonly called the “the sinner’s prayer” and that praying for salvation IS a *legitimate activity* to engage in.

Does one have to pray to God in order to be saved? Some theologians teach that you

can have faith in God and not pray or ask for His salvation. Although to receive salvation, **faith alone** is required, and *perhaps* one could believe without *outwardly expressing* it to others, if one never expresses their desire to be saved and forgiven, to God, and therefore never trusts Him to answer that prayer, it's hard to believe he has truly exercised saving faith in God for salvation.

- b) **On Feeling Sorry for Your Sins.** Feeling sorrow about your being a sinner is not a bad **emotion** to experience! We all need more of it. If that feeling is the work of God's Holy Spirit convicting your heart through the word of God that you are a sinner and need salvation, that's a legitimate experience. However, salvation is not apologizing for your sins. It IS acknowledging that we have done **morally wrong**—that we are **sinner**s, realizing that Christ died to pay our **deserved punishment** and asking God to forgive and completely and eternally save us from that condition and its consequences. Emotions can be involved.

On the other hand, I maintain that anyone who has the *conscious* heart attitude, “I'll just receive Christ and stay committed to being sinful,” is **NOT under the conviction of God,** and therefore is, at present, not in an savable condition. That attitude depicts a person with whom God has yet to fully work in their heart and life to **prepare them** to receive salvation. (Ex.: Jn. 1:12-13's “will of the flesh” **un**-spiritual decisions)

8. **Repentance/Turn,**
9. **Surrender/Commitment,**
10. **Faith in Christ Alone**

These last three purported *conditions for salvation*—repentance, surrender and faith in Christ will introduce a subject too lengthy to address here in full, concerning the two major Gospels circulating within the *Church* (and *world*), often referred to as “**Lordship Salvation**” and **Saviorhood Salvation.**” [See a fuller discussion in the Appendix]

Both groups agree that the Church is far too uncommitted to Christ, lost people have a sin problem only **Christ** can solve, and only one of these views can be biblical; therefore the other must be a **false Gospel** and *not of God.* The danger of anyone **missing heaven** for having heard the wrong requirements for salvation is a *risk* no believer should ever place on a lost person (no matter how remote that possibility may be)! (Gal. 1:8)

The **major bone of contention** is whether lost people must undertake 3 steps (i.e., repent, surrender and believe) or only **one** (FAITH IN CHRIST) in order to be saved. *What do we tell lost people* when we EVANGELIZE, and is commitment to being a **life-long disciple** of Jesus Christ a **requirement** for receiving His **free gift**?

This question goes to the nature of salvation, whether, when and how one can be sure of their salvation and whether Christians are **guaranteed** to live a holy life till they die. These are *not* insignificant issues, and many books have been written to address the *specifics* of this controversy (some of which are listed in the **Bibliography**, below).

It is **NOT sufficient** for pastors to remain ignorant of this controversy, to not address it (or at least to not be *solid* in their own beliefs on the subject), or to use the **cover** of seeming to be a “**peace-maker**” to gloss over, merge or blur distinctions by offering evangelistic invitations with *smatterings of both* views alternated at various times!

For purposes of this website, the author's position will be CLEARLY STATED, but the extensive documentation, research and reasonings behind the his position (over 200 pages in length) *will not appear* here, in the interest of brevity (at least until a *later date*, if **extensive DETAIL** would be appropriate to this website's format).

I am most certainly a SAVIORHOOD SALVATION advocate! I lost my first career ministry position over this subject in 1986, and began a Ph.D. dissertation study on the subject thereafter (though only the research was completed). I **know** how serious the debate is, and how passionate people are on both sides! But since it pertains to the nature of **God's salvation**, issues of **Heaven and Hell**, and what we are to **say** in **evangelism**, it *should be no other way*.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I was saved at age 8, and it was *only* when I reached age 18 that—due to the *discipleship* efforts of a godly friend—I became *totally committed* to Christ. When God called me to salvation, it was **unmistakable**, and it came through a *proper* Gospel presentation at church. Although I have experienced **so many great things** since being totally committed, I will **never** be more *thankful* to God than I am for my initial salvation as a child!

That being said, my Saviorhood position has **NOTHING to do with** my *experiences*. Good theology is **never** derived from experience—experience merely corroborates good theology by activating that theology in one's life.

ON SAVIORHOOD SALVATION

I believe a person **receives eternal life** on the basis of **trusting God through Jesus Christ** to *eternally* save him. The moment one prays in faith, asking to be *forgiven of all their sins* (i.e., to accept or receive God's gift of salvation), he is **forever** saved. **God** and His **grace** are the source, and **faith** is the instrument.

How did I come to this position? Did I pull it out of *thin air*? No, I hold the Saviorhood Salvation position for the following Bible-based reasons:

1. **The Quantity and Clarity of "Faith Alone" Verses.** There are far too many verses stating faith as the only requirement (**over 220 total**). To say that faith, repentance and surrender are *always* expressed as being the same synonymous action is to be dishonest with the whole of what Scripture teaches. **See:** Salvation By Faith Verses, far below (and in the Appendix).
2. **The Bible Calls CHRISTIANS to Total Commitment to Jesus Christ.** Note how many times Epistles are addressed to identified believers/saints—**Christians**—educating them on salvation and theology, **THEN** calling them to total commitment!: ~Mt. 5:18; Rom. Chs. 6-7, 12:1-2, 13:12-14; I Cor. 15:33-34; II Cor. 6:16-7:1; Gal. 4:19, 5:1, 13-16, 24, 6:1, 9, Eph. 1:13, 19, 3:12, 17, 19, 4:1-3, 11-17, 22-23, 5:1, 5-10, 15-17; Phil. 1:6, 9, 24, 27-30, 2:1-4, 12, 15, 3:17, 4:1, 5, 9; Col. 1:9-11, 18, 23, 2:2, 5-6, 20, 3:1-10, 4:12, (17); I Th. 3:1-8, (4:1, 10, commitment can be *enhanced*); II Th. 2:15-17, I Tim. 6:12, 19; II Tim. (1:13), 2:19; Tit. 3:8, 14; Heb. 12:3-11; Jas. 4:1-10; I Pet. 1:22, 2:1-3, 3:15, 4:1-5; II Pet. 1:2-11, 3:14, much of I Jn.; Jude 1:1-4; Rev. 3:2, etc.
3. **CHRISTIANS Behaving Quite Morally Reprehensibly, Yet Their Salvation Is Not Questioned.** (Pv. 14:14); Mt. 24:12; Lk. 18:7-8; Ac. 5:3-5, 8:13, 18-24; Rom. 7:15-25; I Cor. 3:1-3, 12-15, 5:1-5 (sin worse than lost people and physical death as judgment on a Christian), 11:28-32; II Cor. 12:21; Col. 3:7-9; I Tim. 1:18-20 (a

spiritual train wreck), 4:16; II Tim. 4:1-5, 9-10 (Paul forsaken for a **world-loving Christian**); Heb. 5:11-14; Jas. 3:8-10, 4:1-8, 5:19-20; I Pet. 4:15 (**possible**, or prohibition wouldn't make *sense*); II Pet. 2:17-19; I Jn. 5:16-17; Rev. 3:15-16, etc.

4. **Repentance Verses Often Mis-Defined.** When you insert the typical (Ex.: Baptist) definition of “repent” in *EVERY* instance of that word’s derivative, the definition does not 100% of the time make sense, because “repentance” is *essentially* a “change of mind.” **THAT definition**, taken from the *original languages*, **does work 100% of the time**. A quick and **OBVIOUS EXAMPLE... GOD repented 37 out of 47 times** that word is used and translated “repent” in the Old Testament. **Has God ever sinned**, so as to need “repentance” the way **so MANY** define that term (i.e., a U-turn decision to renounce and forsake a sinful life)? Of course not.
5. **In the Bible, Salvation is Presented as a “Free Gift” (i.e., not conditional—except for faith, which is required—and NEVER by works).** (Jn. 4:10; Ac. 2:38, 8:20, 10:45, 11:17; Rom. 3:4, 5:15-17, 6:23; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-10, 4:7, 6:23; Heb. 6:4). Even that one faith response and condition is not a **work** which merits salvation. (Rom. 3:27)
6. **Salvation Occurs at a MOMENT in Time But LASTS FOR ETERNITY and Affects You Forever.** Want proof? Try the *thief on the cross* and the *Ethiopian Eunuch*, for starters! (Lk. 23:40-43; Ac. 8:35-39)
7. **The Bible Distinguishing “Justification” from “Sanctification” (though they are organically tied).** (I Cor. 1:6-7, ~II Th. 1:2-8; Tit. 2:11-13; I Pet. 1:3-9, 13-16, ETC.) **See:** GOSPEL/The Three Tenses of Salvation (and related chart)
8. **Assurance of Salvation is Promised the Moment One Trusts Christ, by the Holy Spirit (vs. AFTER a life-time of good works).** Salvation is **not** a process of life-long works, though **sanctification is**. Sanctificational good works may *buoy* your faith that you were saved, but they don’t change the **fact** that you **were** saved. Assurance of salvation is provided by God’s Spirit based on His word, and **God does not lie!** (Rom. 8:1-17; Tit. 1:2) **See also:** ASSURANCE, and Salvation By Faith Verses, below, especially Jn. 3;16, 18, 36, 5:24, 6:40, 47, 11;25-26, 20:31; Eph. 1:13; I Jn. 5:10-13, etc.
9. **Christ Calling the APOSTLES to Discipleship Sometimes LATE in Their Spiritual Walk.** (Jn. 2:1 vs. Jn. 8:31, 12:24-25, 13:35, 15:8; Lk. 9:23-24, 57-62, 14:26-31, etc.)
10. **“Disciples” Withdrawing from Christ (and their “losing salvation” or doubts about their ever having been “disciples” is never raised).** (Jn. 6:66-68)
11. **The Role of Rewards and Works in the “Christian Life.”** Christians are exhorted to **do good works**, and part of their “*payoff*” is rewards. Because **God decided** this concept, it is **NOT sinful selfishness** to desire heavenly rewards, and it is *more so stoic arrogance* to think you would do good (and evangelize) **ONLY** because you’re such a ‘good’ person (i.e., obedience from *obligation* alone). The Bible gives **thousands** of promises and godly incentives to obey God, and we’d have to ignore them (or tear them out of our Bibles) if that is the case. (Heb. 11:6, ETC) **See:** “Why Be Totally Committed to Jesus Christ?”
12. **Biblical Discipleship is a Life-Long Process.** Salvation (i.e., “justification”) does **NOT** take a lifetime for one to be certain it is **possessed**. (Mt. 28:18-20; Jn. 8:31, 13:35, 15:8; Mk. 1;17, etc.)

ALSO...

- The Bible shows a **RANGE of responses** *immediately* upon conversion, both good and bad. (Ac. 16:15, 31-34 vs. Ac. 8:13-24, etc.)
- **Faith** is the one “*step*” that is **not a work** at all. Faith is **letting God do ALL** the saving, and even your willingness to be saved is due to **His work** in your heart (though not *forced* upon you). (Rom. 3:27; I Cor. 4:7)
- “Repentance” can be a change of mind about a variety of things, including sin, but it is *necessary* in order to trust Christ—one must have a change of mind **so as to put their faith** in Jesus (i.e., a change of mind from whatever mind-set they held **prior to** believing). **See:** Bibliography (especially Cocoris and Hodges books)
- There is a difference between an **experiential-** and **positional disciple**. Some may phrase this the difference between a “believer” and a “disciple,” but the following verse tends to *negate* that **terminology distinction**—though not the **concept distinction**, unless Timothy’s mother was carnal: (Ac. 16:1)
- When you review the “10 Commandments of ‘FREE’ Eternal Salvation,” **requirements** start *stacking up!* Have you ever heard any evangelist **present them all** in one evangelistic invitation? For that matter, do you know anyone who has **met all** these requirements at salvation? *Are there no Christians on the earth*, if Lordship Salvation is consistent with its teaching (which applies **discipleship commands** to **salvation requirements**)?
- A difference can be made between **physical** and **spiritual followers** of Christ. Not all in the *throngs* of people who followed Jesus were believers, and **Christ called the apostles to full-time Christian service** the first contact He had with them. Is every believer called to full-time ministry because believers are to live committed to and following Christ? (Mt. 4:25, 8:1, 10, 19:2, 20:29, 34, etc.)
- Though the Corinthian challengers to Paul’s apostleship were instructed to ‘**test themselves** to see if they were in the faith,’ **all true believers** can have the joy and peace (i.e., “assurance”) that God saved them. No believer needs to *suffer* other’s **attacks** on their spiritual growth by instructing that they can never be sure till they die. A **stable sanctification** is founded upon a **sure and solid salvation**. (II Cor. 13:5-6, Rom. 5:1; Phil. 1:25, etc.)
- A **child-like faith** is what is *required* for salvation, and any **normal kid** can discern there is **no “free gift”** element to the leading Lordship Salvation proponent’s analogizing salvation to **joining the army...** free to join but a very costly commitment. **Salvation IS free**, and even the costliness of discipleship is **far outweighed** by its *benefits*, if we “understand the grace of God in truth.” (Mk. 10:14-15; Col. 1:3-6; II Pet. 3:18; Rom. 5:1-2, ETC.)
- **The “ISSUE”** addressed by salvation is **FORGIVENESS of sins**. If you could live the remainder of your life perfectly, you would still not enter heaven without the forgiveness of sins Christ offers. Christ **paid the penalty** for sins, and once He is received, we have the **power** to live **victoriously**. (I Cor. 15:3-4; Eph. 1:17; Col. 1:14, etc.)

Disclaimers

- **License.** I am NOT teaching that Christians should tell lost people to keep living sinfully and just ‘throw in’ Christ *to boot*. A lost person who is under the conviction of God knows he is a sinner, that sin is deadly (eternally, and otherwise) and throws himself on the grace of God for **forgiveness**. (i.e., “throws” used as a synonym for *faith*). (Heb. 10:26; I Cor. 15:34; I Pet. 4:3, etc.)
- **Actual ‘Lordship Salvations.’** Lordship commitment to Christ **can occur at the same time as salvation** (Paul, for example). However, even Paul **credited *faith*** as the instrument of his salvation. (Ac. 26:11-19; II Tim. 1:12)
- **Distinctions.** God wants all Christians committed to Him, and He wants **all men saved**, and committed to Him. **HOW** that occurs, in my Saviorhood viewpoint, is to first **be saved**. Discipleship (in its various forms, **See:** Relational Discipleship Defined and Described) **follows *after*** water baptism, which follows conversion. (I Tim. 2:4; Mt. 28:18-20, etc.)
- **Tares.** There is no doubt that people can **profess** to be *Christians* and not **possess Christ**. “Tares” do exist and **lost people can lie** about having been saved. (Mt. 13:25-40; II Cor. 11:13, ~Tit. 1:16)

“Saviorhood” is NOT (as Alleged)...

- A 2-STEP SALVATION “PROCESS** any more than receiving a gift and using that gift can be seen as two steps to **receiving that gift**.
- “**SAND-BAGGING” THE LOST** as to the **real COST** they have to pay. Even sanctification is **by grace through faith**, and though full commitment is required, the **joys and blessings** truly make it a **positive life-long experience** we would *never* consider “bad news” or try to hide from *anyone*. It’s just not the message of “initial salvation.” (i.e., justification).
- “**CHEAP GRACE,**” because the gift of grace was **so COSTLY TO OUR SAVIOR!** Also, any *attitude* either presenting the Gospel as **cheap** and worthless, or treating it’s reception as such, is merely evidence the evangelist or lost person is **NOT under the convicting power** and *hand of God!* (I Th. 2:13)
- “**EASY BELIEVISM.**” as **salvation is impossible** for man (Lk. 18:18-30), takes God’s miraculous intervention (through the *Gospel*), and, on a human level, it is not “easy” for someone to trust in a Person who lived 2,000+ years ago, and to believe He lived perfectly, is **alive today**, and will come live inside them forever if they will simply ask for that gift (in faith, based on a 2,000+ year old **holy Book!**)! (Jn. 1:12-13, 15:16, I Cor. 5:10, etc.)
- “**TEMPORARY FAITH.**” How long does it take to receive a **gift** or for a **baby** to be born? One is eternally sealed upon salvation, and it is NOT that thereafter you disbelieve, but salvation (i.e., ‘first tense’) is **NOT** a life-long process—that’s **sanctification** (or ‘second tense’ salvation). The *BETTER question* for Lordship Salvationists is *how valuable temporary commitment* is, when any lapses or backsliding makes one **no longer qualified** as a disciple, though they teach being fully committed to Christ as Lord of your life is required for salvation.
- “**ETERNAL LIFE INSURANCE.**” To be sure, **eternity is secured**, but no Saviorhooder I

know ever encourages or promotes or condones believers *living in sin* once they are saved. **Because we are citizens** of heaven, we are to **live like it**.

---“**ANTINOMIAN**” OR “**GRACE ABUSE**.” **See:** immediately-preceding sub-point.

---**A GOSPEL CONTRARY TO CHRIST’S GOSPEL**. The Epistles do not contradict the Gospels, and if the more theological portions of the New Testament explain salvation as distinct from (though *organically tied* to) sanctification, our understanding and interpretation of history and experience needs to *comport* with these teachings.

---**INTELLECTUAL ASSENT OR A MERE EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE**.

We are **personally, sincerely** and “really and truly” (in spiritual actuality) **receiving God the Son** into our hearts. Ultimately, the only difference between a lost and saved person is Christ within—the hope of glory. (Col. 1:27)

---**TEACHING THAT CHRIST IS SAVIOR BUT IS NOT LORD**. He is **Lord (God) of all** (i.e., deity and divinity). He just may not be *personally lording over* the life of all believers until they *submit* and *relate to* Him in that position.

---**A THEOLOGY WHICH ENCOURAGES OR TEACHES CHRISTIANS TO LIVE CARNALLY**. If you haven’t gotten that sense from reading this website, you must have just started reading it at this *current sentence*! We simply believe that **salvation** is a free gift, accepted by faith, and **discipleship** is a call to **all believers**, facilitated by growth and exposure to the word of God, and exhorted and encouraged by maturer Christians **discipling** less mature believers, the way a natural parent would feed a baby.

CONCLUSION

In *summary*, trying to solve the prevalent **carnality problem** in the Church (especially in America) with a **false solution** will *never work*! The solution to this problem is to **disciple believers**—something this website has provided instruction for and which pastors and leaders *rarely do* any more in the fashion proposed by this website and based on Christ’s model.

Lordship Salvation may keep some people out of heaven. If followed in a *logically consistent* manner, it starts believers’ sanctification on a works basis. The thinking goes like this: works won’t save, but you must **keep them up** or you never were saved (or lost your salvation somewhere along the way, if Arminian). Both legalism and license lead to increased sinfulness—though from *opposite* directions and intentions—and only the **liberty** brought about **in Christ**, on the basis of faith can truly **free** a person to live as God would have them live.

SOME THINGS TO PONDER...

- Philosophically, the **greatest gift** any human could ever give a “god” would be to give that god “their life,” or live totally committed to that deity. Salvation is not a **gift exchange**, and all you can offer God is **sin**. (Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:9-12)
- By analogy, if a wealthy person were to offer you a **Maserati** automobile as a Christmas gift, but **made you promise** you’d read the owner’s manual, wash it every 2 weeks, change the oil every 3,000 miles, do regular tune-ups and maintenance, and **be sure you drove and used it as your habit of life**, can *anyone in their right mind* call that a “free” gift (as opposed to a conditional one)? It is precisely because **salvation is a *miracle*** and a **gift**, and something we cannot

qualify for, earn, or even trade our own life for that we live the remainder of our lives *unto God*, out of gratitude for 'so great a salvation!'

- Gandhi—as “*good*” a man as he was—certainly made a decision to not live sinfully and to live ethically, and you see where those two decisions (**apart from faith in Christ**) got him! Sure his ethics varied some from Christian ethics, but even a commitment to obey ALL God’s laws and to never break a one will never save you.
- Is the Lordship Salvation Gospel “**good news?**” (i.e., you can be saved if you’ll only commit to doing things even people under the law could not do?). Or, will you alter these commands to say God only wants you willing to do them, but doesn’t expect you to actually do them, in which case He commands us to **lie** by making promises we cannot keep?
- **Apart from faith in Christ**, what is the difference between the Christian Gospel presented by *Lordship Salvationists* and the message of **how to get to heaven EVERY OTHER RELIGION** espouses?

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* = date or city/state uncertain at this time.

SELECT SALVATION BY FAITH VERSES

He came for a witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that **all might believe** through him. (Jn. 1:7)

But as many as **received** Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who **believe in His name**, (Jn. 1:12)

This beginning of His signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory, and His **disciples believed in Him**. (Jn. 2:11)

Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, **many believed in His name**, beholding His signs which He was doing. (Jn. 2:23)

that **whoever believes** may in Him **have eternal life**. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that **whoever believes** in Him should not perish, but **have eternal life**. (Jn. 3:15-16)

"**He who believes in Him** is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because **he has not believed in the name** of the only begotten Son of God. (Jn. 3:18)

"**He who believes** in the Son **has eternal life**; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." (Jn. 3:36)

And from that city **many of the Samaritans believed** in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, "He told me all the things that I have done." (Jn. 4:39)

And **many more believed** because of His word; and they were saying to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that **we believe**, for we have heard for ourselves and know that this One is indeed the Savior of the world." (Jn. 4:41-42)

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and **believes Him who sent Me**, **has eternal life**, and does not come into judgment, but **has passed** out of death into life. (Jn. 5:24)

"How can you **believe**, when you receive glory from one another, and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God? Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have **set your hope**. For if you believed Moses, you would **believe Me**; for he wrote of Me. But if you **do not believe** his writings, how will you **believe My words**?" (Jn. 5: 44-47)

Jesus answered and said to them, "**This is the work of God, that you believe in Him** whom He has sent." They said therefore to Him, "What then do You do for a sign, that we may see, and **believe You**? What work do You perform? (Jn. 6:29-30)

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and **he who believes in Me** shall never thirst. But I said to you, that you have seen Me, and **yet do not believe**. (Jn. 6:35-36)

"For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." (Jn. 6:40)

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes has eternal life. (Jn. 6:47)

"But there are some of you who do not believe." For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him. (Jn. 6:64)

"And we have believed and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God." (Jn. 6:69)

For not even His brothers were believing in Him. (Jn. 7:5)

But many of the multitude believed in Him; and they were saying, "When the Christ shall come, He will not perform more signs than those which this man has, will He?" (Jn. 7:31)

But this He spoke of the Spirit, whom those who believed in Him were to receive; for the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified. (Jn. 7:39)

"No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he? (Jn. 7:48)

"I said therefore to you, that you shall die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins." (Jn. 8:24)

As He spoke these things, many came to believe in Him. Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; (Jn. 8:30-31)

"But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. Which one of you convicts Me of sin? If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? (Jn. 8:45-46)

Jesus heard that they had put him out; and finding him, He said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" (Jn. 9:35)

Jesus said to him, "You have both seen Him, and He is the one who is talking with you. And he said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped Him. (Jn. 9:37-38)

Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you do not believe; the works that I do in My Father's name, these bear witness of Me. But you do not believe, because you are not of My sheep. (Jn. 10:25-26)

"If I do not do the works of My Father, do not believe Me; but if I do them, though you do not believe Me, believe the works, that you may know and understand that the Father is in Me, and I in the Father." (Jn. 10:37-38)

And many believed in Him there. (Jn. 10:42)

and everyone who lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" (Jn. 11:26)

"And I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that Thou didst send Me." (Jn. 11:42)

"If we let Him go on like this, all men will believe in Him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation." (Jn. 11:48)

GET THE HINT?

"While you have the light, believe in the light, in order that you may become sons of light." These things Jesus spoke, and He departed and hid Himself from them. But though He had

performed so many signs before them, yet they were **not believing in Him**; that the word of Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, which he spoke, "LORD, WHO HAS **BELIEVED OUR REPORT?** AND TO WHOM HAS THE ARM OF THE LORD BEEN REVEALED?" For this cause **they could not believe**, for Isaiah said again, (Jn. 12:36-39)

Nevertheless **many even of the rulers believed in Him**, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; (Jn. 12:42)

And Jesus cried out and said, "**He who believes in Me** does not **believe** in Me, but in Him who sent Me. (Jn. 12:44)

"I have come as light into the world, that **everyone who believes** in Me may not remain in darkness. (Jn. 12:46)

"**Believe Me** that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; **otherwise believe on account of** the works themselves. (Jn. 14:11)

concerning sin, because **they do not believe** in Me; (Jn. 16:9)

for the Father Himself loves you, because you have loved Me, and **have believed** that I came forth from the Father. (Jn. 16:27)

"Now we know that You know all things, and have no need for anyone to question You; by this **we believe** that You came from God." Jesus answered them, "**Do you now believe?**" (Jn. 16:30-31)

for the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them; and **they received** them, and truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and **they believed** that Thou didst send Me. (Jn. 17:8)

"I do not ask in behalf of these alone, but for **those also who believe** in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; **that the world may believe** that Thou didst send Me. (Jn. 17:20-21)

And he who has seen has borne witness, and his witness is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, **so that you also may believe**. (Jn. 19:35)

Jesus said[^] to him, "Because you have seen Me, **have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed.**" (Jn. 20:29)

but these have been **written that you may believe** that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that **believing** you may **have life** in His name. (Jn. 20:31)

And as they went along the road they came to some water; and the eunuch said[^], "Look! Water! What prevents me from being baptized?" <And Philip said, "**If you believe with all your heart**, you may." And he answered and said, "**I believe** that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."> (Ac. 8:36-37)

And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a large number who **believed turned to the Lord**. (Ac. 11:21)

And when they had arrived and gathered the church together, they began to report all things that God had done with them and how He had **opened a door of faith** to the Gentiles. (Ac. 14:27)

and He made no distinction between us and them, **cleansing their hearts by faith**. (Ac. 15:9)

solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of **repentance toward God** and **faith in our Lord Jesus Christ**. (Ac. 20:21)

But some days later, Felix arrived with Drusilla, his wife who was a Jewess, and sent for Paul, and heard him **speaking about faith** in Christ Jesus. (Ac. 24:24)

to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by **faith** in Me.' "Consequently, King Agrippa, I did not prove disobedient to the heavenly vision, but kept declaring both to those of Damascus first, and also at Jerusalem and then throughout all the region of Judea, and even to the Gentiles, that they should **repent and turn to God**, performing deeds appropriate to repentance. (Ac. 26:18-20)

SEE A PATTERN?

through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of **faith** among all the Gentiles, for His name's sake, (Rom. 1:5)

even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for **all those who believe**; for there is no distinction; (Rom. 3:22)

whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood **through faith**. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed; (Rom. 3:25)

For we maintain that **a man is justified by faith** apart from works of the Law. (Rom. 3:28)

But to the one who **does not work, but believes in Him** who justifies the ungodly, **his faith** is reckoned as righteousness, (Rom. 4:5)

Is this blessing then upon the circumcised, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say, "**FAITH WAS RECKONED TO ABRAHAM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.**" (Rom. 4:9)

and he received the sign of circumcision, **a seal of the righteousness of the faith** which he had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised, that righteousness might be reckoned to them, and the father of circumcision to those who not only are of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the **faith** of our father Abraham which he had while uncircumcised. For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but **through the righteousness of faith**. For if those who are of the Law are heirs, **faith is made void** and the promise is nullified; (Rom. 4:11-14)

For this reason **it is by faith**, that it might **be in accordance with grace**, in order that the promise may be **certain** to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the Law, but also to those who are **of the faith** of Abraham, who is the father of us all, (Rom. 14:16)

Therefore **having been justified by faith**, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have **obtained our introduction by faith into this grace** in which we stand; and we exult in hope of the glory of God. (Rom. 5:1-2)

What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, attained righteousness, even **the righteousness which is by faith**; but Israel, pursuing a law of righteousness, did not arrive at that law. Why? Because **they did not pursue it by faith**, but as though it were by works. They stumbled over the stumbling stone, (Rom. 9:30-32)

But the **righteousness based on faith** speaks thus, "DO NOT SAY IN YOUR HEART, 'WHO WILL ASCEND INTO HEAVEN?'" (that is, to bring Christ down), (Rom. 10:6)

But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"—that is, **the word of faith** which we are preaching, (Rom. 10:8)

So **faith comes from hearing**, and hearing by the word of Christ. (Rom. 10:17)

And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, **that your faith** should not rest on the wisdom of men, but **on the power of God**. (I Cor. 2:4)

nevertheless knowing that a man is **not justified by the works of the Law but through faith** in Christ Jesus, even **we have believed** in Christ Jesus, that we may **be justified by faith** in Christ, and **not by the works of the Law**; since by the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified. (Gal. 2:16)

This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by **hearing with faith**? (Gal. 3:2) [hearing God's voice prior to believing is God's conviction]

So then **those who are of faith** are blessed with Abraham, the **believer**. (Gal. 3:9)

in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Gal. 3:14)

But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin, that the **promise by faith** in Jesus Christ might be given **to those who believe**. But before **faith** came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that **we may be justified by faith**. But now that **faith has come**, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God **through faith** in Christ Jesus. (Gal. 3:22-26)

For this reason I too, **having heard of the faith** in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints, (Eph. 1:15)

and may be found in Him, not having a righteousness of my own derived from the Law, but **that which is through faith** in Christ, the righteousness which comes from God on the basis of faith, (Phil. 3:9)

since we **heard of your faith** in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; (Col. 1:4)

having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him **through faith** in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. (Col. 2:12)

For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in **every place your faith** toward God has gone forth, so that we have no need to say anything. (I Th. 1:8)

But we should always give thanks to God for you, brethren beloved by the Lord, because God has chosen you from the beginning for **salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith** in the truth. (II Th. 2:13)

and that we may be delivered from perverse and evil men; for **not all have faith**. (II Th. 3:2)

GOT A CLUE?

And yet for this reason I found mercy, in order that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience, as an **example for those who would believe** in Him for eternal life. (I Tim. 1:6)

and the grace of our Lord was more than abundant, with the **faith** and love which are found in Christ Jesus. (I Tim. 1:14)

For I am mindful of the **sincere faith** within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois, and your mother Eunice, and I am **sure** that it is in you as well. (II Tim. 1:5)

and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to **give you the wisdom** that leads to salvation through **faith** which is in Christ Jesus. (II Tim. 3:15)

Paul, a bond-servant of God, and an apostle of Jesus Christ, **for the faith** of those chosen of God and the knowledge of the truth which is according to godliness, (Tit. 1:1)

because I hear of your love, and of the **faith** which you have toward the Lord Jesus, and toward all the saints; (Phm. 1:5)

And again, "I WILL PUT MY **TRUST** IN HIM." And again, "BEHOLD, I AND THE CHILDREN WHOM GOD HAS GIVEN ME." (Heb. 2:13)

For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by **faith** in those who heard. (Heb. 4:2)

Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of **faith** toward God, (Heb. 6:1)

let us draw near with a sincere heart in **full assurance of faith**, having our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. (Heb. 10:22)

fixing our eyes on Jesus, the **author and perfecter of faith**, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Heb. 12:2)

who **through Him are believers** in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that **your faith** and hope are in God. (I Pet. 1:21)

Now for this very reason also, applying all diligence, **in your faith** supply moral excellence, and in your moral excellence, knowledge; (II Pet. 1:5)

But you, beloved, **building yourselves up on your most holy faith**; praying in the Holy Spirit; (Jude 1:20)

FIGURED IT OUT YET?

Salvation is By Faith!

NEED I SAY MORE?

FAITH SYNONYMS: Trust, believe, rely/reliance, depend, lean, ask, come to, join self to, eat, drink, receive, turned to the Lord, eat His flesh, drink His blood, call on the Lord, entrust, etc.

See: Mt. 11:(28), 13:(20-23), 18:(3-4), 19:(25-26), 21:(31-32); Mk. 1:15, 4:(16-20), 10:(14-15), 16:16-17; Lk. 8:(12-15), 18:(16-17), 27, 22:67, 23:42-43; Jn. 1:7, 11-12, 2:23, 3:12, 15, 18, 36, 4:48, 5:24, (40), 46-47, 6:28-29, (53-54, 58), 8:24, 9:35-38, 10:26, 37-38, 41-42, 11:26-27, 42, 45, 48, 12:11, (40), 42, 44, 46-47, 14:10-12, 16:9, 27, 17:20, 19:35, 20:31; Ac. 2:21, (41), 44, 4:4, 5:14, 8:12-14, 37, 10:45, 11:(1), 17, 21, 13:12, 39, 41, 48, 14:1-2, 23, 15:5, 7, 9, (19), 16:1, (14), 31, 17:12, 34, 18:8, 27, 19:2, 18, 21:20, 25, 24:24, 26:18, 28:24, (28); Rom. 1:5, 16, 3:3, 22, 25-27, 30-31, 4:3, 24, 9:33, 10:4, 9-11, 14, 16, 13:11, 16:(26); I Cor. 2:5, 7:13-14, 15:2, 11, 14; II Cor. 1:(10), 3:(16), 4:13; Gal. 3:6-9, 14, 22-24, 26; Eph. 1:(12), 13, 15, 19, 2:8, 3:12; Phil. 1:14, 29, 3:9; Col. 1:4, 2:12; I Th. 1:5-6, 8, 2:10, 13; II Th. 1:10, 2:(10), 12-13, 3:2; I Tim. 1:(13-14), 16, 3:16, 4:3, 10, 12, 5:16, 6:2; II Tim. 1:5, 12, 3:15; Tit. 1:15, 3:8; Phm. 1:5-6; Heb. 2:13, 4:2-3; Jas. (1:3, 2:1); I Pet. 1:8, 21, 2:6-7, 3:(21); II Pet. 1:5; I Jn. 3:23, 4:16, 5:1, 4-5, (9), 10, (11-12),13, (20); Jude 1:20, etc.

STATEMENTS AND MISSTATEMENTS OF THE GOSPEL

“If we gave even half of them to an unsaved person, which and what would he be expected to believe?”

- (1) Repent, believe, confess your sin to God, and confess Him before men and you will be saved.
- (2) The clearest statement of the Gospel in the New Testament is found in Luke 9:23: ‘If any man wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.’
- (3) Perhaps the most comprehensive invitation to salvation in the epistles comes in James 4:7-10: ‘Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands you sinners; and purify your hearts you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you.’
- (4) May the Lord reveal to the sinners that the only way for them to be saved from their sins is to repent with a godly sorrow in their hearts to the Lord.
- (5) Utter the prayer of the prodigal son—ask Jesus to be your Lord and Master.
- (6) Come forward and follow Christ in baptism.
- (7) Place your hand in the nail-scarred hands of Jesus.
- (8) Find Christ by praying through to Him.
- (9) Believe in Him, trust Him; Accept Him, commit your life to Him.
- (10) We have the warning of Christ that He will not receive us into His kingdom until we are ready to give up all, until we are ready to turn from all sin in our lives.
- (11) God offers eternal life freely to sinners who will surrender to Him in humble, repentant faith.
- (12) Do we literally have to give away everything we own to become Christians? No, but we have to be willing to forsake all.
- (13) Matthew 7:13-14 is pure Gospel” ‘Enter by the narrow gate...’
- (14) No one can receive Christ as his Savior while he rejects Him as his Lord.
- (15) Give your heart to Christ.

Not all these statements are incorrect or equally good or bad. But they are not saying the same thing.” “...words are the means we use to explain the Gospel to others. Therefore, a correct choice of words is important, even essential in stating the Gospel well.”

So Great Salvation: What It Means to Believe In Jesus Christ, pp. 23-24, by Charles C. Ryrie (Victor Books: U.S.A.), 1989

ETERNAL SECURITY

Let's first make a distinction between “**eternal security**” and “**assurance of salvation.**” The former is a **fact**—that Christians will remain saved from their day of salvation to eternity. The latter is the **confidence** we have regarding that fact's *truthfulness*, which can *wane*, with doubt and sinful lapses. The Holy Spirit GIVES this assurance—it's supernatural. (Rom. 8:16; I Jn. 5:10-13; Heb. 11:1)

The fact (eternal security) is fundamental to a stable and growing Christian life—a proper *foundation* upon which to build. Some people believe there is a place for doubting *very sinful* people's salvation, and *lapses* in confidence *may* be normal in some circumstances, but one has to know that they were saved by God, and that knowledge certainty is based on the **promises** of God's word—promises which never change. The Holy Spirit residing within bears *inner witness* to the certainty of our salvation, and **God never lies** or un-does His miraculous work. Know for certain that if you trusted Christ you **already have** eternal life. (II Cor. 13:5; Rom. 8:16, ETC.)

The main issue often debated is whether one who has been saved can ever lose that salvation. I hold strongly to the *well-established* and *Scripturally justified* position that once one is saved, they are saved forever. That's what **eternal** life is, in its *quantitative* (as distinguished from its *qualitative*) sense. The *overwhelming weight* of biblical evidence supports this view!

Let's view some of the Bible's **MANY** clear passages on the security of our salvation, and YOU determine whether the **few** proffered verses offered by the opposing view are being interpreted correctly:

KEY ASSURANCE OF SALVATION VERSES:

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whoever believes may in Him **have** eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but **have** eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (**Jn. 3:14-18**)

“He who believes in the Son has *eternal* life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.” (**Jn. 3:36**)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.” (**Jn. 5:24**)

“Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes **has** eternal life.” (**Jn. 6:47**)

The one who believes in the Son of God **has** the witness in himself; the one who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed in the witness that God has borne concerning His Son. And the witness is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son **has the life**; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may **know** that you have eternal life. (**I Jn. 5:10-13**)

Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL **NEVER DESERT YOU**, NOR WILL I EVER **FORSAKE YOU**," (**Heb. 13:5**)

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give eternal life to them, and **they shall never perish**; and **no one** shall snatch them out of My hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and **no one is able** to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one." (**Jn. 10:27-30**)

However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him... The **Spirit Himself bears witness** with our spirit that we **are** children of God, (**Rom. 8:9, 16; I Jn. 4:13**)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is **imperishable** and *undefiled* and **will not fade away**, *reserved* in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (**I Pet. 1:3-5**)

See also: **Mt.** 19:29, 28:20; **Lk.** 10:20, 23:43; **Jn.** 6:35-40, 44, 51, 53-54, 58, 8:(52), 10:(14, Cf.: Gal. 4:9), 11:26, (50), 17:(6, 9); **Ac.** 2:38, 15:8; **I Cor.** 2:12, 15:(22); **II Cor.** 1:22, 4:14, 5:1, 5, 10:7, 13:5-6; **Gal.** 3:2, 4:6, 6:(8); **Eph.** 1:(11), 13-14, 2:(8), 4:30; **Phil.** 3:(11), 20-21, 4:3; **Col.** 1:5, 2:14; **I Th.** 4:(8), 5:(9); **I Tim.** 4:(10); **II Tim.** 1:(1), 5, 12, 2:11, 13, 19; **Tit.** 1:2, 4; **Heb.** 6:19, 7:25, 12:28, 13:(14); **Rev.** 1:(5).

PROFFERED LOSE SALVATION VERSES

- (**Rev. 3:5**) "Not erase" is the inverse way of stating his name is **securely in the books**. No clear evidence is found that God *erases* what He has written.
- (**Rev. 3:16**) God in essence vomits at the sight of a luke-warm believer, *as should we*. Does that prove His "*swallowing*" us is a synonymous with salvation?
- (**Heb. 12:14**) The "sanctification" could easily refer to salvation, as has been the case before. (Ex.: I Pet. 1:2; Heb. 10:14; Eph. 5:26; I Cor. 6:11, etc.)
- (**Mk. 13:13**) Prophetic context (as likely with Rev. 3:16), and the salvation can be interpreted as physical preservation through *persecution*, instead of annihilation.
- (**Col. 1:21-23**) "If" is the expectation for believers and an **encouragement** so to do. Nothing is stated about losing eternal life "if" the opposite proves true (though it is implicitly discouraged). The word "if" can be interpreted either as expectant (i.e., equivalent to "**as**") or conditional (i.e., responding action will occur "**IF**" the precondition is met).
- (**I Cor. 6:8-11; Gal. 5:19-21**) Such behavior is not the normal expectation for believers' *behavioral habits!*

REASONS FOR ASSURANCE OF SALVATION

The following are Bible-based reasons why I believe it is **impossible** for a believer to lose his salvation:

1. **The Nature of God.** God is eternal, good, *unchanging* and He **never lies**. The gift exhibits the nature and character of the Giver—it is *eternal*. (Rom. 16:26; Ps. 34:8; Jas. 1:17; Heb. 6:18)
2. **The Promise of God.** God has promised salvation to all who believe and He is **faithful** to His Himself and His promises. (I Jn. 2:23, 25, 5:11-13, 18)
3. **The Power of God.** No one is **strong enough** to take us out of His hand/control.
4. **The Intercession of Christ.** Christ is continually praying for us, and His prayers are *effective*. (Rom. 8:34; Heb. 7:25)
5. **The Possession and Nature of “Eternal” Life.** God’s word says we (already) **HAVE** eternal life, and such life—abundant in quality—is also **eternal** in quantity. He did not give us “temporary life” but **eternal** life, and He didn’t lend it out to us it on *consignment*.
6. **The Irrevocability of God’s Gifts and Callings.** God doesn’t **un-do** His miraculous work, nor is He an “**Indian giver**.” (Rom. 11:29)
7. **The Biblical Word Pictures of Eternal Life.** As my College best friend, Tom Eckman, used to teach:
 - a) **We are Adopted Sons.** No good father *abandons* or *orphans* his adopted son. (Rom. 8:14-17; Gal. 4:4-7; Eph. 1:5)
 - b) **We Have Been Sealed with the Spirit.** Roman seals were very hard to break, but God’s Spirit is **much stronger** than mere human seals. (Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30)
 - c) **Our Certificate of Debt Has Been Paid.** You cannot *owe* a debt that’s been “**PAID IN FULL.**” (Col. 2:13-15)

The doctrine of eternal security does **NOT** teach that we are free to sin, or encourage any such behavior. **Quite the opposite.** We have been **freed** and enabled to live a life **pleasing** to God as *holy bond-slaves* of Jesus Christ, so we *need* to do so.

On Its Importance

Accepting the reality that **most people** BURN IN HELL forever is harder for those remaining *after* their passing than many can handle, so they *invent scenarios* to pacify themselves as if their loved one *went to heaven—especially* at funerals (Ex.: ‘He’s in a better place,’ ‘rest in peace,’ ‘now his suffering has ended,’ or ‘only God knows for sure where they are’). Sadly, if they were lost, **THEY DIDN’T**. If you’ve ever *watched* someone **nearing death**, it’s a sad, tragic and extremely negative thing. GOD DID NOT MAKE MAN TO DIE, but our sin caused it to be inevitable for ALL (except those Raptured).

If I was NOT sure I was going to heaven, or, conversely, if I thought I **might go to hell**, I would spend EVERY WAKING HOUR trying to change that. I **could not sleep** well at night, and I surely would not be at peace on my death bed. It is the ultimate *Satanic delusion* that causes anyone *not to feel the same* if they are unsure.

QUIET TIME: BIBLE STUDY

See: Quiet Time: Why have a Quiet Time, and Why Read the Bible?

QUIET TIME: PRAYER

See: Pointers for Prayer

FAITH-WALKING

Christians are called to “**walk by faith.**” (II Cor. 5:7; Rom. 1:17) This lifestyle is contrasted with the *average* way life is lived—“walking by sight.” It’s easy to understand the latter lifestyle—men make decisions and establish their desires and priorities according to what is **seen** in this world. Because *spiritual things*—especially God Himself—are **not seen**, the faith walk is **relying on God** to empower and lead your life based on what is seen in God’s word. A life *dependent* on God **IS** the normal Christian life!

Faith-walking is contrasted by two lifestyles the believer is not to be engaged in—“**law**” and “**license.**” Christianity is a relationship—not a “rule book”-type of religion where one tries to get close to God based on “good works” and merit. Sanctification is God living His life **through** you, working out His desires **in** you, your life being wrapped up in His and your living the Christian life **in His** power. It is **trusting**, not trying (i.e., in the *flesh* or self *will power*). It is letting go (of control) and letting God (be *in charge*). All these word pictures depict the same marvelous experience—**a life lived by faith.** (Gal. 2:20; Eph. 2:8-10; Col. 3:3, etc.)

I liken time lived “in the Spirit” (that is, Spirit-empowered) to an astronaut on a space walk. The stronger his endurance (and the greater his oxygen source), the **LONGER** he can remain free from the *confines* of the space capsule. With practice, The Christian should experience longer and longer periods of **not committing willful sins** he needs to confess and get re-Spirit-filled over. *That is true* freedom... God’s enablement to not have sin as **master over** you—free to live the life God *intended*. (Rom. 6:12-14)

If one has never experienced it, he may not be able to fully understand it. Perhaps my college pastor, Don Crossland, described the assurance of faith (i.e., **conviction**) best—as the gentle, patient urge, impression, sense, tugging, wooing or still small voice of God, which can cause ‘a check (or caution) in your spirit,’ and the supernatural ability to ‘*know that you know that you know*’ about a matter.

ILLUSTRATIONS

The adage, “**God said it, I believe it, that settles it**” is so true for the obedient Christian.

Evangelism Explosion has the illustration of sitting on a chair. You can *believe* all day that the chair is capable of supporting you, but until you **sit down**, you have never truly **trusted** in that chair. Some camps teach campers to fall back into the arms of their peers, to illustrate the principle.

Faith is putting trust in Bible **facts**. *Feelings* may or may not follow.

HOW TO WALK BY FAITH

How Do We Learn to “Walk by Faith?”

First, let’s **DEFINE** faith. Heb. 11:1 and 6 say:

“Now faith is the *assurance* of things hoped for, the *conviction* of things not seen.”

“And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must **believe** that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who *seek Him*.”

1

Faith *believes* God's word, and lives accordingly, progressively, under **grace** and by His power. Faith is *being sure* of what you hope for and don't see, based on the **Bible** empowered by God's **Spirit**.

Where Do We Get Faith?

Rom. 10:17 says:

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the **word of Christ**.”

What Does Having Faith in God Do for Us?

Mk. 11:22-24 says:

And Jesus answered[^] saying to them, "Have faith in God. Truly I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but **believes** that what he says is going to happen, **it shall be granted him**. Therefore I say to you, all things for which you **pray and ask**, believe that you have received them, and they *shall be granted* you.”

What is the Relationship Between Faith and Works?

Do works PROVE faith, or does true sanctificational faith **produce** works? If you read Hebrews 11, **ACTIONS come from** truly trusting God. In James 2—(a book written to Christians), James tells believers that **works inspired by faith are supposed to occur/happen**, or *that* faith is stifled, unproductive and not being exercised properly. The “salvation” being spoken of here is salvation from the **POWER** of sin (i.e., Sanctification), and if God gives you faith to do something, and you don't do it, to you it is sin, and your **faith** is NOT perfected until you **pass that test** and do what He gave you faith to do. This is **how works work with faith**. It is not works of the law, but truths personally God-given which instill faith (i.e., a conviction to do it), and the obedience based on faith implements that given command, whereby your faith is **matured** as are you, *morally*.

What Are the Imposters to Faith?

1. Doubt

The opposite of trusting God is **doubting** Him. You pray for something you need (or want) which is *consistent* with Scripture, tell Him you trust Him to provide it, and if it doesn't appear soon you're **wondering whether He's going to provide it**. If you did as Mark 11:22-24 says, you have already believed that you have it (i.e., in the spiritual realm), and may even have *confessed* that it was yours. Be patient, keep trusting. This, in part, is the testing of our faith, to see if we really mean it in sincerity. (Jas. 1:5-8)

2. Hope (if by itself)

Another false substitute to faith is hope ALONE. Hope is a great and positive thing, but it is no substitute to trusting God. Our eternal salvation gives us an eternal hope—an optimistic expectation of a sure future thing, but when you are living dependent on God to supply all your needs, it does no good to **ONLY hope He will do it**—that's *unbelief* in God if He said He would.

3. Worry

Anxiety and worry are further symptoms that one is *not* walking by faith. There is a calm peace about a person who is certain God is providing his needs. If God is thus providing, what is there to be worried about? Certainly life brings us *stresses*, but Philippians 4:6-8 teaches us how to deal peacefully with them. (Mt. 6:19-34, etc.)

4. Fear

One who is timid or lives fearfully is **not exercising their full confidence** in God. “God has not given us a spirit of fear” and timidity and “if **God is *for us*** who can be against us?” (II Tim. 1:7; Rom. 8:31). In fact, the Bible instructs us to only fear Him: “And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Mt. 10:28)

5. Self-Reliance

Probably the **most prominent** alternative to faith-walking is trusting in ourselves. To be the one in charge of your own life (‘calling the shots’) is the essence of *not* relying on God, and living *carnally*, because unless you are fully surrendered to God’s will, you are merely doing your own. (Pv. 3:5-7; II Cor. 3:5-6; Jn. 15:5)

6. Ignorance or Emotionalism

Finally, faith is not gullibility or naiveté. (Pv. 14:15).

Living by faith means claiming God’s promises for yourself. Find one that meets your needs, claim it in prayer, and **hold to that faith** until it’s yours in *this* realm. That **IS** the life of faith—humble *submission to* and *dependence upon* God and His power to supply all we need.

Some great verses and quotations on faith-walking are:

VERSES

“Trust in the LORD with *all* your heart, And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil.” (Pv. 3:5-7)

“while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are **not seen**; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are **eternal**.” (II Cor. 4:18)

And Jesus said to him, "If You can!" **All things** are possible to him who believes." (Mk. 9:23)

And He said[^] to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it shall move; and **nothing** shall be impossible to you. (Mt. 17:20)

"For **nothing** will be impossible with God." (Lk. 1:37)

See also: Mt. 14:22-33; I Cor. 2:9; II Cor. 4:13; Eph. 3:20; Jude 1:24; Heb.11:17-19

QUOTATIONS

“There are a number of kinds of faith. Everyone, saved and unsaved alike, has a natural, human faith. The above Scripture, however, is talking about a supernatural faith—a faith that believes with the heart rather than believing what

our *physical senses* may tell us. Faith, in other words, is grasping the unrealities of hope and bringing them into the realm of reality. And faith grows out of the Word of God...

You hope for physical strength to do the work you must do. Faith says, ‘The Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?’ (Ps. 27:1). **Faith will say about itself everything that the Word says**, for faith in God is simply faith in His Word...

“Many people want to receive and then believe they’ve got it. It doesn’t work that way, though. You have to **believe first**, and then you will receive.

“When Paul, writing to the Corinthians, said ‘And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity’ (I Cor. 13:13), he was not inferring that hope and faith are not important. Each has its place, and one cannot be *substituted* for another... Hope looks to the *future*. It is always future tense. Faith is **now**. Faith says, ‘I’ll receive the answer right now. I have it now.’ It is not hoping that gets the job done; it is **believing**.” –**Kenneth Hagin**, New Thresholds of Faith, p. 9, by Kenneth Hagin, (Kenneth Hagin Ministries, Inc.: Tulsa, OK), 1985

“Here is a formula for faith that you can make work for you: First, **have God’s word** for whatever you may be seeking; second, **believe** God’s word; third, refuse to consider the contradictory circumstances, or what your physical senses may tell you about it; and, fourth, give praise to God for the answer.” –Kenneth Hagin, New Thresholds of Faith, p. 25, by Kenneth Hagin, (Kenneth Hagin Ministries, Inc.: Tulsa, OK), 1985

Homework: Read Hebrews 11 and take notes on actions and attitudes prompted by faith (especially vv. 10-16, 17-19, 23-26 and 33-38)

MIND-RENEWAL

Closely related to faith-walking is knowing what God’s word says. If we are to live by God’s promises, we need to know what they are. This takes **mind renewal**. We are *completely* new creatures in Christ on the inside, but our mental habits and attitudes need *renewing*, and that begins with laying God’s word on our heart. (II Pet. 1:2-4; II Cor. 7:1, 1:20, 5:17; Rom. 12:1-2; Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10; Ps. 119:9-11, etc.)

The adage goes, “**garbage in, garbage out**,” and the Bible says “as a man thinks in his heart, so is he.” (Pv. 23:7) We are the product of what we allow in our minds. Salvation in Christ **does not miraculously** impart to us a knowledge of God’s word or 100% purity in our thought life. Our attitudes need changing as we were *completely changed* on the inside, and this comes through meditating on God’s word—getting **His** thoughts on our minds and hearts.

A great booklet entitled, My Heart Christ’s Home vividly describes the Christian life as the homeowner having ownership title, and in time his inhabiting, indwelling and decorating **EVERY** room in that house—the *symbolism* being God progressively taking control—*eventually*—of all areas of our lives as we are led, and yield them to Him.

It is my firm belief that until a Christian has an eternal perspective on life, his priorities will not be fully right. My good friend David Strawn says we spend so much time and effort

working and investing for retirement—even to the point of preparing our own funeral arrangements sometimes—yet we spend **so little time** planning for our eternal future.

Getting God’s word in your mind, through Bible study and meditation is the **surest** way to have SUCCESS in the Christian life. My most respected Minister hero (besides Billy Graham)—Rev. Don Anderson—taught me the following at an *early* spiritual age:

Meditation, from the original languages, is the word picture of a cow **chewing his cud**. Cows don’t merely eat food. They swallow, regurgitate (i.e., burp it up) and then continue to muse and munch on it *over and over* again. A bit graphic—but not in matters of the Spirit.

He also told of the Secret Service practice for **identifying counterfeit one dollar bills**. Inspectors assigned to this duty DID NOT research and study all the examples of *creative counterfeiting*. Instead, they **spent HOURS** staring at and analyzing a *genuine* dollar bill till they knew a ‘George Washington’ *“like the back of their hands.”*

CONVERSELY, if we’re not going to USE our Bibles—and a *recent* survey indicated only **13%** of us *regularly* do—why wouldn’t we simply **burn** them, or, more constructively give them away to someone who lacks one (as in some *foreign countries*)? A Bible is not an **accessory** to church clothes, and if you don’t believe it is fully the word of God,” **CUT OUT** the parts you consider inferior so you don’t *hypocritically* carry the *entirety* of it with you.

We need our minds **renewed** to the thoughts of God, and this will **NOT happen** through prayer ALONE or by **OSMOSIS!**

See: Deut. 6:5; Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:1-3, 119:9-11; Rom. 7:25, 8:6-7, 12:1-2; I Cor. 2:16, II Cor. 4:16, 10:5; Eph. 4:17, 23; Phil. 3:17-20, 4:6-8; Col. 3:2-3; I Pet. 1:13, 22, etc.

See also: Why Read the Bible?

CLAIMING GOD’S PROMISES

Faith-walking requires renewing your mind with the word of God because it is *essentially* **LIVING off of His promises** in Christ! Books are available on the subject of God’s promises—I recommend **All The Promises Of The Bible**, by Dr. Herbert Lockyer, (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1962—and see our best memory verses (in the Discipleship “Quiet Time” section #21—but the following is a mere sample of the **thousands** of promises which are true in Jesus:

Claiming Your INHERITANCE

Grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord; seeing that His divine power has **granted to us everything** pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence. For **by these He has granted** to us **His precious and magnificent promises**, in order that by them you might become partakers of the divine nature, having *escaped* the corruption that is in the world by lust. **(II Pet. 1:2-4)**

and I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the **knowledge of every good thing which is in you** for Christ’s sake. **(Phm. 1:6)**

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, *perfecting holiness* in the fear of God. (II Cor. 7:1)

For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes; wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us. (II Cor. 1:20)

Select Precious PROMISES

Let your character be free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "**I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,**" (Heb. 13:5)

And looking upon them Jesus said to them, "With men this is impossible, but **with God all things are possible.**" (Mt. 19:26)

I can do all things through Him who strengthens me. (Phil. 4:13)

The steadfast of mind Thou wilt keep in **perfect peace**, Because he *trusts* in Thee. (Isa. 26:3)

For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, **shall be able to separate us from the love of God**, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 8:38-39)

But thanks be to God, who **always leads us in His triumph** in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in *every place*. (II Cor. 2:14)

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but **My words will not pass away.**" (Lk. 21:33)

This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall **meditate** on it day and night, so that you may be careful to **do** according to all that is written in it; for **then you will make your way prosperous**, and then you will have **success**. (Josh. 1:8)

These things I have written to **you who believe** in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may **know that you have eternal life**. (I Jn. 5:13)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a **living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **to obtain an inheritance** which is imperishable and undefiled and **will not fade away**, reserved in heaven for you, (I Pet. 1:3-4)

And without **faith** it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a **rewarder of those who seek Him**. (Heb. 11:6)

"Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, **lift up your eyes**, and look on the fields, that they are **white for harvest**. Already he who reaps is **receiving wages**, and is gathering **fruit** for life eternal; that he who sows and he who reaps may **rejoice together**." (Jn. 4:35-36)

IDENTITY & INHERITANCE

OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST

Let me ask you, **who are you?** I can get your name and you may tell me your profession, but, again, **who are you?** Who you are as a Christian is essential to your success in the Christian life. Do you think of yourself as a “sinner saved by grace?” If so, to continually sin might be expected and normal. As they say, ‘**are you a saint**, or an ain’t?’ I’m not talking about the *false* religious concept of designating certain *moral heroes* “saints.”

Let me be *clear*—you **ARE** a saint, and you **WERE** a sinner, and you have been saved by grace. Your “position” (or status before God) SHOULD BE your **attitude** about yourself as a Christian (i.e., “in Christ). Of course, those moments where you (hopefully only *occasionally*) slip up and get in the power of the flesh, you will **not act** like it or necessarily **feel** like it or even **believe** it, but **you are ALWAYS a saint**, because you are always in Christ.

This is one of the “*secrets*” Paul learned in Romans 7 when he was struggling so mightily with how he **desired good** in his *inner man* yet found himself doing just the opposite (because he was living life according to **obeying laws** as opposed to **obeying God** through His word, by **faith**). He had not been living according to the *new nature* and **NEW IDENTITY** God had given him. In the end he **thanks God** when he realizes that **victory** comes from Christ—not *increased will power*. (Rom. 7:25-8:2)

When *you* are in the **throes** of carnality—that is **NOT you**. That is, it is not an accurate expression of the **new person** God has made you. It is **NOT** that you are not responsible for those sins, but that you are completely changed and different on the inside, and it is **your flesh** (i.e., sin nature), spurred on through the **holy law**, which is *causing* you to act in ways you do not want to. Confess it, trust God’s forgiveness and get re-filled with His Spirit.

The **VERY few** instances in the New Testament where a believer is referred to as a “*sinner*” refer either to an attitude of **humility** (reflecting on **who they are in and of themselves**, and acknowledging that **we all are NOTHING** without Christ in us), or to their times of sinful experience as a believer—**NOT** their true identity “in Christ.” (I Tim. 1:15; Jas. 4:8, 5:20; Gal. 2:17; Jn. 15:5; II Cor. 3:5, etc.). Only **one** instance was written of a **believer’s present practice** (Jas. 5:20), in which case it could refer to a Christian living a habitually sinful practice (‘carnal’), or be speaking analogously to the moral good of a believer turning a lost person away from sin (as is good to do with erring believers—*church discipline*). The **VAST majority** of Scriptures focus on **who we ARE—forever** “in Christ.” (II Cor. 10; Jn. 15:1-15, etc.). See also: Rom. 5:8 (past tense); Jude 1:15.

What happens the moment you’re saved? The Holy Spirit indwells, a new (spiritual) nature is implanted, one’s identity, inheritance and spiritual citizenship change, and you have assurance, peace and *complete* forgiveness. (Ex.: Eph. 1)

In theological terms, our position IS our identity, and when we *renew our mind* and reckon ourselves to this fact, it will **also become our experience**, as we walk in the Spirit’s power, *conscious* of what the Bible says about us.

Some Bible teachers, using Gal. 6:7-8, teach that your spiritual walk is like a war between TWO DOGS. The one you **feed** most is the one who will **win**. While completely true

regarding what you feed your mind and how it affects your behavior, it is also true that even when a believer wrongly acts like the *junk yard dog*, he is still a new creation in Christ.

As an example of the **impact** this doctrine can have on the success of your spiritual life, **a cat does not bark** and a dog does not meow. That's not what's expected, normal or “*natural*.” The best example I've found of how our **identity in Christ** positively affects our sanctification comes from an *illustration* from David Needham:

So, just who are we “in Christ?” Let's take a look...

“In Search of the Deepest Meaning

Are you ready for another illustration—a mini-melodrama? This time imagine that you are a very typical boy in high school who likes two things most of all: food and girls (in either order). If someone asked you who you were and you were quite honest you would have to express both your identity and your reason for living in those terms (with a long list of other ones, of course).

One day you're standing by your locker in the hall and the track coach spots you. He takes you by surprise when he strolls purposefully over to your locker to talk to you. (the *track* coach talking to *me*?)

‘Say, I've been watching the way you walk—gotta lot of bounce to your step. Whether you know it or not, you're a sprinter. With a little training you could be setting records in the 100-yard dash. I just know it!’

‘Aw c'mon, Coach. I'm no sprinter. I might win a gold medal in eating or girl-watching, but a sprinter? You've got to be kidding.’

‘No, I'm not kidding. And I'll prove it to you. This afternoon—at practice.’ Now he's hooked you. You go to practice that afternoon...and every afternoon for weeks to follow. Your first clockings aren't that outstanding but you sense a strange exhilaration as you run that maybe—just maybe—the coach was right. In the days that follow you read biographies of great sprinters; you watch films of great races. You run and run and run. It hurts so much sometimes, yet always deeper is a growing sense of identity. You *are* a sprinter! Before long the whole shape of your life bends to this new sense of personhood. If someone walks up to you on the street and asks, ‘Who are you?’, even before you can give your name you spontaneously respond, ‘I'm a sprinter at Madison High! The big meet with Wilson High is Saturday—you gonna be there?’

And Saturday comes. The crowd stirs as you walk across the cinders to your starting block. Suddenly the prettiest girl from Madison High walks straight up to you with a large, juicy piece of Apple pie fresh from the oven and topped with a big glob of ice cream. ‘Hi,’ she coos. ‘I brought this for you...just for you.’

Now comes the decision. You are free to do what you want. But what will you do?

It all depends on your concept of those two words: **IDENTITY** and **MEANING**.

Who are you? Are you a skin-wrapped package of taste buds, salivary glands, and sex drives? If this is your identity, there isn't much question where you will find meaning.

Or are you sure of something else? A new identity. An identity reinforced by warm, relational times with your coach, by a new focus on personhood, a new set of values. If these things are true, your response to sweet Sue will be automatic—and conclusive. On the other hand,

if you have missed out on track practice, if you have allowed your mind to focus on those very tangible, “fleshly” things where you had always found life before, you will respond in one of two ways: ‘All right! Who cares about the race anyway; you’re quite a gal, Susie.’ Or, if not that it will be, ‘Sorry Sue, I want that hunk of pie but I can’t have it.’

What is your response as the sprinter you know yourself to be? With scarcely a second look at her pretty face, you turn to focus on that tape 100 yards away.

‘Sorry, Sue. I’m a sprinter. I don’t want that apple pie (not simply I Can’t have it). Life for me is touching that tape before anyone else. What you offer just doesn’t fit in. Thanks anyway.’

‘Oh! You must want it...and me.’

‘No, Sue, you just don’t realize that there’s something far deeper about me than that. I’m not just a mouth connected to a stomach; I’m not just a guy who gets turned on by good-looking girls. *I’m a sprinter*, Sue. That’s who I am. That’s living. There’s nothing like it in the world. I’m gonna win, Susie!’ BANG! Off you go...and you win.

Oh Christian, do you get the point? If you don’t know most deeply who you are—if you have allowed your sense of personhood to be shaped by your own flesh, by Satan, and by the meaning-mad media that saturates the world, you are either consciously or unconsciously a most miserable, frustrated Christian. Your Bible reading, such as it is, is self-condemning. I John 1:9 is your life verse. God is almost your adversary. Strange that He could be both your Savior and adversary. But it’s true. It seems as though the things you want most in life He says you should want least...or not at all. In your view, a Christian is one who must continually say “No” to himself, “No” to his dreams, and “No” to his desires, all the while saying “Yes” to God and His demands. **Surrender**. That awful word.

To such statements Paul would shout with flaming indignation, “God forbid! What travesty! Whoever had the audacity to paint the Christian life in such a way? What a shambles of God’s truth. For me *to live* is Christ!” For you see, even as Sam discovered a deeper identity, so God’s intention is that every believer become literally obsessed with his own true IDENTITY—MEANING—LIFE!”

Birthright: Christian, Do You Know Who You Are?, pp. 72-72, by David C. Needham, (Multnomah Press: Portland, OR), 1979

SELECT IDENTITIES

Victory can be *continually* had when we realize that the **holy life** of Christ in and through us is **NORMAL** as Christians, no matter what any others may believe or demonstrate. What are some of the **hundreds** of *identity titles* the Bible refers to us as? A sampling includes:

- New Creations (II Cor. 5:17)
- Dead to Sin (Rom. 6:6-11)
- Alive to God (Rom. 6:11)
- Holy Brethren (Heb. 3:1)
- Royal Priesthood (I Pet. 2:9)
- The Righteousness of God in Christ (II Cor. 5:21)
- Saints (I Cor. 1:2)

- More than Conquerors (Rom. 8:37)
- Chosen (II Tim. 2:10)
- Beloved of God (I Jn. 4:10-11)
- Accepted in the Beloved (Rom. 15:7)
- God's Workmanship, Created unto Good Works (Eph. 2:10)
- **ETC.** (go discover **hundreds** more!)

Can you **VERBALIZE** these truths about yourself? (i.e., SAY, **I am a saint,**" etc.) To see how **prevalent** this subject is in the New Testament, here are but a few of the **hundreds** of references:

Jn. 1:12; Rom. 8:16-17, 9:23, 25; I Cor. 6:11; II Cor. 3:3, 5:20; Gal. 3:29, 4:5, 28, 6:10; Eph. 2:19, 3:6; Col. 3:3; Tit. 2:14; Heb. 3:12; I Pet. 1:3, 2:5, 11, etc.

Caution: You are NOT spiritually identified with your **old man** anymore, *nor should* your attitude be. However, do not confuse that truth into believing you—in yourself—are dead to sin; only **through Christ** and His *power*.

OUR INHERITANCE IN CHRIST

Finally, a word about your **inheritance** in Christ. What an awful tragedy it would be to observe a life-long suffering homeless person continue in that condition only to find **he had been the beneficiary of millions in inheritance**, and never knew it! This is how many believers live their Christian life! The Bible says God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ, given us all things pertaining to life and godliness, and that our fellowship with one another can become effective through knowledge of all (good) things given to us by God. **Don't live a lowly, unfruitful and disappointing life** toward God, having such a **large 'heavenly bank account'** and *treasure chest* from which to draw upon!

Some of these **MANY** blessings, obtained by claiming God's promises (which are all '**yes**' in Christ) include:

- Answered Prayer (Mt. 7:7-8; Jn. 16:24)
- Power (Ac. 1:8; I Cor. 4:19-20)
- Victory Over Sin (Rom. 6:14; Jude 1:24-25; I Cor. 10:13)
- Heaven as Your Home (I Pet. 1:3-4; Phil. 3:17-20)
- Personal Relationship with God (I Jn. 1:3, 6; I Cor. 6:15-17; Rev. 3:20)
- Leadership and Guidance in Life (Gal. 5:18; Jn. 16:13)
- Joy and Peace (Jude 1:24-25; Jn. 16:22-24; Rom. 5:1; Jn. 16:33)
- Future Glory and Rewards in the Next Life (II Pet. 1:3; II Th. 2:14; I Cor. 3:6-8, Jn. 4:36; II Jn. 1:8)
- No Fear of Death (I Cor. 15:54-57; Heb. 2:14-15)
- Understanding of Life and Fulfillment therein (i.e., Purpose in Life) (I Jn. 5:20; Phil. 3:8-14; Rom. 15:17; I Cor. 15:10, 9:23-27)
- Access to God's Wisdom (Jas. 1:5-8; I Cor. 1:23-24; Eph. 2:17-18)

- Favor and Blessing from God, and Favor with Man (Ac. 2:46-47; I Pet. 2:20; I Pet. 3:9, 4:14; Jas. 1:12)
- **ETC.** (go discover **hundreds** more!)

See: Eph. 1:3, 18-19; I Cor. 1:30; Phm. 1:6; II Pet. 1:3-4

See also: Rom. 6:4, 7:6; I Cor. 6:11; Gal. 3:29; Col. 1:5, 13; I Th. 4:13; Tit. 3:7; Heb. 10:22; I Pet. 2:21, etc.

FORMER IDENTITY

Lest anyone tell you that salvation is *no big deal* (or only an **emotional** experience), look at this *brief* list of the MANY verses identifying **who we were** before God saved us:

- Darkness (Eph. 5:8; II Cor. 6:14)
- Enemies of God (Rom. 5:10; Phil. 3:18)
- Deprived of the Truth (I Tim. 6:5)
- Alienated (Col. 1:21)
- Hostile in Mind (Col. 1:21)
- Engaged in Evil Deeds (Col. 1:21)
- Aliens (Eph. 2:19)
- Children of Wrath (Eph. 2:3)
- Sons of Destruction (Eph. 2:2)
- Strangers (Eph. 2:19)
- Alive to Sin (Rom. 6:6-11)

LORDSHIP COMMITMENT

See: Why Be Totally Committed to Jesus Christ?

GOD'S WILL

Definition

God's will is simply God's plan for your life in **all** its facets (i.e., large, small and everything in between). IF God has a *specific* desire for what you are to do in a matter, He will reveal it, and your "tuning into" that desire or "will" comes through prayer and Bible study, with practice doing what He has revealed to you is His will, to-date.

His is a *positive* plan, whether pertaining to who to marry, what career to choose, having kids, ministries to get involved with, where to live, etc. It can be **as large** as career and marriage or **as "detailed"** as *which* person to approach with the Gospel (and anywhere in-between). It would unlikely apply to which color of socks to wear, and it is not **IMPERSONAL**, as with the phrase: 'God gave you a brain—use it,' or 'God gave you the Bible'—you figure it out *from there*.' Those aren't attitudes consistent with a **PERSONAL relationship** with God!

Features

God's will for you directs and guides your life in a *powerful* and *positive* way. Romans 12:1-2 says:

"I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice; Acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be *conformed* to this world, but be transformed by the *renewing* of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is **good** and **acceptable** and **perfect**." (Rom. 12:1-2)

Philosophy

What is man's purpose in life? Why are we put on this earth? Theologians traditionally say 'to glorify God,' but I believe the clear and **more specific** biblical answer is **TO DO GOD'S WILL** (Heb. 10:7, 36; Eph. 5:17, 6:6; I Jn. 2:17; Col. 4:12), and to do so in relation and fellowship with Christ (Mic. 6:8; Lk. 10:38-42). Doing so all one's life brings God glory—as the *effect* (I Cor. 10:36)—but the OBJECTIVE is to do His will and obey His commandments (Ecc. 2:24-25, 3:12-13, 5:18-19, 12:1) out of an intimate relationship with Christ (i.e., not legalism). We're somewhat saying the same thing, but focusing on doing God's will is ***practical*** and ***definable***, and avoids an 'anything goes as long as I intend Him to receive glory' attitude (or generalist concept of God's will we have discussed elsewhere).

While on the subject of **ULTIMATE VALUES**, people argue that **human 'relationships'** are the MOST IMPORTANT value in life, but, rest assured, no matter how well you interact with another, what's more (and most) important is WHETHER THEY ARE GOING TO HEAVEN—whether you *get along with* them greatly, or otherwise.

Distinctions

God's general/moral will is *not* hard to discover—just read (and properly *interpret*) His word. God's specific will (i.e., His general will applied within circumstances, and uniquely to you) is not *much* more difficult, but takes **prayer**, dependence on the **Spirit** and experience at such practice. (Heb. 5:14)

Imposters

What alternatives exist to doing God's will?

Christians are either “in the flesh” or “in the Spirit” in their *practice*, therefore they must be either be **doing God's will** or **not**. There are certainly degrees of obedience, intensity and commitment within that Spirit-filled lifestyle, and there can be ranges from naive to guilty motives and intentions, but ultimately a Christian is either doing **God's will** or the DEVIL'S will, often stated as “doing your own will.” One need do *nothing more* than never ‘selling out’ to God to, by default, be guilty of the latter. (Rom. 8:5-8; Heb. 11:6; Col. 1:9-11; Eph. 5:9-10, etc.).

And the **low percentage** of American Christians who regularly live *committed to God*—**10%**—cannot be hidden. Like Mt. 5:13-16 and I Tim. 5:24. Satan's plan for your life can come in a variety of forms:

- **LIVING FOR YOURSELF/CARNALITY**. **Synonymous** with worldliness or licentiousness, this is living with yourself as “lord” of your life, or living “in the flesh” or **carnally**. It can be by either **innocent** ignorance or **willful** disobedience. (Pv. 3:5-7; Gal. 2:20; II Cor. 5:15; I Pet. 2:1-3 vs. I Cor. 3:1-3 and Heb. 5:11-6:1)
- **LUKE-WARMNESS**. **Half-hearted commitment** to God, “*wanting your cake and eating it too*,” or “*riding the fence*” between following your own desires and those of the Lord. It can manifest in trying to live “**balanced**” or “**moderate**” in EQUALLY serving God and *money*, usually excused as trying to avoid being “*too heavenly-minded* for any earthly good.” (i.e., living with the Bible as a token, intellectually assented to with a nod and a wink which amounts to a virtual **ignoring** of its application. (Rev. 3:16-18; Mt. 6:24, etc.)
- **SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS OR LEGALISM**. Either working to *earn* God's pleasure with you, or knowing that doesn't work and **TRYING to obey rules that YOU decide** to apply—never *relying* on His leadership through His alivened word. (Jn. 6:63; Rom. 6:14; Gal. 3:1-5, etc.). Even teachings of Christian perfectionism are errant, as the Bible itself shows that every person commits sin—even Christians. (Ecc. 7:20)
- **WORLDLINESS OR LICENTIOUSNESS**. Either a **greater desire** for the things of this world than the things of God (*worldliness*), or pure and honest like or **love of sin** as a *lifestyle* (i.e., with little to NO interest in spiritual things—*licentiousness*). (I Jn. 2:15-17; Jude 1:4, etc.). Worldliness need not appear any more blatant than a Christian simply **living like any average American lost** person. (Rom. 12:2a; I Cor. 3:3, etc.)

Note: Are we so FOOLISH that because the Bible doesn't **clearly** state that worldliness is the **love of money, sex and things**, that we feel we are NOT entangled in it? The ‘**world**’ is the natural *system* of idolizing fleshly lusts (especially sexual immorality), lusts for what you see (i.e., possessions, paid for with MONEY) and arrogant pride (often associated with ‘success’). Worldliness is arrogantly OVER-VALUING of **sex, money and things**. Just because the Bible defines it less directly, doesn't mean you aren't entangled in it.

- **TARES AND GOATS**. **LOST people** acting like Christians, or deceived into thinking their religious activities can gain them favor with God. This category is *distinguished* from legalism or self-righteousness in MY categorizations because tares and goats are LOST people. (Mt. 13:25-40, 7:21-22, 25:31-46)

Theories

In the 1980s, the book Decision-Making and the Will of God influenced many believers into believing God's will was NOT something you need to diligently seek to discover—a dot or bulls eye—but rather, any decision falling within the Bible's parameters was fully morally OK. Their theory is opposed to our belief in the range of ethics (i.e., the Bible presenting parameters, applied by the sovereign Holy Spirit—generally or specifically as He desires). The biblically astute believer should quickly be able to assess the theological problems with their theory, including:

Circle/General Target (or Anti-Dot) Theory of God's Will:

- 1) **Intimacy?** The theory requires NO intimate relationship to Christ, and nothing supernatural. What would 'led by the Spirit' even mean? Even the Jews, under the law, had commands they could try (and fail, on a perfection standard) to obey, in order to seek God's favor and blessing.
- 2) **Legalism?** The theory should require perfection, to be internally consistent (i.e., you can choose any decision within God's parameters means no crossing the line, and also doing (actively/commission vs. omission) all His parameter virtues. It is not very different from law, if it is in any way different.
- 3) **Miraculous?** Then theory requires no Holy Spirit power, and especially no Holy Spirit leading. Though the Spirit is NOT emotion, and many dot theorists are quite intellectual, there certainly is the subjective work of that Spirit through the word found explicitly in the word.
- 4) **Maturity?** Failing to realize that analogies sometimes break down, analogizing our relationship to God as a Father-son would lead to expected independence-seeking (known as rebellious teenage years) and the eventual maturity of complete independence. But that is not what walking by faith/dependence on God means, and that independence is exactly what we had before we were saved, and that which got us into so much spiritual trouble.
- 5) **Disclaimer:** ONLY if you don't have faith on a given decision do you decide based on general principles from your own knowledge. You are held accountable to the standard you have attained, to-date—not the law/moral perfection, as we are under grace—forgiven. But even if there is no specific guidance, as long as you're sure of the decision (an aspect of faith—Heb. 11:1, 6), there is liberty wherever God leads (II Cor. 3:17)

P.S.: It is also true that a lack of openness to biblical instruction on the possibility of experiencing dot-like leadership by the Spirit can be a huge barrier to ever experiencing it, and that specific guidance is also best understood by distinguishing between soul and spirit, as our section on Spiritual Anatomy (i.e., trichotomy) discusses, based on Heb. 4:12; I Cor. 14:15; I Th. 5:23, among other passages.

Means

10 WAYS TO DISCOVER GOD'S WILL

1. **Bible** (applied by faith)—(Rom. 2:17-20, etc.)
2. **Prayer** (asked with faith)—(Jn. 14:14; I Jn. 5:14-15)
3. Wise **counsel** (of informed fellow believers)—(Pv. 1:5)
4. **Circumstances** (though **not ruled by** them—live above them)—(Phil. 1:12, 4:11-3, ~Col. 4:8)
5. **Wisdom and knowledge** (i.e., the Bible known, and learned through application) **See:** the book of Proverbs, etc.

6. **Senses trained** through Spirit-led practice (i.e., impressions, unction, the ‘still small voice of God,’ etc.)—(Heb. 4:12; Heb. 5:14)
7. **Decisions consistent** with the word of God. The Spirit’s leading **never contradicts** the word of God! (Jn. 16:13, ~I Jn. 2:27; I Cor. 14:33)
8. Though “*fleeces*” are **likely not a great way to go** (as it may border on ‘testing God’), **confirmation** is an excellent hind-sight way of *corroborating* God’s leading. (Judg. 6:37; Mt. 4:7; I Pet. 5:10, ~Phil. 1:7, etc.)
9. Mind and heart, **logic and wisdom**, discernment, judgment, knowledge (i.e., serve God with all your heart and mind)—(Deut. 6:5; I Cor. 2:16; Jas. 3:17)
10. **Inner peace** and calmness sustained vs. restless, anxiety in your spirit (Ac. 17:16~; Jas. 3:17-18; II Th. 3:16)

On a related, but more theoretical level, when referring to ‘God’s will’ beyond just the individual’s life, several aspects come into play:

FOUR FACETS OF GOD’S WILL

- ▶ What God desires, but does not actively cause to occur (Ex.: Salvation of the lost)
- ▶ What God does not desire, but does not actively prevent (Ex.: Christian carnality)
- ▶ What God desires, and actively causes to occur (Ex.: The cross)
- ▶ What God does not desire, and actively prevents (Ex.: Israel’s destruction)

Source: Adapted from Theology 405 (Church and Sanctification) course, Dr. Robert Lightner, Dallas Theological Seminary

Some also distinguish between God’s perfect will (what He wants to happen) and His permissive will (what He allows to happen).

KEY VERSES

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the **knowledge of His will** in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, **so that** you may walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please Him in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all power; According to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the *inheritance* of the saints in light. **(Col. 1:9-12)**

Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bond slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and **fully assured** in all the will of God. **(Col. 4:12)**

Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, equip you in every good thing to **do His will**, working in us that which is *pleasing* in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen. **(Heb. 13:20-21)**

And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, "Behold, My mother and My brothers! For whoever **does the will** of My Father who is in heaven, he is My *brother* and *sister* and *mother*." **(Mt. 12:49-50)**

"And after He had removed him, He raised up David to be their king, concerning whom He also testified and said, 'I HAVE FOUND DAVID the son of Jesse, A MAN AFTER MY HEART, who will do all My will.' (Ac. 13:22)

not by way of eye service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. (Eph. 6:6)

Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but **the one who does the will of God abides forever**. (I Jn. 2:15-17)

Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, arm yourselves also with the same purpose, because he who has suffered in the flesh has **ceased from sin**, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but **for the will of God**. For the **time already past is sufficient** for you to have carried out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. (I Pet. 4:1-3)

For you have need of endurance, so that when you have **done the will of God**, you may receive what was promised. FOR YET IN A VERY LITTLE WHILE, HE WHO IS COMING WILL COME, AND WILL NOT DELAY. BUT MY RIGHTEOUS ONE SHALL LIVE BY FAITH; AND IF HE SHRINKS BACK, MY SOUL HAS **NO PLEASURE** IN HIM. (Heb. 10:36-38)

And this is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything **according to His will**, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we **have** the requests which we have asked from Him. (I Jn. 5:14-15)

in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (I Th. 5:18)

So then do not be foolish, but **understand** what the will of the Lord is. (Eph. 5:17)

SPIRIT FILLED & LED

To DO God's will, God empowers us with His Spirit. Believers are to be "filled with the Spirit," but what does that *mean*? What else could a Christian be filled with? The term basically means **controlled**, much like one is 'under the influence' when intoxicated. In fact, that's the exact *word picture* Spirit-filledness is contrasted with. (Eph. 5:18)

What is the OPPOSITE of This Type of Life?

CARNALITY! ANY Christian who is not willfully and **consciously** filled with God's Spirit is *carnal*, by definition (whether innocently or culpably). And the one requirement for filledness is **total commitment** to Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit indwells (i.e., resides in or inhabits) **all** believers at salvation, but He only **fills** those *totally submitted* to God's will.

What Does the Spirit's Filling Do for Us?

Spirit-filledness is the **SOLE** means by which a Christian can live the "Christian life." The nature of sanctification (i.e., spiritual life in this world) is that we **cannot** live it in our **own power** and strength. We need **supernatural power** to live and enjoy the *abundant life* Christ promised us. (Jn. 10:10; Col. 1:29; II Th. 1:11, etc.)

To live this way is **normal**, miraculously “**natural**,” and **expected** of ALL believers. To live *otherwise* (i.e., to live by sight, like a “natural man”) is to displease the Lord and **NOT** be living the way God wants us to—whether the *majority* joins us or not.

To manifest the beautiful fruit and godly behavior of such a lifestyle (Gal. 5:22-23, etc.) requires **three steps**. These must be **continually repeated** whenever we sin, in order to restore our *fellowship* with God:

1. Admission/Confession: **Admit** to God that you have sinned, and ask for His *forgiveness*. (I Jn. 1:9). Campus Crusade calls *this verse* our “*spiritual soap bar*.” “Confession” means to agree with, or “to say the same thing as” **God says** about the *nature* of the deeds we have done. It is not mere intellectual assent, *always* absent ‘feeling bad’ for the deed (as the *off-beat* pastor of Berachah Church, Houston might allow), but that ‘feeling’ is God’s *conviction*.
2. **Believe** that God has done what He promised—forgiven you freely. And,
3. Ask to be **re-empowered** with the Spirit so you can *continue* the walk. You never lose His Spirit, but you can hinder His power until you are renewed to fellowship. One para-church ministry teaches to “*keep short accounts with God*”—**don’t let much time elapse** from the moment of known sin, and your prayer to regain your Spirit-filledness! (Eph. 5:18; Mt. 7:7-8; Lk. 11:13, etc.)

This way of life begins when a believer decides to **totally commit himself to living for God**, yet it is maintained daily, even as frequently as his sins are brought to his attention by the Holy Spirit. It is not legalism, where **WE** design a process of when to apply what verses (and how). It’s an intimate, **REAL** relationship with a heavenly Person, Who will—rest assured—**lead** and **convict** and *nudge* you in the *right* direction. He is alive and **able** to *communicate* with those close to Him, who, having their “*spiritual senses*” *trained* by God’s word *obey* what they are prompted to do and *regularly draw close* to Him in prayer. (Heb. 5:14; Jn. 2:5; Jas. 2:22, 4:17, 8)

I analogize the Spirit-filled and led life to an astronaut on a space walk. The *further* we go in our Christian walk, the more time we should be able to live with **less and less need to go through these three steps**. This is because *with practice*, over time, we become more *acclimated* to **obeying the first time** we are told, and more *sensitive* to His unctions, impressions and sensings in our spirit—all based on **knowing** and **doing** God’s word by faith. The Bible even teaches that **we do not HAVE TO yield to temptation!** (I Cor. 10:13; Jude 1:24, ETC.)

This is **NOT** Christian perfectionism, but “**living up to the standard** to which we have attained.” God has us where we are, we all have **different weaknesses**, and there’s no use comparing His standard for us to others. Just relate to Christ personally, honestly and directly in *all matters*, by a **continual attitude of prayer**. It’s a *miraculous* life which **MANY** believers do not experience. The longer we live “*in the Spirit*” (i.e., Spirit- vs. flesh-filled), the *greater* our **heavenly rewards** will be. Become a ‘*spiritual pilot*’ who logs **MANY** hours and *long* time-spans without **grieving** or **quenching** the Holy Spirit (*defined below*). This is not only rewarding, but *fulfilling* and **expected**. (Phil. 3:15-16; II Cor. 10:12; I Th. 5:17; Rom. 14:4)

This is perhaps as good a place as any to mention a concept some people teach of the “**faith rest**” life—a more *semi-automatic* and natural living in the Spirit as a habit of life vs. occasional thing or teaching that sanctification is either automatic or **VERY** difficult, though

“trying your best”)—(Heb. Chs. 3-4; I Cor. 2:4-5; Mt. 11:28-30; I Jn. 5:3-4; Phil 2:12-13—both sides of the sanctification responsibility coin, etc.).

Finally, a short word to identify **what sins do to our fellowship** with God. “**Grieving**” (i.e., saddening) the Holy Spirit appears to refer to *smaller* or “*accidental*” sins—all sins being **evil** but not equal—whereas “**quenching**” Him (i.e., putting the flame out) is *more serious*, perhaps in a more willful, conscious or *so-called* “**big sin**” way. **Both should be avoided** as we *increasingly* “excel still more,” but sins for the believer are not relational (i.e., they don’t determine whether you’re saved or lost) but familial (i.e., they affect your fellowship).

See : Jn. 15:1-11; Rom. 6:1-8:17; Gal 5:1-6:4; Eph. 4:17-30; Col. 2:18-3:17; I Th. 4:1, 10; I Jn. 2:1.)

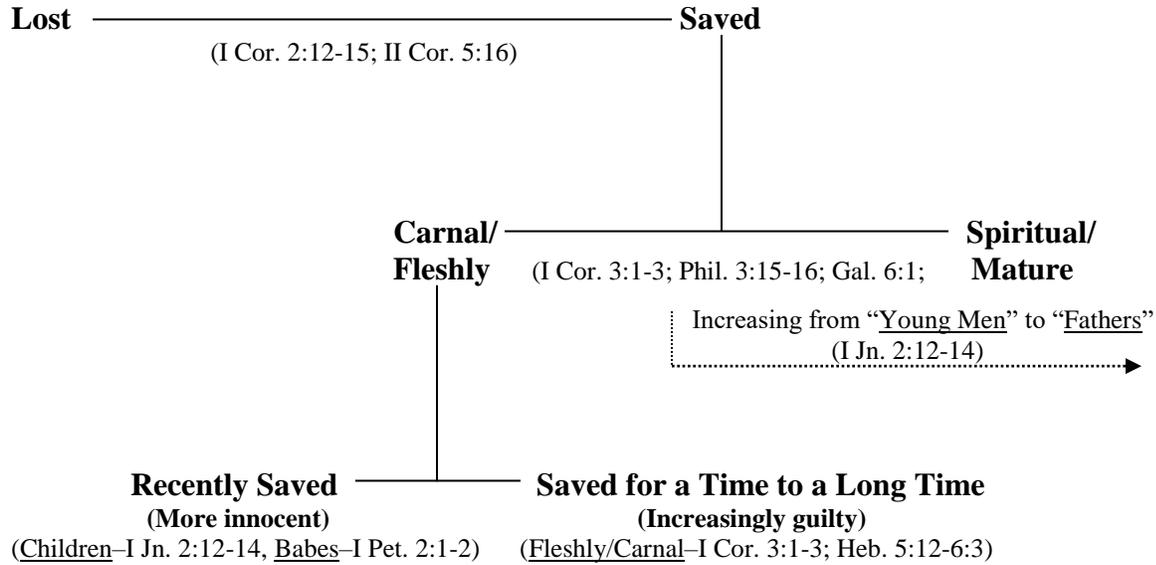
More-Unusual Ways God Has Led (Representative Sample): Ac. 1:26, 8:39, 20:22; II Cor. 12:2-4, etc.

P.S.: Some people say God will first address your most major (i.e., big and external) sins. His valuing priorities and I Pet. 1:22 might indicate this, but there is no clear Bible proof. The old adage, ‘don’t drink, dance, smoke or chew, and don’t hang around girls who do’ also reinforces this belief, but it can also smack of legalism (i.e., man-made and *imperfect* standards—or lists—for how a Christian should behave—not to mention not all types of dancing are morally offensive, nor all instances of non-drunken drinking).

P.S.: It is not will power that keeps you enduring, but patient faith in God (Ps. 73:26; Isa. 40:29-31).

ILLUSTRATION: FOUR TYPES OF MEN

(Adapted from Dr. Robert P. Lightner)



This author distinguishes “carnal” vs. “spiritual” by their **total commitment to Christ/Spirit-filledness**. Both “carnals” and “babes/children” need the **milk** of the word, as they *cannot* handle the **meat/solid food** of the truth. All Christians need *discipling*, but “babes” and “carnals” need it even *more* intensely, and “carnals” (as opposed to “babes”) need *exhortation*, **reproof** and even **WARNING**, as the longer that condition continues, the more subject they are not only to God’s **discipline** but His **judgment** of His people. (Heb. 10:30, etc.)

“Young Men” and “Fathers” are *not clearly definable* statuses, but reflect maturity and time as a believer. I John *distinguishes* them by their getting strong from *ingesting* the word of God, as compared to those who have *apparently done so longer*, and thereby **KNOW** God. We are not to call anyone “father,” so the title as I have used is *descriptive* of those older in the Lord (not necessarily *chronologically*) who are mature and *rest* in the fact of their **knowing God**.

Finally, beware that the term, “children,” does not always refer to the more carnal Christians, as **all believers** are called children in such books as **I John** and **John**.

Note: Some authors distinguish between “spiritual” and “mature,” **Spirit-filled, excited/zealous** and **committed younger-in-the-Lord** believers in the Lord being referred to as “spiritual,” though not *yet* real (*morally* or *knowledge-wise*) mature.

GRACE LIVING

Definition

“Grace” has been accurately defined as “**unmerited favor**” with God. A colloquial acronym is: “**God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense.**” (G.R.A.C.E.)

Description

The life lived under grace can be described as living in **personal relationship** with Christ, *day by day*, with a faith standard you **are able** to live up to, which increases **progressively**, gradually and surely over time. It is living life in the power of God, dependent upon His leadership and is neither under the law nor licentious. It is seeking to *serve* Him in **holiness**, **victory** and **joy** according to our **new nature** and identity in Christ.

Elements

Grace is:

- Given Freely.
- Unmerited and Undeserved.
- Based in Mercy and Forgiveness.
- Involves Unconditional Love.
- Holds No Condemnation or Guilt. And,
- Results in a Life Lived Ethically Out of Joy and Gratitude.

Imposters

To live under grace is to **live as a committed follower** of Christ. *Sanctification* is *always* by grace (i.e., the **source** of our spiritual life) through faith (i.e., the **means** of our spiritual life). These two elements are consistently *found together* working hand-in-hand in Scripture. As Rev. Don Anderson has said,

“**God wants a relationship—not a performance.**”

There are two **erroneous ways** to live life as a believer which, although completely opposite of each other in *intention*, yield the same result—**sin**. We’ll identify *all three* choices as either **Law**, **License** or **Liberty** (i.e., *freedom* in Christ).

License (Lawlessness)	Liberty (Freedom of Grace)	Legalism (Law)
I Pet. 2:16	Gal. 5:1	Rom. 6:14

LAW

For the Christian to **not be under the Law**, means that their *standard* for whether they are living **right with God** is **NOT** 100% perfect obedience to the first five books of the Old Testament (i.e., the Law). Not being under the law can extend to meaning that believer’s success in the Christian life is **NOT** determined by whether they **PERFECTLY OBEY** all the **6,468 commands** of the Bible—right now—or else they are **spiritual failures** and **sinfully disobedient!**

Christ's commandment are light, His load is easy, and His commandments are not burdensome, **BECAUSE** we apply them by faith (i.e., based in a *personal relationship* with God)—**not by law** (i.e., a rule book mentality). (Mt. 11:28-30; I Jn. 5:3-4; ChristianTeens.about.com)

Moral perfection **IS** the standard for *lost men* entering heaven **by their own merit** (an *impossible* feat), and is also what God requires of any *believer trying to live unto God based on WORKS (i.e. their own *self-effort*)—again, an *impossible* feat. (Rom. 11:6, etc.). It is also His ultimate goal for all believers.*

The great news is that since our sins are forgiven, a **new standard** for how to walk with God has been established. We are called to maintain daily fellowship with the living God, and it is **not based on works or performance** any more than having a good relationship with your wife would be based on your doing everything perfectly. Our sins have been FORGIVEN!

God **does** say for us to “**be perfect**,” and “**be holy**, for I am holy,” and our **maturity toward** that *standard* is **gained by faith**, daily. That's the **GOAL** (though *never achievable* in this life), and progressing by **faith** is the **means**. As the Scripture says, we are to **grow in grace** and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and we have received our **introduction** into this **grace** in which we *stand*. (Mt. 5:48; I Pet. 1:16; II Pet. 3:18; Rom. 5:1-2)

The reason Christians are not under law is **NOT** because the law is evil. In fact, the Bible says the Law is holy and righteous (Rom. 7:12), spiritual. (Rom. 7:14), and good (Rom. 7:12, 16). The problem is that **WE—in ourselves—are just sinful flesh**. As such, **we cannot** on our own *effort*, decision-making, self-discipline or **will power** OBEY a spiritual book without His life and power working *in* and *through* us to give us that **spiritual** power. Fortunately, we are **no longer estranged** from God and are **no longer flesh** as our true *identity*, and we are freed to be able to live that life, by **faith**. (Jn. 6:63, 5:39; II Cor. 3:3-6; Rom. 8:3-8; Heb. 4:12, ETC.)

Personal Note: The works-based philosophy is so *prevalent*, even some Christians take offense/umbrage if—not knowing them very well—you **ask them if they're sure they're going to heaven**, as if the question implies their behavior is morally inferior. They're taking OFFENSE at your showing **love**!

P.S.: Living under the law allows for much self-doubt and self-condemnation, for it truly does not have the assurance that decisions made have been led of God (Rom. 14:22; I Jn. 3:20; Ex.: did I do enough, should I have done that, have I applied that Scripture verse?, etc.). Pray and trust the Spirit to *actually* give you those sought-after answers. It's called being led—not leaning on your *own* understanding (Pv. 3:5-7).

LICENSE

The final imposter to grace is what some call ‘**grace abuse**’... taking *advantage* of the system God has established by **NOT trying to grow or obey God**—called “**license**.” Lawlessness, carnality, luke-warmness, worldliness, self-righteousness and pure living for yourself (i.e., just like a lost person naturally would) are other synonyms of **license** in its various forms. **See also:** God's Will/Imposters

In short, believers who are **NOT totally committed** to Christ **are NOT filled** with His Spirit and live life **only** the way they *want* to—doing what they please (which always involves living according to fleshly desires). Such a life will **NEVER please God**, will ultimately cause

PAUPERS in heaven (if such people *were* saved) and brings down the reputation of Christianity as a *Church* ‘full of hypocrites.’ As Mahatma Gandhi said,

“I like your Christ, I do not like your Christians.
Your Christians are *so unlike* your Christ.”

The life of grace is the **most fulfilling** and **wonderfully abundant** life, for in it God provides the opportunity to **live in true VICTORY**. We are (or at least *can be*) free from **habitual, willful** and **knowing sinning against** the One we love, by His power and leading. We are also sure that we are **fully forgiven** and **unconditionally loved**, and are thereby free to love and serve God in holiness, victory and joy.

If this is not the life you are living, you are NOT living the Christian life, though you may be a *Christian*. Get your viewpoint corrected from these two *grace imposters* of Law and License and start *enjoying* the **fruitful benefits** and **rewards** of FULLY PLEASING Him. Walk by **faith**, live and grow under grace, be led by the Spirit, **follow** Christ and walk with God (along with all the other **word pictures** associated with this most **GLORIOUS** and NORMAL Christian life).

Applied

The Christian is not without law, but is under a **Person**, and what the New Testament calls:

- “The Law of Christ.” (I Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2)
- “The Royal Law” (Jas. 2:8)
- “The Law of Liberty.” (Jas. 1:25, 2:12)
- “The Law of Faith.” (Rom. 3:27)

In other words, while all God’s word is applicable to believers and is what we are submitted to, **He decides** which parts and at what time and how we *progressively apply* it, based on our *personal growth* and fellowship with Him.

Abused

Grace can be *abused*, either by manipulatively “**taking advantage**” of its *freedom*, or by **ignoring the Bible altogether** in favor of sin. The *proper* response to God’s *grace* in sanctification is to **live as bond-servants** of God (i.e., **freed** from slavery to sin, and thereby **free** to choose to *make oneself* His slave—the very definition of a bond-slave, and *synonymous* with living as His disciple).

Valued

God’s grace is **unparalleled** and **unmatched** No other religion has the concept of heaven as a **free GIFT**, or righteousness in this life as a *privilege* one is EMPOWERED to live from God’s life within and claiming His promises by **faith**. Here are a few verses *extolling* God’s great idea called “**grace**.”

See: II Cor. 1:12, 6:1, 12, 8:9, 9:8; Eph. 1:6-7; Phil. 1:7; Col. 1:6; II Th. 2:16; I Tim. 1:14, II Tim. 1:9, 2:1; Tit. 2:11, 3:7; Heb. 4:16, 10:29, 12:15, 13:9; Jas. 4:6; I Pet. 4:10, 5:5, 12; II Pet. 3:18

GRAY AREAS AND ‘ALL THINGS LAWFUL’

In the Bible there are many passages which contain **no commandments** to obey. However, where there are commands, with an attitude of willingness to obey and serve God, we **apply the word of God by FAITH**—that is, as the **Spirit** lays His word on our hearts (or “convicts us” to apply it). There are many black and white moral issues in our life to confront, and in His power and timing we (*eventually*) will.

There are some issues which are “*amoral*” (i.e., **not moral or immoral in themselves**), that can become a moral issue for us either if:

1. We are unsure what to do and act against our conscience, or
2. We know or are alerted to the *effect* our decision will have in sinfully influencing a “weaker brother.” (i.e., a *less* mature Christian with a *less-strong* conscience in these matters).

The Bible has some examples from the days of its writing, but we are **not much tempted** to buy food from a local pagan religious temple as our grocery store (among *other* examples), so let me give you a **few examples** of how this concept can **still be in play** for the modern believer. **Can an adult believer ever drink alcohol?** What about Christian women wearing certain types of bikinis or believers dancing certain types of dances or watching certain types of TV shows or movies? Can you say “*string bikini?*”

The ‘rule’ is: Anything you are *free* to do that is **not an objective sin** but you know will negatively impact the moral decision-making of a *weaker* brother **DON’T DO** (at least *around* that person).

Finally, under the topic of **grace**, when we understand that we have been freed up and enabled to obey and serve God in and by the power of the **Spirit**, we can finally **understand** four passages which describe our general decision-making process on **amoral** subjects, often called “**gray areas**” or “**principles of conscience**.” The “*formula*” we are to apply is:

“All things are lawful, BUT...

1. Not all things edify (i.e., my brother)—(I Cor. 10:23)
2. Not all things are profitable. (I Cor. 6:12, 10:23)
3. I will not be mastered by anything. (I Cor. 6:12)

Let this *standard* guide you in any **gray area decisions** you may face. Remember, it is not the activity that is evil, or that you don’t have the right to do it. It is *considering the other person’s* conscience which affects your OWN conscience’s clarity before God. An action can be perfectly morally neutral and still a SIN for **you** if your decision is not “*from faith*.” (Rom. 14:21-23)

This is not the previously popular “What Would Jesus Do?” (**WWJD**) philosophy, which essentially came about because Christians don’t know the Bible well (because they *hardly* read it). They may have some “**image**” of what Jesus would do—which cannot be *completely accurate* if we don’t search the Scriptures. We are blessed with **full access** to ASK HIM **directly** what to do and we have His final written revelation to *teach* us His will! Don’t ask what He would do—*ask* Him, and *see* what he’s already TOLD you!

Many believers have **no idea** what He was like or wants, because they have a “Jesus **meek and mild** only” mentality of **just “loving on” people**. If that were the only issue believers

were to consider in *sanctification*, we could be justified in throwing out all Bible pages but those speaking about love! It's **not that simple**, though it's **not very complicated** either.

See: Rom, 14:1-15:3; I Cor. 8:1-3, 10:14-11:1

KEY VERSES

LIBERTY

But by the **grace** of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the **grace** of God with me. **(I Cor. 15:10)** [i.e., grace when experienced produces more goodness than any law ever could—Gal. 5:22-25]

Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have obtained our introduction by **faith** into this **grace** in which we stand; and we exult in *hope* of the glory of God. **(Rom. 5:1-2)**

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, be on your guard lest, being carried away by the error of unprincipled men, you fall from your own steadfastness, but **grow in the grace** and **knowledge of our Lord** and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. **(II Pet. 3:17-18)**

It was for **freedom** that Christ **set us free**; therefore keep **standing firm** and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery. Behold I, Paul, say to you that if you receive circumcision, Christ will be of no benefit to you. And I testify again to every man who receives circumcision, that he is under obligation to keep the whole Law. **(Gal. 5:1-3)**

Jesus therefore was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." **(Jn. 8:31-32)**

"If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed. **(Jn. 8:36)**

LAW

For sin shall not be master over you, for **you are not under law, but under grace**. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? *May it never be!* Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as **slaves for obedience**, you are slaves of the one whom you **obey**, either of **sin** resulting in death, or of **obedience** resulting in righteousness? **(Rom. 6:14-16)**

For whoever keeps the whole law and yet **stumbles in one point**, he has become **guilty of all**. For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act, as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty. **(Jas. 2:10-12)**

For as many as are of the works of the Law are **under a curse**; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT **ABIDE BY ALL THINGS** WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY **FAITH**." However, **the Law is not of faith**; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL **LIVE** BY THEM." **(Gal. 3:10-12)**

LICENSE

Act as **free** men, and do not use your **freedom** as a covering for **evil**, but use it as bond slaves of God. (**I Pet. 2:16**)

For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this *condemnation*, **ungodly** persons who **turn the grace** of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ. (**Jude 1:4**)

TRIALS, TEMPTATION & SUFFERING

In my New Testament “Color Charts” (which *graphically* portray the contents and *themes* of every New Testament book), the major section heading for James chapter 1 is:

- I. **Seeming Non-Gifts:** Trials (1:1-12)
- II. **Non-Gifts:** Temptation (1:13-15), and
- III. **Gifts:** Salvation⁺ (1:16-18)

So what is the difference between the various “*tough times*” and challenges all true believers will face?

1. First, there are **trials**—tough times which *test our faith* and make us morally stronger.
2. Next, **temptation** is NEVER a lure to make us morally stronger—just the *opposite* (as is its source, the devil).
3. **Suffering**, though very *tough to endure*, is within the providence of God, even if its direct agency is sometimes the *devil* and his *forces*.

Please read the following **key passages** on the various challenges we face, and *learn* how God wants you to handle them. You will quickly learn that someone claiming to be living in a “bed of roses” or “the life of Riley” or on “Easy Street” is LIKELY **not fully** serving within the *will of God*:

TRIALS

Consider it all **joy**, my brethren, when you encounter **various** trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces *endurance*. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be **perfect** and **complete**, lacking in nothing. (Jas. 1:2-4)

In this you greatly **rejoice**, even though now for a little while, *if necessary*, you have been distressed by **various** trials, that the proof of your faith, being **more precious than gold** which is perishable, even though tested by fire, may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ; and though you have not seen Him, you love Him, and though you do not see Him now, but believe in Him, you greatly rejoice with **joy** inexpressible and full of glory, (I Pet. 1:6-8)

“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you have Tribulation, but take **courage**; I have overcome the world.” (Jn. 16:33)

“Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will *care for itself*. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” (Mt. 6:34)

TEMPTATION

Let no one say when he is tempted, “**I am being tempted by God**”; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and **He Himself does not tempt anyone**. But each one is tempted when he is **carried away** and **enticed** by his own lust. Then when lust has *conceived*, it gives birth to **sin**; and when sin is *accomplished*, it brings forth **death**. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. (Jas. 1:13-16)

No temptation has overtaken you but such as is *common* to man; and God is faithful, who will **not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able**, but with the temptation will **provide the way of escape** also, that you may be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry. I speak as to *wise* men; you judge what I say. **(I Cor. 10:13-15)**

then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly **from temptation**, and to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of **judgment**, **(II Pet. 2:9)**

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot **sympathize** with our weaknesses, but **One who has been tempted in all things** as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. **(Heb. 4:14-16)**

And He said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come. 'Give us each day our daily bread. 'And forgive us our sins, For we ourselves also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And **lead us not into temptation**.'" **(Lk. 11:2-4)**

Now to Him who is **able to keep you from stumbling**, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen. **(Jude 1:24-25)**

The one who loves his brother abides in the light and there is **no cause for stumbling** in him. **(I Jn. 2:10)**

"Keep **watching** and **praying**, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." **(Mt. 26:41)**

SUFFERING

Therefore, since Christ has suffered in the flesh, **arm yourselves also with the same purpose**, because he who has suffered in the flesh has **ceased from sin**, so as to live the rest of the time in the flesh no longer for the lusts of men, but for the will of God. **(I Pet. 4:1-2)**

For you have been called for this purpose, since *Christ* also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to **follow in His steps**, **(I Pet. 2:21)**

Beloved, **do not be surprised** at the **fiery ordeal** among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though *some strange thing* were happening to you; but **to the degree that you share the sufferings** of Christ, keep on rejoicing; so that also at the revelation of His glory, you may **rejoice** with exultation. **(I Pet. 4:12-13)**

Suffer hardship with me, as a *good soldier* of Christ Jesus. No soldier in active service entangles himself in the affairs of everyday life, so that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier. **(II Tim. 2:3-4)**

Therefore, since we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also **lay aside** every encumbrance, and the **sin** which so easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the **joy** set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you may **not grow weary** and lose heart. You have **not yet resisted** to the point of shedding

blood in your **striving against sin**; and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons, "MY SON, DO NOT REGARD LIGHTLY THE DISCIPLINE OF THE LORD, NOR FAINT WHEN YOU ARE REPROVED BY HIM; FOR THOSE WHOM THE LORD LOVES HE DISCIPLINES, AND HE SCOURGES EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVES." It is for **discipline** that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? But **if you are without discipline**, of which **all** have become partakers, then you are *illegitimate children* and **not sons**. Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we *respected* them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? For they disciplined us for a *short time* as seemed best to them, but **He disciplines us for our good**, that we may **share His holiness**. All discipline for the moment seems **not to be joyful**, but sorrowful; yet to those who have been **trained** by it, *afterwards* it yields the peaceful fruit of **righteousness**. (Heb. 12:1-11)

And because of the surpassing greatness of the revelations, for this reason, to keep me from exalting myself, there was given me a **thorn in the flesh**, a messenger of Satan to buffet me—to keep me from exalting myself! Concerning this I entreated the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He has said to me, "My **grace** is sufficient for you, for **power** is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, that the **power** of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with **persecutions**, with **difficulties**, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am **strong**. (II Cor. 12:7-10)

OTHER CHALLENGES

Finally, there are other challenges believers *can* face, and the Bible addresses these as well:

Thorn in Flesh (**See:** II Cor. 12:7-10, above)

Strongholds (II Cor. 10:4)

Weaknesses (I Cor. 2:3; Rom. 8:26; Heb. 5:2, etc.)

“Blind Spots” (Jas. 1:23-25; Mt. 7:4)

Addictions (**See:** Strongholds, above)

Natural Consequences of Sin (Ex.: physical death for ALL men, going to jail for a **crime**—Christians are not immune) (Heb. 9:27; Rom. 13:1-7, etc.)

Etc. (do you know of any others?)

It appears that the consistent teaching on **how to handle** these stresses is to:

- **Rely** on God's *Power* and *Deliverance*.
- Have an *Attitude* of **joy**.
- **Pray**.
- Know the **Word**. And
- **ENDURE!** (**deliverance** is promised, **ultimately** if not *sooner!*)

See also: Warfare

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Definition

Spiritual warfare is defined as the attempt and **efforts** of Satan and his demons to **defeat** believers in their ministries and ethical growth and to **keep lost people** from ‘coming to Christ’. The **devils’ plan** for *believers* is clearly laid out in **John 10:10** and **I Peter 5:7-10**. He will do *anything* to keep us from **growing morally**, and **evangelizing**, and he seems to be **quite SUCCESSFUL** in the average American church. (II Cor. 10:3)

Opposition

Even as believers the devil is a **greater power** than we can handle on our own. It is only by reliance on the One *so much greater than the devil*, that we can experience *glorious **victory***, in Christ. The devil may be “the **god of this world**,” but he is **NOT God of all**. His actions are restricted and limited within the sovereignty of God, and WE are allowed to **experience** and promised **victory over the devil** if we trust God and **put on His full armor**. (Jas. 4:5-10; II Cor. 4:4; I Jn. 4:4, 5:4)

Weapons

For the Christian to experience **victory** over **sin** and the **devil** and *reign triumphant* in this life takes both *offensive* and *defensive* weapons. Several passages detail the armor God has provided for us to **stand firm** against our enemy in the *evil day*.

If you have not personally *appropriated* these weapons for your life, you leave yourself **exposed**, vulnerable and subject to **defeat**. Our weapons are **strong**, and **divinely** (vs. *humanly*) **POWERFUL**, and the *devil knows it*.

WE are to know how the devil operates, and **not be surprised** by or **ignorant** of his schemes lest we fall prey to them. Study how he has acted, as revealed in Scripture, and you will see some of his **CLEVER tactics**. They are intended for and aimed at **YOU**, his **target**, to **ruin** your spiritual growth and life. No need to give him **any more victories** than he has already accomplished!

God has provided our armament, and a believer needs only to “**put it on**.” The pieces include:

1. **Truth**. (Loins covered)–(Eph. 6:14) Knowledge of God’s word. Mind-renewal, Scripture **memory** and **meditation**.
2. **Righteousness**. (Breastplate)–(Eph. 6:14) **Holy character** protecting our hearts.
3. **Gospel**. (Feet deliver it)–(Eph. 6:15) Evangelism is a *weapon* against the devil, and requires FEET taking the Gospel message to the people!
4. **Faith**. (Shield that can defeat **all** the devil’s fiery attacks)–(Eph. 6:16)
5. **Salvation**. (Head helmet)–(Eph. 6:17) Likely means either to **make sure** you are saved, or *more likely* to have your mind-set focused on our great SALVATION. **See:** “Salvation. (the blood of Christ),” below
6. **Bible**. (Sword of the Spirit)–(Eph. 6:17) Likely distinguishing the word the Spirit calls to our mind, after having **studied the word** as the loin-covering truth.

7. **Prayer.** (if not a weapon, the **only way** faith can be *exercised*)—(Eph. 6:18; Mk. 11:22-24)
 - a) Pray. (always in the **Spirit**)—(Eph. 6:18)
 - b) Petition. (always *in the Spirit*, and for ALL **Christians**, including for their *boldness* in **evangelism**)—(Eph. 6:18)
 - c) Pray with alertness. (Eph. 6:18)
 - d) Pray with perseverance. (Eph. 6:18)
8. **Faith.** (*Soberly* put on the breastplate)—(I Th. 5:8) **See:** “Shield of Faith,” above
9. **Love.** (*Soberly* put on the breastplate)—(I Th. 5:8) The **greatest ethic.** Learn to love *lost men* and *believers.* (I Cor. 13:13; Mt. 22:36-40)
10. **Hope of Salvation.** (Head helmet)—(I Th. 5:8) **Mind fixed** on our future *hope.* (I Pet. 1:13)
11. **God’s power?** (II Cor. 6:7) Whether *explicitly* a weapon or not, all that is done in Christ is done in the **power of the Spirit**—including *spiritual warfare.*
12. **Right Hand Weapons of Righteousness.** (II Cor. 6:7) Likely the shield of faith or sword of the Spirit (unless you have more than two hands)
13. **Left Hand Weapons of Righteousness.** (II Cor. 6:7) Again, likely the shield of faith or sword of the Spirit (unless you have more than two hands)
14. **Salvation.** (the blood of Christ)—(Rev. 12:11) Likely means either to make sure you are saved, or, *more likely* to have your mind-set focused on our great SALVATION
15. **Testimony.** (i.e., *verbal*)—(Rev. 12:11) **Tell people** you were *saved!*
16. **Commitment.** (i.e., not loving life *more than* Christ)—(Rev. 12:11) Be **totally committed** to Christ.

Not everyone believes all of these are Christian weapons, but all can agree that it’s

Time to GET TO WORK because there’s a lot of military clothing to put on!

See also: Rom. 5:17, 8:35-39; I Cor. 15:57; II Cor. 1:10, 6:7, 10:1-6; Eph. 6:10-18; I Th. 2:18; II Tim. 4:18; I Jn. 4:4; Rev. 12:11, etc.

OUR VICTORY IN CHRIST

For if by the transgression of the one, death reigned through the one, *much more* those who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness **will reign in life** through the One, Jesus Christ. (**Rom. 5:17**)

But **in all these things** we **overwhelmingly conquer** through Him who loved us. (**Rom. 8:37**)

But thanks be to God, who **always leads us in His triumph** in *Christ*, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place. (**II Cor. 2:14**)

You are from God, little children, and have **overcome them**; because *greater* is He who is in you than he who is in the world. (**I Jn. 4:4**)

‘For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome. For **whatever is born of God overcomes the world**; and this is **the victory** that has overcome the world—our faith. (I Jn. 5:3-4) **See also:** Trials, Temptation and Suffering

Schemes

In my *studied* opinion, the devil’s number one scheme is LIES—in *whatever* form (Ex.: non-truths, deception, ‘spinning,’ misleadings, withheld truth and *half-truths*).

- In Genesis—in order to lead all mankind into *sin*, his tactic was to **deny the word of God** (i.e., lie). (Gen. Ch. 2)
- At Christ’s temptation, his scheme was to try to **get Christ to doubt** or **be confused** about **God’s word** (i.e., lie). (Mt. Ch. 4)

He is still up to these tricks, but seems most successful just **keeping Christians from even KNOWING much** about the word he would *otherwise* have to get us to doubt or be confused over (or that there’s a battle going on).

II Corinthians 11:12-14 says *one* scheme of his is to *appear as* an **angel of Light**. He’ll usually not come out **blatantly** with the suggestion of sin—but that suggestion will be thrown in among some **seemingly “good** works.” For example, have you ever seen a notoriously **greedy** business mogul do famously charitable acts to make their public “image” less *offensive*? We should beware of **wolves in sheep’s clothing**, as this is another strategy of the devil. (II Tim. 3:5)

Still others include:

- **Unforgiveness** and/or bitterness. (II Cor. 2:10-11)
- Widow misbehavior. (I Tim. 5:14-15)
- **Ignorance** of doctrine. (Eph. 4:14-15)
- **False doctrine**. (I Tim. 6:21; Eph. 6:11)
- Idols. (I Jn. 5:21; including Money—Col. 3:5; I Tim. 6:10)
- Apathy. (Ex.: “the only thing needed for **evil** to *prevail* is for **good men** to do NOTHING”) (Rev. 3:16)
- Temptation. (I Th. 3:5)
- Trying to get Christians to blatantly disqualify our witness by *blatant* sin(s). (I Cor. 9:27, etc.)
- **Guilt, condemnation** and **accusation** (Rom. 8:1; Rev. 12:10)
- Fear. (II Tim. 1:7)
- Worry, anxiety, and lack of peace. (Phil. 4:6-8, etc.)
- Ignorance of the **Bible** and that there’s even a **battle** being waged. (II Cor. 2:11)
- ETC. (**Many more** are revealed in God’s word... **go find** them)

Christians are **promised victory** in *this* life through Jesus Christ. Besides putting on all the armor and weapons God has provided, we are:

a) **Not to yield** to temptation, OR

b) Quit under *trials* and *suffering*.

If you want to ***experience*** a victorious Christian life, read the following verses, and **DO** what they say:

See: Mt. 4:1-12; Eph. 4:26-27, 6:10-13; Jas. 4:8-12; I Pet. 5:7-10, ETC.

Imposters

WHAT SPIRITUAL WARFARE IS NOT

- A demon at every *doorstep*, behind every *bush* and *headache*. (i.e., errantly ‘**extreme**’)
- A Hierarchy of clearly-named demons and demon “clusters” or families (i.e., so-called “**spiritual mapping**”)
- Demon possession of Christians (vs. **Oppression**). No such promise for lost people.
- Something that **NEVER** happens to believers (i.e., to **deny** him is to be defeated by him).
- “**Generational sins**” and **curses** Christians **MUST** inherit, even though we are ***freed*** in Christ.
- Etc. (What other “new” wild theories can *man* come up with?)

Other Considerations

- a) The devil **can’t be everywhere** at the same time. He’s not *omnipresent*.
- b) The devil **didn’t “make you do it”** (i.e., an attitude of irresponsibility)
- c) Life *under the law* is like **telling a child not to eat out of the open candy dish**. (i.e., the flesh erupts in aggressively rebellious fashion. (Rom. 6-7)
- d) The **mystery of godliness** and the **mystery of iniquity** are as *follows*—*Christ lives in* believers and the *devil* is the father of ALL lost people. **Christ is** “the *mystery of godliness!*” (I Tim. 3:16—“He”; II Th. 2:7; Eph. 2:2; Col. 1:27; Jn. 8:44)
- e) The flesh (i.e., sin nature) is **not eradicated** and the Christian will **never be perfect** IN THIS LIFE. (Rom. Chs. 6-7)
- f) **Sin is NOT you**, if you are in Christ. You are a **NEW person**, and NOT a *spiritual schizophrenic* or a *confused mix* of either two natures or two identities. You do have *two natures*, but the old self is **not you**. (**See:** Identity and Inheritance).
- g) Some people *distinguish* between sin as a **habit** vs. **occasional sins**. Certainly the Bible teaches us to be **WARY** of confessors who are not possessors, or tares among the wheat. Just be sure that, *as a believer*, you continually live your life in Christ-like honor, so **no one** needs to *confuse* you for a *lost soul* or accuse you of being **less holy** than a **moral lost person**. (I Jn. 3:4, 8-9; Mt. 7:21-23, 13:24-30)
- h) The **devil** can work through Christians. (Mk. 8:33; Eph. 6:12)
- i) **Christians cannot be demon possessed**, but they can be demon oppressed.
- j) The **devil can** make people rich—not just God. (Lk. 16:19-31; Jas. 2:6, 5:1; Deut. 8:18, etc.)
- k) The **devil can** do miracles—don’t be **deceived**. (Mt. 7:22-23; Mk. 9:39)

- 1) As I was taught at Highland Baptist Church in College, whenever *someone* says something to you **contrary** to your faith and the **word of God**, say, “I don’t receive that,” (*at least* to yourself).

DOCTRINE I

Topics: God/Trinity, Christ, Holy Spirit, Bible, Salvation/Sanctification

Note: For a thorough and deeper exploration of all New Testament verses' interpretation (including difficult ones), as well as their relation to all others (including highlighted Old Testament verses), see our upcoming New Millennium Commentary: New Testament, and associated Topication.

To have an *effective* Christian life requires some knowledge of basic Christian beliefs. The following is a brief overview of the major points of the **top 10 foundational Christian doctrines**. You will encounter these *doctrinal subjects* repeatedly as you read the Scripture, though never in as organized a way as theology books present them.

Because this website's discipleship materials are aimed at **growing up Christians** and not educating just to get more knowledge, each of the following 10 doctrinal subjects will end with my "**top 10**" choices of *related practical* verses.

"General Revelation

Ps. 19:1-6	Revelation is world-wide and continuous
Rom. 1:18-32	Revelation of the wrath of God
Ac. 14:17	The providence of God
Matt. 5:45	The goodness of God
Acts 17:28-29	God is intelligent and living"

Basic Theology, by Charles Ryrie, p. 614 (Moody Press: Chicago), 1999

THE GODHEAD (Trinity)

1. Trinity "Proofs" of the Triune God:

- a) We Have One God vs. Many Gods. (Eph. 4; I Th. 1:9; Jn. 17:3; Deut. 6:4; Isa. 48:16; Mt. 28:18-20; II Cor. 13:14)
- b) No One of the Three Members of the Godhead is Less Than Fully God. (I Cor. 8:5-6)
- c) The Members of the Trinity Interact in the Following Ways (i.e., Their "Chain of Authority"):
 - Believing in and beholding Christ is **doing so** to the Father. (Jn. 14:44-45)
 - Christ spoke and did what the Father **initiated** (Jn. 12:49-50, 14:10, 21, 17:4, 8), as did the Spirit. (Jn. 16:13)
 - Receiving the Holy Spirit is receiving Christ. (Jn. 13:20)
 - The Father received glory from Christ's glory (Jn. 13:31-32, 14:13, 17:1, 5), as Christ does from the Holy Spirit. (Jn. 16:14, 17:4-5, 22, 24)
 - To know and see Christ is to know and see the Father. (Jn. 14:7, 9)
 - Believers' fellowship with the Godhead. (II Cor. 13:14; I Jn. 1:3)
 - Christ is in the Father and the Father is in Christ (Jn. 14:10-11, 20, 17:21)
 - Christ asks the Father, Who sends the Holy Spirit (Jn. 14:16, 26)

- The Holy Spirit's coming is Christ coming to not leave believers as orphans. (Jn. 14:18)
 - Believers' guidance by the Godhead. (Ps. 23:2-3/II Cor. 2:14; Lk. 9:23/Mt. 4:19; Rom. 8:14/Gal. 5:18)
 - To the one who loves Christ (by obeying commandments) , God the Father will love him (Jn. 14:21, 16-17, 19, 23)
 - In Christ's humbling humanity, He was subservient to the Father (Jn. 14:28; Phil. 2, etc.)
 - The Father sent Christ from and received Him back to **heaven** (Jn. 15:21, 16:5, 17:18), as Christ originated from heaven. (Jn. 15:26, 16:7, 28, 17:8, 13, 23, 25)
 - To hate the Father is to hate Christ. (Jn. 15:23)
 - The Spirit takes from what is Christ's (Jn. 16:14-15), as Christ took from what was the Father's (Jn. 16:15, 17:7, 10)
 - While Christ was on earth, disciples asked **Him** for things (Jn. 16:23-24); Now they ask the **Father** in Christ's name. (Jn. 14:14, 15:7, 16:23-24, 26)
 - The Father gave Christ authority and the right to choose saved individuals. (Jn. 17:2, 9)
 - Eternal life is knowing God the **Father** and **Christ** the Son (Jn. 17:3, 5)
- d) The Interchangeably Ambiguous "Lord" Appellations. (Mk. 12:29, God the Father; I Cor. 8:6; Jn. 13:13, Christ the Son, etc.)
- e) The Personhood of All Three Godhead Members.
- Personhood of the Father
- Mind—Isa. 55:8
 - Will—Col. 3:12
 - Emotion—Neh. 8:10
- Personhood of the Son
- Mind—I Cor. 2:16
 - Will—Jn. 1:43
 - Emotion—Jn. 11:35
- Personhood of the Holy Spirit
- Mind—Rom. 8:27
 - Will—I Cor. 12:11
 - Emotion—Eph. 4:30
- f) The Gender Identification of All Three Godhead Members: Male (i.e., "He," "Him")
- Father—Jn. 6:39
 - Son—I Pet. 1:19-20
 - Holy Spirit—Jn. 16:13
- g) Proximate Triune References. Ex.: Mt. 3:16, 10:20, 12:18, 28:19; Lk. 2:26; Jn. 13:20, 15:26 Rom. 8:9, 11; II Cor. 13:14
- h) Old Testament Trinitarian Allusions. Ex.: Gen. 11:17, etc.

i) The Deity of All Three Persons of the Trinity: **See:** Divine Attributes, after chart below

GOD THE FATHER

2. God the Father (1st Person of the Trinity)

a) Divine Attributes

Divine/Divinity (Deity)–Ac. 17:29

Omniscient (All-Knowing)–Heb. 4:12-13, etc.

Omnipresent (All- or Ever–Present)–Ps. 139:7-12, etc.

Omnipotent (All-Powerful)–Rev. 19:6; Gen. 17:1; Ps. 91:1, etc.

Sovereign–Ps. 100:3; Rom. 9:14-16

Eternal–Ps. 90:2; Deut. 33:27; Rom. 16:26

Unchangeable–Ps. 18:31; Heb. 6:17; Mic. 7:18; Heb. 6:18; Jas. 1:17

Invisible–I Tim. 1:17; Col. 1:15; I Jn. 4:20, (Rom. 1:20)

Holy–I Cor. 3:17, Lev. 19:2; I Pet. 1:16; Ps. 99

Just–Lk. 18:7; Rom. 9:14; Gen. 18:25

Impartial–Eph. 6:9; Gal. 2:6; Rom. 2:11; Ac. 10:34

Righteous–Rev. 19:1-2; II Tim. 4:8?; II Th. 1:5; Jn. 17:25; Ps. 11:7

Love–I Jn. 4:8, 16; Jn. 3:16; Rom. 5:8, etc.

Judgment–Heb. 12:23; Heb. 10:26-31; Rom. 11:22, etc.

Kindness.–Eph. 2:7; Rom. 2:4, 11:22

Merciful–I Pet. 1:3; Eph. 2:4; II Cor. 1:3

Faithful–I Cor. 1:9; II Cor. 1:18; Lam. 3:22-23; Rev. 19:11; I Pet. 4:19

True–Rom. 3:4; Heb. 6:18; Rev. 19:11

b) Names (**See:** I Am: 365 Names of God, by John Paul Jackson (Streams Publishing: North Sutton, N.H.), 2002)

KEY VERSES

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have **to do**. (**Heb. 4:13**)

And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" (**Gal. 4:6**)

And if you address as Father the One who impartially judges according to each man's work, **conduct yourselves in fear** during the time of your stay upon earth; (**I Pet. 1:14-17**)

See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. (**I Jn. 3:1**)

As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior,

because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." Cf.: (I Pet. 1:15-16, Cf.: Mt. 5:48; II Cor. 6:17-18)

Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for **our God is a consuming fire**. (Heb. 12:28-29)

And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; (Ac. 15:8)

Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think; According to the power that works within us, to Him be the *glory* in the church and in Christ Jesus to *all generations* forever and ever. Amen. (Eph. 3:20-21, Cf.: Mk. 10:27)

Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is **no variation**, or shifting shadow. (Jas. 1:17)

And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast *sent*. (Jn. 17:3)

GOD THE SON

3. God the Son/Jesus Christ (2nd Person of the Trinity)

Dare to Compare (Father vs. Son Divine Attributes):

Divine/Divinity (Deity)—Mt. 1:22-23; Mk. 2:5-7; Jn. 1:1-3, 10, 30, 5:16-18, 10:30-33 (Cf.: 19:7); Col. 1:19, 2:9; Tit. 3:5 = II Pet. 1:11 (“Savior” refers to God and Christ), Cf.: Rev. 21:5-6 = 22:13 (“Alpha and Omega refers to God and Christ); Rev. 16:7 = I Cor. 12:3 (“Lord” refers to God and Christ); Heb. 1:3, 6, 10-11; I Pet. 2:22

Omniscient (All-Knowing)—Jn. 16:29-31; Jn. 4:18; Jn. 1:47-48

Omnipresent (All- or Ever—Present)—~Eph. 5:14; I Pet. 5:10, 1:11; Rom. 8:9

Omnipotent (All-Powerful)—Heb. 7:16

Sovereign—Ac. 10:36; Rom. 10:12-13

Lord of Lords—Rev. 19:16 (Cf.: Ps. 136:3)

Creator. Jn. 1:1-3 (Cf.: Gen. 1:1)

Answers Prayers. Jn. 14:14 (Cf.: Ps. 86:5-8)

Unchangeable—Heb. 13:8

Invisible—I Pet. 1:8; I Jn. 3:2

Holy—Ac. 2:27; Jn. 6:69; Ac. 4:27

Just—I Pet. 3:18; Mt. 12:20

Impartial—Lk. 20:21; Mt. 22:16

Righteous—I Jn. 2:1; II Pet. 1:1

Love—Jn. 13:34, 15:12; Jn. 15:13

Judgment—Jn. 5:22-23; II Cor. 5:10

Kindness—*See all His healings and miracles!* (Cf.: II Cor. 10:1)

Merciful—Heb. 2:17; Jude 1:21; Lk. 17:13-14, etc.

Faithful—Rev. 3:14; Heb. 2:17, 3:2, 6, 2:17

True—Rev. 3:14; Lk. 20:21; Jn. 8:40, 1:14, 17

b) **Humanity**—Phil. 2:5-11; I Tim. 2:5; Rom. 5:15; Jn. 19:28; Ac. 25:19

c) **Life**—Ac. 10:38-43; Jn. 20:30-31, 21:25. **See:** the entire New Testament (*especially* the Gospels)

d) **Death, Burial, Resurrection, Ascension, Seating and Future Second Coming**—I Cor. 15:3-8; Eph. 4:10; Col. 3:1; I Jn. 2:28. **See:** the entire New Testament (*especially* the Gospels)

KEY VERSES

Christ is the Only Source of Salvation

"And there is salvation in no one else; for there is **no other name under heaven** that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." (**Ac. 4:12**)

Christ is the Victor over Satan, Sin and Death

but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who **abolished death**, and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel, (**II Tim. 1:10**)

Christ is Unchanging

Jesus Christ is **the same** yesterday and today, yes and forever. (**Heb. 13:8**)

Christ is Powerful and Glorified

and in the middle of the lamp stands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as a dead man. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be *afraid*; I am the **first and the last**, and the **living One**; and I was dead, and behold, **I am alive forevermore**, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. (**Rev. 1:13-18**)

Christ is the Soon-Coming Lord, Authority and God

But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, after that those who are Christ's at His coming, then comes the end, when **He delivers up the kingdom to the God** and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be abolished is death. For HE HAS PUT ALL **THINGS IN SUBJECTION UNDER HIS FEET**. But when He says, "All things are put in subjection," it is evident that He is excepted who put all things in subjection to Him. And when all things are subjected to Him, then **the Son Himself also will be subjected to the One** who subjected all things to Him, that God may be all in all. (**I Cor. 15:23-28, Cf.: Ac. 10:36; Rev. 22:12-13**)

We Have Been Called into Fellowship with Him

what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, that you also may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with **His Son** Jesus Christ. (**I Jn. 1:3, Cf.: I Cor. 1:9**)

Christ-Likeness is the Goal of Sanctification

but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him, who is the **head**, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by that which every joint supplies; According to the proper working of each individual part, **causes the growth of the body** for the building up of itself in love. (Eph. 4:15-16)

Christ is the Source of Godliness

And by common confession great is **the mystery of godliness: He** who was revealed in the flesh, Was vindicated in the Spirit, Beheld by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory. (I Tim. 3:16, Cf.: Col. 1:27)

Christ Prays for us

Hence, also, **He is able to save forever** those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them. (Heb. 7:25, Cf.: Rom. 8:34)

Christ Gives Help in Times of Temptation

For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need. (Heb. 4:15-16)

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

4. God the Holy Spirit (3rd Person of the Trinity)

a) Deity Proofs and Divine Attributes—

Teacher of all Christians—omnipresent and omniscient (Lk. 12:12; Jn. 14:26)

Author of the Old Testament—Ac. 28:25

Spirit of God and of Christ—Eph. 4:30; Rom. 8:11; II Cor. 3:17

The Spirit is “of God”—Mt. 12:28; Lk. 4:18

God’s Spirit—Isa. 61:1

Christ’s Spirit—Phil. 1:19; I Pet. 1:11

Leader of Christ, while on earth—Mt. 4:1

Comes forth from Christ—Jn. 3:33-34

Seal of God’s salvation—Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 3:16; Ac. 19:2

Sanctification source of power—Rom. 8:13

Sin against Him is *worse* than against the Father or Son—Mt. 12:31

The Spirit is Holy—Mt. 28:19; Rom. 1:14, 9:1, ETC.

Originated the Virgin Birth of Christ—Mt. 1:18

Omnipresent—Lk. 11:13; Jn. 3:34

Knows the Future—Lk. 12:12

Limitless—Jn. 3:34

Life-Giver—Jn. 6:63; Rom. 8:2

Eternal—Heb. 9:14

Omniscient (Knows ALL Truth)—Jn. 16:13, 15:26; I Cor. 2:10

Came from Heaven—Jn. 15:2; I Pet. 1:12

Authority—Ac. 1:2

Enables Men to Confess Christ—I Cor. 12:3

Oneness with Christ—II Cor. 3:17

Source of Grace—Heb. 10:29

Has Glory—I Pet. 4:14

Has Power—Rom. 15:13; Ac. 8:39, Cf.: Christ—Heb. 7:16, and the Father—II Tim. 1:8

“Lord” Equivalent?—II Cor. 3:17, Cf.: Christ—Ac. 20:24 and the Father—Rev. 22:5

b) **Gender Identification**: “He” (i.e., masculine orientation) vs. “She” or “It” (i.e., not a thing)—Jn. 16:13

c) **Names**—Spirit, Helper, Holy Spirit, The Spirit of Truth, the Comforter, the Spirit of God, the spirit of Christ, etc.

d) **Ministries**—**See**: Key Verses, below

KEY VERSES

Sealed and Indwelt by the Spirit

In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the Gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were **sealed** in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory. (**Eph. 1:13-14, Cf.: II Cor. 1:22; Jas. 4:5**)

Assured by the Spirit

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are *children of God*, (**Rom. 8:16**)

Filled with the Spirit

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but **be filled with the Spirit**, (**Eph. 5:18**)

Led by the Spirit

For all who are being **led by the Spirit of God**, these are sons of God. (**Rom. 8:14, Cf.: Gal. 5:18**)

Mind Set on the Spirit

For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace, because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so; and those who are in the flesh **cannot please God**. (**Rom. 8:6-8**)

Grieving and Quenching the Holy Spirit

And do not **grieve the Holy Spirit** of God, by whom you were **sealed** for the day of redemption.

Do not quench the Spirit; (**Eph. 4:30; I Th. 5:19**)

Taught by the Spirit

“But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will **disclose** to you what is to come.” (**Jn. 16:13, Cf.: I Jn. 2:20-21**)

Gifting by the Spirit

But to *each* one is given the **manifestation of the Spirit** for the common good. (I Cor. 12:7)

The Spirit Empowering Evangelism

but you shall receive **power** when the **Holy Spirit** has come upon you; and you shall be My **witnesses** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Ac. 1:8)

Behavior of the Spirit

But the **fruit of the Spirit** is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness; Gentleness, self-control; against such things there is **no law**. (Gal. 5:22-23)

THE BIBLE

1. **Inspiration**—II Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:20-21

2. **Inerrancy**—i.e., the Bible, in the original writings, was accurately and exactly—word-for-word—what God wanted written, and is His divinely-inspired Scriptures and revelation.

3. **Extra-Biblical information**

CANONICITY: Basic Theology, by Charles Ryrie, pp. 119-124, (Moody Press: Chicago), 1999

THEORIES OF INSPIRATION: Basic Theology, by Charles Ryrie, pp. 76-86 (Moody Press: Chicago), 1999

KEY VERSES

The Inspired Word

All Scripture is **inspired** by God and **profitable** for *teaching*, for *reproof*, for *correction*, for *training* in righteousness; that the man of God may be **adequate**, **equipped** for every good work. (II Tim. 3:16-17, Cf.: II Tim. 2:15)

The Inerrant Word (i.e., every word is accurate)

Every word of God is *tested*; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. (Pv. 30:5)

The Prophetic Word

For we did **not follow cleverly devised tales** when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, such an utterance as this was made to Him by the Majestic Glory, "This is My beloved Son with whom I am well-pleased"—and we ourselves heard this **utterance** made from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so **we have the prophetic word made more sure**, to which you **do well to pay attention** as to a **lamp shining in a dark place**, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that **no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation**, for no prophecy was ever made by **an act of human will**, but men moved by the Holy Spirit **spoke from God**. (II Pet. 1:16-21)

The Certain and Sure Word

"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words **shall not pass away**." (Mt. 24:35)

The Eternal Word

As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew, and were not walking with Him anymore. Jesus said therefore to the twelve, "You do not want to go away also, do you?" Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. (Jn. 6:66-68)

The Life-Giving Word

And the tempter came and said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" (Mt. 4:3-4)

The Valuable Word

How much better it is to get wisdom than gold! And to get understanding is to be chosen above silver. (Pv. 16:16, Cf.: Josh. 1:8)

The Powerful Word

For the word of God is **living** and **active** and **sharper** than any two-edged sword, and **piercing** as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (Heb. 4:12-13)

The Effective Word

"For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, And do not return there without watering the earth, And making it bear and sprout, And furnishing seed to the sower and bread to the eater; So shall My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me empty, Without accomplishing what I desire, And without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it." (Isa. 55:10-11)

The Basis of Judgment

"And if anyone hears My sayings, and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." (Jn. 12:47-48)

(See also: Why Read the Bible)

SALVATION & SANCTIFICATION

1. **Terms See:** The Gospel/Three tenses of Salvation section
2. **Three Tenses See:** The Gospel/Three tenses of Salvation section
3. **Nature of:** Moment in time, eternal effects, miracle, positive, irreversible, the work of God, intended for all men, etc.
4. **Requirements See:** Additions or Lordship Salvation errors
5. **For all Men (vs. just some)**—II Cor. 5:14-15; Jn. 1:7; I Tim. 4:10, etc. **See also:** Calvinism Errors
6. **Blessings of See:** Identity and Inheritance

7. **When and How Received**—At the moment sincere heart faith is exercised toward Jesus Christ. How is by the grace and the miraculous power of God. **See:** Additions to Faith and Assurance of Salvation

8. **Process**

Sanctification is neither automatic (spiritual ‘auto pilot’), nor all human effort (‘good’ but dead works). It does take effort (i.e., Bible ingestion, prayer, obedience)—which takes motivation and discipline, yet proper growth as a Christian derives such incentives and is empowered by God, lest its resulting works be found to be wrought only in man (i.e., Spirit-led vs. dead works; Jn. 3:20-21)

9. **Titles (Reveal Content)**

SALVATION TERMS: Redemption, reconciliation, justification, salvation, propitiation, born again, conversion, forgiveness of sin, sanctified, adoption as sons washed, regeneration, made righteous, spiritual baptism, sealed, betrothed, deliverance, healed, ransomed, purified, perfected, etc.

SANCTIFICATION TERMS: Sanctification, doing right, fighting the good fight of faith, established in your faith, Christ shining on you, morning star rising in your heart, strengthening the things which remain, rising from sleep/the dead, enduring trials and suffering, walking and pleasing God, obeying God’s commandments, walking in truth, being saved, being perfected, building oneself up on your most holy faith, living by faith, keeping oneself in the love of God, enduring to the end, kept from stumbling, keeping faith and a good conscience, proving zealous for what is good, proving oneself a doer of the word, proving to be Christ’s disciple, good behavior, dead to sin and alive to God, being holy in all your behavior, obeying Christ, growing in respect to salvation, renewing your mind, walking in Christ; Excelling still more, walking in the light, knowing God, etc.

10. **Extra-Biblical Information**

THEORIES OF THE ATONEMENT: **See:** Basic Theology, by Charles Ryrie, pp. 355-357 (Moody Press: Chicago), 1999

SANCTIFICATION THEOLOGY

(Summary outline)

Definition: The life-long process of a Christian becoming more Christ-like and doing God’s will and works.

Key Passages: Jn. 15:1-11; Rom. 6-8; Gal. 5: 1, 13-26; Eph. 4:17-24; Phil. 3:7-21; Col. 3:1-4

Role of Commitment, Repentance & Effort

Commitment. Mk. 8:34-35; Lk. 9:23

Repentance. I Jn. 1:9

Effort. Phil. 2:12-13, etc.; **See also:** Why Be Totally Committed to Christ?

Role of Quiet Time (the Bible & Prayer)

Bible. Jn. 8:31-32, etc.; **See also:** Why Read the Bible?

Prayer. **See:** Pointers for Prayer

Role of Faith, Obedience & Mind-Set

Faith. Heb. 11:1, 6, 3:7-4:13

Obedience. Jn. 15:1-11; I Cor. 3:4-6

Mind-set. Col. 3:1-4

Role of the Holy Spirit (filled & led)

Spirit-led. Gal. 5:1, 13-26

Role of Motivation, Rewards & Promises

Rewards. Mt. 6:5-6, 18, 19:28-29; Lk. 12:33, 44, 14:14; Jn. 4:36; I Cor. 3:8, 12-14; I Tim. 6:19; II Tim. 2:20-21, 4:8; Heb. 11:6; Jas. 1:12; II Jn. 1:8;

Promises. II Cor. 7:1; II Pet. 1:3-4

Role of Security, Identity & Inheritance

Security. **See:** Eternal Security

Identity. **See:** Identity in Christ

Inheritance. **See:** Inheritance in Christ

Bible in Sanctification: Josh. 1:8; Ps. 119:9-11; Mt. 7:24-26; Lk. 8:21, 11:28; Jn. 8:32-33, 14:24, 15:7-10, 17:17-19; Ac. 6:2-4; Eph. 4:14-15; I Th. 2:13; II Tim. 2:15, 3:16-17; Heb. 4:11-12, 5:12-14; Jas. 1:25; I Pet. 2:2; II Pet. 1:19

KEY VERSES

It Has Extreme Value

For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, **(Heb. 2:2-3)**

It is the Purpose Christ Came and Died

“For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.” **(Lk. 19:10, Cf.: Mk. 1:38; Jn. 12:27)**

It is Good News (vs. Bad News) by Definition and Content

Lk. 2:10; Ac. 13:32; Heb. 4:2, 6.

It is Sure, Certain and Prophesied

Ac. 13:32; Rom. 16:25; Eph. 3:9; Col. 1:26; II Pet. 1:19, , etc.

It is Eternal

Mk. 16:20; Rev. 14:6, etc.

It is a Gift—Not the Result Earned by Works

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast. **(Eph. 2:8-9)**

It is Salvation from Punishment

Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. **(Rom. 5:9)**

Its Core Issue if Forgiveness of Sin

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses; According to the riches of His grace, **(Eph. 1:17, Cf.: Col. 1:14)**

It Has Three Tenses (i.e., past, present and future)

I Th. 1:9-10; Tit. 2:11-13; I Pet. 1:3-5, ETC.

It is God’s Will for ALL Men (therefore, go evangelize!)

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one *mediator* also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, **(I Tim. 2:3-5, Cf.: II Pet. 3:9)**

SPECIAL REPORT: THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION

(For best understanding, **See:** Rom. 6:1-8:39; Gal. 5:1, 13-26; Phil. 3:1-21; Eph. 4:17-24 & Col. 3:1-10)

Because of the absolute necessity of this particular doctrine for the church of God—all believers in Christ (who are the primary audience for this website), it is more fully discussed than all others, as well as being addressed in even more detail in our Biblical Discipleship section.

Definition.

Sanctification—the ‘Christian life’ is a life-long process of becoming more like Christ in our behavior—more moral. It occurs under grace—fully forgiven—by faith, born out of developing a deeper relationship with Christ (“fellowship”) through Bible meditation and prayer and obeying Him in what He leads you to do in the power of the Holy Spirit. Such a lifestyle is eternally rewarded, and takes effort (which involves motivation, primarily from God’s promises), and, disappointingly, not every Christian fully engages or even engages this process at all (for which there are temporal and eternal consequences).

Introduction.

Once a person is saved, sanctification begins, at least as far as God is concerned. It may begin with either discipling into a better knowledge of God’s word (feeding the baby) but should and needs to result in a full commitment to Christ. This is a commitment to live Spirit-empowered and led to doing God’s will, by faith (all under grace—not law or license. It involves regularly meeting with God in a (10 minute) Quiet Time—prayer and Bible study. Such habit yields reverence for God and the faith and knowledge to claim His promise provisions. Along the way we encounter spiritual warfare in the form of attacks and temptations, as well as trials and anticipated suffering. Motivation and confidence derives from faithfully applying the word, by faith, and receiving answers to our prayers, as is normal and expected of our new identity, due to our new nature, which we have reckoned our minds toward (i.e., heavenly-minded). Christians fellowship (and corporate ‘body life’) allow us to use our spiritual gift(s) in ministry service (i.e., loving our brethren), as well as social ministry (i.e., loving our fellow man). In this way of faith-walking we obey the two greatest commandments, as loving God is obeying His commands, and loving mankind is through sacrificial selfless service.

The alternatives to this way of life are all sin, including just living the normal “nice” American life that never hurts anyone, is law-abiding and seeks to be “good,” absent any (or much) spiritual input. The varieties of a sinful Christian lifestyle (which 90% of American Christians live) are termed carnality, worldliness, luke-warmness, backsliding and ultimately, apostasy (and they are all judged by God, as to lost—or no—rewards in heaven, by displeasing Him in this life)

SANCTIFICATION FEATURES

Several elements are involved in the successful living of the life of a disciple of Jesus Christ, which are identified and documented below (in alphabetical order).

1. **Commitment.** An uncommitted Christian is a carnal Christian. I know full well that one can have good, moral intentions, be positive about God and Christianity and even go to church regularly and not be Spirit-filled and sold out to Jesus. Such was the sad experience of my pre-adulthood. Being a disciple of Jesus requires full commitment, and no Bible verse promises you the associated blessings short of complete and total abandonment to doing His will and serving Christ (and man).

(Lk. 9:23-24) And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever wishes to save his life shall lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

(I Cor. 15:10) But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me did not prove vain; but I labored even more than all of them, yet not I, but the grace of God with me.

2. **Faith.** Faith is the supernatural assurance that what the Bible says is true and will come about if we meet the requisites of given, claimed promises. Faith comes from God, through the Bible, and deeds based on faith are what the Bible considers “good” works—alivened by the Spirit as opposed to being dead by the flesh and law. To not trust God, or to trust in your own will power or understanding is sin, and flesh, and only a life lived faithing God to live through it—by the power of the Holy Spirit—is rewarded and spiritually blessed (both in this and the next life).

(Pv. 3:5-7) **Trust** in the LORD with **all your heart**, And do not lean on your **own understanding**. In **all your ways** acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes [i.e., pride]; **Fear the LORD** and **turn away from evil**. **See also:** Heb. 11:1, 6; Mk. 11:22-24

3. **Faith Rest.** The faith walk advances to the point that one should, rather quickly, grow in His word to the point that one ceases striving, by will power, and learns to let God live through them (Gal. 2:20) which the Bible accurately describes as having ceased from their own (dead) works. God created the world in 6 days, but the effects of that generation remain to this day, just as ceasing from one’s own works and resting in God, by faith, produces active ‘good deeds,’ as opposed to resting on our proverbial laurels.

(Jn. 15:4-8) **Abide** in Me [i.e., Spirit-filled sanctification], and I in you [i.e., assured of salvation]. As the branch **cannot** bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for **apart from Me you can do nothing**. If anyone does not abide in Me, he is thrown away as a branch, and dries up [i.e. God’s discipline]; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, **ask whatever you wish, and it shall be done for you** [i.e., prayer]. By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so prove to be My **disciples**. **See also:** Heb. 4:1-13, espec. v. 10)

4. **Faith-Walking.** Living a life dependent on God—His power, leadership and His word being true and providing instruction and perspective on our every decision—is the normal New Testament Christian life, though, sadly, too often not the normal, average experience of the American Christian. Keeping one’s mind on the things above, not set or entangled in the daily affairs of this life, is how one walks by faith—claiming God’s promises, and regularly communing with Him as we live and walk with Him daily.

(Gal. 2:20) I have been crucified with Christ; and it is **no longer I who live**, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh **I live by faith** in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me. **See also:** II Cor. 5:7

5. **Fear God.** When one considers that God will judge His people—the Church—and that we will all be held accountable to the Creator of the universe for our deeds and decisions, a reverential awe of God will permeate our lives—not being scared or timid around Him, but a proper balance of respectful reverence (“Father”) with an intimate love of our “Abba,” as well. **See:** II Cor. 5:11, 7:1; Heb. 10:30-31

6. **Fellowship Enhanced by Inheritance (vs. a “social” only).** Just like Political Correctness re-names things with a more positive spin that their content often merits, Christians often label their social gatherings outside the church building a “fellowship.” Sounds doctrinal and spiritual, but if our interactions never broach spiritual subject matter, and remain only secular conversations shared around fun or food, let’s not deceive ourselves—true koinonia has not taken place. And the Bible indicates our knowledge of our (great) inheritance in Christ can enhance the value and quality of such interactions. **See:** Phm. 1:6

7. **God’s Disciplining.** We all love our children, and most of us discipline them in some way when they do bad things. Because God loves us, there’s no difference here, and if one has never experienced this disciplining, they’re either morally perfect or, perhaps, unsaved. God does so so we may share in His holiness. Our earthly parents correct us as seems good to them, but God’s correction is always right, and always for a purpose good for us. **See:** Heb. 12:7-11; Ps. 30:5

8. **God’s Will.** God has a plan for your life, and if you are willing to do it, He will reveal it—what you are to do, where to work, who to marry, etc. Whether it is as specific as a parking space to choose, or not, is His sovereign decision. Your duty is to follow.

(Rom. 12:1-2) Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice; Acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good; Acceptable and perfect.

9. **Grace (Liberty vs. Law or License).** Believers are completely forgiven of all their sins, in Christ—past, present and future, regarding entry into heaven. In the Christian life, forgiveness of sins becomes a matter of maintaining open, clear fellowship with God, unmarred by disappointing (vs. pleasing) Him. The Bible analogizes this as needing our feet washed, while we have already bathed and are clean (as our identity before Him). I analogize it to slapping your wife—you’re still married, but until you remedy that error, you can’t say your relationship is going well. I John 1:9 has been called our spiritual soap bar (by Campus Crusade for Christ), and we claim its promise if we sin against God.

(Gal. 5:13) For you were called to **freedom**, brethren; only do not turn your freedom into an **opportunity for the flesh** [i.e., license/carnality], but through love **serve** one another.

(I Pet. 2:16) Act as **free** men, and do not use your freedom as a **covering for evil** [i.e., carnality], but use it as **bond slaves** of God [i.e., Lordship commitment].

10. **Heavenly-Minded.** For this extremely valuable habit, please **See:** Faith-Walking, above, and read the verses in the ‘Relevant Verses’ section below. **See:** Col. 3:1-6

11. Humility. Faith is humbling. It says I can't produce Christ-likeness on my own, so I will let God do it through me, with my deeds cooperating with the faith he leads me to have. Pride and faith are incongruous, so a child-like, humble faith is the only road to spiritual success. Yes, as Bob Dylan noted, we can suffer spiritual pride, but for spiritual success, God will humble that pride (as pride goes before destruction), for he alone desires the credit when we truly produce aspects of His holiness.

(I Pet. 5:7) Casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.

12. Identity. Who you are, in Christ (vs. on your own/in the flesh) affects what you choose and do. To consider Christians "sinners," though we were sinners and still do sin, rather than what the Bible considers us—saints—is to deny what God says about us (only in Christ). We don't expect a cat to bark, or a dog to meow, and God expects His children to live holy.

(II Cor. 5:21) He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

(II Cor. 5:17) Therefore if anyone in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. **See also:** David Needham illustration on our website.

13. Inheritance. All the blessings we have received in Christ stimulate spiritual commitment and growth (II Pet. 1:3-4; Phm. 1:6). For a Christian to not know about or utilize it is like the heir of a billionaire never knowing his father was rich and never accessing his trust fund account. **See:** Eph. 1:3-14

14. Motivation & Promises. Sanctification is largely a matter of a believer taking God at His word—claiming His promises in prayer, and seeing them fulfilled, by patient faith awaiting their actualization, after having claimed them in prayer. God often if not usually attached a promised blessing for obedience to a given command, as we are under grace, not law, and to miss out on those blessings is to miss the crux of the Christian life (and to set oneself up for shame and losses of rewards in heaven).

(II Cor. 7:1) Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

(II Cor. 1:20) For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes; wherefore also by Him is our Amen to the glory of God through us.

15. Not Lukewarm—Hot or Cold. A 'balanced' commitment is a balance between extremes, and is NOT pleasing to God. God wants us hot for Him, but if not, it's even better to be sinfully cold—rather than riding the fence in luke-warmness—because at least then a distinction is clear to others that we are committed to carnality (and not confusedly conformed to the world with one foot in heaven and the other in the world). Of course, the Bible does warn against excessive righteousness (Ex.: self-righteousness or never having any good, clean fun), but only one verse addresses this rare problem, as being too sinful is much more commonly the problem. **See:** I Jn. 2:15-17; Phil. 3:17-21; Rev. 3:15-17

16. Obedience (of Faith). Ours is not a rule book religion, but an intimate and growing relationship with Christ. We do obey God, through His word, but only as He leads and empowers that obedience, and at the pace and for the content He reveals to us under grace. The Bible rarely simply lists commandments and prohibitions, just as a marriage is rarely a set of rules required to get along or to fulfill the other's expectations. It truly is a relationship, which, as the intimacy grows, the natural outcome becomes our behavior more and more emulating that of Christ, through Bible meditation and prayer (i.e., spending quality time with Him).

17. Quiet Time: Bible Meditation. Man cannot live—as God defines life—only by ingesting food and drink, but by feeding off God’s word. Christ’s words, verbatim. And mere reading is not what gets the job done. “Success,” as God defines it (Joshua 1:8, etc.) comes from thinking deeply about his word’s contents, so one becomes an effective doer—not a mere hearer, who forgets what he has read (Jas. 1:22-25). The analogy found in the Old Testament is that of a cow chewing it’s cud. That is, for we city slickers, eating it’s grain, then burping it up and re-eating it, over and over again. Even lost people will tell you reading the Bible is not an easy, light read one can accomplish like reading an equally thick secular novel. So how can we expect to squeeze every morsel out of our time if we skim through it, and don’t prayerfully interact with it and God, at a pace conducive to its weighty, lofty contents? And, as with prayer, any Christian who does not regularly take the time so to do, cannot be said to be prioritizing God as number one in their lives. **See:** Mt. 6:33

(Josh. 1:8-9) "This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make **your way prosperous**, and then you will **have success**. **See also:** II Tim. 2:15

18. Quiet Time: Prayer. A Christian who has no time directly for God in his day is a less fruitful, more sinful believer, as we cannot survive, spiritually, without it. What sort of marriage could someone claim who never spoke with their spouse, or gave them the time of day or any attention? We are NOT spiritual camels who can be sustained by the content of a sermon a week—many of which, now a days, are chocked full of man’s thoughts, entertaining anecdotes, and little Scripture, plus the fact that we have direct access to God, and have the Spirit as our teacher, and do not need a human intermediary (many of which do not know the Bible very thoroughly, so what they teach can be just knowledge gained recently to stay one week ahead of those they teach). This is not to demean biblical; Expository sermons by those working diligently at preaching and teaching, but anyone who was alive in the 1960’s can tell you our modern sermons have lessened in their amount of Scripture teaching, under the philosophy that to grow a church’s size (in bodies, buildings and bucks), props, alliterations, rhymes, history lessons, jokes, illustrations, and other things MUST be added, to make sermons more interesting or “relevant.”

(Mt. 7:7-8) Ask, and it will be given to you; see, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. **See also:** I Jn. 3:19-22

19. Spirit-Filled. To live the natural life is to live sinfully in the flesh--doing nothing different from a normal life. Spiritual living requires empowerment from a supernatural source, as apart from Christ you can produce no good thing (as you are dead in trespasses and sin, on your own). **See:** II Cor. 3:4-6

(Eph. 4:30) And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

(I Th. 5:19) Do not quench the Spirit;

20. Spirit-Led. If you are making the decisions about your life, there’s a great chance you are living in the flesh, for God has promised to lead His children, and only when He does not provide clear guidance should you have to resort to making decisions simply within moral parameters of His Scripture. His will can be as specific or general as He sovereignly reveals, but submission to doing it is step one toward experiencing His actually leading your decisions, and

there being actual ‘contact’ with a Person outside yourself in giving such wisdom and instruction (as your senses are trained through experience doing the word of God).

(Gal. 5:18) But if you are led by the Spirit, you are **not under the Law**.

(Rom 8:1-4) There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the **law of the Spirit of life** in Christ Jesus has **set you free** from the law of sin and of death.

21. Spiritual Warfare (& Victory). Attacks on the mind—be it sinful thoughts, doubt, fear, confusion, worry, timidity, trying to please men, or pure selfishness—are to be expected from our three enemies—the world, the flesh and the devil. God has provided us all the armament we need to successfully withstand these assaults, but if we are ignorant of the devil’s tactics, or especially if we fail to put on our armor, we are much more vulnerable to being defeated by these attempted victories for sin and the devil.

(Eph. 6:10-11) Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. **See also:** Eph. 6:12-18; I Pet. 5:7-10

22. Suffering. The Bible promises Christians suffering, and we are to expect it. Only those not living firmly for God seem to be able to avoid much of it, though in doing so they are setting themselves up for even greater conflict of being judged for such lifestyle choices in the afterlife. We may never be physically harmed or our lives endangered, living in America, but millions have been martyred over the years, and it was not caused by fitting into the sinful ways of their culture, or hiding their salvation!

(I Th. 3:3) So that no one would be disturbed by these afflictions; for you yourselves know that we have been destined for this. **See also:** II Tim. 2:3-7; II Th. 1:5; I Pet. 4:12

23. Temptation (& Confessing). Trials come from God, but temptations—attempted lures for you to sin—come from the devil. James makes this distinction very clear. Both may be tough to endure, but the toughness of resisting sin is not a trial, per se, but a temptation. God has promised that you can successfully endure every temptation that comes your way—in His power and guidance—because none will befall you that He cannot and will not provide the way of escape from. Sin strongholds and idols, however, cause us to more easily fail in the process.

(I Cor. 10:13-14) No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, that you may be able to endure it. Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

(I Jn. 1:9) If we confess our sins, **He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**. **See also:** Jude 1:24; Heb. 2:16-18

24. Trials. Probably everyone prefers a life with few problems or crises, but this is a major way God grows us up into increased righteousness. Coaches like to say sports don’t produce but reveal character, but the Bible clearly teaches that troubling times DO produce character, if their tests are successfully passed through wisdom and patient endurance. We are to find joy in these tough times, and such attitude is not natural.

(Jas. 1:2-8) Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter **various trials**, James 1:3 knowing that the **testing of your faith** produces endurance. And let endurance have its perfect result, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all men generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith

without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. For let not that man expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, being a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Relevant Verses:

- ▶ **Assurance of Salvation** (Rom. 8:16; I Jn. 3:24)
- ▶ **Bible as Instrument** (Heb. 5:12-14; Ps. 119:9-11; Mt. 4:4; Jn. 8:31-32, 17:17; II Tim. 2:15, 3:16-17; I Pet. 2:1-3)
- ▶ **Body Life** (**See:** website)
- ▶ **Claiming Promises** (II Pet. 1:3-4; II Cor. 1:20, 7:1)
- ▶ **Discipling** (**See:** website)
- ▶ **Doing God's Will** (Rom. 12:1-2)
- ▶ **Faith** (Heb. 11:1, 6; Mk. 11:22-24; Rom. 4:18-21; Mk. 9:23; Phil. 4:13; Mt. 19:26)
- ▶ **Faith-Backed Good Works** (Jas. 1:22-25; 2:14-26; Heb. 6:1, 9:14; Rom. 14:2-3)
- ▶ **Faith in Christ vs. Ourselves** (II Cor. 3:4-6)
- ▶ **Faith Rest** (Heb. 3:7-11)
- ▶ **Faith-Walking** (II Cor. 4:18, 5:7; Rom. 1:17; Gal. 2:20, 3:11)
- ▶ **Fear God** (**See:** section above)
- ▶ **Fellowship** (Phm. 1:6, etc.)
- ▶ **God's Discipline/Pruning** (Jn. 15:1-5; Heb. 12:1-11)
- ▶ **God's Power** (I Cor. 2:4-5)
- ▶ **God's Will** (Rom. 12:1-2; I Th. 5:18; II Cor. 7:9; Eph. 6:6; I Jn. 2:17; I Pet. 2:15; 4:2, 6)
- ▶ **Grace** (Jn. 1:17; Rom. 5:1-2, 6, 14; I Cor. 15:19; Eph. 2:8; II Pet. 3:18)
- ▶ **Heavenly-Minded** (Col. 3:1-6; Eph. 4:23; Phil. 3:17-21)
- ▶ **Humility** (I Pet. 5:5-7; Jas. 4:10; Pv. 16:18; Rom. 3:27)
- ▶ **Identity** (II Cor. 5:17, 21; I Cor. 1:2; Heb. 3:1)
- ▶ **Inheritance** (Eph. 1:11, 14, 18)
- ▶ **Liberty vs. License** (Gal. 5:13; I Pet. 2:16)
- ▶ **Liberty's Light Load vs. Heavy or No Load** (Mt. 11:28-30; I Jn. 5:3-4)
- ▶ **Meditation** (Ps. 1:1-3; Josh. 1:8; Jas. 1:25)
- ▶ **Not Faith in Will Power** (Phil. 3:3-4)
- ▶ **Not Works of the Law** (II Cor. 3:6; Gal. 3:2; Rom. 4:15, 5:20, 7:1-6, 11:6)
- ▶ **Obedience of Faith** (Rom. 1:5, 16:26; Lk. 6:47-49)
- ▶ **Prayer** (Mt. 7:7-8; Mk. 11:22-24; I Jn. 3:19-22, 5:14-15; Jn. 14:13; Eph. 3:20)
- ▶ **Put Off the Old Self, and Put on the New Self** (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:8-11)
- ▶ **Reckon Yourself Dead to Sin and Alive to God** (Rom. 6:11-14; Eph. 4:22-24)
- ▶ **Renewed Mind** (II Cor. 4:16; Eph. 4:23; Col. 3:10-11; Rom. 12:1-2)
- ▶ **Rewards** (I Cor. 3:12-15)
- ▶ **Sanctification** (Rom. 6:6-14)
- ▶ **Spirit Power** (Gal. 5:5, 16-18, 25; Rom. 7:6, 8:2-16; II Cor. 3:6; Jas. 4:5; Phil. 3:3)
- ▶ **Subjective Standard** (Rom. 14:4-5, 22-23; Phil. 3:15-16)
- ▶ **Suffering** (II Tim. 2:3; I Peter—entire book, espec. 2:15; I Th. 3:3)
- ▶ **Taking every thought captive** (II Cor. 10:3-6)
- ▶ **Trials** (Jas. 1:2-4; I Pet. 1:6)
- ▶ **Victory** (I Cor. 15:57; II Cor. 2:14; Rom. 8:37; I Jn. 4:4, 5:3-4)
- ▶ **Victory Over Temptation** (Jude 1:24-25; I Cor. 10:14)
- ▶ **Walk by the Spirit** (Gal. 5:16, 25; Rom. 8:1-4, 14)

- **Warfare** (I Jn. 2:15-17; Eph. 6:10-18; II Cor. 2:11, 6:7, 10:3-5, 11:14; Rev. 12:10-11)

Sanctification Images

- (Mt. 28:20) **Make disciples**; Teach them to **observe all Christ's commands**
(Lk. 6:40) Sanctification goal: Pupil **becomes like Teacher**
(Lk. 9:23) Commitment: **Take up your cross DAILY**
(Rom. 6:4) Saved to **walk in newness of life**
(Rom. 15:14) Full of **goodness and knowledge** and able to admonish
(II Cor. 3:3) **Christ written on hearts by the Spirit**
(II Cor. 11:2) **Betrothed** (evangelism) to **present them as a pure virgin** to Christ
(Eph. 3:17) **Christ experientially dwelling/reigning in your heart**
(Eph. 4:23-24) Be **renewed in your spirit, and put on the/your new self**
(Phil. 1:9) Love grows in **true knowledge (of God)** and discernment
(Phil. 2:12) **Work out your salvation** with fear and trembling
(Phil. 2:16) Sanctification as **holding fast the Bible**
(Phil. 4:9) Sanctification as **practicing what you have been taught**
(Col. 2:2) Love through full understanding and **true knowledge of God**
(Col. 2:5) Sanctification as good discipline and stable faith
(Col. 4:12) Sanctification as **standing perfect and fully assured in God's will**
(I Th. 1:6) Sanctification as **imitating Christ**
(I Th. 1:10) **(Actively) waiting** for Christ's return
(I Th. 2:13) **God's word** performing its work in believers (i.e., Bible as instrument)
(I Th. 4:1) Excel still more at **walking worthily**
(II Th. 1:11) **Counted worthy** of your calling, with goodness, faith and power
(I Tim. 1:5) **Love**, from a pure heart, good conscience and sincere faith--REPEAT
(Heb. 6:1) **Turn from dead works**--a basic childhood Christian lesson (Bible as instrument)
(Heb. 6:9) **Things are expected as accompanying your salvation** gift (i.e., outgrowths)
(Jas. 1:21) Sanctification as **abandoning sin, and receive the Bible implanted**, which can preserve your soul
(I Pet. 1:2) Saved to **obey Christ** (and have any fellowship sins forgiven)
(I Pet. 1:15) **Be holy**, as your Father is--REPEAT
(I Pet. 2:24) Saved so we'd **die to sin and live to righteousness**
(II Pet. 1:12) Remembering the **Bible** (as instrument of sanctification)
(II Pet. 1:15) Remembering the **Bible** (as instrument of sanctification)
(I Jn. 1:3) Sanctification as **fellowship** with Christ and the Father
(I Jn. 2:1) Sanctification as the Bible as instrument **so you won't sin** (though fellowship sins forgivable)
(II Jn. 1:4) Commanded to **walk in truth**
(II Jn. 1:8) Careful not to lose or spiritual progress so you receive your **full reward** (not evil--Calvinists and Lordshippers)
(III Jn. 1:4) Sanctification as **walking in the truth**

Thanks.

Special thanks to Reverends John Bisagno, Don Anderson, Thomas Eckman, Don Crossland, two heroes at Baylor's Penland Dorm (one of whom nagged me into a Quiet Time

habit (1978) and later attended Golden Gate Seminary), Evangelism Explosion, Campus Crusade for Christ, the Navigators, and some teachings on faith by Reverend Kenneth Hagin.

DOCTRINE II

Topics: Devil/Demons/Angels, Man, Sin, Church, Prophecy

MAN (i.e., Mankind)

1. **Origins**—Gen. 2:7, 21-25; Mal. 2:10; Rom. 5:12; I Cor. 15:45, (II Pet. 3:5).
2. **Purpose**—To do God's **will** through an intimate, daily relationship with Him, the effect of which is it **glorifies God**. (Gen. 1:28, 2:15—**work** and **populate** the earth; Ecc. 2:24, 12:13-14, etc.)
3. **Genders and Roles**—Tit. 2:3-5 vs. Pv. 31; Pv. 22:15-16; I Cor. 11:3, 11-12, Ch. 7; Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:18-20; I Tim. 2:11-15; I Pet. 3:1-7, ETC. **See also:** Godly Relationships
4. **Man in the Image of God and Nature of Man**—Gen. 1:27; Ac. 14:15; Jas. 3:9.
5. **Man as Sinner**—Rom. 3:9-18, 5:19, 3:23. **See:** Gospel/Elements/You Are a Sinner
6. **Future**—Jn. 14:1-3; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 21; Mt. 10:28; Lk. 16:23-24; Jude 1:7, etc. **See:** Evangelism/On Hell and Doctrine/Prophecy

KEY VERSES

Created, and Made in the Image of God

Then God said, "Let Us **make man in Our image**; According to **Our likeness**; and let them **rule** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." (**Gen. 1:26, Cf.: Jas. 3:9**)

Role on the Earth

And God blessed them; and God said to them, "**Be fruitful and multiply**, and **fill** the earth, and **subdue** it; and **rule** over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky, and over every living thing that moves on the earth." (**Gen. 1:28**)

All are Sinners (by Nature, from Birth)

Therefore, just as through **one man** sin entered into the world, and **death** through sin, and so **death spread to all men**, because **all sinned**—(**Rom. 5:12**)

For since by **a man** came **death**, by **a man** also came the resurrection of the dead. For as **in Adam** all **die**, so also **in Christ** all shall be made alive. (**I Cor. 15:21-22**)

Short Life's Stay on this Earth

Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. **You are just a vapor** that **appears for a little while** and then **vanishes away**. (**Jas. 4:14**)

Need Evangelism

This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who **desires all men** to be saved and to come to the **knowledge of the truth**. For there is one God, and one *mediator* also between

God and men, *the man* Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time. (I Tim. 2:3-6, Cf.: II Cor. 5:16)

Priorities: 1. God, 2. Family, 3. Career

Marriage, Family and Singleness

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the *man* to be **alone**; I will make him a **helper suitable** for him." (Gen. 2:18)

But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is *good* for them if they **remain** even as I. (I Cor. 7:8)

Wives: Be Submissive to Your Husbands

And let not your adornment be **merely** external—braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; but let it be the **hidden person of the heart**, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is *precious* in the sight of God. (I Pet. 3:3-4, Cf.: Col. 3:18)

Husbands: Love your Wives

You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an *understanding way*, as with a *weaker vessel*, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a **fellow heir of the grace of life**, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (I Pet. 3:7, Cf.: Eph. 5:25)

SIN

1. **Definitions**—In a phrase, “doing evil” (good and evil being defined by God in His word).
2. **Origins**—Gen. 2:15-3:7, etc.
3. **Extent of the Fall**—I Cor. 15:22, etc.
4. **Source: Choice or Nature?** Nature *leads to* choice. All men will sin by choice, because they are sinners by nature. No one will ever not sin, no matter the strength of their will. Some sins are *willful*, some *accidental*, but all are evil.
5. **Ethics Systems and Sin and Ethics List** Theologians often *categorize* ethics systems as moral absolutism (sometimes colloquially referred to as ‘legalism,’ wherein moral decisions are **never gray** and **never conflict**; they are either **right or wrong**), moral relativism (Ex.: *situational* ethics), a-moralism (where there are either no morals, or very few, such as the ‘I am good to people and **do no one any harm**’ mentality), and **hierarchical ethics** (i.e., moral absolutes based on the Bible, priority going to the ‘greater good’ *if ever* in conflict, and applied by faith—the position I hold).

Relatedly, FEW Christians understand the concept I call “**Range of Ethics**,” by which is espoused the biblical concept that where the Bible presents *several* ethical options for believers, **any one of those** choices are ethical, if the Spirit leads you to that choice. For example, I am constantly ‘berated’ for having a “*critical spirit*” or “*mean*” tone, when believers (and especially their leaders) don’t like the truth I’m saying about their lack of priorities. If God leads you, and there is Scriptural evidence for the action and tone—obey the Lord, more so than men! **See also:** Biblical Evidence for a Prophetic Voice.

One man is led to a verse on patience, while another is led to ‘making the most of your time, for the days are evil’ (in Ephesians), and because of that difference (and different temperaments),

while operating at different paces (Ex.: type A vs. others) arguments can ensue as to which one is acting more ‘Christ-like.’ Understanding this concept can reduce **the number of these needless debates**. It’s only where clear Scripturally violative behavior occurs that such discussions are profitable. **See also:** Principles of Conscience/Gray Areas (under Grace Living).

REPRESENTATIVE ETHICS (“VIRTUES”)

Boasting in Christ, Contentment, Delighting in God, Encouragement, Enduring suffering, Faith, Forgiveness; Generosity; Gentleness, Good conscience, Goodness, Graciousness, Gratitude, Heavenly-mindedness, Hope, Humility, Impartiality, Joy, Kindness, Loving God, Mercy, Morality, Not jealous, Patience, Peace, Praise, Pure speech, Reasonableness, Rejoicing in trials, Responsibility; Reverence, Seeking God first, Self-control, Selflessness, Soundness of mind, Suffering ethically, Truthfulness, ETC.

REPRESENTATIVE SINS (“VICIES”)

Adultery, Anger, Anxiety, Argumentativeness, Arrogance, Bitterness, Boastfulness, Covetousness, Cussing, Deception, Dissention, Divisiveness, Drunkenness, Envy, Fear, Flattery for the sake of taking advantage, Fornication, Gossip, Greed, Guilt, Hatred, Homosexuality, Idolatry, Impatience, Jealousy, Laziness, Love of money, Lovers of self, Lust, Lying, Materialism, Murder, Partiality, Prejudice, Pride, Profanity, Quick temper, Rape, Rebellion; Reviling, Self-centeredness, Selfishly ambitious, Selfishness, Sensuality, Sorcery, Stealing, Swindlers, Thievery, Violence, Worry, ETC.

6. Consequences—Sin will *ultimately* be punished and **judged** by God. The deserved and earned outcome of sin is “death.” This term encompasses several ideas: **Estrangement** from a relationship with God, **separation** from fellowship with Him (as *believers*), **natural consequences** of sin being in this world (Ex.: *hurricanes*, sickness) and **specific judgments** on sin, at times, in this life, **bodily death** and *ultimately* an **eternity in hell** for those who do not trust Christ. (Rom. 3:23, ETC.)

7. Titles (Reveal Content)

Moral corruptness/badness, evil, godlessness, lawlessness, iniquity, missing the mark, transgressions, whatever is not from faith, unrighteousness, gone astray, falling away, rebelling, wickedness, disobedience, etc.

SPECIAL REPORT: THE DOCTRINE OF SIN

The Nature of Sin.

Theologians commonly reference the core of sin as either pride or ‘living for self’ (its definition or descriptive manifestations varying from transgressions, evil, missing the mark, etc.). Perhaps so in our American culture, but more broadly, there are very moral lost people, even selfless ones and those who live to serve God. I find Scripture teaching that the **ULTIMATE** nature of sin is man doing anything apart from faith; that is, performed simply living their natural life outside of a personal relationship with God through Christ (even doing externally moral, or ‘good’ things).

The Nature of Worldliness.

Both in the Garden of Eden, and at Christ’s temptation, I John 2:15-17’s three-fold definition of worldliness appears to be in operation. Eve found the forbidden fruit to be good for food (i.e., appealing to the lust of the flesh, or physical satisfaction), pleasing to the eyes (i.e., lust of the eyes, or for what one sees), and good for making one wise in ways God did not desire (i.e., the boastful pride of life). The devil attacked Christ in similar fashion, offering Him a chance to test

God (i.e., physical temptation forcing angels to save Him from a fatal fall), to own everything (i.e., lust of the eyes, of for what one can see), and ultimately to worship Satan (i.e., the boastful pride which even caused his own eternal downfall). Had Adam and Eve only listened to and continued heeding God's word (or walked by faith) to have whatever they desired, with only ONE negative prohibition, they would never have known they were naked, and, more importantly, they would not have died that day (i.e., they died spiritually that exact day, the symptomatic physical manifestation of that fact coming years later at their expiration). Continuing to walk by faith based on God's word and out of a relationship to God (rather than listening to the devil's lies) would have preserved our original ancestors, and it DID preserve our Great Elder Brother, Christ. (Gen. 2:17, 3:5-6; Mt. 4:1-11)

KEY VERSES

Everyone Must Deal with Their Sin Problem

"But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out." (Num. 32:23)

Sins Estrange the Lost from God

But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He does not hear. (Isa. 59:2, Cf.: Rom. 3:10-12, 5:19)

Sin Causes Death (Separation from fellowship, Bodily Demise and Hell)

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 6:23)

Forgiveness of Sins at Salvation

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses; According to the riches of His grace, (Eph. 1:7)

Christian Cleansing of and Cure for Experiential Sins

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. My little children, I am writing these things to you that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an *Advocate* with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; (I Jn. 1:9-2:1)

Commitment to NOT Sin

Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the **love of the Father is not in him**. For all that is in the world, the **lust of the flesh** and the **lust of the eyes** and the **boastful pride of life**, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is *passing away*, and also its **lusts**; but the one who does the will of God abides forever. (I Jn. 2:15-17, Cf.: I Pet. 4:3)

Sin Defined

Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is sin. (Jas. 4:17, Cf.: II Jn. 1:11)

Everyone who practices sin also *practices* lawlessness; and sin is lawlessness. (I Jn. 3:4)

We Can Have Victory Over it

knowing this, that our old self was crucified with Him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who has died is freed from sin. For sin shall not be master over you, for you are not under law, but under grace. (Rom. 6:6-7, 14, Cf.: Heb. 10:1-2)

Sins are Not “You,” (in Christ) but You are Responsible for Them

But if I am doing the very thing I do not wish, I am no longer the one doing it, but sin which dwells in me. (Rom. 7:20)

THE DEVIL

1. Personhood of the Devil (i.e., being/entity)

- Mind—II Cor. 11:3
- Will—Isa. 14:12-14; II Tim. 2:26
- Emotion—Rev. 12:17; Lk. 22:31

2. Origins and Fall—Eze. 28:13, (Isa. 14:12-15)

3. Purpose and Plan/Scheme(s)—Jn. 10:10; I Pet. 5:7, etc. **See: Warfare**

4. Deeds—Sin, though he sometimes appears as an angel of light.

5. Future—Lake of Fire/Hell. (Rev. 20:10)

6. Titles (Reveal Content)

Beelzebub, Satan, devil, the evil one, serpent, liar and the father of lies, Lucifer (“bright”), dragon of old, the tempter, prince of the power of the air, god of this age, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience, ruler of the demons, the deceiver; Accuser of the brethren, murderer, roaring lion, the mystery of iniquity, etc.

See also: Job 38:32; Mt. 4:1, 10:25, 12:24; Jn. 8:44, 12:31; II Cor. 6:15; Jas. 1:13; I Jn. 3:8, 5:19; Rev. 12:9-10.

KEY VERSES

His Plan for Your Life

“The *thief* comes only to **steal**, and **kill**, and **destroy**; I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly.” (Jn. 10:10)

Our Adversary and Enemy

Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prows about like a *roaring* lion, seeking someone to **devour**. (I Pet. 5:8, Cf.: Mt. 13:39)

A Deceptive Tactician

And no wonder, for even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light. Therefore it is not surprising if his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness; whose **end** shall be according to their deeds. (II Cor. 11:14-15)

We are Not Ignorant of His Schemes

in order that no advantage be taken of us by Satan; for we are not ignorant of his schemes. (II Cor. 2:11, Cf.: Eph. 6:11)

Hinders the Lost’s Salvation (in Evangelism)

in whose case the god of this world has **blinded the minds** of the unbelieving, that they might **not see the light of the Gospel** of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. (II Cor. 4:4)

Accuses Christians (Blame, Guilt, Finger-Pointing)

And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation, and the power, and the kingdom of our God and the authority of His Christ have come, for the **accuser of our brethren** has been thrown down, who **accuses them** before our God **day and night**. (Rev. 12:10)

Tries to Defeat our Spiritual Walk

For this reason, when I could endure it no longer, I also sent to find out about your faith, for fear that the **tempter** might have **tempted you**, and our labor should be *in vain*. (I Th. 3:5)

Thwarts God's Work (only Partially and Temporarily)

For we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, more than once—and yet **Satan thwarted us**. (I Th. 2:18)

Can Use (Self-Centered) Believers

But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, **Satan!** You are a **stumbling block** to Me; for you are **not setting your mind on God's interests**, but **man's**." (Mt. 16:23)

We Can Have Victory Over Him!

You are from God, little children, and have **overcome them**; because *greater* is He who is in you than **he who is in the world**. (I Jn. 4:4)

DEMONS

1. Personhood of Demons

- Mind—Mk. 1:24; Mt. 8:29; Jas. 2:19
- Will—Lk. 8:32
- Emotion—Lk. 8:28; Jas. 2:19

2. Definition Fallen angels, unclean, evil spirits (unholy, not chosen).

3. Names Evil spirits, fallen angels, demons.

4. Origins and Fall—Eze. 28:13, (Isa. 14:12-15), by implication (and association with the devil).

5. Purpose and Plan Assist the devil in his **plans**, by implication (and association with the devil).

6. Power—Mk. 5:1-10, 8:16, etc.

7. Numbers/Quantity—Many (Mk. 5:9)

8. Future (end)—Rev. 20:10 Lake of Fire/Hell, by implication (and association with the devil).

KEY VERSES

They Exist—They Are Real

Mt. 17:11, 8:28-33; I Cor. 10:20, etc.

They Are Fallen Angels

Now I desire to remind you, though you know all things once for all, that the Lord, after saving a people out of the land of Egypt, subsequently destroyed those who did not believe. And *angels* who **did not keep their own domain**, but **abandoned their proper abode**, He has kept in eternal **bonds** under darkness for the **judgment** of the great day. (**Jude 1:5-6**)

They Are Unclean Spirits

Mt. 10:1, 12:43; Mk. 9:25, etc.

Hell is Their Eternal Future

For if God did not spare *angels* when they **sinned**, but cast them into hell and **committed** them to pits of darkness, **reserved** for judgment; (**II Pet. 2:4, Cf.: Rev. 20:10**)

There Are Many of Them

Mk. 5:9, 15, etc.

The Have Power Greater Than Humans

Mk. 1:24-26, 5:1-5, 9:26; Rev. 16:13-14

They Assist the Devil in Using Their Power for Evil

Mt. 9:34; Dan. 10:10-14

They Can Possess Lost People and Oppress Saved People

Ac. 10:38; Mt. 8:16; II Cor. 12:7-9

Christ Defeated and Has Authority Over Them All

But some of them said, "He casts out **demons** by **Beelzebul**, the ruler of the demons." And others, to test Him, were demanding of Him a sign from heaven. But He knew their thoughts, and said to them, "Any kingdom **divided against itself** is laid waste; and a **house divided** against itself falls. And if **Satan** also is **divided against himself**, how shall his kingdom stand? For you say that I cast out demons by Beelzebul. And if I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out? Consequently they shall be your judges. But if I **cast out demons by the finger of God**, then the kingdom of God has come upon you." (**Lk. 11:15-20**)

Christians Can Experience VICTORY Over Their Ploys

Put on the full armor of God, that you may be **able to stand firm against** the schemes of the devil. For our **struggle** is not against flesh and blood, but against the **rulers**, against the **powers**, against the **world forces** of this *darkness*, against the **spiritual forces** of **wickedness** in the *heavenly places*. (**Eph. 6:11-12**)

ANGELS

- 1. Definition**—Chosen, holy, "ministering spirits." (Heb. 1:7, 14; Ps. 104:4; Lk. 9:26; I Tim. 5:21, etc.)
- 2. Origins**—Pre-Gen. 1:1; Ps. 148:5 (Job. 38:4-7)
- 3. Purpose/Function**—Assist God's execution of His plan. (Heb. 1:4, etc.). For an excellent exposition on the ministry of angels, **See: Basic Theology**, pp. 150-153, by Charles C. Ryrie, (Moody Press: Chicago), 1999
- 4. Ability/Power**—Mt. 28:2; Ac. 12:6-11, etc.

5. **Numbers/Quantity**—Many—a multitude of heavenly hosts. (Ps. 148:2, etc.); “Myriads” (Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11)

6. **Categories/Names**—For an excellent exposition on Michael, Gabriel, archangels, cherubim and seraphim, **See:** Basic Theology, pp. 146-149, by Charles C. Ryrie, (Moody Press: Chicago), 1999

KEY VERSES

Have a Higher Ranking than Humans

But one has testified somewhere, saying, "WHAT IS MAN, THAT THOU REMEMBEREST HIM? OR THE SON OF MAN, THAT THOU ART CONCERNED ABOUT HIM? “THOU HAST MADE HIM FOR A LITTLE WHILE **LOWER THAN THE ANGELS**; THOU HAST CROWNED HIM WITH GLORY AND HONOR, AND HAST APPOINTED HIM OVER THE WORKS OF THY HANDS;” (Heb. 2:6-7)

Continually Praise the Godhead

And I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne and the living creatures and the elders; and the number of them was myriads of myriads, and thousands of thousands, saying with a loud voice, "**Worthy is the Lamb** that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing." (Rev. 5:11-12)

Conduct Ministry Missions

And of the angels He says, "WHO MAKES HIS ANGELS WINDS, AND HIS MINISTERS A FLAME OF FIRE." (Heb. 1:7)

Minister to Christians

Are they not all ministering spirits, sent out to render service for the sake of those who will inherit salvation? (Heb. 1:14, Cf.: Mt. 4:11)

Rejoice in Evangelism Results!

"In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Lk. 15:10)

Have a Special Concern for Children

“See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you, that their angels in heaven continually behold the face of My Father who is in heaven.” (Mt. 18:10)

May be Seen in Human Form

Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it. (Heb. 13:2)

Can be Instruments of the Spirit’s Leading (including Prayer Answers and Encouragement)

Mt. 28:5-7; Ac. 8:26, 12:5-10, 27:23-24

Will Carry Believers to Heaven

“Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried.” (Lk. 16:22)

Are Not to be Worshipped

And I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed me these things. And he said[^] to me, "Do not do

that; I am a fellow servant of yours and of your brethren the prophets and of those who heed the words of this book; *worship* God." (Ac. 22:8-9, Cf.: Col. 2:8; Rev. 19:10)

THE CHURCH

1. **Founding** For an *excellent* exposition on the church's founding, **See:** Lectures in Systematic Theology, p. 313, by Henry C. Thiessen, (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, MI), 1979
2. **Universal vs. Local**—Col. 1:24-25; Eph. 5:23, 27, (universal); Rom. 16:5; I Cor. 16:19; Col. 4:15, (local).
3. **Purposes:** Christ's (human) representative on earth *until* He returns. (I Jn. 4:17, etc.)
4. **Priorities/Ministries:** 1) Exalt the Savior, 2) Edify the Saint, 3) Evangelize the Sinner (i.e., Worship, Discipleship and Evangelism). (**See also:** Body Life)
5. **Offices/Leadership** Elder/Pastors, Deacons, Laity/"Brethren." (**See:** I Tim-Tit; Eph. 4:11-13; I Pet. 5:1-3, etc.).
6. **Ordinances** Baptism and the Lord's Supper. Some argue for *foot washing*. (Ac. 2:38; I Cor. 11:23-26, ETC.).
7. **Spiritual Gifts** **See:** Spiritual Gifts
8. **Vision for the "Ideal Church"** (including "Body Life"), and Ideal Pastor and Layman—Coming Later. **Temporarily See:** Body Life
9. **Titles (Reveal Content)**
The gathering/assembly, the congregation, the church ("called out" ones) of (the living) God, the disciples, the Way, the brethren, the body of Christ, Family, the house of God, the little flock, the bride of Christ, a holy priesthood, a house of prayer, the pillar and support of the truth, the people of God, the building of God, etc.

NEW TESTAMENT CONCEPT OF THE BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH

- A. Toward the *end* of Christ's ministry, Christ promises to build His church (i.e., in the future). (**Mt. 16:18**)
- B. Christ told His disciples that the baptism of the Spirit would occur *soon after* His ascension. (**Ac. 1:5**)
- C. The Spirit fell on the world, represented by a) full Jews (Ac. 2:1-13), b) half-Jews (Ac. 8:14-17), c) full Gentiles (Ac. 10:44-46), and d) those with half knowledge (Ac. 19:6-7). —**Dr. John Bisagno**.
- D. Peter explains that the Spirit's falling on the group with Cornelius (Ac. 10) *was* Christ's promised baptism of the Holy Spirit. (**Ac. 11:15-16**)
- E. And how do we know the baptism of the Spirit BEGAN (initiated/inaugurated) the Church?
 1. By **one** baptism we are baptized into *one* body. (**I Cor. 12:12-13**)
 2. And the **church** is that one body. (**Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18**)

Conclusion: The falling/baptism of the Spirit (manifested to four groups in Acts), *began* the church, and individual Christians are once and for all baptized into that one church/body upon salvation—not their later repeated in-fillings. This doctrine has significant value in properly discerning prophecy, where God’s plan (“program” for His church can (and needs) often be distinguished from His plan for His chosen people, the Jews.

Source: Adapted from Theology 405 (Church and Sanctification) course, Dr. Robert Lightner, Dallas Theological Seminary (*not* original to that Professor, he says) and a sermon by Dr. John R. Bisagno

KEY VERSES

Christ is It’s Head

For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the *wives* ought to be to their husbands *in everything*. (**Eph. 5:23-24**)

It is Universal and Local

Col. 1:24-25; Eph. 5:23; II Cor. 1:1; Phm. 1:2.

It is Composed of Many Members of One Body

For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. (**I Cor. 12:13, Cf.: Eph. 4:25**)

It is God’s Representatives on Earth (Ex.: in Evangelism)

in order that the manifold **wisdom** of God might now be made known through the church to the rulers and the authorities in the heavenly places. (**Eph. 3:10**)

It is Powerful

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades shall not overpower it.” (**Mt. 16:18**)

It is to be Growing Up in Maturity

And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. (**Eph. 4:11-13**)

It is to Be Known for its Praying

And He began to teach and say to them, "Is it not written, 'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER FOR ALL THE NATIONS'? But you have made it a ROBBERS' DEN." (**Mk. 11:17**)

It is to be Loving

“By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” (**Jn. 13:35**)

It is to be Charitable

“You are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has become tasteless, how will it be made salty again? It is good for nothing anymore; Except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden.” (Cf.: I Jn. 4:17) (**Mt. 5:13-14**)

It is Participatory and with Some Spontaneity

Rom. 12:5, 10 15:5, 7, 14, 16:3-6, 16; Gal, 5:13, 6:2; Eph. 4:2, 5:21; I Th. 5:11; I Cor. 14:26, 12:7, 11, etc.

It is Not Denominations or a Building

I Cor. 6:11-13; I Pet. 2:10, etc.

PROPHECY

(See also: New Website section on Prophecy)

- 1. Introduction:** REALITY CHECK: The **Bible Speaks** of the Future! (up to 27% of the Scriptures!)
- 2. Disputed Issues**—Literal vs. figurative interpretation, pre-, mid- or post-Tribulational Rapture and pre-, mid- or post-millennial second coming of Christ, does the Church go through the Tribulation, whether we are in the Tribulation or it has already taken place, etc.
- 3. Importance (Cf.: to Sanctification)**—It’s in God’s word (a lot!). It **affects** sanctification (See: 5, below). It tells believers how the “last chapter of life” turns out, etc.
- 4. Major Events** The Tribulation, the Second Coming of Christ, Resurrections, Judgments, the Millennium, the Eternal State, etc. See: the Book of Revelation, ETC.
- 5. Application (Prophecy is “impractical” and “intellectualism?”)**—I Cor. 15 (espec. v. 58); Phil. 3:17-20; Col. 3:2-4; I Th. 4:18, 5:11; I Pet. 1:13; II Pet. 3:11-12; Heb. 13:14; I Jn. 3:2-3, ETC.

KEY VERSES

God Wants us Knowledgeable of This 27% of the Bible!

But we do not want you to be **uninformed**, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. (**I Th. 4:13**)

No Human Knows Prophecy’s Timing

“But of that **day and hour** no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the *Father alone.*” (**Mt. 24:36**)

Christ is Coming Back SOON

Tit. 2:13; Mk. 8:38; II Th. 2:8; Lk. 18:8; II Tim. 4:1, 8; Rev. 22:7, 12, 20, etc.

Heaven and Hell are Men’s Eternal Destinations (and All Men Face Judgment)

Jn. 14:1-3; Jn. 3:15-16; Rev. 21; See: “On Hell;” II Cor. 5:10.

Prophecy Knowledge Affects Sanctification (i.e., it is Not Mere Intellectual Pursuit)

When I was a child, I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I did away with childish things. For now we see in a mirror dimly, but **then** face to face; now I know in part, but **then** I shall know fully just as I also have been fully known. (**I Cor. 13:11-12**)

Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. And everyone who has this **hope** fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. (I Jn. 3:2-3)

And now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in **shame** at His coming. If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him. (I Jn. 2:28-29)

Therefore, gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. As obedient children, do not be conformed to the former lusts which were yours in your ignorance, but like the Holy One who called you, be holy yourselves also in all your behavior; because it is written, "YOU SHALL BE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY." (I Pet. 1:13-16)

For our **citizenship** is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the **body of His glory**, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself. Therefore, my beloved brethren whom I long to see, my joy and crown, so stand firm in the Lord, my beloved. (Phil. 3:20-4:1)

Since all these things are to be destroyed in this way, *what sort of people ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness, looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God*, on account of which the **heavens will be destroyed by burning**, and **the elements will melt with intense heat!** (II Pet. 3:11-12, Cf.: I Th. 4:18, 5:11)

On Bible Prophecy

In the 'near' future, God will again judge the world for its sins, as He did in the days of Noah. However, this time, it will not be by flood but by three series of seven terrible physical judgments during a seven year period called The Tribulation. Below are the select "signs" of its impending arrival, followed by the major events immediately preceding, during and following that 'time of Jacob's trouble.' More details (and explanations) can be found at our book, Practical Prophecy for an Unsuspecting World.

I. Prophecy Precursors

25 TRAITS OF CULTURE IN THE LAST DAYS

Ask yourself if we are more or less like this description than in the 1900's? 1950's?

1. Men will be Lovers of Self. (II Tim. 3:2).

Examples: The "me" generation, looking out for number one, what have you done for me lately; much less 'ask not what your country can do for you' mentality. Political Correctness teaching self-esteem, even in academic failure, and avoiding punishment (as "mean") as a consequence of bad behavior.

2. Men will be Lovers of Money. (II Tim. 3:2).

The number one idol in America, close to sex and fun. Do you know many Americans who don't value money at least as much as their deeds and time and effort spent shows they value God?

3. Men will be Boastful. (II Tim. 3:2).

Examples: Taunting, in your face, hyper-competitive, trash-talking. How could any 'artist' celebrity be "anyone" without "swagger" now-a-days?

4. **Men will be Arrogant. (II Tim. 3:2).** Same as above, but even more vocal about it.
5. **Men will be Revilers (Blasphemers/Profane Speakers). (II Tim. 3:2).**
Cussing has not only become more acceptable and mainstream, it's almost required to get TV ratings or to cut through advertising clutter and sound bites to get attention. Talk radio's harsh and mean rhetoric is another example. 2 recent TV and radio spots bleep out easy to fill in the blank cuss words, just to draw attention to Joe's Crab Shack and a hot sauce brand (with a grandmother figure actress as the one doing the cursing).
6. **Men will be Disobedient to Parents. (II Tim. 3:2).**
Have you ever watched the Maury show where youth receive intervention? We now have boot camps, teen gangs and thugs, juvenile crime, scared straight programs, no corporal punishment, parents trying to be their kids' friends (at the expense of discipline, and needing The Super Nanny), spoiled brats; Externally reflected in violence, rude behavior, gangs, brutal beatings filmed for pleasure to be shown on YouTube and Jack A_s TV show and movies, and rap artists proud of their 'gangsta thug' image, pimp lifestyles and considering their criminal past to lend them 'street cred').
7. **Men will be Unthankful. (II Tim. 3:2).**
When is the last time someone under age 35 sent you a thank you letter, voicemail or email for something you did for them? The practice is passé, and many now have an entitlement mentality. Manners and customer service are down in exchange for a self-centered entitlement mentality. Gone are the days when Dear Abbey could make a living as she did. Recently, NBC's Today Show hosted a series entitled "Is civility dead?," asking is bad behavior rewarded by our society?
8. **Men will be Unholy. (II Tim. 3:2).**
Ethics is a subject many professionals must study, but it is often disregarded as an impediment to business, and discussing morality is often seen as old-fashioned, boring and maybe even backwards. "Everything in moderation," "everything is relative" (i.e., true for you but not for me, "that's none of your business," or "Live and let live" (i.e., do whatever makes you feel good so long as you don't hurt anyone are popular moral standards today. Ex.: Las Vegas and New Orleans' Mardi Gras shenanigans.
9. **Men will be Unloving. (II Tim. 3:3).**
Examples: Just the facts, mam; it's not personal, it's business; bottom-line it for me, I'm too busy to care or know what's going on in other countries (Ex.: suffering); few people meet or know their neighbors, and customer service is often a concept of the past.
10. **Men will be Irreconcilable. (II Tim. 3:3).**
Examples: Go your separate way; long-term friendships are all but a thing of the past, and relationships break up at the drop of a hat. The divorce rate is rampant (over 50% in the U.S.), and acceptable for any cause ("no-fault"). Courts have to settle even the smallest of disputes (\$50 small claims TV court shows). In the 1970's there was a comedic commercial where a husband stated, sarcastically, "My wife—I think I'll keep her." Now a days, men actually contemplate that decision.
11. **Men will be Malicious Gossips. (II Tim. 3:3).**
Examples: Tabloid newspapers, tell-all books, Hollywood news TV shows, rumor mills around the water cooler, unnamed sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, gossip columnists, outing people as revenge (Ex.: Miss California's risqué photo, common gossip at the workplace and over cell phones and emails, etc.
12. **Men will be Without Self-Control. (II Tim. 3:3).**
Examples: Addictions (including sex, drugs and some Japanese youth toward the internet), poor moral choices excused as 'who I am' or a disease (Ex.: alcoholism, homosexuality,

obesity epidemic, unprovoked cussing, etc.). Up-skirting and smuggling methods, also.

13. Men will be Brutal. (II Tim. 3:3).

Examples: Drive-by shootings, girls fighting girls on viral web videos, cyber bullying, violent gangs, drug lords and cartels and the mafia, wife beaters, terrorists cutting off American worker's head. Caustic or inflammatory speech on talk radio and in politics as more and more the norm. the Museum of Torture, in Oklahoma (demonstrates man's inhumanity to man, as 'inventors of evil').

14. Men will be Haters of Good. (II Tim. 3:3).

Few of Hollywood's leading macho men want the reputation of being 'good guys,' but a "bad boy" or womanizer image can help their careers. (Brad Pitt's New Orleans work being a wonderful exception).

15. Men will be Betrayers (Traitors/Treacherous/Benedict Arnolds/Turn Coats) (II Tim. 3:4).

Examples: Several people have sold secrets to enemy governments for the almighty dollar; kiss and tell-all books; back-stabbers ending friendships over trivial disputes.

16. Men will be Reckless. (II Tim. 3:4).

Un-called for risk takers. Un-cautious, rushing headlong. Can you think of any examples?

17. Men will be Conceited. (I Tim. 3:4).

See: Arrogant, above. A more sophisticated and subtle internal belief that you are better than others, often based on the size of your bank account.

18. Men will be Lovers of Pleasures More (Rather) than Lovers of God. (II Tim. 3:5).

How much more emotion, time and money do we spend entertaining ourselves after work and on weekends, than spending time with God (in prayer and Bible study), and evangelizing? When off work, TV, sports, celebrity worship, computers, Wii, video games, entertainment, hobbies, dominate our attention. Do you value your X-Box, I Pod, Blackberry, Movies, TV shows, sports games, hobbies—generally, your after-work and weekend activities more than you prioritize and spend time pursuing God?

19. Men will have a Form of Godliness, but they will Deny its Power. (II Tim. 3:5).

Can you say "Political Correctness," positive mental attitude, never offend (even at the expense of the truth), hate speech legislation trumping free speech rights, overlooking racial tensions needing resolving in an attempt to pretend all is well, giving back, pay forward, random acts of kindness and make a difference grass roots campaigns (as good as they may be, most never reference God or the Bible), karma (what comes around goes around'), the law of attraction, positive mental attitude, etc. Just think of the general moral difference between the days of the Beatles' "I want to hold your hand" to today's 1-night stands and friends with benefits).

20. There will be Men who Creep into Houses and Lead Captive Weak Women Weighted Down with Sins, Led Away by Various Lusts. (II Tim. 3:6).

How many women with low self-esteem and less moral standards than they ought to have, will sleep with a guy just to get his affection or attention, or to not fall into the supposed 'stigma' of being a '40 year old virgin?' Players, one night stands, friends with benefits, casual sex, shacking up, booty calls, strip clubs, video sex stores, bunny ranch, Playboy mansion, porn websites, etc.

21. They will Always be Learning but Never Able to Come to the Knowledge of the Truth. (II Tim. 3:7).

This is the information age, where knowledge is power, and business pushes always learning as a means to success. Yet so few of us have much of an idea what God has written for us. In America, we have the most educated generation in history, with some of the least-

informed students of the Bible in history (even among church-goers).

22. They will Oppose the Truth. (II Tim. 3:8).

How many Americans spend five minutes a day even looking into what it—the Bible—says? More and more Americans are buying into the God is dead, man evolved from soup and a big bang, the Bible is full of myths and contradictions, religion as opiate of the masses, popularized philosophies, and opposition of any form of religious expression in public places (in God we trust, one nation under God, etc..

23. They will have Corrupt (Depraved/Morally Bad) Minds. (II Tim. 3:8).

Ever said something and someone took it in a dirty, sexual way, because their mind is in the gutter?

24. They will be Rejected Concerning the Faith. (II Tim. 3:8).

All people are born without Christ, and if that condition continues, they will forever be rejected by God. The number and percentage of our populations who are spiritually “lost” exceeds that of the immediately preceding generations.

25. They will Not Make Further Progress, Because their Folly will be Obvious to All. (II Tim. 3:9).

False “tares” can only fake it till their true colors break through. They can’t progress morally beyond a certain point, that point often being just the cultural norm.

II. Prophecy Events

11 MAJOR PROPHECY EVENTS

1. Rapture.

a) A miraculous ‘snatching away’ of all born-again believers from the earth in an instant. Just prior, Old Testament believers’ are bodily resurrected, and the result of the rapture is that the sin-restraining power of the Holy Spirit is removed from the earth, causing an explosion of heightened expression of man’s sinfulness, both in quality and quantity.

b) Immediately following, the Antichrist—a Satan-empowered human being set to completely rule the world—is revealed. He is described as doing what he pleases; Exalting himself above all gods, blaspheming God, financially prospering till Armageddon, having no regard for religion or interest in women, honoring military strength and a ‘god’ foreign to his heritage; Dan. 11:36-38.

c) Likely the effect of millions of dead or missing from the rapture, the start of a unified 1-world religion occurs at this time, lasting 3 and a half years, until such time as the Antichrist—who uses her to gain political power—tires of, hates and persecutes her, so that he can become the sole object of man’s worship at the time of the mid-Tribulation.

2. Peace Treaty.

Either as a first move, or the result of power and notoriety gained from cleverly uprooting three European heads of state, at the beginning of this seven year period the Antichrist having been revealed now embarks on a diplomatic and especially systematic militaristic campaign to dominate the entire world by the mid-Tribulation period. His fame and clout allows him to negotiate a 7-year peace treaty between the Jews and her predominantly Arab-Islamic enemies, wherein Israel lives in peace under his reign for but half of that promised length of time.

3. Seals.

One of the Antichrist’s first decrees after signing the peace treaty is to allow the Jews to rebuild their Jerusalem temple and start instituting their religious sacrificial system (without Islamic opposition—or so the Jews believe—for only the first half of the Tribulation). Perhaps before or soon after that order is given, God Himself begins a series of world-wide supernatural calamities which devastate men and the earth, seven known as seal judgments.

4. Trumpets.

The seal judgments are rapidly followed by seven even more intense trumpet judgments, all of which devastate men and their environment, and are completed by the mid-Tribulation time-frame.

5. Treaty Broken.

At the half-way point, likely per a secret pre-agreed-upon determination between Antichrist and Israel's enemies, he breaks his covenant of protection for Israel, and so begins the 'great Tribulation' half which sees severe persecution of Jews and saints (Dan. 7:24-25). Antichrist successfully conquers the entire world, both by military conquest, and more voluntarily by amazing any doubters by being physically resurrected after having been assassinated at the mid-Tribulation period (Dan. 7:23; Rev. 13:3-5, 7-8). He proceeds to set up a 1-world government and economic system (i.e., 666 and image) wherein no one is allowed to buy or sell without having sworn allegiance to him as supreme Master indicated by receiving his mark on either their hand or forehead.

Antichrist worship replaces 1-world religion. Allies who had helped him seize power were given conquered lands as a possession and reward, and presumably to wipe from the face of the earth any semblance of God or Christ's influence, he attempts to change calendar dating and at least some civil laws (Dan. 7:24-25)

6. Bowls.

The bowl judgments are the most intense, and occur late in the second half of the Tribulation, perhaps in a very short period of time.

7. Armageddon.

At the end of the seven years, though Antichrist loses his governmental kingdom, he still wields enough power to summons every nation's military might for one last battle, this time directly against God, at a place in Israel named Armageddon. At that time, Jesus returns from heaven with His previously resurrected and raptured saints, who slays this Beast (and his false prophet) with the sword of His mouth and throws them both into the Lake of Fire (Rev. 19:20; Dan. 11:45).

8. Second Coming.

This physical return of Christ as second time to this earth is known as the Second coming of Christ, wherein His feet touch on the Mount of Olives, and He begins establishment of His earthly reign over the nations of the earth for the next 1,000 years (Rev. 20; Eze. 38:22).

Between the Second Coming and establishment of Christ's kingdom, the 10 nations Antichrist was initially federated with and rose from within are weakened, but still rule for a short time of perhaps 45 days or less (Dan. 7:12). It is at this time that Christ institutes the 'Sheep and Goats' judgment to determine which of the Tribulation survivors exhibited faith in Him by their treatment of His people—the Jews—and enter directly into the kingdom, and which did not, and thereafter are judged and sentenced to hell.

9. Millennium.

At this time, all surviving Jews (only about a third of that number which began the Tribulation) are spiritually saved, when they see their Messiah's return and believe on Him whom they slayed. Their wealth is restored, as a nation, their temple gets rebuilt, their enemies celebrate the Feast of Booths and the earth becomes miraculously fruitful and free of the effects of the curse of sin. Jesus rules all mankind, and the unsaved and nations other than Israel are ruled over with an iron rod. The Church—all true believers in Jesus Christ, remain with Christ, wherever He goes, and rule and reign with Him.

10. Great White Throne Judgment.

Though Satan is bound in the Abyss during the millennium, he is again released for a short time thereafter, in which he tries one last time to incite a global rebellion and war against God, but is quickly defeated and also thrown into the Lake of Fire. Then, all lost and deceased persons are bodily resurrected and face judgment for their sins and an eternal sentencing to hell, at the ‘Great White Throne Judgment.’

11. Eternity.

Human accounting for time ceases, as all men enter their life’s eternal destiny, the lost permanently banished to the Lake of Fire, and believers of all ages always being with Christ, in heaven.

SEE ALSO: Prophecy Chart Explanation and Events and Definitions in our prophecy book.

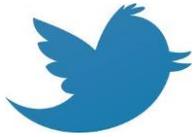
CONCLUSION

Because this study in doctrine merely touches on issues, I **strongly recommend** you read our **Prophecy section** on this we site, get our book, Practical Prophecy for an Unsuspecting World, or see either of the following *excellent* texts for more detail than can be covered here:

Things to Come, p. 295, by J. Dwight Pentecost (Zondervan: Grand Rapids), 1958.

Basic Theology, by Charles C. Ryrie, (Moody Press: Chicago), 1999

Lectures in Systematic Theology, by Henry C. Thiessen, (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, MI), 1979



TWITTER THEOLOGY
(@AmericanAnswers.org)



Evangelism

a) Need.

Churches OF ALL DENOMINATIONS need to UNITE in (at least) one last National (and Global) EVANGELISM thrust. Will we? Doubtful.

God, bring the US church to a place the 1st century was, where concern for men's souls vs. how our business is perceived by lost people was priority 1.

If laymen are biblically uneducated and pastors like system financially WHO will ever change it? New Testament tells what church is to be--READ IT!

Pastors shepherd their flock of 99 and have forgotten to seek out the 1 lost sheep, though the numbers are reversed now-a-days.

We believers pat ourselves on the back for TOKEN evangelism efforts compared to the size of the potential ambassador crew of church members! Exaggeration is delusion.

Do the math! # who evangelize, # lost, # of days till Christ returns (unknown) & THE NUMBERS DON'T ADD UP. Need more laborers!

HOW MANY individuals died in the last 30 years who NEVER heard a Gospel message from a believer and slipped thru the eternal crack?

Politeness that lets people go to hell is the devil's ethic! Never push a layman to evangelize--just be kind--sentences millions+ there! Won't do it!

Does God have to write the Great commission across the sky for His US church to understand its implications? I think possibly so!

Any pastor who meets lost people on judgment day being sentenced to hell WILL have accounting to THEM if they lived NEAR your church in my opinion.

After all, the Bible's symbol for an evangelistic Christian (the ONLY biblical type) is a FOOT. GO! (Rom. 10).

b) Motivation.

In hazardous chemical spills authorities always FULLY use the DOOR TO DOOR method (as well as media announcements), because ONLY that method can ensure EVERYONE hears the warning. Hell's more dangerous than a mere chemical leak!

Cults systematically canvas neighborhoods thoroughly. JW's or Mormons you see on the streets should make a born again believer blush by timidity!

Radical Islam is kicking the US church's tail in promoting forced religion with works. Doesn't their commitment for a wrong cause at least cause you shame?

c) Theory.

It is morally worse than murder to not evangelize people, because, as evil as it is, murder only kills their body (vs. their soul eternally).

IF you evangelize by your deeds, God help the lost person's eternity who sees when you sin, as we ALL do. You are NOT the message, JESUS is!

What Gospel would people read watching Gandhi or Mother Theresa's deeds? If you don't think the Gospel is a MESSAGE, you're a MESS.

Only 3 examples of "attraction evangelism" in the New Testament & ONLY for two guys who DIDN'T know the Gospel and one too OLD to go anymore. Not many people's excuse.

The world wasn't turned upside down by people evangelizing ONLY as they went, unless they were HUGE jet setters! Ac. 17:6

You don't evangelize Christians! It's stupid and insulting. But not knowing who's what we do it ALL the time, wasting PRECIOUS, LIMITED resources.

You cannot be an evangelism mobilizer if you are not a serious evangelizer, as hypocrisy stinks to high heaven--literally.

d) Strategy.

God used Gentiles to sway Jews and He could use Catholics or even the lost to change Protestants. #MyHope He does. Put NOTHING past Him to save souls.

The 10/40 window SHOULD be all we need focusing on, but with IRRESPONSIBLE evangelism NO one KNOWS who still needs to be reached elsewhere!

Autonomy gone amuck NEVER identifies need, duplication of effort or coordinates results. US evangelism (as a business) deserves fired CEO's!

IF the pope is saved and gets thinking right BILLIONS of Catholics might follow suit. THAT'S WHY I will persistently tweet him; not abandoning Protestants.

e) Methods.

PRAY for more laborers but that is NOT all you are to do. Eph. 4 shows pastors are to train laymen up to do ministry. That's NOT just praying for workers!

Preachers evangelizing the church crowd is like the military recruiting on the battlefield or colleges doing so at a college dance. LEAVE the building!

Much evangelism today is like a sales person in uniform (with a badge) on your front yard, hoping you see him and know why he's there.

Pastors: Being very excited and positive about evangelism USUALLY doesn't work. TRY it and prove me right or wrong. You'll look unwise in the process.

f) Solutions.

I will TRY any moral motivational technique in a sermon, but asking people you know to watch you do it works best (and our 'On Hell' Sunday School lesson).

It is LIKELY persecution alone that will get US church evangelistic. If so, BRING IT ON! Ac. 8:4

EE should stand for evangelize and exhort--a 2-pronged ministry. NEED MORE WORKERS as we train existing work force.

Protestors brought about civil rights and ~ended Vietnam. Why is it considered EVIL to protest 95% of US Christians' decision NEVER to evangelize?

g) Excuses.

What would US church's excuse to God be if Billy Graham hadn't pinch hit for us again (i.e., My Hope)? He DOES deserve a retirement (I Cor. 9:6)--GET to WORK!

We tried will not cut it on judgment day if succeeding at Great Commission COMPLETION was possibility. First century proves failure not option!

You be the one who tells those we haven't but could reach you chose them allowed into hell. God executing DESERVED judgment for sure but the relief truck got STALLED.

h) Opposition.

Do NOT EVANGELIZE! Now, quickly think of some way to justify this 95% US church summary statement to make it look holy. –the Devil (sarcasm).

I'm unsure HOW one could be too negative about 5% only, 30 years+ the consequences being HELL forever for those we neglected by distracted priorities!

i) Conclusion.

Honestly don't know how else to communicate the problem to you. A drop in the bucket or even a cup full is NOT what we're called to. DO YOU UNDERSTAND?

I vow before God in Christ I will CEASE ALL evangelism exhortation when the church evangelizes every lost soul of age one time. Mark my words!

If pastors DO FULL evangelism in their neighborhood I'll shut up and be the non-reproving party you'd LOVE me 2to be NOW without completing that task.

WHO is holding the US church accountable for INCOMPLETE evangelism or the 5% blithe? I HOPE there are many of us. I know very few, sadly!

Discipleship

Jesus preached to the crowds but poured His life into (intimate relationship with) the 12. Lesson for discipleship vs. MERE sermons, pastors!

Only 13% of US Christians regularly read the Bible. How else CAN they grow the other 167 hours of the week beyond just a sermon, as it's the tool!?

Jesus said follow Me and I'll make you fishers... 95% of US Christians prove aren't following very closely. You're so harsh and negative (and TRUTHFUL!)

I LOVE and fully believe in discipleship. Just make sure all have heard so discipling work does not prevent any from being offered heaven/Gospel

Until laymen are disciplined/matured up in the faith practice, don't expect the 5% to change a lot. Hasn't in 30 years! Disciple them vs. just preach.

It took guy NAGGING me MANY times to have a quiet time w/him for 30 days, so I can't imagine that method isn't still great for pastors to emulate.

Body Life

Worship services are VERY professional/excellent these days but they SHOULD be the cherry on top of a week of victoriously walking with Christ.

If you're content w/going to church and trying to be nice Christianity as the whole of the deal, you're not a disciple, though you may be saved! Read the Bible!

Ministry

US pastors are on full notice that the 5/10/13 problem* is primarily THEIRS to fix, humanly-speaking, and to deny its existence is a sin that WILL be judged!

Church is 2 hours a week. Christianity is 24/7. See the difference? Mt. 4:4 is DAILY. We aren't spiritual camels who can live off 1 sermon!

Pastor: If you're too busy that it's an interruption to do the 3 mile plan, change the 5% and relationally disciple your members, you're chasing chaff and earning wood, hay and stubble.

Many mega pastors have found church growth methods a way around 1 Tim 5:17. The devil can make U rich (Mt 4:9 v. 6:33).

As I said at DTS; Expect quiet time, evangelism, full commitment and discipleship of Ur members and see if U can sustain a mega church!

UNLESS the Church IS Israel, Christians are not Pharisees (Mt. 23:23) or physical descendants of Jacob (Mal. 3:6). II Cor. 8-9 is Church giving chapters.

There is ZERO need for you to be at the site of prayer answers by prayer walking, but there is EVERY need for God to be there. He's not venue-limited.

If I hated pastors I'd encourage them to keep the 5/10/13 problem* going as they lose eternal rewards for so doing. That's love if you read the Bible.

Reproof

Tough love (if NEEDED and Spirit-led) is better than soft love that LET's folk go to hell & Christians push them over that cliff!

If I DIDN'T tell our websites' "Church Conflicts" section, MANY laymen would hardly know of the US church's spiritual condition among its heads. Shows are dazzling, TRUTH divine.

If you ever offend, WEAK people shut down on you. Christ doesn't require walking on eggshells (Lk. 6:26; Gal. 1:10; Pv. 18:24; Jn. 12:43; I Th. 2:4).

LABELS do not establish legitimacy, spin does not negate substance, and dismissiveness do not cause facts to disappear. Easier to put in ear plugs than to put on eye glasses.

Personal

I envision ripping up old Bibles or a stunt man on fire as the video I would need for any church event I'd be part of (and 'On Hell' and 50 reasons to evangelize).

Four Corners church (new name now) said my evangelism zeal could be an emotional problem. If it is (ha) I don't want the one HE has!

Why do I not SMILE very often? Look at what I see and try to be happy, happy, happy. Billions going off the cliff UNWARNED! Sobering and somber!

Pontifex: IF you read today's @JamesMeroney tweets U'll KNOW what's wrong with Protestantism for which I call Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org its 18 Thesis!

When I die DON'T come to my funeral but spend those 2 hours evangelizing as many as you can in my honor. I'll be watching from above. Thanks.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS (IDENTIFIED)

What is a “Spiritual Gift?”

NEWS FLASH to some: Spiritual gifts *do exist*, and they’re not just for the professional!

A spiritual gift is defined as a **supernatural enabling** for a particular spiritual service or ministry. They are qualitatively different and distinguishable from natural **talents** or learned **skills**.

When are Spiritual Gifts Received or Given?

Spiritual gifts are received at salvation, though they can be “stirred up” for usefulness later. (I Tim. 4:14)

How Many Spiritual Gifts Do Individual Christians Possess?

Every Christian has (at least) **one**. No believer has none. I Cor. 12:7, <I Cor. 4:23-24>

- (II Tim. 1:6) May imply only one gift per believer.
- (II Tim. 1:11) May imply the apostle Paul had *at least* **three** spiritual gifts.

Can You Acquire one Later On in the Christian Life?

There is no clear evidence of *anyone* acquiring one later once the four “fallings” of the Spirit had occurred (Ac. 2:1-13, 8:14-17, 10:44-46, 19:6-7). What comes with growth and ministering is **becoming more Christ-like** in that area.

How Many Spiritual Gifts are there in Total?

Following are the most central passages listing spiritual gifts:

4 MAJOR SPIRITUAL GIFT PASSAGES

For through the grace given to me I say to every man among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. And since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let each **exercise them** accordingly: if prophecy; According to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. (**Rom. 12:3-8**)

But to **each one** is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For to one is given the word of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word of knowledge according to the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit, and to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, and to another the effecting of miracles, and to another prophecy, and to another the distinguishing of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, and to another the interpretation of tongues. But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as **He wills**. (**I Cor. 12:7-11**) **See also:** Chs. 12-14

But to **each one** of us grace was given according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it says, "WHEN HE ASCENDED ON HIGH, HE LED CAPTIVE A HOST OF CAPTIVES, AND

HE GAVE GIFTS TO MEN." (Now this expression, "He ascended," what does it mean except that He also had descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is Himself also He who ascended far above all the heavens, that He might fill all things.) And He gave **some** as apostles, and **some** as prophets, and **some** as evangelists, and **some** as pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of **service**, to the building up of the body of Christ; until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a **mature man**, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the *fullness* of Christ. **(Eph. 4:7-13)**

As **each one** has received a special gift, **employ it** in servicing one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God. Whoever speaks, let him speak, as it were, the utterances of God; whoever serves, let him do so as by the strength which God supplies; so that in all things God may be *glorified* through Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. **(I Pet. 4:10-11)**

SPIRITUAL GIFTS LIST (WITH EXAMPLES)

The following list is derived from the *above* Scriptures. The "*examples*" referenced are **NOT necessarily** examples of the named spiritual gift, but can be examples of actions emulating the gift, or a **similar act** as an expression of the **CHARACTER of Christ**.

1. Apostle (Rom. 1:1, 11:13; I Cor. 9:1; II Cor. 12:12)
2. Prophet/Prophecy (I Cor. 13:2a-b; Mk. 6:4; Ac. 3:22-23)
3. Evangelist (Rom. 10:15; II Tim. 4:5)
4. Pastor (I Pet. 5:1-3, etc.)
5. Service (Tit. 3:14, etc.)
6. Teacher/Teaching (Jas. 3:1-2, etc.)
7. Exhortation (Ac. 13:15-16⁺)
8. Giving (Cf.: I Cor. 13:3a)
9. Leadership (Tit. 2:7)
10. Mercy (Lk. 10:33-36)
11. Word of Wisdom (I Cor. 6:5)
12. Word of Knowledge (Jn. 1:48; Jn. 4:18)
13. Faith (I Cor. 13:2c-f)
14. Gifts of Healing (Lk. 17:13-17, etc.)
15. Discerning of Spirits (Ac. 8:20-22)
16. Various Kinds of Tongues (I Cor. 13:1)
17. Interpretation of Tongues (Ac. 2, etc.)
18. Speaking? (general category or repeat of other named gifts, or separate unto itself?)

Are There any Spiritual Gifts UNNAMED in the New Testament?

Preachers sometimes say the lists in the New Testament cannot be proven to be exhaustive, but it is a **safer** bet not to speculate about any others "unidentified." I Cor. 13:3 indicates **martyrdom commitment** may be a spiritual gift. Some believe that **singing** <I Cor. 14:15> and **praise** <I Cor. 14:16> are spiritual gifts, but there's no solid proof. Others believe **celibacy** and

encouragement are “spiritual gifts,” but while celibacy and encouragement certainly are *gifts*, and spiritual by nature (Mt. 19:11-12; Rom. 1:11), they seem more like a person’s call into ministry—a gift, and spiritual, yet not classified as a “spiritual gift.” Some may offer **fasting** and **suffering** as spiritual gifts, but there’s no solid proof of these either.

Can we Classify Spiritual Gifts?

The Bible has several lists of gifts, but whether they were intended as *categories* is hard to prove. Some people see the different listings as indicating the following *possible* categories:

- a) **Sign Gifts** (Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues, Healings, Discerning of Spirits, Word of Wisdom and word of Knowledge—the category title stemming, in part, from the doctrine espoused in Heb. 2:4, ETC.)
- b) **Leadership Gifts** or *Office* Gifts. (Eph. 4:7-13)
- c) **Speaking or Serving**: Taking these two terms as category distinctions. (I Pet. 4:10-11)

How do you Define These Gifts, and How Can I Know what Spiritual Gift(s) I Have?

In College, in 1978, I was blessed to be at a very biblical church which presented us with what must have been one of the first scientifically-researched **spiritual gifts inventory** ever (at which time I confirmed that *teaching* was my gift). I have seen at least 2 other inventories *recently*, so although I do not yet have either **spiritual gift descriptions** or **inventories** on this website, I know they are easily accessible on the internet or at your local church. I **strongly encourage** you to **identify** then **USE** whatever gift (or gifts) God has given you!

SPIRITUAL GIFTS (USED IN MINISTRY)

Above all, spiritual gifts are to be **USED**, in *biblical* ministry. Once you discover your gift, **prayerfully seek God** to find how He would **use you** to **bless the Church** and *minister* to people, especially in the top-priority ministries of **evangelism** and **discipleship**. (I Cor. 12:7, 14:12, etc.)

See also: Body Life

EVANGELISM

See: Why Evangelize?

FOLLOW UP

See: Gospel Tract Page 2

OTHER SPIRITUAL SUCCESS FACTOR CONSIDERATIONS

LOVE

The **ultimate** expression of a successful Christian life is that we **love** God and love men—especially believers. The **ultimate example** of love is when Christ **laid down His life** for others. In our “politically correct” society, it seems that “**luv**” (i.e., emotion-based good feelings, good will and generally being “**nice**” to people) is considered *synonymous* with biblical love. If the two were exactly the same we would not need our Bibles at all. And if they are the same, all politically correct advocates would be Christians, as they would be espousing **everything** God wrote of in His word. (Ex.: II Tim. 3:5)

Love as a theme is *strewn throughout* all these discipleship (and evangelism) materials, but because it is the **supreme ethic** for the Christian, a specific focus is in order. We need to dig a little deeper and be accurate to see what love **truly is**. The following *list* is intended to *enhance* your understanding of what God is calling every believer to do-**LOVE** (in its many forms and manifestations):

Love:

- Patient (vs. anxious/impatient)
- Kind (vs. mean or rude)
- Not Jealous (i.e., content)
- Does Not Brag (i.e., modest)
- Is Not Arrogant (i.e., humble)
- Does Not Act Unbecomingly
- Does Not Seek its Own (i.e., selfless/not selfish)
- Is Not Provoked (i.e., volitional)
- Does Not Take Into Account a Wrong Suffered (i.e., forgiving)
- Does Not Rejoice in Unrighteousness (i.e., pure)
- Rejoices With the Truth (i.e., Bible-centered)
- Bears All Things (i.e., perseveres)
- Believes All Things (i.e., has faith)
- Hopes All Things (i.e., has hope)
- Endures All Things (i.e., endures vs. quits)
- Never Fails (i.e., is victorious)—(I Cor. 13:3-8a)

PRINCIPLES OF LOVE

- God IS Love—I Jn. 4:16
- Love is the Highest Ethic—I Cor. 13:13
- Christ’s Death is its Ultimate Expression—I Jn. 4:9-10; Jn. 3:16, 15:13; Rom. 5:8
- God’s Love for Us is Eternal (past, present and future)—Jer. 31:3; Ps. 136:1

- Nothing can Separate us from Christ's Love—Rom. 8:35-39
- God's Love was Poured Out in our Hearts at Salvation—Rom. 5:5; II Tim. 1:7
- We did not Initiate our Love of God—I Jn. 4:10, 19
- Christians are to Pursue Putting On Love—II Tim. 2:22; I Tim. 6:11; I Cor. 14:1a, Col. 3:14; I Jn. 4:12, 17
- We are to **Love God** Fully—Mt. 22:37-40
- All Things Work Together for our Good when we Love God—Rom. 8:28
- We are to **Love Christians**—I Jn. 3:16, 4:11-12, 20-21; I Pet. 1:22
- Obeying Christ's Commandments Demonstrates/Proves we Love Him and Christians—I Jn. 5:2-3; Heb. 13:1; I Th. 4:9
- Loving Christians Shows the World we are Christ's Disciples—Jn. 13:35; I Jn. 4:7, 16
- Love Covers Many Sins—Pv. 10:12; I Pet. 4:8
- Love is Not Afraid or Fearful that God will Punish us—I Jn. 4:18
- Love is not Lip service or Hypocrisy but Expressed in Deed and Truth—I Jn. 3:18, Rom. 12:9
- Love Builds Up Others—I Cor. 8:1-3
- If you Love you Will **Evangelize**—II Cor. 5:14-15
- Love Unifies Believers—Col. 3:14
- The end Goal of Bible Teaching is that Believers Love—I Tim. 1:5
- Spiritual Gifts are to be Used with Love (to be effective)—I Cor. 13:1-3

See also: Godly Relationships, and Body Life.

SPIRITUAL ANATOMY

Are human beings composed of **2 or 3 metaphysical parts**? Are we *dichotomous* or *trichotomous* in our human makeup? Are we made up of only one material and one immaterial part, or does the Bible teach that we are **SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY**? I make a *distinction* between soul and spirit (both of which are *immaterial* parts) aware that the biblical terminology can vary, though the concepts remain distinct.

This question primarily involves the role of our faculties in *discerning God's will*. If God can "speak" to us through the Spirit alivening His living, written word, that leading would be separate from our own thoughts and a *miraculous experience* which no human mind could ever create.

Based on the following Scriptures and my personal experience being led of God—*VERY specifically* at times—I am a **strong adherent** to the **TRICHOTOMOUS** view. If a person is **not open** to God leading *supernaturally* when our *spiritual senses* have been trained by the word of God *in practice*, they will likely not see the need for this *distinction*, or ever make complete sense of the following 3 verses, in my opinion:

Trichotomous-Indicating Verses

- (I Th. 5:23) The **entirety** of personhood seems to be presented here.
- (Heb. 4:12) Does the Bible divide between 2 things which are exactly the same (i.e., soul and spirit being analogized to joint and bone marrow)? **Why praise** the word's ability and power to so divide if there are **not two** separate (though *closely related*) things being *divided*?
- (I Cor. 14:14-17) Why make this *distinction*, if it doesn't exist? Paul is making **conscious moral effort** to also use his mind, rather than just his *spirit*. Paul *says* as much!

This topic is a bit technical, but if you ever experience God miraculously intervening and leading you, **VERY directly** and **specifically**, you will know that that experience was not something conjured up within *either* your mind or **only** your "subconscious" mind.

The following descriptions seem to adequately capture elements of our human experience, as described in the Bible, associated with what I am calling our "**Spiritual Anatomy**" (or "DNA"):

(s)pirit. The ultimately and fully *spiritual aspect* or part of man—whether as a residence for the devil or God—Rom. 8:16; I Cor. 14:14-17; I Th. 5:23; Heb. 4:12

Soul. The place of man's **mind, will and emotions**, which **DOES** increase in holiness with *spiritual growth*—Mt. 10:28; Mt. 22:37; Lk. 12:20; Jn. 12:27

Body. **NOT** referring to our **sinful** "flesh," but our skin, our **physical** "flesh," the human body we all inhabit and "are," physically)—Gal. 6:17; II Cor. 4:10; Heb. 10:5, ETC.

Clear and distinguishing verses on sub-parts of our "spiritual anatomy" include the following (among others where these *distinctions* are **blurred** or **non-existent**):

Heart—Rom. 10:10

Soul—I Pet. 2:11; I Cor. 15:45; I Th. 5:23

Mind—Rom. 12:2; Phil. 4:8; Col. 3:2; I Pet. 1:13

Conscience—I Tim. 3:9, 4:2; II Tim. 1:3; Tit. 1:15

Will—Ac. 20:16; I Cor. 5:5, 7:37, etc.

(s)pirit—Pv. 20:27; Rom. 8:16; Heb. 4:12; Jas. 2:26?; I Cor. 6:17; Eph. 4:23?

- Soul (Mind, primarily) Distinguished from (a Deeper) Heart—I Pet. 1:22
- Soul as the Immaterial Part of Man—Mt. 10:28
- Heart and Soul—Ac. 4:32 (i.e., they ‘gave their all’)
- Heart and Mind—Phil. 4:7 (i.e., emotions and thoughts)

GODLY RELATIONSHIPS

In our fast-paced, multi-tasking and ever *electronic* age, Americans have **seemingly lost the concept of having deep and genuine relationships with people**. Some to be sure still understand and value deep relationships, but this lesson is intended to *highlight principles* consistent with Scripture on the *importance* of and *means* for maintaining good human relationships and friendships.

We understand *friendship* in part from how God interacts with us, and from our own positive experiences with people. The following traits seem **self-evident** though sorely lacking today, even in the Christian Church:

What Good Relationships ARE

Honest; Genuine, sincere, caring, friendly, supportive, encouraging; Exhorting, reproving when needed, faithful, deep and intimate (i.e., not surfacy), open (Ex.: vulnerable "transparency"), wanting the best for the other person, non-competitive, "letting your hair down/being yourself," sharing sorrows, disappointments and even failures, "bearing one another's burdens," responsible, role-modeling an exemplary lifestyle, godly, not torrid or sensual, uplifting, edifying, and life-giving. In a word, biblical "**love**."

What Good Relations Are NOT

Using people, cliquiness, taking advantage of people, seeing people as ways to make money for you, temporary (love them, use them and leave them), ditching them in hard times (i.e., "fair-weathered friends"), back-stabbing, gossiping, lying, harboring bitterness; Cold, surfacy interaction faking that you really care or are concerned, having a hidden agenda, "kissing up" to 'important people,' flattery, etc. (all of which concepts Bible verses could be found to **prohibit**).

If we *cannot* find godly relationships with *fellow church members*, how do we expect to find much good friendship with those OUTSIDE the faith? Tempted to think this is **old-fashioned** or **naive idealism**? Read your Bible and take the risk. Be *friendly* and open to being *blessed* by others with this wonderful gift! Learn to *love people*, both lost and saved.

See: Ps. 12:2; Pv. 17:17, 18:24; Ecc. 4:12; Rom. 1:29, 9:1, 12:15-16, 16:18; I Cor. 1:12-13, 10:23; Gal. 1:10, 6:2, 10; Eph. 4:15, 29-31; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:9; II Tim. 2:16; Tit. 2:7; Heb. 10:25; Jas. 2:15-16, 3:13-14, 5:13; I Pet. 1:22; I Jn. 3:18; III Jn. 1:5; Jude 1:16, ETC.

See also: Body Life, and Love

Marriage & Family

Our materials are noticeably absent on this subject, because much modern information on this subject is extrapolated from Scripture by surveys, research and life experience. However, I recognize great information when I see it, and having had **Gary Smalley** as my college Sunday School teacher (see his materials for reference), another excellent source is my current pastor's (Jarrett Stephens) "**Life Together**" series viewable through www.Prestonwood.org (April-May, 2013).

FEAR GOD

An honest and serious respect for God is essential for successful Christian growth. An attitude that God is there to play Santa Claus for my *every* desire, or that we know He'll always forgive us so "better to ask forgiveness than permission," or **any other** attitude **trivializing** the position of God in our lives is spiritually detrimental and displeasing to God. His rightful place is to be **PRIORITY ONE** in our lives. (Col. 1:18)

Please read the following verses, and **assess** your own *concept* of how the Bible teaches that God is both "**abba**" (i.e., "daddy") and "**Father:**"

KEY VERSES

Praise the LORD! How **blessed** is the man who fears the LORD, Who greatly *delights* in His commandments. **(Ps. 112:1)**

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not **lean** on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; **Fear the LORD** and turn away from evil. **(Pv. 3:5-7)**

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; *Fools* despise wisdom and instruction. **(Pv. 1:7)**

"The fear of the LORD is to **hate evil**; Pride and arrogance and the evil way, And the perverted mouth, I hate. **(Pv. 8:13)** [Christians are supposed to hate sometimes!]

So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with **fear and trembling**; for it is **God** who is at work *in you*, both to will and to work for His good pleasure. **(Phil. 2:12-13)**

The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: **fear God** and keep His commandments, because this applies to *every person*. For God will bring *every act* to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil. **(Ecc. 12:13-14)**

See also: Ps. 36:1, 111:10, 112:1; Pv. (5:21), 23:17; II Cor. 5:14; Eph. 5:21; Phil. 2:12, Heb. 12:28; I Pet. 1:17; Rev. 14:7, ETC.

HUMILITY

A major component for spiritual success is HUMILITY. Acknowledging that we can do nothing “good” in **our own abilities** is the beginning of a victorious Christian life. The Bible teaches that pride goes before destruction, but if we will humble ourselves, **God WILL exalt us**. It is not evil to desire the *glory* God offers, but it is impossible to receive without going about it God’s way. (Jn. 15:5; II Cor. 3:5; Isa. 64:6; Rom. 3:10-11)

Paul was likely one of the two greatest believers of all Christendom (Billy Graham being a close second, *in my opinion*), and his success was due in large part to his **continued humble dependence** upon God. He had every reason to trust in himself, or to be spiritually prideful about all that God had done through him, but he was *wise enough* to not allow that to happen (plus there was that nagging “thorn in the flesh” to ensure his *humility*).

How can we expect to **do great things** for God if we think we are something, or don’t realize that it is only what God does in and through us that *matters*? Please review the following verses, and I think you’ll agree that humility is *essential* to *victorious* Christian living:

KEY VERSES

And such *confidence* we have through Christ *toward God*. **Not that we are adequate** in ourselves to consider **anything** as coming from ourselves, but our adequacy is from God, **(II Cor. 3:4-5)**

“Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch **cannot** bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for **apart from Me you can do nothing**.” **(Jn. 15:4-5)**

But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, “**GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.**” Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to gloom. **Humble yourselves** in the *presence* of the Lord, and **He will exalt you**. **(Jas. 4:6-9)**

You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for **GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE**. **Humble yourselves**, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that **He may exalt you** at the *proper time*, **casting all your anxiety** upon Him, because He cares for you. Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your **faith**, knowing that the same experiences of *suffering* are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. **(I Pet. 5:5-9)** [Prayer and faith-walking go *hand-in-hand*, and are expressions of **humility** and victory against the devil]

And sitting down, He called the twelve and said[^] to them, “If anyone *wants* to be **first**, he shall be **last** of all, and servant of all.” **(Mk. 9:35)**

Pride goes before **destruction**, And a haughty spirit before **stumbling**. It is better to be of a humble spirit with the **lowly**, Than to divide the **spoil** with the proud. **(Pv. 16:18-19)**

See also: Mt. 20:16; Phil. 2:1-11; Jas. 1:21, ETC.

FASTING?

Some Christians believe that fasting is a **short-cut** or '**fast-track**' to blessings or spirituality. **If and when** God *leads* you to fast, it is very *significant* and useful for your walk with Him. But to elevate fasting *too* highly, use it as a way to try to “force” God to give you favor, or allow it to create a *holier-than-thou* spiritual pride is an **abuse** of the holy practice of a **God-led** fast.

A **true, spiritual** “fast” is NOT just prayer and withholding food—it is the sacrifice of helping the poor and homeless (among *other* righteous deeds listed—**Is. 58:6-9**)

See: Mt. 6:16-18; Mk. 2:19-20; Ac. 13:3, 14:23, etc.

PRAISE?

Praising God is important. In fact, “there are more Bible verses on praise than prayer” (Jack Graham, 9/25/16). **Praise is** commending, complementing or *bragging upon* God, and is very closely related to “*worship*”—which means to attribute value and worth to.

However, praise is not a secret passageway to spirituality. God desires His children to praise and brag about Him—His abilities, deeds, character, gifts and blessings—but a life lived in the flesh all week with *extreme emotional singing and shouting on Sunday morning* is **not** a life lived in *proper* understanding of *biblical praise*.

In my opinion—and feel free to prove me wrong, with Scripture—the **greatest praise** God is seeking is a **life lived in holiness** that brings Him the greatest *glory*. After all, He is not needy, and does not live *waiting* for us to brag on Him. Praise is *possibly* something that blesses us even more, for we consider **HIS greatness and majesty**.

Saying the phrase “praise the Lord” is not *in itself* praise, though it *can* be. Praise starts with an **attitude** of heart. It is a **great activity** to engage in, but do it biblically, unto God, and not for *selfish* gain.

See: Ps. 106:1 and a huge portion of the Book of Psalms; Mt. 21:6; Rom. 14:11, 15:9, Heb. 2:12, 13:15

See also: Body Life

THE OBEDIENCE OF FAITH

A **MAJOR** “key” to a *victorious* Christian life is **obedience to the faith God gives you**. Romans uses the phrase, “*the obedience of faith,*” and I will *distinguish* it from either **obedience to all rules right now** or you’re ‘living in sin’ (“**law**”) and **no obedience at all** (lawlessness or “**license**”). James refers to our obedience as **faith working with our works**. (Rom. 1:5; Jas. 2:22).

We believers need to learn to be **completely** and **immediately obedient** to the leadings of the Lord, through Scripture and prayer, by God’s power, with experience, over time.

See: Faith-Walking, Grace and Spirit-Filled and Led

WORSHIP & FELLOWSHIP

See: Body Life, and Gospel Tract Page 2

Worship is a lifestyle, more than just something we do.
It is an attitude that we carry with us day by day... and it is fueled by corporate worship.

-Dr. Jack Graham

GIVING & USE OF MONEY

American Church-Going Believer...

DID YOU KNOW the Bible taught the following things about money?

There are *at least* **five significant sins** people can engage surrounding their acquisition and use of MONEY:

- ▶ Idolatry (I Cor. 5:11, 6:9; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 22:15)
- ▶ Love of money (Lk. 16:14; Heb. 13:5; I Tim. 6:10; 3:3—of pastors; II Tim. 3:2)
- ▶ Greed (Lk 12:15; Rom. 1:29; Col. 3:5; Pv. 11:6)
- ▶ Pride (Jer. 9:23; I Tim. 6:17; I Jn. 2:16)
- ▶ Selfishness (Pv. 23:6; Jas. 3:14, 16; Phil. 2:3; Rom. 2:8)

Many American Christians seek for a status God says makes it **hard** for lost people to *enter heaven* (Mt. 19:23-24), and many WASP's are unwilling for God's will to NOT include their being **rich**, despite evidence it could be in His will (Pv. 30:8):

- **Jesus** (Mt. 8:20, etc.)
- The **apostles** (at least temporarily)—(Mt. 10:9; Lk. 10:4, 22:35)
- **Peter** (Ac. 3:6)
- **Paul** had money at times (Ac. 24:26) and was poor at times (II Cor. 11:27; 6:10; Phil. 4:11-13)

Ever heard the “joke” (truth), “Lord I surrender to you ‘*fully*,’ but please don’t send me to the BOONIES for *foreign missions*”? I guess **Mother Theresa** was a *financial fool*, under that way of thinking.

You Can't Take it With You

(I Tim. 6:7-10) For we have **brought nothing into the world**, so we cannot take anything out of it either. And if we have food and covering, with these we shall **be content**. But **those who want to get rich** fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which **plunge** men into ruin and destruction. For the **love of money** is a root of all sorts of evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith, and **pierced themselves** with many a pang.

'He With The Most Toys in the End' Is NOT the Winner

(Lk. 12:15) And He said to them, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of **greed**; for **not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions**."

(Pv. 23:4-5) **Do not weary yourself to gain wealth**, Cease from your consideration of it. When you set your eyes on it, it is **gone**. For wealth certainly makes itself **wings**, like an *eagle* that flies toward the *heavens*.

The Love of Money

(Heb. 13:5) Let your character be **free from the love of money**, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,"

The Value of Money

(Pv. 16:16) How much better it is to get **wisdom** than gold! And to get **understanding** is to be chosen above silver.

- ▶ Righteousness is greater than riches. (Pv. 11:28)
- ▶ Wealth is **deceitful** (Mt. 13:22), and riches often *distract* us from righteousness (Lk. 8:14), which is why they have been called 'unrighteous.' (Lk. 16:11)
- ▶ The rich occupy a position of **HUMILIATION**; the poor an *exalted* one. (Jas. 1:9-11)
- ▶ The rich are held hostage to their money, as **life's ransom**. (Pv. 13:8)
- ▶ Faith in money (vs. or greater than God) is *evil*. (Ps. 52:7; Ps. 49:5-6)
- ▶ Hoarding wealth **harms** the hoarder. (Ecc. 5:13)
- ▶ It is evil to seek to '**get rich quick**.' (Pv. 28:20)

Ambition

[Aspirers:] (Jas. 4:13-17). Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow, we shall go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are just a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. Instead, you ought to say, "**If the Lord wills**, we shall live and also do this or that." But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil. Therefore, to one who knows the right thing to do, and does not do it, to him it is *sin*.

[Achievers:] (Jas. 5:1-6). Come now, **you rich, weep and howl for your miseries which are coming upon you**. Your riches have rotted and your garments have become moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver have rusted; and their rust will be a witness against you and will consume your flesh like fire. It is in the last days that you have stored up your treasure! Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and **which has been withheld by you**, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the Lord of Sabbath. **You have lived luxuriously on the earth and led a life of wanton pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.** You have condemned and put to death the righteous man; he does not resist you.

(I Cor. 7:29-32a) but this I say, brethren, the time has been shortened, so that from now on those who have wives should be as though they had none; and those who weep, as though they did not weep; and those who rejoice, as though they did not rejoice; and those who buy, as though they did not possess; and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the world is passing away. But I want you to be free from concern.

Worldliness: The Devil can Make you Rich!

(I Jn. 2:15-17) Do not love the world, nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the **lust of the eyes** and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. And the world is passing away, and also its lusts; but the one who does the will of God abides forever.

(Jas. 1:27) Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to **keep oneself unstained by the world**.

(Mt. 4:8-10) Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory; and he said to Him, 'All these things I will give You, if You fall down and worship me.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go, Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'

► Using the *reasoning* of Mt. 6:19-34, if you did not acquire your wealth **obeying verse 33**, God did NOT (directly or specifically) *give you* that wealth Your flesh/sin nature did.

See also: Charismatic Theology: 100% Wealth

Contentment: Not the Absence of Ambition But the Lack of Lust

(Phil. 4:11-13) Not that I speak from *want*, for I have **learned to be content** in *whatever* circumstances I am. I know how to get along with **humble means**, and I also know how to live in **prosperity**; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being **filled** and going **hungry**, both of having abundance and suffering need. I can DO ALL THINGS through Christ who strengthens me.

See also: Heb. 13:5; I Tim. 6:8

Foolishness: The Fool is Never Satisfied With His Riches (& Workaholism is a Sin)

(Ecc. 4:8) There was a certain man without a dependent, having neither a son nor a brother, yet there was no end to all his labor. Indeed, his **eyes were not satisfied with riches** and he never asked, 'And for whom am I laboring and depriving myself of pleasure?' This too is vanity and it is a **grievous task**.

Fulfillment: The Rich Are Getting All Theirs in This Life

(Lk. 6:24) But **woe** to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full.

(Lk. 1:53) HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS; AND SENT AWAY THE RICH EMPTY-HANDED.

Ultimate Justice: God Will Even it Out in the End

(Lk. 16:19-31) Now there was a certain rich man, and he habitually dressed in purple and fine linen, gaily living in splendor every day. And a certain poor man named Lazarus was laid at his gate, covered with sores, and longing to be fed with the crumbs which were falling from the rich man's table; besides, even the dogs were coming and licking his sores. Now it came about that the poor man died and he was carried away by the angels to Abraham's bosom; and the rich man also died and was buried. And in Hades he lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and saw[^] Abraham far away, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried out and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool off my tongue; for I am in agony in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Child, remember that during your life you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus bad things; but now he is being comforted here, and you are in agony.' 'And besides all this, between us and you there is a great chasm fixed, in order that those who wish to come over from here to you may not be able, and that none may cross over from there to us.' And he said, 'Then I beg you, Father, that you send him to my father's house—for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' But Abraham said[^], 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them.' But he said, 'No, Father Abraham, but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent!' But he said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.'"

(Lk. 6:24) "But woe to you who are rich, for **you are receiving your comfort in full**.

Other

(Ecc. 9:11) "I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, and the battle is not to the *warriors*, and neither is bread to the **wise**, nor wealth to the discerning, nor favor to men of *ability*; for time and chance overtake them all."

(Pv. 10:4) “Poor is he who works with a *negligent hand*, but the hand of the diligent makes rich.”

Are you glad you *learned* these things, or is the flesh frustrated by CONVICTION at such knowledge?

See: Mt. 6:19-34; Lk. 6:20, ~16:25; II Cor. 9:6-7 (essentially all of chapters 8-9); Phil. 4:11-13; II Th. 3:10; I Tim. 6:17-19; II Tim. 3:2; Jas. 4:13-16, ~I Jn. 2:15, 17, ETC.

THE BIBLE ON RICHES

Abraham and David were wealthy; while Jesus and Peter were quite poor. So is it always God’s will for Christians to be rich (as Charismatics claim), or, God forbid for the average American, could He ever desire His children to be poor, though never so much that they beg for bread (Ps. 37:25)? American Christians so love the idea of being rich, there’s even a joke in church circles about people fearing God’s will because He may send them to the boondocks. The issue is—have you submitted your income expectations to Christ’s lordship? I suspect, with carnality rates at the 90% range, most American Christians would have to answer in the negative in this very important area of their lives (I Jn. 2:15-17; you cannot serve God and mammon—Mt. 6:24).

The answer to this question lies in what is God’s specific will for your life. You can (wrongly) assume that because you were raised wealthy, or all your peers are, or since you live in the wealthiest nation on earth, God would understand and want you to keep living, as the civil law puts it, at the standard to which you are accustomed. Perhaps that wrongful assumption is why research indicates more than 95% of American ministers never seem to “feel” led to the foreign mission field, but choose to minister in North America—a region where Christianity has historically had its largest stronghold, and where there is a huge glut and excess of churches and pastors, compared to the areas needing the gospel the most, known as the 10/40 Window.

As justification for believers seeking riches, I have heard believers use the following statements—as if they were Bible verses themselves:

1. It’s Not a Sin to be Rich. It certainly *can* be—a fact they never biblically acknowledge (I Tim. 6:10; Ecc. 5:10). Supporting a belief in riches as all-American, and even “Christian” (i.e., a biblical virtue and ideal), they also often sugar-coat any moral issues with the *TRUE* statement that, “it’s not how much money you have, but how much money has you.” It *CAN* be about the amount—if God, for some reason, wants you middle- or lower-incomed. In that light, isn’t it ‘funny’ how American pastors always feel “led” to minister in the wealthiest country in the world, and always feel “a call” to move up to a larger church and/or city? Why do so few “feel” a call to ‘downgrade,’ or go into international missions, and rejected that American upgrading feeling?

2. Abraham & David were Very Rich. They *were* very rich, by the standard of their day, but they were NOT wealthy to the degrees many Americans strive for and achieve, they used their riches biblically (i.e.; Generous in helping others) and money was NOT an idol to them—they truly served God as number one in their lives, so He—not the devil—did make them rich. He can still do so today, but I suspect the majority of wealthy American Christians were not made that way by God, but by self-effort, my proof being that 90% of them are carnal (i.e., not totally submitted and committed to God’s will), thereby having only one other spiritual source for those accomplishments, as they achieved their “success” by serving mammon above God.

3. **You Can't Bless Others if You Have Nothing to Bless Them With.** This pious-sounding 1-liner is often used as an excuse to pursue wealth, while its adherents give paltry percentages to help others, and neglect what God can do with even a little, as in the multiplication of the fish and loaves or the widow's mite.
4. **You Have a 'Poverty Complex.'** Are they now biblical psychiatrists diagnosing one's honest assessment of the weight of biblical evidence praising the non-lazy poor and so often decrying the arrogant rich as a psychosis?
5. **'Wealth is in the Atonement'** (i.e., guaranteed as part of salvation). After all, as one so-called pastor claimed, Jesus would be driving a Bentley were He here today (even though He once stated, "foxes have holes, birds have nests, but the Son of God has nowhere to lay His head.")
6. **God Provides Us "All Things to Enjoy" (I Tim. 6:17).** Yes he does, in general, but He does not give everything there is to own wanting us to have and enjoy them all, personally, as that is the idol of materialism. I Jn. 3:15-17 says a Christian is not to love the world (sexual and material lust, and their associated pride) as we are 'in the world, but not of it, and I Cor. 7:29-31 says that it is time for those who have things, as believers, to live as though they did not. If this verse was written nearly two millennia ago, how much more applicable would it be today? You never hear that verse espoused on in a modern church sermon, do you?
7. **The Protestant Work Ethic (Col. 3:23-24).** The argument goes that victory/achievement and hard work in America is exhibited by rewarding the best, brightest and hardest-working with money, so, under the Protestant Work Ethic, I show myself God-honoring in working hard to provide for my family by your seeing how wealthy that ethic has made me (even though workaholicism is a sin of idolatry). I even heard a fellow law student (not a Christian, to my knowledge) once claim that his proof that he would be the best lawyer would be in his being the wealthiest lawyer, because the more he got for his clients in settlements, the more he would be paid. Any positive way of spinning our sins to make them look righteous, we'll do, when hooked by the lure of filthy mammon (a Bible term NOT calling money bad, but only bad when wrongly used or prioritized).
8. **Republican Party & the Religious Right.** Politically, many WASPs (white Anglo-Saxon Protestants) are members of a political party that extols wealth-building, but rarely balances that aspiration with God's emphasis for the rich—generously giving back. To be in good political standing, therefore, many in the Church are in bed with the philosophy of worldliness, in order to keep up with their social peers—not the party whose emphasis has always been for government to protect the weakest among us (though I am NOT endorsing either party 100%, as our book, Dumb as a Donkey, Fat as an Elephant proves—there certainly are many biblical reasons to support—and oppose—parts of both parties (Ex.: anti-abortion and homosexuality in the GOP).

CONCLUSIONS

God has commanded our focus to remain on the things above (Col. 3:1-4), and not to be into the world of materialism and monetarism, yet even pastors often poo poo these verses as only meaning don't idolize money (if ever addressed at all). One may ask, who is to say where to draw 'the line?' The answer is simple—The Holy Spirit, working with and through the person's conscience and the word of God, through prayer and walking by faith in (and totally committed to) Him. It's a matter of priority, intensity of desire (i.e., idolatry, or not), one's motives and intentions, sometimes it's the amount of goods/assets/dollars, one's upbringing can play a part, and it is especially the answer to the question: what specifically has God—not society—lead you to own?

Yes, we Americans suffer the idolatry of the love of money sin, at a huge cost to our spiritual power witness to the world (Rev. 3:17-19), and there is a cost to be paid for our trying—

against biblical instruction—to “balance” serving and loving God with serving and loving money (an unbiblical ‘balance’ which cannot be done).

UPDATE

A brief summary of *insightful* thoughts offered by MY pastor (in recent days)...

- ▶ God blesses you with wealth in order to (*generously*) bless others.
- ▶ **ALL** possessions are owned by God—we are *just* stewards. (Deut. 10:14; Levit. 25:23, I Chron. 29:11-12; Job 4:11; Ps. 50:10-11; Hag. 2:8; I Cor. 6:19-20)
- ▶ Perhaps the poor are ‘blessed’ because their *circumstances* **require** them to **trust God**.
—Jarrett Stephens (paraphrased)

ON “TITHING”

Contrary to common teaching, the “**tithe**” served as the Jewish national tax under their *theocracy*, and is NOT the **New Testament standard** for giving. II Cor. 8-9 clearly describes the Christian’s giving standard(s).

“...the proportion was clearly specified and every Israelite was obligated to bring to the Lord approximately 22 percent of his yearly income. In contrast, the New Testament merely says ‘as God has prospered him.’ This may mean 8, 12, 20, 50 percent—any percent, depending on the individual case.” Balancing the Christian Life, p. 86, by Dr. Charles C. Ryrie (Moody Press: Chicago), 1969

Someone once told me, “yeah, but if you don’t set a goal, you’re sure to hit it,” to which I *should* have replied—set **hearing the voice of God** as your giving goal.

I formally request a qualified Old Testament *scholar* to research what percentage of the Jewish “tithe” Israelis put toward helping the widow, orphan, homeless, sick and poor, as compared to funding priest wages and temple buildings (and compare average priest and Levite wages to average mega church pastor salaries). I suspect **the percentage going to the ‘lowly’ will be significantly higher** than in the average American evangelical church, as the Jews (as are we) were commanded to help the down-and-out—and *did* (especially their own).

For more on this subject, See: Dr. Charles C. Ryrie’s work (above), or review the following article by one of my *original* ‘disciples’ at thebiblepage.org/biblesays/tithing.shtml.

Note: If you **REALLY** want to ‘give to God,’ support **evangelists** (and not the famous ones—they’re doing fine) and **para-church** members who truly disciple--like *The Navigators* or *Campus Crusade*—and **give some to the poor**, even if you receive no tax credit for doing so.

BODY LIFE (i.e., True New Testament “Church”)

See: Body Life

DISCIPLESHIP 'PROGRAM' HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

The 20 Key Memory Verses:

Mt. 6:19-21, 7:7-8, 28:18-20; Mk. 11:22-24; Jn. 3:16; Rom. 3:23, 6:23, 8:37-38, 12:1-2; I Cor. 10:13; Phil. 4:6-8; Col. 3:1-4; II Tim. 2:15, 3:16-17; Heb. 11:1-6; Jas. 1:2-4; I Jn. 1:9, 5:11-13; Ps. 119:9-11; Pv. 3:5-7

DISCIPLESHIP OVERVIEW

1. **Discipleship**. Living as a life-long learner of Christ is the best way to live, becoming more like Him in your thoughts, desires and actions daily.
2. **The Gospel** (“good news”). The message of Jesus is the greatest story ever told. (Jn. 14:6; Ac. 4:12; Rom. 3:23, 6:23; I Cor. 15:1-4a)
3. **Salvation Requirements**. Faith in Christ is what it takes for anyone to go to heaven, and not hell. (Jn. 1:12, 3:16; Rom. 10:13; II Tim. 1:12)
4. **Eternal Security**. God has saved you forever, and wants to know you until you meet face-to-face. (Jn. 10:27-29; I Jn. 2:25, 5:11-15)
5. **Quiet Time: Prayer & Bible Study**. Meet with God 10 minutes a day, by doing two things:
Bible Study. Effective Bible study is God speaking to you. (Jn. 8:31-32; II Tim. 2:15, 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12; I Pet. 2:1-2; Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:1-3)
6. **Prayer**. Effective prayer is you speaking to God. (Lk. 6:12; Jn. 14:12-14; Eph. 3:20-21; Deut. 4:29)
7. **Faith-Walking**. You live the Christian life by complete trust in God’s leading and living through you. (Mk. 11:22-24; Rom. 10:17; II Cor. 4:18, 5:7-10; Gal. 2:20; Phil. 4:13; Heb. 11:1, 6; I Jn. 5:3-4)
8. **Identity & Inheritance (in Christ)**. You are a new person and have a new set of blessings (and tools) to live out your walk with Jesus. (II Cor. 5:17; Eph. 1:3-14; Phm. 1:6; II Pet. 1:2-4)
9. **Priorities & Commitment**. God rewards (in this life and the next) following Him. Think from the grave backwards. (Mt. 6:19-21; Mk. 12:30-31; Lk. 9:23-25, 12:15; Rom. 12:1-2; I Cor. 15:10)
10. **God’s Will**. God has a wonderful plan for your life. Regularly discover what it is. (Jn. 10:10; Phil. 4:6-8; Col. 3:1-4; I Jn. 2:15-17; I Pet. 5:6-10; Ps. 37:3-6; Pv. 3:5-7)
11. **Spirit-Filled (Grace)**. If and when you sin, ask for forgiveness and re-filling with God’s Spirit. (Rom. 8:14-15; I Th. 5:16-19; Jas. 1:25; I Jn. 1:9)
12. **Trials, Temptation & Suffering**. Life is not a bowl full of cherries, but God prepares and empowers you for the tough times. (I Cor. 10:13; Jas. 1:2-4, 13-16; Isa. 40:28-31)
13. **Spiritual Warfare**. The devil is always on the prowl, but Jesus with you is always far stronger. (II Cor. 2:14, 10:3-5; Eph. 6:10-18; I Th. 5:8-9; I Jn. 4:4)
14. **Doctrine I**: There are some basic concepts that making life with God (and in His Word/Bible) more readily understandable.
The Triune God. There is but one God, Who expresses Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit (i.e., the Trinity).
 - 1] **God the Father**. Our God is all-knowing, all-present and all-powerful.
 - 2] **God the Son**. Jesus was 100% God and 100% man.
 - 3] **God the Holy Spirit**. The Holy Spirit indwells, then infills the believer.
 - 4] **The Bible**. The Bible was 100% perfect in its original form. (Mt. 4:4)
 - 5] **Salvation & Sanctification**. God has saved you (i.e., salvation), and now He wants to

grow you up in Him (i.e., sanctification). (Jn. 17:3; II Cor. 7:1; Gal. 5:22-25; Ps. 119:9-11)

15. Doctrine II:

6] **Mankind.** God made man male and female, to live in fellowship with Him and to responsibly rule on earth. (Rom. 5:8)

7] **Sin.** All men are sinners. We are born that way (since Adam), and hell is our rightful end, without Christ.

8] **The Devil, Angels & Demons.** The devil is a fallen angel with power, seeking to destroy believers (along with his demonic armies). God's angels are always there, assisting Him in protecting us (i.e., believers)

9] **The Church.** Regularly participate in (and with) your eternal family, the Church (Ac. 2:41-47, 4:32-37; 4:11-13)

10] **Prophecy.** Christ is coming back soon.

16. **Spiritual Gifts.** God has uniquely gifted you—find out with and for what (See: spiritual gifts inventories online).

17. **Spiritual Service.** Have a ministry. Do something for God to advance His kingdom here on earth.

18. **Evangelism.** Tell people about Jesus. (Mt. 4:19, 9:37-38, 28:18-20; Jn. 4:34-36; Rom. 1:16; Pv. 11:30)

Homework. *Please read:*

My Heart Christ's Home (by Robert Boyd Munger)

How To Be Filled With the Holy Spirit (by Bill Bright, Campus Crusade for Christ)

26. Doctrinal Statement

My Denominational Affiliation(s):

I am *proud* to have regularly attended the following churches (either as a frequent guest or regular **member**) the past 30 years! **Thank MOST of you, *pastors***, for your outstanding wisdom and influences in my life:

Mild Charismatic (Southern Baptist): Highland Baptist Church, Waco, TX (an **excellent** church!)

Southern Baptist (Conservative): Second Baptist Church, Houston, TX (**before** it became *church-as-a-business* in the mid 1990's—**See:** YouTube, search “Church Conflicts” (possible future video)

First Baptist Church, Houston, TX (still a godly church)

Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, TX (proud of as of changes secured by 2012—**See:** Appendix/“Church Conflicts”

Bible Church (Independent): Cypress Bible Church, Cypress, TX (ex-pastor later was revealed to myself as a partial hypocrite on *personal evangelism*—**See:** YouTube, search “Church Conflicts” (possible future video)

Note: This list will likely never be added to, as **I will not become a church member again** unless a church is committed to evangelizing all near their building, discipling all their members, getting their 5% who evangelize to a much higher percentage and implementing body life.

I have long said I am 95% Southern Baptist, 93% Bible Church and 35-40% Charismatic. Many of these denominations' views overlap, which is why the numbers don't add up to 100%, but still make sense:

Where I disagree with the Southern Baptist Convention: Tithing, Lordship Salvation (and their definition or ‘repentance’ only as a U-turn in direction; See: Lordship Salvation Errors), churchianity (as we define it on this website), and their traditional opposition to dancing and all alcohol drinking (and saying all gambling, even in moderation, is evil—a sin). **See also:** Our ‘Doctrinal Statement’ section (immediately following).

Where I disagree with the Bible Church: Any adherence to churchianity, any lack of emotional compassion (or friendliness) for intellectual academia, and **See:** Our ‘On Dispensationalism’ paragraph in the Charismatic Theology Errors (in the Appendix).

Where I disagree with Charismatics: Any adherence to churchianity, and **See:** Charismatic Theology Errors.

Doctrinal Statement.

In an effort at expediency, efficiency and not reinventing the wheel—at least for the time being, I refer you to the **Baptist Faith and Message (2000) Doctrinal Statement** as a quite adequate representation of my *personal views*. ONLY where I would **add** things for accuracy, emphasis or specificity, or where I might rarely, slightly **disagree** have I noted any opinions of my own which differ from those stated. (**See:** www.sbc.net/bfm/bfm2000.asp)

The Scriptures.

I would add the term “inerrancy:” i.e., the Bible, in the original writings, was accurately and exactly—word-for-word—what God wanted written, and is His divinely-inspired Scriptures and revelation.

Salvation.

The “Lordship Salvation” being presented here I completely disagree with as an inaccurate portrayal of the Scriptural requirements for salvation (vs. for discipleship/sanctification).

“Lord” I will take as deity/God/divinity in this rendering. (**See:** Lordship Salvation Errors). The concept usually means commit to Jesus as Master of your life for the rest of your life, which is a wonderful decision for someone to make—and all believers should (and some people do it at salvation; Ex.: Paul)—but is **not** what I believe the Scripture teaches as a requirement to receive a **free gift** (as opposed to being a requirement for discipleship/sanctification). It offends my innermost sensibilities to think that I could decide to be holy and live holy without God inside me making that desire and willingness happen—100% His work—I simply let Him do His miracle!

The same goes for my disagreement with the definition and/or description of ‘repentance.’ which is accurately interpreted as “a change of mind.” I will take the words stated as a positional turning from a **condition** of being totally **sinful**—i.e., a sinner—to an opposite position of being totally forgiven—i.e., a saint. Considering “repentance” as turning from being a sinner to having a reliant trust in Christ for eternal salvation I can agree with as a usage of that term.

“Commitment...as Lord,” as Baptists usually define these terms, I do not agree with as a salvific requirement. I will take the “commitment” as a commitment/decision to sincerely trust Christ to entirely and graciously save you, based on His promises and performed by the Spirit’s influence and power in your life at the point you make that decision.

God’s Purpose and Grace.

“Free agency of man” referring to “free will” is acceptable in all matters **non-spiritual**. As to man being free to choose God apart from the Spirit’s calling (or, contrarily, that calling **forcing** man’s will God’s direction), I disagree with entirely. God prepares and changes our heart to want to receive Christ, but we still must do so (in His convicting power). **See:** Calvinism and Arminianism Errors

The Church.

I wish a sentence on “Body Life” would be added, but it’s probably too much to ask for people to even **know** what I’m talking about.

The Lord’s Day.

Church services can legitimately be held on other than Sunday (Ex.: Saturday night services, which **I** attend), which appears to be *precluded* by this language. (Rom. 14:5-7)

Last Things.

This paragraph is **quite** undefined and non-specific, and there is no commitment to a pre-Tribulational Rapture, pre-Millennial return of Christ, or **MANY** other detailed events other than a general return of Christ “in the future.” I understand it’s hard to get agreement, but at least **identify options** upon which we may differ. Even any possible distinction between a Rapture and 2nd coming is ambiguously blurred or obfuscated.

Stewardship.

I’m thankful the term “tithing ” was left out, and the document stays with a more accurate description of New Testament *giving*.

War and Peace.

I wish a phrase would be added extolling, as does Ecclesiastes, that there is a proper time for both **war and peace**. This fact has been sadly *omitted*, and could easily lead to the impression that Baptists are against all necessary wars. (Ecc. 3:8)

27. APPENDIX A: Doctrinal Problems (that Can Negatively Affect Evangelism)

Doctrinally, there are **4 major theological movements** which, despite having some *advantageous* qualities, can also have a **negative impact** on COMPLETION of the Great Commission, for which reason the following refutations are offered.

Note: In constructively and biblically criticizing these various doctrines, it is not intended to anger their advocates, and is not to say they don't have good (and biblical) aspects to them—which the author will point out. It is for the purpose of being biblically accurate, for false understanding of God's word leads to a less quality Christian life, at best, and degrees spiritual delusion, at worst. Also, our focus on correcting the error often does not lend itself to giving proper percentage emphases on these positive aspects, as the need, here, is to determine truth—not to be a bragging place for all that is good within Christendom, to the neglect of bad, harmful and dangerous barriers to success in evangelism and the Christian life. If all one wants is praise and positivity, you will not get very far in your walk with Christ—unless your lifestyle and doctrine is *perfect*!

27A. “Lordship Salvation” Errors

PASTOR WARNING

All pastors who adhere to the ‘Lordship Salvation’ *heresy* beware—the **blood of those for whom Christ died will be eternally on your hands** if any reject Christ because YOU offered a *false* Gospel by focusing the Gospel message on man and his will, not on God and Christ, and the all-sufficient gift of salvation offered through Jesus Christ, by grace. The issue man faces is NOT whether one is half, whole or any other percentage committed to live for Jesus the rest of their life, but our *desperate* need for our sins to be forgiven, lest hell intervene before we allow God to do ALL that saving work, by sincere, whole-hearted faith in Him so to do (NOT mere intellectual assent to a set of facts). Absent God's Spirit's conviction, this decision will *never* be made, and our words serve as merely the accurate but ‘*dead*’ words of men. You are getting the **cart before the horse** (considering the aftermath of salvation as a *prerequisite* for salvation), to the DAMNATION of *many* a pitied soul (and I would have been one of them, had you been my preacher at age eight, ‘*God forbid*’). God holds those teaching His word to a higher standard of accuracy for their teaching words (Jas. 3).

Danger(s): Teaching a wrong view of God's requirements for salvation *could* lead lost people to hell (and that's too huge a danger to ignore), as well as the fact that anytime you are involved in false doctrine, the devil has gained some victory in your life (or at least your thinking).

Background: After losing a ministry career over this issue (**See:** Church Conflicts), I started pursuing a Ph.D. at Southwestern Seminary to more authoritatively address the subject, but had to stop as I couldn't afford it at the time. You can consider this my unofficial thesis, and if these materials help people's understanding and walk, it's more beneficial than any academic document could have been.

INTRODUCTION.

Boiled down to the core of the issue, is **sincere faith in God** to eternally save you through Christ's death on the cross *enough* to be SURE one will go to heaven (1 so-called "step"), or must a lost person:

- 1) "Repent" of (when defined as "U-turn from") their sins,
 - 2) Receive Jesus (i.e., trust Christ), and,
 - 3) Totally surrender (i.e., commit to living for God the remainder of their life)? (3 steps).
- Said another way, is salvation a *free gift* or something we qualify or work for, or earn? Is there *anything* a human can do to achieve salvation, or must he solely let God do all the saving, by faith?

The difference between these two viewpoints (referred to as **Saviorhood Salvation** and **Lordship Salvation**) could not be more important, as a wrongful message constitutes a false Gospel, and could endanger the hearer's eternity (if their response is *less* that God required, or they refuse to make it because the *false* offer is more than God requires and they're willing to agree to).

If one defines "repentance" as a commitment to turn away from a sinful lifestyle, do humans have the ability to *cease* sinning, and even if they could—perfectly—that decision alone *wouldn't* save, as they still have unforgiven sins prior to their decision to be perfect thereafter, and one sin qualifies a person for hell.

If "surrender" is required, that is the greatest "work" a human could offer, and is the beginning step to *all* religions which teach that a life of works earns you salvation. So, neither "repentance" (as commonly defined by Southern Baptists and others) nor "surrendering" save, in and of themselves. Only Jesus saves, and He does so by forgiving us ALL our sins when we trust Him to, and ask Him to live within.

Efforts at merging the two views are intellectually dishonest, though sought with good moral (peace-making) intentions, as 3 only equals 1 when discussing the Trinity. Most Christians have no idea this issue even exists. Many pastors gloss over it (or are ignorant of the distinctions) and try to merge the views by generalizing only where we both agree—that Jesus is the answer to man's need for salvation. Both groups want Christians to live holy lives, and Lordship salvation was nobly, but *wrongly* instituted as an attempt to solve the problem of so many sinfully-living Christians in our churches (90%).

Saviorhooders, on the other hand, believe the Bible teaches salvation is a pure gift of grace, which, over time and with conscious discipling by maturer believers, will result in true believers living committed lives unto God, out of gratitude and thankfulness for all He gave them at salvation (and biblical promises, including heavenly rewards). Saviorhooders also acknowledge the reality that Christians DO sin, and some sin badly—even worse than non-Christians—which is a problem needing a remedy and not to be solved by changing the Gospel's message or requirements, but through growth and discipleship.

Perhaps this issue is best summed up in the fact that salvation is a MIRACLE, and for the human mind to fully understand how receiving a gift can transform a life (manifested by efforts of both the Gift-Giver and recipient, over time), even without *initially* requiring one to commit to such, is spiritually impossible.

Caution: The salvation experience is so personal, you'll rarely if ever question what you were taught. And even if false doctrine was a part of the message, God's Spirit's conviction could have trumped it. Also, human pride can become an issue if one committed their life to living holy as a presumed salvation requirement, where they would never be open to others hearing any lesser requirements—even if biblical.

SOME INITIAL QUESTIONS TO PROMPT YOUR RENEWED THINKING:

1. If men must be life-long totally committed to God in order to qualify for salvation, **a)** have all those nominally committed in our churches lost their salvation?, or **b)** do we assume they are all 'tares'—deceived that they are saved?
2. Relatedly, can we only believe we are saved if we rely on a lifetime of good works to prove that decision to ourselves and others?

As you review the following questions, consider which viewpoint is *more consistent* with the word of God, and only cleave to that which is TRUE.

Lordship and Saviorhood Salvation: The Crux of the Matter

1. Are there **1 or 3** steps man must take in order to get saved? (i.e., **1.** Turn/repent from sinful living, **2.** trust Christ alone, and **3.** total commitment to live for Jesus, ethically, the *rest* of your life **OR** by *contrast*, truly receive Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior, by full and sincere **faith** from the heart in His completely saving you, **forever?**).
2. Is salvation biblically viewed as an event in time (i.e., a point, with **eternal effects**) or a life-long process (i.e., a line), or somewhere in-between ("both/and")?
3. Does the security and assurance of the believer come from the Holy Spirit, at salvation, or by increasingly good works *all your life* as a Christian?
4. What are the proper definitions of "repentance" and "faith" as they pertain to God's *salvation requirements*?
5. Are all sinful-living "claiming" Christians unsaved and deserving our *doubting* their salvation? (i.e., **can Christians be "carnal"/"sinful"/"fleshly"?** Will all true Christians produce **life-long** good works?).
6. Can Saviorhood and Lordship Salvation BOTH be the true Gospel of Jesus Christ (or is one a **false** Gospel, from the devil, even from the *noblest* of Christian men's' intentions?).
7. Is salvation a **free gift** or are there strings attached? It BEING free does not mean we receive it lightly, glibly or disrespectfully!
8. Does true Saviorhood Salvation teach carnality, a 2-step salvation, momentary intellectual assent, and easy believism, as it has been accused of teaching?
9. Are the *requirements* for salvation the same as those for sanctification/discipleship? (i.e., Is the call to salvation the same as the call to live as a disciple as *indistinguishable synonyms*?)
10. Is it biblical, in trying to be a "*peace-maker*," to simply agree with both camps that Christ is man's sin answer, and avoid answering this debate in specificity or taking any position? (i.e., are pastors who alternate, intersperse and otherwise confuse the evangelism invitation and Gospel offering requirements *doing the right thing*, trusting God's conviction will clear it all up, because "God knows the heart?" and they don't want to "rock any boats?").

Note the Lordshippers' emphases:

Man and his will and *deeds*

vs.

Jesus, God, grace, forgiveness, gift, faith, indwelling power of the Spirit and man's sin *nature*.

"Lordshippers require what Saviorhooders inspire."

The '10 Commandments' of 'FREE' Eternal Salvation

(*sarcastically* cumulated as mandatory to a biblically-CONSISTENT "Lordship Salvation" position)

Those who espouse the teaching that the requirements for salvation (i.e., through evangelism) are synonymous with the requirements of sanctification (i.e., discipleship), in order to be **accurate** and **consistent** with the **WHOLE** counsel of God, **MUST** face the fact that **all** of the following commands are **required** in order to receive the 'free' gift they call salvation **under their THEORY**. With these standards, is **ANYONE** on earth saved?

I personally know of *no* Lordship preacher who has sold all he had in order to get saved, and the Bible does NOT say simply a willingness to do so is sufficient. This philosophy teaches a life of **un-peaceful WORKS**, for if you stray much at all, or your fruit is *not good enough*, others (and yourself) can *rightly* and *constantly* **doubt** that you were ever saved.

And if you ever slip, or act **too bad**, can you get re-saved? (Ex.: I Cor. 5:1; I Tim. 1:19; II Tim. 4:10; I Pet. 4:15—action obviously possible, or why else prohibitively warn?; Mt. 24:12; Lk. 18:8; II Tim. 4:3; I Cor. 3:2-4; Heb. 5:12-13; I Cor. 15:34; III Jn. 1:9-10; I Pet. 4:1-3; Rom. 13:12, ETC.).

In Old Testament times, would King *David* have been the equivalent of unsaved OR carnal, when he killed a man and slept with his wife? What about *Moses*, who also slew a man? Finally, we are commanded to take up our cross **DAILY**, as a disciple requirement. Does that mean we are **saved on a day-long** and day-to-day basis till we die? How is salvation a "free" gift with all the following stipulations?:

1. **FAITH**. The only **ONE true condition**, wherein by the grace of God and enabling of His Spirit we ask/allow/rely on Christ to do ALL the saving, due to our totally helpless and sinful condition, wherein we can only offer/'give' God **sin-tainted** deeds. (**Ac. 16:30-31, etc.**)
2. **REPENTANCE**. Defined by Lordshippers as 'a decision to stop sinning or to commit to turning, forsaking or renouncing a sinful lifestyle/way of life/practice of living.' Funny, God Himself repented 37 times in the Old Testament! Better to define it from its grammatical roots, as a 'change of mind.' (**Ac. 17:30, etc.**)
3. **SUBMISSION**. Full commitment/dedication to Christ's Lordship and Mastery of the *entirety* of one's earthly life, **in order to qualify** to inherit a "**free**" *eternal gift*. This involves three main facets:
 - a. **Deny Yourself**. (**Mk. 8:34, etc.**)
 - b. **Take Up/Carry Your Cross (DAILY)**. (**Lk. 9:23**)
 - c. **Follow Christ**. (**Mk. 8:35, etc.**)
 - d. **Other**: Count the Cost, Hate Your Family and Friends (compared to God), Hate and Lose your Life/Die to 'Self.' (**Lk. 9:24, 14:26-31; Jn. 12:24-25; See also: Lk. 9:57-60 and Mt. 8:19-22**).
4. **GOOD WORKS**. "Faith **PLUS**" works or obedience, as *inevitable* fruit, or else that

‘faith’ was not faith at all, or else one’s salvation was lost. (Mt. 7:15-23, etc.; See also: Lk. 10:25-28).

5. **BAPTISM.** Water–**not Spirit**–baptism, as a requirement for ‘washing away’ sins (not simply as a symbol or memorial of spiritual washing). That really would be a miracle for WATER to erase a spiritual (vs. physical) thing! (Ex.: Ac. 22:16; Mk. 16:16)
6. **CONFESSION.** Public, *verbal expression* of your personal experience of saving faith in Christ. ‘Unless you express it, you don’t possess it’ goes the mantra, even though God knows your heart. Confession is a natural outgrowth of faith–not a synonym. (Rom. 10:8-11; Mt. 10:32-33)
7. **DIVESTMENT.** Sell and/or leave all you have (and give your possessions–money and assets) to the poor. (Lk. 14:33)
8. **MARTYRDOM.** Or, *at least*, immediate willingness to be killed for Christ’s sake; taking seriously the call to “bear your own cross,” which was an instrument of death. WE would say carry your electric chair (or equivalent). Peter and company grew in their willingness and conviction on this matter, *over time*. (Mt. 10:37-39, etc.)
9. **TONGUES.** The spiritual gift of speaking in tongues as bona fide and conclusive evidence of eternal salvation, applicable to **EVERY** believer, or he is not saved?. The Bible teaches not. (Mk. 16:17-18; I Cor. 12:30)
10. **ENDURANCE.** Perseverance in *good deeds to the end*, or you prove that you were never saved, or lost your salvation *somewhere along the way*. (Mt. 10:22; Lk. 21:19; Rev. 14:12). Ironically, most Lordship Salvationists don’t believe one can lose their salvation, so they **must doubt conversions** if much sin is present, because they also reject the Bible’s teaching that Christians not filled with the Spirit–only indwelt–are “**carnal**” and **fleshly**, or immature babes. What a non-reassuring, confusing and un-solid foundation for spiritual growth effort–to never know till you’re an old man that you were **ever born** in the first place!

Four other traits from the Bible tell you your process of discipleship is going well (i.e., true for sanctification but not **salvation**): Loving believers (Jn. 13:35), continuing in the word of God (Jn. 8:31), bearing much fruit (Jn. 15:8; Ex.: good works), and evangelizing people (Mt. 4:19). If salvation is a life-long process, you’re only saved in the end, and you must maintain works in order to “*earn*” entrance into heaven.

Yes, salvation truly is the **free gift** of God’s tremendous grace, which we can **only** live thankful for in response. Salvation is neither a *transaction* between equals (as we are *nothing*), a *gift exchange* (what do you have to offer but **sin**?), or analogous to *joining the army*–**free** to join but **costly** to qualify and live for, as a leading Lordship author **convolutedly** ‘reasons.’

Sanctification by works can result from such a *false* and **faulty** start, because you can **DO** nothing to deserve salvation–you can **ONLY** receive it, that receiving, biblically not being a work at all (Rom. 3:27-28). **God’s** the One doing *all* the work–you just let Him, if and when He *allows* you to, by the Spirit’s power, grace and calling/conviction.

Key Arguments for Saviorhood

TOP 12 BIBLE-BASED REASONS I BELIEVE IN SAVIORHOOD SALVATION

1. The vast majority of the Bible teaches faith alone—over **220** verses in the New Testament.
2. The clearest evangelism verses of the Bible teach faith alone.
3. The **most evangelistic** book never mentions repentance (the Gospel most geared to Gentiles—John).
4. **God repented** 37 of 40 or so times in the Old Testament, so our common definition is *flawed*.
5. New Testament examples of Christians sinning very badly, and its doctrine of ‘carnality’ as *possible* in the Christian life. **Pv.** 14:14; **Mt.** 5:13, 6:23, 24:12; **Lk.** 18:7-8; **Jn.** 15:2, 6; **Ac.** 5:1-11, 8:4-24, 15:5; **Rom.** 6:1-23, 7:1-6, 15-25, 8:1-17; **I Cor.** 3:1-3, 5:1-5, 3:12-15, 5:1-13, 6:8, 15, 18, 7:35, 11:21, 28-32, 15:33-34; **II Cor.** 6:11-13, 17, 12:20-21, 13:2; **Gal.** 1:6-9, 3:1-5, 4:9-11, 15-16, 19-20, 5:4, 7-10, 15 (Cf.: Jas. 4:1-6), (26); **Eph.** 4:1, 5:14 (15-17); **Phil.** 1:15-18, 2:20, 3:18-19; **II Th.** 3:6-15; **I Tim.** 1:18-20, 5:15, 6:21; **II Tim.** 1:15, 4:1-5, 9-10, 16; **Tit.** 3:14 (vs. Jn. 15, fruitful); **Heb.** 2:3, 3:7-8, 12-13, 16-19, 4:1-6, 5:11-6:9, 10:16-38, 12:1-3, 15-16, 13:9, 16; **Jas.** 1:13-15, 3:8-10, 13-4:1-6, 10, 5:19-20; **I Pet.** 1:13-14, 2:11, 20, 4:1-5, 15; **II Pet.** 1:10, 2:17-19; **I Jn.** 2:4, 9, 11, 28, 3:15, 4:1, 20-21, 5:15-17; **II Jn.** 1:8; **III Jn.** 1:9-11; **Rev.** 2:2-6, 13-16, 20-23, 3:1-3, 15-20.
6. New Testament exhortations for **believers** to commitment (while *never* doubting their salvation). **Mt.** 5:18; **Lk.** 6:46; **Rom.** Chs. 6-7, 12:1-2, 13:11; **I Cor.** 1:9, 3:22-23, 15:33-34; **II Cor.** 5:15, 6:1, 16-7:1; **Gal.** 4:19, 5:1, 13-16, 25, 6:1, 9; **Eph.** 1:13, 19, 2:10, 3:12, 17, 19, 4:1-3, 13-25, 5:1, 5-10, 14-17, 6:(11); **Phil.** 1:6, 9-11, 18, 23-24, 27-30, 2:1-6, 12-13, 15, 3:1-10, 17, 4:1, 5, 9, 12, (17); **Col.** 1:9-11, 2:6, 20, 3:1-12; **I Th.** 2:10-12, 3:1-8, 4: 1, (2), 5, 7, (10), 5:4-8, 11; **II Th.** 2:15-17, 3:13; **I Tim.** 6:12, 19; **II Tim.** 1:13, 2:19-22; **Tit.** 2:7-8, 3:8, 14; **Heb.** 2:1-3, 3:1-6, 4:1, 6:18, 12:1-17, 28, 13:20-21; **Jas.** 1:21-22, 25, 4:1-10; **I Pet.** 1:13-17, (22), 2:1-3, 11, 3:12-16, 4:1-5; **II Pet.** 1:2-11, 19, 2:18, 3:14; **II Jn.** 1:4; **Jude** 1:1-4; **Rev.** 3:2.
7. Like being offered a Maserati at Christmas—it’s the **nature of a gift** that inspires its usage, and it’s not a gift exchange, for we have nothing to offer but SIN.
8. As the life of Gandhi shows, Lordship Salvation requires the same decision all religions’ faithful make, yet they go to hell absent faith in Christ. Goodness is good, but *not* salvific.
9. The issue of salvation is that you are facing hell for your sins—you need forgiveness **above all else**.
10. Salvation makes *true, miraculous* changes from within, which, over time manifest on the outside.
11. Even if you turned from *sinful* living to *righteous* living, and lived **perfectly** hereafter, you’d still go to hell without Christ. Every religion teaches to live good and **not** bad, but their converts remain unsaved without Jesus.
12. How is the concept of “you have to commit to stop sinning and live right from now on” *good* news, *unique* to Christianity or related to Christ’s work on the cross? No wonder so **few** claiming Christians never want to tell that message (i.e., evangelize). Lordshippers stop at the bad news—you are a sinner—solve it/heal yourself. Problem is, you can’t live up to the promise to live right, *that’s why you need* mercy and forgiveness. The lead Lordship advocate’s (John MacArthur) army conscription illustration is totally ludicrous, as anyone with *child-like faith*—including any child—could tell you.

P.S.—Testimony: My personal experience tells me it’s so, in agreement with the weight of New Testament evidence and the many faith alone verses. God called me through an *accurate* Gospel presentation, and on the song “There is a fountain,” I went forward in a Baptist church in Lincoln, Nebraska, and received Christ. I DID later commit to His Lordship, which has produced a spectacularly abundant life, as the outgrowth of salvation, but that experience pales by comparison

to the day all my sins were washed away (forgiven) by God through Christ, and I will *never* rely on that Lordship commitment date causing me to end up in heaven, as it is all of grace and none of my doing!

Additional Reasons I Believe in Saviorhood Salvation

1. The biblically *obvious* difference between salvation and disciple requirements.
2. You can't *talk to a baby* about diapers and milk bottles TILL THEY'RE BORN! The lost do not *have* a spiritual nature to comprehend that sanctification is positive.
3. God wouldn't require anyone to lie in order to be saved (i.e., promise you'll live fully for Him all your life, which not all Christians do).
4. How can a "free" gift cost you *everything*? That is schizophrenic and internally *inconsistent*, and worse than marketing ploys using the term "free" (with catches).
5. If during sanctification you backslide, you are no longer qualified as a disciple, so you either lost your salvation or never had it, to be consistent with Lordship's salvation requirements.
6. The illogic of considering the 10 commands of Lordship salvation requirements as being either a gift, or free.
7. **Positional vs. Experiential Disciples.** Some of Christ's followers were still called "*disciples*" (not tares), though they *clearly* did not meet the requirements. (Ex.: Jn. 6:66)

CONFLICT SOLUTIONS

The key missing ingredient in these discussions is **EXPERIENCED CONVICTION** by the Holy Spirit. That power is NOT to be overtly discussed with lost people in evangelism, but works behind the scenes to secure their decision. But with so many **substitutes** and **imitators** to His *sovereign work*—music, friendship bonding, obligation felt from having been served or given a physical gift, the emphasis on salvation as a 'choice' (as if the lost have completely free wills and are not blinded by Satan or bound in their sin), fear from the word '**repent**' being *yelled* at you, or the false belief that God is requiring your full commitment **in exchange for** sincerely receiving a *free* gift—we must discuss the issue so often *missing* from our evangelism.

The Maserati illustration is a KEY to settling this dispute. Lordshippers view salvation in the **negative**, as a need to improve one's behavior. Saviorhooders, on the other hand, view salvation in the **positive**, where eternal life and forgiveness of all sins is secured as a FREE GIFT, which then enables and incentivizes a life of sanctification out of *gratitude*, not obligation in order to have qualified for that free gift. That would be as ludicrous as someone giving you a million dollars, and if you don't sell your soul for that gift, or even spend a thousand dollars, you get accused (not by the Giver, but Lordshippers) of NOT ACTUALLY OWNING the stash of cash.

SPECIAL NOTE: Since this website is public, and the Lordship controversy—which should be only a **family matter**—will therefore be made known, please note, *lost person*, that **God does want you to live holy**. The issue is that He even more so wants you saved, because even if you stop living evil from here on out, without salvation it will have all been in vain, as you will end up in hell. Don't put the cart before the horse, as holiness is the outcome, and how one becomes holy starts with becoming **saved**.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT SAVIORHOOD SALVATION

- ▶ **Accusations.** Accusers may well ask or say, 'If God wants people to be holy, why are you making a BIG DEAL about the difference between Saviorhood and Lordship? You have *evil*

motives to keep the lost sinful. You teach two types of Christians.’

Reply: God does not have TWO Gospel messages, and this matter is NOT academic, nor is it a **little** subject. It is no smaller than what must I do to be eternally saved? Sadly, *seemingly no one cares* about this anymore, and it is **ONLY because God’s Spirit** convicts that people get saved despite our false Gospel invitations! Nevertheless, we should all be able to agree that FALSE DOCTRINE IS FROM SATAN, and Christians should not be in the business of spreading Satan’s thoughts.

- ▶ **2-Step Process?** Saviorhood is a 2-step process if receiving a Christmas gift, then using it thereafter is a 2-step process (and in that case, Lordship salvation would be a multi-step process, as we choose to pick up our cross and follow Him on a daily basis).
- ▶ **Cheap Grace?** Ex.: Saviorhood teaches you can be half-hearted toward God and still be good with God? Accepting Jesus *non-seriously, nonchalantly*, or as you would take a flier handed out in public to not make waves (or offend the sales person) is NOT a Saviorhood invitation. **Sincere, from the heart faith** in God to totally save you for eternity IS required, and no Saviorhood ever **lessens** this *true* standard of God!
- ▶ **Grace Abuse.** It couldn’t be FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH to accuse Saviorhooders of fighting for the lost’s **right to still live sinfully**. Grace CAN be abused, just like your best intentions for your child can backfire through rebellion. But that takes nothing away from the moral value of grace, and is a reflection **not on the grace Giver**, but the grace **abuser**. Again, grace CAN be abused, and just like a normal parent, when God’s children do so, the blessings (usually) **decrease** and disciplining **increases** (be it in the form of unneeded trials, lack of answers to prayer, negative circumstantial consequences, sickness or ultimately premature death).
- ▶ **Easy Believism?** Is it easy to believe? Then why do so many lost people disbelieve? They are blinded by Satan, and it takes a miraculous power to free them. They cannot free themselves, and that experience and decision is, therefore, not easy, but impossible (II Cor. 4:4). No true Saviorhooder presents the Gospel in a casual, non-serious way, or asks for an insincere or flippant decision to trust Jesus. That myth is more the figment of a Lordshippers’ imagination than a common experience in America.
- ▶ **Lessening God’s Standard?** If Saviorhooders lessened God’s standard for salvation, their converts would not be saved (absent the sovereign Spirit’s conviction miracle), just as if Lordshippers are requiring more than God requires for salvation, they are directly guilty of the eternal lives of any who were scared off by their false doctrine, but would have received Christ had they heard an accurate Gospel.
- ▶ **Eternal Life Insurance?** One may treat salvation as ‘eternal life insurance,’ but its effects are present and on-going, no matter their misbeliefs.
- ▶ **Spiritual Abandonment.** Saviorhooders are often accused of *hit-and-run* evangelism—getting people saved and never discipling them. Beyond our having already cited the **Ethiopian Eunuch** as evidence discipleship is not always required of the evangelizer, I know of NO LORDSHIPPER who **immediately** enrolls one of their converts into a *required* discipleship program (immediately following water baptism), so stop with the sanctimonious hypocrisy!
- ▶ **Hit-and-Run/Rambo’ Evangelism?** Tis better to ‘hit and run,’ than to never have “hit” a person with great news that can change their eternity! Tis better to abandon a new believer than to have left them in sin because you didn’t have enough time to mentor them!
- ▶ **Repentance.** Saying ‘I’m sorry for or I admit my sins, please forgive me’ IS **essential** to being saved, but unless you believe—and can (by the Holy Spirit), you still *aren’t*. One doesn’t *typically* ask for forgiveness if they don’t believe (or ‘feel’) they need it. Feeling

sorry for your sins does not save you, and if you are proud of your sins, yet still want salvation, that attitude also **won't save you**. Faith in Christ, exercised under the sovereign conviction of the Holy Spirit—through the Gospel message—DOES save you—God being the One doing all the saving work—ALL you can take credit for is **flesh**, sin, arrogance.

- ▶ **Commitment.** Taking up your cross daily is a **daily** decision, while being born again (i.e., salvation) is at a **point in time**—your *spiritual birthday*. And when a Christian DOESN'T take up their cross, they are, by biblical definition, **CARNAL** (or 'fleshly').
- ▶ **Repentant Feeling?** Are Saviorhooders claiming the Bible shows no examples of people—lost or saved—feeling bad about their sins (or “broken,” as some term it) as a good moral experience? Certainly it does, and such attitude is moral. It simply is not salvific, as it is not necessarily the same as being under conviction, as lost people sometimes feel bad about their decisions, yet don't get saved.

SOME OBSERVATIONS ABOUT LORDSHIP SALVATION

- ▶ Lordship salvation has been the predominant gospel theory since 1985 (MacArthur), yet 90% of American Christians have remained carnal since then because the theory DOES NOT WORK to make people any holier than the true (*Saviorhood*) Gospel!
- ▶ To the extent salvations occur under Lordship Salvation Gospel presentations, it is because God's Spirit convicts during the accurate Gospel explanation/presentation portion—**DESPITE** the **false theology invitation** section (where requirements for heaven are WRONGLY presented)! That's the **power of God**, to work despite erring evangelizers!
- ▶ By *Christ's* requirements for a disciple, Lordship Salvationists HAVE to doubt **most** Christians' salvation!
- ▶ Under **LORDSHIP SALVATION**, *repentance* is deciding to STOP living sinfully (the *rest* of your life), *faith* is deciding to RECEIVE Christ, and *surrender* is deciding to START living ethically (the *rest* of your life).
- ▶ **Lordship Salvation Thinking:** 'If I live holy the rest of my life will you let me into heaven? No. If I promise to do so will you? Yes.' That makes **NO** sense! Deeds are more important than promises, and neither are what God requires, as you're **focusing on what you can do for God** vs. what **God** will do *in* you—if you let Him.
- ▶ Lordship Salvation, taken on its face, argues that if you're not willing to be totally committed to Christ, you **deserve to and will go to hell**, because salvation depends on **you and your fully engaged/committed will**. Saviorhooders, on the other hand, believe EVERYONE deserves and will go to hell simply because they were born sinners—**unless** they accept Christ's free gift of salvation. Your willingness to be committed or not committed to live holy the rest of your life is **NOT** the subject (or issue immediately needing direct addressing) of the Gospel. You have a **SPIRITUAL NATURE PROBLEM**, and evil deeds flow from it (even if your external deeds are as 'good' as Gandhi, which most people's *aren't*). Forgiveness, and a **change from within** are first needed before you are able to live differently (as opposed to mere feigned, eye-service *good deeds of the flesh* or will of man—Jn. 1)
- ▶ You can be fully committed to living **holy** and **not sinfully** and **STILL GO TO HELL**, but you can't trust Christ and miss heaven unless it was insincere/not from the heart, mere intellectual assent or a lie to *impress* others.
- ▶ Lordship salvation forces (or coerces) that which should be free-willed—commitment to sanctification/discipleship from humble gratitude for all God has done for you in salvation.
- ▶ For Lordshippers to be consistent with their theory, they should **NEVER** use biblical motivation or God's promises to secure any sanctificational action(s), as that was already promised as a requirement for salvation.

- ▶ If salvation is a process (i.e., a commitment to a **lifelong behavior pattern**), *rather than* an event and experience (with **ETERNAL EFFECTS** and *consequences*), **being born again** is a LIFE-LONG CHILDBIRTH.
- ▶ Contradictorily, Lordshippers **lay on new converts a burden** not even the Jewish fathers were *able to bear* (Ac. 15:10), when, through FAITH, Jesus said His load is LIGHT (Mt. 11:30; I Jn. 5:4).
- ▶ Philosophically (i.e., logically) at least, if baptism doesn't save, but is the **FIRST step** of obedience in the *Christian life*, how could **SUBSEQUENT STEPS** of sanctification save?
- ▶ If **baptism doesn't save**, neither does commitment to it. *SAME APPLIES* to sanctification.
- ▶ HOW BAD DOES ONE HAVE TO FEEL in order *to be saved*? Some religions **flail their backs** in sorrow for their sins, and they're not saved, absent faith in Jesus Christ, so FEELING BAD ABOUT YOUR SINS does NOT save, and therefore it cannot be required for salvation! Conviction of the Spirit, yes, as no decision is *alivened* without Him. (Jn. 1)
- ▶ A life of works does not save anyone, but it starts with a commitment to live holy and consciously try to stop one's sinful behavior. That same decision is what Lordshippers say is required of lost people—even though it saves no lost people.
- ▶ Lordship provides no real assurance of salvation, as you never know for sure you're going to heaven until your life of good deeds confirms what you suspected—that you are saved all along. How 'good' does a person have to be before they're saved, and have a Bible verse for your answer (or you're making yourself the standard or judge)?
- ▶ Jesus taught to forgive a repenting brother/Christian up to seventy times seven times if they sin against you. A Lordshipper would doubt someone was saved or ever "repented" (by their definition) if they sinned against the same brother/Christian anywhere near that many times! (Mt. 18:21-22)
- ▶ Do you say that a person does not possess a product because it sits on the shelf? Do you only believe they possess it when they use it every day (as discipleship requires us to do), vs. occasionally? How sensible is it to wonder if they possess an asset or product only if they use it all their life (assuming a hypothetical product could last that long)?
- ▶ Growth in Christ—*sanctification*—comes from prayer, Bible meditation, the obedience of faith (i.e., living up to the standard you have attained; Phil. 3:16/obeying your convictions), the Spirit's power and His working behind the scenes both by being within us and in answer to our prayers. It is progressive and incremental, under grace, and is **never automatic** simply by deciding to be totally committed to Christ. It TAKES WORK, and you **cannot shorten that process** by front-loading the Gospel with *untrue* Lordship salvation requirements!
- ▶ Why does the Bible offer incentives seeking to motivate Christians to full commitment to Christ if full commitment had to already be there for them to be Christians/saved?
- ▶ The Lordshipper wonders, 'how could not requiring a lost person to fully commit to holy living the rest of their life ever end up in their **living holy**?' It's the sort of wondering Nicodemus underwent concerning how a person could be born twice (Jn. 3). EXPERIENCE IT, and you will know the way you are *supposed* to know—from truth-based experience.
- ▶ Are you or God the focus of salvation? Lordship Salvation focuses on what deeds the person is going to do to prove to MEN there's been a moral change for the *better* in their life.
- ▶ A lifetime of WORKS (or law lifestyle) and Lordship Salvation have **very difference between** them. One is **in order to get** salvation at the end of life (works), the other is **in order to qualify for** (at a point in time and for all one's lifetime) or to **prove they actually received it** (at a point in time and for all one's lifetime—Lordship Salvation). What really *is* the

difference between works and Lordship, unless the Lordshipper agrees with the Saviorhooder that salvation was secured at **a point in time** (vs. as a life-long process)?

- ▶ Lordshippers put the oneness on a spiritual *infant* to **feed himself** and learn how to fix and hold a bottle. A child is born, then grows and learns to walk, and **parents** (or guardians) are ESPECIALLY needed in the early stages.
- ▶ Lordshippers often consider carnal Christians lost, and fear huge numbers of tares in the Church, when they need only look inside to see they are imperfect themselves, they are using their own standard of evaluation, and only God knows for sure—not judging claimers. The \ difference between a confessor and a possessor comes down to, in fact, is the Holy Spirit residing within that person, or not? That same Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are God’s children, whether that witness is felt by others, or not.
- ▶ Pride and judging can creep in when one believes himself superior because he committed to become a Christian by full surrender, faith and full “repentance,” while another committed to become a Christian by trusting Christ.
- ▶ Repentance is NOT the same as choosing to and doing good deeds (Lk. 3:7-8), and it can be sincere, yet the deeds repented of repeated multiple times without one’s sincerity being questioned by God (Ex.: strongholds—Mt. 18:21-22)
- ▶ Rev. John McArthur’s intent and purpose was **noble**—the church needs less sinful Christians. His method was **unbiblical**, *changing God’s salvation requirements to front-load commitment* to holiness. Salvation is FREE; but discipleship is **COSTLY**, and free is not a synonym of costly in ANY Dictionary. If pastors would relationally disciple and encourage daily Quiet Time (enforced in grace and love), **they’d achieve that end** without buying into the Churchianity belief that all the pastor has to do is put on a great production and speak a great speech once a week, and **all will (somehow) turn godly**.
- ▶ While I have cited many instances of sinful (*‘carnal’*) behavior among believers, there is also evidence of some believers who **did** properly demonstrate their faith *at salvation*: Jn. 9:38; Lk. 19:8-10, 23:40-43; Ac. 2:41-46, 11:21-23, 13:43, 16:15, 31-34; I Cor. 1:4-9; Gal. 4:12-16; Phil. 1:3-7; Col. 1:3-8; I Th. 1:2-10; Phm. 1:4-7; Heb. 10:32-34.

CLARIFICATIONS

Your problem is not the quantity of your sins, or even the severity of them. Your problem, truly, is that you were born, for that act alone makes you a sinner. Since the days of Adam man has been born with a sin/fallen nature, which means they are not in direct, spiritual relation to God, which inevitably causes man to choose to sin. And merely one sin—even only one in a lifetime—makes your problem larger than anything your will can overcome. Stopping sinning is not the answer, per se, nor adding righteousness, per se, but receiving forgiveness, and the power to do curb sinning and put on righteousness by the Spirit within—a relationship begun by praying to eternally receive Christ.

Are we teaching that salvation has nothing to do with how you will live the rest of your life? No. Salvation WILL affect it as a result (not so much if you don’t apply principles of biblical sanctification), but that is not the proper focus of salvation (or our evangelism)—initially. One has first to discover how to come out from under the great weight of God’s judgment, before they can learn how to truly walk with God in the light, and that transformation comes only through salvation. And once a person believes something intensely enough, they will become fully committed to it.

Receiving a gift is not necessarily the same or contemporaneous with using that gift, any more than child birth is the same as childhood. Does the fact that someone uses a gift later than the date of its reception mean they never received it? Or, for that matter, if one never uses a gift they received, is that proof they never, in fact, received it?

Relatedly, man's ultimate sin problem is not *necessarily* one of pride, or love of self as their number one priority, as some espouse. For example, even people like Gandhi were very moral, though still spiritually lost, and many lost people are humble, giving, and non-self-centered people. No, the sin problem is ultimately caused by the fact that we are born in a state of being apart from a relationship with God. Said another way, your sin problem is caused because you were born with a sin nature, but God holds you accountable for it when you *freely* choose to express its inevitable effect and consequences in the form of a sinful choice (and just one sin makes man guilty of all sins, before God—Jas. 2:10; Gal. 3:10-12). We cannot blame God, or the devil, but only that free choice, and then dependently cling to God's promise of free salvation from this ill condition.

In summary, You miss heaven if you **reject Christ**, but you deserve hell because of your SIN—and only **one sin** is needed—and *at least* one is inevitable.

ON BIBLICAL REPENTANCE

A distinction can often be made between the repentance called for from a believer as opposed to a lost person, though in both cases a change is certainly being required. Observe the following nuances concerning biblical repentance for a further detailing of such distinction(s):

- God's conviction brings about a repentance in a heart adequately softened & prepared by Him. You can't choose to feel that way on your own. (II Cor. 7:10; 1 Jn. 1:9-10)
- And once you "feel" God's sovereign conviction, you will ("naturally") make that change of mind, though you must, lest you lose its blessing.
- Repentance, therefore, can be both a spiritual "feeling" and a resulting change of mind, choice or decision. It is NOT your having the innate power to stop sinning (or all sinful behavior).
- EVEN if a person 100% stopped sinning and 100% chose to live righteously, they STILL have past sins needing FORGIVENESS, by faith.
- The spiritual Christian life is NOT one of "woe is me, for I sin all the time," because God brings victory and power to live up to His (ever incrementally increasing) faith standard for you TODAY. (Phil. 3:16; I Cor. 4:4; Heb. 10:2)
- At the same time, we must NEVER deny our sin when God reveals it to us by His Spirit. Keep SHORT accounts with Him, or you'll experience broken fellowship and lost rewards. (I Jn. 1:9-10)
- Yelling 'repent!' as a command or order is biblically NOT asking lost people to stop sinful behavior—IF they are not first in relation with God), as if they could. They need the change and power of salvation first.
- If one is willing to truly trust Christ for salvation, that's evidence they have already had an internal change of heart and mind wrought by God on the inside.
- Changing your behavior is the outgrowth or RESULT of salvation—NOT its prerequisite or primary aim or end. Forgiveness and re-establishing the relationship lost in Adam ARE, however.

- Salvation brings a 100% spiritual change to the inner man ('spirit'). Whether and to what extent that change is externally manifested biblically varies per person, and over time (especially given their effort in such pursuit, or lack thereof).
- Repenting and believing are NOT two separate steps of salvation. To do the former is to do the latter, as faith is a change from one's former (sinful) state of unbelief in Jesus/God.
- Conviction is NOT mere human emotion, but a God-wrought sorrow which you could never work up on your own power or initiative. Criminals may feel remorse, but that is certainly not necessarily evidence that God is convicting them unto salvation.
- Acknowledging your sin is a prerequisite to salvation, but is not itself salvific. Admitting you're a sinner will never save you unless you also trust Christ as the solution to that problem.
- Feeling penitent (or sorrowful/remorseful), also, does not save—unless combined with trusting Christ. It can be evidence of being under conviction, and others can only observe whether it leads you to a decision to sincerely trust Christ. (II Cor. 7:10)

References: Mt. 1:20; Mk. 1:15, 6:12; Lk. 5:32, 13:5, 17:4, 24:47; Ac. 2:38, 3:19, 5:31, 8:22, 11:18, 17:30, 20:21, 26:20; Rom. 2:4; II Cor. 7:9-10; II Tim. 2:25; Heb. 6:1, 6; II Pet. 3:9, etc.

AREAS OF AGREEMENT

Both groups agree salvation in Christ is the answer for sin, and that Christians should not live carnally. The key to understanding the truth on these matters is that Saviorhooders do not teach a no-lordship sanctification for believers, and do not teach lost people they can receive Jesus and then are free to live sinfully thereafter. The issue the lost man faces is NOT how they will live their life, morally speaking, but first, where they will spend eternity—who is their spiritual father—in a word, are they saved and forgiven, or not. After this *threshold* question has been resolved, it's time to address how to use the gift they received—if they received it. Sanctification is not the issue of salvation, and comes into play especially if during evangelism the lost person raises a question about the effects of their salvation.

There is nothing morally wrong with discussing sanctification in an evangelism conversation—though it is NOT the issue initially needing addressing. In Jn. 10:1-5, 25-29, both salvation and sanctification are addressed in such a context, where it was presented POSITIVELY and invitingly, as living water that normal people would want (note that entering the Gate and being known by Christ precede being Shepherd-led and following after Him). In Jn. 5:19-25 Jesus addresses skeptics and speaks of saved people having passed out of death into life after believing in Christ, thereby not being judged.

In both these examples, salvation (chronologically) precedes sanctification (though, also, no time lag between them is needed, required or even indicated). Normal salvations bring about change—internally (Ex.: peace, new nature, etc.), and at least *eventually* externally.

TYPICAL RESPONSES OF PASTORS TO THIS CONTROVERSY

1. Ignore it, believing that all "controversies" are from Satan and "*divisive*," even for something as important as taking a stand for the true Gospel (vs. an imposter one). Jesus made many moral divisions, and says He came for that reason.
2. Ignore it out of lack of knowledge of the subject, or that the issue exists (or claiming to be too busy).

3. Continue to preach their view, and never address the opposing view—called being a theological chicken.
4. Try to *merge* the two doctrines as a sort of “peace-maker,” usually through a *confused* hodge-podge of terms which belong to both viewpoints (though three steps vs. one step for salvation can never be reconciled into an agreeable, *consistent* theology).
5. Academic detachment of teaching both sides, yet taking no stand either way.
6. Teach both sides’ existence, but take a stand for the biblical viewpoint (i.e., teach Saviorhood, and encourage; Exhort, teach and hold Christians accountable to follow Christ in commitment through personally discipling and motivating them with scriptural promises, and being accountable for the results of their congregation (vs. just preaching words and never knowing if believers are personally growing).

ALLEGATIONS AGAINST LORDSHIP SALVATION

1. If, as I assert, Lordship is *unbiblical*, it has a spiritually **Satanic** origin (Gal. 1:8-9)
2. Second only in importance to that first problem, and possibly more serious is that Lordship Salvation can **lead some lost people to end up in hell**, because they were not offered the true Gospel, and were told requirements God did not place on people in order to be saved, and they weren’t willing to agree to. What a HORRIBLE and needless missed opportunity.
3. It focuses the gospel on **man** and his will—not Christ’s work, Person and gracious forgiveness and mercy (i.e., what can and do I need to do in order for Him to be willing to save me vs. what is God offering me and how do I get in on it?).
4. It begins a person with a salvation theology of works, and usually continues such persons in a sanctificational process of works (which can *never* lead to spiritual or moral success/victory, joy, or a true understanding of God and His *grace*).
5. It often slanders those adhering to the true New Testament gospel of Jesus Christ (Ex.: ‘eternal fire insurance’ and ‘cheap grace’ accusations, and assertions that we support carnality or teach Christian discipleship as an *option* the Christian is free to decline).
6. It *confuses* salvation with sanctification, and cannot account for the many biblical evidences for carnal Christians and exhortations to Christians to be fully committed to live for God.
7. It is deceptive in the usage of terms, words and definitions used in evangelism invitations, and confuses right-thinking persons; a trait—confusion—not associated with God (Ex.: ‘Repent,’ commit your life as a synonym to receive a gift, receive Christ “as” Lord, etc.).
8. It requires a lost person to, at best, lie to God in order to get saved, as they make promises they cannot and therefore will not fully keep.
9. It is rooted in human pride in the use of one’s will, as opposed to the humble desperateness and complete need for Christ’s acting and forgiving.
10. It makes salvation not a gift received, but an *exchange of gifts*, as if a lost person has anything to offer God.
11. It destroys the biblical bases of sanctificational motivation, by **making a life of committed living required in order to receive a free gift**, rather than the *free willed* fruit of a life **thankful** for complete forgiveness.
12. Though *rightly intended*, Lordship Salvationists seek to secure holy Christians using completely *unbiblical means* (i.e., securing promises to live holy and not live sinfully, in order to qualify to receive a “free” gift).
13. It can, in reality, only **speak** of grace—never fully able to *experience* or understand grace, because the doctrine is steeped and rooted in the same origins as *cults’* salvation theologies—**works**.

14. As has been said before, if a Christian ever ceases to be fully committed for any period of time, has he lost his salvation, as he no longer meets the requirement for discipleship?
Do we properly withhold giving someone assurance of salvation till their death bed?
15. If works give us assurance of salvation, what are we to conclude from the fact that every Christian is imperfect? That basis for security makes an ‘assurance’ that comes and goes. After all, NO one tells an infant, “You’re not walking yet so I’m not sure you’re alive.
16. There can be a strong element of pride (a sin) in the attitude that ‘I chose Christ,’ as if you initiated the process (i.e., hyper-Arminianism) or that you made a choice to be holy and not sinful—something you can condescendingly feel others need to do since you did. One can see, here, how often Calvinism (Reformed Theology) works in tandem with Lordship Salvation (though this theological error of Lordship Salvation has infiltrated other if not all Christian circles).
17. Stated in a way most Lordshippers would never do, yet entirely consistent with their beliefs, one could easily present the Gospel in the following way: Commit to live the rest of your life in a holy way, or you will go to hell. This threatening invitation of Lordship Salvation is the exact same basis for other religions (though spun more positively) and even official Catholic dogma involving a works-based salvation, for under their premise, that lifestyle promised must be fulfilled for any initial commitment so to live to be effectual (to which even the Bible would agree, were the initial premise accurate—Mt. 21:28-32).
18. Lordship salvation theory is theological schizophrenia—salvation by works and as a gift, all rolled up into one confusing yet great free, yet conditional offer you have to be completely sold out to or you can’t have it.

SOME QUESTIONS FOR LORDSHIPPERS

- If Lordship salvation requires total commitment, what happens if a “believer” wanes in that level of commitment for a time?
- How good must one be (i.e., behave) till they can be sure of their salvation, and how good must one be (i.e., behave) till others believe they are saved?
- As has been said, if the Lordship salvation commitment is for life, every “nominal” or carnal Christian must be lost, as they don’t meet God’s requirement for salvation (or they lost salvation).
- Nowhere does God say that willingness to be committed is enough. In fact, the story of the two sons shows that decisions are nothing—implementation of them (even reversing a bad decision) is preferred to making the right one and never *implementing* it.
- Commitment is a work and a commitment to live a life of good works does not need faith. False religions prove that committing to live ethically and stop living sinfully saves no one. So if such commitment can’t save you, why would God require it of lost people in order for them to qualify to be saved?

Analysis of Proffered Salvation Requirements

1. FAITH

Explicitly 67 times in the book of John; ~159 times elsewhere in the New Testament. ~226 total.

Synonyms: Believe, trust, rely, lean, ask, turn to, depend; Accept, receive, call upon, faith).

____—Underline indicates verses teaching assurance of salvation upon faith in Jesus Christ.

Please See: “Additions to Faith”
for a preliminary discussion of reasons to believe in faith alone.

2. REPENTANCE

Specific Repentance Verses

Excerpted from Tom Eckman’s **Salvation Marathon** and **Additions to Faith** (cassettes)

Ac. 2:38 and in Lk. 24:47.

[Ac. 2:41 defines that change of mind as having received his word (i.e., faith). –J. Meroney]
“What do you change your mind about? Sin? You could do that and still not change your mind about receiving Christ. It can be two separate things, but he’s calling them to one repentance both in Ac. 2:38 and in Lk. 24:47. What’s he saying to them? Change your mind. About what? The context suggests (i.e., in Ac. 2) prophecies concerning Christ and the person and work of Christ (in Peter’s sermon). That is, repent about who Christ is—what you’re going to do with Christ. That is very different from a change of mind about sin. First, repentance from personal sin does not accomplish the task... you still have to deal with the sin nature and how do you turn from that? Only one way...taking Christ’s righteousness (a separate change of mind). [What’s the repentance about?]. What’s the very last thing he speaks of? “This Jesus, whom you crucified, God has made Him both Savior and Lord.” “Brethren, what shall we do...?” Repent! Change your mind about Jesus Christ and what He did on the cross. Change your mind about who He is. You’ve been sitting there thinking He’s just an insignificant man, who you put to death, and that He didn’t accomplish anything, and that all He was some political figure. But, no! He rose again, and you need to recognize this and change your mind! Change your mind about what He did. You’ve got wrong thinking about these things. You need to trust Him for your salvation, and you haven’t been—change your mind! The context suggests that this repentance is about Christ. Let’s look at several other basic passages...

Mk. 1:15. Repent and believe seems to talk of two different things. What’s he actually saying? Change your mind and believe in the gospel. If they were believing in any other thing and he says, “change your mind, and believe in the gospel,” what happened when they believed the gospel? They changed their mind! If you are anything other than a Republican, and I say, “repent and become a Republican,” what happens when you change your mind? You’re a Republican! Did you do two separate things? Just one. In changing your mind, you obtained the result. [Ex.: get on the bus and go to Cleveland—Cocoris ill.; Cf.: Mt. 21:32].

II Pet. 3:9. (“All to come to repentance”). This is God’s desire for every person. If this phrase refers to sin (as opposed to repentance concerning/about Christ), is what God is wanting for all people, something that falls short of salvation (according to those who would separate faith and repentance)? Or is the one repentance God wants everyone to come to a change of mind about Christ? “Obviously,” it is a change of mind about Christ and how you get saved. One more verse...

Heb. 6:1. (“Repentance from dead works, and of faith...”). This verse is often abused and taken out of context. Please note that the book of Hebrews was primarily written to Jewish/Hebrew Christians who had an understanding of Jewish tradition. Here, it’s obviously two separate things. What is he talking about repenting of? What context is the repentance in? From dead works. Is that the same thing as sin? Well, dead works are sin, and even if they are good they are against God. But what is he actually saying? He is speaking to Jewish Christians/believers...”To get saved you had to repent from dead works.” Why? Because they

were trusting in those dead works. For example, if I say I'm going to really be good, and live up to the law, and make it to heaven on my own, why do I need Christ? What he's saying is that you need to repent—change your mind—about the value of those things, and put your faith in Christ instead of yourselves. If I'm putting my faith in myself, how can I put it in Christ? And if I'm self-righteous—if I think I am righteous within myself—why do I need to trust Christ? Obviously he's telling them—especially the Jewish Christians (many of whom were very self-righteous)—you need to repent/change your mind about your dead works, because they are useless before God, and trust Christ/put your faith in Christ.

The idea is that repentance is part of salvation in that the main repentance that must take place is that you have to repent to Christ. It's a repentance about Christ that puts faith in Him. Anytime I put my faith in Christ and I had not previously put my faith in Christ, what have I done? I've changed my mind. I don't really see much justification in saying there's two steps involved, when most of the passages used by those who espouse that view we just refuted through exegesis. Most other verses in the New Testament say simply faith.

[Ac. 3:19] In 4:2, at the same event, it shows that the repentance called for is faith in Christ. —J. Meroney]

[Ac. 13:24] Verse 39 shows what action Paul was calling them to do, as with Mk. 1:15; Ac. 19:4. —J. Meroney]

[Ac. 17:30-31]. [Verse 34 shows that proper responders to this call believed. —J. Meroney]

This is a well-abused passage. “All everywhere should repent.” Everybody everywhere ought to change their mind. About what? Verse 31 gives us a clue. Why should they change their minds? “Because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom He has appointed.” What are they to change their mind about? Well, how are they going to be judged? They need to recognize that they're going to be judged through a man He has appointed—Jesus Christ. They had better change their mind and see Him for who He is, and they better trust in that man because He's going to be the one who does the judging. Whether or not they have received Him and trusted Him is going to determine how He judges them, and they had better change their mind real quick about who He is, because He's going to be their judge. That is, verse 31 clarifies verse 30, in my opinion.

Ac. 20:20-21. This is an interesting passage. “...Jews and Greeks of repentance” from sin. Did I quote this incorrectly? “Repentance toward God, and faith in ...” Here you are given the context. It's stated. Repentance is toward God. How does a person have repentance toward God? Think about it. “Both to Jews and Greeks.” Repentance toward God is a change of mind which points a person toward God. What are they changing their mind about? I would say, specifically as to the Greeks, that it was a change of mind toward God as being one, or toward monotheism (i.e., God as the one true and sovereign God). What was the problem with the Greeks? See I Th. 1:9. “you turned toward God from idols.” The Greeks had these idols, or pieces of wood, and they thought those idols would save them. They had a bunch of “gods” and thought those gods would save them (or else they were atheists, and said, ‘let's just pursue pleasure all our life, as there is no God’). So what do they need to do? They need to change their mind toward one God. Before they can place their faith in Jesus Christ, they have to believe in who He is, and if He's God, they had better believe in Him who is the one, true God. They had better become/be monotheistic before they place their faith in that one God, and they better change their mind away from polytheism (i.e., a belief in many/multiple gods) or idolatry (i.e., trusting in those idols), and/or atheism (i.e., a belief that there is no God), *toward* God. Now, what was the Jews' problem? How did a Jew “repent,” or change their mind *toward* God? Does the verse say to repent of your sins before you can receive Christ? Repentance toward God, yes. If I'm an atheist, I certainly have to change my mind before I can put faith in Christ—

true? You had better at least agree that there is a God, and it might help to do that before you trust in Someone you don't think is out there. "I" believe this verse is speaking of two separate things, but the first thing it is speaking of has nothing to do with sin, but of repentance toward God, and it results in faith in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Ac. 26:20. Question: If repentance is the same thing as "turning," why does he say "repent and turn (and do deeds appropriate to repentance)?" They need to change their minds, turn to God and perform deeds appropriate to their having changed their minds. What is that change of mind about? We're not told, here. So, it would be unfair to be dogmatic on this passage. We are not given a clue. It could be any number of things. We need to consider the fact that changing our mind is usually, in a New Testament context, for unbelievers, concerning Jesus Christ. What we change our mind about is the value of Jesus Christ for salvation, or, what we change our mind about is away from anything/something else we trust in for our salvation, and see Christ as the only One we can trust in/the only way that we can get to heaven. In my teaching, a person needs to change their mind about Christ, they need to turn toward God, and then they need to get sanctified. As believers, they need to begin living a holy lifestyle/life and walk with Christ. What Paul did, that's exactly what I need to do. We need to teach not only justification, but also sanctification.

Mt. 3:2, 8. Who was John the Baptist and why did He come? He came to prepare the way of the Lord, so Christ could come and at least offer (we know that the Old Testament predicted it would be rejected) His kingdom. Christ offered it, though it was rejected by the Jews. Was John the Baptist an Old or New covenant prophet? He was an Old Testament prophet who prepared the way for the new covenant's coming. Still, he was an old covenant prophet. Here, he says, "repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Change your mind, for the kingdom is upon you. What's he telling them? Knowing he's an old covenant prophet, and he's speaking to Israel, and that the new covenant has not yet come, he's saying, 'you Jews, change your mind. You're under a covenant. God wants you to be ready for His coming when Jesus Christ offers you the kingdom, so you'll be ready to accept it. And what you need for that to happen is a change of mind about the covenant you're already under. You're still His covenant people—He hasn't destroyed that covenant yet.' So he's saying to them, 'change your mind, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Christ is coming. He wants to offer His kingdom to you, but in order for you to be prepared for that offer, you've got to go back to your covenant.' Knowing that the Gospels were primarily translated from the Hebrew, we could say that probably what happened was that the authors translated "shub" as "repent" ("meta noia"). Return! You're under a covenant. This baptism is a baptism of repentance. What's that mean? What is a baptism-type/kind of repentance? It's a baptism that says you're going to turn from your Hellenism or your Greek ways, or whatever, and go back to your covenant and start observing that covenant again. All your ideas about atheism or polytheism...you need to turn from those things and start obeying your covenant again because you are a covenant people, and you need to return to your covenant.

Lk. 13:3, 5. The same thing is true in this passage. "Unless you repent..." Ask yourself what is the context? Here they are asked whether they think God is going to judge others more than He is going to judge them? No! They need repent also. What is the context? Obviously it is sin, and "repentance" pertains to their sin. Now ask yourself if it is a covenant or non-covenant people he's talking to? That is, are they already under a covenant, or are they people who haven't yet entered into a covenant relationship with God? Look at the passage, verse 6 (whose corollary is Rom. 11). The fig tree, in the New Testament, represents Israel. The whole passage is referring to Israel. God's going to His covenant people as to a fig tree, and He's looking for fruit on them and He's not finding any. And if they continue to go and wander away from that covenant that they're under, God's going to cut them off and graft in the Gentiles—which is

exactly what He did, because they continued to not bear fruit, and continued to be the barren fig tree.

Lk. 24:47. This verse comes toward the end of Christ's ministry. He has risen, and is sending them out and telling them what to do. You can view this passage as the institution of the new covenant, or the beginning of the Church age. We're going to see a real problem here, in verse 46. "Repentance for the forgiveness of sins." Repentance means a change of mind. A change of mind about what? Here, we're not directly told, but we need to think about it. It is repentance "for" forgiveness of sins. What does the word "for" mean, in this context? In order to get. What do you need to change your mind about in order to get this forgiveness of sins? Is it something you do? Do you have to change your mind about something you are doing? That depends. What brings you forgiveness of sins—is it you or is it the Lord Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ. Well then, what do we need to change our minds about, or "repent" about? Jesus Christ. We'll see many ways the word "repent" is used in the New Testament, but I'll say here that the primary usage is that you have to change your mind about Jesus Christ, and receive the forgiveness that He's already accomplished on the cross. You didn't trust Christ before; you didn't see Him as your Savior; you now trust Him as your Savior for the forgiveness of sins, and He gives it. When you trust Him, you'd better bet that that trust is going to accomplish something, because it's in Christ. So, here, it's in a New Testament context (i.e., at the end of His ministry—He's already died and been resurrected), and it is stating something that should be done (i.e., in the future). Now, when was the new covenant fully instituted? When did we really see it take shape, and we saw the Church really begin? At Pentecost.

Lk. 10:13; Job 42:6; Jon. 3:4-10 (Cf.: Mt. 12:41; 'Repented in dust and ashes'). There are seemingly varying degrees of emotion (Ex.: sorrow and remorse) possible at salvation. However, most Lordshippers go beyond any Spirit conviction-generated feeling(s) of remorse to demand full, life-long commitment as a prerequisite to the eternal security of salvation. That's a theological stretch from even extreme emotional remorse.

Categories of Repentance

God causes repentance—Ac. 5:31, 11:18; Rom. 2:4; II Tim. 2:25

God's sorrow leads to repentance—II Cor. 7:9-10

All people need to repent, or face judgment—Mk. 6:12; Lk. 5:32, 15:5, 10, 24:47; Ac. 11:18, 17:30, 20:21; II Pet. 3:9

Lost repenting of specific sins—Rev. 16:11

Lost repenting of sin—Rev. 16:9; **Jer. 15:7; Eze. 14:6, 18:30**

Jews needed to repent—Mt. 3:2, 11, 4:17; Mk. 1:4; Lk. 3:3; Ac. 3:19, 5:31, 13:24

Christians needing to repent—Ac. 8:22; II Cor. 12:21; Heb. 6:6; Rev. 2:5, 16, 21-22, 3:3

Principles of Repentance

---**Definition:** Repentance is a change of mind. God repented most of the time in the Old Testament, so blind adherence to the behavioral U-turn definition doesn't always work.

However, God changing His mind is NOT synonymous with a moral change of mind (or 'repentance') regarding one's sin(s). (Num. 23:19)

---There is no mention of repentance in the clearest evangelistic New Testament book—John.

---In salvation, you are turning from a state of being in darkness (i.e., a sinner).

---Repentance does not guarantee changed behavior (Mt. 3:8; Lk. 3:8; Ac. 26:20).

---Repentance leads to believing the Gospel (i.e., faith is repentance's result)—Mk. 1:15; Ac. 19:4

---Relying on works, idols or anything but Christ for salvation needs to be repented of (I Th. 1:9,

Heb. 6:1)

---You cannot live holy on your own, so a required promise to do so would be hollow, and either make you a hypocrite, or teach that God requires one to lie to Him in order to be saved.

---There is no one to return to if you were not first related to them.

---Jews in covenant relation were more culpable for not repenting.

Conclusion:

Please consider this issue... Since repentance means a *change of mind*, what could that change of mind be about? A lot of different things. We've seen just a few New Testament options. In a new covenant context, what you mainly see is that "repentance" is either one of two things: Either repentance about Christ (that is, a change of mind about Christ—who He is and what He did, which results in receiving Him), or it's a repentance away from something else that a person is trusting in, in order to bring them to see that all they can do is trust Christ." —Thomas Eckman

SUMMARY

It IS a gift that God would forgive all your sins. He does not owe such a favor to mankind. But just how do you qualify to receive that gift? By asking, in faith (under the conviction, or sorrow produced by His Spirit alone, working behind the scenes, but surely nonetheless). (Rom 2:4; II Cor. 7:10)

- a) Feeling sorry that you've sinned saves you? It is certainly part of the experience—or 'process' (as some refer to it) of salvation, but sorrow must also be joined with faith in God to forgive and change you.
- b) God HAS commanded repentance, but that is not a command to feel a certain way, but to receive His Son as the answer to our greatest problem.
- c) Does making a "U-turn" in your behavior—as so many Southern Baptist preachers define repentance—save you? There will be a turnaround in your behavior, but because of your salvation—not in order to receive it. And even committing to make a behavioral U-turn is of no value if one does not, in fact, make it, so the commitment could not save you until it's fulfillment occurred, which is a life-long process, in which case we again must equate Lordship Salvation to works-based salvation teachings. You do not need your life changed so much as you need to be born again, becoming a completely new person, from the inside first!
- d) Is a promise to not commit certain sins again required for salvation? A promise not to commit all sins? Any fool with a lick of life's experience knows you couldn't keep that promise, even if your lips uttered it.

Your nature must be made completely new—not reformed or just transformed by rehab or behavior modification. Many a person has hit rock bottom in life, and decided to change certain bad habits. That is not biblical salvation. One local pastor recently asked, 'What are you holding back? What do you need to give up or set free of?' These words are a false salvation invitation, over- focused on man—not Christ—and on man's deeds—not grace, and they certainly do not smack of a gift or good news to anyone with any active brain cells working.

P.S.—It is interesting to see how LITTLE biblical evidence exists describing or defining **conviction**. And several verses address the word 'repent' or 'repentance,' but **VERY FEW** address what it is or isn't. II Cor. 7:9-10 clearly shows that **God's sorrow is NOT the same as repentance**, but initiates and brings it about.

Conviction is truly **best understood from experience**. In fact, the only two New Testament references often used are addressed to already saved believers (II Cor. 7:8-11, 2:1-11), concerning conviction over sins committed during their SANCTIFICATION process/period—not at salvation. However, they do give some glimpses in the distinction between *mere feeling*, and that God-produced determination of faith.

From these verses, it is clear that biblical “repentance” is NOT just feeling bad, down or sorrowful. The devil can make one feel overly-bad, depressed, guilty or condemned about the fact that they have sinned. But that “feeling” does not save at all. In fact, “feeling” sorry about your sins does not save unless and until faith is exercised—emotional feeling or not. The work of the Holy Spirit CAN involve one’s emotions, but He is NOT the same as emotion—as some Charismatics misunderstand. This is NOT to say salvation is a mere intellectual exercise (‘head faith’), as it truly **must come from the heart**.

Also, commanding a lost person to simply FEEL repentant would, therefore, be futile and foolish, if one is desiring their conversion, just as a command for them to make a U-turn in their behavior (i.e., works’), or especially to *just decide to* do so, and never make that change.

3. COMMITMENT

What a great term Lordshippers use for salvation (I say, sarcastically)—“**surrender**”—as if God is warring with you, and you finally admit defeat, in order to receive a **free gift!** That’s GOOD news?

MINISTRY CALLS OF THE APOSTLES

Note: All but one of the 12 apostles (Judas, the unsaved traitor) followed Christ from the start of that call, though Christ had to occasionally remind them of the cost, especially facing suffering.

Mt. 4:19; Mk. 1:17 Call of Peter and Andrew. Christ says ‘Follow Me and I’ll make you evangelistic.’ Mk. 3:14 tells what this call was about—**raising up leaders**—and Jn. 2:11 tells WHEN these apostles were saved—**AFTER** this call, very early on (within days), just after Christ’s first *sign*.

Jn. 1:43 Call of Philip. Christ says, ‘Follow Me.’ As with the references above, we see the apostles were saved—believed—**BEFORE** they responded to this call to ministry leadership. Same reasoning applies to...

Mt. 9:9; Mk. 2:14; Lk. 5:27 Call of Matthew/Levi to “Follow Me.”

DISCIPLESHIP CALLS AFTER SALVATION

Mk. 8:34-35; Lk. 9:18-27 To the disciples and the crowd. Same context as the verse below. You “save your life” by keeping it for yourself vs. losing it in Christ, by coming after Him, requiring denying yourself, taking up your cross and following (repent, believe and surrender?). Rewards for such lifestyle accrue (also) in the life to come. Opposite lifestyle is to gain the whole material world and forfeit your soul (i.e., live for here and now—money, materialism vs. for God). (vv. 18-27) Context—He had been praying alone, with His disciples. Peter confesses Christ is God (Lk. 9:20), which Christ told him to keep secret. The disciples are ALREADY SAVED (except Judas).

Mt. 10:38 Three years after the apostles’ initial call to salvation, in a prophecy context, and addressing facing impending suffering (especially regarding Jews during the Tribulation, in context).

Mt. 16:24 Again, three years after the apostles’ initial call to salvation, and in the context of suffering, even death (or martyrdom). Lesson: Following Christ can be costly.

Jn. 12:24-26 Unless a grain of wheat dies (loses its life)—Stated late in His ministry, regarding His impending death, just after His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Jn. 21:19, 22 **Three years into Peter's salvation** Christ tells him to "Follow Me."

DISCIPLE REQUIREMENTS

Mt. 8:18-22; Lk. 9:57-62 A scribe says he'll follow Christ wherever He went, and Christ deters him with the *non-luxurious* nature of those travels—**Christ would never discourage salvation** or, by default, encourage hell, **given all he did to secure it for us**; another of the "disciples" asks permission to bury his father too, and Jesus says to "Follow Me," and let the spiritually dead physically bury cadavers. Summary: Warn that it's *not easy*, but encourage it vs. lesser, earthly concerns.

Lk. 10:25-37 Said to a self-righteous, testing attorney—inherit eternal life by fully loving God you're your neighbor (i.e., perfect obedience to the law—impossible, though the man tried to justify himself, till Christ taught the Good Samaritan extent to how far our love must go to get there by works). Somehow, if we perfectly loved God and man we would inherit eternal life? That's NOT what the law taught, so why would Jesus teach this? He doesn't. He goes on to more subtly show the attorney he is very imperfect, as the Good Samaritan shows him that every human is his neighbor!?

Lk. 14:25-32 (the Tower Builder) The cost of discipleship is to be somberly considered, as it requires completion and hating family in comparison to Christ. Nowhere is receiving eternal life (salvation) ever presented as something to first be cautious to consider whether one wants it, needs it, is willing to receive or should act upon its invitation. The call to salvation is hence, distinguishable though organically tied to and chronologically following (i.e., sanctification immediately follows conversion) that salvation.

Lk. 18:15-30; Mt. 19:13-30 The CONTEXT of these three events is key, here. The story of the rich, young ruler is bookended by lessons teaching that 1) humble, child-like faith is what's needed for salvation, and 2) that commitment to Christ gets rewarded in this life and the next, but we must be humble about such achievement.

The rich, young ruler event teaches very clearly that salvation is IMPOSSIBLE by man's works, as opposed to humble, child-like faith in Christ. The ruler's focus is not on faith but on working his way to earning eternal life—an aspiration he has chased from childhood. It's so obvious, with compassion for his sincere intentions, Christ distracts his attention from Christ's "goodness" to God's perfection standard for works, and asks him to follow, after first divesting his idol. Nowhere else in Scripture is selling all one's possessions a requirement for anything other than rewards in heaven, so Jesus is showing him that he is NOT morally perfect. The man was called to follow as a disciple of Christ, but money was an insurmountable stumbling block as more precious a priority than God.

Peter, amazed by the encounter wonders what all his commitment will be worth, to which Christ reminds him that humility is needed in the discipleship path. In summary, humble, child-like faith saves and full commitment is rewarded in this life and the next, including the originally secured eternal life—but humility is needed, not pride. The rich, young ruler relied on his riches to get him through this life, and relied on his good works to get him into the next. Christ said trust Me for both.

CALLS TO CHRIST'S *PHYSICAL* FOLLOWERS

("Groupies"—saved or lost)

Lk. 14:25-35 (Cf.: **Lk. 9:49-50**). Said to large crowds that were following Him (hate family by comparison, and consider the cost; Ex.: king building foundation)—i.e., they were evidencing dedication, but physical (vs. spiritual) following does not save you!? To be Christ's disciple, you

must hate everything else BY COMPARISON—including your own life (i.e., Christ must be number one in your life). Can one commit to be a disciple—at salvation or later—then wane in that commitment and cease to be a disciple for that time? Yes, you can revert to carnality.

Principles:

1. Christ called His chosen evangelists to full commitment, though it was before they were soon after (or contemporaneously, with Paul) saved, for all apostles whose calls were recorded.
2. Christ called Peter to follow Him 3 years after his conversion (Lordshippers would call it a re-commitment, which, by their theory, would be a re-salvation?).
3. Christ cautioned of the **high cost** of commitment, yet also warned against rejecting it for lesser things. To live for yourself in this life is a waste and a loss of a life, spiritually.
4. Many if not most of Christ's calls to discipleship came *years after* conversions, and immediately after He informed the apostles He was going to die. It apparently exhorted their continued faithfulness *after He departed*.
5. Physical followers of Christ on earth were occasionally called to discipleship, possibly to inform them their commitment to accompany Him on His journeys was not the type of spiritual commitment He was seeking from men, or easy
6. The life of sanctification requires *full* commitment, but His yoke is easy and His burden light, due to faith.
7. Coming to Christ for salvation appears to be different from coming after Christ in discipleship, just as receiving a gift is different from deciding what to do with it thereafter.
8. Coming to Christ for discipleship requires putting Him *above everyone else*.
9. Because salvation occurs at a specific *moment in time*, but discipleship is a *daily occurrence*, for life, salvation and sanctification cannot be seen to be the same event (though the decision to commit to both can occur simultaneously, as Paul proves).
10. Proof of your discipleship takes time and effort.
11. It is the natural expectation of our new nature for Christians to (eventually if not from the outset) follow Christ.
12. All Christians are *positional* disciples, though their *experience* is possible to be quite carnal, at times.
13. Some disciples were no longer walking with Christ, but Jesus *did not doubt* that they were disciples, but Peter had learned Christ's words were powerful enough to maintain his commitment. (Jn. 6:66)
14. There are consequences—some very severe—for Christians not walking with God in a disciplined life.
15. Sanctification, in the New Testament, is *voluntary*, with God offering many *incentives*, and comes from *thankfulness* for salvation—not because one promised God they would live it, in order to receive (i.e., in exchange for) a free gift.
17. Just calling Christ “Lord” does not mean you're saved or committed. (Mt. 7:15-23)
18. In prophecy, during the Tribulation, preserving your *physical* life will require *enduring* in following Christ. (Mt. 10:22, 37-39; Lk. 21:19)

Summary:

God wants ALL men to be saved, and to come to a knowledge of the truth. God wants committed Christians, and though discipleship is *voluntary*, it is not *optional* for a believer. HOW God teaches us to bring men to a committed lifestyle is not by front-loading the Gospel invitation with *false* requirements. Grace; Experienced, can ultimately only be understood through a **true experience** of God and His conviction.

- ▶ You DO (choose to) believe, and if you don't, you don't get saved, but God empowers (and initiates) the ability to do so.
- ▶ Belief does have a significant element of commitment—FULL commitment to relying on God alone to save you.
- ▶ It is not temporary faith, but it IS an experience which occurs at a specific point in time and has eternal effects.

Quotations of Experts

When something is stated well; Accurately and is truthful, to try to re-phrase it in your own words becomes like trying to re-paint to Mona Lisa or rephrase President Kennedy's "Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country. For that reason I simply quote the following:

Excerpts from G. Michael Cocoris's Evangelism: A Biblical Approach

Introduction.

"Ask three Christian leaders to define repentance and you will probably get three different answers. Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer says, 'The word means a *change of mind*...' Many evangelists preaching on repentance define it as a change of life. They say something like, 'Unless you have turned from your evil ways, unless there has been a marked change in your manner of living, you have never truly repented, for repent means to change.' Now, which leader is correct? What is repentance?" (p. 65).

Repent Definition.

"Repentance is basically a change of mind. *Metanoia*, the Greek word translated 'repent,' is a compound made up of two definite Greek words. The first is *meta*, 'after,' and the second is *noema*, 'mind.' Thus, the two together mean 'afterthought,' or 'change of mind.' The word describes an inward change of thinking or attitude."

"When someone changes his mind, there may be emotions—and there may not be. And when someone changes his mind, a change in his course of action is expected. But both of these things are *results* of repentance, and not the nature of repentance. Repentance is *not* being sorry for sin. This is the popular idea of repentance. Some even insist on tears." "...many do feel that repentance is being sorry for sin, and that is simply not the case. Paul plainly demonstrates that sorrow and repentance are two different things: 'your sorrow led to repentance' (II Cor. 7:9). Sorrow may lead to repentance; sorrow may accompany repentance; but sorrow is not repentance. There is another Greek word *metamelomai*, which means 'regret,' and that Greek word is never used in a salvation passage. There is an obvious difference between regretting and repenting. In Acts 2 the Jews regretted what they did to Christ and asked, 'What shall we do?' (v. 37). It was after their regret that Peter said, 'Repent' (v. 38)."

"One other observation: sorrow does not have to precede repentance. Paul says the goodness of God can also lead to repentance (Rom. 2:4). [It says God's goodness does lead vs. can lead]. D.L. Moody used to say that the inquirer is not to seek sorrow, but the Savior." (pp. 67-68).

What Repentance is NOT.

"Repentance is not turning from sin. That is another common misunderstanding. One fiery preacher may thunder, 'Repentance which was the burden of the [John the] Baptist's message, involves the sense of sorrow, sorrow for sin, and the severance from sin by the grace and power of God. He who repents realizes that he is a sinner, regrets his sin and resolves to forsake it.

Remember: he that lacks time to mourn lacks time to mend.’ ‘Turn or burn’ is their message.” [Harsh, unloving, and no grace in that].

“The conclusive evidence that repentance does not mean to be sorry for sin or to turn from sin is this: in the Old Testament, God repents. In the King James Version, the word *repent* occurs forty-six times in the Old Testament. Thirty-seven of these times, God is the one repenting (or not repenting) [Emphasis mine]. If repentance meant sorrow for sin, God would be a sinner.”

“The conclusion is clear: Repentance means a change of mind or attitude. It does not include tears or turning. It doesn’t even necessarily deal with sin. (As a matter of fact, ‘Plutarch tells of two murderers, who having spared a child, afterwards ‘repented’ and sought to slay it.’)¹³ If someone changes his mind, a change in behavior should result, but the word *repent* looks at the change of belief, not the change in behavior.” (pp. 68-69).

The Objects of Repentance.

It is commonly assumed that repentance always deals with sin. But again, that is not the case. The word means a change of mind or attitude—period. The matter one changes his mind about is not in or implied by the word. The different view held by the repentant person may concern God or man, fishing or eating, sin or sun-bathing.

What is the object of repentance in the New Testament? There are several.

1. **God** is sometimes the object (Ac. 20:21). If a person has a wrong concept of God, he must repent, that is, change his mind about God. If he believes that God is an idol, he must repent and see that the true and living God is the invisible creator of the universe. If he believes that God is a mean, arbitrary judge, he must repent and see that God is just, yet merciful; He is gracious and loving, as well as righteous.
2. Another object is **Christ**. This one is not so much stated as implied. In Acts 2 Peter preached that the Jews had the wrong view of Christ. They thought of Him as a common criminal, a boastful blasphemer. But Jesus was the sinless sovereign of the universe. He was no mere man, but was the magnificent Messiah. When they heard that message they cried out, ‘What must we do?’ Peter responded, ‘Repent’ (vv. 37-38).
3. Still another object of repentance is **works** (see Heb. 6:1; Rev. 9:20; 16:11, etc.). As a general rule, mankind is of the opinion that works save. ...Each individual is convinced that he is allowed a few miscues. The common concept is ‘If God grades on the curve, I’ll make it.’ God declares that the works of man are unable to save. Our effort is dead works; it has no life or ability to rescue us. So men must repent of their dead works, that is, change their minds about their works.
4. Finally, the Scripture talks about **repenting of sin** (Rev. 9:21). Some sinners take a light view of sin. In their minds, sin is not serious. God’s view is that sin is hideous. It separates humans from Himself. It causes destruction and death. To be saved, then, one must change his mind about his sin and see that it is his problem.

From this brief, simple study, it is obvious that repentance has several objects. In his book, *What the Bible Teaches*, R.A. Torrey said, ‘What the repentance, or change of mind, is about must always be determined by the context.’”¹⁶ (pp. 69-70).

The Marriage of Repentance and Faith.

“In order to thoroughly understand repentance, we must understand its relationship to faith. Frankly, this is a *puzzle* and a problem.” (p. 70). [A bit complex, yet understandable].

Sometimes repentance is the one and only stated requirement for salvation (Ac. 17:30; II Pet. 3:9). In light of the New Testament doctrine of faith, repentance in these passages must include faith. After all, faith involves a change of mind from unbelief to belief (Cf.: Ac. 11:17-18). Many times faith is the one and only requirement for salvation. [Many more times!]. This is the case in the gospel of John and in Romans 4. A few times, repentance and faith are listed together (Mk. 1:15; Ac. 20:21; Heb. 6:1). What is one to make of these statements? The conclusion seems to be that repentance and faith are not synonymous. When repentance occurs alone it includes faith. When faith occurs alone it implies repentance. Thus, they cannot be separated, but they ought to be distinguished. In salvation repentance is an inseparable part of, but is not synonymous with faith.” (p. 71).

“The wrong version of repentance goes like this: ‘You are a sinner. Be sorry for your sin. Stop sinning! Turn from your sin.’ The person who hears this will be convicted and will think he must change his life-style.”

“On the other hand, the correct view of repentance is more like this: ‘You are a sinner. You have the wrong view of God and Christ. You have sinned, and you cannot save yourself. Only Christ can help you. Throw yourself upon Him.’ The person who hears this will be convicted of his sin; but he will also be convinced that his works cannot save him, and he will come to Christ for salvation. God then changes the person inside, with a sometimes sudden and sometimes gradual change on the outside.” (p. 72).

Faith Definition.

1. **Recognition of Truth—knowledge of some truth information.** [prerequisite knowledge within the Gospel message, the recognition of which usually occurs, by the Spirit, as they hear that message].
2. **Reception of Truth—Accepting it’s truthfulness.** [prerequisite knowledge within the Gospel message, the recognition of which usually occurs, by the Spirit, as they hear that message].
3. **Reliance on Truth—Trusting/leaning/fully relying upon.**
A truck driver may believe the bridge is safe, but he does not believe in the biblical sense until he drives onto the bridge. ...A person with his clothes on fire may believe that the swimming pool will save him, but he is not saved until he dives into the pool. Faith is acceptance plus reliance.

Simply to know about Christ will not save. To accept the facts about Him will not save. Even to acknowledge that Christ actually died for sin and literally rose from the dead will not save. One must believe *on* Christ, that is, depend on Him, trust Him. Saving faith is not believing a proposition; it is trusting a person. Only when a person trusts Christ, depends on Him who died and arose, is he saved.

Faith is accepting something as true and depending on that something. This assumes knowledge. Thus, faith is the recognition of truth, the reception of truth, and the reliance upon truth.”

Charles Hodge, the famous nineteenth-century Princeton theologian says: That faith, therefore, which is connected with salvation, includes knowledge, that is, a perception of the truth and its qualities; assent, or the persuasion of truth of the object of faith; and trust, or reliance.’ Charles Hodge, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*, p. 29. (pp. 75-76).

Illustration.

Imagine a ship filled with people crossing the Atlantic. In the middle of the ocean there is an explosion. The ship is severely damaged and slowly sinking. Most are dead, and the rest are rushing for the lifeboats. Now suppose one man doesn't know about the lifeboat, so he doesn't get aboard. He doesn't have knowledge, so he is not saved. Suppose another man knows about the lifeboat and believes it will save his life, but he is grief-stricken over seeing his wife killed, so he chooses not to get aboard and dies with his wife. He has knowledge and mental assent, but he is not saved. Others believe the lifeboat will save them, and they get into the boat. They are saved by faith, that is, they have knowledge, mental assent, and trust. However, it is not their faith that saves them—no matter how much they have. It is the boat. Saving faith trusts Christ, and Christ saves.” (p. 77).

Lord Definition.

“What must I do to be saved? The simple statement of Scripture is, ‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved’ (Acts 16:31).¹ But if you listen to some saints and some speakers, you get the impression that you must do more than that.” (p. 5). Ex.: Make Christ Lord of your life, give/commit your life to Christ. “This kind of preaching of salvation is commonly referred to as Lordship Salvation. Those holding to this position claim that Christ must be Lord for Him to be Savior.” (p. 5). Is that true?

Excerpts from Dr. Charles Ryrie's Balancing the Christian Life

The Meaning of Lord.

“But, someone may ask, doesn't Lord mean Master, and doesn't receiving Jesus as Lord mean as Master of one's life? To be sure, Lord does mean Master, but in the New Testament it also means God (Acts 3:22), owner (Luke 19:33), sir (John 4:11), man-made idols (I Cor. 8:5), and even one's husband (I Peter 3:6). When it is used in relation to Jesus in the New Testament, it can have an ordinary meaning of a title of respect (as in John 4), but it must also have had some unusual connotation which caused some to question its validity. In other words, when someone who apparently was no more than an ordinary man from a poor carpenter's family claimed to be God, and when the title Lord, which meant 'Jehovah-God' to the Jewish mind, became attached to this Man Jesus in the preaching of the apostles, then there was division. For further discussion, See: Balancing the Christian Life, pp. 173-176, by Charles C. Ryrie (Moody Bible Institute: Chicago), 1969

“Simply stated the question is this: Must there be a commitment to Christ as Lord of one's life in order to be saved? Those who answer in the affirmative put it like this: ‘Those preachers who tell sinners that they may be saved without surrendering to the Lordship of Christ are as erroneous and dangerous as others who insist that salvation is by works.’¹ Or, concerning erroneous ways of presenting the gospel to people, another writer asks: ‘Or will it leave them to do is trust Christ as a sin-bearer, not realizing that they must also deny themselves and enthrone Him as their Lord (the error which we might call only-believism)?² Another supporting this same position says, ‘I am suggesting, therefore, that it is as unbiblical as it is unrealistic to divorce the Lordship from the Saviorhood of Jesus Christ.’³ In other words, if one does not give over the control of his life to the Lord when he receives Him as Saviour, he cannot be saved. Recently there has been a modification of this position to say that *willingness* to be controlled by the Lord at the time of salvation is all that is required in addition to faith in order to be saved. That is, there must at the time of salvation also be a moment of willingness to commit one's life absolutely to the Lord even though the practice of a committed life may not follow completely.

But in both variations of this viewpoint then lordship of Christ over one's life becomes a condition for salvation along with faith in Him for forgiveness of sins.

The importance of this question cannot be overestimated in relation to both salvation and sanctification. The message of faith only and the message of faith plus commitment of life cannot both be the gospel; therefore, one of them must be a false gospel and comes under the curse of perverting the gospel or preaching another gospel (Gal. 1:6-9), and this is a very serious matter. As far as sanctification is concerned, if only committed people are saved people, then where is room for carnal Christians? Or if willingness alone is required at the moment of salvation, to what extent is this willingness necessary? Can, for instance, a man who is convinced in his mind that smoking is wrong (not necessarily for spiritual reasons but simply on medical grounds) not be saved until he is at least willing to give up his smoking? Or, what kind of dedication must be preached to people, if, in order to be saved, they have already dedicated their lives to the Lord? These are very practical questions about a subject that has important ramifications in many areas." Balancing the Christian Life, pp. 169-170, by Charles C. Ryrie (Moody Bible Institute: Chicago), 1969

SLANDEROUS ACCUSATIONS AGAINST SAVIORHOODERS

Often made by Lordship Salvationists

INSUFFICIENT REQUIREMENTS

- **Sandbagging/2-Step Salvation.** Holding back even more good news, till their spirit can comprehend it; Experientially, and focusing solely on the issue of salvation—their need to have their sins forgiven and remove the impending threat of eternal judgment, is NOT an evil Gospel presentation.

Lordshippers allege Saviorhooders teach one can get saved and contemporaneously be committed to stay living in sin thereafter. Though the issue of salvation is NOT what you will do with the gift, once received, a person expressing such a heart attitude evidences he is Not under conviction at that moment. Forgiveness—not (yet) righteousness—is their initial need. Cure their primary problem before you address its symptoms, and with a new heart implanted with which to cure them. Two-step easing you into commitment, and only second step works? No. Conviction does it (Holy Spirit). Finally, is it “two steps” to receive a gift, then use the gift (i.e., decide what you’ll do with it)—to be born, then to live? Is the gift NOT received till it is used, or the life not real until day 2?

- **Discipleship is Optional.** For whom? It is not optional if one is to follow Christ. For believers, discipleship is necessary/essential, but you must first become a believer (or you can do it at the same time, voluntarily/spontaneously, as Paul demonstrates). Discipleship is voluntary, but not optional for believers.
- **Saviorhooders Sugar-Coat the Gospel.** They primarily present one (positive) side of salvation; privileges while withholding mentioning the responsibilities. Till one has the Spirit within, they cannot understand spiritual thoughts and words. It is enough for them to grasp enough of the Gospel, to, by the Spirit, respond.
- **Saviorhood Lowers God's Standard.** If we are, I agree our converts are lost. If yours is higher than God's standard, you have sentenced some people to hell (who were unwilling to meet your standard) and those who were willing could have a pride problem (I chose God) and have a growth that is based in total misunderstanding of grace.
- **Saviorhood Promotes Carnality.** Completely false. EVEN if, as with the thief on the cross and the Ethiopian Eunuch, no follow-up discipling occurs, God is in charge of their lives, and

can be trusted to achieve His purposes. Nevertheless, no Saviorhooder I have ever met teaches to receive Christ and ‘ return to your sinful lifestyle. IT JUST DOESN’T HAPPEN, and your glee at striking down a straw man would be embarrassing if so many naive laymen didn’t believe you actually had proof of such beliefs existing in Saviorhooders.

- **Easy Believism.** It is hard, that is impossible to believe apart from the Holy Spirit, but with Him, much “easier” than the alternative—works under the law. Humanly speaking, as Dr. Ryrie has queried, how easy is it to believe on a Person who lived 2,000 years ago and is claimed to be alive, and God?
- **Mere Mental/Intellectual Assent.** No—sincere, ‘with all your heart’ heart faith/reliance upon God, and trusting Christ alone. We both agree intellectual assent won’t save
- **Cheap Grace.** It was costly and expensive to Christ. So valuable, you can’t afford to work for salvation He earned (perfection standard or eternal jail sentence in hell).
- **Eternal Fire Insurance.** It is not just that, but that is certainly the foundational issue to all spiritual growth thereafter. Fire insurance is better than enduring the fire, though it’s not all God has or wants for you/His children. Fire insurance only is bad, but the solution to carnality within the Church is NOT false doctrine. And if you’re judging peoples’ motives for getting saved, you’re looking for morality in the wrong source and teaching that good works do save a person. Ultimately it is the sovereign call of God and the obedience of faith response of the person in question.
- **Saviorhood Offers False Assurance.** Saviorhooders offer as false an assurance as Christ and the apostle John offered which is NO FALSE ASSURANCE at all! Because of your faulty theology, you believe someone who has asked Christ to forgive their sins and live within them has not yet earned the right to know that Jesus did come in and eternally seal them with His Spirit. But the Bible tells a different story, and your belief that works confirm to you later that you are saved is the most crumbly of foundations upon which to build a life of sanctification! Your focus is on man and his will, and finding any method possible to ensure people live holy. God in His grace has designed a different system, you need to learn about.
- **Faith is a Commitment.** A commitment to allow God to do all the work of saving you eternally! Lordshippers love to merge a lordship commitment and faith, as if trusting Christ to save you is the same as trusting Him to lead you the rest of your life. In Greek terms, one is punctiliar, the other linear, and though the two are organically connected, never confuse sanctification (a process) with salvation (a point-in-time experience).

EVANGELISM MOTIVES

- **Saviorhood Promotes Spiritual Abandonment.** Excellent topic. Although every convert should be disciplined, ask yourself the following questions, then get back with me on this allegation: Is it right that one person NOT hear the Gospel, if limited resources were assigned to discipleship rather than completing the Great Commission? Would most Christians more easily talk to new believers or lost strangers? Let THEM follow-up our converts, even though that never morally excuses them from needing to evangelize, as well. Until the Church faithfully disciplines all those in her care, they have zero credibility attacking the few threshing oxen who are on the front lines of the war of all wars—evangelizers. God has called us to given ministries, and we are not all Paul’s—who do both things. All Christians, however were called to evangelize. I HAVE disciplined several people, but the great need of our day—unless you’re oblivious—is to recruit more workers in the ripe fields of evangelism.

Jesus taught of the joy and value of finding the one lost sheep as superior to the joy of having 99 safe sheep. I much prefer to have everyone reached, and less saved people with great rewards in heaven for growth IF, with limited resources (due to man’s sinful unwillingness to minister much) it were an either/or choice. How selfish of us to want

“quality” for the few over FIRST reaching them ALL. Now, what was it you were complaining about, for I fear you have been convicted of your role in this process, by now!?

- **Notches in Spiritual Belt.** Even if one were selfishly seeking only rewards, and had zero concern for the lost, their evangelizing in the flesh is preferable to holily doing none (Phil. 1:15-18). Plus, the Bible nowhere says that doing the right things and thereby receiving promised rewards is evil or selfish. The incentives were God’s idea.
- **Rambo/Hit-and-Run Evangelism.** Have to harvest the field entirely/thoroughly, before you can use the proceeds to make bread. You want to make bread loaves off a corner of the field, and let the other stalks dry up and be burned. Trust me, you do no better discipling that Saviorhooders—we’re all weak at it. Paul DID follow-up with converts, but he also FIRST made sure he could boldly, honestly and with good conscience attest that he was guilty of no lost person’s eternal soul not having heard (Ac. 20:26). Not many of us are called to that broad a ministry, especially laymen.

THEOLOGICAL SLOGANIZING

- **“The Great Commandment Precedes Great Commission.”** The greatest way to show love to the lost is to evangelize them! Every other deed of serving their earthly needs is vain, if they expire without Jesus. The assumption of this **rhyme theology** (such as has been used by Rev. Jesse Jackson and O.J. Simpson’s lawyer–‘if the glove doesn’t fit, you must acquit’) is that direct evangelism is wrong or hateful in the way people communicate the Gospel. No Saviorhooder I have ever met evangelizes harshly or judgmentally. The lost are victims of Satan, and need God’s love and mercy more than anyone else!
- **“If Christ is Not Lord of All He is Not Lord at All.”** More (**nursery**) **rhyme theology!** A rhyming slogan shows you thought through how to market it, but is zero indication of the merits of its content. If you cared to study your Bible more than sloganizing, you’d see that in the primary Gospel stating the Great Commission, evangelism was addressed by Christ throughout His ministry, and Mt. 4:19 (among other verses; Ex.: Jn. 4:34-36, at the beginning of His ministry)–which comes before Mt. 28:18-20 (post-resurrection), proves that you need to be more intensely obeying II Tim. 2:15 than criticizing or seeking to muzzle the threshing oxen of our world.
- **Christ is Savior and Lord.** Yes, He saves you and He is God (deity). He is Lord of all no matter if a lost person is in total rebellion to that authority. If He is not your personal Lord, as to your commitment to that authority, He is still positionally your Lord. The only issue remaining is does one have to be totally committed to His Lordship in order to be saved, and that question has been adequately answered throughout this article.

PROCEDURAL COMPLAINTS

- **Formulaic Outline and Magic Words of the “Sinner’s Prayer.”** There are no set words which work. NO Saviorhooder has ever taught that there were. God is looking at the heart, but the main way one expresses what resides therein is through words of prayer, and calling on the name of the Lord is NOT an evil thing, as you try to spin it.

SATANIC SLANDER

- **Saviorhood is a False Gospel.** If everything presented in this article is accurately interpreted and truthful, the severe oweness is on Lordship Salvationists to prove THEIRS is not the false Gospel (as it is).

Bottom line: if you have **never experienced salvation**, the *natural mind* can **never** comprehend it! (I Cor. 2:14). And if your salvation experience is SO personal you are unwilling

to be objective and challenge your theological traditions' assumptions, you will NEVER move past simply **parroting** someone else's opinions on this *most important* subject.

Lordship Salvation Proof Texts—Refuted

4 Soils. Only the first person is unsaved. The other 3 “believed,” though the next two are carnal and worldly, the last one being the only “spiritual” seed. There are degrees of discipleship, and everyone decides how intensely he will serve Christ and the quality of work they will offer and be rewarded for (I Cor. 3:10-16).

Treasure Hidden in a Field. For joy in finding the treasure he sells all—NOT as a requirement for finding the treasure. Lordshippers will argue his selling all was required to own it, which is true, but we do not buy salvation, and finding it is enough to have the joy to commit all toward its experiential possession in our lifestyles, if one has ever found it in Christ.

The Lost Coin. Same analysis as the treasure hidden in a field, above.

Prodigal Son. The Father doesn't even let him complete his pre-planned Lordship Salvation repentance speech, though Lordshippers would absolutely teach that the intention of that speech in its entirety was required for his dad to have so welcomingly received him (even though the father had been looking for and ran to him when he saw him).

Rich, Young Ruler. This man was seeking salvation by works (and doing quite well by man's standards), and Christ's disciples got confused (as wealth in that day was considered a sign of God's blessing, contrary to Jas. 2:5). Christ corrects their misunderstanding by teaching that salvation is only possible with God (i.e., not by man's works). Jesus did NOT teach that renouncing specific sins is required for salvation, but points out that the man's obvious idol showed him to be just a sinner needing salvation (as one sin makes us guilty of all; Jas. 2:10). The disciples were then concerned about their own commitment's rewards, to which Christ assures them it IS rewarded—both here and in eternity—though the ultimate reward—salvation—is an un-earnable gift.

Calls to Discipleship. Either full commitment is required for salvation or it is not. Please see our thorough, well-researched prior analysis of this question, which should make it clear which side of the fence we're on. Funny, many of the most-famous discipleship calls were given to Christ's apostles, at least 2 years after He called and saved them!

Repentance Verses. Aren't there verses where repenting does mean feeling sorry for and turning away from sin or sins? Please see our prior thorough, well-researched analysis of repentance verses.

Paul's Conversion. If you had a lightning-like blinding light strike you and make you blind and dumb for 3 days, I feel quite sure you'd be willing to do anything the voice told you. However, even Paul himself attributes faith as the basis of his conversion—not surrender. (II Tim. 1:12). Also, his life as a Jew was depicted by radial commitment—he merely needed a new understanding of the Object for which his efforts were to be committed, in ministry (once saved).

Calling of the Apostles/Disciples. See the case of Paul as representative. Christ was not just calling these men to salvation, but to leave their professions and families and literally follow Him around in His ministry travels. Have you been called with such a call (at salvation)? Plus, John 2 tells us they were saved AFTER they had responded to Christ's call to be evangelistic leaders, though His grouping them as apostles, and telling them discipleship requirements came even AFTER that.

Faith and Works. The book of James was written to people who were already saved, and the theme of the book is how to become sanctified as a believer. Chapter two speaks of specific acts of faith—not the general trusting of Christ for forgiveness of all sins—such as if a believer sees a

brother in need. This is a sanctificational decision in which one must act upon the faith given in the leading. **See:** Additions to Faith.

Conclusion:

Many Lordshippers (using Mt. 7:13-27 and 13:1-23 as *limited* proof texts) teach there are many people in church (often referencing Saviorhooders and their converts) who are *deceived* that they are saved. There *are* imposters attending church for business leads, to clear their conscience, to look good and because it's the American way (at least in the Bible Belt), but there is also a secular social stigma against being a 'religious' person, so one claiming to be a Christian would not be a decision entered into lightly were it not the case.

These same Lordshippers RARELY if ever fail to read verses about actively sinfully, yet surely saved believers in the Bible, or to acknowledge that 90% of American Christians are carnal (or, as some call it—nominal), yet Lordship Salvation is the predominant salvation teaching. Are they accepting people claiming full commitment to living good, not bad, and, at the same time, denying even those people got saved?

Evidence of the Severity of the Dispute

(hopefully non-inflammatory, though *true* statements)

First and foremost of the evidences is the significant problem of the extent of carnal living within the American church, of which both sides agree (even though Lordship Salvation is predominantly the majority viewpoint!). What follows are paraphrased or directly quoted statements of the opposing sides indicating how seriously they hold their proponent's doctrinal error and effect to be:

On the Seriousness of the Issue

Hodges: It is 'one of the worst distortions of the Bible in our day. (p. 25).

MacArthur: It is the greatest weakness of American evangelical Christianity today. (p. xi).

MacArthur: It is a matter of eternal consequences. (p. xiv).

On the Gospel's Content

Hodges: It is 'a radical re-writing of the gospel.' (p. 20).

MacArthur: It warps and sometimes completely destroys the gospel. (p. xii).

On its Spiritual Origins

Hodges: It is 'Satanic at its core,' and it is 'encouraged by the Enemy of souls.' (Gospel Under

Siege, pp. 6 and 122)

Hodges: It is to have faith in the powerless words of man. (p. 49).

On the Matter of Faith and Requirements for Salvation

MacArthur: It is a tragic error as it teaches that one can become a Christian without becoming a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. (p. xi).

MacArthur: It offers a salvation which involves no spiritual commitment, no turning from sin, no change in lifestyle, and no commitment to the authority of Christ. (p. 22).

MacArthur: It feeds the sinfulness of the human heart by giving the promise of eternal life without surrender to divine authority. (p. 16).

MacArthur: It offers cheap grace. (p. 16).

On Salvation

Hodges: It makes salvation a contract between God and man. (p. 27).

Hodges: It has ‘turned the meaning of faith upside down.’ (p. 27).
MacArthur: It exalts a faith which it destroys. (p. ix). [it destroys no such thing].
MacArthur: It makes faith a bare assent to the facts of the gospel. (pp. ix and xi). [out and out, absolute LIE].

On Sanctification, Law and Grace

Hodges: It seeks to make Christians obey by challenging them to question their salvation. (GUS, p. 97).
Hodges: It is akin to Pharisaism. (p. 183).
Hodges: Lordship salvation “is a kind of faith/works synthesis which differs only insignificantly from official Roman Catholic dogma.” (p. 20).
MacArthur: It divorces the gospel from a transforming commitment to the living Christ. (p. ix).
MacArthur: It separates salvation and discipleship and applies every recorded invitation of Jesus to discipleship and not salvation. (p. 30).
MacArthur: It offers a salvation from hell but not from the bondage of iniquity. (p. 16).
MacArthur: It makes obedience optional in the Christian life. (p. 17).
MacArthur: The life we live, not the words we speak, determines our eternal destiny. Hard To Believe, p. 93, by John MacArthur (Thomas Nelson: Nashville, TN), 2003

On its Theology and Bad Effects/Consequences

Hodges: It is as a theology ‘a complete disaster.’ (p. 27).
Hodges: It is ‘a theological Trojan horse.’ (p. 27).
MacArthur: It will secure only false conversions. (p. ix).
MacArthur: It produces a false evangelism. (p. 15).

On Assurance of Salvation

Hodges: It destroys the ground of assurance for believers. (p. 48).
Hodges: It is so in error that it cannot possibly give true assurance of salvation to the Christian in his life.’ (GUS, p. 10).
Hodges: It drives its adherents ‘into a psychological shadowland.’ (p. 31).
MacArthur: It offers a false hope. (p. 15).
MacArthur: It promises a false peace to those not truly in God’s family. (p. xi).

On Historical and Biblical Accuracy

Hodges: Its message and doctrine would be unrecognizable by the New Testament writers. (GUS, p. 121).
MacArthur: It is a distinctly different view of salvation than the Biblical one. (p. xiv).

On Hermeneutics and Exegesis (Scriptural Interpretation)

Hodges: It is to handle the Scriptures in a manner which is ‘grotesque distortion.’ (p. 135).
Hodges: It has a resolute blindness which resists obvious conclusions. (p. 148).
Hodges: It ‘clashes with the repeated statements’ of the apostle John. (p. 26).
Hodges: Its discussion of Scripture at points wanders off ‘into a wasteland of obscuring and confusion.’ (p. 169).

“In light of the above statements, who can deny that the chief proponents of the debate consider the issue of Lordship versus non-lordship salvation a serious matter, even involving the very nature of the gospel itself.” (Layman’s Guide, p. 4). “The controversy is important and every Christian of our day needs to be informed on the subject, and needs to take a stand in the controversy. Both authors noted above are correct in one thing concerning the controversy—the nature of the gospel is at stake.” (Layman’s Guide, p. 5).

Note: Excerpts paraphrased from A Layman's Guide to Lordship Salvation, by Richard P. Belcher, and Other Sources. Responses to allegations made may exist from respondents, and if they are not listed, it is only for want/lack of this author's discovering them in print—not that they do not exist or are not possessed by the writers involved. [All MacArthur quotes and paraphrases taken from John MacArthur's The Gospel According to Jesus; all Hodges quotes and paraphrases from Absolutely Free, unless otherwise indicated, namely The Gospel Under Siege ("GUS").

FAQ's

1. What About the Jew's Repentance (and, For that Matter, Wayward Christians)?

The Jews, as a nation, knew better (as they were already in covenant relationship with God), so their repentance did pertain to their returning to God. You can't return to a place you have never been. Of course, all of God's spiritual children should quickly return to Him anytime they fall/fail, through grace.

2. Could One Commit Their Life to Living for Christ and Not Have Received Him?

Unlikely. Committing to living morally, yes (Ex.: Gandhi), but it was not the requirement to receive salvation, and any false teaching about that can start one on a life of works-based sanctification (as well as pride in their role in salvation, etc.). It IS a very **good and important** thing to do, but is not that which God has required in order to (humbly, under conviction) receive His free gift offer!

Application: What Have You Learned?

From A.W.A.N.A.S...

"Invitations...must be clearly and precisely conveyed. It is of utmost importance that everyone listening will understand the specifics of the invitation. Above all, the invitation must be biblically-based. ...Frequently heard as conclusions to salvation messages are the following invitations. Some are doctrinally correct, some incorrect. Others are just too confusing to understand."

Evaluate the following invitations (as theologically true or false):

1. ___ Will you give your heart to Christ?
2. ___ Will you surrender your life to Christ?
3. ___ Will you confess your sins and ask the Lord to forgive you?
4. ___ Will you come to Christ tonight and promise to serve Him from now on?
5. ___ Will you come and "pray through" to Christ?
6. ___ Right now ask Jesus to come into your heart.
7. ___ Will you make your commitment for Christ tonight?
8. ___ Will you make Him Lord of your life?
9. ___ Will you repent of your sins to get saved?
10. ___ Just believe now and allow Jesus to touch you.
11. ___ Are you willing to forsake all your sins to obtain salvation?
12. ___ Will you accept the Lord Jesus as your own personal Savior?
13. ___ Christ died for your sins. Believe it personally. That's all you need to get saved.
14. ___ You can be saved right now by believing that Christ died for your sins.
15. ___ Will you believe Jesus took your place on the cross?
16. ___ Right now believe that Christ paid the price in full for your sins.

The stated proper answers are numbers 12-16, yet the truth is numbers 13-16 are preparatory information one needs to know (and subconsciously assent to?), but will not, on their own, save you. In fact, not one statement mentions Christ's resurrection—that is, that he is alive—something I Cor. 15:1-3 says is the Gospel. No answer says trust, necessarily, as believing true facts alone is not the same as relying on Jesus to save you. —J. Meroney.

SUMMARY

I believe most Lordship Salvationists sincerely believe their theory, believe it's biblical, and surround themselves with like-minded thinkers, so their belief is considered mainstream and right. Many (if not most) were probably saved under that belief, so the emotional tie is near unbreakable. Plus, there truly are a few verses that can seem to confuse the issue (if not properly understood). I also believe many Lordshippers think Saviorhooders want sinners to remain sinful and not get committed to Jesus—just accept a gift (a privilege) with zero responsibilities think Saviorhooders, and that they can send people to hell by lessening God's requirements (i.e., from their standard). As in politics, the issue will likely never be resolved as between (hopefully) brethren, but, fortunately, the same God we both attempt to serve is able to save even despite false doctrine. So, we should still try to convince and influence toward true doctrine, and love one another, but it is ultimately a matter some people just will not be accurate about until they reach the other side.

TWEETED THEOLOGY

Since mid-80's Lordship Salvation has been predominant theory espoused in the U.S. church which STILL suffers 5/10/13 problem*. Saviorhood Salvationists have been closeted.

Saviorhood salvationists: Where are you and where have you hidden?
BE BOLD, despite mainstream U.S. church believing lordship salvation error!

Jn. MacArthur saw the carnality in church and sought to fix it with Lordship Salvation.
Discipling/Quiet Time and Bible motivation was the answer vs. error.

If full commitment to live holy for life is REQUIRED for salvation, why are Christians told to do such so often in Bible? See our website on Lordship salvation.

You can commit to live holy rest of your life and stop living sinfully rest of your life and you'll still go to hell without trusting Jesus. ONLY that saves.

Salvation happens at a point in time (with eternal effects) just like childbirth.
Discipleship/sanctification is DAILY & life-long/linear. VERY clear in the New Testament.

Salvation is a FREE gift; discipleship is costly. If you can't see the difference, open your eyes and read Lordship Salvation errors at our website.

Mental assent WILL NOT SAVE anyone. Only sincere faith in Christ;
ONLY ACTUALLY receiving Him, all under His sovereign conviction.

Eternal fire insurance is better than assurance of eternal fire.
We're not saved by the morality of our motives, but faith in God's moral mercy!

Saviorhooders are NOT against fully committed believers. We ONLY support such.
But you DON'T force it holding heaven over their head but gratitude for salvation!

Here's verses showing behavior change can occur at salvation:
Ac. 2:41-46/11:21-23/13:43/16:15, 31-34; Phil1:3-7; Col. 1:3-8; I Th. 1:2-10, ETC.

Saviorhood gets HOLINESS by discipling under grace through faith by commitment from conviction and Spirit's power. Lordships can't achieve that with law!

Example: Undercover Boss GREAT illustration of Saviorhood salvation.
Recipients overwhelmed by GREAT gifts so LOYAL. Teach believers its VALUE! (Heb. 2:3)

Example: When I rub our rabbit's back, he licks my other hand in gratitude.
I NEVER tell him if you'll lick my hand I'll rub your back, Lordship Salvationists.

Except for II Cor. 13:5 ~EVERY record of SINFUL believers listed at same website section NEVER doubts their salvation, usually calling them brothers.

Peace itself may be the only INITIAL evidence of salvation.
What evidence had the thief on the cross?

Good deeds are NOT perfect proof one is saved. Some religious people act better than believers. The Spirit inside as witness is ultimate basis of assurance.

The Spirit forever within is how we know we are saved—
NOT our inconsistent and imperfect deeds, be they now or even later in life!

The church of Corinth was a VERY sinful church, but Paul NEVER doubted their salvation.
Lordship Salvationists would say they were lost, as full commitment for life is required.

IF FULL commitment for a lifetime is required for salvation, if a Christian's behavior (or commitment) wanes, and Lordships say he's still saved, it WASN'T required for a lifetime!

ANY lack of full commitment in your lifetime DIS-qualifies you as a disciple in that moment, so Lordships HAVE TO say you lost or never had salvation!

God is more interested in your doing good deeds than mere words
or even commitment to do such without the doing. Lordship Salvationists say

don't change before salvation, just commit to change!

Can anyone see by these many Bible-based mini-arguments that Lordship Salvation is NOT God's Gospel? Christ by faith alone saves—accepting His free gift.

This is NO attack on the sincerity of Lordshippers' beliefs, or any doubt they're saved. It is addressing their content compared to the FULL counsel of God.

Lordship Salvation leaders say Saviorhooders cause carnality by NOT requiring full commitment to be saved. We trust God within can and does bring changes, over time.

Lordship Salvationists truly have faith in man's will. Saviorhooders rely on the miracle that happens within when Christ is received.

Saviorhooders are dupers to discuss sanctification with converts? If babes are resistant to talk about growth, we MAY warn them change might not have occurred, but they need information (and time)!

We are accused of sandbagging the 'bad news' or a 2-step salvation. Sanctification is NOT bad news and there can be a difference between receiving and using a gift!

We teach cheap grace? It was COSTLY to Jesus! We teach easy believism?

It's impossible to believe apart from the Spirit.

Grace can be abused, but God doesn't NOT offer it due to that.

Jesus DID call people to follow Him daily and fully. We support that FULLY—it's just not His initial/salvation requirement. I'm NOT the only one who teaches this.

There are likely MILLIONS who hold a Saviorhood Salvation position. Two leaders are Drs. Charles Ryrie and Zane Hodges. Read them too, vs. just Rev. John MacArthur.

Before his books in the 1980's (or earlier), Saviorhood Salvation was more popular than now. For FEAR faith was NOT enough, people clung to his teachings.

God doesn't operate in fear.

Lordshippers have SO scared people into NOT wanting to be accused of "cheap grace," they've gone quiet and private about Saviorhood Salvation! Stand firm!

One is a peacemaker to teach BOTH views in a sermon invitation? You may FEEL like one, but you're truly confusing the lost, and God is NOT the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33)

Why refute Lordship Salvation so avidly? Doesn't that make you "evil" and opposing repentance and righteousness? NO. Define it rightly and how to be good rightly.

GRACE brings righteousness and law (will power trying to obey commands without the Spirit and faith) brings MORE sinfulness (Rom. 7). Christians can't be good on their own.

Making people commit to be good on threat of hell if not is LAW. God motivates by GRACE! We grow from gratitude for vs. to qualify for salvation!

Does ANYONE out there CARE about this issue? Dr. Ryrie was sad this issue had reached a lower cycle of interest! It's IMPORTANT, especially for evangelism.

I will HAPPILY enter any public debate (as I offered Rev. E. Weedon in 1986) on Lordship Salvation vs. the Bible, because the TRUE Gospel saves (Rom. 1)

I'm no expert. Ask select Dallas Seminary professors to go public and debate it—NOT to cause strife but to educate Christians on what's true vs. false.

Non-Christian devout religionists commit to live holy and NOT sinful, but those two decisions DON'T get them out of going to hell absent Jesus within. Is this hard to understand?

Those religionists' definitions of sin and holiness may vary from ours some, but ONLY when they receive Christ do they go to heaven—NOT commitment to be good and not bad. READ the Bible.

Faith must be sincere and from a FULL heart, prayerfully, humbly trusting Christ to eternally save you when you ask Him to, based on His work and promises so to do.

Faith is NOT mere intellectual assent. Saviorhooders DONT teach that straw man!
Most importantly, God's sovereign conviction must be there, or NOTHING spiritual happens.

Select Bibliography

Pro-Lordship:

The Gospel According to Jesus, John MacArthur

Faith Works: The Gospel According to the Apostles, by John MacArthur

A Layman's Guide to the Lordship Controversy, by Richard P. Belcher

Pro-Saviorhood:

Absolutely Free, Zane Hodges

The Gospel Under Siege, Zane Hodges

Balancing the Christian Life, Charles Ryrie

Biblical Evangelism, Michael Cocoris

Free and Clear, by R. Larry Moyer

Grace Evangelical Society literature, Etc.

27B. “Relationship Evangelism” Errors

PASTOR WARNING

All pastors who adhere to and advocate the ‘Relationship Evangelism’ *theory* beware—**the blood of those for whom Christ died will be eternally on your hands** if using this method, you never FULLY COMPLETE the Great Commission in at least your ‘own Jerusalem’ (or part of town). Evangelism has **NOT** been done—or even begun—until the empowered words of the Gospel are communicated to lost people!

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

God highly values human relationships, and we need to evangelize those we already know and love (Ex.: friends and family). However, as can be seen in the Personal Evangelism Plan section, there are many other ways we relate to people, and people from **every** type of relationship we encounter need to be evangelized! Evangelize everyone you know well immediately, and stop following the world (which only rightly teaches children not to speak to strangers) in agreeing that we are not to speak of religion or politics, lest an argument erupt. **Reach out beyond your own circle of influence.** Paul (and the other apostles) certainly did, for him to have been able to reach *as many* as he (and the others) did!

Biblical Evidence for DIRECT Evangelism: Jn. (3:1-21), 4:7-42; Ac. 2:14, 22, 3:12, (4:1?), 4:8-13, (19-20), 31, 5:28-29+, 42, 6:(10), 7:2+, 8:4-6, (12), 25-31, 35, 9:19b-20, 22, 27-28, 10:28+, 34, 11:(1), 19, 21, (24), <12:24-25>, 13:5, 14-16+, 46-49, 14:1, 3, 7, (9), 21-22, 25, 15:<13>, 35, 16:13-14, (25?), (30-32), 17:1-4, 10-13, 16-19, 22+, 18:4-5, 8-9, 11, (13), 19, 19:8-10, 20:(18-21?), 21:(20-21), 22:1+, 23:1+, 24:10+, 25:8+, (11), 26:1+, 27:<10, 21+>, 28:17+, etc.

Danger(s): Relationship Evangelism very easily can slow down the pace of Great Commission completion, can cause a lost person to ‘respond’ based on emotional bonding to a Christian rather than the convicting call of the Spirit, and is a disobedient and sinful timidity and delay in evangelizing needy lost persons.

INTRODUCTION

This relatively new, **highly popular** philosophy is usually presented as a ‘method’ of evangelizing. By definition, it calls for Christians to relate to lost people by establishing some sort of relationship (beyond initial human rapport) **BEFORE one can share the gospel** with them, usually explained as “*earning the right* to be heard.” The fallacy of the theory is multi-faceted, primarily centered on the fact that evangelism is speaking a message in the power of God, corroborated by ethical behavior. *You* are **NOT** the message, nor your *imperfect* lifestyle (proof positive? Mormon and Jehovah’s witnesses’ good deeds, sometimes surpassing our own, though representing a *false* Gospel), and Christ earned our right to be heard—He commands us to be witnesses.

The philosophy was created to try to counter the **small numbers of Christians who ever evangelize**, by making it ‘*easier*,’ “*more natural*,” and more *fun* and interesting to the believer by making them feel if they use their hobbies and job skills to do almost anything toward a lost person, they can feel like they are participating in the high and noble work of evangelism, even if they never speak the Gospel. No matter how hard we try, the Gospel is NOT a natural topic of conversation—it’s spiritual—and though sales spiels are not either, they are more so than evangelism. This theory arose in the mid 1980’s (Ex.: Lifestyle Evangelism, by Joe Aldrich) as

a knee-jerk pseudo theological reaction to the **embarrassment** felt by many for NOT participating in direct evangelism ministries, such as Evangelism Explosion (and the SBC-versioned CWT program).

Rather than being an *improvement* to any prior efforts, the movement represents a landmark shift in the pace and breadth of evangelism, more akin to a **work slow-down** (as if we have all our lives and can take our time reaching every soul, with a self-righteously *alleged* increased focus on quality rather than quantity). They typically accuse people who simply start conversations with lost people about their eternity as “**confrontational**,” though there is no direct evangelizer I have ever heard of who in evangelism treats a lost person as evil, and needing a dressing down, but as a victim of Satan who needs the words of life—the **good news!** Even atheistic liberals don't need our *chastising* for being atheists, but the GOSPEL. They aren't our *enemies* (Eph. 6:12), but Satan's **victims**. It's always easier for the flesh to criticize than to **evangelize**.

Finally, the model is premised more on an analysis of the business sales process (i.e., relational selling vs. cold calls) than a close or thorough examination of the word of God.

If one were to sincerely consider the following questions, answering them only from the Bible perspective, perhaps God would clear up their *blind obedience* to this doctrine of man, designed less for *thorough* Great Commission results than to **water down our call** to get more *supposed* evangelism participants.

Relationship vs. Direct Evangelism: The Crux of the Matter

1. Is an evangelism method which is slow and timid *fully* biblical? If by its *very nature* and society's busy pace of life, that method could **never** reach very many people for Christ per individual believer, and **could not** easily, literally and **completely** fulfill the Great Commission, could it be ‘*of God?*’
2. Do accusations such as “Rambo” evangelism, “hit-and-run” evangelism, “gaining notches on one's spiritual belt,” spiritual abandonment, “confrontational” evangelism and “in your face, button-holing” evangelism—spoken about those who directly and in loving attitude **SPEAK** the Gospel to lost people—come from God or the **devil**, even though *through* the mouths of “*Christians?*” (Ex.: Mt. 16:23)
3. Does the Bible (or some other source) require and/or encourage Christians to “develop relationships” with lost individuals before the believer “has earned” some “right to be heard,” because “no one cares how much you know before they know how much you care?” Is the reasoning of this approach found in Scripture? How could Peter and Paul have “developed relationships” with so MANY individuals which constituted a number possibly in the millions who heard them preach the Gospel? Doing the Great Commission is the **ULTIMATE** way to fulfill the Great Commandment to love God and man!

Example: A local church's High School Music Minister, seeking to justify ‘servant evangelism’ (‘cleaning up streets, businesses and residential areas to **show we care** about the community’) said: ‘The more-hardened New York City people aren't going to be receptive to out-of-state teenagers just coming up to them **telling them about Jesus.**’ (6/25/12). Is that ASSUMPTION how Jesus said to evangelize people **WE** are stereotyping as hardened (Lk. 8:5-8)? Does that way of thinking show faith in the Gospel as “the power of God unto

salvation” (Rom. 1:16), **faith** in the power of the **Spirit** to *prepare hearts* to be receptive through empowered servants—*no matter* their age? Evangelism is **NOT** a sales transaction, you are **NOT** the message, and you **CANNOT** out-smart God and His strategies. You may never have seen God work in evangelistic power (I Cor. 4:20), to strangers, but **your experience is NOT the standard**, and *many of us* have experienced that very truth. **Nowhere in Scripture** are we told to do social service in order to ‘warm up’ a person to our message! **No wonder** our evangelism yields so few results! THE SOWER SOWS THE **WORD**.

4. Is it a **sin** to cater to and appease believers’ old sin nature-based **timidity** in and **fear** of evangelism, to make them **feel like they are engaged in evangelism** (so as not to “step on their toes” over the historically **deplorably** low percentage of them which ever **speak** the Gospel to anyone; i.e., 5%)? Relational evangelists **hide behind** the *good* concept of being a friend, to hide their **timidity** at sharing the Gospel with strangers! ANY “RELATIONAL EVANGELISM” ACTIVITY **ULTIMATELY BECOMES DIRECT** EVANGELISM ANYWAY, if ever one moves to the point of obedience in telling their “friend” the Gospel!
5. Is living holy, as a Christian, a *method* of evangelizing? Can any lost person **understand** the Gospel message because they see a believer act ‘good’ (and *hopefully* don’t see the times when he falls short)? Said another way, are YOU the message, and do your deeds **corroborate** or communicate the **contents** of the Gospel? HOW do good deeds differ from Gandhi’s message, and how do they **tell of a cross, a sacrifice and an eternal, divine Savior**?
6. Relatedly, **can a person evangelize without SPEAKING?** Is performing charitable deeds toward the lost biblically required, or even ‘*best*,’ **before evangelizing** them? Don’t we still have the same **power** within (i.e., the Spirit) as they had in Acts (though the manifestations—miracles and healings—likely have changed)? Maybe we don’t experience that power like we should. And don’t rely on I Pet. 3:1-2, because no one in their right mind would believe that wife had never told her lost husband she was a believer, before she then needed her corroborating deeds to try to win him over. (I Cor. 7:16)
7. Is it biblical to pass the buck of evangelism off to the professionals (i.e., pastors and Evangelists), or to ignore the injunctions to **“go and tell”** by resorting to **inviting** lost people to **“come and hear”** that same preacher at a church building? God puts no more oneness on lost people than to believe. We have *encrusted* the Gospel with “come, then believe.”
8. Does the Bible teach **urgency** and **boldness** in evangelism as **virtues** or *sins*, and is **emotional bonding** with lost people, *over time*, **“the power of God unto salvation?”** People say “yes” to sales persons all the time, so as **not to hurt their feelings**. How much more so to ‘friends,’ which the statistic that only 10% of American believers are *committed* Christians would indicate is often going on here?

Said another way, can you justify, *biblically*, **delaying** telling ANYONE the Gospel, in order to first “get to know them” fairly well? Isn’t that ungodly *procrastination*? What Scriptures do you cite for any claimed justification?

9. Even if any “*direct* Evangelism” advocate/adherent were **ever doing** evangelism in the flesh—does the Bible teach **carnal evangelism** or no evangelism as the BETTER option? (given that 95% of Christians choose the ‘no evangelism’ lifestyle). (Phil. 1:18)
10. Does the Bible teach **direct** evangelism, or a subtle, ‘back-door,’ sophisticated, schmoozey type of **“befriending”**—with evangelism as the **“HIDDEN AGENDA** you *MAY* eventually get

to?” Bringing up politics and religion in conversation can *ruin* social relationships, so you may risk losing this “friend” by **doing** evangelism.

11. Why do the **majority** of American churches employ the relationship evangelism method **near their building**, but if they evangelize **anywhere else** (Ex.: **even same-city evangelism**), direct methods are OK? Certainly *cultural differences* can’t validly be the excuse (as with foreign mission trips). Could it be they are more concerned with gaining church members, and only **assume** people don’t join their church after being evangelized *directly*?
12. **REAL relationships** start *naturally* (i.e., are not contrived), or when someone has moved or feels lonely, and sets out to *fill that need*. How many of your friends did you specifically and consciously set out and choose to be your friend? Relationships take time and effort (despite “friending” labels on Facebook), and with *busy lives*, are you really committing to be a ‘friend’ in the **biblical sense of that word?** (Pv. 17:17; Ecc. 4:12; Amos 3:3; I Cor. 15:33)

12 ISSUES FOR RELATIONSHIP EVANGELISM ADHERENTS TO CONSIDER

1. **Evangelism in a Nutshell.** If God were to come to you today, put a gun to your head and say: “Go evangelize!,” what would you (immediately) **do**? Move your feet and open your mouth to tell someone the Gospel message! No wonder God uses the feet as illustrative of the evangelizer. (Rom. 10:15) I assure you that you would **NOT** go find anyone to “build a relationship” with over time. Remember, the gun *is* to your head in this hypothetical—He’s the Holy Spirit, and “evangelism” was called for, and anyone who fears God would NOT be so foolish as to disobey, under this fact scenario.
2. **Tortoise-Like Pace/Non-Urgency.** If the person you are “*leveraging*” toward the Gospel (i.e., the prospect, new ‘friend,’ or evangelism ‘prospect’) **DIES** before you get to the day you would share the Gospel with him or her, MIGHT you consider using a better method? Who put molasses in our Great Commission vision glasses?
3. **Small Quantity Reached.** How can the relational method square with Scripture, which says both that a man of many friends comes to ruin (Pv. 18:24), and to let your foot rarely be in your neighbor's house, lest he become weary of you and hate you? (**Pv. 25:17**). The relationship method can **NEVER** reach MANY people, a result contrary to Scripture and the Great Commission. In our *busy* American lives, and with most people already having an *adequate* number of friends, the time and effort required to build a decent friendship—as important as that is IF you are inclined to have them as friends “*naturally*” (that is, because you like them and need or want an additional friend)—does not allow a believer to reach more than PERHAPS 15 people (or so) in his/her lifetime (unless you **re-define** what it means to be a biblical “FRIEND”). Perhaps the idea comes from the sales or networking disciplines.
4. **Not Used in the New Testament.** Do you really think there is any possibility that Peter, Paul and the rest of the limited number of Christians who turned the world upside down in the first century could have employed the relationship evangelism method, given that likely millions of people heard the Gospel through their mouths in so many places in so little time? (Ac. 17:6) Can you IMAGINE Paul using such a slow method, even on his **worst** day?
5. **Not Taught in Scripture.** Can you show me in Scripture, direct, clear and specific examples of the relationship evangelism method being used by *anyone*? It’s NOT biblical, not found in

Scripture, certainly is *not* supposed to be the main/#1 or even a **major** evangelism method, and until one has tried the methods God has revealed that **He** leads believers to use—and proven that they fail—one has no right trying to improve on God’s revealed methods, and try to *out-think* or “help” God in our attempted wisdom (and knowledge of our supposedly so very unique “culture”).

6. **Hidden Agenda/Non-Transparency.** If your “friend,” over a long period of time, absolutely hardens his heart against receiving the Gospel, and tells you he is resolute against even talking about it, and never appears to *lessen his stance* no matter how kind you are to him during that process, **would you STILL continue to pursue the friendship?** Relational evangelism is a friendship with an agenda and strings attached (to the target), and is practically *manipulating* people with “friendship” to *get something* at the end of the process—though the thing sought to be obtained **IS** noble (and is for the “friend’s” eternal benefit, not for the Christian’s own edification). Paul was “straightforward” about the truth of the Gospel and we should be also. (**Gal. 2:14**),
7. **Timid vs. Biblically Bold.** How is relationship evangelism urgent or bold—two principles of BIBLICAL evangelism? (**Eph. 6:19-20; Lk. 12:35-40**). Contrariwise, it can cover for our timidity and fear (**II Tim. 1:7**) or shame of the Gospel (**II Tim. 1:8; Rom. 1:16**), which would constitute sinful attitudes. The method clearly does not take seriously or literally the fact that Jesus could return ANY day, and that people’s last day on earth is *never known*, and could occur at any time, or the HUGE number of lost required to be reached by the *small number who evangelize*. Better to err on the side of obedience to God, than presumption upon God’s delaying Christ’s coming or that lost person’s demise. (**II Pet. 3:9**)
8. **Never Reprove Rejecters/Political-Correctness.** Rather than EVER shaking the dust off our feet (**Mt. 10:14; Mk. 6:11; Lk. 9:5; Ac. 13:51**) at willful Gospel rejecters, the “relationship evangelist” would NEVER be so politically incorrect, offensive or BIBLICAL, as they try to supersede that COMMANDMENT by “schmoozing” or socializing people into liking the evangelizer, through repeated social interaction, even when faced with an otherwise “pearls before swine” situation (**Mt. 7:6**). By trying to “*out-smart*” God, relationship evangelists believe they have circumvented ever experiencing such a “swine” encounter or any need to ever shake the dust off their feet, because we’re going to “love them into the kingdom.” THE BEST WAY TO SHOW LOVE TO A LOST STRANGER IS TO LOVINGLY EVANGELIZE HIM OR HER.
9. **Deeds Don’t Tell Gospel Content and Aren’t Biblically Clear.** No matter how exposed lost people are to your ‘*behavioral testimony*,’ at best they will see some good deeds and some sins. What sort of message are those deeds communicating, apart from the Gospel itself being spoken? **Gandhi’s life might have been better lived than many believers’, and his ‘life’s message,’ sadly, leads people to hell!** The Bible NEVER says that our behavior or WE ourselves are the message—our message is Jesus Christ, *corroborated* by our ethical behavior for Him (**II Cor. 6:3, 4:5**), and seen by the world. NEVER is evangelism a matter of communicating by deeds or communicating anything but the Gospel message. As Dr. Roy Fish has stated (*paraphrased*) ‘it would be the height of *self-righteousness* to believe that our deeds are so good that they can present the Gospel to people *without our having to speak* the message.’ YOU don’t “*attract*” lost people to Christ—God draws them.
10. **Can ‘Never’ COMPLETE the Great Commission.** We are told by relational evangelists that their method constitutes being ‘*wise as serpents*,’ becoming ‘*all things to all men*,’ and

that “THE GREAT COMMANDMENT PRECEDES THE GREAT COMMISSION,” but HOW could such a method be *biblical*, which by its very nature could NEVER complete the Great Commission, is not implementable at the PACE of *biblical evangelism*, and expends so much time and energy for one valuable soul (at the expense of others) that it can NEVER literally fulfill or seriously attempt to COMPLETE the Great Commission? If something conflicts with biblical principles, it is not *biblically* “wise.”

Finally, if one would but read the same Book they make a bold claim to asserting regarding both the Great Commandment and the Great Commission, Christ commissioned His men to DO evangelism well before teaching them about the Great Commandments! The Great Commission was *NOT* Christ’s first mentioning of the subject of *evangelism*. (See: **Mt. 4:19** and/or **Mt. 10:5-23** and/or **Mt. 13:3-9** and/or **Mt. 19:29/Mk. 10:29-30** chronologically preceding **Mt. 22:37**, which *does* in fact chronologically precede **Mt. 28:18-20**). It was the ULTIMATE act of *love* for Christ to die for sinners, just as it is an ultimate act of *love* for us to TELL them about Him! *Apathy* or *hatred* procrastinates and delays giving such a *glorious* message. If that message is **true** and **beneficial**, why hide and disguise and delay lost people’s experience of it?

11. **Ambassadors Authorized to SPEAK.** We are both **Ambassadors** to men on behalf of God (II Cor. 5:20), and **heralds/messengers**, or **town crier-like speakers** for the Gospel. What herald, commissioned by the King of the universe, would take his *marching orders* to deliver the King’s edict, in *love*, to **every citizen** AS SOON AS POSSIBLE (before judgment comes, or Christ returns, applying this analogy to real life), and then turn around and, knowing he is under orders to tell and speak, **conduct opinion polls concerning how the citizenry likes to hear and receive messages before they IMPLEMENT their job description** on behalf of the King? **The Gospel is NOT 100% analogous to sales**, we are **NOT** to be *peddlers* or *men-pleasers* (II Cor. 2:17; Gal. 1:10), and EVEN if our presenting the *good news* of Jesus Christ “**turns off**” anyone, **they** are held accountable before God for having been offered the opportunity to hear it, and the **evangelizer is NOT responsible for that lost person’s poor rejecting decision** (unless, of course, the evangelizer spoke the Gospel NOT from love, or morally (as opposed to emotionally) offensively; II Cor. 6:3 (or the WRONG Gospel).

NOWHERE in Scripture are we taught that we have to “**earn the right to be heard!**” CHRIST earned that right, and we are *commissioned* by the King of the world and given His power and authority to **SPEAK** on His behalf and to **get the job DONE**, and His last words to us were **NOT** to **make friends** of all the nations, but **DISCIPLES**—which **BEGINS** with **EVANGELISM** as step one. We are *expected* to be hated for being believers, and you can’t avoid that *discomfort* by schmoozing someone into salvation! (**Mt. 28:18-20; Mt. 10:22, etc.**)

12. **Emotional Bonds Relied on Due to Absence of Holy Spirit POWER.** The relational method relies (more) on the *psychological influence* of friendship, and soul/emotional bonding, than on the power of the Gospel by the power of the Spirit using God’s Word both to prepare and convict a lost person’s heart. That’s a soul decision, not a spiritual one necessarily. (**Rom. 1:16; Jn. 1:12-13**) Cults “love on people” to get them into their group. It’s a message, but not just information dissemination.

Disclaimers:

Am I saying no other methods should be used but **direct** evangelism? Be as *creative* as you want **AFTER** you have reached **ALL** people, but still you would need a *thorough threshing/harvesting* every three years or so to *objectify* what work still needs to be done.

If you've read our Personal Evangelism Plan, after you have witnessed to *everyone* you already know, you're eventually going to have to *trust God* and have biblical courage enough to **talk to strangers**. There can be *rejection* and many people have *fears*, but relational evangelism's attempts to **eliminate** these experiences does not teach biblical faith and courage. They're not rejecting you, but Christ. And God may have set a *divine appointment* for '**ripe, low-hanging fruit**' (*hearts prepared* to receive you), but **you'll never know how few negative reactions you'll encounter** or how it's not like climbing Mount Everest until you **do it**.

On Evangelism Explosion

In the interest of full disclosure, this author disagrees with Evangelism Explosion ever having presented the Gospel as a survey (many of the first questions being a ruse to warm up the guest, plus the results were rarely tallied, as surveyors do, which is deceptive), and agrees that requiring a specific outline to be memorized (or courses of knowledge being required, as with passing 'certification') is biblically unfounded as required. Beyond these concerns, that program (and those like it) generated the **greatest direct layman involvement in evangelism** that God's church (and a lost, dying world) has witnessed in centuries, and **millions** will be *eternally grateful* for those peoples' participation, and that of its beloved founder, Dr. D. James Kennedy (God rest his soul). I am *saddened* that EE practitioners have been so **slandered** that they have virtually gone into the woodworks and may never rise to their *proper church prominence* again—just **faithfully** and more quietly doing the work of God, while being banished to the **off-prime hour** class times (Ex.: Sunday or Wednesday nights) for the supposedly spiritually elite or only those who are "interested" (vs. training in direct evangelism of strangers for **EVERY church member**, whether by EE, other program, or *especially* the **Bible itself**).

Relatedly, the following illustration is offered: [After a 16-17 week long personal evangelism course] the leader told his sub-leaders: "I want to apologize that this course took so long. If I could just take you to hell for five minutes, you wouldn't need any of this training." Later, Booth explained what he meant: "If they could see the flames and smell the smoke and feel the heat and hear the cries of the damned, they would go out to preach what they had seen and heard. They would then preach like dying men to dying people." —**William Booth** Unseen, p. 216, by Jack Graham (Bethany House: Bloomington, MN), 2013

RELATED ISSUES:

ATTRACTION & INVITATIONAL EVANGELISM

The American Church having all but abandoned direct, loving evangelism, this new fad has arisen which teaches that if Christians are "salt and light" (which they are), lost people will see that and may show interest in the lifestyle or ask them questions about their faith, thus, supposedly, constituting an 'opening of the door' to a gospel conversation. Funny, the often ethically superior lifestyle of Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses may attract—but to what end? Or, a church engages in moral modern and *secular* activities to "attract" the lost. How can this strategy be fully biblical when it can never document literal *fulfillment* of the Great Commission?

The Bible teaches “go and tell,” not come and hear (and Christ trumps culture—despite the oft used “Fuller Brush salesman accusation of direct evangelism being out-of-date). And the only instances where the lost were invited to come hear the Gospel from someone else was when the inviter **did not fully know the message** (Cornelius; Ac. 10), the Message was here on earth, in Person (Andrew, of Jesus, to his brother), or when the evangelist had *so saturated the world* with the Gospel that his fame and older age (years after having done so much direct evangelism) lended itself to the lost flocking to where he resided (and when he could not travel as before; Paul; Ac. 28:30-31). Paul did NOT use *secular methods* like face painting, jump houses, free food and music to get the lost to himself! What’s our excuse? False theology (from the book, Lifestyle Evangelism) and sinful timidity.

Finally, some argue that the verse about a wife winning her husband without a word proves this theory (I Pet. 3:1-2), but, as was said before, **who in their right mind** would believe that that couple never discussed her being a Christian (Ex.: during courtship or earlier in their marriage—sometime before she is instructed to **corroborate** that claim in convincing ways toward her lost husband?

It is the height of arrogance to think that your deeds are so stupendous that as a method of evangelism, you will wait for lost people to *initiate a conversation* with you about why your lifestyle is so exceptional. This *could* happen, but we should never rely on it as a method. And even if your behavior exceeds that of the typical lost (and especially moral Mormons), **no deeds have ever clearly communicated a cross, a sacrifice, a divine Savior risen from the dead, or the requirement that they respond in faith.** Nothing short of speaking the Gospel with someone is true evangelism (even *praying* for people’s salvation), unless one tries and the other party refuses to let you proceed further. Christians are to be salt and light in our world—an ethical injunction especially relevant to social change—but all of our good deeds are merely *corroboration* of the message we claim to believe, and are done NOT to impress the lost but to **please our Father**, out of gratitude for all He has given us with our so great salvation.

VARIATIONS:

a) **Crowd-Attracting ‘Hooks.’** NOWHERE does the Bible command evangelizers to do **overtly secular** things to convince their hearers they are just *normal, ordinary guys*, yet many American Christians do just this. They’ve become experts on entertaining through free food, music, games, face painting and jump houses even as they have REMAINED AMATEURS at knowing the power of God for salvation.

b) **Subtle/Backdoor Evangelism.** Some Christians practice “easing” lost people into Christianity, by inviting lost people to social gatherings so they can to get to know Christians as friends BEFORE later telling them the good news weeks or months later. How presumptuous must one be to believe their **lifestyle is so wonderful** that it will sway hearts, and how **unbiblical** to withhold good news for even a day, primarily due to fear and **timidity** at just telling strangers God’s commanded message!

EXAMPLE:

A recent High School ‘mission trip’ used *Hollywood-quality Glee-like* musical to “attract” NYC crowds. The first half of their program was *100% secular*, then it turned spiritual. **For the money and amount of people**, the salvation results were ABYSMAL—though each and every person’s salvation is awesome—and my wife, watching the review program and responding to my criticism that **‘Nowhere in the Bible does God ask us to attract a crowd for evangelism,’** said, “*It’s not right but it’s what all the churches do.*” Now there’s a slogan—IT’S NOT RIGHT,

BUT,” or “EVERYONE’S DOING IT.” God, restore our power—and **seriousness** about the Great Commission!

SEEKER-SENSITIVE CHURCHES

This author is quite pleased that many churches have undertaken a modernization—tele-screens (vs. just hymnals), modern “spiritual music” (vs. mainly hymns), business casual attire (vs. only suits and robes), and a number of other *refinements*. However, the philosophy prevalent in many American churches—known as the “seeker-friendly church” concept—has corrupted what the Bible teaches that the Church is and is to be—a place for believers to gather, praise and worship God and be mutually edified by fellowship and ministry service. Instead—and mainly because so many churches have abandoned God’s number one evangelism method (which is speaking directly to lost persons where they may be found), this philosophy views the church as the place where evangelism is to *principally* take place, by the mouths of professionals, so through laymen inviting the lost to church, or the church “attracting” them through meeting social or entertainment needs and wants, the professionals get the chance to (hopefully) share Christ with them (which is not the model depicted in Eph. 4).

It might prove informative to the advocates of this philosophy to read where the Bible says that no one seeks God, note that attending a religious gathering is contrary to the lost’s only spiritual nature, and understand that the clergy’s job is not to do the laymen’s job, but to teach them to do the work of ministry (and realize that having lost people drop by a church service was somewhat unusual vs. expected and planned for; Jas. 2:2, “if” vs. “when,” I Cor. 14:23, “if”).

MEGA CHURCHES

The **first two churches** were *mega* churches (Ac. 2, 4), so God is *not opposed* to large congregations. However, do you believe a church could become a mega church very often if they were committed to and had expectations that *every member* be evangelistic, have a daily Quiet Time, memorize Scripture, be disciplined, know doctrine, use their spiritual gift in ministry and be totally sold out to Christ? What compromises, and what motives (i.e., money) have caused this church growing trend, and does anyone in their right mind believe the budget for the first two churches, or the salaries of its leaders, ever reached the amounts we spent ON OURSELVES in America today (where some ministers so-call “**earn**” a million dollars a year, with no moral issues raised about a possible love of money in their hearts, or how a lot of that money **should have gone** to evangelism and the needy poor).

Instead of being used as a *huge boon* to Great Commission completion, with all the thousands of members being trained and motivated to become evangelistic, too many mega churches raise millions of dollars to pay staff and entertain the crowd, pushing a morally-required “tithe” and barely if ever using money donated (in any impactful/*significant* percentages) to help the poor—especially if those poor are not members of our church. Can you see the **self-centeredness** of this use of funds, and the sick, mutually beneficial relationship between prosperous ministers and entertained congregations, with neither strongly pushing the other to change the system (or especially to evangelize), because it works for their *flesh*?

The Honorable Father Sir-Master Right-Reverend Doctor Puff ‘N Stuff.

And as a *slight* aside, lay person... PLEASE understand that God never required the head of the larger churches to be “doctors” (or *ordained* or licensed, for that matter) and, *much more importantly*, understand that **there are true “doctors”** in the world—*Ph.D’s and M.D’s*, and then

there are **LESS-standardized “doctors”** whom we still call “doctors”—*Chiropractors and ministers* who earn only D.Min. degrees. The difference is usually at least two years more schooling, and much more academically rigorous at that. In seminary, ‘gentlemen’ sought to earn a D.Min. so they could be considered for large church positions (i.e., more *MONEY*) and be called “doctor,” **VERY similar to the Pharisees** at Mt. 23:7 (i.e., human *pride*). Lawyers earn “doctor” degrees, and I am one of those, but, fortunately, our profession only (usually) designates that respectful title for the professors who have earned more than a J.D.

27C. Calvinism & Arminianism Errors

See also: 4 Salvation and sovereignty illustrations in the Appendix (at “**Illustrations**”)

PASTOR WARNING

All pastors who believe or teach that God so chooses individuals that they do not need to be asked or encouraged to respond to the Gospel through faith, and all pastors who teach that salvation is such a decision that what is primarily needed is a person to decide for Jesus beware—**the blood of those for whom Christ died will be eternally on your hands** if either a non-decision or a purely willful (i.e., not Spirit-led) decision is made, because you adhered to the errors incumbent in either Calvinism or Arminianism (though, fortunately, God is able to supersede our idiocies as attempting evangelizers).

Danger(s): Calvinists can be **LIARS** when they evangelize (as the hearer may not be ‘elect’), and can often be dis-incentivized to evangelize (and urgently), since God will ultimately take care of all those matters anyway. Arminians could produce decisions of the will or flesh (Jn. 1:12-13), and rely on salesman convincing techniques, rather than totally relying on God’s Spirit to convict.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

This author makes the *unusual* decision to place the application of this lesson before even addressing the subject, because it’s APPLICATION is **so much more important** than the more “heady” analysis which will follow. A discussion of Calvinism is in these materials because a wrong view of **only God** causing man’s salvation, or **only man** (though his will) securing it, is a misrepresentation of Scripture, which has direct influence on proper evangelism, evangelism effort (or lack thereof), and proper evangelism results.

As is often said, “it takes two to tango,” and any marriage is truly a *mutual* decision of two parties, but the distinction in salvation is that the two parties are NOT co-equals. We humans are mere bums in the street being offered an eternal wedding feast by the King of the universe! Nor does one decision occur simultaneous with the other (though in progression sometimes nearly so). God must call (or convict) first, we must respond (under the power, or “spell” of that active and continued call or conviction), and He seals us eternally immediately upon that decision of faith. See our graphics on this miraculous “process,” further below.

Note: We *call* it a process only as regards this present analysis. It is an experience and a miracle no one can fully explain—how and why God calls, how many times, how we know His call, how our hearts are made to want to respond, etc.

Arminians. Arminians need to rely on God’s Spirit when they evangelize, and know that *only* with His conviction will a true spiritual response be elicited. Too much emphasis of the role of the will of man in salvation takes the rightful focus off Christ and His great work, and makes the Gospel anthro-centric (man-centered). We need not await signs that He will convict; simply trust that He will, as we speak the Gospel in His power.

Calvinists. Calvinists, on the other hand, need to recognize the MANY verses giving Christians REASONS to evangelize, and showing how effective word choices, convincing biblical arguments, and a deep, sincere desire that everyone reached receive the Gospel do *have an influence* in that process, and that evangelism is not mere *perfunctory obedience* with no real effect. They also need to rid themselves of the HERESY of teaching that God chose some (which is true), and therefore all those He did not choose *could never be saved* and are damned to hell by God’s

choice, totally apart from any *consenting involvement* of their will in response to salvation. To be *accurate*, God has destined all Christ-rejecters to hell, but **no one is a Christ rejecter by force**, or “decree,” as if they have *zero say in the matter*. As Paul admonished the rejecting Jewish nation, you have *judged yourselves unworthy* of eternal life, so we will go to the Gentiles --they will listen. (Ac. 13:46, *paraphrased*)

INTRODUCTION

A church staff member once opened a Bible Fellowship class with the question, “Did you choose God, or did God choose you?” Beware—it’s false choice and a *loaded question* (but not to a Calvinist). Dr. D. James Kennedy rightly said, **“Those who go to hell have no one to blame but themselves. Those who go to heaven have no one to praise but Jesus Christ.”** And that is no false humility of credit being fully given to Christ, for apart from Him, we could not make a spiritual decision.

God didn’t choose you because He knew you’d believe (as if His choice was based on something good within you—when there is nothing but sin for us to offer), nor did He force you to get saved without requiring you to believe. He chose to save everyone who would believe, and any who have believed were sovereignly allowed and enabled so to do, by His Spirit. He chose you because of His love, mercy, kindness and grace.

No one can so no one will ‘come to Christ’ unless God draws/calls them (i.e., heart prepared beforehand and conviction through the Gospel message). Once under conviction, God offers a limited window of opportunity during which men are enabled to respond in faith. No one knows how long that opportunity will be allowed, and it could vary per person and their hardening responses, but once it has vanished no salvation is possible (and even if decisions were to be made, they would be unspiritual and therefore ineffective toward securing salvation—Jn. 1:13).

The believer’s responsibility is to present the Gospel accurately and with God’s power, trusting Him for the results (having prayed beforehand that God would prepare them for the encounter). Man’s skills at presenting the Gospel can be improved, and some are more skilled and gifted, but practice makes perfect, and training can help people not make blatant verbal mistakes which can interfere with man’s responding to God’s calling.

Does God specifically call every person? In some way or the other (i.e., where no Christians ever evangelize them, other methods must be used), I believe the answer, consistent with God’s character and nature, is “yes.” This does not mean He has to, is obligated to do so toward anyone, or cannot do whatever He chooses. Plus, the ability of lost people to properly respond to God is totally subject to God’s sovereign call—without which he stands no hope.

Calvinism and Arminianism: The Crux of the Matter

1. Does God specifically call every human being to salvation in Jesus Christ? If so, and not all respond, is His call ineffective and weak, even though stemming from an all-powerful God?
2. Does God calling someone to salvation *guarantee* they will positively respond in faith? Does the Bible teach that God has a general and specific salvation call, the former to the “non-elect” and the latter to the “elect?”

3. Is man's faith response to the Gospel "free willed," forced, or **free willed if under the (sovereign) conviction of the Holy Spirit?** Illustration: Call someone by their name, and ask them to raise (or, conversely, just extend your hand—with a smile—for a hand shake). When they do, you 'caused' (vs. forced) it, and they freely cooperated with their will.
4. Is faith something God gives to man (through the Scriptures) or man works up within his flesh and will? Can a totally depraved human make any spiritual (as opposed to simply moral) choice *in and of himself*? Is there any "good" in lost people, by God's definition of "good?"
5. Is God sovereign in the area of salvation, or can man dictate how God must act toward him? Did you initiate salvation and "choose God" or did He initiate your salvation and choose you, or were there **TWO CHOICES** made?
6. Does man's choosing under the Spirit's wooing/conviction make salvation "of" man, by his will's doing, or a work from man's ethical initiation? Is man's will involved in the miracle of salvation *at all*, or, or does God **force** salvation on people without requiring their responding in faith? If God causes one's salvation, without forcing it, and man's will is involved, does that concept confuse you too biblically?
7. Is evangelism truly an (eternally) life-changing activity for those whom Christians minister the Gospel to, or is it performed *perfunctorily*—simply and **solely** to be obedient to God?
8. Does God **make** anyone go to hell (or heaven, for that matter) without their having any say in the matter? Does God damn some people to hell with their never having any chance or opportunity to not go there?
9. Did Christ die for ALL men or just for some? If He died for all, but not all go to heaven, does this make His death to no avail or ineffective?
10. Does requiring men to respond to the Gospel, by faith, contradict the verses that speak of "the elect" being "*chosen from the foundation of the world*" (in Christ)?

CALVINISM VS. ARMINIANISM: IS EITHER VIEW TRUE?

Calvinism (T.U.L.I.P.)

Total Depravity. Man is a sinner, and can't save himself (Yes)

Unconditional Election. God decided in eternity past to save just some select people by His sovereign choice (No) (Yes, if those people were all who'd believe once He enabled them to)

Limited Atonement. Christ's death was only for select people (No)

Irresistible Grace. Subjective call cannot be resisted (No)

Perseverance of the Saints. All saved are saved forever (Yes)

Arminianism (F.C.U.R.F.)

Free will. (No—you can't choose God by your own initiative)

Conditional Election. God didn't choose you pre-knowing you'd believe. (No—He chose that anyone who'd believe would get saved, and knew that wouldn't be all, and that they could only believe if He called, specifically; Chosen means He specifically called, you responded and He sealed. Nothing short of all 3 steps.

General (or "Universal") Atonement. Cross didn't secure anyone's salvation (without faith) (Yes)

Resistible Grace. (effectually) (Yes—No NT evidence whether he specifically calls everyone)

Falling From Grace. (i.e., lose salvation) (No)

IN DEFENSE OF COMPATIBILISM

Traditional 5-Point Calvinism (“T.U.L.I.P”)

(“Traditional” beliefs presented do not necessarily fully represent the views of their named founders, but many adherents)

Total Depravity of Man: Man is a sinner, completely unable to save himself, even by exercising ‘saving faith.’ There is no good or meritorious thing within man that he can offer God at/for salvation.

Unconditional Election: In eternity past, God chose to save certain individuals, solely based on His sovereign choice/will.

Limited (or “Particular”) Atonement: Christ’s death was intended to save the elect only, and secured their salvation.

Irresistible (or “Efficacious”) Grace: In addition to the general, outward call to salvation made to everyone, the Holy Spirit extends a special, specific inner call to the elect, which inevitably brings them to salvation.

Perseverance of the Saints (or “Eternal Security”): All who were chosen by God, redeemed by Christ and given faith by the Spirit are eternally saved.

Traditional 5-Point Arminianism

Free Will: Man suffered greatly as a result of the Fall, but God graciously enables every sinner to repent and believe, but He does so in such a way as not to interfere with man’s freedom.

Conditional Election: God’s choice of certain individuals was based on His foreseeing that they would respond to His call.

General (or “Universal”) Atonement: Christ’s redeeming work on the cross made it possible for everyone to be saved, but did not actually secure the salvation of anyone (i.e., apart from their personal faith response).

Resistible Grace (i.e., effectually): The Spirit inwardly calls all those who are outwardly called by the gospel invitation. God has done and does all that He can to bring every sinner to salvation.

Falling From Grace (i.e., lose salvation): Those who believe (i.e., are truly saved) can lose their salvation by failing to maintain/keep up that faith, or by some level/extent of serious, continued lifestyle of sinning/sinfulness.

Paraphrased from The Doctrine of Salvation, p. 9, by Gary D. Long, Copyright 1978, G.A.M. Printers, Sterling, VA.).

A Proposed Refinement and Alternative View—“Compatibalism”

- *Total Depravity of Man: Man is totally sinful, and cannot save himself. Even “saving” faith does not intrinsically, by nature, reside within man. However, if God chooses to specifically, personally convict a person toward salvation, under that gracious, loving and powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, God thereby enables (but does not guarantee) man to exercise the faith which originated in God.
- *Conditional Election: God has graciously and legitimately offered salvation through Christ to all who, in faith, trust His Son for salvation/as their Savior. I reject the beliefs that such “saving faith” is a work of man he produces of himself, or that God so elected some that their will is not involved, though it is in a minor way, energized totally by and all glory going to God/the Spirit.
- *General Atonement: Christ died for the sins of all men. Salvation is a potentiality for all, but reality only for those who personally appropriate it. The benefit of Christ’s work on the cross only helps believers (i.e., since the time of the cross, believers in Christ are “the elect”), because one who does not take advantage of God’s gracious offer can never receive the benefits of that great offer. I am not saying that those who believe do so because they were chosen/elected to do so.
- *Resistible Grace: Though I would hope, and consider it “natural” (i.e.; Expected) that a person who hears and understands the good news (“gospel”) message, and is under the Spirit’s conviction, would (choose to) respond, I tentatively believe Scripture is not perfectly clear as to when rejecters in the Bible were under or not under such a specific call, so it is certainly possible that men can reject the call of God.
- *Perseverance of the Saints: Once saved, always saved, and being sanctified and guaranteed to be glorified” (that is, 3 tenses of salvation all resident in the one gift of salvation). At the same time, *as necessary*, warning Christians to test themselves to ensure they are saved, and warning wayward believers of the dangers of living a life without the fear of God before their eyes.

FURTHER CLARIFYING ASPECTS TO COMPATIBALISM CONCEPTS AND DEFINITIONS

- *Total Depravity of Man: Man is totally sinful, and cannot save himself.
 - There is no deed man can perform to merit God’s saving grace.
 - Man cannot seek God, therefore...
 - Man will not seek God.
 - These facts pertain to every man ever born—except Christ.
 - Man also will not choose God on his own—that is, own initiative or coming up with the concept himself.
 - It ‘takes two to tango’—One, a nothing with zero goodness to add (humans) and One the supreme Being of the world (God).
 - God’s sovereign call to salvation may feel ‘irresistible,’ because you don’t WANT to resist, but to accept His offer (i.e., when God has prepared your heart vs. you have hardened it against Him)!

Man does not initiate the salvation “transaction,” and has nothing to offer God, either as a work, or a moral or an asset to use as leverage to trade or barter with to get salvation—it is a free

gift of God's grace, though faith. God is not obligated to or beholden to our wills to respond to us—we are the creature—however, He has promised to save all who (will) believe—and we must. Secularly (i.e., psychologically and physically—NOT spiritually) our wills are somewhat “free” (within constraints of God-ordained government, societal morays of morality, psychologically felt “goodness”—which is of no value before God toward merit/credit in heaven—and the Spirit's general restraining presence in this world. Spiritually, no man can make a decision “for” God, unless and until God sovereignly and specifically and initiatorily allows him to, at which time, or at least before such time has passed, he must do (that is, believe), in order to be saved. Salvation, therefore, is the first spiritual decision (and even then, of a reactionary/responsive vs. initiatory type) any man has or could ever make—and his ability to and reasons for so doing are totally and legitimately creditable only to God (not just for the sake of trying to be humble).

There should be no intrinsic pride problem associated with this view, as the true recipient of that favor from God will know within himself that the faith was not of his own doing (I Cor. 1:30, 4:7)—he will simply be thankful, and hopefully live a life which shows his gratitude, through moral living.

If one ends up in hell, it is totally his fault (of course, with action and influence of the evil one influencing that decision), but if one goes to heaven, it is totally credited and attributable solely to God. If you understand this concept, especially from Bible-based personal experience—information without application never saved anyone—I would conclude that you are on the right-track in your thinking concerning the concepts of the sovereignty of God and the role of man's will in salvation.

*General Atonement: As defined by the “Alternative View,” this term does not mean that all men will be saved (i.e., Universalism), because personal appropriation of that salvific potentiality is required (of course, as the Holy Spirit convicts, vs. on our own or in ourselves). Though Christ died for all humans, His sacrificial death is especially relevant and beneficial to, and only personally beneficial believers in Christ. Why? Because they are the only ones who personally receive and experience the offer and it's blessings/benefits. It would mean very little for a cancer patient that a given scientist had found a cure for cancer, if they never used the break-through drug themselves. The cure has been provided (better, discovered) for them, but that fact does not help them until applied to their life situation.

Christ's heart, which led Him to die for men, was not limited in its love, to just a few “elect” people. Though many, possibly the historical majority, will go to hell (Mt. 7:13-14), it is not because Christ has not died for them. He agonized over man's sin and the calamity it has caused all mankind. However, His death is not effective for or impactful to all men, not because they were not selected for salvation way in the past, but because they have not done the one thing He chose to require them to do (once and if He enables them). And even that “act”—faith—is not a human act of will power or inner goodness, or any sort of meritorious good work. Faith is the one “act” in life that is, indeed and in fact, a “non-deed,” for it is the relying of man upon Him to do all the saving work for him, not them doing anything themselves, or having any self-reliance. And, as I have said before, and will not feel bound to repeat every time I reference faith, faith itself is given from God (Ex.: “I have faith to believe so and so)—But one must believe, and cannot be saved if they do not.

That does not mean, as Calvinists may be quick to attack, that “our” faith saves us—Christ saved us, by grace, through faith, and God is not a weak Party limited by or needingly waiting for our response, as if our response is something He does not want, did not allow and promise and provide for us to have, or that He has any man-dependent needs, such as fellowship with man. That having been said, the opposite is also true, and such Calvinists would do well to equally acknowledge that God is no prideful ego-maniac, or human-dependently needy Party craving (though deserving, desiring and worthy of) our praise, so that for Him to have chosen the plan to involve man in salvation is no affront to anything within His character—either His power, dignity, sovereignty or freedom of decision. God is certainly totally deserving of and will someday receive all the glory man can give, but I think a more accurate understanding of God’s revealed truth (the Bible) will demonstrate that man being involved in salvation (vs. waking up one day, having been saved, as if he caught a cold overnight, totally with his non-involvement) is not in tension for God, or contrary to but fully in support of the awesome plan He—not we—has designed for His creatures (Rom. 11:33-36)

*Conditional Election: I would not teach this to lost people, but even “saving faith” is not of/from/originated in or by man, though, if the Spirit illumines and opens his heart to believe (better, gives him faith to believe/convicts Him, through the gospel), he is then and only at that point able and empowered to believe—and he must/must believe/must do so, or he will not be saved (as this is God’s plan and conditions, not humanly conceived). This event occurs as one movement of God’s Spirit, sustaining all three aspects/factors of the salvation event/transaction/miracle, in an “instant” in duration yet contiguous and chronological, those three “factors” being: 1) conviction, 2) faith, 3) sealing. This is, however, not to say that the Spirit guarantees that men will respond, if convicted, and that lack of guarantee is not due to any deference by God to man as God’s superior, but as to state clearly that it is not my contention that God forces men’s Spirit-empowered wills.

I reject both the belief that man can choose God on his own, or that God forces His choice on men. It may be above un-renewed logic so to think, but a suitable alternative to these two positions is that God can enable a man to respond to Him, and if the man does, it is totally and exclusively creditable to God.

Man never exercises his humbly minor and totally God-allowed and empowered and initiated faith reliance, apart from the Spirit, so it can never be legitimately accused that man causes or initiates or helps God save him—God does all the saving, when sincere faith in Christ is exercised, that faith following God’s having inspired, enabled/empowered and initiated it. Also, “saving faith,” that is, God-wrought faith, is not an “act” or “deed” per se, which man (i.e., man by himself) does for (i.e., to earn or merit) salvation. It coming from God through the gospel, is a gift (that is, for God to convict you/give you faith is a gift), yet one which must be exercised toward it’s Giver, immediately at which time salvation is sealed, by the Spirit.

If you understand what faith is (Ex.: biblically and through a Biblical experience of salvation), you will know that faith is the only so-called deed which is in fact not a deed at all. That is, you are not DO-ing anything for God (pride)—you are letting God do it all (humble and total dependent reliance); and even your letting Him work is God inspired—not God forced nor man generated or initiated.

These fine distinctions are not word wrangling or theological hair-splitting, or any attempt to avoid implications of the concepts labeled as “free will” or “total depravity.” They

are an attempt to make biblical sense out of its full record, knowing that the Bible is harmonious, non-contradictory, and that man can, to some extent, understand or make conclusions consistent with what has been revealed therein.

Man totally cannot do it (i.e., trust Christ) on his own/in himself, nor does God force such decision out of man (better, the “elect”). The truth, as I see it, is clearly and peacefully residing distinctly separate from these two alternatives, described above. I have this conviction not only from having personally experienced God’s call to salvation, but, more importantly, because these beliefs are the only accurate way I have come to understand the many verses describing different facets of the salvation miracle/event. You are free to examine my scant Appendix evidence which shows verses or passages which focus on the sovereignty aspect, the will aspect, both factors, and possibly either one, if implications are presupposed or allowed.

Should we put blinders on, and only look at verses supporting our presuppositions? Even having thus somewhat described the salvation experience (about as far as I can, given what I see to be revealed in Scripture), and admittedly not having explained it in full, one can never biblically conclude that there is no mystery in the salvation occurrence.

How God convicts and how the Spirit’s work accomplishes our willingness to believe, without forcing us nor with our choosing it totally by our own will (i.e., apart from the Spirit), when and if He chooses to convict, etc. still remain, in part, mystery (i.e., as to full understanding), and for these truths to ever to cease to have an element of mystery about them (Ex.: Jn. 3:8), would tell me that the one claiming to understand it fully has over-analyzed a love relationship and a miracle, and in so doing, likely missed it, or at least tried to diminish things too indescribable for words!—not that their actions can damage or lessen the event, but that the understanding and explanation has missed the mark of accurately describing that real event. Faith is man’s response-ability not his “responsibility,” as if man is capable of believing and must just be urged or cajoled by pushy Christians to do so, unless and until the spirit convicts, through his hearing the word of Christ (Rom. 10:17). Generally, he is called to believe, but

Scripture also teaches that it is the Spirit who gives life. However, that same verse indicates that the Spirit gives life through the words Christ spoke. You—apparently—need both the gospel and the Holy Spirit, despite the fact that the gospel is the power of God for salvation—not that it is not such power, in and of itself, but that the Spirit and the word work hand in hand, and to try to dissect them appears ludicrous, save possibly for trying to identify or distinguish between a general or specific call of God unto salvation. If there is no Holy Spirit present, all man is left with is flesh/sin (Jn. 6:63-64), and flesh cannot submit to God’s law, nor exercise genuine faith (Ex.: Jn. 1:13; Rom. 8:7). At the same time, I do not shy away from, and do affirm God’s heart in a matter of major import to Him, that He truly wants all men to have faith in His Son, so as to be saved (II Pet. 3:9, etc.). These desires of God; Expressed in promises which lost men can rely on, based on His faithfulness and faithful word, are no mere sham—requiring an act which is impossible to perform. Salvation IS impossible for man to achieve on his own, but “with God,” all things are possible, and I am solely advocating the reality of God working in the situation so as to bring about the result, though not by force, thus allowing and enabling saving faith, which is then (to be) placed in Christ, from Whom it came, by the convicted person, who is thereafter eternally saved.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

The Holy Spirit drives the word of God to the human heart (Isa. 55:11); therefore, the less you use Scripture in your Gospel presentation, favoring instead your own explanations, the less likely it is—though still possible—that a successful outcome will incur.

Logic, and even apologetic evidence does not save a person. They can bolster the argument, if it's been made by the Word of God, but sovereign conviction is mandatory or a salvation will not happen. At the same time, a human must want to or be willing to get saved. God forces no one. Our family once had a person ever so dear to us consistently refuse to be 'born again,' and as death stared them straight in the face we prayed that somehow they would still, somehow, be saved. One *good* more intellectually-oriented tract I saw called, 'Why it makes sense to believe in Christ.' Makes sense to whom? Spiritual things are *naturally* foolishness to the unsaved mind (I Cor. 1), as they are blinded by Satan—not just unknowing or ignorant, needing mere information (II Cor. 4:4).

***Resistible Grace:** The Bible doesn't always provide details concerning whether a given evangelism encounter recorded in the Bible involved a general vs. a specific call, by which we may authoritatively say that a given gospel rejection was a rejection of one or the other call types. Our seeing such events as one or the other, often, are more implications of how to understand given passages—not necessarily wrong, but thereby not extremely helpful in identifying who in Scripture rejected under conviction vs. rejected a message through which the Spirit was not working at all.

The "Alternative View's" perspective on "resistible Grace" is not to teach that a given individual does not experience God's call to salvation as compellingly irresistible to him, in a subjective way (as was my testimony). Only that, objectively speaking, the ability to decline was there, though he likely was not told that (and wisely wasn't, by the evangelizer), and may never have thought about that option, thankfully, as his attention had been focused and brought upon Christ and His good news—information (spirit and truth) which, by its very nature, does not naturally lend itself to one of contemplating rejecting, though some people obviously do. That is to say, "Resistible" does not imply that it does not seem irresistible to many if not most who are thus called. It is more a technical argument, that resist-able (un-able to resist), by definition, requires force, vs. magnetism or "magic"-like (I use the term ONLY by analogy) persuasive power which causes the man to change his mind so as to believe and be saved.

***Perseverance of the Saints:** Every born again believer (there are no other types!) will remain in the condition of being saved, throughout his life on earth, and into eternity. He cannot and will not ever lose his salvation. Those adhering to this doctrine have undergone criticism for not equally teaching that this statement does not intend to imply, or mean that a Christian can continually live in a lifestyle of sinning and "get away with it" forever, without God disciplining him. I appreciate this counterbalancing or limiting influence to an abuse of full expression of biblical freedom and grace, which would turn grace into licentiousness. The New Testament is replete with positive promises and motivations to get a believer to live a morally set apart life unto God. However, where needed, it does not lack for up in prophetic judgment the deeds not wrought in Him by believers, so some could, at least initially, be sad or shamed at Christ's coming. There is at least one "sin unto death," and in many other ways God can and often does punish/reprove and correct His children, as an expression of His love. A healthy fear of God is necessary in the Christian life. Although there are a few verses which, on the surface, can tend to appear to teach a loss of salvation, that existence of so-called "problem passages" does not negate the truth that a true believer in Jesus Christ is eternally saved, because God gave him a

gift which is eternal by nature, as it is of God, Whose nature is eternal, and that Christian can rest assured of his eternal salvation (if he has “tested himself” and seen that he is in the faith vs. out of it—that is, never having been saved—or whether he simply had an ecstatic and/or emotional experience, with no conscious understanding of the gospel, and personal appropriation). The degree to which a believer can sin, and “get away with it” in this life, or the degree of goodness his life must display before others can legitimately question whether he is saved can and is often debated. Suffice it to say that Gandhi was likely not saved, but a really “good” guy, while the man in I Cor., sleeping with his father’s wife (mother or step mother) was obviously not very experientially sanctified. Could you tell the difference between believer and unbeliever, in this case, if they were to dine with you at the same meal? God knows for sure—we can discern, by the witness of the Spirit within, and mutual witness of our spirits, as fellow believers, and especially by the testimony of their mouth concerning what they believe concerning Christ and their salvation experience. Works are no iron clad proof of anything, but the indwelling Spirit, appropriated by faith, is.

IMPORTANCE

- 1. Is evangelism necessary and does it serve any useful and effective purpose?**
- 2. Can man possibly arrogantly believe he caused his own salvation with little to no actions of God?**

Truth

1. Man is sin-FULL, and can’t save himself
2. God decided to save whoever will believe.
3. Christ died for all men, especially believers.
4. The Spirit’s conviction is powerful and necessary for salvation.
5. Every believer will remain saved forever.

Error

1. Man is sinful, but still has free will. [Not in spiritual matters]
2. Man decides who will be saved. God didn’t foreknow who’d be saved. God predetermined certain ones to be saved.
3. Christ only died for certain people.
4. The Spirit’s call cannot be resisted.
5. You can lose your salvation.

POSITIVE (AND A FEW NEGATIVE) ELEMENTS OF BOTH TRADITIONAL VIEWS

Arminianism

- Taking (Hebrews etc.) warning passages seriously, and denouncing licentiousness.
- Rightfully pointing out “problem passages” for the eternal security doctrine.
- Expecting sanctifying “effort” (though only in cooperation with the Spirit, working through you—Gal. 2:20; Phil. 2:12-13) as opposed to hands-in-the-lap, bench-warmer/spectator passivity in sanctification.
- Acknowledging that man’s will, in a very minor and humbling way, is engaged; Activated and allowed, enabled and required to go along with God’s “wooing” to salvation
- Even that willingness and “decision” is God-wrought, at least in the proposed “Alternative view”.
- Realizing that verses about Christ dying for all, God wanting all to be saved, and Christ as the Savior of the world are in the Bible, and therefore true—without glossing over or re-

interpreting them to fit a preconceived system.

Calvinism

- Following the Bible's lead, de-emphasizing man's role in salvation (though, in my opinion, often taking that too far), so as to totally glorify God for man's salvation
- (something the "Alternative view" supports—total glory and credit going to God for salvation). Acknowledging that man is utterly helpless without God, and totally sinful in his true, inner self (nature).
- Affirming that there is no goodness in man at all. No one seeks God, can or ever will.
- We (men) contribute nothing to salvation, have no merit before God, even if before men we appear morally better than Hitler, and
- God must intervene in our lives for us not to end up in hell.
- Acknowledging that God is all powerful, all sovereign, all knowing, is the One in charge not man.
- Acknowledging that any pride in man is not a conducive attitude toward salvation (i.e., teaching humility).
- Acknowledging that God can do whatever He chooses, and we have no right to question His choices or accuse Him of behaving immorally—as He does not.
- Affirming that salvation is totally the work of God
- (though the "Alternative view" holds that if allowed and empowered, man "passively" (as opposed to initiator or self-contrived) but consciously, by the Spirit, allows, and indeed asks God to do all the saving, which He has promised to do and therefore does).
- Affirming the eternal security of the believer, not letting our confidence and certainty of eternal saved-ness rest on any human work, either at salvation, or post-salvation, such as any claimed need of maintaining a faith we never mustered up from within ourselves in the first place.
- At least addressing verses and concepts in Scripture regarding the words "elect, sovereign, and choice" (though the "Alternative view" differs and fairly strongly disagrees with the beliefs that decisions in the past guarantee effects in the present in a pre-determined, automatic and forced/programmed way, or that God only loves a few in a specific sense, and the allegation that the loving act of the cross was only intended for a few—not the few who believe, but the few God chose, to the exclusion of all others).

THINGS WE HOLD IN COMMON

1. Christ is the answer to man's sin.
2. Pride—either that you're special because you were in the chosen elect, or because you were 'good enough' to decide to receive Christ, is reprehensible in both types' hearts.
3. The subject of salvation is extremely and eternally important and should be studied seriously and accurately. That is, neither side desires to present a view that is unbiblical.

AN APPEAL

Though we will likely never fully agree, if we are saved, we need to love one another, be united as a family, and at peace with one another, "as much as is in our power," and we certainly can (and should!) unite in the great work of world evangelization. I encourage us all to PLEASE spend more time personally evangelizing the lost than debating difficult, and somewhat philosophical or "intellectual" analyses of all that is or might be or have been in God's mind, and for sure do not live in or try to box God into living exclusively in, or over-emphasize the

“eternity past” any more than the Scripture does, or make authoritative statements where the Bible is not as clear as you make it out to be. That would be dishonest. In the final analysis, some aspects of mystery must remain such, though that frustrates our human intellect. I pray that this small study has been of some help in clarifying issues that are admittedly difficult, and, as always, be sure to test all that you believe or are taught by the inerrant word of God!

SUMMARY

<u>T</u> otal Depravity	Total Depravity	Free Will*
<u>U</u> nconditional Election* (def)	Conditional Election	<u>C</u> onditional Election
<u>L</u> imited Atonement*	General Atonement	<u>G</u> eneral Atonement
<u>I</u> rresistible Grace*	Resistible (and Irresistible?) Grace	<u>R</u> esistible Grace
<u>P</u> erseverance of the Saints	Perseverance	<u>F</u> alling from Grace* (lose salvation)

Following is a list of where the Bible focuses on the sovereignty of God, the will of man, or both, in salvation. It occasionally touches on these same foci in sanctification, because assurance of salvation and how sanctified a believer becomes are also contentious issues of Calvinism (i.e., does God do all the work, do you, or does God through you, or by your cooperating with Him?).

Sovereignty of God

Mt. 13:11-13, 19:11, 24:22, 31; **Lk.** 10:22, 18:7, 24:16, 45; **Jn.** 6:63-65, 70, 10:27, 15:16; **Ac.** 2:23, 47, 3:18, 26, 4:28, 5:14, 31, 38-39, 13:48; **Rom.** 8:28-31, 33, 9:11, 15-20 (but see 11:32), 11:5, 7-8; **I Cor.** 1:2, 24-31, 2:7, 10-14, 6:11, 16-17, (7:16, 20, 22-24), 12:13, (18); **II Cor.** 3:3, (5), 6, 4:(3-4), 6-7, 5:5, 18, 9:10; **Gal.** 1:4, 15, 3:13, 5:(17); **Eph.** 1:3-5, 9, 2:13, 3:11, 5:26; **Phil.** 1:6, (11), 29; **Col.** 1:12-14, 16-17, 19, 21-22, 26-27, 2:(10), 11-14; **II Th.** 2:6, 13; **I Tim.** 6:15-16; **II Tim.** 1:9-10, 2:10, (13); **Tit.** 2:14; **Phm.** 1:(15-16); **Heb.** 1:14, 2:14, 3:1, 6:17-18, 9:15, 10:10, (14), 32, 12:1-2, 13:21; **Jas.** 1:18; **I Pet.** 1:1-5, 18-20, 21, 23, 2:9-10, 21; **Jude** 1:1; **Rev.** 13:10;

Will of Man

Mt. 18:7, 22:2-14; **Lk.** 10:13, 13:23-24; **Ac.** 2:21, 36-38, 44, 3:14-17, 19, 23, 4:4, (11), 12, 32, 5:(9), [20], 6:7, 7:49-53, 10:43, 13:46; **Rom.** 3:22; **I Cor.** 1:17-18, 21, 2:8, 3:18, 6:16-17, 7:37, 8:(3), 9:(19-27), 10:33, 15:1-2, 11, 19; **II Cor.** 1:10, 3:16, 4:2; **Gal.** 3:2, 7-9, 11, 14, 22, 26; **Eph.** 3:12, 4:15; **Phil.** 1:5, 13-14; **Col.** 1:4-5, 2:12; **I Tim.** 1:15-16, 3:13, 16, 4:3, 4:10, 12, 6:2; **II Tim.** 1:5, 12, 3:8, 14-15; **Tit.** 3:8; **Phm.** 1:5, 6; **Heb.** 4:1-2, 6:1, (11, 18-19), 11:1-2, 6; **I Pet.** 1:1-2, 2:(25), 3:21, 4:(1), 5, (17), 18; **II Pet.** 3:9; **I Jn.** 2:22-23, 3:23, 4:2-4, 15-16, 5:9-13;

Sovereignty & Will (both/and)

Jn. 6:44 & 63-65; **Ac.** 2:23, 39, 4:25-28, 5:14, 13:46-48; **Rom.** 9:16-17 & 31-32, 10:16-21, 11:2; **I Cor.** 3:5-9, 18, 21, 2:4-5, 3:5-8, 18, 4:1-7, 15:10-11, 17; **II Cor.** 1:9-12, 2:14-17, 3:14-16, 4:6-7, 5:10-21, 6:1-2, 16-18, 7:1, 9-10, 8:16-17; **Gal.** 2:8, 20-21, 3:2-5, 4:9, 5:1, 24-25, 6:14-16; **Eph.** 1:4-13 (Cf.: vv. 15, 19), 2:1-10, 3:7, 3:16-4:1, 21-22, 32, 5:2, 8, 6:12; **Phil.** 1:3-6, 19, 2:12-13; **Col.** 1:20-23, 27-29, 2:6, 19, 3:1, 7-10, 12-13, 4:17; **I Th.** 1:2-4, 2:13; **II Th.** 1:8-11, 2:9-12, 13-14, 3:2-5; **I Tim.** 1:13-14, 16, 3:9, 4:10; **II Tim.** 1:9-12, 2:10, 19, 25-26, 3:8, 15; **Tit.** 1:1, 2:14-3:8; **Phm.** 1:22; **Heb.** 3:7-11, 4:3, 10, 10:19-23, 12:1-2, 13:12-13, 15; **Jas.** 5:11; **I Pet.** 1:1-2, 8, 20-21, 2:3-10, 3:20-21, 4:6, (19), 5:6, 10; **II Pet.** 1:3-13, 19, 21, 2:1-9, 14-15, 17, 3:7-9, 11, (13), 15; **I Jn.** 2:1-2, 5:4; **Jude** 1:4-7, 13

Key Calvinist Proof Texts with Arminian Counterparts:

(The Calvinist’s holy trilogy of John; Romans & Ephesians)

Book	Sovereignty/Chosen	Will/Faith
John		6:28-29, 35-36
	6:37-39	6:40
	6:44	6:45, 47, 51, 53-54, 56-58,
	6:63	6:64-65
	6:70a-c	6:70d
	10:25-29	10:37-38
Romans	9:1-29	9:1-9, 30-33
	10:(19-20)	10:1-21
	11:1-12	11:13-36 (espec. v. 32)
Ephesians	1:3-12	1:13-15, 19
	2:1-7	2:8-10

EXPERT COMMENTS

John. “Sometimes in the New Testament it does mean to drag a person or object (cf. John 18:10; 21:6, 11; Acts 16:19). At other times it does not (cf. John 12:32...). Standard Greek Lexicons allow for the meaning ‘draw’ as well as ‘drag.’” Chosen But Free, pp. 92-93, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

Romans. “The Hebrew word for ‘hated’ really means ‘loved less.’ ...The expressed love is the same for both believer and unbeliever; the received love is greater for the believer.”¹⁰ Chosen But Free, p. 83, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

Ephesians. “Extreme Calvinists often take the ‘it’ here to refer to ‘faith,’ mentioned just before this... But even John Calvin said of this text that ‘he does not mean that *faith* is the gift of God, but that *salvation* is given to us by God, or, that we obtain it by the gift of God.’⁵ In addition, however plausible this interpretation may seem in English, it is very clear from the Greek that Eph. 2:8-9 is not referring to faith as a gift from God. For the ‘it’ (*touto*) is neuter in form and cannot refer to faith (*pistis*), which is feminine. The antecedent of ‘it is the gift of God’ is the salvation by grace through faith (v. 9). Commenting on this passage, the great New Testament Greek scholar A.T. Robertson noted: ‘Grace’ is God’s part, ‘faith’ is ours.’⁶” Chosen But Free, p. 182, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

SUMMARY

The lost person must be under conviction, and that’s the sovereign act of the Holy Spirit. It MAY involve emotions, but, unlike many Charismatic experiences, the Holy Spirit is NOT a synonym for just feeling human emotion! This is not a mindless, knee jerk, reflexive reaction, or mere “natural instinct,” as man’s nature is to sin, and therefore forever resist God’s call. No, it requires a true, conscious choice, only under the convicting influence of the sovereign Holy Spirit rather than self-induced, powered or initiated.

Salvation requires a miracle, and that is God’s work. It also involves a decision, which is yours. Any normal decisions only require the free act of human will, but salvation truly is the first spiritual decision you will have ever made (if made under the convicting power of the Spirit). No one goes to hell because God did not ever give them any chance to go elsewhere.

In summary...

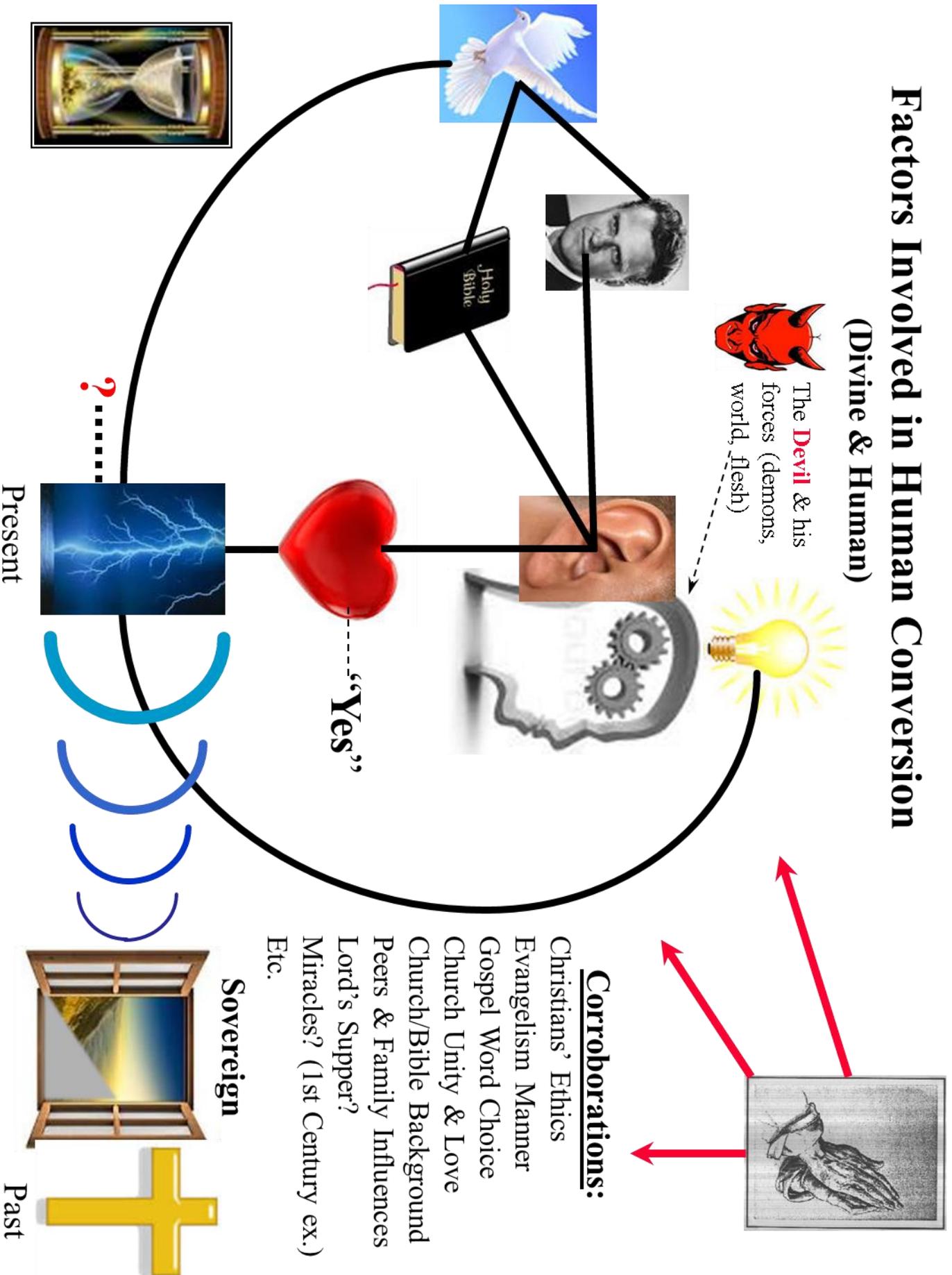
Truth: Unless one makes a decision to trust Christ, they *will* go to hell.

Behind-the-Scenes Truth: At the same time (actually, just beforehand), unless they were called to so respond they cannot make that decision, for such attempted decision would only constitute a decision by “the will of the flesh, or of man.” (Jn. 1:12-13)

Man’s Will’s Role is Neither of the Following Errors:

1. Your Part, God’s Part (as if you do something independent of His initiation and power).
2. You Do Nothing–Not Even Believing (i.e., you simply wake up some day and feel you somehow got saved).

Factors Involved in Human Conversion (Divine & Human)



FACTORS Elements:

Occurs in the mind and heart; Holy Spirit convicts in your spirit; heart and mind hear the gospel (understanding involved); hour glass—can take time till people respond (and several presentations); evidences after it occurs; Bible spoken; devil having blinded opposes the process and seeks to steal the word/seed (including through means of the world; II Cor. 4:4; Mk. 4:4,15); people having prayed over the event; sovereign miracle to convict through evangelist's words; heart decides yes or no/reject, and hardens over time the more the rejection (Ex.: grey fading to black triangle within "window" of opportunity); reversed "c's" indicate the possibility of several gospel presentations before the lost "come through;" salvation tenses addressed (predestined knowledge of the saved, present deciding, security in the future for positive response); all founded upon the historic cross.

Umbrella Explanation:

Heart prepared, conviction, window of opportunity, response and saved with sealing
Emphasis is god doing all the work—not man, pride or will.
Holy Spirit working with and through humans the whole
Time or nothing spiritual will occur as a result.

Umbrella "Steps:"

1. Called (or convicted) by God. (**I Cor. 1:1-2, 2:1-5; II Tim. 1:9; II Pet. 1:3**)
2. Responded in faith (vs. initiated). **See: Select Salvation by Faith Verses (in our Discipleship section)**
3. Saved and sealed with the Spirit. **See: Synonyms for Salvation, above**

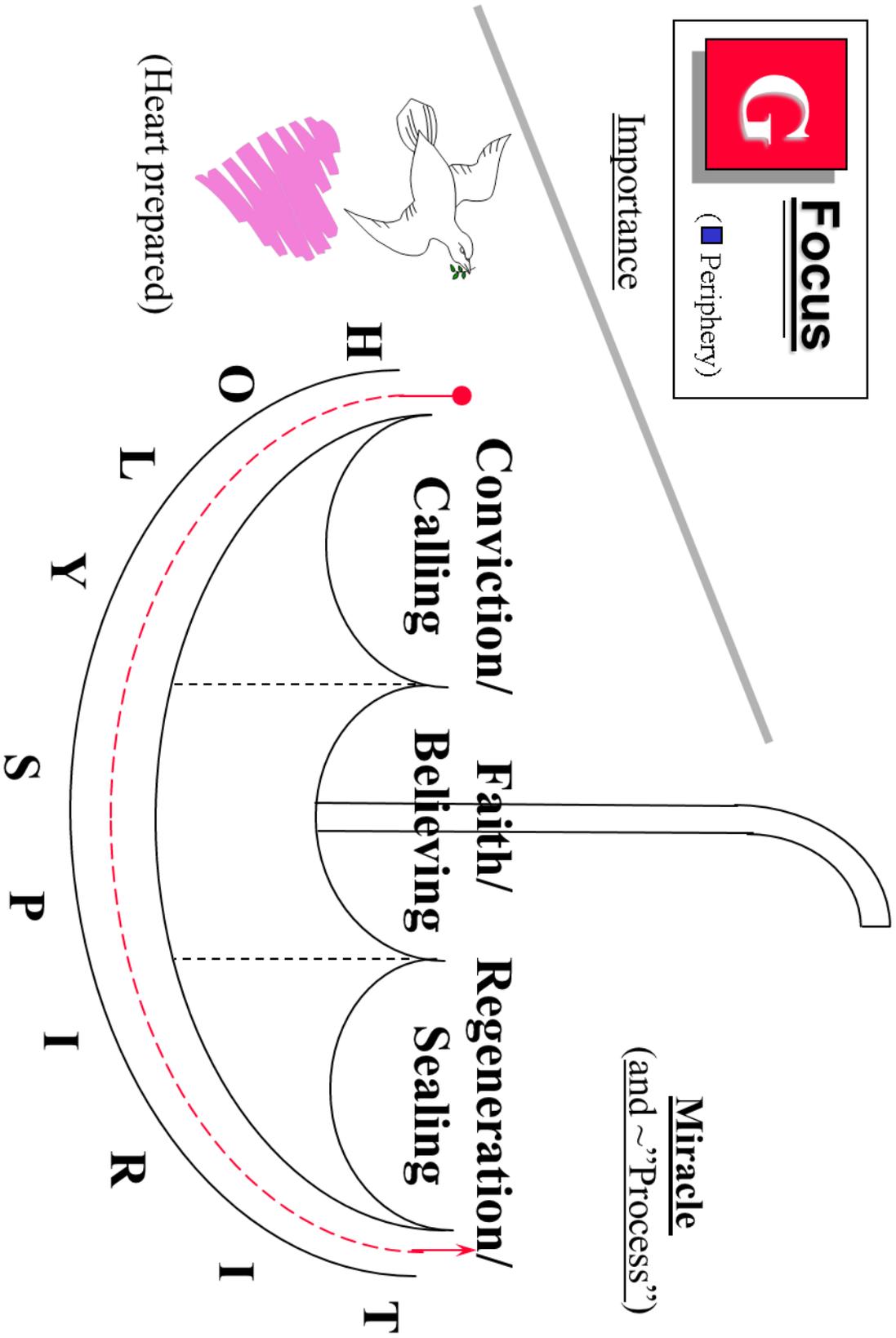
Note: There is an unbroken flow and oneness of spirit between the three functions (illustrated by the Holy Spirit umbrella) which are only separated for sake of our understanding vs. experience.

Salvation: SOVEREIGNTY and Will Umbrella Illustration

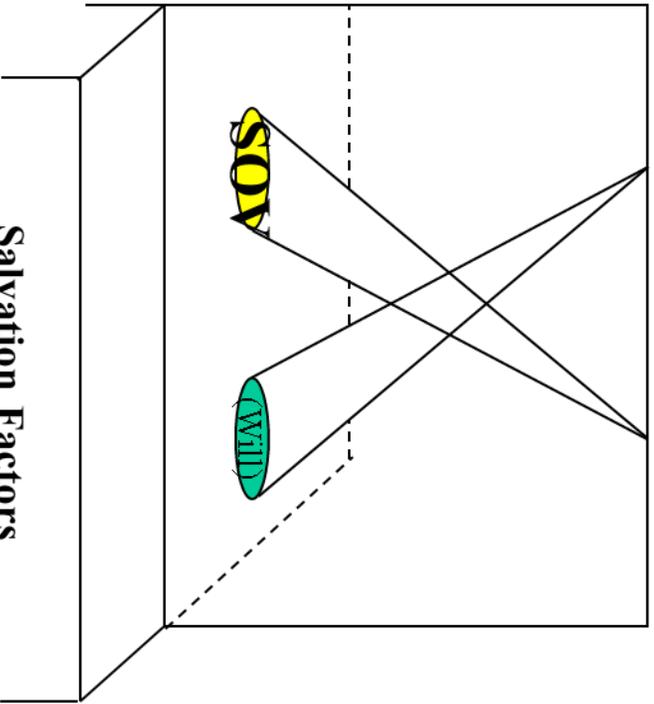
Focus
 (■ Periphery)

Importance

Miracle
 (and ~"Process")

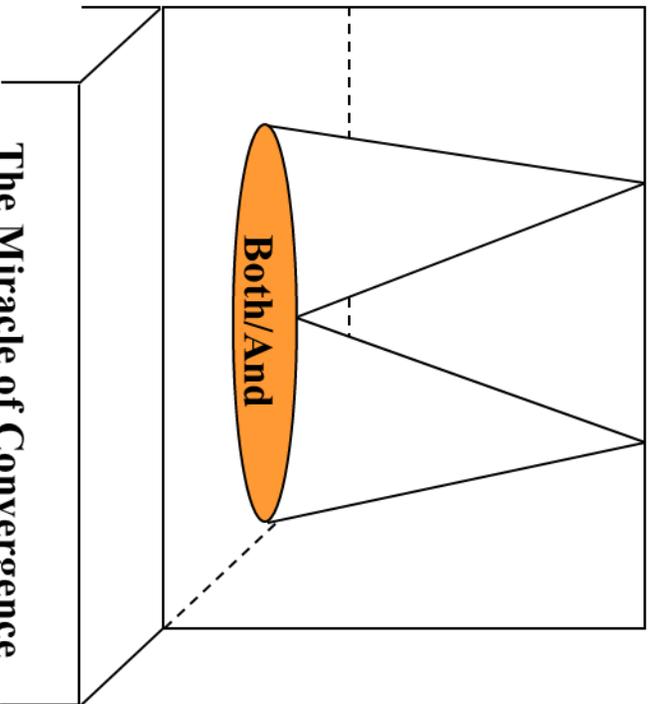


Scene A, Act 1

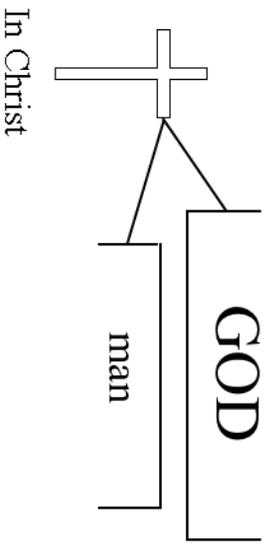


Salvation Factors

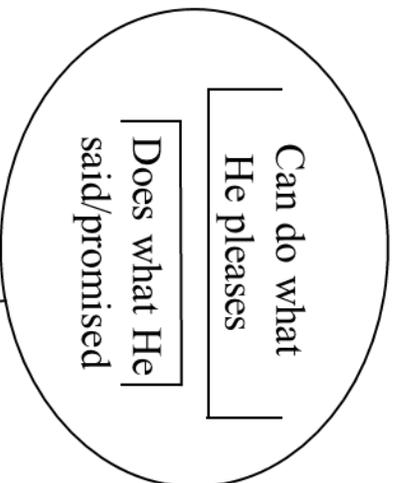
Scene A, Act 2



The Miracle of Convergence

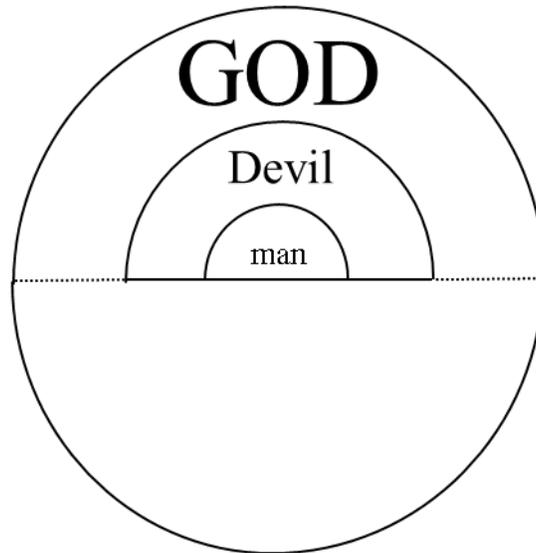


In Christ



not in a Box

“Spheres of Sovereignty”



Eternal Chain(s) of Authority:

GOD/Trinity

Father
Son
Holy Spirit

Devil/Satan

Devil
Demons

Man/Mankind (cf.: government, employers, etc.)

Husband
Wife
Children

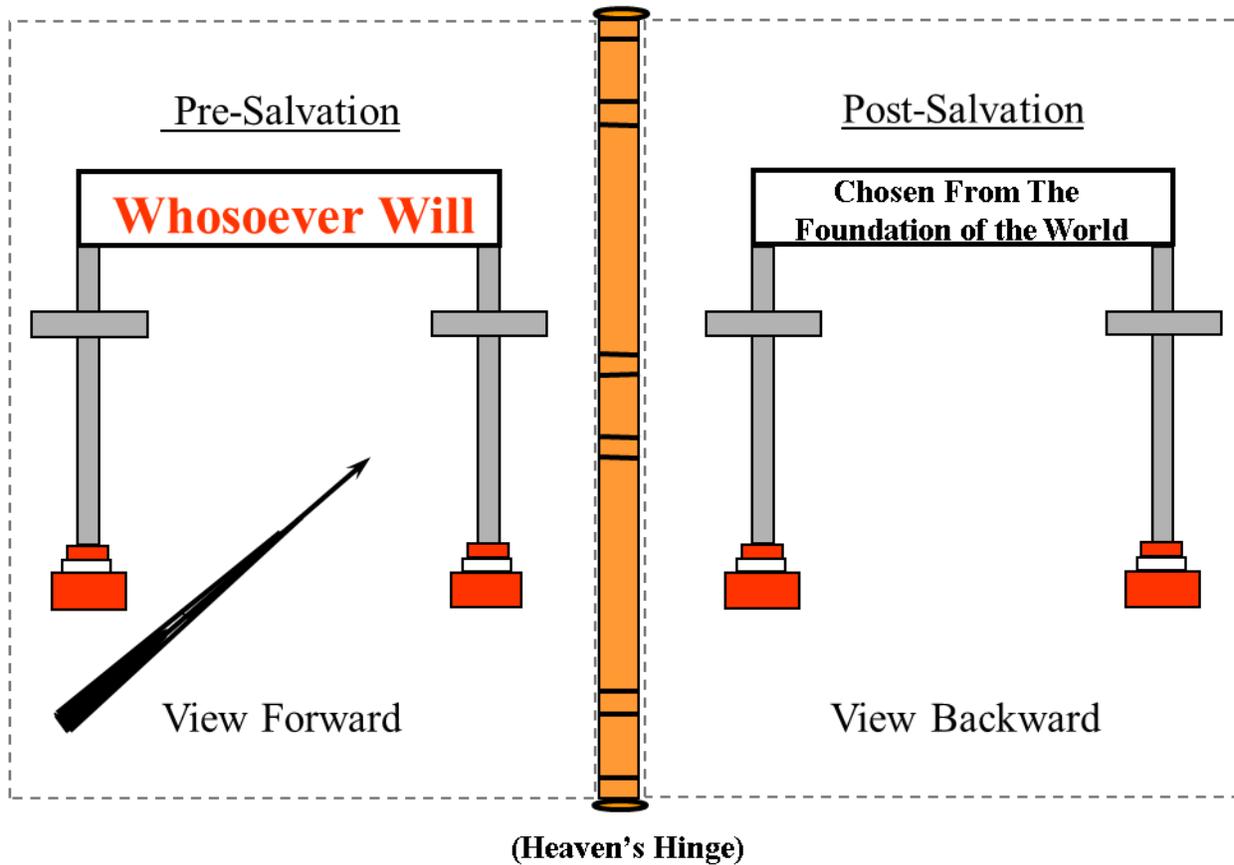
Animals and Plants

Animals?
Plants?

Spheres of Sovereignty.

- 1. God** (100%). Eph. 1:11, 4:6; Gen. 18:14; Jer. 32:27; Isa. 46:9-11; I Chron. 29:11-12; Ps. 115:3; Job 42:2; Dan. 4:17; **See also:** Four Aspects of God’s will (i.e., things He causes to happen, allows to happen, causes to not happen and allows not to happen), by Dr. Robert Lightner, in our Discipleship section.
- 2. Devil** (less; boundaries exist). Mt. 4:8-9
- 3. Man** (even less; more boundaries exist). Gen. 1:28-30
- 4. Christian** (i., through Christ, victory over the devil). I Jn. 4:4, 5:18

Perspectives on Salvation



Divisions Within God's Will

(Adapted from Dr. Robert Lightner)

<u>Things Which God...</u>	<u>Example</u>
++ Desires and Actively Causes to Occur:	The Cross
+ - Desires But Does Not Actively Cause to Occur:	Salvation of the Lost
-- Does Not Desire But Does Not Actively Prevent:	Christian Carnality
- + Does Not Desire & Actively Prevents:	The Destruction of Israel

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UPDATE

From a very edifying on-line Twitter Fest with an avowed Calvinist in early 2014, it became clear to me that this section could use a more detailed refining to address many more assertions of committed Calvinists. Following is a result of that biblical inquiry.

INTRODUCTION

The issues raised by examining the subjects of Arminianism and Calvinism—namely, eternal salvation—how it is secured, by whom and for how long—have been debated within the Christian community for centuries. Applying a logically consistent approach, both sides in modern application seem to take polar opposite position on five main tenets (known in Calvinism circles as ‘T.U.L.I.P.’).

But how do both sides’ views line up with Scripture—the ultimate authority—and are there aspects of both positions which are Scripturally accurate? People will disagree on the answer to that question for centuries to come (absent prophecy’s intervention), but much of that loyalty comes more from emotional comfort zones and historic traditions than that the Bible is either unclear, confusing or even contradictory on these matters.

It is this author’s sole intention and purpose to solely and accurately represent the full counsel of God’s word in addressing the issues raised, and no ill-will is intended against any individuals who may so dearly hold to either theological system.

AREAS OF AGREEMENT

For all their differences (i.e., their five main propositions being mirror opposites), Calvinists and Arminians do share the following Bible-based commonalities:

1. God saves human beings.
2. All men deserve punishment for their sins.
3. Christ died to pay the penalty for sin.
4. The Gospel is God’s message of salvation.
5. Not everyone goes to heaven; in fact, few do.
6. Those who miss heaven go to hell; there are no in-between venues.
7. Christians are to evangelize.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Total vs. Partial Depravity

1. Is every human (other than Christ) completely sinful before God, or is there any moral good in a lost person?

Answer: Yes.

2. Is a lost person's will free or bound?

Answer: Bound on spiritual matters. Free, within limits prescribed by God, on all other matters.

B. Unconditional vs. Conditional Election

1. Did God choose to save Christians because of anything they did, decided or inherently were?

Answer: No.

2. Were specific people "chosen" in Christ, by God?

Answer: Yes, "in Christ."

3. Does man's will play any part of salvation, and if so, how, biblically?

Answer: A humbly minor yet important part, if and when they are under God's sovereign conviction. That call/conviction empowers them to be response-able and they then are required to be responsible by believing, or they are rejecting the Holy Spirit—an unforgiveable sin, for if you reject salvation you will never get salvation (under God's conviction).

C. Limited vs. Unlimited Atonement

1. Did Christ die for all people, or just a few?

Answer: He died for all, but only a few will benefit from that death, because only a few are prophesied to be willing (under conviction) to receive it/appropriate it for themselves.

The atonement is limited in its application, but not limited in its extent. ...Christ died for the sins of all human beings (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4-6; 1 John 2:2; 2 Peter 2:1). Chosen But Free, p. 205, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

2. Did Christ's death on the cross secure anyone's salvation with no further action required on their part?

Answer: No. Potentially everyone can be saved, but if a person never expresses faith in Christ they will go to hell as their ultimate destiny.

Christ's atonement was intended to provide salvation for all as well as to procure salvation for all who believe. Chosen But Free, p. 205, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

D. Irresistible vs. Resistible Grace

1. Can a person resist God's call to salvation?

Answer: Having experienced God's call to salvation, I understand how people can testify that it was (i.e., felt) irresistible, as I certainly had no desire not to accept the offer. However, analyzing Scripture, the picture becomes more objective, and we see that people can resist the Spirit, to their eternal detriment, though those who get saved did not do so, by the grace of God.

2. If so, does that prove they were 'non-elect'?

Answer: No one but God knows who is on God's eternal book of life list, so the concept truly has no impact on the lives of Christians, in that our not knowing makes it completely incumbent upon us to assume that everyone is on the list, until the last time they will hear our Gospel presentation, or they are on their last legs and death bed. God does not go into a lot of detail in His revelation about His perspective or process of election, and we need not speculate beyond what He hath revealed. What He has given us, we most certainly must interpret and address.

3. Does regeneration precede faith?

Answer: No, but sovereign conviction (which may feel, to some, as if God saved them) does. At the same time, God's conviction carries through their faith response and God's sealing, where no true believer could ever claim or feel they helped God, chose God on their own or on their own initiative, or that God's grace did not cause their response. In fact, God alone saves. Even our allowing Him to, under sovereign conviction, gives Him all the glory as He is the but for/procuring cause of that willingness, and letting someone do something (the humility vs. arrogance of faith) is not the same as their doing so—saving us!

E. Perseverance of the Saints vs. Losing Salvation

1. Will every true Christian be sanctified between conversion and glorification?

Answer: A variety of results are demonstrated in Scripture—a range. God will always be at work within believers till glorification (Phil. 1:6), but true believers have been prematurely killed as punishment for their severe sinning (I Cor. 11:30) and Demas forsook God for the world (Col. 4:14 and Phm. 1:24 vs. II Tim. 4:10, later on). These people's salvation was not questioned (as II Cor. 13:5-6 is so over-used and over-emphasized, and especially refers to false prophet critics of Paul), but their sanctification was clearly questionable, and rewards would be lost, as with the former's physical lives, as judgment. Many verses indicate the natural expectation of believers' new nature, but we still have two natures (only one of which is us in Christ), and the one you sow to is the one that will be most evident in your behavior (Gal. 6:7-10).

2. Does a lack of sanctification over time indicate a lack of salvation?

Answer: It can. Lost people can act morally (Ex.: Gandhi and maybe Mother Theresa*—if she was unsaved) and Christians can act quite evilly (I Cor. 5:1-2). Others may doubt a seriously sinful Christians' salvation, but better biblical practice is to reprove them and obey Jas. 5:19-20 and I Jn. 5:16-17. Very few 'tares' in the church truly seek to act moral, yet reject Jesus, as their primary motivation in modern times is to solicit business connections at God's house.

3. Will every true Christian produce good deeds all their lives?

Answer: Not necessarily. **See:** 'carnal Christian' evidence at our website (Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org) under the 'Lordship Salvation errors' section.

4. Is a person who is saved by faith in Christ saved forever, or can they lose that salvation?

Answer: If they have been saved/justified, that salvation is forever, though their obligation is thereafter to pursue God's sanctification the remainder of their life.

I just happen to believe vs. I choose to believe vs. I choose to believe by God's grace and in his power.

* “‘May you enter into the heart of Jesus through the Virgin Mary.’ [–**Mother Theresa**] So she believed that salvation comes by virtue of Mary.” Hard To Believe, p. 192, by John MacArthur (Thomas Nelson: Nashville, TN), 2003

TRUTH PROPOSITIONS

(Concerning salvation, sovereignty & 'free' will)

- Every human but Christ is totally sinful (sinners) in their only spiritual nature. (**Rom. 3:23, 5:8, 7:18; Gal. 3:22; Eph. 2:1-3**)
- All men were born sinners since the fall of Adam. (**I Cor. 15:21-22**)
- One sin makes a person guilty as if they had committed all sins. (**Jas. 2:10; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:10-14**)
- Natural (lost) people do not all express this sinful capacity to the same extent in their experience. That is, there is variety in how sinfully lost people act. (**Ex.: Ac. 17:11; II Tim. 1:16-18; Ac. 12:23, etc.**)
- Natural (lost) people do not fully express this sinful capacity (i.e., all are not Hitlers, or worse), due to the restraining Holy Spirit, government and some degree of self-control/restraint. (**II Th. 2:7; Rom. 13:1-6; Ex.: Mt. 19:20**)

The old nature only makes sin inevitable, not unavoidable. Chosen But Free, p. 65, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

- Man's conscience, also, partly serves as the remaining image of God in fallen/sinful man. (**Pre-Fall: Gen. 1:26-27; Post-Fall: Gen. 9:6**)
- Every external, man-viewed 'good' work of lost people is sin-tainted, and wrought from sin, not God. (**Jn. 3:19-21; Rom. 3:9-18**)
- The lost ("natural") person's only spiritual nature is to sin. (**Rom. 3:9-18; Eph. 2:1-3**)
- The lost person's will is bound by and to satan's will. (**II Tim. 2:24-26; Rom. 6:20, 7:9-11; Jn. 3:19-21, ~8:43-45**)
- The lost person cannot make a spiritual decision on his own (initiative), and any such attempts would be non-salvific, and spiritually dead. (**I Cor. 2:14; Jn. 1:13**)
- There is a distinction between an external (i.e., the evangelizing person's words, or 'general call') and internal (i.e., God's specifically speaking) call of God to salvation through the Gospel.
- Conviction from God, by the Spirit through the Bible gives one the ability to trust/believe. (**I Th. 1:5-7; Col. 2:12, etc.**)
- When and if God sovereignly convicts a lost person to respond to the Gospel, he is thereby made response-able, at which time he must be responsible to trust Christ under that influence.
- All who are saved were drawn by God. Jn. 6:44
- Faith is trusting God to do all the work you cannot do for yourself, and desperately need for yourself. It is fully depending upon Him, and taking Him at His word (claiming His promises, or taking Him up on His offer in the Gospel).
- The nature of biblical, saving faith is that it is humble, speaks and acts. (**I Cor. 4:7/Lk. 18:16; II Cor. 4:13; Heb. 11**)

A. God's Conviction of a Lost Person to Believe is NOT:

- ▶ God only "helping you" to decide or to be saved/changed. (**II Cor. 6:2**)
- ▶ God assisting you.
- ▶ God weakly hoping you will respond.
- ▶ God's call failing or being weak. (**Rom. 9:6**)
- ▶ God begging you to respond as if in a position of weaker leverage.
- ▶ God forcing you to respond (i.e., spiritual rape).

If affirming that God will not violate the free choice of any human being in order to save that person is an ‘Arminian’ view, then every major church father from the beginning, including Justin, Irenaeus, Athenagoras, Clement, Tertullian, Origen, Methodius, Cyril, Gregory, Jerome, Chrysostom, the early Augustine, Anselm, and Thomas Aquinas... were Arminians! Chosen But Free, p. 53, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

B. God’s Conviction of a Lost Person to Believe IS:

His fully and completely empowering you to believe; Expecting you, therefore, to do so in His power (not your own), and lovingly wooing the heart He has already prepared so that you will trust Jesus, sovereignly executed at His time-frame and frequency/ies.

C. A Person’s Resulting “Choice” to Trust Christ is NOT:

- ▶ Self-initiated. (**I Jn. 4:19**)
- ▶ A work. (**Rom. 3:25-31, 4:1-8; Gal. 2:16, 3:10-14; Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:4-6**)
- ▶ Meritorious.
- ▶ Intellectual assent. (**Jas. 2:19**)
- ▶ Proud/ego-centric.
- ▶ Man controlling God or His salvation offer (obligating God to man?).
- ▶ Opposite of man’s will being bound in sin.
- ▶ Man saving himself.
- ▶ Dead, ‘natural’ faith.
- ▶ (Faith in) willpower.
- ▶ Innate goodness in man.
- ▶ A Gift that never must be received.
- ▶ Only a feeling.

D. A Person’s Resulting “Choice” to Trust Christ IS:

ONLY under God’s power, initiating and heart preparation humbly asking God to save you based on His Gospel promise, and trusting Him so to do (and to do it ALL).

- Upon such expressed faith (and only while/when under conviction), God immediately seals a person’s salvation by and with His Spirit, just as He truthfully promised. (**Eph. 1:13**)
- That sealing, or saving of the person, is full, complete, and eternal, never to be un-done or lost, based on god’s ability to both save and save forever. **See: Eternal Security (in our Discipleship section)**
- God does all (i.e., 100% of) the saving. You don’t “help” or assist in God saving you.

Synonyms for God’s Work in Salvation:

- ▶ Made alive by God. (**Eph. 2:5-6; Col. 2:13**)
- ▶ Brought near to God. (**Eph. 2:12**)
- ▶ Brought forth by God’s will. (**Jas. 1:18**)
- ▶ In Christ by His doing. (**I Cor. 1:30**)
- ▶ Regenerated and washed. (**Tit. 3:5**)
- ▶ Renewed by the Spirit. (**Tit. 3:5**)
- ▶ Made a kingdom and priests. (**Rev. 1:6**)
- ▶ Rescued by Christ. (**Gal. 1:4**)
- ▶ Reconciled to God. (**Col. 1:21-22**)

- ▶ Saved by God. (**Tit. 3:3-7; II Pet. 1:3-5**)
- ▶ Baptized into the Body by the Spirit. (**I Cor. 12:13**)
- ▶ Forgiven our sins. (**Col. 1:14, 2:13**)
- ▶ Redeemed. (**Col. 1:14**)
- ▶ Sealed with the Spirit. (**Eph. 1:13**)
- ▶ Indwelt by the Spirit. (**I Cor. 3:16, 6:19**)
- God’s salvation is a freely-bestowed, unmerited gift of grace. (**Rom. 3:24, 5:15-17, 6:23; II Cor. 9:(15); Eph. 2:8**)
- God does not (choose to) save anyone based on any moral goodness innate within them.
- God does not save anyone because He knew they would believe under conviction, as if He requires a successful outcome or somehow He will have “failed” (i.e., by being rejected). (**Ex.: Rom. 9:6**)
- God saves people solely because of His mercy and plan/own will. (**II Tim. 1:9; Tit. 3:5**)
- This calling can be instantaneous, but our biblical understanding of it (i.e., viewed in “slow motion”) finds the following elements: the Holy Spirit’s wooing flowing throughout it all, God’s preparation of man’s heart to receive salvation (by various means and circumstances), and the immediate elements of, 1) calling, 2) faith and 3) sealing—again, all within God’s Spirit’s power alone. (**II Th. 2:13; Eph. 1:13, etc.**)
- **See: Sovereignty of God in Salvation illustration in our Discipleship section (i.e., Umbrella illustration)**
- It is God’s complete right not to save any humans, but it is His nature to save humans. (**Rom. 9:14-23, 11:32/I Tim. 2:4/Jn. 3:16, etc.**)
- God does not owe anyone salvation. (**It is a gift of grace, vs. debt of God from having been earned**)
- No one forces God to save them. (**Lk. 16:16 is “trying” to enter by works vs. faith**)
- No one controls God or His salvation ‘process’/experience. (**Rom. 9:16, etc.**)
- There is a limited window of opportunity for a person to accept God’s salvation offer under conviction. (**Rom. 2:3-5; II Cor. 6:2; Heb. 10:26; Ac. 28:28, etc.**)
- That specific call to salvation may feel irresistible to the recipient (as it is a mesmerizing power), but people have and do resist God’s specific (vs. just general) calling to salvation. (**Best proof is engaging in evangelism and seeing convicted persons who delay; Bible doesn’t say if rejections were under specific or only general call; whether they finally believed, the evangelizer may never know**)
- The frequency, duration and number of times God specifically calls any person can vary and is unknown by humans, but when it happens/occurs, to reject such a call hardens the heart to the point that the more times an offer is rebuffed, it eventually becomes impossible for that person to be saved. (i.e., the unforgiveable sin). (**Mt. 12:32 & the nature of ‘sovereignty’**)
- God desires that all men get saved, but His will incorporates four distinct aspects:
 - ▶ What God desires, but does not actively cause to occur (Ex.: Salvation of the lost)
 - ▶ What God does not desire, but does not actively prevent (Ex.: Christian carnality)
 - ▶ What God desires, and actively causes to occur (Ex.: The cross)
 - ▶ What God does not desire, and actively prevents (Ex.: Israel’s destruction)

--Dr. Robert Lightner

Those who insist that God’s will cannot be resisted confuse what God wills unconditionally with what he wills conditionally. God wills the salvation of all persons

conditionally—conditioned on their repentance (2 Peter 3:9). Chosen But Free, p. 94, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

- God empowers and enables a faith response, but does not force Himself on anyone.
- It was God’s plan to allow mankind to cooperate or participate in His calling process by responding under conviction—no one forced Him to come up with that design.
- Christ died on the cross for the benefit of all persons, but His death only benefits those who believe (i.e., specifically credited to their account by faith ‘appropriation’). (**I Tim. 2:5-6, 4:10; I Jn. 2:2; Eph. 5:25, etc.**)
- Salvation, therefore, requires a decision to trust Christ, under conviction, and evangelism efforts would be biblically non-God honoring to exclude that element of invitation so to do.
- Immediate external (i.e., behavioral) evidence of salvation varies in the Bible. (**Ac. 2:41, 4:16, 9:20, 16:33; II Cor. 1:7; I Jn. 5:18; III Jn. 1:11**)
- Post-salvation (sanctification) behavioral results biblically vary among persons, both at the beginning and end of life. (**Ex.: Ac. 8:12-14, 19:18; Phil. 1:5, 3:17-19; Col. 1:4-6; II Tim. 4:6-10, etc.**)
- Sanctification, as with salvation, is also by grace through faith—not ‘dead’ works. We are to walk by faith. (**Rom. 5:1-2; II Cor. 5:7; Heb. 6:1, 9:14/Jn. 5:39, 6:63**)
- Sanctification is not automatic for the Christian. It takes effort (i.e., cooperation with God, by faith). (**Mt. 5:16; Jn. 8:31-32, 13:34-35; I Cor. 15:10; II Cor. 6:1-2, 7:1; Gal. 2:20, 6:7-9; Phil. 2:12-13; II Tim. 2:20; Heb. 4:(14), 5:11-6:1, 9:14, 16; I Pet. 1:22, 5:5-6; II Pet. 1:14-15; Jude 1:3**)
- The Bible plays a significant role in sanctification. (**I Cor. 2:10-3:2; I Pet. 1:13-2:11**)

COMMENTS & QUESTIONS

Problems.

- ▶ The Bible is a big book, and with little study and many preconceptions, you can't expect many people to come to right conclusions about its contents. Frequently, they clearly see trees without seeing the forest (or other trees that work alongside their cherished tree)
- ▶ It detracts from God's glory for anyone to ignore parts of His revelation to push their limited agenda.
- ▶ Christ and His word are greater than church history heroes. They may have been great persons, but unless their doctrine is fully correct, they can rightly be criticized and not followed on their erring matters.
- ▶ Universal church unity is not to uniting to self-delusion, by ignoring doctrine or completely separating due to differences.
- ▶ Will 'the elect' be saved no matter what (that is, without being evangelized)? The greatest Christian role model, Paul, never acted like it, and he was sincere in his evangelism vs. feigning a perfunctory act. The elect (i.e., Christians) will be saved not because they are on an unknowable pre-existing heavenly list, but because they respond to the Gospel in faith (and you will never know who will do this unless you give all opportunities to do so, modern pure Calvinists).
- Modern pure Calvinism exalts philosophy and speculative biblical deductions more than the full counsel of God.
 - “...the voluntarism of extreme Calvinism is a classic example of the fallacy known as theologism. It takes a single theological principle and uses it as the ultimate determiner of all truth. Often the principle is: *Whatever gives most glory to God is true.* And since *they believe* that making God's will supreme over everything else brings more glory to Him, then it would follow that voluntarism is true.” Chosen But Free, p. 238, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999
- Modern pure Calvinism biblically exaggerates and over-focuses (~obsesses) on the concept of 'election.'
- Modern pure Calvinism focuses on the less than 1% of times where no human evangelizer is involved in a person's salvation (Ex.: Paul) rather than the Bible's focus on Christians as His primary instrument. Is it to avoid evangelism?
- God rarely (if ever) reveals Himself as a logical syllogism, as many claimed followers seek to present His revelation.

Election.

- ▶ A modern pure Calvinist once asked members of a Sunday School class, “Did you choose Christ or did Christ choose you?” The question is a false dichotomy (which I quickly explained, and the church eventually cut him from their staff for other un-predetermined sins). Just as in marriage, ‘it takes two to tango,’ though in salvation that analogy is more the King of the world inviting a mere beggar to His eternal feast—not two decisions of co-equal partners.
- ▶ Same modern pure Calvinist once taught that ‘You do what you want to do’ (seeking to prove that the nature change of salvation must occur before a lost person can respond to God), to which I asked him (in front of that Sunday School class), ‘Do you as a husband ever take out the trash when your wife asks you to?’ He got quiet.

- ▶ A modern pure Calvinist may ask, ‘How can a dead man make a choice or decision?’ He can’t, which is exactly why it takes God’s sovereign Holy Spirit’s call to ‘aliven’ any faith response.
- ▶ A modern pure Calvinist may then ask, ‘Then does God completely save us or merely resuscitate us to life?’ However you desire to analogize it, without His conviction you cannot be saved, and with it you must choose to be saved. You will never be resurrected to life without exercising saving faith in Christ.
- ▶ Regeneration precedes faith? No, conviction precedes conversion. And it is completely illogical to say that God saves you, then you trust Christ for forgiveness of all your sins He already forgave when He saved you
- ▶ God is not an autocrat or micromanager of robots, though He is sovereignly in (supervisory and sometimes specifically determined) control. See also: Four facets of God’s Will (Dr. Robert Lightner) in our Discipleship section.
- ▶ Are you a predestinarian? Read the Bible! God RARELY discusses past thoughts or how they impact the present or future—only a system does that. We pray to Him and answers come in the future. The Bible doesn’t speak of that answer having been determined well beforehand, even if it were. Focus on God’s revelation rather than academic speculation.
- ▶ To some degree, salvation is a mystery we cannot fully understand. Even Jesus said so. (Jn. 3:8); Therefore, the interaction of God’s sovereignty and man’s free will are not 100% compatible, or logical. Salvation IS a miracle, after all is said and done.

“Moderate Calvinists agree that there are no strings attached to the gift of salvation—it is unconditional. When election occurred—before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4)—the elect were not even created yet. God elected His own, without any conditions that needed to be performed on the part of the elect. However, the question is not whether there are any conditions on God giving salvation; the question is whether there are any conditions for man receiving salvation.” Chosen But Free, pp. 67-68, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

- No one is born credited as being ‘elect’ without doing so, just as no one wakes up one day “knowing” God has saved them. Such a feeling could be merely the aftermath of the night before’s spicy pizza! You do not get saved by osmosis, just as no one can truly say they are not sure when they were birthed into this world (though the details of their new birth will certainly be more remembered).
- Individuals are chosen, and all of them chosen “in Christ.” How does one get “in Christ?” Trust Him.
- God chose to let us respond—that was His and not our plan.
- No one is chosen for any latent goodness within them.
- If you are a Christians, God did not choose you because He knew you would choose Him (as if He seeks to avoid ‘failure’ to maintain His reputation, or ‘save face’).
- Does God send anyone to hell without their willing consent? No one will go to hell who does not deserve to go there (as we all do) or who did not (in some way or another) choose to reject God’s saving Gospel message in Christ. **(Mk. 16:15-16)**

“All Calvinists, like it or not, must hold some form of double-predestination—the logic of their positions demands it.” Chosen But Free, p. 206, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

Depravity.

- ▶ No human being (other than Christ) is good. Even Jesus, in His humble state as a human for 33 years acknowledged God's standard for goodness is perfection (which Jesus met, but humbly deflected glory for).
- ▶ Lost humanity can still produce externally-looking 'good' works, as opposed to bad deeds, but even those are sin-tainted, imperfect, and not brought about (or sourced) by God (the true definition of goodness) as they are undertaken outside a personal relationship with Him.
- ▶ It is because of God's image within man that they can so do, and though valuable for society and possible less punishment in hell, they can never earn anyone entrance into heaven.

Atonement.

- ▶ If Christ died as the sacrifice for all people, will all people be saved? No, because His death made their salvation possible, but it must be personally appropriated, or received, for that historic event and fact to benefit a person individually. God's word makes it clear that He will give salvation to all who believe. That was His free choice and promise in Christ.

Christ 'Bought' Even Apostates by His Blood. (II Pet. 2:1)

Christ died for the Ungodly. (Rom. 5:6)

Not All Christ Died for Will be Saved." Chosen But Free, pp. 195-203, by Norman Geisler, (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

- ▶ If Christ's sacrifice needs man's acceptance to be effective, is it not all-sufficient (Rom. 5; Eph. 1:3-14). We don't "validate" it, we take God up on His freely chosen offer in Christ. It is all-sufficient in its potentiality for everyone, but God is the One—not Mr. Arminius—who set one condition upon its being experienced by anyone. Be mad at God for "evilly" requiring man to exercise faith in Him instead of having to perfectly work their way to heaven.

Faith.

- ▶ Is it logical or reasonable to believe in Christ, since it is a free gift and the only chance to miss hell? It may seem reasonable to Christians (i.e., post-salvation, with spiritual hindsight), but the lost person's mind is blinded by satan, and he is bound to doing his will, absent God's intervention, so what is truly wise appears as foolishness to the unsaved mind.
- ▶ Is the Holy Spirit's conviction needed or you can't trust Christ? Yes, though that is no excuse, for if a person is willing to do so, he's already evidencing that work of God on his heart.
- ▶ Not that I have ever heard any Christian (or Arminian) teach otherwise, but a lost person is not free to choose to trust Christ anytime they want! Conviction must be present.
- ▶ If you believe 'God gives faith,' God gives us faith to believe, at which point we must (cooperatively) believe, or not—a choice! Response-ability, responsibility QUOTE.
"Contrary to the extreme Calvinist's view, faith is not a gift that God offers only to some... All are responsible to believe and 'whoever' decides to believe can believe (cf. John 3:16).

...everywhere the Bible assumes that anyone who wills to be saved can exercise saving faith.¹² Every passage where the Scriptures call upon unbelievers to believe or repent to be saved implies this truth. A few familiar passages will suffice to make the point: Lk. 13:3; Jn. 3:16, 18, 6:29, 11:40, 12:36; Ac. 16:31, 17:30, 20:21; Heb. 11:6 [abbreviated]. Finally, the Bible describes faith as *ours* and not God's. It speaks of '*your* faith' (Lk. 7:50), '*his* faith' (Rom. 4:5), and '*their* faith' (Mt. 9:2, but never of *God's* faith.

...the opportunity to repent is a gift of God. He graciously allows us the opportunity to turn from our sins, but we must do the repenting.

Does God give the ability to come to Jesus to all men?⁷ The answer is that there is nothing here or anywhere else to say God limits His willingness to provide this ability to only some. Chosen But Free, pp. 35, 189-190, 185, 53, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

- Biblical faith is not a 'que sera sera' attitude about one's afterlife.
- Neither will intellectual assent to Gospel facts saves no one. (Jas. 2:19)
- Jesus' calls and commands for people to believe in Him were certainly not asking anyone to simply feel something. They were action calls to sincerely trust in Him for salvation.
- It is not evil for a lost person to respond to God's message, in fact it is the right thing to do. Does that choice mean he has performed a meritorious work? No, See bullet # 4, above.
- Bible verses indicating that God knows the heart serve no purpose if the attitude of the lost person is no consideration to God as to whether they believe, or not. (Ac. 15:8; II Tim. 2:19)
- If you choose not to "obey" the Gospel you are thereby choosing to go to hell (if you're under conviction).
- A decision, as meager a part of the transaction as it is, is still needed.
- It is neither free-willed nor forced. It is chosen by the person under the influence of God's empowering and enabling conviction.
- A Christian can be proud, but biblical faith's nature is humility.
- God alone decides what He deems to be a work and what is not. He has told us that faith is not a work. It is not performing a deed in order to earn your salvation, and it is NOT a work, in God's system of accounting. (**Rom. 3:25-31, 4:1-8; Gal. 2:16, 3:10-14; Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:4-6**)

'The dispute here is not over whether or not salvation is based on works. All orthodox Protestants believe that salvation is *not* based on works. The question is whether an act of 'faith' on man's part constitutes a meritorious work. A negative answer to this is supported by Scripture and good reason. First of all, faith is clearly contrasted and opposed to works in the Bible. The Bible constantly places faith in opposition to works, as is evident in the passages just cited and many more (cf. e.g.; Rom. 3:26-27; Gal. 3:11). Rom. 4:4 affirms that 'when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation.' It is either faith or works, but not both. Thus, the faith exercised to receive the gift of salvation is not a work. It is the admission that we cannot work for it but must accept it by pure grace. Furthermore, the act of receiving a gift by faith is not any more meritorious than is that of a beggar receiving a handout. It is a strange logic that asserts that the receiver gets credit for receiving a gift rather than the giver who gives it! The act of faith in receiving God's unconditional gift accrues no merit to the receiver. Rather, all praise and glory goes to the Giver 'of every good and perfect gift.' (Jas. 1:17)..." Arminius asked these poignant questions: 'A rich man

bestows, on a poor and famished beggar, alms by which he may be able to maintain himself and his family. Does it cease to be a pure gift, because the beggar extends his hand to receive it? Can it be said with propriety, that ‘the alms depend partly on the liberality of the Donor, and partly on the liberality of the Receiver, though the latter would not have possessed the alms unless he had received it by stretching out his hand?’” Chosen But Free, pp. 190-191, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

- You do nothing—you let Him do everything.
- Saved by God or by your faith? No one puts faith in their own faith, but their own faith in God, based on His promises. This is likely a straw man argument of ivory towered non-evangelizers, as no one I have ever heard of believed they were saved because they believed in their own capacity to believe. It’s an oxymoron, among other ills.
- God prepares one’s heart (circumstances, etc.) to believe.
- Salvation is both a miracle and an experience. It is not just a decision.
- The indwelling of God’s Spirit occurs after faith.
- There is a limited window of opportunity for a lost person to get saved, and it may vary per person. No one but God knows how many chances a person will get to respond, how often he will call or how frequently, or how long His conviction will remain/tarry. The Bible only promises that today—not tomorrow—is the day of salvation. God’s Spirit will not always strive with man.
- Throughout the unknown duration of God’s salvation’s ‘window of opportunity’ per individual, the more one resists, the more their heart hardens, to the point that one day it will be virtually impossible for them to get saved. (Rom. 2:5; Heb. 3:15, etc.)
- Does the ‘Sinner’s Prayer’ save? Christ saves, but He does so when we trust Him to and in response to that faith, which usually is expressed through praying for forgiveness. You can express that desire in any words you choose. How else would a person communicate with God?
- What is the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit? I don’t know for sure, but it is attributing something miraculously from Him as from an evil source. Since it is unforgiveable, I take it to ultimately be the rejection of His specific call to salvation, because only rejecting salvation can keep a person from salvation. There are sins unto physical death, but rejecting Christ is worse.
- Those who fear God are welcome to Him (Ac. 10:35). That means the heart is in the right place, or ripe for salvation, though in itself God-fearing does not save, absent faith in Christ alone.

Assurance.

- ▶ It is a falsehood to teach that a person cannot know they are saved till their life’s deeds prove it to the end (as if assurance is only available on one’s deathbed). In the Bible, the certainty of our salvation is a major stimulus to good deeds (and ministry).
- ▶ To base one’s assurance on their deeds is to have an unstable foundation upon which to build the Christian life. And deeds engaged in as a believer do not maintain our salvation.
- ▶ External deeds may serve to convince others that you are saved, but God knows those who are His, and the Spirit bearing witness to those who are His is the primary basis for assurance of salvation. (Rom. 5:5, 8:9-11, 16; I Cor. 2:12, 3:16; II Cor. 5:5;

Gal. 3:2, (5), 14, 5:25; Eph. 1:13-14, 4:30; I Th. 4:(8); II Tim. 1:14; Tit. 3:5-6; Jas. 4:5; I Jn. 3:24, 4:13)

- ▶ A Christian's sins do not cause them to lose salvation, but rewards.

Sanctification.

- ▶ Salvation is a point or line—an experience or a life-long process? It is an experience in time (point; as with child birth) which has life-long consequences and effects, and beyond. The point is called 'salvation,' the connected line which derives therefrom is called 'sanctification.'
- ▶ If you would but read God's word you will quickly see that positive sanctificational results of true conversions/salvation are not guaranteed.
- ▶ Sanctification results vary, as do responses upon salvation and at people's final stages of life.
- ▶ The more we grow in Christ, the more we learn and understand what it means that there's not so much God's part and your part, but that we are one spirit with Christ, whereby He lives our life 'through' us, so that our part and His part are more organically combined.
- ▶ Though God is always at work within, there is effort required of believers to produce a successful/active/fruitful sanctification. (Phil. 1:6)
- ▶ For the stoics or the self-righteous, who claim that rewards are 'selfish,' please reassess your position after studying God's word. (Mt. 6:19-21; Jn. 6:27, 14:1-3; Rom. 2:6-11; I Cor. 3:10-15; II Cor. 5:9-10; I Th. 2:(19); I Tim. 4:8, 6:5-6, 17-19; II Tim. 2:20-21; Jas. 1:12; I Pet. 3:9-12, 5:4; II Pet. 1:11; I Jn. 3:2, 4:17; II Jn. 1:8; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26, 3:4-5, 9-10, 12, 21)
- ▶ If teaching false doctrine (i.e., Lordship salvation) and doubting people's salvation are your means of eradicating carnality in the church, you ought to consider how God tells us to address the problem!

Evangelism.

- ▶ The terms 'election' and 'predestination' are often used by some to give pseudo-theological cover for their low evangelism activity.

“Many years ago a young man went to his spiritual mentor and informed him that he would like to be a missionary to the heathen. His hyper-Calvinistic advisor told him that if God wanted to save the world, he could do it without him. Fortunately, the young man did not heed his mentor's advice. His name was William Carey, famous missionary to India.⁸ God only knows for sure how many other extreme Calvinists feel the same. As a matter of fact, if their view is correct, then we need not get excited about missions for several reasons. First of all, God does not love the whole world in a redemptive sense, but only the elect. Second, Christ only died for the elect, not the world. Third, no one has the faith to believe unless God gives it to him. Fourth, God has willed to give faith only to a select few, 'the frozen chosen.' Fifth, when God's power works on the hearts of the unbelievers He wants to save, there is absolutely nothing they can do to refuse it. God's power is irresistible... If all these were true—thank god they are not—it would be understandably hard to muster up much enthusiasm for missions or evangelism.” Chosen But Free, p. 136, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

- ▶ Please name for me any specific modern pure Calvinist who will criticize Billy Graham's life as having been wasted, for having promoted allegedly evil (as

unbiblical) “decisional salvation.”

- ▶ A modern pure Calvinist often engages in the sin of defrauding certain people if they ever do evangelism, for they cannot truly say that that person has a right to trust Jesus if invited. (Ex.: God loves you and Christ died for you?).
- ▶ If God provides promises, rewards and incentives for Christians to evangelize, it would be less than biblical if not pride to say that you don’t need those—you evangelize solely because you are an obedient believer. And with such position, what is your actual practice of evangelism? Enthusiasm, emotion, sincere desire for the lost to respond with faith is an element of biblical evangelism (which God can use to yield results)!
- ▶ Only one time in the New Testament is a lost person told that salvation is only available to him if God specifically convicts him to respond with faith (and even then, more so by

Solutions.

- ▶ There is a biblical balance in God’s revelation between His sovereignty and man’s will that is noticeably absent in both modern pure Calvinism and Arminianism.

GEISLER DISCLAIMER

The *small* number of issues upon which I disagree with Norman Geisler’s book, Chosen But Free, include:

1. Christ’s Death on the Cross Made People ‘Savable.’

“Christ’s payment for the sins of all mankind did not automatically save them; it simply made them savable. It did not automatically apply the saving grace of God into a person’s life. It simply satisfied (propitiated) God on their behalf (1 John 2:2).

...that Christ’s death made everyone savable does not thereby mean that everyone is saved. God would save all men if He could... God will save as many as God can ‘without violating their free choice.’” Chosen But Free, pp. 85, 53, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

Response: It is not that God cannot save those who do not believe—He can do anything. It is that He will not, as He has chosen to save only those who (choose to) believe

2. Fallen Man Can Choose God with His Assistance.

Response: Conviction is not God helping us, Him assisting or even begging us to respond. It is total spiritual power and enabling us to make that right response. And without that but/for procuring conviction we could not make a spiritual decision, and any decision made would be a dead work, as produced only of flesh. At the same time, His power does not force our wills—it woos, strongly influences and mesmerizes those upon whom it leads to believing. (Jn. 1:12)

3. The Sovereignty of God & Will of Man are Compatible, But also a Mystery.

“God’s predestination and human free choice are a mystery, but not a contradiction.”
Chosen But Free, p. 54, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

Response: If they fit together like a hand in a glove, there is no mystery. If they work together in ways not fully understandable to us, the miraculous and mysterious nature of salvation is preserved. (Isa. 55:8; Rom. 11:33-36)

4. God Will Send More Light to Those who have Never Heard the Gospel Based on Their Response to the Light He has Given.

Response: Based on Rom. 2:12-16, He may do that, and their responses to conscience and creation are certainly important, but there's no guarantee (or clear revelation) that He will save them absent the Gospel. Absent Him ultimately bringing the light of the Gospel, all lesser light is less than what He has said saves man (Rom. 1:16). Therefore, the Church cannot use that possibility to let up all efforts to reach them. If the church absolutely cannot reach them, we've done all we can. If we could, but got lazy, moral culpability rightly ensues to our account. In other words, don't ask what about those who have not heard, ask where are they and how can we go reach them now?

SUB-ISSUES

Introduction.

- ▶ If you don't decide to trust Jesus for salvation you go to hell. Therefore, especially in practice, Calvinism can be a gravely erring doctrine that has potentially eternally serious consequences. However, as with Lordship salvation, because God can work even through false doctrine, people can be saved despite holding to all aspects of Calvinism.

Election.

- God saves only those He wants to—who meet His one requirement (faith). He wants to save all and chooses to save all who believe (but only those who believe). (**II Th. 2:13**)
- A person is not saved against their will, kicking and screaming. God prepares hearts for salvation, and makes the person want to receive Christ, though that desire alone is not salvific. God's conviction precedes faith, but conviction alone does not save, either.
“However, as the Bible indicates later in Romans 9 (v. 22) and elsewhere, we can reject God's mercy (2 Peter 3:9; Acts 7:51).” Chosen But Free, p. 59, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999
- Does man rejecting God's call mean God's call is weak, or fails? Not according to God's word (**Rom. 9:6**; vs. man's more machismo definition of power)

Glory.

- ▶ Does someone who is drowning in the ocean who grabs and clings to a life raft thrown to him have anything to brag about (i.e., concerning his rescue)?
- ▶ The Apostle Paul (actively) trusted Christ, yet took zero credit for it (**I Cor. 15:10; II Cor. 3:5**), as there is zero contradiction in so doing!
- ▶ As Dr. D. James Kennedy said (paraphrased), credit God if you're saved; blame yourself if you're not.
- It is one thing to take credit for your salvation.
- It is another thing to humbly deflect any involvement to give all glory to God.
- It is quite another thing to deceive yourself and others that your will played no part, in so trying to glorify God you may not even be saved.
- ▶ Having trusted Christ can cause some to unbiblically be prideful (I Cor. 4:7 vs. Rom. 3:27), but being among the elite elect few can also (Ex.: Jas. 2:1).

Faith.

- Biblical/saving faith comes from hearing the Bible—not resident within any man. (**Rom. 10:17**) Only analogous secular (or natural) faith exists within all.
- Trusting God to fully save you forever requires full-hearted and sincere faith in Christ. (**Ac. 8:37**) Mental assent to the facts of the Gospel is NOT enough. (**Jas. 2:19**)
- Salvation does NOT happen by osmosis: A 'que sera, sera' attitude that if God wants to save me He will is not biblical faith, but fatalistic or deterministic.

Prayer.

1. Does the “Sinner's Prayer” Save You, and Isn't That “Decisional Salvation?”

First, there is no such set prayer, and no the prayer does not do the saving, but asking God to forgive you all your sins IS done through praying, believing He will do it based on His word of promise. Finally, if you never make any decision to respond in faith to God, rest UN-assured

that no matter how sincerely you are trying to honor God through your theological purity, you are NOT saved.

2. Is It a Gift or Privilege to Believe?

Yes. God did not have to offer mankind any way out of hell, but He graciously has through Christ.

Sanctification.

- Bad behavior in sanctification does not cause a Christian to lose salvation, but earthly blessings and eternal rewards.
- The parable of the sower demonstrates four different soil types, the final one being the goal, but the second and third also being saved, through “carnal.” (Lk. 8:4-21)
- The Bible does not exclusively indicate that every “true” Christian will do good deeds till the end of their lives. Several instances to the contrary are given, and their salvation is not questioned.

Evangelism.

- ▶ The only CRUCIAL issue in Calvinism-Arminianism debate is WHEN (vs. IF) you evangelize, God-empowered & relying on Him to convict, must the lost person pray to receive Jesus in order to be saved? The biblical answer is YES.
- ▶ **Evangelism Affects Eternity (i.e., it is NOT perfunctory).**
 - a) Arguing & Giving Evidence/Proof. (Ac. 9:22, 29, 17:3, 18:28)
 - b) Urging & Exhorting. (Ac. 2:40)
 - c) Begging & Compelling. (Lk. 14:23; II Cor. 5:10-20)
 - d) Hard Work (vs. passively letting God do all work without you). (I Cor. 9:15-27; II Tim. 2:10)
 - e) Warning & Reproving. (Mt. 10:14; Lk. 16:28; Ac. 2:40, 3:23, 13:46, 18:6)
 - f) Convincing & Persuading. (Ac. 17:4, 18:4, 13, 19:8, 26:28-29, 28:24; Rom. 11:14)
 - g) Wise Words. (Ac. 14:1)
 - h) Preaching & Teaching. (Ac. 5:42, 15:35)
 - i) Solemnly Testifying. (Ac. 2:4, 7:25, 8:25, 18:5, 20:21)
 - j) Wise Speech. (Ac. 14:1; Col. 4:5-6)
 - k) Reasoning (including from Scripture). (Ac. 17:2, 18:4, 19:8)
- ▶ Evangelize like it all depends on you, and trust like it all depends on God, because it does. Pray, then evangelize in His power and leading!
- ▶ Likely the greatest believer of all times, the apostle Paul, did not believe or teach that faith was a work (Rom. 3:25-31, 4:1-8), or that the human will played zero part in salvation! In fact, he said of his own conversion:

For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know Whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. (II Tim. 1:12)
- ▶ **Paul’s Thorough Evangelism.** Ac. 9:20, 27-28, 14:21, 25, 27, 17:6, 19:10, 20:20-21, 24, 26, 21:28, 24:5, 26:20; Rom. 1:13, 11:14; II Cor. 2:12, 10:16; Eph. 3:7-8, 6:19-20; Phil. 1:12-13, 4:3; Col. 1:28-29, 4:2-4; I Tim. 1:11; II Tim. 1:8, 2:9-10, 4:17; Tit. 1:1
- ▶ **Biblical (Thorough) Evangelism.** Ac. 5:28, 8:25, 40, 21:(20)

- ▶ In evangelism, you are speaking to man but totally looking to Christ to use those words to convict their heart. God through you (object/source through instrument) is key to the debate in salvation.
- ▶ God would save more people if the church did her evangelism job better. God puts guilt over the lost's going to hell on non-evangelizing Christians. Don't tell me evangelism (and prayer) doesn't change things!
- ▶ You only know who was non-elect on their death bed—when the last evangelism attempt has been made. Never give up till no more time (Ex.: thief on the cross).

1. We Need 'Pure' Motives for Evangelizing (i.e., solely obedience)?

Even carnal evangelism can be used by God, though it is not how one should evangelize.

2. You Don't Talk Someone into Salvation, or Water Down the Gospel or Pressure People to Get a Decision.

True, it is not a sales presentation, but God can use our reason, evidence, argumentation and convincing. He does not have to, and without His conviction those facets of evangelism will not produce fruit.

3. We Failed When Someone Rejects the Gospel?

Sometimes, if a flubbed up presentation; sometimes cause God was not calling at that time.

DISCLAIMERS

- Experiencing salvation gives some insight on salvation, though it never over-rules proper interpretation.
- If you have never made a personal decision to receive Christ, as God convicted you to, rest assured you are not saved. That decision did not save you, but put you into a position/allowed God to save you, per His own prescribed requirements—not our forcing Him into any arbitrary or man-made box.

PROBLEMS

A. Calvinism.

Positives:

- ▶ Preeminently, their historic abandonment of the works-based salvation which had infiltrated the Catholic Church.
- ▶ Also, total depravity, unconditional election and perseverance of the saints.

Errors:

- ▶ Double (and single) predestination (i.e., God damns certain people to hell without their ever having any say in the matter, and/or the elect will be saved no matter what, and also had zero choice in the matter).

“All Calvinists, like it or not, must hold some form of double-predestination—the logic of their positions demands it.” Chosen But Free, p. 206, by Norman Geisler (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN), 1999

- ▶ Regeneration precedes faith/dead men can't decide.
- ▶ God overrides our will to give Christians faith. Even if God gives faith (better: He convicts, which enables faith), it must be exercised in order to receive the gift.
- ▶ Sanctification by works (i.e., the logical result of Lordship salvation).
- ▶ Trying to over-analyze God's thinking in ways He has not revealed, overly-trying to

glorify God (i.e., detracting from such glory) by negating man's responsibility in salvation and living a majority of the time in "eternity past's" supposed decrees vs. God's word emphasizing relation with Christ in the present, in light of our glorious future, as believers.

B. Arminianism.

Positives:

- ▶ Preeminently, advocating putting faith exclusively in Jesus Christ for salvation.
- ▶ Also, unlimited atonement and resistible grace.

Errors:

- ▶ A decision solely of the will of man can save (Jn. 1:12).
- ▶ Man is not totally morally depraved.
- ▶ Christians can lose salvation.

TESTIMONIES

My Wife's Conversion.

My wife (and her father) are perfect examples of the problem I am addressing. In my twenties I had been Youth Minister, licensed by the Southern Baptist Convention, and from all our conversations, my wife (raised Presbyterian) was a Christian. However, a few years later (when I was not on staff) we were members of Second Baptist (Houston), and in a service my wife nudged me that she wanted to go forward in response to a Gospel invitation. I was both confused and embarrassed, as how could a "saved" wife of a minister be wanting to get saved? I even told my friend on staff (Doug Page), I don't understand why she has come forward. Rest assured she did get saved that day, and I have since asked her why she thought she was saved before that event, to which she attests it really wasn't discussed much, just sort of assumed in the circles she was raised in. Rest assured, again, if you assume you are saved, you are not saved, because everyone is lost without Jesus!

My Wife's Father.

Her father (rest his soul) was another matter. A nice, dignified and more aloof Scottish gentleman, our relationship was never such that bringing up concerns about his eternity were ever in order, as he considered myself a 'Bible thumping, born again type.' Sometimes (rarely) God does not lead you to evangelize certain people, but trust that others will pick up the slack (Ac. 16:6; 19:10, 26). I was always thankful a friend of theirs from Canada regularly sent Gospel tracts in their Christmas cards, which he denounced as a bad thing. I even heard him say, 'I don't want anything to do with that born again stuff.' As he got quite elderly, my wife and I regularly discussed how she might go down to Houston to share the Gospel with him. I even asked my dad (who lives where they did) to witness to him, which he did, but was rebuffed. We even insisted that we were concerned about his eternal destiny to his minister at the time, to which that gentleman told us he would handle it. His eulogy mentioned her dad knowing God, but with his beliefs and traditions, we have zero idea when or whether he ever personally received Christ in his heart. We can only hope so. (II Tim. 1:18)

My Conversion Testimony.

I was raised going to church with my family (Sunday School, and some Sunday and Wednesday nights). One Sunday when I was eight, at Southview Baptist Church (Lincoln, Nebraska), the preacher preached the Gospel. I remember the event as if it was yesterday when God called me to salvation on a verse of the hymn, 'There is a Fountain.' I went forward, spoke with the pastor, prayed to receive Jesus in my heart and was baptized a week or so later. The exact process of

that five minute event, in hindsight, was as follows: I remember my heart saying ‘I don’t want to go to hell,’ and the conviction of God through the song and its lyrics was undeniable and carried me through (and forward) in a mesmerizing ‘moving.’ Thinking of it as a decision, or there being any alternative to the feeling/conviction that ‘I have to go forward’ never entered my mind or heart. That conviction sustained me, and the assurance of God’s Holy Spirit living within has never left since. So though I understand Calvinists’ emphasis on God doing all the work, knowing the Bible decently now and having evangelized quite a bit, I also can see from the whole counsel of God how it is a necessity to ask a lost person to trust Christ—not just feel something.



Southview Baptist Church, Lincoln, NE

Surely this ruined race requires reviving. I am fully aware that there are those who in their sleepiness will swing back on the sovereignty of God and say, ‘When He moves, revival will come.’ That is only half-truth. Do you mean that the Lord is happy that eighty-three people per minute die without Christ? Have you fallen for the idea that the Lord is now willing that *many* should perish? Do you dare say—what to me is little less than blasphemy—that when God decides to lift up His heel and scatter His enemies, then a mighty visitation will come? Never!
(Why Revival Tarries, pp. 138-139 by Leonard Ravenhill)

TWEETED THEOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

It is morally reprehensible to teach that the God who so mercifully saves a person might become an Indian Giver if you act too badly.

It is morally reprehensible to say that a sinner has the spiritual nature which can choose Christ at any time, with no conviction by God ever needed!

It is morally reprehensible to teach that God damns certain people to hell without their having any chance anytime to have any say in that outcome.

It is morally reprehensible to teach that certain people will be saved no matter what, as if there are zero biblical incentives to evangelize.

It is morally reprehensible to say God loves some people and hates the rest, as He proved on the cross that belief to be from satan.

It is morally reprehensible to say that a lost person does not need to make any response of faith to God and he's safe on life's other side!

"Calvinist" means predestination to most laymen,
so I would never refer to myself using that term.

"Arminianian" means you can lose your salvation or decide for Christ on your own to most laymen, so same conclusion.

PREDESTINATION

God pre-determined that those who trust in Christ go to heaven & the rest go to hell. Don't speculate on His decisions beyond what HE has revealed!

IF God ONLY saves a select few, He destines and damns some to hell with zero chance for that to ever have gone differently. NOT the God I serve!

God hates NO man, & has done everything under the sun to make salvation freely available & secured for ALL IF you'll believe in Christ, modern pure Calvinists.

The cross, a free eternal gift, heart preparation, sending the church to evangelize all, the Spirit's wooing. What else is needed to prove God is no modern pure Calvinist?

God owes no one salvation and He initiates it. He chooses to save because He's gracious and only does so to those who believe (under conviction).

Why God chose anyone is His mercy & purposes in Christ—NOT because we would believe & not without our believing. Grace thru faith.

God forces NO ONE to go to heaven or to hell, but He enables those who do choose, by faith, to go to heaven.

The sovereign call of God to salvation feels "irresistible," NOT because it is, but because you don't want to when He prepares your heart.

Paul worked harder than ANY man to get Gospel to EVERY man. His behavior shows he did NOT believe "the elect" would get saved no matter what. Evangelize like him!

Paul's zeal & work in evangelism PROVES he was no modern pure Calvinist. You NEVER know who will believe until their death bed rejection so reach them ALL!

FAITH RESPONSE

NO person naturally responds to Gospel. Salvation is a miracle, though it requires faith response inspired by God's conviction and heart preparation.

Man's will IS free for EVERY decision but a spiritual one (salvation) and EVERY externally "good" deed is nonetheless sin without Christ. (Jn. 3:21)

You do not initiate salvation. You do not decide salvation on your own. It is only in His power/conviction, or any decision would be non-spiritual and would not save, or 'work'/take effect.

The Bible is chocked full of exhortations for the lost to believe in Christ. God does no evil, and does not deceive He'll save you if you will!

IF God does not convict, our wills are dead to making a spiritual decision, but IF He convicts, we must, & that response God does NOT deem a "work." (Rom. 3 & 4).

God's conviction enables/empowers a faith response, but doesn't by itself save. A faith decision, under that conviction, is required, or you end up in hell.

God's sovereign conviction gives a person a response-ability, after which they have the responsibility to believe.

There is a humility to biblical, child-like faith that would NEVER take credit for salvation as the human never secured it—only Christ on the cross.

Giving God all credit isn't same as all the responsibility if He gives us some. We're NOTHING, but must believe or face wrath. Experience it.

When, how often, & how long conviction lingers and whether it returns is always unpredictable. Therefore, today is always the day of salvation. II Cor. 6:2

God DOES do ALL the saving, but HE has chosen for us to either allow or disallow His work, but only while our wills are empowered to do so (i.e., a limited window of opportunity).

MUST a "non-Christian" pray in faith for forgiveness of ALL their sins (i.e., salvation) in order to go to heaven? ABSOLUTELY, modern pure Calvinists notwithstanding.

Responding to the Gospel in faith is NOT any innate goodness in man's heart. God prepares the heart and calls, and NO one takes credit for grabbing a life raft when they're drowning in the ocean!

The glory of salvation is ALL God's, but we skew that glory teaching that He forces His love on select individuals. That is His right to (Rom. 9:21), but NOT His revealed character (Rom. 2:11, 11:32)

If one takes faith as a gift, gifts must be received to have any benefit to the recipient, just as faith must be exercised in order to receive salvation.

Why are modern pure Calvinists SO adamant that faith alone in Christ alone is NOT enough for salvation, then argue you do absolutely nothing, with NO response needed? Spiritually schizophrenic!

Even 'eternal fire insurance' is better than assurance of eternal fire. We're not saved by the morality of our motives, but by faith in God's moral mercy!

SANCTIFICATION & ASSURANCE

The Holy Spirit forever within is how we know we are saved—NOT our inconsistent & imperfect deeds, be they now or even later in life!

Sanctification is from GRATITUDE for salvation—NOT to earn it or to prove it to yourself or anyone else. Grace vs. law. (Mt. 11:30; I Jn. 5:3-5)

Christians still have two natures, only one of which is who they are in Christ,
but which one you sow to makes a world of difference in your behavior!

Some say rewards motivation is selfish. Read Jn. 4:36; I Cor. 3:8, 14; I Tim. 4:8, 6:19; II
Tim. 2:20-21; Heb. 10:25, 11:6 & II Jn. 1:8.
READ before you speak for God (II Tim 2:15)

Doubting others' salvation & the false Gospel of Lordship Salvation
are no substitute for discipling, & no solution to carnality in the church!

A pure modern Calvinist's salvation is NO DIFFERENT
from waking up after eating a spicy pizza & feeling saved
(i.e., no prayer in faith asking for forgiveness, or even Gospel presentation needed).

EVANGELISM

There is no need for a CONSISTENT modern pure Calvinist to evangelize,
as God will force Himself (i.e., 'spiritual rape') on whom He wants.

GOD designed predestination "in Christ", but MANY use that concept
to sear their conscience from moral responsibility for evangelism.

If you believe some people are destined to hell with no chance of that changing,
you LIE & cruelly tease them by evangelizing!

Which modern pure Calvinist has the courage to call Billy Graham 's ministry a waste of
time, as it advocated what you may call "decisional salvation?" Names?

The good news is that modern pure Calvinists can hardly screw up a lost person's thinking
about salvation, as they evangelize so RARELY.

Since no human being knows who all "the elect" are, keep it as an academic reality
& evangelize like every one of them may come through. (Mt 28:18-10)

Calvinist: You so believe in God's sovereignty, couldn't He make your evangelism FAIL
if you reached a non-elect? No more EXCUSES-GO evangelize!

If you spend more time thinking about Arminianism or Calvinism than you do evangelizing,
you have missed the point and fully made the devils.'

If you go to hell you have only yourself to blame. If you go to heaven you have
only Jesus to thank. (Jn. 1:12, 3:16-17) Pray to receive Jesus TODAY (II Cor. 6:2)

CONCLUSIONS

I HIGHLY commend analyses of Calvin and Arminias,
but the devil has used their differences to divide Christ's church into
'high church' and other denominations, with NO united evangelism efforts.

There is NOTHING sacred about either Calvinism or Arminianism where
they disagree with Scripture. Christ is more important than theological SYSTEMS!

Arminianism is COMMONLY associated with the possibility of one losing salvation
and 100% free-willed faith. If you agree with LESS than its five points,
at least choose a BETTER term for your theology!

IF you hear someone try to convince or sell you on reasons to trust Christ,
AS IF it were 100 percent up to man's will, RUN. That's logic vs. power.

Calvinism is COMMONLY associated with predestination.

If you agree with LESS than its five points,
at least choose a BETTER term for your theology.

In SO TRYING to glorify God some Calvinists dishonor Him by asking for zero response from a lost person. Why do anything if ALL is "predestined?" Just SLEEP.

God is not a logical syllogism or a system of theology. That's man-made religion.
MEET and know God—not creeds or men's' opinions about Him!

27D. Charismatic Theology Errors

PASTOR WARNING

All pastors who adhere to traditional Charismatic Theology beware—if any lost person has been “turned off” to God and the Bible because of your most prominent “leaders” shenanigans in the name of God (Ex.: televangelist extremes, teaching that 100% health and wealth are promised to all Christians at all times, etc.), **the blood of those for whom Christ died could, in part, be eternally on your hands.** Quit appealing to worldly, fleshly desires of ALL men (Ex.: money, materialism and health) to ‘get them interested’ in Jesus, especially to fund your religious business. Trust God to call and convict, and stop *warping* His message, making your leaders wealthy by fleecing the people in the process (if not as the motive).

Danger(s): Charismatic theology can misrepresent Christ to the world, can exalt emotion over rightful doctrine (and practice), give false hope that every person will rich and healed, and can present a ‘religion’ where excitement and enthusiasm is morphed into mindless idolatry of emotions and having experiences.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Neutral Observation:

A typical “Charismatic” denomination will have more clapping, jumping, dancing, shouting and hearing about healing, emotions; Experiences and the Holy Spirit than other mainstream denominations.

Positives:

Christians considering themselves “Charismatic,” “Pentecostal,” or “full Gospel” usually have an excellent and refreshing (elsewhere *too often* absent) zeal for God. They are great on their belief in trusting God, learning ones identity in Christ, the reality of (some) spiritual gifts and the reality of the Spirit’s power in the Christian life, reliance on the ministry and leadership of the Holy Spirit, the need to do evangelism and belief that Jesus can still heal and do miracles. They often write wonderful ‘*upward-looking*’ spiritual songs. However, those assets do not negate their *need* to correct the following abuses...

ISSUES ADDRESSED

100% Health (i.e., guaranteed in the atonement)

God has NOT promised perfect health to the Christian! (Ex.: Phil. 2:25-28; I Tim. 5:23; II Tim. 4:20) There is a **major difference** between **WORKING UP faith** (i.e., ignoring certain Bible teachings to generate “faith,” aka, *self-delusion*) and **having faith** (*sovereignly given* from God and consistent with clear Scriptural teachings). The results will also often be very different too, wherein the **credibility** of those claiming something will happen *wanes* when it doesn’t.

Let the Charismatic believer consider the following paraphrased challenges from **John MacArthur’s** work, The Charismatics...

- If someone claims to have the gift of healing, like Jesus with the sick, they should clear out Hospital floors.
- As with the public and corroborated nature of Jesus’ miracles, anyone claiming divine healings should be willing to have those ‘healings’ corroborated and examined by doctors and medical science.

- Why are claimed miraculous healings so often performed in cloistered, closed-TV sets with evangelist-supporting followers?

Pastor **John R. Bisagno** has said (paraphrased)...

- We all die of something, and,
- God is more important (and first priority) than doctors, when you're ill. (II Chron. 17:12).
- We should never teach (as do Baptists, often) that laying hands and anointing with oil should only occur in obscure, Wednesday night meetings, or only in small group meetings **after** worship, removed from the worshipping public (Jas. 5:13-18).

Consider as well...

- True miracles would make website or newspaper **headlines**, as did news spreading about Jesus and His miracles.
- Jesus' death on the cross secured **spiritual** vs. physical healing for every believer (Isa. 53, I Pet. 2:21-25).
- Some illness can **bring glory to God** (Jn. 11:4; Ex.: Joni, Evangelist Tim Lee), just as some illness is judgment on sin (I Cor. 11:30)
- Our ultimate healing—the glorification of our body—is guaranteed by our salvation (II Cor. 4:16-5:2).
- Contrary to father Abraham (Rom. 4:16-22), some Charismatics deny reality and their physical symptoms in order to hold to their version of "faith." **Faith is not the denial of reality** but a greater belief in God's word—accurately interpreted.
- Why are today's televangelist miracle workers able to do some "miracles," but **they never** resurrect from the dead, walk on water, calm the sea, turn water into wine, multiply food, drink poison or handle snakes and without being harmed?
- God often uses His own natural laws to bring about healing over time (Ex.: a cut usually heals 'of its own accord'), as with His general witness to His creation, such as rain and sunshine (Ac. 14:17).

Theology of New Testament Miracles

Causes Cured

- ▶ Christ could heal the dead. (**Mt. 9:18-19, 23-26; Lk. 7:11-17; Jn. 4:46-54, 11:17-44**)
- ▶ Christ healed every form of disease and sickness. (**Mt. 9:35**)
- ▶ Christ healed the lame, crippled, blind, mute, and others. (**Mt. 15:30-31**)
- ▶ Christ healed the blind and lame. (**Mt. 21:14**)
- ▶ Christ healed a demon-possessed mute. (**Mt. 9:32-34**)
- ▶ Christ healed a mute. (**Mt. 12:22**)
- ▶ Christ healed a leper. (**Mk. 1:40-45**)
- ▶ Christ healed a paralytic based on his friends' faith. (**Mk. 2:3-12**)
- ▶ Christ commanded healing of a man's withered hand. (**Mk. 3:1-5**)
- ▶ Christ re-attached a slain ear. (**Jn. 18:10-11**)

Frequency

- ▶ Healing occurred while God allowed it to (in Christ's name). (**Ac. 4:30**)

- ▶ Christ has to be willing for someone to be saved. (**Mt. 8:3; Mk. 1:40-45**)
- ▶ God does not always heal (Ex.: Timothy's frequent stomach ailments; Paul was unable to heal a man in Miletus, had a thorn in flesh, and some diseases are for the glory of God).

Process

- ▶ Christ sometimes healed with a touch. (**Mt. 8:14-15, 9:20-23; Mk. 1:29-31, 5:25-34**)
- ▶ Christ healed with fingers in ears (**Mk. 7:31-37**) and spittle on eyes. (**Mk. 7:31-37; 8:22-26**)
- ▶ Christ sometimes healed with a word (Mt 17:18), and here, healed all. (**Mt. 8:16**) (Mt. 8:28-34)
- ▶ Christ could heal from a distance. (**Mt. 8:5-13**)
- ▶ Christ once healed in a two-step process. (**Mk. 8:22-26**)

Conditions

- ▶ Christ asked some sick what they wanted Him to do, then healed them. (**Mt. 20:29-34; Mk. 10:46-52**)
- ▶ One had to believe Christ was able to heal. (**Mt. 9:27-31**)
- ▶ Christ was impressed with a sick person's wisdom/thinking in faith. (**Mk. 7:24-30**)
- ▶ Christ didn't do miracles where faith was lacking. (**Mt. 13:53-38, 14:1; 17:19-21**)
- ▶ Christ commanded action (vs. self-pity) for healing. (**Jn. 5:6-9**)
- ▶ Faith healed many, but not all thanked God for their healing. (**Lk. 17:11-19**)
- ▶ Christ reproved believing due to miracles. (**Jn. 4:46-54**)
- ▶ God usually doesn't spare us from the natural consequences of bad decisions.

Demon Deliverance

- ▶ Christ commanded demons to leave people. (**Mk. 1:23-28**)
- ▶ Some demons come out only by commanding (in Christ's name) and prayer. (**Mk. 9:20-29**)
- ▶ Demons were subject to the disciples (and the 70) in Christ's name. (**Lk. 10:17-20**)

Purpose

- ▶ Miracles sometimes (if not always) confirmed Christ's word. (**Mk. 16:20**)

Apostles

- ▶ The apostles performed miracles (**Ac. 2:43, 4:33, 5:12**)
- ▶ The apostles' power and piety did not cause the healing. (**Ac. 3:12**)
- ▶ Paul healed a man lame and unable to walk since birth. (**Ac. 14:8-10**)
- ▶ Paul commanded a demon to come out of a woman. (**Ac. 16:18**)
- ▶ Peter raised someone (Dorcas) from the dead. (**Ac. 9:36-42**)
- ▶ Peter's shadow healed, and sometimes all were healed. (**Ac. 5:15-16**)
- ▶ Peter healed a man eight years a paralytic. (**Ac. 9:32-34**)

Deacons/Laymen

- ▶ A deacon (Philip) healed evil spirits, and some paralyzed and lame. (**Ac. 8:7**)

Application

- ▶ The prayer of faith, with the elders' anointing oil, 'will' heal. (**Jas. 5:13-16**)
- ▶ Persistently seeking Christ's healing paid off for some. (**Mk. 10:46-52**)
- ▶ Some illnesses are for the displaying of the glory of God. (**Jn. 9:1-7**)
- ▶ Christians are to invite the poor and crippled and blind to their parties. (**Lk. 14:21**)
- ▶ Only humanly-speaking, there are some illnesses that are "incurable." (**II Chron. 21:18**)

Summary: Ask (pray), believe He can and hope it's His will for you (but don't neglect medical

treatment, as well).

Experts

Think of how thrilling and rewarding it would be to have the gift of healing! Think of what it would be like to go into a hospital among the sick and dying and just go into the hall touching them, talking to them, and healing them! But strangely enough, the people who claim to have the gift of healing never seem to get out of their tents, their tabernacles, or their TV studios. (p. 134).

1. Jesus healed with a word or touch.
2. Jesus healed instantaneously. [**One exception**]
3. Jesus healed totally.
4. Jesus healed everybody. [**Exceptions: Unbelief in victim, or when not led to heal, but teach or travel, for example**]
5. Jesus healed organic disease. Jesus did not go up and down Palestine healing functional disease like lower back pain, palpitation of the heart, and headaches. He healed organic disease, crippled legs, withered hands, blind eyes, palsy, etc., the kind of healings that would show a miracle beyond doubt.
6. Jesus raised the dead.

Same criteria applies to the apostles. (Charismatic Theology, pp. 146-149, by John MacArthur)

Dr. [William] Nolen [M.D.] makes particular distinction between what he calls 'functional' disease and 'organic' disease. A functional disease is one in which a perfectly good organ does not function properly. An organic disease is one in which an organ is organically destroyed, maimed, or crippled. According to Dr. Nolen, infections, heart attacks; Gallstones, hernias, slipped discs, cancers of all kinds, broken bones, congenital deformities, and lacerations are all included in the organic disease class. According to Nolen the organic diseases are the ones that the healers cannot cure." The Charismatics, p. 138, by John F. MacArthur (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1978

Obviously, the Charismatics can respond to my entire line of reasoning with the same question they use when anyone tries to ask them to consider the biblical and theological implications of what they are doing. The usual words are: 'But things are happening and how do you explain it?' In reply I ask:

Since no Charismatic healer (or personality who is letting the Holy Spirit do it) can come up with consistently verified cases of healing organic disease instantly, totally, by word or touch...

Since no Charismatic healer heals everybody (hundreds go away from their services as sick and crippled as when they came)...

Since no Charismatic healer raises the dead...

Since the Bible is complete is complete and revelation has ceased and no more miracle signs are necessary...

Since the Word of God needs no conformation outside of itself and is sufficient to show the way of salvation to man...

Since Charismatic 'healings' are based on questionable theology of the atonement and salvation...

Since Charismatic writers and teachers appear to disallow God His own purposes in having some people stay sick...

Since Charismatic healers seem to need their own closed environment...

Since the evidence they bring forth to prove these healings is often weak, unsupported, and over-exaggerated...

Since Charismatics are not known for going into hospitals to heal (where there is plenty of faith on the part of many)...

Since they cannot heal all who come to them...

Since many instances of healings by Charismatics can be explained in many ways other than God's unquestioned supernatural intervention...

Since Charismatics get sick and die like everybody else...

Since all this confusion and contradiction surrounds what 'is happening,' let me ask the return question, 'How do you explain it?' Certainly not the biblical gift of healing! The Charismatics, pp. 150-151, by John F. MacArthur (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1978

100% Wealth (i.e., guaranteed in the atonement)

God has NOT promised perfect wealth to the Christian! (Ex.: Mt. 8:20; Ac. 3:6; II Cor. 6:10; Phil. 4:10-13)

- The overall tone/tenor or **attitude of the Bible** on money is NOT for acquiring or prioritizing gaining great wealth (Ecc. 5:10; I Tim. 6:7-10; Lk. 12:15; Pv. 23:4-5; Heb. 13:5, Pv. 16:16; Lk. 6:20; II Th. 3:10; II Tim. 3:2; Jas. 1:9-11, 4:13-16, etc.). It is not innately sinful to have wealth (Ex.: Abraham, Solomon, David and the parable of the talents; Cf.: Lk. 23:50-51; Jn. 19:38), but God entrusts such to qualified people who gain it rightly (Mt. 6:19-21), use it rightly (Ac. 20:35; I Tim. 6:17-19), and prioritize it rightly (Mt. 6:24, I Tim. 6:1-11; Jas. 4:13-17)—something perhaps the majority of U.S. rich people could not honestly claim. After a certain amount, one is by definition selfish (Phil. 2:3-4), if all they ever do is keep all of it for their family.
- Remember, also, the devil can (and often does) make people rich (Lk. 12:15-21, 16;19-31, Jas 5:1-6, etc.). For instance, do you think God make Bernie Madoff rich? I don't think so; in fact, I know He didn't—the devil did. How you made it, how you use it, and especially how high a priority it is for you in your heart significantly determines its rightfulness or wrongfulness.
- It is the nature of the flesh to crave wealth, perfect health, and a selfish/me-first, all good things come my way lifestyle (I Jn. 2:15-17). Parents—especially fathers—are to provide for their family, but there is nothing extra noble about loving or seeking to have 100% health and wealth—**every lost person** desires these things too! (Lk. 12:29-31)
- Why is it that, traditionally, it was the *televangelists* who **reaped the promises** of riches in the atonement by fleeing the poor and less educated, through demanded tithes and 'seed faith' pledges?

Charis-Math:

1. Money is your highest calling; Except for serving God, and
2. Even doing that requires money (which gets us back to our first premise).

Charis-Thinking:

1. God could rarely if ever call someone to be poor. Even Mother Theresa must have missed God's calling (or been too dumb to realize she could help more orphans if she were a millionaires).
2. The flesh could never lust for money, or be worldly, because being rich is God's will for believers.

Tongues

- The gift of tongues is not for every Christian, and can't be later received by "*learning*" it, by every Christian. (I Cor. 12:30)
- Tongues were known, unlearned languages miraculously given, whose content glorified God to that languages' speakers (Ac. 2:6, 11; I Cor. 14:10-11).
- Tongues were a sign to the lost people—especially the Jewish nation—(I Cor. 14:21-22), and among the spiritual gifts which corroborated the word of God (New Testament portion), before it was canonized as Scripture (Heb. 2:1-4).
- Tongues were NOT the norm in the first century (See all evangelism events in the book of Acts—FEW involve tongues following, and those 4 incidences were to specific groups of people receiving the Spirit after they believed, with such manifestation).
- As Rev. John MacArthur has asked (paraphrased), when tongues are interpreted in church, what authority do they hold? Ought we add another book to the New Testament? For that matter, if the procedures listed in I Cor. 14 are not followed, how do we consider their interpretation valid as opposed to counterfeit?
- The evidence for tongues used as a "private prayer language" is minimal at best, and such use would contradict all spiritual gifts' intended use—to bless ("**edify**") other Christians/ the Church (vs. self-edification—I Cor. 14:3-5, 12-20).

Experts

- ▶ Direct revelation from God has ceased. The gift of tongues was an agency to authenticate the writers of revelation. When they died, the marks of their authentication were no longer needed. (p. 169)
- ▶ [the] ...gift of languages was a sign of this judgment on unbelieving Israel (I Cor. 14:22). ...The message to Israel was clear. No longer would God confine Himself to one people as a channel; no longer would God operate His work of grace through one nation and speak one language. Their unbelief changed that. ...Tongues, then, were a sign of the removal of national blessing on Israel. (p. 168)
- ▶ ...the mystery religions were well known in Corinth in the first century. Mystery religions made wide use of tongues—ecstatic babble. (p. 161)
- ▶ The Corinthians were using their 'gift of tongues' to speak to God and not to men (see v. 2). Spiritual gifts were never intended to be used for God's benefit. (p. 161)
- ▶ I Cor. 12:10. You cannot translate ecstatic speech or babble.
I Cor. 14:21. Paul referred to Isaiah 28:11 and 12. ...Who were the men of strange tongues who fulfilled the prophecy from Isaiah? They were Assyrians who spoke genuine Assyrian. (p. 160)

Dispensational Dogma:

Why tongues have ceased.

1. Tongues was a miracle gift, and the age of miracles ended with the apostles. [**Charismatics often ask what date or year this occurred**]
2. The miracle of tongues was a judicial sign to Israel because of Israel's unbelief.
3. The gift of tongues was inferior to the gift of prophecy. [**Not if interpreted**]
4. Speaking in tongues was rendered useless when the New Testament was complete. [**Not if used in evangelism of groups with never studied languages**].

5. Tongues are only mentioned in the **earliest books** of the New Testament. ...Paul wrote at least twelve other epistles and never mentioned tongues again. **Peter** never mentioned tongues; **James** never mentioned tongues; **John** never mentioned tongues; Neither did **Jude**.
6. **History** records that tongues did cease. ...**Clement of Rome, Justin Martyr, Origin, Chrysostom, and Augustine**—some of the greatest theologians of the ancient church—**considered tongues a remote practice**, something that happened in the very early days of Christianity. Cf.: followers of **Montanus** who was branded a *heretic* (during the first four or five hundred years of the church); the **Cevanol priests** who lived in France in the late seventeenth century, who were branded *heretics* because their prophecies went unfulfilled and their militancy was frowned upon; and a 1731 group of Roman Catholic reformers called the **Jansenists**. (Charismatic Theology, pp. 161, 166-169, by John F. MacArthur)

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

The Bible is, admittedly, a large book. However, that fact does not give us an excuse for wrongly interpreting it. *Proof...*

Health.

- Sin can cause sickness. (I Cor. 11:28-32; Mk. 2:5; Rev. 2:22-23)
- Sickness can bring God glory. (Jn. 9:2-3, 11:4)
- Were these sick Christians sinful or unbelieving about healing? (I Tim. 5:23; II Tim. 4:20)

Wealth.

- Did this saint not know how to pray the prayer of agreement, claim promised blessings or know how to give to get? (Pv. 30:8)
- Why would God instruct us not to set our sights on achieving that aspect of the atonement? (Pv. 23:5)
- Were these poor Christians sinful or unbelieving about wealth? (Ac. 3:5-6, 11:29; I Cor. 4:11 [Paul; Cf.: II I Cor. 11:27; Phil. 4:11-13]; II Cor. 6:10 [apostles/leaders], 8:2 [deep poverty]; Jas. 1:12, 2:15-17)

Miracles.

Anyone who is unaware that Christ performed many miracles (including healings) simply has never read (or believed) God's word. [For a complete listing, **See: All The Miracles of the Bible**, by Herbert Lockyear]. He usually did so in response to man's faith. The question is whether He heals every time we believe (as guaranteed in the atonement), and how do you pray in faith if you're not sure this time is in His will? The answer is that God gives faith to believe for specific instances, sovereignly.

The following are principles to consider when evaluating claimed miracles:

- Not everyone who produces miracles is of God. I Ki. 18:1-46; Mt. 7:21-23 (vs. Mk. 9:38-40)
- Biblical miracles violated laws of science and physics.
- Biblical miracles were credible and verifiable/provable. (Ac. 4:16, etc.)
- If true Christ-type miracles occurred, they'd likely make newspaper headlines.
- The amount of miracles in Christ's and the early church's day were for a reason/purpose (to corroborate the message or messenger; Jn. 10:38, etc.).
- We often need to distinguish between subjective 'miracles' (Ex.: God answering your prayer for a parking space) and objective miracles (like walking on water, calming the sea, turning water into wine and raising the dead).

- Even when one witnesses a true miracle, we are not rejoice in miracles but in the fact that we are saved. (Lk. 10:19-20)

OTHER

Miracles

- Charismatics often fail to distinguish between two different definitions of miracles—subjective and objective. God answering one’s prayer with a parking lot opening (or, more clearly a sought-for job) is no less the work of God, but could not reasonably be placed on the same level of authenticity to outsiders as the types of identity-confirming miracles Christ performed (such as violations of scientific, physics and physical laws).

Experts

According to Scripture, miracles occurred in three major periods: the days of Moses and Joshua, the time of Elijah and Elisha, and the time of Christ and the apostles.

1. Miracles introduced a new era of revelation.
2. Miracles authenticated the messengers of revelation.
3. Miracles called the attention for those listening to hear the new revelation. (Charismatic Theology, pp. 74-75, by John MacArthur)

Women Preachers

- Women are not to be head pastors, or teaching spiritual things to adult males/men. (I Tim, 2:11-14 (clear enough), 3:1-7 (man, vv. 1, 5-6, husband, v. 2, he, vv.4, 6), 11 (deacon’s wife, in context of make deacon requirements; Tit. 1:5-9, man, v. 6, husband, v. 6, he, v. 9)

“Charismatic”

- Just because one calls their faith “Charismatic” does not ensure they have any more of the Spirit, or any more of charisma or influential personality than any other believers.

Slain in the Spirit

- God’s clearly revealed character and gentle nature of conviction would never “slay” a believer “in the Spirit.” Jesus’ word WILL slay lost people to death at Armageddon, however, in judgment.

Barking in the Spirit

- It is beneath the dignity of our to-be-feared God to lead a child of God to “bark in the Spirit.”

Holy Spirit

- Having full access to the ministry of the Spirit does NOT negate our responsibility to be avid students of God’s word, and the more and better one knows the latter, the more forcefully they can claim the position of representing the former. Our “anointing” in Christ does not negate this (I Jn. 2:21-22, 27).
- Experience and emotion are NEVER superior authorities to a properly-interpreted word of God. Scripture never contradicts itself, and the more obscure passages should always be interpreted by the more clear ones.
- The Holy Spirit is NOT the same as emotion. Anyone claiming God told/led me to do so and so had better have Scripture (properly interpreted) backing them up.
- There is no formal “second blessing” experience where one has the Spirit fall on or poured out on them, separated from salvation, ever since His original coming to earth in the first century. We experience many re-fillings, and perhaps a delay in experienced power, if we

are committed sometime after conversion, but a theology that teaches as normative a later experience of indwelling is errant.

- The Holy Spirit never seeks a position in men's minds or lives of a higher prominence than that of Jesus.
- While our relationship with God should become intensely intimate (over time), he is never just our Buddy, without a counter-balanced reverence for Him as Abba and Father, both at the same time. Ultimately, ones deeds and theology evidence their closeness, more so than any easily-made claims to such.
- The Spirit is neither female nor an impersonal "it," and to refer to Him as a "Ghost" often denotes a more ghastly or spooky image than is proper for this revered Third Person of the Trinity.

Praise

- To say "praise the Lord" does not always equate to your having done so, nor is it proof that one is spiritual, any more so than saying "Lord, Lord" will prove such for false believers.

Fasting

- Nowhere in Scripture is physical fasting taught as a quicker way to spirituality.

Faith

- Faith is not a magic force or power we control to seek God as a mystical Santa Claus who will give us whatever is on our ticket with God or wish list.
- Faith in faith is not the same as faith in God, and even mountain-moving faith has biblical boundaries. No one has actually ever been known to move a literal mountain, though it could happen if God led you to believe for such (if within His will, or word). All things rayed for must fall within its bounds.

APPLICATION

Since pleasing our Lord is our primary objective, given what the Bible teaches on these matters, this author encourages every "charismatic" believer (and especially their leaders) to:

- a) Renounce any teaching that health and wealth are in the atonement;
- b) Cease seeking to get every believer to speak with tongues;
- c) As is taught in the Bible, value education, knowledge and wisdom, and cease making fools of oneself (vs. being willing to be fools for Christ) by doing things claimed as God having told you to do so, and,
- d) Each side of this issue (i.e., traditional vs. Charismatic) stop hating the other side of our one family in Christ.

CHARISMATIC THEOLOGY

There are an estimated 500 million "Charismatic" Christians in the world today, and their denominational labels come in various forms (Ex.: Four Square, Charismatics, 'Holy Rollers,' Full Gospel, Azuza Street, Pentecostal, Spirit-Filled, Word of Faith, Church of God, and *some* Community Churches, etc., <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pentecostalism>). I have met and associated with many of them and believe them to be very sincere, quite zealous and committed, and sincerely saved and generally striving to please their Lord. The problems I raise is not with the people themselves, but with the identified unbiblical beliefs they continue to espouse, and appear unwilling to do away with. These beliefs can affect evangelism, in a more general way,

by giving Christianity an undeservedly bad name, mainly because they are inconsistent with the word of God. I would not fail to minister with such brethren, feel unity with them or recommend that all their leaders be abandoned or their churches never visited. However, when any Christian group or denomination starts having too many large issues inconsistent with the Bible, it can be a wiser decision to find a place where you will encounter less challenges being fully supportive of their practices and beliefs.

POSITIVES

In general, “Charismatic” Christians are often open, transparent, honestly emotional, zealous, committed, want abundant vs. “normal” life, ethical, faithful to church; Exercise their *faith* more than many (vs. mind only), promote the Holy Spirit (previously more ignored), believe in and claim God’s promises, teach victory in Christ, believe in being Spirit-led, seek God’s will, don’t doubt God can heal, support spiritual power, teach Christians’ identity in Christ, realize the devil really does war with us to defeat us, fairly evangelistic.

ANALYSIS

Charismatic theology essentially glorifies ignorance or selective Bible knowledge, sometimes confusing felt emotions with the Holy Spirit’s leading. Prayer and internal leading by God too often replaces serious study of the Bible; Except for what the minister espouses in sermons (usually focused on repetition and reinforcement of select topics).

The resulting problems include. False doctrine, which can cause false behavior (Ex.: healing always available to everyone all the time, riches promised to all believer by God, tongues are for all, subjective “miracles” confused as objective miracles found in the Bible, holy rollers, barking in the Spirit, slain in the Spirit, and sometimes sin justified as holy by a special perspective given by “the Spirit”/word from the Lord, etc.

The positive aspects of the charismatic movement; Achieved by the grace of God despite their false methodology, include: zeal, commitment, evangelism, body life, spiritual gifts not ignored, etc.

Charismatic and Traditional Theology: The Crux of the Matter

1. Do Christians have *at least one* spiritual gift? If so, is it important for them to identify and use them in biblical ministries?
2. Are tongues, interpretation of tongues, miracles, healings and words of wisdom and knowledge still actively and NORMALLY present supernatural spiritual gifts in our age/day? Have “sign gifts” completely ceased? If so, when and why, and if no, are they ‘NORMATIVE?’
3. Does God promise all (or any, for that matter) believers **perfect health** and wealth in this life? Is it wrong for Charismatic leaders to be **quite wealthy** off the hard-work and earnings donated by congregants who are strongly exhorted to “tithe” so those souls can GET or receive from their “investment” with God? (especially when MANY are poor and uneducated). Does God or the devil manipulate the poor for financial gain?
4. Does the Holy Spirit draw attention to Himself greater than to that of God and Christ? Does He interact with God’s children in any fashion contrary to or separate from the Bible and decisions consistent with it?
5. Does God continue to and **regularly** do miracles, like the almost always instant always miraculous and complete healings of the New Testament (which medical doctors could prove

and newspapers today would headline)? Were New Testament miracles any different from what is often claimed today (i.e., subjective vs. objective)?

6. Is faith given to us by God to confidently ask for **anything** and EVERYTHING we want? Are there any limitations, boundaries or biblical restrictions? Can you “write your own ticket with God” (in a Santa-like role)?
7. Is the Holy Spirit synonymous with heightened emotional experience? Would He ever lead someone to poo poo thorough Bible research, Greek studies, seminary degrees and other intellectual exercises, and would He ever consider such activities **contrary** to His ministry within us as our ultimate Teacher (as some Charismatics feel)?
8. Can a person be led by God’s Spirit today? [**YES!**] If so, does that occur accurately without adequate **knowledge of Scripture** (i.e., with senses, impressions **REPLACING** much of the need for Bible study)
9. Has the universal Church historically been, overall, too dead, unexcited, drab, boring and non-zealous about God and Christianity, thus creating a vacuum which the Charismatic movement has filled? [**YES!**]
10. Does willingness to do **whatever God asks** and to be a *‘fool for Christ’* justify such practices as slain in the Spirit, barking in the Spirit, snake-handling, drinking poison, chaotic corporate tongues expression (i.e., all speaking over one another with different utterances, and contrary to I Corinthians 14’s orderly process), in today’s church? Grammatically, at least, is being a ‘fool for Christ’ (I Cor. 4:10) the same thing as behaving foolishly? (Pv. 13:16)

TOP CHARISMATIC THEOLOGY ERRORS

1. **Wealth**. God wants all of His children (Christians) to be financially wealthy in this life.
2. **Health**. Every Christian can always claim divine healing in the name of the Lord.
3. **Miracles**. Objective miracles are the norm today (or you don’t have faith), for all believers.
4. **Tongues**. Every Christian can have the gift of tongues, available for private use, simply by asking for it.
- (5) **Second Blessing**. The ‘baptism of the Holy Spirit’ is a second anointing for power and miraculous gifts,
received after salvation, and always evidenced by speaking in tongues.

1. WEALTH.

Christian ministers and laymen who believe, teach or advocate that God wants every Christian to be financially wealthy—rich—in this life engage in biblical error, by assuming and presuming upon God’s plan for individuals’ lives, thereby promoting a false doctrine. In the Bible, God has made some of His children rich, even very rich (Solomon, David, etc.), but at least equally representative are the examples of God’s greatest servants being poor (Christ, Paul, Peter, etc.). The range of available incomes within God’s will stems from quite wealthy (in Old Testament standards), to so poor Christ had no place to lay His head and Peter had no silver or gold. However, we can draw the line by saying that God is not the one making people rich in any evil, greedy or selfish ways, nor will He ever lead His children to be so poor as to beg for bread.

The common denominator between these teachings is that if God has a specific income level for a particular Christian, that is where that believer should be living, and to not do so would be to live outside His will—in sin. Our flesh (and maybe the desire of every human being) wants

God's will to always involve our being financially wealthy—there is nothing innately noble in that aspiration. As well, how one achieves their wealth—especially their heart attitude in how highly they aspire to it (priority, emotional involvement) and why they want that objective (motive—selfish greed or otherwise) are all factors to consider in determining the level God wants one at. Paul was able to have peace and contentment with much and with little. Can that be said of most American Christians?

And do we ever serve Him so greatly that wealth might need to be restricted, by an old-fashioned ethic called self-restraint? The apostles certainly were led to that lifestyle, and they completely out-achieved most modern-day laymen and ministers in evangelism and discipleship, and were not distracted or deterred by the search to be wealthy. The overall tenor (or tone) of the Bible is for moderation, diligence, compassion for the poor, and warning against the evil rich. The following three verses seem never to have been found by Charismatic ministers, who are usually the primary ones who benefit from teaching a gospel of wealth and mandatory tithe: Pv. 23:4-5; Ecc. 9:11; Mt. 6:19-24; I Tim. 6:7-10; Lk. 12:15; Heb. 13:5; Pv. 10:4; Jas. 2:15-17; Rev. 2:8-9, etc.

Examples:

- ▶ Kenneth Hagin's pamphlet, Write Your Own Ticket With God can easily be used as *worldliness* justification, requiring **only faith** to justify our desires and seemingly any amount of possessions (as if God were Santa Claus to our flesh).
- ▶ Some churches (maybe others) misuse I Tim. 5:17 and pride themselves in how well they 'bless' their pastor with BMW's (etc.), as a supposed testimony to their community of their being 'good' parishioners (using a WORLDLY standard and an *unbiblical* definition of what he needs and how to 'bless' him).

See also: Counterfeit Christianity and Christianity in Crisis, by Hank Hanegraff

2. HEALTH.

Christian ministers and laymen who believe, teach or advocate that God wants every Christian to never be sick, as if 100% health is guaranteed "in the atonement," engage in biblical error, and wrongly focus only on verses where Jesus did heal completely. They often extrapolate those experiences using Heb. 13:8 to say Christ's behavior on this issue never changes either (as if healing miracles have happened regularly, everywhere, for every generation of man). Christ did heal, Christ does heal, but He heals sovereignly, and He has not guaranteed that every Christian will always live in perfect health. As with wealth, there is nothing innately noble about human beings desiring this experience of perfect health—the flesh and probably every lost person aspires to this end.

Christ died to pay for our sins—not to pay for our diseases, and in the oft-quoted I Pet. 2:24-25, spiritual healing (of sins) is obviously the context. Even in its Old Testament predecessor; Isa. 53:5, Christ did prove His divinity and ability to forgive sins as such, by His many physical healings while on earth. In short, Christians can and should look to God in prayer and faith to heal them, but unless He sovereignly gives the faith to believe that a miraculous physical miracle (such as growing an arm back, replacing a failed heart, resurrections, or other such organic miraculous cures), we are wise to avoid the false doctrine that God always will heal everything every time because we are Christians.

In fact, the biblical evidence is that God does not always heal. Paul was unable to do so late in his ministry (II Tim. 4:20), and encouraged I Tim. 5:23 to use wine to help his frequent stomach ailments. Also, God uses His own laws of nature to cure up cuts over a few days' time

("naturally"), thankfully, and He is not opposed to utilizing doctors. Finally, some sickness can bring glory to God (Ex.: the paralyzed Christian singer Joni; ~Cf.: Jn. 11:4), and some sickness is due to our own sinfulness (I Cor. 11:27-30). Rather than more selfishly seeking perfect health all the time, seek God's specific will for you. Do teach that God can and does heal, but also realize that, as John MacArthur has noted, we all die of something and those claiming to have a gift of healing ought to use that claimed gift to clear out hospital floors, and not always in cloistered, staged sets with admiring followers (even among which not everyone in wheel chairs or scientifically diagnosed as ill always leave long- or short-term "cured"). Some Charismatics have gone so far as to offer 'healing glory dust' on their hands, while praying and laying hands on the sick. If this isn't mysticism and superstition (like 'holy water'), I don't know what is!

3. MIRACLES.

Closely related to claimed miracles of healing, Christian ministers and laymen who believe, teach or advocate that objective miracles are the norm in the Christian life engage in biblical error, again by attributing the manifestations of 3 years of Christ's life to all times thereafter. Obviously, Christ performed many amazing miracles, seemingly at will. He walked on water, calmed the sea, resurrected the dead, turned water into wine, and many other awe-inspiring signs. But are these feats expected of today's believer, and to be part of our everyday experience? Were there reasons why Christ demonstrated such powers while on earth?

Most Charismatics I am aware of do not claim to have resurrected the dead, walked on water or calmed any ocean. So by their own admission, their belief in miracles is already limited from that which Christ demonstrated. The real issue seems to focus around two different definitions we can attribute to the word "miracle." Is it a miracle when God answers a Christian's prayer, when He empowers them in evangelism and the hearer responds, when He leads us and all of the sudden there is a parking space where we felt led to drive, when He gives us wisdom (as He promised—Jas. 1:5-8) in a situation where we are making a tough decision? YES to all of the above. But these "subjective" miracles—which ARE "normative" of a healthy Christian life—cannot validly be equated with science-violating, laws of nature and physics breaking objective miracles—the type which would make modern-day headlines. Nor can they be validly minimized as anything other than a miracle themselves.

Are there two types of miracles which God produces? No, but there are some of extraordinary nature, and those intended to bring about a response from observers of the miracle, which seem to differ in intent from those essentially benefitting God's children more directly and personally. They all require the miraculous intervention of God, and any miracle is to be received with gratitude and amazement. But the Charismatic errs in making lost people believe that Christianity teaches that science-violating extraordinary miracles occur every day in every Christian's life, simply because they have faith.

The Christian life is abundant and amazing, but unless you are able to outwardly demonstrate an activity which has no human explanation, no rational lost person is going to believe that you are sane or intelligent, if you claim science-violating miracles and have no evidence or proof which that lost observer is incapable of refuting (as with Christ's miracles). Be careful how you refer to answers to prayer, do believe that God can and does do miracles, but never harm the reputation of Christ by associating yourself with claims of things which are either not true, or cannot be adequately substantiated by independent (i.e., unbiased), intelligent persons—Christian or not.

We do not minimize the greatness of God by admitting that the three brief times in Bible history when miracles were the norm were for a specific purpose, nor do we minimize belief in

His ability to do miracles by acknowledging that in our day and time, the “objective” type miracles do not seem to be nearly as prevalent across the earth as those other 3 times in biblical history.

4. TONGUES.

Christian ministers and laymen who believe, teach or advocate that God wants every Christian to speak tongues engage in biblical error, by ignoring clear biblical evidence. If it is not patently obvious in the English; I Cor. 12:28-30 is very clearly indicating that the answer to the questions, “All do not speak in tongues, do they?” is clearly No! (Cf.: I Cor. 12:7-11). If a Charismatic teaches that the gift of tongue is available to anyone who desires or seeks it, they are plain wrong. Not all believers are arms to the body, nor are they its tongue, for what sort of body would that look like if all had the same gift? (I Cor. 12:12-27).

Worse that this mistaken teaching, Charismatics often teach, using I Cor. 14:2, that “tongues” is a private prayer (or worship) language, unintelligible to their human mind, to be used to bless God. Strangely, God’s word does not teach this view, but in fact teaches that every spiritual gift is given for edification of the body of believers—corporately—not for self-edification (I Cor. 14:1-2, 12, 26). Tongues were never used in private, to enhance one’s spiritual walk. Even when in church settings, they were to be interpreted so all could be edified, and when used in public, among lost observers, the gift was used to validate the message of the speaker to those ungifted who were present, and usually being evangelized. For the Jewish nation, this gift clearly demonstrated that God had judged the nation and moved forward with his plan of taking His eternal gospel also to the Gentiles, as they would listen (Ac. 2, etc.; Cf.: I Cor. 14:22, where tongues are a “sign” gift to unbelievers in general).

In modern times, and given the injunction “forbid not to speak in tongues” (I Cor. 14:39) it is quite reasonable to believe that God might manifest this gift on the mission field, where language barriers during evangelism are more prevalent (or in such cases as a non-English speaker enters a typical American church and that language barrier arises, as an example).

Tongues were, by definition, a “sign” gift—one which had an associated message to people by its manifestation—and, more importantly for us, tongues were (and are) an unlearned real human language, the miracle being that we are able to effectively communicate spiritual information to people in their language, never having naturally learned it (Ex.: Ac. 2:1-11).

5. BAPTISM OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Christian ministers and laymen who believe, teach or advocate that there is a special “Second Blessing” called being “baptized in the Spirit,” post-salvation, which all Christians should seek, engage in a slightly less serious biblical error, at the least by simply mis-naming Spirit-filling, or at worst, by claiming an experience the Bible does not reference in the same way as they teach.

It is clear from I Cor. 12:13 that at salvation, God baptizes every believer into the body of Christ. Jesus spoke of His disciples being later baptized with power, after He ascended and the Spirit fell. But just what did that mean? Until Christ sat down at God’s right hand, in heaven, the era of the Church age and Holy Spirit did not officially arrive. Once that feat occurred; Ac (a historical and often transitional book) records four “fallings” of the Spirit, which symbolized and manifested God’s message that all types of humanity were now capable of directly receiving God and His power upon faith in Christ—not at a later date (as the apostles and others in Christ’s days had to patiently wait for). Dr. John Bisagno has accurately identified these 4 fallings as representing the four spiritual people groups of that day—Jews (Ac. 2), half Jews (Samaritans;

Ac. 8); Gentiles (Ac. 10), and Gentiles with half knowledge (Ac. 19). The clarity of the message to all men was not missed on that generation—the Holy Spirit was hereafter received directly upon salvation—and he was.

Charismatics generally teach a “second blessing” of power (and usually miracles) they often call the “Baptism of the Holy Spirit.” This issue is listed last of their top errors, as it may constitute only a mis-naming of an experience. Biblically, all Christians are baptized into the body of Christ (Church) at salvation by the Spirit, and likely what Charismatics are referencing is their first real experience of being filled with the Holy Spirit upon their first full surrender to Christ’s Lordship, post-salvation. Guaranteeing miracles will be associated with that commitment is an error, but they certainly have biblical basis for believing subjective type miracles—answered prayers, God’s leading, manifest spiritual power and influence in evangelism and favor among men—will accompany any believer fully committed and thereby fully empowered by God (which happens to many people years after their initial salvation).

If Charismatic believers could simply recognize these truths, and properly name their first Spirit-filled experience (especially if their being fully committed to Christ and being contemporaneously filled with the Spirit occurs sometime after they get saved), much confusion and division could be avoided, which would not only help the cause of Christ in rightly representing His word, but also promote an ever closer unity between true Christians on both sides of this issue. At the same time, traditionalists, who fear miracles, essentially disbelieve in spiritual gifts of any kind (or never talk about or use them), who are too proud to be willing to go out on a limb for Christ, or who derive pleasure justifying their mundane Christian lives by slandering Charismatics, need to also make the appropriate moral changes to allow this unity (and cooperative evangelistic endeavors) occur.

On a personal note, the very best church I have ever attended and been a member of was able to quite accurately merge the best of both worlds in being a conservative Southern Baptist church that was mildly “charismatic.” I have never seen another church so closely emulating the New Testament model, while avoiding biblical errors on either side, and I am saddened that modern pastors either don’t try harder to achieve such a church practice, or don’t know how. Follow Scripture; Accurately, and even without knowing that church’s name you will arrive at a very similar church practice. Not doing so is a major reason myself (and I trust others) cannot get fully excited about being fully loyal to any modern church, as I have ‘tasted’ much better, and refuse to become a “charismatic” or to deny the legitimate emphases that denomination (and, more importantly, the Bible) affords us.

Finally, this matter is labeled “(5)” because this author considers it as not necessarily a substantive theological error, but possibly simply a mis-naming of a legitimate Christian experience (except when people insist that miracles, tongues or other unusual manifestations are normatively associated with it).

CONCLUSION

There is no intention in this lesson to slander, minimize or offend the sincere people of the Charismatic movement, as this author believes most if not all of them are truly saved believers, simply misled in their beliefs by a less than thorough reading and synthesis of all god’s words teaches. The harm, and the reason these issues is raised, is that any false doctrine actually harms the adherent, as well as giving our joint Christian faith a name it does not deserve, among any lost people who attribute mistakes to Christ Himself. Great unity toward evangelism, fellowship and brotherly love can be had as biblical denominations interact with each other—as the Bible

does not teach denominations—and this can be more effectively achieved as we all seek the purest of doctrine and practice.

Warning Signs:

A brief sampling of things to beware of when a more emotions-based Charismatic acts or opens their mouth is: I've prayed and I feel a peace about this (with no Scripture reference or contrary to God's word); Accusing those quoting the Bible for a decision with the label "legalism," authoritative confidence from "God spoke to my *spirit*" (who can argue with God?), use this formula—"in Jesus' name" (vs. content being within His will), trying to 'gang tackle' God with numbers praying (vs. potentially more power by the godly few—Jas. 5:17-18), naming emotions after demons, especially every time a situation gets difficult (Ex.: the 'demon of depression'), spiritual psychobabble (mixing Freudian emotional history evaluation of a person with sin or demonic stronghold analysis), thinking their pastor is a spiritual celebrity with more power before God, commanding or "taking authority over" the devil (vs. Jude 1:8-10; II Pet. 2:10-12) and expecting miracles exactly the way they were in the first century and at its frequency. Ignorance kills, people—don't be deluded or deceived, because you know those two traits' spiritual source.

HAND-RAISING **(the preeminent Charismatic symbol)**

The American church too often follows the majority and mainstream more so than the Bible. Ex.: Hand-raising was a symbol of the charismatic movement, then it went more mainstream, but I'll bet few to none (especially pastors) have ever done a study on what the Bible teaches about that, and our postures in prayer.

Doctrine.

I Tim. 2:8-10. Church setting, mirroring women's deeds, and only pertains to men praying in church (with lives full of integrity). Is this how Charismatics practice it?

Deut. 32:40. One hand, and as a sign of avowing revenge (in context). Is this what Charismatics do?

I Ki. 8:54. With physical kneeling and at an altar. Do Charismatics ever kneel at the same time?

II Chr. 6:13. Again, on an altar (bronze platform), kneeling, and before the religious assembly—Israel.

Neh. 8:6. Both hands, as a form of blessing God in the assembly, followed by kneeling and worship.

Ps. 63:4. Both hands, as a blessing to God.

Ps. 119:48. Lifted to God's commandments, which the lifter loves and meditates on. Do Charismatics do that?

Ps. 134:2. Both hands, to the sanctuary in heaven, as a blessing of God.

Ps. 141:2. Both hands, in prayer, at the evening, as an offering to God.

Isa. 1:15. Both hands, done in prayer (but, here, with an evil heart, to which God will not answer).

Lam. 2:19. Pouring out your heart to God in prayer, for hungry children.

Summary.

In summary, the practice is encouraged, and not (to be) forbidden or prohibited (as it is not sinful), but also it is not mandatory (i.e., commanded), or necessarily to be done all the time (and *always* to be done sincerely—never as an empty or token gesture not from the heart). No 'leader' in the congregation to do it (i.e., using peer pressure to engage in something that doesn't

mean you're closer to God or more open to His Spirit). Not everyone who raises their hands is a 'charismatic,' an emotional person (more so than logical), or adheres to unbiblical charismatic errors. Finally, **God cares much more about the posture of your heart** than of your body.

Comments.

A recent Christian song's lyrics aside, raising your hands in church is no great restrainer of the evil type of pride. You can be led to raise your hands to the Lord in praise (and prayer), but there is *little* 'sacrifice' going on in an environment composed mainly of Christians, hidden from the general, where it is either the norm (as in Charismatic churches), or from peer pressure/group think ('as you feel led,' 6/12/13, then, at another church, 'all of you,' ~2 months later an evangelist's event (8/17/13). Don't require what is voluntary, or confuse dignity with pride, or humility for humiliation.

And one can still have a half- or fully-closed heart, whether their hands are open or not. Evangelizing the public and especially **living holy, even when it differs from culture** is the courage God seeks in being a 'fool for Christ.' God knows your heart, and is **seeking a sold-out life**—not a mere gesture that some, wrongly, take as synonymous.

Position.

I **love** my Charismatic brothers and sisters, have attended their churches on multiple occasions, and have included them—along with Baptists and Bible church denominations—as among three of the *most* biblical Christian groups in America. However, I would no more give the Catholics' "sign of the cross" on my head and chest (due to their litany of doctrinal errors—including 'salvific' sacraments—listed in the Apologetics section of Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org) as I would often raise my hands in a church, because of the prevalence of significant Charismatic errors (Ex.: tongues for all, practiced not for same use or in same way as in the first century), and 100% wealth and health in the atonement) and hand raising's direct association with that theology in our culture. You do it as you are led! I have, and will sometimes, but until Charismatics correct their largest errors, I will let my wife be the one who does it more in public.

Note: The small amount of verses on the subject (which is not dispositive), and especially the small emphasis given it in the New Testament (*one* verse) keeps this author from including it as having a significant impact on one maturing as a disciple. Hence, it is not included in our Discipleship section.

On "Dispensationalism"

In the interest of full disclosure, if the materials on this website cause readers to consider this author "**Dispensationalist**, that label would be generally and unapologetically agreed to, with gratitude for the many wonderful teachings their experts have given. However, the following examples are some of the few errors of that movement this author disagrees with, and should show the reader the independence and fidelity to Scripture that this website strives to adhere to, in the spirit of I Cor. 1:12-17 and Gal. 1:10:

1. **Academics.**

- a) An over-emphasis on academics
- b) Less emotionally in-tune, friendly or gregarious and joyous church services
- c) Any displayed intellectual arrogance lodged against the many godly, zealous and sincere if not misguided laymen in the Charismatic movement

Example: "Knowing the Bible is one thing. Knowing the Author is another." True, that **intellectual; Academic, trivia** facts can be known by anyone (though few but

Christians—and Jews, for the Old Testament—would *naturally* do so), but untrue in that **simply having met a person** is nothing in comparison to knowing them deeply/intimately (which is the type of practical, application/experience-based understanding of the Bible that comes only from those who **truly know God**. Often this phrase is a theological-sounding excuse for someone who is **only saved**, and has *grown little* and *taken little effort* to learn the love letter book God **wants** and commands us to.

2. **Prophecy.**

a) An occasional over-emphasis on Bible prophecy.

3. **Miracles.**

- a) An almost total rejection of any supernatural or **miraculous** functioning of God in believers' lives (Ex.: God does still heal, and still can do so miraculously)
- b) A near negation of teaching on the true spiritual gifts and their need to be utilized in church gatherings (i.e., "Body Life")

4. **Evangelism.**

a) Often a lack of **evangelism**, perhaps by their strong belief in God's sovereignty, or that the number one purpose of man is to glorify God (which can be done in so many other ways than saving souls).

More 'Scholarly' Concerns:

- Perhaps in a more defensive mode of proving their eschatological system, an occasional over-emphasis on the word "kingdom" as meaning the Millennium.
- Some over-emphasis on the Jews' (vs. the Church's) interpretation of Gospel parables.
- Some failure to emphasize the many similarities between the Church and Israel (as sister or cousin religions).
- Occasional insinuation that all Jews within their nation rejected Christ in His day.
- Some over-emphasis on more academic concepts than Christian life practicalities (seemingly equally shared with Covenant Theologians and Progressive Dispensationalists).
- Failure to clarify that the Bible does not emphasize nearly as much as dispensationalists that God has **only one** supreme purpose for history, be it demonstrating His sovereignty or glory.
- Occasional de-emphasis on the *primarily* applicable Sermon on the Mount.
- Often failure to explain how debating the book of Genesis' several dispensations' names and time-frames have any relevance to the average Christian (if more than primarily academic).

That having been said, I am first and foremost an objective Bible student, then a Dispensationalist, and neither a Covenant Theology nor Progressive Dispensationalism advocate.

Kingdom Concepts

I. Jews' Kingdom Inheritance: Offered in Messiah, Postponed for His Rejection.

- a) **Offered.** Mt. 3:2, 4:17, 23, 15:24-27; Mk. 7:(28)
- b) **Rejected.** Mt. 21:28-34, 22:1-14; Lk. 17:25; Jn. 1:1
- c) **Punished.** (Ac. 7:51); 70 A.D.
- d) **Postponed.** (Mt. 21:43)
- e) **Present.** Rom. 11 (espec. vv. 25); Completed Jews
- f) **Future.** Rom. 11:26, etc.

II. Christ's Reign.

Jn. 18:36-37

III. A Present Spiritual Reality for All Who are in Christ.

- a) **Life in Christ.** Mt. 10:14-15; Jn. 3:3;
- b) **Righteousness.** Rom. 14:7
- c) **Power.** I Cor. 4:20

IV. Future Prophecy (more general).

Lk. 13:28-29; Ac. 1:3?

V. A Future, Earthly Reign of Christ in the Millennium (a sub-issue of prophecy).

Mt. 19:28-29; Lk. 1:32-33, 21:31; Ac. 1:(3?), 6; I Cor. 15:24; Rev. 19:_____

VI. The Positive Afterlife for Every Believer in Jesus.

Heaven (et al). Lk. 12:32; Ac. 19:8, 14:22; I Th. 2:12; II Tim. 4:18; Heb. 12:28

ADDITIONAL CHARISMATIC ERRORS

This sect of Christianity used to be appealing primarily to the poor (as their leaders got rich), who so desired to be wealthier, but in modern times, ever more wealthy flock to their gates, as Charismatic theology (falsely) salves their conscience about their **wealth always being in God's will**.

- ▶ **Spiritual mapping** (i.e., identifying historical venues of demonic, witchcraft or other evil “pockets” of activity to specifically target for purification—yes, they really believe and do this!).
- ▶ Identifying “**demon clusters**” (i.e., families of demon influences), and demon naming (Ex.: the demon of anxiety, etc.). Sometimes, when you study their teachings, you have to wonder if some of them they give more attention to Satan than to God.
- ▶ **Protocol and processes** for deliverance (exorcism) ministry (totally unlike Jesus; Ex.: start with our class, scheduled weeks forward of your pressing need—Gateway Church, North Richland Hills, TX).
- ▶ **Generational sins and curses**, as opposed to learned or inherited traits that in Christ we are not destined to repeat. (**Gal. 3:13; Jn. 8:36**),
- ▶ **Positive confession:** Ex.: Do not say you have the flu (or lost your job—i.e., deny the truth) as that spiritually secures that negative experience to you, because the power of life is in the tongue.
- ▶ Based on the Garden of Eden, **all illness is from Satan**, despite stomach ailments, left sick in Miletus and for the glory of God. As usual, cherry picked/select dogma not based on the full counsel of God always goes astray. Funny, it was God who visited Job's troubles upon him (using the devil as the instrument) and his family, as a test of his great righteousness. (**Job 1:11-12, 2:6, 10, 5:17-18**)

28. BIBLICAL VS. AMERICAN CHRISTIANITY

It has been said, if you never aim at something, you're sure to miss it. Our American church leaders have been lulled into believing that if a person attends church once a week, and "tithes," that is Christianity. However, the Bible gives so many more definitions of our walk with Christ, and even what it means for the Church to be biblical church! Please consider the following (Josh. 1:8):

A MODEL CHURCH VISION

"Where there is no vision, the people perish." Proverbs 29:18

Is your church "successful?" The Church in America prides itself in aspiring to be or being "successful," which typically is defined, in part, as having large, beautiful buildings, many church members, and lots of money. If Christ were here, as He spoke in Revelation chapters 2-3, do you think He would give us a very good report, given the following ideals as to what a church is truly to be?

How is it that a handful of simple, fairly uneducated, brand-new Christians—2,000 years ago—were able to "turn the world upside down," and we, with our claimed millions of believers, great learning, technology and capital, with 2,000 years of "progress" can hardly make any noticeable impact on our society? (Ac. 17:6, 24:5).

Principles of what a Church is Truly to Be:

1. **PRAYER.** Church known by outsiders for its praying—not from public demonstrations of such (Ex.: prayer walks, etc.), but because of the lost world witnessing the results and impact of our praying. Most American churches are known principally for their preaching eloquence and music quality. (Mt. 6:1-6; Mk. 11:17; Ac. 12:5, 12)
2. **EVANGELISM.** Daily or "regular" evangelism (by most believers—biblically, **all** believers!) as an outgrowth of corporate fellowship, edification and spiritual relationships. Also, warning gospel rejecters of the consequences of their decision. (Ac. 5:42, 13:51, 16:5, 34, 18:6, 19:9-10, 20, 20:7). Graciously and gently, but certainly addressing with lost people (in evangelism), the fact that there is a Hell, and that it is fiery and forever (i.e., not a myth, or a lost/abandoned doctrine). (Rev. 20:15)
3. **DISCIPLESHIP.** Relationship-based discipleship of the majority (biblically, **all**) of claiming Christians, personally training, teaching and motivating them to allow God to mature them up in the faith both spiritually and morally (i.e., "sanctification"/the Christian life), through sharing the essentials God has taught us with anywhere from one to possibly ten other believers, and training them to, in turn, do the same. Biblical responsibility and accountability for this, and all other church ministries, rests and begins with the pastor. Even the best sermons often fall short of changing lives for permanent impact, as God has designed spiritual relationships, through personal discipleship (not necessarily one-on-one, but personal contact), as the way Christian lives can be daily changed, as believers are led by the Holy Spirit and are enjoined to practice the discipline of a daily Quiet Time (i.e., prayer and meditation). (I Th. 2:8; II Tim. 2:2, 3:10-11b; I Cor. 11:1; Ac. 11:23, 26, 14:22, 28, 15:41, 16:5, 15, 40, 18:11, 23, 19:18, 20:2, 23:1, 26:32)
4. **WORSHIP.** "Body life" church services (See in part the book by the same name, by Ray Stedman), which; According to I Cor. 14; Ac. 2, 4, 19 and Jas. 5:13-20 appears to have been the *normal* Sunday worship mode, rather than a service for elitely-committed believers! Example activities include time enough in the service to allow for congregational involvement in such activities as: prayer requests, ministering remaining spiritual gifts praises voiced, needs expressed and met, testimonies given, group conversational prayer, Quiet Time lessons shared by lay persons, etc.). These are also services in which the non-sign spiritual gifts are properly used to edify the brethren (and not assigning these service types to Wed. or Sun. evenings, due to their less popularity—they **ARE** what the Christian Church gathered acts like, biblically, and it is not up to our preferences or desires to decide what type of services we are to

aspire to, or accept). Also, based on I Cor. 14, it appears that these services were both normative and on Sunday morning—not relegated to smaller groups or the more committed member’s other attendance times. (Ac. 1:14, 16, 2:7, 12, 42-44, 46-47, 3:1, 4-5, 11-12, 4:23-39, 31-37, 5:1-9, 6:1, 9:19, 21, 23, 26, 29, 31, 38, 10:23, 11:29-30, 12:16-17, 13:3, 11, 30-31, 52, 14:22-23, 27, 15:3, 35, 40, 16:34, 19:1, 27, 31, 38-39, 20:7, 17-38, 21:4, 7-8; I Cor. Chs. 12-14; II Cor. 13:11; Eph. 2:20-22, 4:2-3, 11-16; I Pet. 4:10; the corporate church ethics/the “one another’s”—Rom. 12:10, 16, 14:13, 19, 15:7; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2, 25, 32, 5:21; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:13; Heb. 3:13, 10:24-25; Jas. 4:11, 5:9; I Pet. 4:9, 5:5d-g; I Jn. 5:11, 13b, 15.

5. **GENUINE & BIBLICAL UNITY.** The Church known to the lost world for its love and oneness of heart and mind (vs. divisions, denominational pride—though not the kind of pseudo “unity” which compromises or avoids doctrine, or which links up with doctrinally errant, or even lost-but-religious. (Jn. 13:35; I Pet. 1:22; I Th. 3:12, 4:9; Rom. 13:8; I Jn. 2:11, 3:18, 4:7, 11-12, 5:2; Jn. 13:35, 17:22-23; Eph. 4:3; I Cor. 1:10, 3:3; Ac. 1:14, 2:46; Jas. 4:1-4; I Cor. 13:4-8a; Eph. 2:11-22; Ac. 1:14, 2:46, 15:25).
6. **BIBLICAL PREACHING.** Churches where the Bible is preached (rather than most church-goers hearing less than 1/50th of the Bible, if they attended every Sunday, for life), preached/taught expositorily as well as topically, and preached/taught in a way where the Bible is not used as a springboard for many illustrations, poems, statistics, stories, jokes, news articles and other anecdotes used to “color”/beef up three alliterated points and one main theme (to the distraction of Christians hearing and learning God’s life-giving book). Our congregations are smarter than we give them credit for, but our sermon styles may aid in their remaining Biblically ignorant, and entertainment and impressing them with our knowledge is NOT what biblical preaching is supposed to be. (II Tim. 4:2-4)
7. **BIBLICAL TEACHING.** Church leaders/pastors working hard at both preaching and teaching (vs. primarily preaching), and honored/rewarded accordingly by the flock. (I Tim. 5:17; Ac. 15:35, 28:31)
8. **DAILY QUIET TIMES.** Christians (why not all of them?) having daily quiet times (prayer and Bible meditation), and moment-by-moment walking in the Spirit, as they are committed to Christ, though morally imperfect. (Mt. 14:23; Gal. 5:16; Josh. 1:8; Ps. 1:1-3)
9. **SCRIPTURE MEMORY.** Much more Scripture memory, and lay persons possessing some understanding of doctrine, and some ability to defend our beliefs and address the apologetic issues of lost people.
10. **BIBLICAL MUSICAL TYPES.** Music which incorporates all three biblical musical types—psalms, hymns and spiritual songs—rather than following what is popular in society, or what particular groups within the local church want to hear or sing. Worship is not up to our desires, whether for “traditional” or “contemporary” preferences of worship style. (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16) It is not ours to second guess God’s program or to follow church trends which do not match up with Scripture, such as letting the majority of our membership’s musical preferences decide the matter, or appeasing lost visitor’s musical tastes at the expense of biblical modes of music.
11. **GIVING.** Grace-based financial giving, as led by the Spirit (as opposed to “law”-based, guilt- and peer pressure-based giving, or “tithing” being lorded over at a set amount—a concept originally for Jewish taxes, and often exceeding 10%). If we will grow up our people to maturity, we can and rightfully should expect increases in gifts (rather than allowing our congregations to be content with not evangelizing, not discipling or being disciplined and not being very committed to Christ, and our insisting that they owe us our 10%). (II Cor. 9:6-8; Ac. 13:52).
12. **CHURCH DISCIPLINE.** Biblical church discipline and loving reproof (vs. American churches rarely doing so, even when needed—avoiding our responsibility under the guise of a false sense of what it means not to “judge,” or, more likely, the fear of losing members to church hopping, and their associated financial gifts). (Mt. 18:15-17; I Tim. 5:19-20; Jas. 5:19-20; Gal. 6:1; Tit. 1:9, 11, 2:15)
13. **CORRECTING FALSE DOCTRINE.** Addressing and refuting/correcting false doctrine and false teachers, vs. apathetically ignoring them as “harmless,” turning a blind eye or thinking such activity invariably constitutes sinful “judging.” (I Tim. 4:1-2,6; II Jn. 1:9-10; II Tim. 2:24-26)
14. **OPENNESS TO SUFFERING.** Suffering persecution (something American Christians hardly need to fear as our lifestyles too often mimic the world’s, and our lack of evangelizing is certainly to their liking, and to the temporal victory of their spiritual father). (I Th. 3:3; Ac. 5:41, 8:4; Jn. 8:44; Eph. 2:2)
15. **POWER.** Power, amazement and the fear of God, as the environment in which we are to live, and as evidence the Holy Spirit is working in the midst of our churches. Having the New Testament, can we

expect true, provable/verifiable miracles, which helped produce this environment? Churches disagree on this. (I Th. 1:5; Ac. 2:43a, 4:13, 9:21, 31, 13:12, 19:17)

16. **FELLOWSHIP.** “Church” gatherings occasionally meeting spontaneously (either corporately or in small groups), from a dynamic fellowship life, rather than such meetings being calendared in. Christianity, after all, is more than going to church two hours on Sunday, and we need fellowship (not necessarily the gathered together type) throughout the week. (Ac. 2:46, 20:20; Rom. 16:5)
17. **SOCIAL MINISTRY.** Social concern placed as third priority to evangelism and discipleship (worship and quiet time not being considered as a ministry, in that sense), but emphasized and encouraged, especially as expressions of individuals’ ministries, using their gifts and talents to show love to the lost and dying world, especially the “down-and-out” (as the Old Testament emphasizes).
18. **OTHER.** Principles practiced in the following, non-exhaustive list of New Testament verses: Jas. 5:13-16; II Cor. 11:28; I Tim. 2:1-4, 8-12; I Tim. 3:1-13 & Jas. 3:1 (Elder, Teachers and deacon qualifications/roles vs. badge of honor to friends or large contributors); Jas. 2:1-4 (clothing/attire in church, and equitable treatment of poor and rich people vs. teaching God always wants Christians rich, or favoring large contributors and giving them more power or status in church), praise and true, sincere, heart-felt worship (Ac. 16:25; Phil. 3:3; Rom. 12:1-2), public confession of sins (where appropriate, vs. airing dirty laundry without discretion or finger-pointing/judging) (Jas. 5:16), taking care of widows in the church (I Tim. 5:3-14), meeting the loneliness and other needs suffered by the orphans and poor (Jas. 1:27; Gal. 2:10), meaningful (vs. rote, archaic, removed) confessions expressing our beliefs from our hearts in our own words (~I Tim. 3:16), public hearing of the word of God (I Tim. 4:13), commitment to the point of being willing to be martyrs, if required (Ac. 7:55-60,9:29, 20:24), leaders devoted to the Bible, evangelism, and the highest spiritual priorities (Ac. 6:4, 18:5), Spirit-initiated fasting (as opposed to it being seen as a spiritual “fast track” to success) and commissioning of ministers and short-term mission trips (Ac. 13:2-3, 14:23, 15:40), laymen aware of what ministry work is being done across the world and places nearer to home, through testimonies before them (Ac. 14:26-27), meeting believers’ needs (Ac. 11:28-30, 16:33; Tit. 3:14), intra-church (not just denominational) financial helping/sharing (all but unheard of in hoardish America; II Cor. 8:13-15), intra-church (not just denominational) greetings (Ac. 18:22; Phil. 4:21; II Cor. 16:19-20), spiritual and moral authority/respect in society (Mt. 16:18-19), personal Bible meditation (in church?); (Body Life exemplary verses: Eph. 4:11-16, 5:19-21; Rom. 12:3-21; Col. 3:12-17; Rom. 12:10, 16, 14:13, 19, 15:7; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2, 25, 32, 5:21; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:13; Heb. 3:13, 10:24-25; Jas. 4:11, 5:9; I Pet. 4:9, 5:5d-g; I Jn. 5:11, 13b, 15; I Cor. 14:23 (not a normative gift for today; Except perhaps on the mission field, but evidence that normative gifts are to be used in Sunday’s main service)

If your church is aspiring to and increasingly achieving these ideals, through faith in God, keep doing the right! You needn’t necessarily continue reading the following materials!

‘Vived’ Church Vision **(former Tweets from @JamesMeroney)**

If ‘revival’ occurred, what might its manifestation look like? This author suggests at a minimum the following:

- Testimonies of evangelistically excited pastors, famous or not (extending outside their local church).
- Testimonies of repentant pastors who admit they haven’t been evangelistic or at least enough.
- Excitement about progress/successes in evangelism overseas (Ex.: ‘foreign missions’).
- Famous national hero Christians’ testimony about evangelism—pastor or laymen—in every country on earth (televised, etc.).
- Videotape of famous Christian doing evangelism person to person (perhaps even live fed to YouTube).

- Multiple famous preachers gathered to publicly pray for forgiveness for not having taken the Great Commission literally.
- Famous (and millionaire) pastors publicly giving back significant portions of their overage to the poor in the name of Jesus/the Gospel.
- A large crowd of non-famous pastors doing the same thing. (Gal. 2:6)
- A group of laymen 5%’er with homemade signs outside a church clamoring for others to join them in evangelizing (beware: more negative, obviously).
- Pastors asking public forgiveness for not having relationally disciple many if any of their members during their career.
- Pastors asking public forgiveness for not having utilized laymen’s skills during worship services.
- Pastors asking public forgiveness for not having significantly helped the struggling poor, like Jesus would have (and did).
- Groups of Christians spending days at church praying till something big from God happens. Refuse to leave until you see God move! (Mk. 11:22-24)
- Denominations united in same unified Great Commission completion goal, focused on targeted areas till fully complete.
- High church denominations repenting of their less evangelistic history (humility vs. I’m too \ dignified for that baser activity–pride).
- Charismatics admitting to God before men that He can and sometimes will but does not always heal and it’s not always fault of sick one lacking faith.
- Non-charismatics publicly admitting they have so avoided extremes they may have lacked faith in God’s miracle-working power in our generation.
- Charismatic and traditionalists sharing a joint worship service without their members sitting on opposite sections of the worship area.
- Calvinists worshipping with Arminians and celebrating joint belief Jesus is only way to heaven and God loves and wants all men saved--and praying for that.
- Calvinists and Arminians agreeing to disagree agreeably, and NOT separate or part company or ignore and slander each other.
- Smaller churches being honored w/public recognition by mega churches for their achievements and possibly offered gifts-same denomination or not.
- Missionaries and evangelists being publicly touted as the heroes they are (i.e., much-needed recognition).
- Laymen publicly repenting that they have not been actively involved in using their spiritual gift(s) in ministry.
- Publicly repenting of not being fully committed to Christ and not having a daily quiet time of 10 minutes, or so (as a general rule).
- Publicly repenting of not evangelizing one's laymans' share of world’s need (i.e., between 42-111 each, in a lifetime). Website has analysis.
- ‘High church’ trying some ‘low church’ practices in at least one worship service and vice

versa (robes/hymns/responsive reading/dance/casual dress).

- Churches publicly agreeing to no longer have traditional vs. contemporary services but biblical ones which include psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.
- Churches (especially pastors) agreeing to teach grace giving as led by the Spirit, and trusting God for the results.
- Have a no dress code worship service, where any DECENT/modest attire is equally respected.
- Protestants invite Catholics to their service to jointly worship Jesus? Not sure how this would work (or if it would).
- Public debate series politely advocating for one's view on important subjects (Ex.: inerrancy, etc.), possibly live streaming.
- Local churches shutting down one Sunday for all attending to go minister to some struggling poor (bus transport and cops as needed). Mayors attend?
- Churches together commit their to reach EVERY lost soul within 1-3 miles of their church.
- To facilitate this, establish address logs or maps to chart prayer-backed evangelistic progress.
- Local churches adopt-a-neighborhood in another country to pray for and send evangelizers to.
- And select non-overlapping country segments. Duplicity wastes precious resources, and re-evangelizing can occur after that job is COMPLETED.
- Mega church pastors gather in meeting to discuss what's working to grow their church, as we are co-laborers—NOT competitors.
- Public reconciliation services between Christians (in a local church or otherwise). “Confess your sins one to another.”
- City-wide healing service not by famous ‘healers’ but dignified and respected elders who will pray over them (oil as presumed medicinal Jas. 5).
- Public acts of charity/civic service in remorseful response to having ignored our communities in large part if they hadn't been church visitors.
- Video teleconferences to third world countries preaching the Gospel or discipling laymen and pastors?
- Pastors publicly agreeing that sermon, song and silver is an incomplete model of the New Testament church (2 hours a week vs. 24/7).
- Pastors teaching laymen how to have a quiet time—during worship services—and actually having them do one during that same time.
- Laymen publicly reciting memorized Scripture during the worship service (orderly constraints imposed). Isn't THIS what church is supposed to be?
- Mega church pastors publicly agreeing to cap their salaries when they are at a comfortable level.
- All further expansion of their enterprise could then provably be for right motives (even a wealthy level is fine if you do so, to me).
- Churches agreeing to partly support career evangelists. One Bible church in Houston uses displays to educate laymen how their money is used.
- US church giving some money to help 3rd world Christians—a new public and conscious

campaign to raise funds specifically targeting the poorest.

- Mission trips to enable third world pastors to be trained in EDDBS and bi-vocational skills. Being done-Excel still more!
- Planting churches by evangelism in foreign countries with no monetary return to sponsoring church. Being done-excel still more!
- Mission trips to teach 3rd world poor how to plant their own food sources after US church pays for tracks of land-Ex.: Rick Warren's ministry. But ONLY IF that government allows it and does not corrupt the transaction!
- Institute a campaign to have wealthy Christians pledge to give more for foreign missions evangelism (and helping the third world's poor).
- One Sunday have various mixed age group Sunday Schools—we are family, not segregated (and black church worship w/white church)!

THIS is “church,” folks, at least how I see and envision it from Scripture! If we the church want to impact our society the way they did in Acts, we must align our priorities with Gods’! If we REALLY want revival & our land healed, let it begin with ‘ME!’ (II Chron. 7:14, by analogy only).

GLAD God could give me this ‘vision’ within 24 hours of Billy Graham’s birthday!
What a privilege.

PS: Ac. 5:38-39 to any detractors (is my firm conviction--think what you want in any opposite position).

Warning: Denying & especially IGNORING can B some of the most SUBTLE means of rebelling & disobeying God!

A MODEL PASTOR VISION

Many American churches, under the leadership of their pastors, have wonderful, worshipful music and eloquent, interesting and intelligent sermons. In these two functions of “church” we Americans seem to excel. Many of our churches minister to a lot of Christians, have nice buildings, do good social ministries and accomplish some evangelistic undertakings. Whatever experience we have had with our individual pastors, whether good or bad, we can all agree that there is no perfect pastor, and that we should never even require or expect such from our leaders. We also know that many pastors are sincerely trying to serve God, and want to lead in and do the right things.

The issue under consideration is, for whatever reasons and under whatever vocational or cultural pressures, is your pastor at least aspiring and trying to become a “biblical” pastor? It is so easy to determine what a pastor’s job description and priorities are to be by looking to other churches, historical tradition, or the ‘can he preach and draw a crowd’ standard, but God has laid out principles for both what His leaders are to do, and how they are to lead His Church to behave as the gathered body—the Church. The question, in evaluating the following criterion, is whether we are succeeding at being biblical, or, contrariwise, “Babylon” preachers?

Biblical Pastors

(Sample Listing only)

1. Loves God, and loves men with biblical, agape love
2. Shepherds (leads, guides, trains) the flock God has placed under his under-shepherd care
3. Is a male
4. As to activities, is devoted, above all, to the word of God and prayer
5. Is hard-working, and prioritizes the urgent from the important, priority matters
6. Is biblically qualified to hold his position (I Tim. 3:1-7; I Pet. 5:1-3; Tit. 1:6-9; II Tim. 2:15, 22-26, etc.)
7. Leads by moral example, rather than by lording over, or grudgingly
8. Lives at a moral level which measured against a higher standard than the average lay person
9. Stands up for morality within his community/society
10. Preaches the Bible
11. Works hard at both preaching and teaching (and the church rewards him accordingly)
12. Seeks the profit derived by the giver more than the gift itself (not greedy for “filthy lucre”)
13. Relies on God to supply his needs, and does not compromise His word to get income
14. Leads as a role model in evangelism and relationship discipleship (disciples church members)
15. Trains the lay persons to do the work of ministry
16. Is willing to undertake church discipline, when necessary
17. Has concern for the poor
18. Etc.

Remember, being a pastor is NOT being a glad-handling, back-slapping, schmoozing kiss-up who never steps on toes, or a salesman who appeases and coddles people to support a salary and religious business (i.e., people-pleasing ‘wolves’ or ‘hirelings.’ Ex.: Gal. 1:10). It is *professional negligence* to be good at speeches but bad at one’s theology.

A MODEL CHURCH MEMBER VISION

(Tests of True Spiritual leadership and Church “Success”–the aspirational ideals)

Is your church’s membership “successful,” by God’s standards? Please consider the following...
100% of church members–

1. **Quiet Time.** Have a daily Power-/Quiet Time (meditation and prayer)–Christ’s example of getting away by Himself to pray, and Josh. 1:8, etc.
2. **Discipleship.** Are being discipled (or have been and are discipling others)–II Tim. 2:1-2; Mt. 28:18-20; Col. 1:28 (and Christ’s example with the 11-12).
3. **Body Life.**** Are involved in “Body Life” (i.e., implementing the N.T. “one anothers,” ministering to the brethren and involved in the Sunday morning service–**See verses below**)
4. **Memorize Scripture.** Ps. 119:9-11; I Pet. 2:2; Jas. 1:21-22
5. **Regularly Evangelize.** Ac. 16:5, 19:9; Mk. 1:17
6. **Gifts in Ministry.** Know their spiritual gift and use it in a ministry (Eph. 4:7,
7. **Committed to Christ.** Are committed to Christ and daily walk in the power and leading of the Holy Spirit. (Eph. 5:17-18; Rom. 8:1-18; Gal. 5:16-26; I Cor. 7:35; Mk. 8:34-35; Mt. 10:37-39; Mt. 16:24-27).

Body Life Exemplary Verses: Eph. 4:11-16, 5:19-21; Rom. 12:3-21; Col. 3:12-17; Rom. 12:10, 16, 14:13, 19, 15:7; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2, 25, 32, 5:21; Phil. 2:3; Col. 3:13; Heb. 3:13, 10:24-25; Jas. 4:11, 5:9; I Pet. 4:9, 5:5d-g; I Jn. 5:11, 13b, 15; I Cor. 14:23 (not a normative gift for today; Except perhaps on the mission field, but evidence that normative gifts are to be used in Sunday’s main service).

On “Church Growth” (& Mega Churches)

(See also: How To Grow a Church--vs. Church Growth Gone Amuck--maybe on YouTube)

Pastors and parishioners often want to know, **how can their church grow?** In this day when big box businesses have swallowed up many ma and pa shops, the same trends has seemingly happened in the church world. *Bi-vocationalism* and *expecting a lower salary* that in private business has given way to **mega church mania** and **millionaire celebrity pastors**, and one has to wonder if these are those described in prophetic texts as “ministers” in it for the money? As I once asked in a *Dallas Theological Seminary* class, **could a mega church be built not in an affluent neighborhood, if the pastor’s expectations were that:** members had a daily quiet time, regularly evangelized, were zealously committed to Christ and holiness, being Spirit-filled and led 24/7, using their spiritual gift(s) in ministry and knew the Bible well?

In short, church has now become **big business**. Aspiring “pastors” have to learn “what works” in business (one famous one reportedly reads *Management books* all the time and fires one or two staffers each year to keep the rest on their toes), and *imitate* “successful” churches. In fact, much modern “**sheep stealing**” now occurs with *seemingly no concern* for how the advertising and activities drain smaller church pastors’ income. It’s survival of the fittest among (generally) NON-Evolutionists!

Balance is always in order, be it traditional or contemporary music, or hugeness and intimacy (Ex.: having small groups available in otherwise *anonymity-inducing* mega churches), but biblicality is **much** more important.

If you criticize any part of it, you’re a *killjoy*, at BEST. The excuse that will KEEP THIS TREND FROM STOPPING is that **the other guy is doing it**. For instance, one church seeks 10 Houston venues, while Lakewood purchased and refurbished an NBA stadium. In DFW, one church started sprouting multiple sites, so others build in the neverlands where “demographic” research indicates growth is expected, and yet another started branching out in many venues directions. I’m sure the case exists in other states where keeping up with the Jones’ to **not lose market share** has also infected *otherwise* godly (or even false) ministers.

Jesus twice scourging people treating His institution as a BUSINESS seems to be Bible verses these men fail to find in the book they know all too *infrequently*. As I have said before, if they were **doing the first things well**, their size is not an issue. The first two churches were mega churches. But when EGO, LOVE OF MONEY and SPIRITUAL COMPETITION rear their ugly heads, “**success**” **can also come from Satan**, as we see in the church of *Laodicea*. Failing to address the 5/10/13 problem*, refusing to evangelize everyone near their church, change the 5% who ever evangelize, relationally disciple (to change the only 10% who are committed believers and the only 13% who regularly reading God’s word) and engage in social ministry—especially helping the poor—and having “Body Life” in their main worship services (as well as the ego, apparent love of money from the lifestyle of the minister—mansions; Expensive cars, **never capping their salaries** and no concern about ‘sheep stealing,’ but everything focused on THEIR church growing) are **biblical ‘litmus tests’** I use to determine whether a given mega church is *credible* or **much** less so. Their response, as I was told to my face once, is “*it works.*” (Ex.: a million dollars a week raked in at one of these corrupt places). The Bible be danged, as there is no fear of God before their eyes, because, everything is done for the stated motive of promoting ‘Christ.’!

If anyone did mega church the right way, take it from an **MBA**, there are business advantages to a large church. I would **love** to see a *godly* pastor with a million members, if he did the top priorities well! Some of these advantages include:

- Economies of scale in purchasing power (Ex.: Prestonwood negotiates Wed. night Hawaiian Falls rental).
- Opening new campuses indicates **growth** and that people **like** what they're offering.
- Big, modern, nice buildings *attract the curious* who might otherwise have no interest.
- The wealthy are more inclined to attend a "successful" church, so *more money* in the budget.
- Also, potentially better salaries, able to hire top talent for cheap (status working at named company), the media will give you more credence, celebrities are more inclined to speak there, Christians like feeling there's something "big" and of quality they can be proud to be part of (vs. social low esteem), it is more able to ride out a bad economy, members don't have to feel that everyone knows there every business, etc.

Smaller churches and larger ones with old buildings must decide their **strategy of survival**, because, just like Blockbuster got eaten up by Red Box and NetFlix, we **do need more competition in mega churches**, but remaining small or "old" is somewhat like holding onto a *typewriter, 8-track or horseshoeing* business—"progress" has *somewhat* passed you by (*at least* in the big cities). Fortunately, there will always be people who like the homey atmosphere of a smaller church, but you have to know where they are and how to get them to join your church (and mega churches can *emulate* this with small groups)

If a church is committed to:

- 1) Evangelizing every lost person near their building ASAP,
- 2) Discipling every willing saved church member,
- 3) Training and incentivizing their members to evangelize, and
- 4) Implementing the "one anothers" of Scripture (including during the main worship service),

I see nothing wrong with SOME the following strategies I have observed a handful of the largest mega churches in America using:

- Combining churches (business analogy: merger and acquisition trend of the 1990's). Most churches whose buildings are **small** or **old** should at least consider combining many like-minded, like-situated churches to form a competing mega church (perhaps existing structures as satellites), and perhaps with head pastors **alternating Sundays** or **worship hours**, some taking on other needed functions (and some staffers may need to be *relieved of duty*, as usually happens in corporate mergers)—just to survive, longer-term, because multi-campused and "**franchised big box churches**" are legally stealing sheep without conscience. My concern (and God's mercy) is for the hurting churches, where God says there is to be "**no lack**," but greedy millionaire mega church pastors get rich literally off the backs and budgets of smaller church pastors! Judgment day will *settle* the matter, but the *smaller* or *older* churches **may go bankrupt** before it transpires, and established pastors' careers can be on the line (with few *skills* or *interest* in other employment).
- Considering a building remodeling/update/facelift (if appropriate to neighborhood conditions).
- Housing multi-lingual churches in the same facility for off hour service times (sharing rent).
- Multi-campus churches, including video tele-screened messages of central campus sermons (business analogy: franchised location convenience).
- Multi-state (and city) church campus venues, with local pastor, or tele-screened sermons.
- Huge central venues (Ex.: Mr. Osteen's Houston church and Pastor Cho in S. Korea).

Specific Church Growth Strategies (in no particular order)—**not all** of which I *morally* approve:

Church Growth Strategies

Addiction recover classes. Always building your church building in rich areas of town. At least two tele-screens to film the sermon and allow the audience a closer viewing (now in HD). Auto-depositing one's financial contribution. Automatic-dial phone messages of upcoming church events. State that you minister in the richest zip code or county in America (Second Baptist, Houston; Grace Community Church, Plano, TX). Business men's "power lunches" (Wednesdays, downtown, to attract the business class). Buying out declining churches for a new satellite location. Café and coffee bars in church foyers, with casual lounge areas. Calling "Sunday School" "Bible Fellowship" classes. Children doing video announcements. Christmas musical concerts with live animals and actors (First Baptist, Houston). Church advertising by radio, direct mail and mall kiosk ads. Church app for smart phones. Church architecture that is warm, inviting, green and fairly modern, compatible with community standards. Church billboards. Church buses. Church Logo. Church-owned businesses (Ex.: retirement high rise, First Baptist, Houston retail strip center and restaurant building, Tallowood Baptist, Houston). Classes helping with teen pregnancy. Close off unused seating sections with ropes (or ceiling dropping blinds (Ex.: Gateway Church, Southlake, TX). Considering a "Six Flags Over ____ (church name)"—I once sarcastically proposed in a Evangelism Minister job interview at a church that bragged it ministered in the wealthiest zip code in America, so my direct evangelism methods "would not work" (though they worked effectively on many occasions)—name withheld to protect the guilty. Dave Ramsey financial seminars. Divorce recover classes. Doilie-backdrop to pulpit (for art-based tele-screen viewing). Easter egg hunt for the neighborhood with catered food. Emails to parishioners from the pastor (including video clips). Emotional stories Excellent soloists and choir presentations. Famous celebrity testimonies for evangelism. Flat screen HD TV's all over the church to look professional/business-like and project a quality image (with church event announcements on them with modern Christian music in the background, or not). Fourth of July community parties (with fireworks). Free childcare for Sunday School class meals. Free wills and trusts seminars to attract non church-goers and get some to donate estates to the church. Friday or Saturday night (casual) church. Getting as many potential church customers to attend any moral way they can—lost, saved, or churched elsewhere. Glossy, four color church bulletins. Golf carts for getting around large church campuses. Group-discounted weekly Hawaiian Falls rental. Having a built-in 3 story slide or play area in the children's area. Having a church gym, to attract non church-goers. Having a church logo and slogan/motto. (Ex.: The Oasis of Love). Having a private school (a popular way for a church to make money). Having a professional church website. Having Architects mock up the future church building site plan so members can envision what they are being asked to pay for. Having contemporary Christian music in the background before worship services. Having only "yes men" in one's inner circle of head pastor's advisors. Having public art work or a lake as part of the church's external 'ambiance.' Having services available in other languages. Helicoptering between church campuses (trial ballooned and rejected at Second Baptist, Houston). Hiding a church's denominational affiliation. Hiring a famous or "inspiring" speaker, his preaching ability being the main qualification. Hollywood-quality (and cost) Broadway Christmas pageants to "attract" some lost people. Hosting Presidential candidates but disallowing them to speak about politics. Imitating the stage and service format of mega churches (I recently attended a church which 4 years ago looked nothing like the mega church I have been a member of, but now looks almost exactly like it). International TV and radio ministries. "Joash Box" public presentation of pledges to building programs (in sealed envelopes).

Job search and help classes. Kiosks in church advertising sermon series. Labeling parking lot areas (for easier locating one's car). Less us of evangelistic crusades with Evangelists (as these rarely pay for themselves, a morally bankrupt staffer recently told me). Less use of robes and hymns (or modernizing their music). Less use of Wednesday night church services. Less use of wooden bench pews. Marriage seminars and pre-marital counseling seminars. Messianic Day. Mother's Day Out. Motion-sensored flood lights into the crowd. Men's and women's conferences. Mission trips. Music lyrics projected on the tele-screen (sometimes omitting hymnals). Naming buildings after the rich in exchange for large contributions. Naming Sunday School classes other than by age, number or teacher last names. Never asking what Church is (in the Bible) but what do men say it is or want it to be. New Christians' class (preparing them for baptism, with doctrinal overview). Only and over-positivity. Parade of Lights at Christmas (Second Baptist, Houston). Parenting classes. Passing out Voter Information cards (essentially telling members their views on abortion and gay marriage). Pastor having his own motif and signature art for correspondence. Petting zoo. Placing the church's website address on the building or as the church's name. Police directing traffic, and members guiding church parking. Praise teams, with professional musicians (or not), speakers, glass enclosed drums and a scenic backdrop. Promoting pastors and their ministry in the media (local newspaper, TV stations, etc.). Public testimonies of amounts pledged by the richer members, challenging other rich to do the same. Pushing 'heavy' subjects to off-hour time slots. Requiring a tithe for church membership. Retreats. Rewarding wealthier "tithers" with deaconship. Saddleback Hawaiian shirts. Schmoozing famous rich people (lost or not) to come to your church to get their tithe, using one's undisclosed Hawaiian condo as bait (less work raising funds from a handful of rich people). Scripture verses projected on tele-screen (and sermon points). Securing the rich's 'tithe' by making them deacons. Security systems for monitored access in children's area (with scan-in temporary badge-making machines). Selecting members as church "greeters" (as Wal-Mart does upon entry). Sermons available on-line and/or live streaming. Soup kitchens. Specialty courses members can take (like university or seminary electives) Staff members always available by smart phone text or email capability (and Facebook and Twitter accounts). Streaming church signs with catchy sermon titles. Subway Sandwich shops within churches. Super Bowl (and other famous sports event) watch party at the church. Targeting the youth as a future money source (Ex.: pastor wears a Hawaiian shirt). T.D. Jakes' Megafest ('show the world it's fun to be a Christian;' we *really have* adopted this world as our home and *really are* just sitting around waiting for Christ's return, as if the Great Commission was complete, contrary to Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:1-4, and *many* other verses—care more about what God thinks of you than the world!). Theme Parks (Ex.: James and Tammy Faye Baker, of old). Topical sermons with video clips, alliterations, sermon note handouts, jokes, stories, illustrations, poems, history and business facts, news items, etc. Translucent plastic stage screens with adjusting lights. TV screens all over the socializing/waiting area with coffee bar (if not restaurant/café). TV-quality cameras (and booms). Undercover security officers with suits and earpieces. Using a gym as a temporary sanctuary, until the building program can cost-justify a larger sanctuary. Using carnivals to "attract" the lost (with jump houses, face painting, juggling, games, etc.). Using off-site parking with church vans to shuttle attendees. Using props during sermons (Fellowship Church, Grapevine, TX), and the pastor stretching into more entertaining skills. Using the "if you build it they will come" philosophy to erect a mini mega church where growth is projected and land is still cheap. Using the "tithe" as a rule for Christians (despite the New Testament being Spirit and grace-led—II Cor.8-9, etc.)—one church reportedly requiring a tithe in the past in order to become a church member. Vacation Bible School. Video childcare numbered paging system. Videos of church announcements. Visitor parking spaces nearest the entry (as Wal-Mart and others do for expectant mothers).

Worship countdown clock on tele-screen. Worship service simulcast en Espanol (why not all languages with U.N.-like headphone sections?). Youth ministry with live rock band, video games, laser tag, camps, contests (with prizes), food (free pizza), sports events.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLING (and belief in **Matthew 6:33**)?

Let's take this movement to its logical conclusion:

Consider having: TV show clips during sermons, all pop music songs “Christianized,” history events on video as sermon analogies (Ex.: NASA), art on walls of church hallways (perhaps electronic), modernize Bible stories (Ex.: one two church spoke of the prodigal son being a Michigan prostitute who sought to return home after tiring of her lifestyle, and another analogized the gal John the Baptist reprovved a king over as being like us going to strip clubs with her dancing pleasing him), visitor cards filled out electronically on I-phones, a graffiti wall on the church, technology give-aways (promoted to reward members by the Calvinist I helped run off at FBC, Katy), strobe lights, disco balls, bubble-making machines, swimming pool or spas in the sanctuary, the greatest play area to “attract” youth, scents in church, hand out energy drinks (even in the Lord’s Supper?), robots hand out collection baskets, Neon suit and Elton John costumes for pastor, America’s Got Talent acts with testimonies afterwards (weight lifters already have the “Power Team”), promote a church committing to a week of sex (Fellowship Grapevine already did this), get prominent people as members to up the church’s status, heated, massaging pews, church bumper stickers, T-shirts reading ‘I had fun at church Sunday, did you? (already done), using your laptop on stage for sermon notes (First Baptist Church, Houston—a godly church), seeking media attention for the pastor (only positive USA Today article on Osteen, April 2011, likely pushed by a former colleague at Second Baptist, who saw this trend and switched denominations to conduct media ministry at Lakewood in the mid-1990’s—Duncan Dodds), teleprompter, children’s hands-on museum, personal airstrip or helicopter for ‘busy’ pastors, hiring under-qualified youth for leadership (to attract youth—the new money), fog-making machines, stage curtain, sell or give away hot dogs and popcorn, hammocks and lounge chairs in the sanctuary, standup comedy, puppets, ventriloquists (don’t believe this is real? Google Southern Baptist Evangelists and the SBC North American Mission Board’s “God’s Plan for Sharing” event types), Punk pink Mohawk pastor (with tattoos?), wine bar, let crowd use technology to take church votes live, buy one of the best organs in the world (Tallowood Baptist, Houston), satellite campus(es) in every state (and country, connected by streaming HD satellite video), most unique architecture (to lure one-time visitors and get media attention—Ex.: my floating building design from U of I graduate architecture program), stage projects out into the crowd (like rock concerts), three dimensional holographing technology of Dr. Young to 10 Houston campuses (sought in ‘silicon valley’ in 1996, when I interviewed with them as Evangelism Minister—just wait till this gets to a re-built Jerusalem temple!), give presents to visitors, pay people to fill pews till the church grows, brag that you stood in line to be one of the first I-Pad owners (as was done at one church, to seem “cool”/‘relevant’), speak of P Diddy, a CEO, Tiger Woods (as with Easter 2011’s sermon at Grace Community, Plano), have a trampoline, spider man swing onto stage, trap door, spinning circular stage with seating in all directions, elevatable stage, British phone booth prop, brag on how great Easter is at your church (so visitors will want to return and be glad they came; Easter 2011), do the wave, have a mosh pit, Bic lighter service in the dark, drum solos, guitar licks, brag on the audience as a “good looking group” (The Met, Cypress, Texas), have camera persons and videographers film the service to make it look important, take marketing surveys to see what the community wants (Ex.: Saddleback Church), let the pastor drop in from the ceiling (or the baptismal, as was done at

Baraka Church, Houston), golf course, secular counseling center, motivational speakers, joint professional sports arena, etc.

WHY NOT? Most of these activities and schemes are already being done. It's **ALL about a one hour presentation a week** (or, as one pastor said, "*church is all week long*"). Church is? Jesus is, but Jesus is not synonymous with *church* (and is often outside the door, knocking).

Is the reader beginning to get a clue that **things are out of hand** (or are you so biblically ignorant that you think all these things are **great** ideas?). And **don't use** the argument from extreme, *thinking* I'm advocating churches going **BACK** to pews, hymns, hymnals, robes, responsive readings, stained glass, steeples and boring sermons. Also, if you *feel* my "tone" is undignified, unbiblical or not of a *pastoral demeanor*, learn that **every one of God's leaders** in Scripture—including **Jesus Himself**—reproved, decried moral lapses and spoke against God's institutions being used for man's selfish ego and financial gain (i.e., "Church-as-a-business").

Church Growth & Architecture.



In the "attraction" philosophy of ministry, modern architecture is key, and in the church-as-a-business model, your church building is apparently your storefront (despite Jesus' words in Mt. 24:1-3 and never commanding the church to have buildings). An insider at Cypress Bible (below) told me that's why they re-built, and an insider at another church) told me the pastor believes in professionalism for Christ (to which I can attest—almost all they do is top-quality). He believes too many churches have a cheesy quality for God, though never to be extravagantly luxurious.

My college amigo's church (mentioned below) believes that where a campus is located helps attract the right demographic, and one staffer mentioned that their church had done demographic research before opening their 2nd of 3 campuses in an undeveloped grassland. The

thinking seems to be (likely from management books), if you want to bring in the cash, you must minister to those who have an abundance of it.

Church Conflicts: Naming Names

(For how these events changed American Christianity and Presidential politics, from 2014 to 2017+, see our YouTube video, American Answers, and our book, Wit & Wisdom)

The following experiences form the experiential backdrop to this website. Apart from the last two churches (where I dropped in simply *seeking advice* on how to fulfill my calling to affect the universal Church in the matters of thorough evangelism and discipleship), **every other event came to me**—I never sought out any of the negative “conflicts,” but I do expose them to warn believers *not to always trust what you see displayed in public for but 2-3 hours a week*. Pastors have to live out in private what they portray at the worship service, or they are often **biblically unqualified**.

First Baptist Church (Deer Park, TX, 1986)—My first and *only* paid staff position as Youth Pastor. A deacon raised questions with myself about my beliefs about the Gospel’s requirements on two private occasions (his being a **Lordshipper** and myself a **Saviorhooder**). Then, from my office, I saw him in several private meetings with the head Pastor. Soon after, that gentleman preached a sermon directly attacking Saviorhood, and **completely different** from the topic printed in the church bulletin. God gave me the boldness to stand up, tell the congregation the change in sermon topic was a result of Bob Sebesta’s private meetings with Ernest Weedon, and **challenged him to a public debate** on what it takes to get to heaven. He had used the **“BULLY pulpit”** to undermine my effective ministering to the youth, and I was *not going to let him get away with it*. He continued preaching **as if nothing had happened**, so I walked out and *ended* any further association.

Second Baptist Church (Houston, TX, ~1998—more than a decade later, for any accusing me of being a purposeful “trouble-maker”)—A staff member, Doug Page, contacted me to go through the interview process, because he knew me to be **one of the most evangelistic people** he knew (his own words). During that process, the following things were *said* (by four staffers):

Teacher-Coach: If you become the Evangelism Minister here, **will you make all church leaders evangelize**, because I’m a coach and a teacher? Reply: If the mother duck won’t lead by example, how do we expect the ducklings to ever evangelize?

Doug Page (friend, at that time): **We minister in the richest zip code** in America (77057), and **direct evangelism** (i.e., person to person, where they live) **doesn’t work here**—a claim my own friend and “discipleship trainee” at the time can tell you is false, as we effectively witnessed to several people several times prior to this meeting.

Doug Page (friend, at that time): Why did you leave Second Baptist for FBC Katy? Reply: Because the church has become *too commercialized*, with rich professionals **bragging** in the (then) Summit that they have pledged \$50,000, and others can do the same (contrary to Mt. 6:1-4), and using the “Joash Box” to put **peer pressure** on “*tithers*,” publically parading them before all to deposit their sealed envelopes at the front of the church (contrary to that same passage).

Doug Page: Well, **it ‘works,’** and black churches do it.

Doug Page (friend, at that time): Your job as Evangelism Minister is “just to get people to the church campus... Dr. Young’s *charisma* will take over from there.” What ego, *audacity*, misunderstanding of evangelism and theological error!

Second in Command & Music Minister (in his office): After recounting their *human Christmas tree* and *parade of lights*, JM asked: **Would you consider having a Six Flags Over Second Baptist?** Reply: You know, that's not a bad idea.

Second in Command & Music Minister (in his office): Dr. Young and I envision 10 Second Baptist campuses across Houston, and we're presently pursuing (in Silicon Valley, CA) the rights to be the **first church to have the rights to use three dimensional holographing technology** to project his *image* to every other satellite. JM: Are you raising up ministers to take over those churches? Reply: Dr. Young and I *will retire* in about 10 years, and that will be their problem.

I suggest any interested readers also inquire of honest staffers or deacons about the **“John Baugh” incident**, business meeting microphone shut downs, and how Second Baptist of Katy really got funded—*against* the donor's intentions. These and *many other* allegations were sent to the **“Bible Answer Man”** of Christian Research Institute (CA), at the time, but since he was offered a speaking engagement at the church, **his show only exposed allegations I had sent about Joel Osteen** (at the time), but not Second Baptist—anything wrong with double standards (or *not biting the hand that feeds you?*). So, when the church hosted Hank Hannegraff, per the Christian radio station I worked for, I anonymously left four fliers with allegations and Bible verses, hoping someone *responsible* in the church would learn the inside truth—and do something about it (David vs. Goliath all over again).

Un-shockingly , they *rejected* my candidacy, using the ruse of a **“hiring freeze”** as a lie and *excuse*—the church **raked in \$1 million a week** at the time (according to a retailer operating just behind their South entrance—a client of mine at the time).

Highlighted Excerpts from CRI Inquiry Request Document (mentioned above):

Second Baptist Church Inquiry (~2000)

- Dr. Young allegedly shut off the microphone at a business meeting when Mr. John Baugh (founder of Sysco Foods, and acquaintance of my dad) began to approach the podium to state his objection to the idea of spending his \$20 million contribution (and some) to build a second campus in Katy.
- Dr. Young apparently targeted John O'Quinn (famous, rich Houston attorney) to become a church member, by taking him to his alleged condo in Maui (which I am sure few church members know their donations to God have paid for).
- Dr. Young's salary is apparently veiled in ambiguous figures in the budget, so that the exact amount is unclear. He also, allegedly, receives 100% of the profits from his Winning Walk TV show, and his office is worth an alleged \$1,000,000 (though it was donated by church members).
- The pastor has allegedly stated that if he could have it his way, he would prefer to have an underground walkway between his office and the pulpit, to avoid so much crowd interaction
- That same staff member expressed a little disappointment that the Katy campus was attracting people from the other side of I-10 (that is, the poorer side of the freeway). Didn't Jesus come to preach the gospel to the poor?
- Deacons have told me that the larger contributing deacons have more influence, decision- and information-getting involvement in business affairs. Deacons allegedly receive updates on the percentage of their “pledges” which they have contributed to date, with reminders if they are not on track to complete the pledge by budget year's end.
- An executive staff member told me, “laity give up the right to rule, and clergy give up the right to minister,” and Dr. Young signed on with the stipulation that he make all the final decisions.
- A staffer told me Dr. Young regularly reads management books, and had a policy of firing one or two staff members, to keep the rest of the crew on their toes.
- An ex-deacon (who left the church) recently corroborated many of these items, adding that the "Baugh incident" occurred when one close to him confirms the tallied votes on opening a Katy location of

Second Baptist was not going to pass as a resolution, and allegedly the pastor told Mr. Baugh that “no one controls this church, no matter what kind of money they donate,” to which Mr. Baugh responded, “yes, and that lack of control of the church also applied to all men (implicitly, the pastor), as it was God’s church” (or words to this effect).

Lakewood Church Inquiry (~2000)

Prior to his *even* being any more than the church’s ‘television guy’...

- Do you know if most of the members of Lakewood Church know where their “new” (Osteen’s son) preacher lives, as they may be surprised to learn that he is in one of the most exclusive neighborhoods, with two Mercedes and another car in the garage (personally witnessed, as two doors down from a close Second Baptist friend at the time, on Doliver–near 2nd Baptist–I believe the address is 5563–a new, red brick two-story you won’t mistake for the older houses surrounding it; the next door house to the East being a newly-remodeled 1-story, if you care to investigate).
- He also is reported to own one or two highly expensive (over \$600,000 each) cars which are housed on the other side of the city in garages, which the congregation knows nothing of.
- Anyone who regularly watches his TV show (I do NOT) knows that he waters down and selectively ‘cherry picks’ what Bible verses he speaks on, and he himself (in interviews) says he likes to keep topics upbeat, positive, and avoid making public statements that are controversial (like expressing an opinion as to the morality of homosexuality, etc.). Many critics have called him Christianity lite (and a Christian pop psychology or motivational speaker), for good reason. Is that what the Bible gives as a pastor’s job description?

Cypress Bible Church (Cypress, TX)–The then *head Pastor* was reputed as being the **equivalent of the denominational head**–if Bible Church were a denomination. I asked him in his office if he’d be willing to go evangelize with me. I pointed to a neighbor 3 houses away from the church who was mowing his lawn. He proceeded to drive me to a *new neighborhood* more removed from the premises, where he witnessed **perfect responses**... 2 people we met were preparing for their rehearsal dinner that night, so we moved on. One person we met was already a believer, and the other two we met got saved. On the drive back he said, “Jim, God’s obviously gifted you and laid a burden on your heart, but I don’t want that taught in my church,” to which I replied, “then I guess this is no longer my family’s church.” **Hypocritically**, he resigned within 1.5 years to accept a VP of missionary training position where missionaries do just what I did–direct evangelism! (East-West Ministries–**Dr. Joe Wall** is his name).



Metropolitan Baptist Church (Spring, TX)–a hefty staffer literally **ambushed** a good friend of mine’s Sunday School class, and as he was teaching, installed a new teacher in front of the class, for *unexplained* reasons (to shut down the heavy Bible study to make the class more fellowship-oriented and the lessons more watered down for visitors). The respected **David Strawn** was the first (vs. installed) teacher’s name. The name of the *less* respected staffer–whom we debated openly–has *long sense been forgotten* (probably by more than just myself).
Dave Strawn (RIP)

College of Biblical Studies (Houston, TX)–The school withdrew a prior offer to teach a second **Evangelism class**, by stating that a full-time staffer would handle it, but in the context of their official policy being “relational evangelism” (which I exposed as much less biblical than direct evangelism–**See:** Appendix, which I taught from) after students **asked me if I would say the same things** I did to them in the next session which was made up of pastors (regarding moral culpability for the 5% statistic of Christians who ever evangelize **resting squarely on the**

shoulders of pastors more than three years in ministry). You can't speak the truth if it hurts your donors, can you? *Never bite the hand that feeds you*—the 'ol Hitler S.S. salary reasoning.

First Baptist Church (Katy, TX)—I was grilled for 2 hours in a private meeting between a staffer and *millionaire* member who didn't appreciate my criticizing his proposing to donate \$4 million for a gym “for evangelism,” because evangelism is free (except for paid professionals and Missionaries). He could have just been honest and admitted that the gym would be a nice amenity for members, and may 'attract' *some* non-members. This man I'll call **Mr. “feel good son,”** *bragged* that he owned four successful businesses—one a trucking/transportation company in West Houston (2 miles west of Highway 6's Sam's Club), where I dropped off a pamphlet from Fuller Seminary's Missions Department that really tells how his filthy lucre truly could have been used for evangelism (highlighted in yellow, named Be A Part of It). In the sovereignty of God, he and another pastor arrived on my doorstep 3 months later (after my family had visited that pastor's church), doing *church visitation*. When the pastor introduced us, I said “Oh, yes, I know him—we've met at First Baptist's staff office.” The man was speechless the entire visit (but I assume that church now has a *pretty nice gym, “for evangelism,”* of course).

Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church (Houston, TX; where I was married). I assume my voice mail instructing the Pastor that much of his millions about to be spent on a building expansion could be much more greatly used hiring **full-time Evangelists in the 10/40 Window** went unheeded. I didn't receive a call back, but if you're ever there visiting, the *Northern most* (and likely newest) wing came at the expense of many lost souls who have yet to hear the Gospel there.

Jesus Video Project (Houston, TX). I was being considered for the *head position* of this ministry getting the Campus Crusade “**Jesus video**” to churches, “for evangelism.” **If any Houston pastor bought several and thought you were being a wise steward of God's money, YOU GOT RIPPED OFF for “Jesus”!** They charged between \$18 and \$24 per DVD, and **their cost was well under \$3** a tape. *I made this clear* to the board members, and **pushed for a much lower price**, as well as not solely relying on just one tool to get the Great Commission done, but when I mentioned at a meeting in a Fleetwood neighborhood home that “**no one should hear the Gospel more than once so long as some have never heard,**” the board members took over the meeting (I had arranged of several evangelism ministries), and I was treated as if I had stated a heresy thereafter. The lead board member was later discovered to be a prominent member of Cypress Bible Church, which I also write about.

Prestonwood Baptist Church (Plano, TX)—Where do I begin with this one? The events are **so numerous**. I joined 4 years ago, and sought to *volunteer* to teach evangelism and discipleship (and when I say “teach” it is rarely just informing, but actions). On **eight separate occasions** I met with staff underlings (never allowed access to those with the power, *moral OPPOSITE* of Gal. 1:15-19), which ALWAYS led to a **dead end**. I had started positive that first year, but the answer always ended with a “**no.**” At each meeting, I asked every staffer to look outside their glass wall windows and consider *going to evangelize* those homes—none ever did. I was content to let it drop, but God was not.

The next 2-3 years I was led to use more forceful methods—as **I will not let this message be squelched** (including taking my “Go Evangelize” sign to the Sunday parking lot exit, wearing my website shirt to church often, and handing out a Sunday School leader letter exhorting them

to reach all near the church with the Gospel, since the leadership seems not inclined to do so, and private emails to the top 2 preachers). These techniques brought about many external changes (sermons on evangelism, from my website materials specifically tailored to the subject), but likely little impact of actual evangelism. They preached sermons galore, quoted my materials (un-cited, which I gave them permission to do in my emails), had annual campaigns 2 out of 4 years (Live to Tell, and 10 for 10) even my own Bible Fellowship teacher thought should satisfy “me.” They had an evangelist hold a crusade (even though Dave Shivers told me they don’t do them often, because they rarely pay for themselves), invited Probe ministries to have a booth in the foyer (often quoted in my apologetics section), hosted 4 door to door Wednesday night “evangelism” events (where 3 of the 4 times they went to church visitors, and 4 out of 4 times they handed out **sacks with church marketing materials**). My son and I did go door-to-door across the street, and took the name of the **one lady who got saved** to the staffer who initiated my being “*silenced*” by the church (details below–“Lumpy”), telling him we took no materials–just a memorized knowledge of the Gospel and the Spirit’s power, email showing the head Pastor with Billy Graham (which I emailed him about, saying associating with greatness is no substitute for evangelizing, and *discovering* whether your own church suffers from the 5% who ever evangelize problem). **We’ll never know if the 5% ever changed** as a result, because, as a deacon Sunday School teacher emailed me earlier this year, “**they will never agree to the things you are proposing**,” and “things are just going to get worse for you here so you ought to consider *another* church,” referencing my proposed 3-mile plan, objectively identifying whether we suffer from the 5% and 13% problem, and instituting a church-wide relational discipleship push to help resolve the problems (including Multiplication Discipleship and Evangelism).

Stumpy and Lumpy: Lumpy (Connon Bales), as I will call him (I don’t memorize names of people I don’t respect much) filled in a Sunday School lesson, and told a class of believers that we needed a *completely new root*–we needed our trees to be uprooted. He was using some Old Testament passage, out of context to a Christian setting. I asked him if he was evangelizing the class, because everyone I knew in there was saved, and we were new creatures in Christ. His *ego could not stand* showing his false doctrine (as a staff member), so 2 weeks later the minister he replaced (or vice versa–what their position is *means nothing* to myself), Stumpy (Chris Kouba) arranged the following event:

Ross Perot Wannabe: My Sunday School teacher (Phil Thames) had reportedly a reputation for being more objective about things going on in the church (which is often labeled not being a “team player”). I was even *more outspoken* that he, so he had to make a decision. For 3 years I had asked him and other leaders to simply have a class where we actually did a **Quiet Time** (to get people started on the habit) and **went out evangelizing** as a class. They excused inability to do so on following curriculum (which they violated on several other occasions–a session on prophecy, before my *push* for prophecy, which the church then taught--and a lesson on **how to become a Management Consultant**, etc.) and being “*submissive*” to authority (the old **Hitler’s S.S. excuse**, which never assesses the morality of what is being submitted to). After 3 years, and after being *wined and dined* by the top church echelon in Arizona (a Ranger’s pre-season event, meeting a famous ‘Christian’ player who when later falling off the wagon said he owes nothing to the Rangers) he phoned me long distance to say he wanted to speak to me about the direction of the class. I asked if this meant using my materials (i.e., to do a Quiet Time and evangelism project), and he said “**yes**.” When I arrived at big box church, he was there, but suddenly 2 other unannounced persons walked up (one names Jeff Young), and for 30 minutes I was grilled about the untenability of my correcting the teacher’s *false doctrine*, asking questions of it or making comments in class about it. Stumpy (who now will head the Dallas franchise)

literally told me **I was no longer allowed “to speak**, make comments or ask any questions.” I asked if that pertained to the changes God had used me for in the top dog’s sermons, and he referenced only Sunday School. I answered, ‘no problem. I have already been scouting out more biblical and evangelistic classes,’ to which stumpy said “**I mean in ANY Sunday School class.**” This is the same person who told me in that **ambush meeting**, “perception is reality,” which is the *exact opposite* of the Bible—**we walk by faith**, and whatever is contrary to what it says is **not** spiritual reality (his authority is obviously idioms, not *Scripture*).

25 minutes later, stumpy, lumpy and another staffer were joking and chit chatting—**being paid to stand around**—so after finishing some work on my book, I went up to them and asked if they wanted to go evangelize the homes across the street. To a man they said they were *short on time*, but I informed them **we all had 40-45 minutes** before the service started, but exposing their hypocrisy was about all I could do with them there—they were typically obstinate. And before the service I ran into the Perot wanna be (his LinkedIn.com profile is where that nick name comes from—where his face is hardly visible, and Perot is prominent, because he worked for EDS and must think the shot shows him knowing Ross), and **asked him why he ambushed me**, hadn’t he ever read of that as a sinful act in Proverbs, and told him he ought to read and live out more of that book he was so clingingly holding under his arm. He raced to the elevator with cowardice silence. To his credit, he allowed me to speak in class *several times* afterwards, but the day a lady who sat in front of me **GLARED** at me when I had extolled the class to **not be in the 5%** who never evangelize, and she said “I am nice to my neighbors all the time,” to which I replied, “that’s not evangelism,” I decided *not to return*, and haven’t for over 9 months. Sometimes, the fight is just not worth it—*dust off your shoes* and move on to more fertile pastures! **Update:** ‘Wanna be’ has now changed his profile photo so he cannot be identified by Ross Perot in the background. Note the un-Christ-like pattern—no apology, just hide the evidence.

Much less qualified than many other staffers, the YOUNG Stumpy is now rewarded with heading up their third (Dallas) campus, likely **to attract youth** (future dollars, as the elderly die off, as church growth texts teach, because some other mega church nearby is successfully reaching them—competitors!). Even Ross Perot wanna be had suggested the *main campus instituting rock concerts*, to attract the youth (when I had suggested **discipling** people). They had instituted the Saturday night service to try to attract youth, but it really hasn’t done that well at achieving that purpose. Stumpy, on one occasion, saw my prophecy chart and mocked to Perot-wanna be, “have y’all got it all figured and mapped out?,” when Stumpy attended *Southwestern Seminary* (**not famous for** eschatology—when I was there, the Professor said, “here’s our lesson on prophecy—Jesus is coming back soon”), and hardly knows much about the subject. He also said the church has a **neutral position** on prophecy, yet Dr. Graham now sends out **money-solicitation envelopes** for his TV show with a ten sermon series on prophecy. There’s no **hypocrisy** going on anywhere, is there?

And before that class merged, to stay afloat, a staffer told that Sunday School class that **they might need to disband**, as *attendance* was not very large. **The same people who lured my teacher into ambushing me would turn on him for church growth!** Isn’t it great to be schmoozed into being a team player, seeing how loyal they aren’t to you once you join the team; Phil. I know these things because my wife and son still attend—I withdrew being a class member the week after I was *supposedly* silenced by Stumpy (but we must obey God, and not man, and we cannot stop speaking the things we have experienced!—Acts references).

By the way and for the record, “Lumpy” has been nothing but polite in saying hello to my wife—by name—and myself, apparently unwilling to address hypocrisy, just “moving on,” or maybe seeking to heap coals on my head, but I feel none, as I did not do the morally wrong thing in that incident, by the grace of God.

A deacon/Sunday School leader told me ‘they got the message, now **can you let up?**,’ to which I adamantly replied, ‘No’ (having no indication—till years later—whether major changes would be made, or not). Thank God, they *were!*

Dave Shivers: The reputed “most evangelistic staff member,” **Dave Shivers, on THREE OCCASIONS agreed to do witnessing with myself, and** thrice stood me up **with no contact, apology or even explanation. The teaching Pastor on Saturday nights, Jarrett Stephens, did the exact same thing regarding simply meeting for a lunch some time. His email literally said to give him 3 dates, and he would “make it happen.”** Every date passed, **with no contact, apology or even explanation. Sort of like Peter—emphasizing their moral failure** (toward God—not me). Then he proceeded to preach a sermon on forgiveness, saying not to just “move on,” but *initiate* forgiveness—whether the offender or offeree, and saying some in our church needed to implement this sermon. So I emailed him and asked if he wanted to remedy his standing me up three times, even though I had moved on from it with no input from him. Zero response. **Hypocrisy is an ugly thing**, especially among God’s so-called leaders, but **THEY GET AWAY WITH IT** so long as people like myself remain politely quiet—which I am no longer doing (if *ever* I did). Note the un-Christ-like pattern—no apology, just keep these acts private, so you can ignore them (or deny them or claim ‘no proof’ if others later finds out?).

Dr. Graham: The ONLY official correspondence acknowledgement I ever received (despite many sermons from reading my website materials) was his secretary saying he was **very encouraged**, after I informed them I used 4 quotes of his on my website, and referring to him as my “**former pastor**,” as I *ceased* being a member the day after he announced spending **\$18 million to open a new Dallas campus** (where the under-qualified youth-attractor who ‘silenced’ me would be the preacher—I learned days later). His sermon the week before used between **4 and 6 quotes** based on my website, and was exhorting national and international evangelism, then he said he had a *very exciting* announcement to make the next week. You would expect perhaps a HUGE contribution to fund full-time **10/40 evangelists** (at only \$15,000 a year each), or adopt a portion of some country for evangelism. Needless to say, trying to butter up people who *might* complain about building, then **completely abandoning any great news for the Great Commission** for a new building (with no revealing or capping of his total compensation) is not the way to silence me—and he knows my history at FBC Deer Park that I will speak out against wrongdoing, as one of my *closest youth disciples* at that church is now a deacon at Prestonwood.

Even a Dallas seminary *friend* who got to know me decently warned me not to “name names” when I was speaking with a layman about the evangelism emphasis, and thrice being *stood up* by Mr. ‘shiver-me-timbers,’ and a young staffer I spoke with 2 weeks before the Dallas campus announcement said “Pastor Graham has **very few nay sayers** in his inner circle, so it’s going to happen.” Same **authoritarian iron fist** as some of my Second Baptist allegations (disclosed to CRI) detailed (perhaps the material for another YouTube video in the future).

RELATED NOTE TO MEGA CHURCH PASTORS: Fully reveal and cap your total compensation, and your aspirations will not seem as *culpable*—but only if you also do thorough evangelism and discipling! The Bible teaches that **God wants no lack among churches**, but your autonomous

retail business unit only serves your business, and often sheep steals, hurting godly *smaller* church pastors!

July 2011 Update: Sadly, unless I **retract** this section on Prestonwood, I am no longer allowed to go to any Bible Fellowship class. If I had **lied**, said something **untrue**, I would have considered at least a *revision* to what has been written. And to those who say I'm blowing things out of proportion, **OF COURSE** my experience with the leadership is only one—**HOW** would you expect there to be many others, since, I say regretfully, *no one I know* or have ever heard of tries politely (or otherwise—within biblical bounds) to **change the 5/10/13% abomination** in leading churches or elsewhere—we either are *ignorant* of its existence, or **accept** it as having to exist. The apostles dealt with top priorities and '*leading*' churches, when they sought to implement ministry initiatives, and it is no wonder their same God would lead even a peon like myself to do the same in our generation.

Probably the **most effective method** to bring about CHANGE was a posting on *TripAdvisor.com* which I have since retracted (yes, they **monitor** what's being said about their business' "*image*") in which I legitimately praised their music, architecture and biblical sermons, but also sent readers to this section of this website. **They could ignore** one not seeking publicity and doing things privately, but get the public involved—especially potential *new members*—and they took notice. I do believe their changes were sincere, but the pressure needed to get them to **pay attention** to our materials (better, what **God's word** teaches) had to hit them where it counts—where their *priorities* lay.

(December 2011): The church has made incredible strides toward sermons and activities supporting the top Bible priorities (especially evangelism). *Let's pray it continues* indefinitely! I'd now venture to say if a visitor went there, they'd have no idea there ever was a problem with this church now being quite a LEAD CHURCH in these areas in emphases and sermons. For those reasons, I continue with it as my church home). Still work to be done (confirming, then solving the 5/10/13 problem*), but the head pastor's heart for top priorities seems truly to be in the right place, for which **many lost souls, our Lord** (and myself) should be *eternally* grateful. Also, commendable teaching pastor personally meeting his 'family' after a service, implementing each Sat. eve the congregation shakes hands with those around them—a start toward 'Body Life—prayer altar calls, an *expository* and *apologetic* sermon series (Jan. 2012—See their own *excellent* variation of an exhaustive Apologetics website like ours, prestonwood.org/ **WhyBelieve**), and a sermon on the key importance of identity in Christ at the last service of the year! **For even more positive changes**, please see our YouTube video, American Answers and book, Wit & Wisdom.

(June 2018): Be it from sincerity, or just to assuage my many criticisms (i.e., to make them look false), the church has now hosted Harvest America in Dallas' ATT Stadium twice, and now supports perhaps 35 church plants in under-represented cities, among other good spiritual (vs. political) changes. (Phil. 1:18)

Political Church Corruption (2015-2018): To learn how this turned political, including the election of the 45th president (including MANY sinful, devious acts in the process) please see our FREE book, Christians For Trump: Is God a Democrat or a Republican?, at <http://AmericanAnswers.org>.

Laymen: **PLEASE get these materials to your church leadership** any way you can. God can use them mightily to make *significant* changes, only due to their representing what God has long since written in His *unchanging* and *eternal* word.

(early September 2012) The church continues to have **GREAT** evangelistic emphases, including a marvelous California video teleconferenced evangelism crusade by the next Billy Graham (in my opinion), Greg Laurie! I could go on about *intense* defenses of the new campuses, but I don't think they will ever understand the PRIMARY REASON I opposed such expansions (but, one LAST time I will make it FULLY CLEAR (since I never expect any *personal* communication):

THEY HAVE YET TO COMMIT TO REACH EVERY LOST PERSON WITHIN THREE MILES OF *EACH* CAMPUS OR SPECIFICALLY DISCOVER WHETHER ONLY FIVE PERCENT OF THEIR MEMBERS EVER EVANGELIZE ONE SOUL.

That omitted priority is between them and God on *judgment day*! Attempting to justify this **HUGE omission**, they stated, '5000 other churches have *multi-site venues*.' When a church compares their behavior by what *other churches are doing*—NOT by what the Bible teaches—II Cor. 10:12 rightly applies.

NOTE TO EVERY PASTOR IN THE WORLD: Have the *courage* to break from the (rebellious) pack and *do God's will*! Don't do what's "normal" but what's RIGHT.

(mid-September 2012) After summer sabbatical, the first two Saturday night worship services saw Dr. Graham having a cameo appearance to tout the two new campuses as clearly 'God's will' and the exciting future for our church. They explained that these moves were 'selfless,' justifying as being among 5,000 other churches with multi-venued churches, and Dr. Graham *somewhat chided* the ORIGINAL congregation for **the MAJORITY** not having visited their newest campus (proven by show of hands), saying "that's your church." **IMAGINE** having to be told you have FAMILY and you need to go meet them.

Then I sent this email, addressed to both the Saturday night teaching pastor (Jarrett) and Dr. Graham, and sent from my alternative email, to PROVE they received it and couldn't have blocked it (as I had never sent to them from this address before):

Dr. Graham: GREAT evangelistic crusade last weekend. What great commitment on your part!

Would you and Jarrett ever desire to meet in person, to end the differences we have had through sermons and website (the way Christians should reconcile)? You have no reason to fear physical confrontation (nor have you ever had--only spiritual!), but you can have as many "FBI security" personnel as makes you comfortable!

[Editorial Explanation: He literally said in a sermon, "If you want a piece of me, you'll have to go through" this FBI agent (who protects him), speaking of an 'ill church member' and stated during one of the two cameo Saturday night appearances. MOST LIKELY he was referencing a 'mentally ill stalker' his **head of security** told me about (likely the former and now banned church member; According to a news article), as that would be a SERIOUS stretch and SLANDER to allege such of myself for the LOGICAL and **BIBLICAL** matters this website raises—Ac. 26:24-25!

The ONLY issue I have ever consistently chided y'all on that remains important is failure to commit to reach EVERY lost soul within 3 miles of your 3 campuses and specifically discovering whether only 5% of the membership every evangelizes one soul in their lifetime--the problem almost every other American church also suffers from (and for which there are answers).

I have long since moved on, but y'all's last 2 sermons indicate to me you still feel a need to defend expansion over first addressing these two issues. That problem is between y'all and God, alone. As I said, I have moved on, and wish to more amicably relate in the future, if you two are also so (biblically) inclined. I hope you do, but that proverbial ball is in your court.

Sincerely in Christ,
Jim Meroney

ZERO reply from Dr. Graham, to date (and I DO check voice mail and even my email's trash can), but **TO HIS CREDIT** Jarrett—for the first time ever (and *at the earliest chance*) shook my hand the next Sunday eve, as he made his way through the crowd. I'm assuming from his prior standing me up with zero communication, he is **disallowed** (by his HUMAN boss) from making any '*connection*' (a word they love to use for new members to get involved) with me, but this gesture showed me tons about his character. Enough space spent on this church... (Rom. 9:11)

(June 2013 Update) In the words of the 2013 Southern Baptist Convention Pastor's Conference, 'arrogant lawyers' and 'critics' may have a kernel of truth, so 'LISTEN to them (as his actions show he has). In the case of this website, it's either a popcorn bag full or the most important 'kernel' in that bag, for U.S. pastors. Implementing EDDBS is pastoral 'leadership' and leading with 'integrity!' And DO NOT confuse confidence for arrogance, lest one use I Cor. 8:1 to teach—contrary to Scripture (Mk. 12:30)—that one must remain ignorant of God's word in order to be humble, or that being "loving" (something we are commanded to be) means doing something inconsistent with God's word (I Jn. 2:3, 5:2), using a confusion over two Greek words for "love" to justify replacing loving God with an emotional "luv" that lacks *biblical* content, or substance.

Don't shoot the messenger: It is not 'arrogance' to tell a grocery store owner his in-house coffee shop is doing wonderfully, but his grocery business is run-down, though I guess that humble message could be delivered in an arrogant manner. It's more likely that an owner who defines success as bodies and bucks takes that message as arrogance (no matter the tone), because his version of 'success' has arrogantly blinded him to what he is in business to accomplish (or **called to do**, in the case of the church). Churches that draw crowds with great music and sermons **an hour a week** per Christian without their relationally discipling them into being evangelistic and fully committed to Christ are like that poor grocer (and *churches* can be like that—Rev. 3:14-19).

Finally, a long-established church worker told me, even if there is never any acknowledgement of even 1-way contact between the pastor and yourself, "rest assured, it all comes down from the top." However, since **these "EDDBS" problems are almost 100% systemic** in America, I choose not to single out individual churches (or pastors) anymore, as the effort to change it is not just a battle (i.e., a small problem) but really more of a war (i.e., battles almost everywhere you turn).

(September 2013) Reported their need for continued discipleship of teens 2 months ago, as my son was bullied on a choir trip. The church is making great strides in their commitment to God's priorities—re-hosting Harvest America this month, Dr. Graham is now hosting Evangelism Explosion training in the worship center, and they recently hired a Youth Minister (from First Baptist, Houston) in charge of discipleship of high schoolers. Hard now to find a church with so many changes for the good, so I keep these posts mainly as a tribute to godly leadership that is willing to change (vs. hardened-hearted).

Fellowship Church (Grapevine, TX). The Sunday nearest the **ABC report** of Ed Young Junior's (Second Baptist Houston transported to Dallas, with props) undisclosed **\$4 million French-made leer jet** (and 10,000 square foot home on Lake Grapevine), I felt led to take my "**Go Evangelize!**" signs (**See:** Appendix) to that building. After 2 security guards addressed myself, and a cop finally arrived, and I asked to *speak with his supervisor* (as I was on **public property**, and, being a lawyer, I know my Constitutional rights), he confirmed that town has a local ordinance requiring a permit. So I left (after many members saw the sign), but I **walked SO SLOWLY**, all the stragglers saw it too (including the ignorant BMW owner who gave me a *thumb's down* sign)—thumbs down on exhorting evangelism? Get your facts straight before you make *assumptions*, naive "brother."

Ed Junior **LOVES** publicity, like laying in bed atop his building to promote his week of sex book (the Bible does not teach how often to engage in marital intimacy, or to idolize it) and puts props (including live lions) in church 'presentations' to get attention, fame and money. **Just exalt Jesus**—not yourself!

A Large Community Church (Racine, WI) **Evangelism Minister** *phone interview* ended when they learned I **expect all leaders and laymen to evangelize**, and that I could not secure a speaking gig for Coach **Tony Dungy**, because they relied on what they called "*event evangelism*" (i.e., famous "celebrities" "ATTRACTING" an audience and doing all the evangelism work for the laymen (contrary to Eph. 4). **God help our country** with little spiritual leadership!

'**One Church**' (formerly **Four Corners Church**; Allen, TX) One minister—a great guy who recommended me to a church I already knew was great (Pantego Bible)—told me such **evangelistic zeal** as I showed can be a sign of mental/emotional illness. Imagine that same pastor telling *Paul* that, and what if I had asked of his own evangelistic commitment—was he completely and certifiably 'sane' based on his definition (proved by his **LACK** of such commitment)?

Water's Edge Church (Frisco, TX)—When asked, '**how would you evangelize that home across the field?**,' the response was "I am not targeting people for the Gospel—God is; and in His sovereignty, if He leads our paths to cross, I'll pray for an open door of opportunity to share the Gospel with them... But we share the same Great Commission goal." Of course you do. Our actions execute it and yours only has **wishful thinking**, spiritualized as something better. Needless to say I chalked that church off as a possible next home, after leaving Prestonwood!

Life Point Church (Plano, TX)—Sermon (paraphrased): "Your life is good (living in the richest county in the country—mentioned *three* times); Easter (i.e., the Gospel) is about **making your life better**." Really? What if they are *content* with their luxurious lifestyle? And are men really "**good**," when God says to commit one sin makes us guilty of all and facing hell at any unknown moment? Does the Bible say a good life consists of having possessions, or does it say just the opposite? (Lk. 12:15) Amazing what people will do (and say) to *draw a crowd* of lost people to **grow their church**. An interesting seminary study would be to watch films of this church 4 years ago, see how things have changed, and to identify what facets were likely copied from Joel Osteen, Prestonwood and Fellowship Grapevine. I have already done so for my own curiosity. (Hint: props, backdrops, purple haze, and Gospel positivity). I had the privilege of a private meeting with Pastor George, who seems like a **truly good man**, but once I emailed him details on my proposed **billboard campaign**, the dialogue has seemingly ended.

First Baptist Church (Grand Prairie, TX—a College *friend*)—Response: Because you aren't a pastor, I question (and will likely never implement) your teachings (even though they're biblical, I have been a pastor and have *seen and been a part of all* these things occurring—through evangelism, relational discipling and body life). In other words, **you haven't (yet) experienced** why I **choose to not obey God** on these priority matters. Since when did *experience* trump the word of God—whether a good or (more often) bad experience?

First Baptist Church (Prosper, TX). My conversation with this man tells me **a lie detector alone will prove** who's telling the truth about *Prestonwood* (better: both sides face a reckoning for their deeds before the eternal Judge, so the 'proof will be in the pudding' then). He accused me of *slander* (truth is always a defense to slander, under our U.S. civil law) “vinegar” causticness, being very close to **sinful rebellion** against God (for simply telling the truth), and *not trusting the Spirit* to discipline His bride, unsubmitiveness, and warned me of the 2-3 witnesses verse in allegations against Pastors (of which **I have two to three**—though they would never risk their cherished deaconship to testify to the truth, without a subpoena'd lie detector; plus, these experiences WERE kept private by myself, so there are few witnesses available!). The lie detector would not lie! Simply **exposing the 5/10/13 problem*** REALLY RILES these men, as their *deeds are exposed* (and I don't mean the common *imperfections* we all have—**glaring top priority** omissions). I am glad for this pastor seeking to raise a BIBLICAL objection, though his objection, *sadly*, loses credibility by thinking there are not 2-3 witnesses. As to **unsubmitiveness** and not trusting the Spirit, I trust the Spirit alone to guide me in this difficult reproving endeavor, and **I don't have to submit to stubbornness in unbiblical attitudes** by God's so-called “leaders,” as *no one* should! That's the old Hitler S.S. excuse, **abusing submitiveness** and hiding behind the 2-3 witnesses verse so Pastors are never held accountable!

Norm Miller (President of Interstate Batteries at the time). Through his office, he declined to financially support our John 3:16 billboard campaign, citing his contributions to the 'I am Second' campaign (which uses *so-called* 'famous' people to give testimonies, as if God needs famous spokespersons and especially as if our experience or ourselves are the Gospel message vs. just preaching Christ).

'Number One' Christian Radio Station in America (KLTY).

(October 21-22, 2013 emails; only typos corrected from the saved originals)...

JM: Like your station, listened 7 years, but RARELY hear you exhort Christians to evangelize. As a 'Christian' station, that may be a 'negative' vibe to positivity, but you have a platform and it's biblical. Think and pray about it. Thanks, J. Meroney WillYouLiveForever.org

Mike Prendergast (Program Director): Hi James, Thanks for reaching out. You raise an excellent point, one we have prayed about and thought about for years. The vast majority of our listeners come to us to hear uplifting and positive music with a message of hope through Christ. They don't come to us to evangelize on air or for us to encourage others to do so. We do that on our sister station, 100.7 KWRD, I encourage you to listen to that station some if you're not familiar with it. The way we're able to reach such a vast audience w/ His message of redeeming hope is through the music. Thanks again and I hope this answers your question. Have a blessed week!

JM: Sir: May I respectfully suggest that our Lord is less concerned with what His people want than what they need—especially what the lost need—Jesus. US Christians want only positivity with no responsibility, and that may well pay ministry bills but it does not honor or please our same Lord. Please pray some more, as the mass of listeners are likely not at the other station,

and the Great Commission needs massively more workers. Great encouragement with no evangelism helps no lost people and gains believers no rewards in the next life. God bless, Jim M.

Comments: These emails are PROOF you have to *document* conversations with public officials, to let the public know the truth they will otherwise hide from them! Honesty from the heart is sometimes hard to get people to admit to.

Dear Pastors:

10/24/13

As influential Christian leaders in DFW I cordially invite you to take a public stand for evangelism by meeting together as a group at SpiritFest 2013 outside Arlington Stadium, using your notoriety to simply greet and give an encouraging word to attendees (Heb. 10:24), as I do the more humbling work of holding 1 or 2 professional signs biblically exhorting Christians to evangelize (pictures attached). This show of unity (II Cor. 6:1; Eph. 4:13) and commitment to the Gospel/Great Commission will speak volumes (just as the first century Christians reached *lost* people in public places like open markets, homes and Jewish synagogues with no expense or further action toward ‘attracting’ crowds; Except for their miracles).

I will be there between 5:30 and 7:30 Nov. 10 (a Sunday evening, so there should be no conflict with your preaching schedules), standing on public property for there to be no local ordinance violations. Third Day will start at 7pm, so a good crowd is expected, as well as great music in the background. Please let me know by email reply if you are coming so we can arrange a central meeting place

If we *REALLY* care about COMPLETING the Great Commission to a person, Christian pastors must **lead** in exhorting believers to speak the Gospel, not just their own church members (II Cor. 11:28).

Thanks for your prayerful consideration. Sincerely in Christ,
James Meroney (MDiv, JD, MBA; WillYouLiveForever.org)

P.S.: Bring any staffers with you (or security personnel if you feel you need them at a public setting). I will NOT promote my website there if you come—ONLY Jesus!

CC: Revs. Ed Young Jr. (Fellowship Church), Robert Morris (Gateway Church), Jack Graham (Freely, legally/contractually-agreed to unnamed mega church, Tony Evans (Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship), T.D. Jakes (Potter’s House), Chuck Swindoll (Stonebriar Community Church) and Robert Jeffress (First Baptist Dallas)

Email Sent to Over 40 Denominations’ Executives. (July 5, 2014)

Sirs:

As leaders of respected Christian institutions, I appeal to you to prayerfully consider *doing* the following as soon as possible:

Organize enough members of your “denomination” to FULLY evangelize (i.e., take the Gospel to) an identified small town or zip code, so those results could be broadcast afterwards to inspire other believers to do the same where they live.

Lay persons like being part of something big and important, and feeling they have accomplished something rather than just engaging in random or *partial* activities. Reaching EVERY lost soul is not only biblical, we should be hardly able to live with ourselves if they *only* heard the Gospel one time!

Many lay persons would *happily* publicize this achievement (Ex.: by email, Facebook, Twitter, billboards and YouTube), but not as many would be willing to help achieve it. Can you IMAGINE a billboard in another state or country stating “Everyone in [named town or zip code] has been offered the Gospel of Jesus this year! (John 3:16, The Bible)”? It could get lost people inquisitive and local Christians wondering why their own zip code has not been thoroughly “threshed.”

This effort should NOT promote any group or person (other than Jesus), though it *could* result in increased membership, and Bible-based materials could be handed out for initial discipleship. I am willing to participate in any way possible if you select a venue near my home, but by all means do not let the devil convince you to ignore this appeal! I have CC’d this notice to others to help ensure that does not happen.

God bless you as you pursue His will in obeying the Great Commission (part one), and please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or suggestions.

Sincerely in Christ,

James Meroney

(Phone number withheld here)

WillYouLiveForever.org

First Reply (7/5/14):

Thanks you, I prayerfully considered and am not interested

Jay Wittmeyer, Executive Director

Global Mission and Service

Church of the Brethren

OTHER—2000 Emails sent. exhorting the highest priorities were thoroughly ignored by **500 of the largest Mega churches**—except for 2 laymen replies, one positive and one inviting me to a mission trip—and similar emails to 40 Southern Baptist State Conventions—one positive reply from the North American Mission Board. I may use Facebook and/or Twitter next round.

I also sent **Billy Graham** a letter seeking endorsement of ‘my’ 3-mile plan, but his secretary replied he was too frail to engage (though his organization 3-4 years later did have at least one more national campaign, called My Hope America, so hopefully my Tweets that it is likely his last hurrah won’t prove prophetic!). **Update:** I learned just today (10/12/13) that my pastor one year ago went to Billy seeking to have him conduct one last crusade event for his 95th birthday. I pray Dr. Graham’s reading parts of this website was used of God to get through to Billy Graham in ways I was not able to without a platform of a 30,000 member church! God knows!

Note: If you EVER want to discover whether your town has churches suffering these same biblically moral challenges, DO NOT set up a pastoral interview first. Any good B2B salesman knows their gatekeeper (secretary, et al) is paid to keep access to them to a minimum, and when that person asks if he knows you, if you’re a church member, or what the nature of the meeting is, your discussing the 5% problem or 3 mile plan will SURELY be met with rejection. Go in person—as I have always done.

If you ever wonder **why Billy Graham** is reported as saying he would not return to host a Houston crusade any longer, *because of the condition of the pastors* (i.e., likely their **fighting for** his converts, to win their membership loyalty—and coveted “**tithe**”), you should *wonder no*

longer! If you think that churches growing large is always a good thing, or that I have been too critical of abuses in the American Church, perhaps now you know the backdrop from whence I speak. These may be *anecdotal*, but I venture to say most American churches have drunk the same Kool-Aid.

A few notable exceptions to the rule are the following great ministries:

- First Baptist Church, Houston, TX
- Highland Baptist Church, Waco, TX
- Don Anderson Ministries, Tyler, TX
- MinistryCatalyst.com, Ft. Worth, TX.

Evangelism Explosion, Campus Crusade for Christ and the Navigators. The few good men are around, but, sadly, are **few and far between**.

I have a **26 year history** of fighting moral corruption in church leaders, and less than the highest Bible priorities in church practice, so I am no Johnny-come-lately on the issue, though, just like Paul for his over 18 years, I have done this ministering in obscurity (Gal. 1). I pray that the reader of this website will **use all means necessary** to allow my story—and, more importantly—these Bible-based teachings—to rid the Church of her **un-prioritized and 90%** (in America) **carnal condition!** If you want to see my teaching about these experiences in *video* form, be looking for our possible YouTube video entitled “Church Conflicts,” or search YouTube for my name. Thanks.

Update: Much change (for evangelism, discipleship, prophecy teaching, Church racial unity and political involvement and calls for ‘revival’ stemmed from MANY prominent U.S. ministers watching/witnessing a three week “Twitter-Fest” of visions and messages I wrote as led for many sleepless nights between Oct. & Nov. 2013 (highlights now documented at our Blog).

Top Ten Tactics (of Oppositional Churches; Eph. 5:11)

What methods do resistant pastors use to avoid addressing truthful criticisms, and **are they biblical?**

1. **Slander.** Attacking the messenger and seeking to find moral fault with him (Ex.: accuse them of being false prophets because they are called divisive, lone wolves, self-initiating and promoting, mean spirited and harsh, unloving, etc.). **See also:** Biblical Evidence for a Prophetic Voice—Reader Beware.

2. **Delegation.** Pawning off addressing any issues to lesser staff members (so the head pastor can tacitly authorize their actions and claim to have no knowledge of it).

3. **Ignoring.** Dead-end meetings, delays and general inaction, hoping the issue will just go away. Ultimately, they must privately use II Jn. 1:10-11 to justify staffers not speaking to the reprover(s), even if their doctrine conforms to Scripture, which is the standard for discerning a false prophet. (Ex.: Grace Church, Plano, TX, etc.)

4. **Non-Reconciling.** Even preaching sermons specifically calling for such, yet remaining a ‘secret’ hypocrite no church member will ever learn about. (Contrary to: Mt. 5:23-24).

5. **Silencing.** NOT biblical silencing, which Christ did and they are commanded to do (by arguing biblical truth that wisely defeats an opponent’s claims), but prohibiting them from speaking or attending meetings (even denying they have ever met that person, so they can claim to know nothing about the issue—Mt 22:34; Tit 1:11 II Tim. 2:2).

6. **Pacifying**. Doing some right things, partly with kicking and screaming. Wonderful result, though it is SAD to have to bring it about this way, and for which, in part, their ministry is a stewardship—not rewarded (I Cor. 9:17).

7. **Denying**. Having no public evidence of any formal contact from them to the reprovor, they think they can claim it never happened, or that such person is ‘crazy’ saying that it did.

8. **Pontificating**. Using the bully pulpit to reinforce their position, throwing in occasional slanderous jabs against opposing (and more biblical) theological positions.

9. **Transferring**. Having staffers (or especially deacons) ask that person to find another church or start their own (rather than addressing and changing wrongful behaviors).

10. **Anger**. Seething in private, and engendering ill-will between deacons and such reprovor(s), by having them on guard around such persons (*assumed* to have occurred by several deacon conversations and unpleasant looks with the same).

Above all, keep it PRIVATE. Don’t let the *public* or the *congregation* learn about it!

Not the kind of actions, words and attitudes befitting a *true* man of God

(though I do NOT doubt their salvation, even if they might doubt mine).

Biblical Analysis

The chief text hidden behind to maintain IMMUNITY from any legitimate, constructive criticism is I Tim. 5:19-20. Let’s see how they manipulate their circumstances using this text. If an allegation is raised—in *private*—there is no process available because **there is only one WILLING witness** (because the other witnesses are **biased, PAID staffers** or **authority-rewarded deacons**—not the type of persons independent enough to testify truthfully, unless civilly subpoenaed)! They deny Mt. 18:15-17 has any relevance for that same ‘*only one witness*’ reason, and since pastors have a higher presumption of innocence than sinning laymen, based on I Tim. 5:19-20. If one were to go public, they accuse them of *subverting God’s process* (or being a LEGALIST, or being *arrogant* with ‘head knowledge’ if they analyze any behavior according to the specifics of what God has said). So, as in Lk. 7:31-35, they want to have their cake and eat it too—and ***get away with it***, but *only* before MEN. We’re ALL accountable to God for our behavior—fear Him (Jer. 5:22-25).

Mega church pastors used to being treated like rock stars (the same *idolizing* problem of I Cor. 1-4) are NOT used to hearing many negative comments, as they often surround themselves with ‘**yes men**’ (paid) staffers (including security guards), overly-loyal deacons, and not-so-biblically knowledgeable laymen—(who’s fault is THAT, when those laymen rely on these same men as their human *mediators*, as opposed to I Jn. 2:27?)—who praise them (Lk.6:26) and seemingly just **want someone who can preach and draw a crowd**. Even in my own pastoral job interviews, the deacon committee admitted their process didn’t really address biblical requirements for pastors when I brought up the subject. (I Tim. 3:1-7; Tit. 1:5-9) One laymen recently told me she **didn’t want to know** what goes on behind the scenes, was sure there was a lot of dirty stuff, but it’s probably COMMON among churches (the old head in the sand with a Wizard of Oz syndrome). Is THAT the standard? If so, **throw away your Bible**, because the *true* church has all but abandoned it (i.e., ‘the great apostasy’ of prophecy) to support a working business above all else (and *God help us* then)!

THE SHEEP MIRROR THEIR (UNDER-) SHEPHERDS.

I generally ***avoid*** criticizing laymen, as *everyone’s imperfect*, and pastors have ultimate human authority for the results of their ministering. However, **BECAUSE RELATIONSHIP DISCIPLINE IS NOT SIGNIFICANTLY OCCURRING** (and I predict it likely never will) the

following are just a few examples demonstrating how there is a **general lack of integrity** (and sometimes prevalent **hypocrisy**) among American believers—even between themselves—which the world notices and rightly criticizes us over (and wrongly blame God for).

At one of the aforementioned churches, in a public Sunday School prayer request session a lady complained about a **drug problem in a Baylor dorm** her daughter lived in. I told her my family knew the President, and if she wanted me to mention it to him, to *get it resolved*, I'd be happy to (as that's my *alma mater*). She said yes. Two weeks later, when I saw her and asked how things went, SHE GLARED AT ME and was **angry that the President actually got involved** and shut down the problem. **AMAZING hypocrisy!**

At the latest church I have regularly attended, a claiming spiritually-committed gentleman said he'd "**have my back**" if the church ever banned me from attending, and promised he'd use his media savvy to film some YouTube video on evangelism and discipleship. Then his family proceeded to leave the church, **NEVER complete the promised filming**, yet had the AUDACITY to ask me to appear at his going-to-jail court hearing, knowing I am an honest person with a legal background. For the sake of God and conscience alone I attended. Again, **AMAZING hypocrisy.**

The same church **tried to negotiate with us** about what they could give in exchange for our registration for a weekend event for my son we had to cancel as soon as we learned of my mom's death. When we requested a refund, they first said they'd get back with us the next week—which **never occurred**, then they tried to offer us something **worth, at best, \$20 for a \$65** registration fee. **Give them your money, and good luck to your ever seeing it again without a fight.** EVEN BUSINESSES DON'T DO THAT—over a genuine funeral excuse! Isn't a grandmother's death a good enough reason—with plenty of prior notice—to just have mercy on that situation and **forego profiting** without delivering ANY service to my son? This was NOT our asking for our church giving to be returned, but a **for fee event!** They FINALLY relented.

At the gathering following my mother's death, a gentleman said he attended "**The Met**"—the church where my good friend had his Sunday School class shut down. I told him the facts of that situation, and he **couldn't believe it was the same church** under the same head pastor's leadership.

I will not bore you with further anecdotes. **Am I the only one** who sees this integrity problem, or does God ONLY lead me to see "**RARE**" problems, or might larger churches **cover up these actions** from the majority of their membership? I fully understand that *we are all imperfect*, but where in the Bible does it excuse Christian behavior as the same, or worse, from that of the world?

Pastors: The *moral* condition of your membership is **your responsibility**, and what you have been doing—where it does not match up with God's BEST PRACTICES—is **NOT** working very well, no matter how godly and wonderful the worship *presentation* actually is!

"JAMES THE BAPTIST?"

(or "God's whistleblower"? "Colonel of Truth?")

I don't mind if I were the only outspoken person **reproving** the Church over this **5% blithe!**

- ▶ **THE LOST** will never complain that they are not being reached, as that's spiritually irrational.
- ▶ The 95% of American believers who never evangelize won't complain about themselves.
- ▶ The 90% of American believers who **aren't fully committed** to Christ won't, or don't care enough.

- ▶ Many pastors are **unaware** of the problem, as they are only **single-church focused**.
- ▶ Many *godly evangelists* conduct evangelism without noticing, or never mentioning the problem, choosing **not to ruffle the feathers** of pastors who often help PAY THEIR BILLS, calling such behavior “**unloving**” or “**un-Christian**” (even though on this website we have shown **BIBLICAL EVIDENCE** for a prophetic and reproofing message).
- ▶ And many *godly* saints, as well (in number—not percentage), conduct evangelism without noticing or ever mentioning the problem.

The world is going to hell **unaware** and **un-warned**, and the Church in America is continuing in disobedience and REBELLION, overwhelmingly **unconcerned!** Who is left to defend the need (vs. necessarily want) of LOST PEOPLE the world over and the need for BELIEVERS who don't want to do the work of evangelism? Perhaps committed, evangelistic **believers outside the U.S.** see the problem, and will **SPEAK UP(?)**. We pray so.

Opposition: Expect It!

(I Pet. 4:12-14; II Cor. 10:3-5)

It has been my ‘privilege’ (Mt. 5:11) to experience much opposition from church leaders in seeking to get churches to priorities and do “EDBS” over the years. Though more efforts may be forthcoming, I am confident the majority of that work is now through (and I am moving on to another field needing reform). A summary follows of conversations (in many cases, arguments) I have had with “leaders” and their stated criticisms of my constructive criticisms of their religious business’ “*success*” (in human terms). My replies to them follow.

1. I Disagree With Your Tactics, Not Your Objectives.

What tactics have you used, and did they work? I’ve tried more positive for 20+ years—it’s time to warn of impending judgment. You’re a laymen likely not called to change things much. We can differ, so long as both have biblical justification. God’s word has a pattern of going from positive to negative. Encouraging, instructing, helping, reminding; Exhorting, correcting, reproofing, warning, then God judges. He rarely just brings hailstones down soon after first offenses, but He also does not overlook our sins forever (and He often uses people as instruments of His message).

2. You Don’t Have a ‘Loving Tone (or Speak the Truth in Love).

Please refer to our section on the need for a prophetic voice, and read those verses. I’ll take God’s results through me, to-date, in this “tone,” over your results on the top priorities with a more positive tone any day! I’ve tried positive methods plenty—they don’t work with many hardened pastors committed to Churchianity and Church as a Business. If you’ve never tried to change these things, you just would never know that.

Plus, God’s established way to teach, encourage, help, remind (many times), correct, reprove, rebuke, warn then judge. This process (and increased intensity for obedience) occurs over time, but He does not allow rebellion forever, and the American church has had plenty of time to get their spiritual house in order since their decline started in the early 1980’s! Even “dispensationalists” teach God’s Old Testament pattern as testing, failure, repentance then reconciliation. We’re just seeing very little repentance from leaders on lack of priorities—because the business of church is so successful.

Love is obeying God’s word (II or III Jn.). ANYTHING consistent with morally biblical behavior that god calls you to do is within the definition of ‘love,’ not “luv,” including reproof, correction and warning of judgment. I DON’T love these people’s decisions, so my despising what

they are doing to the lost's eternity angers me with serious righteous indignation. Zeal for God's house consumed Christ—you just see few people worked up about or even knowing the problem exists.

3. Aren't You're Just Trying to Get the Church to Do More?

There's always more one can do. Avoiding professional negligence and completely DOING priority one and attempting it to priority two before anything lesser gets done IS biblical. It's the extraneous things that keep us from doing so, and disorganized, token efforts on behalf of the lost will never be excused as our having done our duty (and the lost will forever hate us for it, in Hell).

4. You're 'Ranting.'

And I hope some others will join me in behaviors you label as such. Again, you just are unfamiliar with experiencing anyone with righteous indignation on this subject in our nicey-nice politically correct culture, that heavily influences God's church, as well.

5. You State Opinion vs. Fact & Truth.

My "opinions" are based on Scripture, consistent with it and have biblical bases I have quoted to you. What about yours? What verses teach accepting failed status quo, supporting everything your 'leaders' do and say, and, most importantly, allowing the 5% who ever evangelize once, 9% who are totally committed to Christ and 13% who regularly read the Scriptures to continue another 30 years? You justify those positions in Scripture, and maybe you'll win a convert in myself to your majority view lack of a cause.

6. You are Divisive, a Controversy-Stirrer, Arrogant & Mean-Spirited.

I could list Bible verses for my replies, but for brevity...

a) **Divisiveness.** Truth, by its nature, polarizes. Jesus came not to bring peace but a sword—a division between those who would follow Him and those who would not, or would only half-heartedly. [They're trying to link me with prophesied false prophets who immorally divide over sin—not righteousness; Ex.: II Pet.; Jude).

b) **Controversial.** Trying to link me with prophesied false prophets who have morbid curiosity in controversies fails, first because my doctrine is sound (by the grace of God), I don't match the listed traits (and I'm saved), and any "controversy" I engage in addressing is top priority failures in the Church which to not address might keep down 'controversy,' while displeasing God in the process.

c) **Arrogance.** To God be the glory in everything he does through myself. Confidence, based on faith in God's leading is often taken as pride, because so few walk boldly with Him enough to experience the confidence he gives when you're in his will. I'm sorry you haven't experienced that enough, just like the Sunday School member who asked me how I knew what to write every day I woke up. God promises He will lead, but if you doubt that promise, you will never experience just that.

d) **Meanness.** Political Correctness and Positive Mental Attitude permeates U.S. culture (and the American Church). I assure you that Jesus, Paul and John the Baptist were "mean" (as YOU, vs. God, define it), but if you fail to look up those verses, you can remain ignorant of this truth. I'd rather appear 'mean,' 'judgmental' or 'critical' than to NOT warn the Church (as I feel led to do) of certain impending judgment if we continue to not address and change these lack of priorities. Anyone else want to join me in this biblical ministry?

7. God Uses Imperfect Ministers. Aren't You Expecting Perfection?

I know He does, because He chooses to use me. Having every church reach every lost soul within walking distance of their building is NOT asking for perfection. The apostles did WAY

more than that, turning the world ‘upside-down’ for the Gospel. It IS professional negligence to not do so, like a grocer who has stocked no shelves with food, as Dr. Wisdom (FBC Katy, TX) said. And defending these people’s actions (or lack thereof and lack of biblical priorities) is the old Hitler S.S. reasoning—I’m just being “submissive” to authority—never thinking for myself or questioning what it is I’m told to fully support.

Successful Strategies for Spiritual Success **(at Changing Churches)**

I was led to use the following methods for God to produce the results a major U.S. mega church is now experiencing (3-6 years from initial efforts). Though that pressure was quite unwelcome at first, I truly believe (from sustained changed actions—not just changed words) that their pastor experienced a change of heart (or personal ‘revival’) during the process of dealing with these methods—praise the Lord!

1. Met with and offered to teach and lead classes on evangelism and discipleship, and go personal witnessing with each of those 8 church staffers ‘interviewed.’
2. Refusing to allow false doctrine to be taught in Sunday School, and privately imploring their leaders to implement a class Quiet Time and evangelism plan.
3. Taking my ‘Go Evangelize’ signs to their church campus Sunday morning (as well as a national day of prayer event their ‘most evangelistic staffer’ “just so happened” to see me at).
4. Handing out a flier to several Sunday School leaders biblically justifying the need for the 5% of evangelistic Christians being changed, our 3-mile plan as biblical as their ‘field,’ and biblical evidence that evangelism is for every Christian, ending with a challenge that “if our leaders will not do these things, let’s do it ourselves, as lay leaders of that church.” You can create a similar document, and are free to use our website for biblical back-up.
5. Wearing my black WillYouLiveForever.or shirt many times while attending church.
6. Privately emailing many relevant excerpts to the top two pastors; Exhorting them to implement those priorities (and volunteering to help).
7. Writing on a travel blog for tourists which rated the church and allowed them to find my “Church Conflicts” section. This act REALLY got leadership’s attention. (it might have been TravelAdvisor.com).
8. Meeting with several local pastors to ask them about their commitment to the lost surrounding their building.

It helps that this website tells of the Lord raising myself to publicly speak against an erring pastor during a church service (with a witness thereto now this mega church’s deacon), though I don’t suggest you do that.

LAST WORD

Because the truth, whenever it's tone is more negative, seems to be like Cryptonite to U.S. Christians, this possibly most important section is given last. It consists of prior-posted tweets that have been grammar-adjusted to more than 140 characters. Please heed their warning!

Introduction

Bottom line: NO pastor likely knows the spiritual condition of ALL lost people near their church, or WILL know anytime soon, if ever, CONTRARY to Mark 16:15.

BILLIONS will go to hell because the church won't complete Christ's Great Commission. I can ONLY be "cheerful" by IGNORING this fact, knowing I did my part.

If PASTORS got God's priorities (EDBS, as defined at our website), the world would be turned upside down! Otherwise, only sin increased, then prophecy.

Please Retweet: NO OTHER PASTOR is AS responsible for the eternal destiny of lost people near your church as you are, pastors! FULLY thresh your own Jerusalem.

As I've said before, an Ostrich (vs. feet) is the Church's symbol for evangelism. (Rom 10:15) Problem? What problem? The budget's fine!

Motivation

Why the evangelism urgency? The number who do it vs. the number of lost, people die every day, 7 presentations per response (average), EVEN if Christ delays 2,000 more years. (Mt. 24:36)

Everyone's heard (or enough times), no one will die today, & Jesus can't return today. 3 reasons NOT to evangelize, all of which are UNTRUE.

The problem is that statistics say it takes 7 hearings of the Gospel for the average person to respond & the church is content IF WE only speak ONCE, if that!

PROVE to me Jesus won't return tonight or lost people won't die tonight. Then WHY won't you evangelize, claiming Christian? Choosing rebellion!

Why NOT sound the alarm for the church's need to evangelize? Are we ignorant of the HUGE gap between aspiration & achievement? Absolutely & apathetically!

If hell wasn't real & a risk for so many, I'd talk & live like so many who know Jesus, but act like hell doesn't exist for those who don't know Him.

We ADMIRE Billy Graham, but we need to EMULATE him. You can't pawn your responsibility off on the evangelistic FEW! (Rom. 10:11-15; Mt. 9:37)

How loving is a so-called Christian who LETS people he knows go to hell because comfort zone > obedience to Jesus on evangelism? NOT!

The Christians involved in EE in the 1970s were MUCH nobler than today's Christians. They FULLY evangelized. I witnessed it as an EE member.

Highland Baptist Church (Waco, TX, 1978): I SAW entire neighborhoods evangelized & documented. There's MY proof it can be done. Prove otherwise!

It is NO WONDER God leads Me to push so HARD for evangelism!

It is THE reason Christ came & died. (Lk 19:10)
Are you serving HIS purpose or sinfully your own?

I'll stop reproving pastors if EVERY pastor will evangelize ALL lost people near their church. Won't happen! DO YOU SEE A SIN PATTERN?

I'll go against my beliefs & become an Arminian if EVERY Arminian will go evangelize their proper allotment (between 42-111). Won't happen!

I'll go against my beliefs & become a Calvinist if EVERY Calvinist will go evangelize their proper allotment (between 42-111). WON'T happen!

Pastor, I could video going under cover as a lost person to ask Christians
how I can go to heaven,
And you'd see how incapable & inexperienced they are.

Can God trust you with the Gospel? (I Th. 2:4) Your faithfulness in evangelism answers
that question. Paul was trustworthy! (I Tim. 1:11) Who cares? Anyone?

Problems

IF salvation is so GREAT, as Christians claim, why do so many of them keep it from YOU?
That's hypocrisy, which is what Christ rebuked!

EVERY day you DON'T evangelize someone they don't experience abundant life,
risk death then hell, & miss eternal rewards. Think about it!

You will feel shame & lose rewards for NOT evangelizing, Christian (I Jn. 2:28)
Even evangelizing in the flesh is better than not at all! (Phil 1:17)

Until you KNOW every lost soul near your church building has heard the Gospel lovingly,
accurately & powerfully, you're a biblically-incompetent minister!

It is ministry malpractice for ANY claiming pastor to NOT know the spiritual condition
of EVERY lost person within 3 miles of his church (with laymen's help).

For the life of me I'll never understand how any pastor can drive to work every day
& pass neighbor homes not knowing if they've heard the Gospel.

A church that does NOT reach all lost near their unrequired edifice is like a grocer who has
little food, but many auxiliary services. Think about it.

To be evangelical & not evangelistic is a contradiction by an oxy-moron. Be a wise ox! (I
Tim. 5:18) Go evangelize, & preach & teach God's word.

You CANNOT dabble in evangelism OR dilly dally. Real people WILL respond IF you go.
If you don't, a real hell awaits real people. Really!

Dr. D. James Kennedy had a vision of FULL evangelism & he was a Presbyterian
& NOT crazy. Crazy are all pastors who don't share his vision!

Rev. Greg Laurie HAS evangelized his share of the lost & will continue to do so.
Is he the ONLY pastor who literally obeys the Great Commission?

Pastors: Read Eze. 3:18; Ac. 20:26, 1:8; I Cor. 3:9; II Cor. 10:16.

You're responsible before God for evangelizing ALL lost people nearest your building!

There is peace in pastors' hearts that their peers also have NOT evangelized ALL lost
in their neighborhood, but it's from hell. (Jn. 14:27; II Cor. 10:12)

I LOVE the Church but I hate her sin of evangelismlessness that's lasted OVER 30 years.
There were BETTER efforts in the 1970's (for you young ones).

Evangelism takes time & effort & MAY not increase church membership.
Is this why so many pastors do it so rarely? Always follow the money trail.

Remember the phrase, "always follow the money trail?" Most pastors will NOT reprove your
unconcern for the lost because God pays their salary through you.

Theology & theory have NEVER won one person to Christ
(in the BIBLICAL sense of that word—I Cor. 9:22).
Leave the ivory tower for highways & byways!

The church believes God will be merciful to those we didn't reach (or reach often enough),
like they'd have responded with faith had we NOT been lazy. Then why did Christ die?

It is the sin of presumption or testing God to not evangelize all
& hope God is merciful nonetheless, when in our power to do so! (Mt. 4:7)

Only ONE Scripture indicates what MIGHT happen to those we haven't reached

(Rom. 2:12-16), but if we COULD HAVE, their blood is on OUR hands.

You can advertise your church to the lost, but God never told you to, & they had ability to make signs in the first century. You ARE to GO & TELL, NOT invite to come & hear.

Having a church presence in a community is NOT evangelism!

FEW lost people ever attend, so they go to hell in the shadows of your holy huddles.

Jonathan Edwards' most famous sermon (for the lost) could NOW be applied to the church, but would be rejected as too truthful (& Rom. 1:25a applies, though for the lost).

You can pridefully take that word as a condemnation you are above hearing, but ONLY at the expense of billions of people going to hell for your lack of attention!

Southern Baptists: Did Continuous Witness Training mean continuous witnessing
Or continuous training, or neither? Go LEAD in evangelism!

My website shows a letter contacting Southern Baptist national leaders
AT LEAST three years ago to have a national evangelism push
& they promised to do so. Three years!

Patience is one thing. Procrastination another. Don't confuse these two P's,
Southern Baptist leadership in evangelism! Go national NOW!

This message DOES NOT 'SELL' in the U.S. church, because we are CARNAL,
& the truth is abhorrent to us if it doesn't make us FEEL good. (II Tim. 4:3)

P.S.: These 'words' are NOT retweeted because the church is going apostate,
setting up prophecy right according to plan in our GREAT God's timing!

The Church, the pillar of truth (I Tim. 3:15) CANT handle truth if it's negative!
'Encourage me & never tell me how bad hell is or my evangelismlessness!'

Want to SYOP the "end of the world?" You CAN'T! The next best thing is to retweet:
Pastor, Go evangelize ALL lost people near your church ASAP! (II Pet. 3:9)

The ONLY thing standing between the Rapture & today's news reports is
God's MERCIFUL patience in waiting for any more to be saved (& evangelized)!

Excuses

BIGGEST lie I've ever heard Christians say: If you'd be positive, pastors & laymen would respond positively to your evangelism exhortations. I have 30 years of proof otherwise!

'You're imbalanced on evangelism.' I want to be, UNTIL all have been reached at LEAST one time. When will you get God's desires too? Never? That type of balance kills.

If I'm "extreme" for calling for evangelizing ALL lost people, Jesus was my role model,
& you're sinfully "balanced" & guilty for their eternal death.

I Cor. 15:10; Rev. 3:15; Jn. 2:17, 4:34; Phil. 2:30. Is that "balanced?"
Be priority-balanced, & leave your accounting concepts in business!
Zeal, or NOTHING for God!

You're using fear tactics for the church to evangelize. PROVE the day a lost person will die,
they've all heard (or heard enough) & Christ won't return today. Excuses! (Lk. 12:5)

Have an M.Div. in missions-evangelism & taught evangelism (& New Testament)
at a Bible college & attended Dallas Seminary. NOT an angry, ignorant fanatic religious nut!

NO condemnation in Christ, for the law of the Spirit sets believers free!
However, our deeds & priorities repugnantly prove we DONT walk with Him,
which is condemnable.

Shoot the messenger so long as we can IGNORE the message.

You're negative, unloving, divisive, judgmental... how about RIGHT? Read more Bible!

What "spirit" am I of with my righteous indignation at major church abuses & omissions?

Read John 2:17 & I Cor. 6:17.

My own documented experiences of fighting this fight > 30 years is on our website.
No Johnny come lately, though few & far between are with us.

Does anyone see the PATTERN? Call for the Church to FULLY evangelize
(just like Jesus does)
& EVERY excuse & attack will come your way, with NEVER much repentance.

Arminians & Calvinists

If Calvinists & Arminians would read the Bible more, they'd debate often man's doctrine
less,
& evangelize more. People die as we discuss vs. reach them.

The only CRUCIAL issue in Calvin-Arminians is: WHEN you evangelize,
God-empowered & relying on Him to convict,
must the lost person pray to receive Jesus in order to be saved? YES.

In practice, the biblical fact of election means NOTHING. Evangelize,
trusting God alone for results & prayerfully hoping all will respond!

The GREATEST test for Christians' claim to follow God's theology is to get predestinarians to
go evangelize & see how they give an invitation. Wanna go?

The past 200 years shows which denominations take the Great Commission seriously
& which gives LIPSERVICE. What will the next 10 years show?

P.S.: If you disagree that the church's evangelism lack DOES sentence people to hell,
you DO hold to an UN-biblical view of "election."

For ANY Arminian who thinks you can evangelize without need for the Spirit's conviction,
or a lost person can choose Christ at any time, read more Bible!

Warnings

If a church is not very evangelistic, God holds the head pastor accountable to LEAD.
NOT my thoughts--read your dusty Bible! Lead or be fired.

One final word (I hope): You were WARNED. No dates EVER set, but do the math
on what evangelism is needed. ALL on you from here out. Washing my hands!

I'VE taken public Go Evangelize! signs to several churches & will consider it again
if that's what it takes to get pastors to repent (shown at our website).

JUST AS at Rom. 11:11-14, I plan to take these tweets as public as possible,
if, perhaps LOST people might be angry that Christians care hardly a lick
about their eternal destination.

Church leaders beware: I WONT solely focus on content without marketing
in the near future, & I know how to learn marketing. This message WILL get out!

Church's eternal secret & largest sinful omission WILL be exposed to the world,
who suffers forever from our apathy & self-delusion about hell! (Eph. 5:11)

I have ZERO need to be liked by Christians. I have EVERY need for you, believer,
to heed this message & warning, for Ur own good. Go evangelize!

God will RIGHTLY bring persecution on the U.S. church for her lack of complete/thorough
evangelism! May it happen SOON as it's NEEDED.

Conclusions

Choose you THIS DAY who you will serve: Christ & His evangelism call,
or satan & his greatest cause of keeping you evangelistically MUM.

If you want to be God's leader of believers, you MUST lead God's vs. man's way.
What your peer majority does means NOTHING to God! (Gal. 1:10; Col. 2:8; Mk. 7:8)

How do ANY of you expect ANY pastor will EVER fully evangelize a zip code,

but that it happens starting in one zip code in the world,
then gets publicized that it CAN be done?

ONE zip code. Is that TOO MUCH to ask churches to FULLY reach With the Gospel,
as a START to inspire others? ONE zip code? 1 neighborhood? 1 street?

Business as usual is why I believe little change to the U.S. church's evangelism effort
will occur, absent a miracle. Hardened hearts--hell's in the balance!

Please Retweet: EVERY pastor is on notice to evangelize EVERY lost person
near their church building ASAP.

PLEASE fund one John 3:16 billboard, centrally located in ANY MAJOR U.S. city.
Choose between the many shown on our website, WillYouLiveForever.org

I MAY soon stop any tweets on evangelism, as it has been said as many ways as I can
& it gets old, & just needs an expanded audience.

The take-away ISNT that I've said the Church needs to do a little better at evangelism
& discipling, but compared to God's standard, we're MISERABLE failures. (Rev. 3:17)

Christian: IF you evangelize regularly I wish you a very blessed week.

If you don't, I fear for you & cant wish that same blessing for you. Go evangelize!

**EVERYONE Please Retweet: Ask ANY pastor near your home
why they haven't YET told you the Gospel,
& tell ANY Christian you know to tell you how to go to heaven today! (John 3:16)**

Relationship of Evangelism & Discipleship in Acts

[E = evangelized; D = discipled; F = fellowshipped (no teaching on growth necessarily);
S = suffering; B = baptized.]

2:41-47 STARTED BIBLICAL church after E (enough converts to do so); 3:23-4:3 E (P prevented anything further); 4:4, 32-37 SAME body life result; 5:15, 42 E; 6:1 E, then disciples gathered; 7:54-60 E (P prevented further); 8:4,12 E (with B); 8:13, 18-24 E (with carnality at salvation); 8:25 E; 8:34-40 E (no D possible); 8:28 E; 8:31 D in church; 9:42-43 E (possibly D); 10:44-48 E (then B); 8:1-4, 11:19 P causes LAYMEN's itinerant E; 11:24 E, (possibly D); 13:5-6, 12 E (no time for D); 13:38-42 E (only brief D-v. 43 (& why "urge" if was salvation requirement?); 13:44-51 E; 14:1-6 E (D possible but unlikely as forced out); 14:15, 20 (E, then left); 14:20-22 E, then elsewhere for D (followed up PRIOR converts!); 14:23-24 (left PASTORS to be in charge of converts); 14:25 E; 14:27-28 F (possibly D); 15:32-33 D; 15:35 E; 15:36 D LATER (followed up PRIORS); 15:41 D (same follow-up of PRIOR converts); 16:5 D (as clergy & laity ~did E-"increased daily"); 16:10 E; 16:11-16 E, then be then moved on; 16:30-35 E then be (possibly D); 17:1-4 E (D possible with (traveling?) "joiners"); 17:10-13 E; 17:14-17 E; 17:30-34 (D possible with "joiners"); 18:1-4 E; 18:5-6 E then moved on; 18:8 E; 18:8 E; 18:11 E (possibly D); 18:19-21 E; 18:22-23 F (possibly D); 18:24-26 ~D: 18:27-28 D & E; 19:1-7 F; 19:8-10 E (possibly D); 19:20 E; 19:30 E attempted/P prevented; 20:1 D (briefly); 20:2-3 D; 20:7-38 F (possibly D, vv. 7-12, 32); 21:7 F (possibly D within the one day); 21:16-26 F; Chapter 22 E (until P); 23:6 E; 24:14-16 E; 24:24-27 E; 26:1-29 (E through Paul's testimony); 27:21-26 ~E; 28:9-11 (possibly E & D—doesn't say); 28:14 F (possibly D); 28:17-29 E, then left; 28:30-31 E (possibly D—doesn't say)—END. Layman going to bed!

Conclusions: Sometimes E only, D only & sometimes both. Sometimes E with D later, sometimes NO D (by evangelizer, at least). Sometimes persecution prevented D, sometimes God's leading prevented it THEN.

29a. APPENDIX B: Free Materials For Evangelism

Feel free to use any of the following website materials for your personal evangelism campaign:

1. Prioritized Pastor's Pledge (sent to many large countries' major denominations, seminaries, churches and ministries—April 2011)
2. Billboard Campaign (slogans)
3. The Gospel (printable tract)
4. On Hell (Sunday School/Bible Fellowship or sermon material)
5. Church-Wide Evangelism Survey
6. About Us/Ministry Experience (author's resume you can send anywhere)
7. The following two letters, sent to almost all U.S. Southern Baptist associations (and the Home Mission Board). Feel free to send them to appropriate 'leaders'—only changing addressees—and if done this way, you can attribute it to myself to take any heat. Do realize, however, they trash these convicting letters, so send them to several people and underlings (in separate emails, so they don't know who to collude with to ignore them), so they're more apt to be held accountable for arrogantly dismissing them.

29b. APPENDIX B: Free Materials For Evangelism Exhortation

SUBMITTED TO CHRISTIANITY TODAY AND CHARISMA MAGAZINE (APRIL 2011):

TOWARD A MORE BIBLICAL MODEL OF CHURCH IN AMERICA

Three *dirty little secrets* in American Christianity are that only **5%** of believers *ever* actually tell one lost person the Gospel their *whole lifetime*, **10%** of us are fully committed to Christ and only **13%** *regularly* read their Bible. This "**5/10/13**" problem forms a huge *white elephant* in our sanctuaries which most are "*too polite*" to speak (or know) about. With the advent of mega churches (expanding with the "Church Growth Movement of the early 1980's) and living in a Politically Correct culture where many truthful things are suppressed if they're *negative*, if we have church members attending and "tithing" (which allows buildings and budgets to be paid for) our churches are perceived by men as "*successful*." But God is not satisfied, nor does continuation of this 5/10/13 problem* match His definition of "success" (Rev. 3:15-19; Josh. 1:8)

We Americans *used* to pray for national "revival," but with churches becoming more autonomous business units, that cry has lessened recently. Plus, the analogous II Chron. 7:14 requires **4 things** of believers—not just praying for revival—and the implications of that oft-quoted verse are that our "5/10/13" problem is *largely* responsible for the declining moral condition of our country.

With status quo "Churchianity" *working* (i.e., going to church 2 hours a week to hear a sermon, music and give some money) what's likely to change, and what *should* it change to and why? Please permit me to elicit the following list of things needing changing immediately:

1. Every Church in America Should Reach Every Lost Soul Near Their Building with the Gospel in the Next Three Years—their “Jerusalem,” which they are *most* responsible before God to reach. America has not been *thoroughly harvested* in over **30 years**, and unless a church records the spiritual condition existing at all actual street addresses (if not recording names), they can **NEVER** say they have *objectively* fulfilled the first of three stages of the *Great Commission*—evangelism (baptism and discipleship following). (Mt. 28:18-20)

2. Pastors Should Enlist Church Members to Go with Them, Observing How They Share the Gospel and Emulating Their Actions (perhaps video recording these events for viewing in worship services). **Leaders lead by example**, and tacking on an evangelistic *invitation* at the end of a sermon should never be a pastor’s **primary** evangelism activity for the week. Jas. 2:1-4 and I Cor. 14:23 indicate that lost visitors were welcome at church, but **not all that expected** (note the word, “*if*,” not “*when*,” *regardless* of the tongues reference)—as the first century Church understood that their instructions were to **leave** their gathering and go tell the message.

And what of the **millions** of lost who will never be “*attracted*” to or attend your church? **Do they go to hell** because we’re too *scared* or *lazy* to **obey God** and speak to them? Funny, the apostles and their colleagues never had jump houses, carnivals or face painting to “attract” anyone to their message, but what they *did* have—**spiritual power**—turned the world upside down in only a few short years, and allowed Paul to testify that he was innocent of the blood of all men. (Ac. 17:6, 20:26).

3. Jesus (and Others) Taught Us by Example That Maturing Up Believers is Not Just Preaching Sermons to the Masses, but requires spending time with a small group of learners—getting them into a habit of **feeding on His word daily** (*personally* and *deeply*)—and pouring one’s life into those persons so they are trained up to be able to replicate that process in others. (II Tim. 2:2; I Th. 2:8; Mk. 4:34; Ac. 4:13). This “multiplication” model can enable a church of **any size** to reach all church members (for discipleship and evangelism—evangelism being a more expected outcome of maturing believers) in **4 to 5 sessions** (if all participants are faithful and if an approximately 1:12 ratio is maintained), so a church being “too large” is **no biblical excuse**.

4. Finally, What Some Used to Call “Body Life” IS the New Testament Norm for What Church Is and what our Sunday morning worship services are to *entail*. Never was “church” intended to be a spectator sport led only by professionals with **no interaction between or involvement of** the laity; Except *giving* and occasional *singing*. Where else might believers as a family (or body) act on the “**one anothers**” of Scripture, and how were those more rare *visitors* in the first century to SEE believers’ love of one another than when they happened by our **main church gatherings**? (Jn. 13:34-35)

America has seen some resurgence in church attendance, with more entertaining sermons (rarely expository, often topical) and *upgraded ambiance* and *amenities* which have caused more believers to *return home*, but when you have your **God glasses** on—life’s perspective viewed from His Book—you soon see that we have accepted a ***much lesser form of Christianity*** than was ever intended, due to tradition; Expediency and what ‘works’ to bring in the numbers. After all, the Church is **God’s organization—not** man’s business, and even if our American form of Christianity *works* for laymen and pastors, it does not fully conform to what **God** has said.

Solutions exist, but only if they're implemented. These priorities may not be the average church's "*business model*" but they are certainly the *best way* to achieve God's priorities, so your leaders' "business model" may need a *scouring* revisiting. I know that Pastors are not often trained in these concepts in seminary, but any minister more than three years into his career is biblically responsible for the 5/10/13 condition being hardly addressed or changed, as the human heads of their churches (Eph. 4:11-13; I Pet. 5:2-3).

Pastor, be a **true leader**—even if *none* of your co-laborers (who are *not* competitors, biblically) do the same, and believe again (as you likely did earlier) that **God rewards obedience** to His priorities, even if what He calls you to do does not always *directly* or *immediately* increase your church's membership or contributions. There are rewards in heaven, not just on earth, and always remember that, **1)** People die unexpectedly and 'prematurely' all the time, **2)** Christ could return at any time, and, **3)** There is a huge *numbers gap* between evangelistic Christians and lost people that will not be bridged if we only maintain our **less-biblical status quo** American church model.

This author, as *but one* of many *quieter* believers, HAS experienced all these things through real-life para-church organizations and one unique church in College, and is unwilling to settle for **second best**. This is NOT Pollyanna idealism or wishful thinking, but the actual prescription for what ails us. The problem is, we are deluded that there is nothing ailing us, because it's all we *see* and therefore all we know. Ingest God's word more, and take a look around. Sadly, **para-church organizations are dominating the American Church of God in these most vital and priority ministries!** God will judge His people and there are heavenly rewards to be had (or lost), depending on how we *respond* to God's revealed priorities. (Ps. 135:14; Heb. 10:30; I Cor. 3:5-8; Jn. 4:35-36)

Don't shoot the messenger if he speaks the truth, as *unpalatable* as the message may be. (Gal. 4:16) And as I have told many resistant pastors who sought to discredit this message by attacking the mouthpiece, **even if I were Hitler himself**; Titus 1:12-13 teaches us to **heed** truthful messages (especially if they are of such high priorities) even if the one making the statements were a false prophet, or, as III Jn. 1:5-8 teaches, even if you don't and may never know me—just a *stranger* hopefully not just *crying in the wind*.

There is no money being sought nor any organization being promoted by this word of exhortation, which may be why it's not standard fare. However, if you want more biblical information on these matters—**FREE of charge**—with *full* Bible justification, please join us at our website, Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org. *More importantly*, read God's word for yourself, and implement it more in your practice of "church." *What lost person* would not be spiritually attracted to that type of Christian community (as they *were* in the first century)?

James Meroney, M.Div., JD (further graduate studies at Dallas Theological Seminary)

SENT TO EVERY POSSIBLE SBC STATE ASSOCIATION DIRECTOR (APRIL, 2011)

Dear Director:

As Southern Baptists, we believe in the Great Commission. We even do Great Commission work. But **have we completed** the first step of the Great Commission—*evangelism*—in our Associational area and **can we prove it?** Certainly we can always *re-evangelize* people, but unless we are sure all methods we use have *specifically affected* every lost person in our area of Texas, we cannot tell God we **did our job** and hear “*well done, thou good and faithful servant*” on this matter. After all, it’s the Great Commission—not the *Pretty Good Commission*.

This task is **NOT impossible**. In fact, ensuring we have reached every lost person is not that difficult if we enlist every willing believer and start **documenting** all we know to claim to be born again. Then just *reach the remainder* at least once with the Gospel.

There is a biblical urgency to completing this task. People die *every day*, die ‘*prematurely*’ and *unexpectedly* all the time, there are *huge numbers* of lost and Christ could return at any time. It **should not take more than three years**, and America has not been thoroughly harvested in about 30 years. We never know how many hearts have been *prepared by God* in our own fields until we thresh.

If I am able to help you *complete* this task, based on my credentials and materials on Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org, though I am no longer a full-time Evangelist, I still have the burden to **get the job completed**—not just drips, drabs and pats on our backs for drop-in-the-bucket attempts. **I have yet to find one church** in America that claims they have reached all lost people near their church, and this condition is appalling and very easily remedied.

We do so many activities, even surrounding evangelism. *When will we see* our need to be **objective** in determining how successful all our efforts are at reaching ALL people. Jesus died for them all! **God bless you** as you consider this urgent appeal, and hopefully send it out to the pastors in your Association. **I am soliciting no funds** from anyone, but do not lightly take no for an answer, as there is **nothing else** we are to be about higher than this task, and it is so doable.

Thank you.

James Meroney, JD, M.Div., MBA, BBA

P.S.: Please **don’t disregard** this email because you *don’t know* the messenger, because though I am a stranger and even if I were a *whacko* or Hitler himself; III Jn. **1:5-8** and **Titus 1:10-13** indicate it is *incumbent* to implement **prioritized, Bible-consistent messages**, and you are on record as having received the message.

**SENT TO THE NAMB, WITH POSITIVE REPLY ABOUT THE SBC’S GPS PROGRAM (SEEKING TO SOLICIT EVERY BELIEVER TO REACH EVERY LOST PERSON WITH THE GOSPEL BY 2020)
(APRIL 2011)**

Dear North American Mission Board staff:

I wrote *over three years ago* that we Southern Baptists need to have a national plan to ensure every lost person has heard the Gospel in the next three years, and received a politely-worded brush-off. Now, three years later, we still have this need.

America has not been thoroughly threshed in *30 years* (though I am not advocating any particular methods, such as EE and CWT, which were used when it was last harvested). Perhaps a bit of Scripture referencing will answer your objections (unless they would be deemed legalistic or “bibliolatry”):

The Great Commission is to a person—not people groups, not access to the Gospel, not just attempts to reach all, but literal success... Taking the Gospel to every soul—in your case, every American (Mt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15). Nowhere in Scripture does God command us to *attract* anyone to our buildings, but only to go and tell.

Christ was not joking or asking the impossible, and the job would *not be real difficult* if every SBC church simply 1) identifies who claims salvation among their membership, 2) identifies who is currently being selected by members to reach for the Gospel, and 3) reaching the remainder on a community residency list (especially if we even more biblically cooperate with other denominations). Even with just the 5% of believers who ever evangelize, each church can objectively prove they have completed the first stage of the Great Commission, then just monitor move-ins, coming of age children, and re-evangelism, discipleship and other social needs.

We Baptists love slogans and programs, so perhaps you could call it the “**just doin’ my job**” campaign (Lk. 17:10). Not sexy—but *accurate*. As a denomination, we do more than the rest, but we never objectively prove whether we have *completed* the job. Every Christian lay person is to do evangelism (Ac. 8:2, 4, 10:19), and every minister/pastor is to do evangelism (II Tim. 4:5—a “pastoral” epistle!).

It took Jesus three years to mentor His men, and took them and a few others just a little longer to turn the world upside down for Christ (Ac. 17:6). We have much *more manpower*, for a county *teeming* with Christians. Several times delay over a period of time is *rebuked* in Scripture (Lk. 13:6-9; Eph. 5:16; Heb. 5:12-14; I Pet. 4:1-5).

Our urgency is based on the fact that Christ can return at any time, people die every day, ‘prematurely’ and unexpectedly (see your local obituary for proof), the huge disparity between the numbers of lost and 5% of believers ever speaking the Gospel to the lost, and the value of being “in Christ” vs. lost for yet another day.

If you’re inclined to dismiss this letter as the work of a *whacko extremist* or even an *evil person* (due to my tone), please realize even if I am a stranger to you (III Jn. 1:5-8), **or Hitler himself** (Tit. 1:10-13), if the message conforms to Scripture, and is highly prioritized, you do well to heed (vs. dismiss) it.

Finally, to *not* do our job, when it’s *clearly the Scripturally right thing to do* is wrong (Jas. 4:17; Rom. 14:23). If you reject the message because of my *tone*, please review the following reproof and exhortation examples—*when needed*—even by Christ Himself: Mt. 3:7, 12:34, 21:12-13, 13:57, 23:33; Lk. 6:26; Ac. 5:31; Gal. 1:8-10, 2:11-13; II Tim. 3:16-17, 4:1-5;

Tit. 1:12-13. Fear the Lord—He will judge us for failing to do what was very doable (Heb. 10:30; Ps. 135:14), just *less-prioritized*.

Let me know how I can help. Thank you.

James Meroney (Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org), JD, M.Div., MBA, BBA

Business Card/Tract

If ever you're evangelizing, and get '*stumped*' with a *tough* question, forward them to this **website** address to hopefully lead them to an experts' answer to that '*apologetic*' question—then you can simply continue with your Gospel message. Feel **free** to print the following *business card* on your home computer and keep it in your purse or wallet for such times (or consider ordering **free business cards** through vistaprint.com, to hand to questioning lost people. They certainly can access what I believe to be, by God's grace, the *best Bible information* they will need as new Christians thereafter, by knowing a central place from which to **grow, quickly!**).

1. **Business Card** (cheap at VistaPrint):

Will You Live Forever?

YES!

In Heaven or Hell?

PRAY TO RECEIVE JESUS FOR FORGIVENESS OF ALL YOUR SINS!

Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org

2. **Note** (for posting prominently and stealthily at churches):

Pastor (name) :

YOU ARE NOW ON NOTICE

of (and without excuse for) your *biblical* obligation before God to **evangelize EVERY lost person** nearest to your building **ASAP**, and to **change** the 5% of believers who **EVER** evangelize one person in their lifetime! (I Pet. 5:2-3; Eph. 4:11-13)

Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org

Let me know how I can help.

—James Meroney (MDiv, JD, MBA), @JamesMeroney or Meroney@Juno.com

3. **Business Card** (cheap at VistaPrint):

Pray to receive Jesus for the forgiveness of ALL your sins! (John 3:16)

CHRISTIAN: Tell someone Jesus' Gospel *today*.

They go to hell if you don't & their blood will be on YOUR hands. (Eze. 3:18; Ac. 20:26)

Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org

@JamesMeroney (JD/MDiv, MBA)

30. Giving

30A. Giving to This Ministry

NOTE: We are Not a 501 (C)-3 (i.e., tax-deductible non-profit status) organization, or member of the ECFA YET. Sorry to all who would lose a tax deduction for their donations presently!

Any experienced lawyer volunteers who can make that happen?

Donation Alternatives

- General Ministry Support (i.e., continued writing, speaking, emailing pastors, door-to-door evangelism, Gospel Signs, ‘world events coordination,’ etc.)
See: ministry activity list in **About Us**.
- New York Times Full Backside Page Prime-Time Ad “**Open Letter**” fund.
(Between \$53,000 and \$82,000 I’ve been told by the NYT).
- \$375 per American Church **10-40 Window fund**. (**See:** Details, below, at **28B**)
- I might be interested in purchasing either a copy of your discipleship and evangelism materials (or Commentary and Topication, or both, when finished).

Name: _____

E-mail: _____

All correspondence can be sent to: 4404 Caledonia Creek Lane, Plano, TX 75024

(Unofficially “EDBS Ministries;” i.e., Evangelism–Discipleship–Body Life–Social Ministry)

It is *envisioned* the following laymen-oriented ministry would rise up to **complete** the Great Commission, *possibly* with the cooperation of godly prioritized evangelists and pastors.

30B. Giving \$375 per American Church To The Great Commission Completion “*Financial Warehouse*”

World Evangelism COMPLETION statistics (as of **1996**) show:

“[There is an] ...uneven distribution of nearly 650 million **active evangelical believers**. [Statistics for] ...**nominal Christians**. These 1.3 billion professing Christians are not active in their faith. [Statistics for] ...**non-Christians within reached people groups**. These 1.8 billion live within reach of an evangelizing church movement. [Statistics for the unreached] ...**10,000 unreached people groups**, containing 2.2 billion people.

Each of the 10,000 unreached people’s needs a team of at least 4 missionaries to enable a church movement to be planted among them—so a total of 40,000 missionaries are needed. Each of these missionaries would need an average of \$15,000 per year to support their work. This means that \$300,000 million more is needed annually. Worldwide, believers earn \$4 trillion a year in disposable income. We only give \$10 billion of this to missions; about ¼ of 1%—or about \$1500

a year per church. To make up the additional \$300 million needed would require only \$50 more per year from each church! That's only about 50 cents more a year per person! (Once again, if the U.S. had to supply all this money, it's still only about \$375 more per church)." Be A Part of It, pp. 14, 36, by Robby and Jackie Butler, (U.S. Center for World Mission: Pasadena, CA), 1996

We are *extremely interested* in making sure the Church of Jesus Christ actually raises \$375 per American church annually—the amount estimated to be needed to COMPLETE the Great Commission (needing adjustment upward for INFLATION from these 1996 figures!). Such funds would be “warehoused” and overseen SOLELY to fund indigenous evangelists in the least evangelized areas of the world (and only so long as it takes them to raise their own support).

If you are interested in giving to this **most worthy cause**, please let us know and, with *enough interest*, a 501(c)3 non-profit entity will be established to make it tax deductible for you. Whether through *this* ministry, or others, **PLEASE ensure that the Great Commission gets completed** and fully **funded**, and earmark your gifts to such ministries specifically for that purpose!

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Spurgeon at His Best, by Tom Carter (Baker Books: Grand Rapids, MI), 1988

Systematic Theology, Vol. 3, by Lewis Sperry Chafer (Vail-Ballou Press: Binghamton, N.Y.), 1978

Tentmaker.org

The Gospel According to Jesus, by John MacArthur (Zondervan: Grand Rapids, MI), 1994

The Gospel Under Siege, by Zane C. Hodges (Redencion Viva: Dallas, TX), 1981

Tlogical.net

Walvoord: A Tribute, by Donald K. Campbell (Moody Press: Chicago, IL), 1982

World Shapers, by Harold Shaw (Harold Shaw Publishing: Wheaton, Ill.), 1991

On the 5/10/13 Problem Statistics

The 5% who ever ‘win’ one soul to Jesus statistic documentation (over 30 years stable, from 1975-2005) comes from 1) an Evangelism Explosion precursor curricula, 2) a book by Bill Glass and 3) Freddie Gage’s “Go tell” (only as to an estimated percent who have ever won a person to Christ). With a likely much more generous (i.e., ambiguous) definition of evangelism, modern statistics by the deservedly highly-esteemed ‘Christian George Gallup’—George Barna—paint a prettier (but likely LESS biblically accurate) picture. In 1993, Michael Parrot reported that 5% had ever won a soul to Christ (different from 5% ever having evangelized; **Book:** Street Level Evangelism).

We are NOT saying the human agent actually does the winning—only God does—but that terminology IS biblical! (I Cor. 9:22) And evangelism will not always lead to a conversion, which is not always the fault of the evangelizer. The 10% and 13% statistics (“5/10/13 problem*”) come, respectively from a Fuller Seminary chart on ‘nominal Christian’ data cumulating Canadian and American results (dated 1978, by Robert H. Winter, William Carey Library, entitled Two Thousand Years of Christian Expansion), and a highly touted 13% statistic from the late 1990’s.

The percentage of American Christians who ever evangelize have varying statistics (and such vary all the time), as with the percent of committed believers or those who regularly read God’s word, as seen in the following sources:

19% Active Christians. Baylor Institute for Studies of Religion (9/11/06)

52% Evangelized once in past year. So 48% haven’t Barna, 12/20/13

61% haven’t evangelized in past 6 months. So 59% have. Lifeway Research (8/13/12)

26% regularly read their Bible. American Bible Society poll (4/4/13)

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/gleanings/2012/august/majority-of-churchgoers-never-share-their-faith-lifeway.html?paging=off>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christianity_in_the_United_States

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/04/04/americans-love-the-bible-but-dont-read-it-much_n_3018425.html

http://www.centerforbibleengagement.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=23&Itemid=7

P.S.: Anyone can get bogged-down and argue technicalities on numbers, but no matter their findings, the HORRIFICALLY low number of fully committed Christians who regularly read their Bibles or do evangelism MUST CHANGE NOW. I don't plan to track changes in these stats in the future, but to CHANGE THEM!

32. Topical Index

See also: How To Have the Best Life (possibly on YouTube)

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33. Gospel Signs

GOSPEL SIGNS

Though I have not spoken much about the various methods I have been led to use in evangelism, the following pictures document the progression of thought in more clearly communicating the Gospel in public places (i.e., the small and excessively wordy signs rarely get used anymore). Thousands have seen the Gospel through these professionally-created metal signs, and friends and relatives have taken them to wherever about 3,000 or more are expected to gather. Thanks to John Chalker of Houston Arbor Care (now in San Antonio) for his gracious gifts!

Some of the many venues these signs have been seen at include the only vehicular access to the Houston Livestock and Rodeo Show (only one ‘forced’ entrance, with commuter buses entering every 30 seconds), the public opening to the then-new Mormon Tabernacle in North Houston, downtown Houston and 3 Freeway shoulders the day after 9-11, just outside the main entrance to the Houston Intercontinental Airport the busiest day of the Thanksgiving weekend, on the I-10 Freeway shoulder as traffic from San Antonio slowed to a crawl the weekend before Christmas, the Houston Marathon (right behind a locally famous news reporter who glared at the message, and mumbled, ‘not that’), the BP 300 (and MS 150) Bike “race” from Houston to Austin, and other select venues.

The signs exhorting Christians to evangelize have been to the Promise Keepers Convention, and 4 mega churches in Houston (including Lakewood Church, among three others), the global Day of Prayer meeting in Dallas, Fellowship Church (Second Baptist Houston’s son’s main campus after ABC revealed financial improprieties), and possibly the largest church in Dallas/Fort Worth.

I HOPE the reader will be convicted to do at least the same thing in your own town or city. Suggested venues include such events as finding the largest 10-25 churches in your vicinity, seminaries, Bible colleges, church Fall Festivals at churches, YOUR own version of my DFW events such as the 2011 Super Bowl, Byron Nelson golf classic, Plano Hot Air Balloon Festival, Christian Day at 6 flags, Texas Motor Speedway races, Dallas Cowboys’ first season game, Global Day of Prayer, Ft. Worth Livestock and Rodeo, Texas State Fair, July 4th events, pastor conferences, national denomination annual meetings, Christian rock concerts, evangelistic crusades, etc. (I trust you to be smart enough to decipher which events are for evangelizing vs. exhorting Christians to evangelize!).

P.S.: As a PERFECT illustration of how YOU can evangelize, I just learned my digital camera—how to use and download from it. I had feared it would be complicated and really didn’t care to learn, but just as these photos appear here (though primitively), if you’ll but do evangelism, you’ll probably learn—as did I with digital photos—that it’s not that difficult, and certainly my fears were unjustified.

P.S.S.: When my sons and I took the signs to Cottonwood Creek Baptist church, Allen, TX (a church that had *never* responded to my email inquiry as to the pastor’s commitment to fully threshing his own field for evangelism), someone called the cops, and again (as is typical when the Lord is with you and you are obeying the law), the officer heard our story, agreed we were breaking no laws, and said to commence (i.e., continue) with our prior activities.

God bless you as you join the fight of the ages. –Jim Meroney

GOSPEL ‘GO-GETTERS’

My close acquaintances and myself have taken our Gospel Signs to many public venues over the past 15+ years in Houston and Dallas. It is time to take this ministry national and ‘make a stir’ so the world knows Christians are evangelizing! Paul and his colleagues were certainly known for such, though they had miracles to help promote that cause publicly.

Purpose: To find, unite and organize evangelizers to significantly and publicly impact our city with the Gospel.

Goals: Make a public stir for increasing evangelism efforts, world-wide!

1. To inspire enough workers and/or actually complete evangelizing of all lost people within an identified zip code or small town (Ex.: Project Prosper).
2. To replicate this ministry in the 50 largest cities in the U.S.
3. To use publicity, marketing and the social media to inspire others in other cities around the world to also reach one complete zip code or small town (to ultimately inspire others that it can and must be done all over).

Principles:

BEHAVIOR

- Act, dress and drive vehicles that are respectable—not Christ-dishonoring or reflecting a trashy image.
- Because the Gospel does not condemn lost people, but presents grace for their standing condemned before God status, this organization does not seek or support singling out any particular sins as those which would sentence anyone to hell, and for that reason is it encouraged that members not hold Gospel Signs at abortion clinics, bars, houses of prostitution, gay pride rallies, gambling casinos or secular (i.e., non-church) Halloween gatherings. Also, don’t interrupt business, or slow down shoppers or intrude on private events (like funerals or inside hospitals).
- For the same reason (non condemnation), it is advised that participants not yell, or create signs stating ‘repent,’ or ‘America needs to repent,’ or ‘turn or burn’ language, but members always act in a loving and ‘professional’ manner. This does not mean Gospel-rejecting lost people should not be seriously warned about that bad (and harmful) decision.
- Gospel Exhortation ministry at churches is reserved for only people with a proven track record for being evangelistic, as hypocrisy can easily hurt this ministry’s credibility.
- Members/and participants will follow all relevant civil laws, including permit ordinances if informed such are needed. As a general rule, do not stand on private property, do not distract drivers or significantly disrupt traffic, and always stand safely away from traffic dangers (Ex.: bright, neon shirts can be helpful for visibility).
- Every activity of this ministry should be prayer-backed.
- Every new convert should soon thereafter be encouraged to be water baptized and to join a ‘good,’ Bible-following local church.
- Participants are not to be argumentative or confrontational, as lost people are satan’s victims, not our enemies.
- It is preferred that participants stand while holding Signs, unless events are to last beyond 1-1.5 hours (Ex.: folding chairs).

- Remember, some churches do not respond to any evangelism exhortations unless their reputation is risked by negative publicity exposure.

RULES

- To stay legal stay legal, either stay on public/government property, or ask permission from private citizens; always stay safely away from traffic danger and don't obstruct or distract traffic; dress so as to be visible, and sometimes permits are required (though "it's always easier to ask forgiveness than permission," meaning if a police officer tells you you need a permit, leave, though I have done so slowly before, to ensure maximum Sign exposure). This last piece of advice is NOT legally-protecting you—just exposing my own approach.

FOLLOW-UP

- Strive to have tracts available for follow-up/initial discipleship, but at a minimum inform new converts of our Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org (perhaps as a Vista Print business card).
- Any Gospel tracts used are primarily a follow-on and/or back-up method if other direct evangelism methods fail to secure an evangelistic conversation or communication.

ORGANIZATION

- This ministry is not something people join (like a church), is not denominationally affiliated, is theologically Bible-based and is not (for now, at least) a paid position for anyone, in which case any funds would ever be solicited.
- There are, for now, no meetings, except the evangelism events, though an annual fellowship/social could be arranged.
- Members are free to suggest and/or to organize and participate in other evangelism events for the organization.
- Members are fully free to participate in any evangelism events with any other organization with no concerns from this organization or need to even inform us.
- This ministry is to supplement members' church involvement, and not to distract from it.
- This organization can work with any other evangelism ministry in the furtherance of our stated evangelism goals.
- This ministry, for now, offers no formal evangelism training, but is more geared for organizing the five percenters who already evangelize. As always, refer to our website if such materials are needed.
- Anyone is encouraged to participate in group evangelism events, though it is preferred that they be saved/Christians. 'Membership' can be established, which would merely mean one is committed to this cause—not just a one or two time event participant.

COMMUNICATION

- Primary contact, for now (i.e., to inform of event schedules and details) is by email, though a website could be developed (perhaps by Venga).
- Cell phones (or walkie talkies) can be used to fellowship during Gospel Sign holding events, but not if distracts or makes holder look disinterested.

SIGNS

- For the messages to be both consistent and theologically accurate, any Gospel Signs created need the approval of 'management' (i.e., Mr. Meroney).
- In order to secure 'branding' in the public's mind, and to give the impression of a more ubiquitous evangelism presence, it is hoped that participants would purchase their own approved, positive-oriented Gospel Sign(s) for a cost of \$75, so more ministering can

occur in many places, and check-out of existing Signs could be more easily coordinated (especially geographically).

- We have a ‘you break it you buy it’ policy for the Gospel Signs, meaning if for any reason a Sign is lost, stolen or damaged, the person who checked it/them out is financially responsible to reimburse management for damaged or lost signs at current replacement value and with the same quality and Sign wording.
- Gospel Signs need to be returned to their proper owner within 2 to three days of an event, and can be signed up for or otherwise requested on-line (Ex.: email, to start) on a first come, first served basis.

EVENTS & PLANNING

- Events are to consist of a minimum of two to three persons, though individuals may check-out and use signs for approved solo ventures (i.e., not official group events). If no two or three plus parties’ schedules match up for any scheduled event, the event is officially called off merely by no member/person meeting with any other person to attend that scheduled event.
- Weather and Daylight Savings Time can significantly impact event planning and execution.
- Principal hours of operation are nights and especially weekends (according to participants’ work and home duty schedules).

STRATEGY

- Preference for Sign use will always be toward their being made available for scheduled events. This means personal or solo use of Gospel Signs should be rarer, and Signs should always be available for use, even if a scheduled event does not make.
- ‘High Church’ denominations can be engaged, though they should be second-tier recruitment ‘targets,’ as less reputedly evangelistic. Baptist, Charismatic and Bible church (and like-minded) denominations are priority one candidates for participants. Same applies to the evangelism exhortation event venues.
- Participants are encouraged, at least initially, to secure the biggest bang for the event buck as to audience reached, and least expense in time and money.
- Events are encouraged to be both filmed and photographed for documentation and promotional reasons.
- Participants are encouraged to share tips with the group on how to improve specific events, where to find free parking, what dangers (or permits) were encountered, and hours of most effectiveness.
- In general, any advertising medium may be used to barrage our city with Gospel/evangelism awareness.
- In general, do not waste limited resources hitting the same audience more than three (to five) times.
- In general, use more positive signs at medium-to-smaller churches, but always use what is needed, if you know of resistance(?).
- Events could be hosted in other cities, or during vacations(?).
- See <http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0763098.html> for a list of America’s top 50 largest cities (to target for Sign⁺ ministry expansion).
- Take this ministry global (especially the 3 mile Project Prosper plan).

METHODS

- Evangelism exhorters should seek to reach 2 services minimum within 1-1.5 hours, and ideally 2-3 churches a Sunday (with close proximity). Sign holding methods include proper-uppers, one sign with many participants (to draw attention), multiple signs at one venue, signs spread out to spell a message, many signs that are the exact same message in one venue, same signs in many places at the same hour (so the media might cover it), or repeated visits to the same venue till message is clearly in the public's mind. [or many people under a billboard, filmed]

RECRUITING

- Recruitment/mobilizing of new members and participants is always encouraged, and a minimum of ten members is needed for any of its events to have a decent chance of happening. (Ex.: EE or E3 members, seminary evangelism course students, etc.). Use Facebook, Twitter and Linked-In to secure participants in other cities.
- Church pastors are encouraged to attend.
- 'Members' are encouraged to ask friends and pastors to join them in door-to-door evangelizing (tell them to pray and observe only; maybe say their name and smile appropriately, until they get the courage to take the lead in presentations).

PUBLICITY

- Consistent group T-shirts may be made to make events more cohesive and visible/identifiable to the public.
- The media is always welcome to cover any event, but please have any questions sent to Mr. Meroney to address.
- With several of the same Gospel Signs, the desire is that the public starts thinking this group is large and 'everywhere' (though, in fact, it may be small and very public and efficient).

DISCLAIMER

- Due to the voluntary nature of this ministry, it takes no legal responsibility for any illegal activities of any event participants, and is hereby released from any financial responsibility for any actions caused by any event participants. All participants serve at their own expense, and strictly voluntarily.

Means (types of evangelism):

Group evangelism event types include (but are not limited to):

A. Evangelism

1. **Project Prosper.** A systematic, organized effort of several individuals, preferably only for four Saturdays (ASAP) to fully reach with the Gospel every lost person in the town of prosper, TX, those results being broadcast to the church world-wide by social media to inspire their doing the same near their domicile.
 2. **Gospel Signs.**
 - a) Highway Overpasses. Safely holding Gospel Signs (preferably at major artery intersections).
 - b) Drive-Time. Holding Gospel Signs at major artery overpasses during rush hour, AM and/or PM.
 - c) Sign Walking. Holding Gospel Signs (Ex.: downtown Dallas).
- ▶ City Hall apology sign holding, or street corner sandwich boards. (Ex.: suit, or orange or black-and-white jumpsuit; See website for pictures).
 - ▶ 95 Thesis taped on church doors.
 - ▶ Gospel Signs as I exercise outdoors.
 - ▶ Twitter and Blog.
 - ▶ Website-logo'd golf or dress shirts?

- ▶ YouTube videos of door-to-door, Gospel Signs and Go Evangelize! Signs Email churches and pastors. (Cf.: Facebook and Twitter).

B. Exhortation

Evangelism Exhortation. Go Evangelize signs at churches or public Christian events/gatherings.

Email churches and pastors. **See:**

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_largest_church_buildings_in_the_world

<http://www.sermoncentral.com/articleb.asp?article=Top-100-Largest-Churches>

<http://thomrainer.com/2013/01/26/largest-churches-in-the-southern-baptist-convention/>

Other Possible activities:

- ▶ Advertising-wrapped RV's.
- ▶ Advertising-wrapped vehicles/cars (including RV's and 18-wheelers).
- ▶ Airplane streamers. Preferable used in conjunction with billboards and city-wide events.
- ▶ Arthur Blessitt-like cross-carrying?
- ▶ Automatic phone callers (only if legal).
- ▶ Banners.
- ▶ Billboard trucks
- ▶ Billboards (**See:** John 3:16 billboards, at Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org).
- ▶ Blimps.
- ▶ Book signings.
- ▶ Bumper stickers.
- ▶ Business cards.
- ▶ Call all local Christians to meet at a public park to pray, then evangelize?
- ▶ Car window decals.
- ▶ Car windshield visors (with message).
- ▶ Carriable large helium balloon with messaging?
- ▶ CB radio?
- ▶ Chain letters.
- ▶ Christian radio and TV interviews.'
- ▶ Church protests. Placard signs held in protest of resistant pastors or churches?
- ▶ Company attire (See my website shirt at our religious website's 'About Us' section).
- ▶ Digital, scrolling sign with night lighting?
- ▶ Direct mail.
- ▶ Door hangers.
- ▶ Door-to-door witnessing. Jim seeks someone to video him in action, for uploading on YouTube for inspiring and training.
- ▶ Earmark 'tithes' to direct evangelism.
- ▶ Email churches globally asking pastors to fully evangelize.
- ▶ Email my resume (on our website) to every church (as it describes what needs to be done).
- ▶ Enlist professional evangelists?
- ▶ Facebook.
- ▶ Faxes?
- ▶ Fill-in as interim pastor to speak on evangelism.
- ▶ Film Go Evangelize! Sign events.
- ▶ Film of a fire-walker (for YouTube).
- ▶ Fliers on cars in (church and other) parking lots.
- ▶ Four color Gospel Signs (for upscale areas of town?).

- ▶ Gospel Banner (or for pastor park ‘debates’).
- ▶ Guinness Book record set?
- ▶ Ham radio.
- ▶ Hands-Across-The-City.
- ▶ Hot air balloons.
- ▶ House (or car) Windows (Ex.: At Halloween).
- ▶ Huge helium filled balloon with message on it (you can carry around).
- ▶ Infomercials.
- ▶ Instagram.
- ▶ Internet advertising.
- ▶ Lapel pins?
- ▶ Light-weight, carriable scrolling sign with programmable messages.
- ▶ Lighting for Gospel Sign night events.
- ▶ Lost people protest churches with pickets (Ex.: Why do you not love me enough to tell me the Gospel?).
- ▶ Magazines.
- ▶ Man on a cross display.
- ▶ Megaphone used at churches.
- ▶ Movie trailers (Christian movies).
- ▶ Neon sign clothes (especially at night)?
- ▶ Newspaper Op-ed.
- ▶ Notes placed in visited churches’ offering plates.
- ▶ Parachutes.
- ▶ Parking lot chalk art (Ex.: Ed Young).
- ▶ Pedestrians circling a church, praying (with some set, holding Gospel Signs?)
- ▶ Petition drive?
- ▶ Prayer sit-ins?
- ▶ Protest churches with Go Evangelize! Signs,
- ▶ Public access TV.
- ▶ Public Gospel tract hand-outs.
- ▶ Public park debates of pastor job descriptions including leading members to fully evangelize (with temporary, retractable stages, with banner).
- ▶ Publicly ripping up old Bibles (for YouTube, to show effect of NOT reading the Bible).
- ▶ Radio (ads and interviews).
- ▶ Rapid Response Team that goes to relevant public places upon serious crises (Ex.: 9-11, Ebola outbreak).
- ▶ Sackcloth dress suit (with ashes)?
- ▶ Sandwich boards (Ex.: Apology sign to city halls).
- ▶ Sign on a building?
- ▶ Sky writing (‘Receive Jesus,’ or ‘Go Evangelize!,’ or both)
- ▶ Skyscraper window lighting (receive Jesus).
- ▶ Sleep atop church building (Ex.: Ed Young).
- ▶ T-shirts (Ex.: as I speak or exercise outdoors; we use them to advertise our churches—why not Christ and the Gospel?).
- ▶ Tape a church grievance letter to church front doors (Ex.: EDBS priorities in our Executive Summary excerpt).
- ▶ TV/television (ads and interviews).
- ▶ Video door-to-door events for YouTube (Ex.: Go Pro camera).

- ▶ Voicemail?
- ▶ Website(s).
- ▶ Word-of-mouth advertising.
- ▶ Yard signs (if legal).
- ▶ YouTube.
- ▶ **Etc.** (use your creative and renewed mind to think of other possibilities).

Venga Ministries:

A former colleague was comfortable using the following evangelism methods:

- ▶ Megaphones (can be intrusive, if not spoken with grace!; never yell, or condemn sinners).
- ▶ Open-air preaching (in Acts, people were less busy, culture listened to such speakers and the Gospel message was new).
- ▶ Open-air music concert events with the Gospel presented (I attended one where likely NO lost person was there—that’s NOT evangelism!).
- ▶ Evangelism parades (Great Commission is NOT a party but serious, loving work; plus, can you find enough Christians outspoken enough for evangelism to put on a parade).
- ▶ Certified letter to the Nigerian head of RCCG (for Project Prosper workers; since he or his staff have ignored all my inquiries).

Venues:

a) Evangelism

Major secular events.

b) Exhortation

Major Christian events (concerts, National Day of Prayer, ‘Promise Keepers,’ pastor conferences, denominational headquarters and meetings, seminaries, Bible colleges), Sunday and Wednesday night church meetings.

Event History:

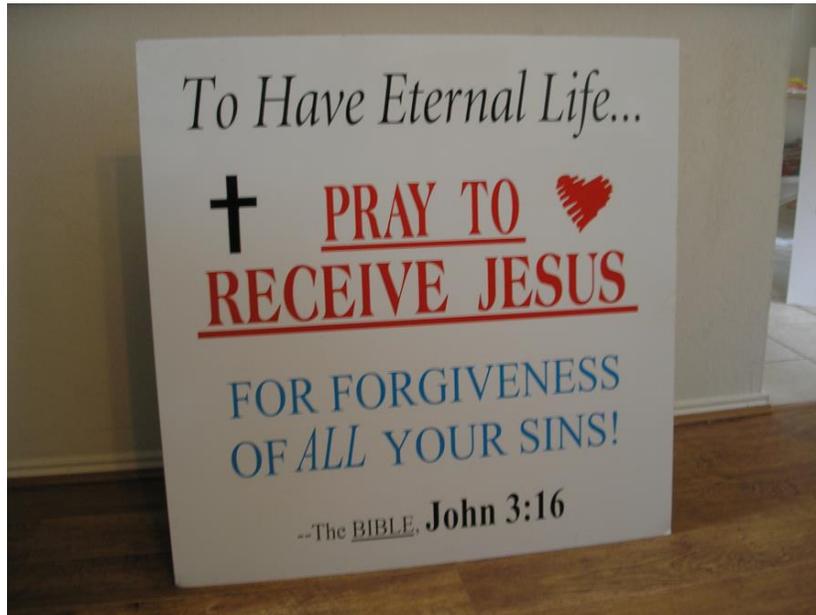
Some of the many venues these signs have been seen at include the only vehicular access to the Houston Livestock and Rodeo Show (only one ‘forced’ entrance, with commuter buses entering every 30 seconds), the public opening to the then-new Mormon Tabernacle in North Houston, downtown Houston and 3 Freeway shoulders the day after 9-11, just outside the main entrance to the Houston Intercontinental Airport the busiest day of the Thanksgiving weekend, on the I-10 Freeway shoulder as traffic from San Antonio slowed to a crawl the weekend before Christmas, the Houston Marathon (right behind a locally famous news reporter who glared at the message, and mumbled, ‘not that’), the BP 300 (and MS 150) Bike “race” from Houston to Austin, and other select venues. They have also been taken to the seven most-prominent mega churches in Dallas (including such churches as First Baptist Dallas, the Potter’s House, Charles Swindoll’s Stonebriar Community Church, Gateway Church, several sites of Ed Young’s Fellowship Church, Tony Evans’ facility and my own home church).

The Go Evangelize! signs exhorting Christians to evangelize have been to the Promise Keepers Convention, and four mega churches in Houston (including Lakewood Church, among three others), the global Day of Prayer meeting in Dallas, Fellowship Church (Second Baptist Houston’s son’s main campus after ABC revealed financial improprieties), and possibly the largest church in Dallas/Fort Worth.

Example Events:

Suggested ‘large’ events in DFW (with comparable events where YOU live) include; Allen Event Center events. AMTRAC Train station. Art Galleries (free days). Bank of America Colonial Golf Tournament (May, Fort Worth's Colonial Country Club—(817) 927-4277). Baptist

County Associations. Bike races. Bass Performance Hall events. Broadway Plays. Busiest intersections and overpasses. Busiest mall shopping days (nearest overpass or intersection, etc.). Christian Day at Six Flags (Ex.: Christian youth day). Christian radio events. Christmas lighting events (Ex.: downtown Frisco—lighted signs required). College Basketball games. College football games. Convention Center events. Cotton Bowl. County fairs. Cowboys Stadium events. Craft fairs. Dallas Aquarium. Dallas Museum of Art. Dallas Arboretum (Autumn). Dallas Convention Center. Dallas Seminary (Dec 17-18, last day of school). Dallas Baptist Association annual celebration (First Baptist Dallas, Oct. 19). Dallas Cowboys games. Dallas Mavericks games. Dallas Stars games (home opener or playoffs). Dallas Zoo dollar day (Nov. 22). DART train stations (busiest locations). Downtown Dallas noon hour (in good weather—not too hot or cold, to catch pedestrians). Deep Ellum Arts Festival (April). Famous politicians in town. FC Dallas Major League Soccer. Festivals. Flea Markets. Ft. Worth Sundance Square Christmas Tree Lighting and Downtown Parade of Lights. Ft. Worth Air Show (free). Ft. Worth Livestock & Rodeo (opening or closing day—(817) 877-2400)). Ft. Worth Zoo (special pricing or event days). Gaylord Texas (Christmas ice sculptures). Gexa Theater Fair Park music concerts. Grand openings (Ex.: Dallas’ new designer bridge). Grapevine New Vintage Wine & Arts Festival (April). Greyhound Bus terminals. Harvest America (or Dallas). High school sports games (and tourneys/playoffs). Highway Intersections & Overpasses: Day 1—380 @ 75, then 121 & 75; Day 2—Tennyson @ DNT, then Geo Bush @ DNT; Day 3—75 & Geo Bush, then 75 @ 635; Day 4—360 @ 30, then 360 @ 20; Day 5—35W @ 121 S., then 35W @ 212 N. (Ft Worth); Other days—12 @ 30, then 12 @ 20; 183 @ 12, then 183 @ 360; 35W @ 20, then 35W @ 20; Highway 121 at Ohio overpass (Fridays 4-7pm; park car on NW side road behind new Dodge dealership; prefer a Sign holder facing East and West, and covering toll- and feeder road). Haunted houses (night-lighted Gospel Sign needed). I Am Second/94.9 jog (Nov. 1, 8:15am). Indy car races. Interstate Battery’s Freedom25 Fest (~June 28, Southfork Ranch). Jehovah’s Witness annual convention (Ex.: Arlington Convention Center, 2014). July fourth celebration events. Juneteenth Celebration (near Tarrant County Convention Center—(214) 353-4445)). Kimbell Art Museum. Lone Star Park dollar day (~Apr. 10). Main Street Ft. Worth Arts Festival. Major businesses (entrances before and after work days). Major road construction (traffic slows down). Mall street entrances (vs. their being private property). Marathons (Ex.: Dallas, Dec. 14). MegaFest (~Aug. 20-22, by T.D. Jakes). MLB games. Monitor: NBC5.com, 94.9, 101.7, KLTY, FortWorth.com/events, visitdallas.com/events. Mormon temple openings. Movie theaters. Museums (special pricing or event days). Music concerts (Ex.: AA Center). NASCAR (Ex.: AAA Texas 500, Sun., Nov. 2, 3pm). Nasher Sculpture Center. National Day of Prayer (May 7, 2015). NBA games. NFL tailgate parties outside stadiums. Olympics. Operas. Parades (Ex.: MLK Day—(214) 670-8355; Cinco de Mayo—(214) 650-8381)). Pastor gatherings (Ex.: KLTY Pastor appreciation dinner). Perot Museum. Rush hour intersections (7-8am; 4-5pm). SBC annual convention. Six Flags’ major groups day. Southwestern Seminary (Dec. 3, last day of school). Super bowl. Symphonies. Tarrant Baptist Association annual celebration (Oct 20, 10:30 Southcliff Baptist Church). Texas Rangers (home opener or playoffs). Texas Scottish Festival (June, Arlington’s Maverick Stadium—(817) 654-2293)). Texas State Fair (opening or closing day; Sept. to Oct.). The Nutcracker (Nov.; Majestic Theater—(800) 320-1733)). Toyota Stadium events. Traveling fairs. Wednesday before Thanksgiving at airports (busiest travel day so slow traffic). West End Mardi Gras parade (Feb.—(214) 741-7180)), etc.





□

ARE YOU SURE YOU WILL GO
TO HEAVEN WHEN YOU DIE ?

PRAY TO RECEIVE

JESUS CHRIST



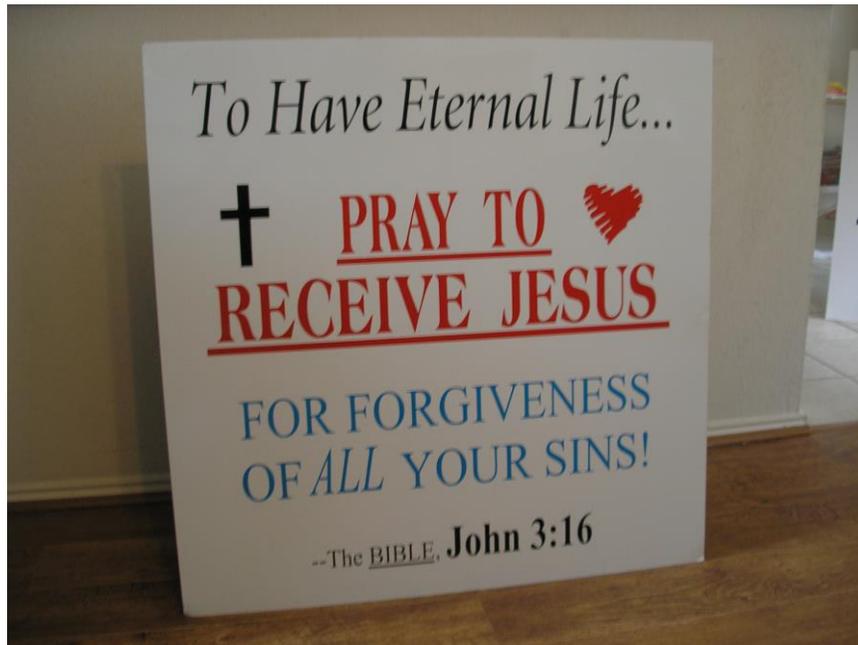
for the Forgiveness
of ALL Your Sins,
and You Will Have



ETERNAL LIFE







APOLOGY

Far Too Few of We Christians will
EVER tell ANY of you How you Can
GO TO HEAVEN... by, Through Faith,

PRAYING TO RECEIVE

JESUS CHRIST

for the Forgiveness of ALL Your Sins!
Most of us are too Scared to Speak
to You, and will Let you End Up
Eternally Separated from GOD,
in Hell, Rather than to Risk
Offending or Hurting your Feelings
by Bringing up "Religion."

PLEASE FORGIVE US THIS WRONG

For Not Loving you Enough to
Tell You About the Message of
Eternal Life we Believe,
and Confess to Have Experienced!

GOOD NEWS!

1. God Loves You, and
2. Though you are a Sinner, and
3. Sin Results in Death,
4. Christ Died on the Cross to
Pay the Penalty for Your Sins.
5. The Bible says that If you Will,
by Faith,

Pray to Receive JESUS CHRIST.

ALL your Sins will be Forgiven,
You will Have Eternal Life, Go to
Heaven (vs. Hell) when you Die, and
Have a Present Relationship with God



RELATIONAL DISCIPLING

Jesus preached to the crowds, but He disciple the 11, who almost exclusively ‘turned the world upside down’ with the in their day. So what’s the difference between preaching or even teaching sermons, and doing what Jesus did with His disciples, which we call ‘relational discipling?’”

1. Jesus gave personal attention to these men; one on one relationship-building in a small groups setting. They were not mere pew-sitters in a church building. Jesus knew them deeply, thoroughly and intimately.
2. Jesus asked and answered questions, even those specific to those men’s individual lives. He did not mass manufacture his mentoring assembly-line style, but customized it to specific needs.
3. He shared insights with these men that the crowds only got in parables.
4. And finally, the men spent time with Jesus (which is how some were identified by others— Ac. 4:13), and not just 30 minutes a week in a congregational setting.

For more on this subject, and the subjects I suggest are most potent for spiritual growth, please see Relational discipling, at our website. And, I believe, if you do not get other believers into a daily Quiet Time habit, you have not been initially successful at establishing a foundation for them to truly be disciple.

BODY LIFE (in Walk & Talk)

The Bible describes the Church as a family, a body and a building. What’s common in these three descriptions is that they are made up of individual parts working together as a whole/one. There is also, implicitly, love, relationship and life between the members. What is noticeably absent is any age segregation, pew-sitting benchwarmers, entertainment by professionals or anonymity and aloofness which disallows relationship or accountability. Contrary to churchianity, which I define essentially as sermon, song and silver whose success is determined by bodies, bucks and buildings, Body Life (as Ray Stedman described it)—that is, New Testament Church—involves every member’s spiritual gift (or gifts) edifying the body as a whole, and taking place as part of our main weekly gathering in order to actually implement the ‘one another’s’ of Scripture.

A sample of lay activities in worship services I have *seen*, read about or known of include the following, non-exhaustive list:

- Spiritual praise songs (perhaps even written by a church member—if the quality is good).
- Allowing lay testimonies (Ex.: an open microphone, within limits).
- Discussion groups or prayer amongst groups of three or four **during the service**.
- Individual prayer requests and *specific praying* for needs *expressed* (cautioned to avoid “TMI”/too much information or too personal of details!).
- Short teaching lessons by laymen from Quiet Time lessons they have recently learned (pastors gently *correcting* any theological errors, afterwards, if needed).
- Relating evangelism success stories (Ex.: Ac. 15:3).
- Publicly expressed answers to prayer (i.e., thanksgivings and “praise reports”).
- *Blessing* other members with a verse of Scripture God may lay on their heart for that other person (only if it will edify/bless the group as a whole—not subjectivism or authoritatively pronouncing ‘*thus sayeth the Lord*’).

- Laymen singing solos or playing a song on an instrument God may have “given them” to write.
- Words of corporate encouragement or needed moral cautioning.
- Public repentance of **general** (vs. specifically identifying) sins.
- Reverse passing of the offering plate for the needy to *take what they need* (if not abused or done too often).
- **Meeting each other’s needs** (Ex.: I once saw an older man give his used car to a needy college student, as she expressed her prayer request for transportation—right there in the “body life” portion of Sunday morning church!).

From the Bible itself, lets flesh out more exactly what that could look like:

- (**Rom. 12:10**) Publicly acknowledge members’ individual achievements.
- (**Rom. 12:10**) When people are down-and-out or hurting, pray for and sometimes meet their needs; volunteer to help, take them meals or give them career advice (publicly acknowledge needs and hook up helpers as a small part of the 10-15 minute period in the main worship service).
- (**Rom. 15:5**) Let select laymen teach a small insight from their Quiet Time (doctrinally examined the at least a week before).
- (**Rom. 15:7**) Do not have even an unspoken dress code rule that dishonors or discriminates against those Poorly-dressed no matter what part of town your church is in.
- (**Rom. 16:3-6, 16**) Handshakes (fist bumps?), holy hugs, go across the sanctuary to greet friends, brief fellowship conversations of Bible insights from Quiet Times.
- (**Gal. 5:13**) Ask about needs and pray for an fulfill them.
- (**Gal. 6:2**) Publicly confess struggles and problems (if willing). Pray over them and offer counseling afterwards.
- (**Eph. 4:2**) Forgiveness and reconciliation time between brethren with broken relationships (ask forgiveness and tell where a brother wronged you—honesty).
- (**Eph. 5:21**) Ask if you can help a Christian brother or neighbor with anything.
- (**I Th. 5:11**) Use Bible verses and promises to individually encourage people to continue doing good and ministering.

Also, prayer for healing (Jas. 5) and laying hands on commissioned ministry students, etc.

On a more macro level of the universal or regional Church, please see our ‘Vived Church Vision’ on our Blog, to see how denominations and local churches should be behaving toward one another, biblically speaking. In short, we do not know each other as community. Too often we are a big gathering of strangers, with no relationship, accountability or involvement (other than giving and maybe singing).

SOCIAL MINISTRY

Our big world has problems. Christ came to address and fix many of them, but never completely in this life. Though evangelism and discipleship are mankind’s greatest needs the Church is to fulfill, We—NOT government, charities or political groups—ought to be leading in helping overcome such things as: poverty, widows, orphans, the disabled, rape, murder, gangs, child abduction, sex slaves, over-pollution, discrimination, unemployment, hatred, violence, wars, disease, suicide, prostitution, drunkenness, bullying, domestic abuse, tax cheats, stealing, laziness, immoral politics, government waste, and generally all unholiness in our society. (Gal. 2; Mt. 25, etc.)

PUBLIC EVANGELISM

The HUGE need of our day is for Christian pastors and laymen to take a loving, accurate and empowered Gospel message to every lost person ASAP. It is not that none have heard, but that America has not been thoroughly threshed in over 30 years. As prophecy gets closer, it is consistent with God's nature to warn those He will judge and offer them at least one more opportunity to receive Jesus, and that message only comes from CHRISTIANS!

The greatest practical plan to achieve that goal is to get every Christian church in America to reach all lost people nearest to their church building. Ideally, the domino effect could occur if any Christians ever reached an impressive, limited and identifiable area (larger than just a named neighborhood), like a zip code or small town. Already, one ministry group has reached one square mile of Ft. Worth, so it CAN, should and must be done!

In Paul's day, miracles, a smaller earth and more evangelistic believers helped them reach their world for Christ. As a corollary to targeting a certain area, or just the area near your church's building, your community needs to know of such efforts, and especially, know the Gospel message, and we cannot responsibly rely on churches fully evangelizing their own area, so public evangelism efforts (as well as helping evangelize in areas away from your church) are encouraged.

Gospel Signs.

*****See our Gospel Signs*****

- a) Highway Overpasses. Safely holding Gospel Signs (preferably at major artery intersections).
- b) Drive-Time. Holding Gospel Signs at major artery overpasses during rush hour, AM and/or PM.
- c) Sign Walking. Holding Gospel Signs (Ex.: downtown Dallas).
- ▶ City Hall apology sign holding, or street corner sandwich boards. (Ex.: suit, or orange or black-and-white jumpsuit; See website for pictures).
- ▶ Gospel Signs as I exercise outdoors.
- ▶ YouTube videos of door-to-door, Gospel Signs and Go Evangelize!

Some of the ways I recommend you engage in public evangelism in your own city include:

- ▶ Airplane streamers (Ex.: Trust Jesus John 3:16).
- ▶ Banners.
- ▶ Billboards (**See:** John 3:16 billboards, at Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org).
- ▶ Bumper stickers.
- ▶ Business cards.
- ▶ Call all local Christians to meet at a public park to pray, then evangelize?
- ▶ Car window decals.
- ▶ Chain letters.
- ▶ Door hangers.
- ▶ Facebook.
- ▶ Gospel Signs taken to public events.
- ▶ Hands-Across-The-City.
- ▶ House (or car) Windows (Ex.: At Halloween).
- ▶ Instagram.
- ▶ Lighting for Gospel Sign night events.

- ▶ Man on a cross display.
- ▶ Public Gospel tract hand-outs.
- ▶ Rapid Response Team that goes to relevant public places upon serious crises (Ex.: 9-11, Ebola outbreak).
- ▶ Sky writing ('Receive Jesus,' or 'Go Evangelize!,' or both)
- ▶ T-shirts (Ex.: as I speak or exercise outdoors; we use them to advertise our churches—why not Christ and the Gospel?).
- ▶ Video door-to-door events for YouTube (Ex.: Go Pro camera).
- ▶ Website(s).
- ▶ Word-of-mouth advertising.
- ▶ YouTube.
- ▶ **Etc.** (use your creative and renewed mind to think of other possibilities).

Please contact me if you are convicted to participate and do any of the above things (at **AAorg2020@gmail.com**), as my great burden is multiplying the impact and calling upon the Church for evangelism workers—not just praying and letting status quo remain abysmal!

I will not be doing this ministry forever, and it is time for good men and women everywhere to also take up this cause. These signs have been to the following venues: the only vehicular access to the Houston Livestock and Rodeo Show (only one 'forced' entrance, with commuter buses entering every 30 seconds), the public opening to the then-new Mormon Tabernacle in North Houston, downtown Houston and 3 Freeway shoulders the day after 9-11, just outside the main entrance to the Houston Intercontinental Airport one of the three busiest day of the Thanksgiving weekend, on the I-10 Freeway shoulder as traffic from San Antonio slowed to a crawl the weekend before Christmas, the Houston Marathon (right behind a locally famous news reporter who glared at the message, and mumbled, 'not that'), the BP 300 (and MS 150) Bike "race" from Houston to Austin, and other venues.

PASTOR EXHORTATION

There is a problem so huge in America, that if we don't solve it soon, I fear for the future of our country, because I believe there is a God who is all-loving, yet Who also judges His people when they continue to rebel and disobey Him on the most-important matter before mankind, and that is the severe lack of evangelism taking place among American Christians, and especially their so-called leaders—U.S. pastors.

Jesus came to earth to save mankind, and died for that exact same purpose, and He has commissioned His people, the Church, to take His Gospel (or good news message) to everyone, as their ONLY hope for eternity with Him in heaven, rather than eternity in hell with the devil.

There are three lesser important issues American Christianity is WOEFULLY inadequate at and under-achieving, but we will address them in the next video. We'll start with priority one.

On a very practical, as well as theological level, it is UN-arguable that American pastors are ultimately responsible to God for this evangelism blithe. God has them as heads and leaders to represent Christian laymen under His authority. In short, the buck stops with American pastors, especially when so many other nations look to America in general to lead the world on important matters.

On that same practical level, who else on earth is MORE responsible before God to ensure the lost people near every church building in America has heard a clear, accurate and loving Gospel presentation that that local church's spiritual leader, by leading his members to reach all lost people ASAP? The answer, again, is American pastors! Said another way, the blood of every lost person nearest to YOUR church is on that church's hands if that person dies and goes to hell unreached by the members of that closest church, and their pastor is MOST to blame!

Very much on that practical level, as well, how else can the church universal ensure, guarantee or document that step 1 of the Great Commission has been completed unless each local church pastor adopts all nearby lost people as primarily his church's responsibility before God? Will evangelists come to your neighborhood, or pastors from farther away? Be realistic and go evangelize all nearby lost people ASAP, U.S. pastors!

So why most American pastors NOT getting the job done? Let's address some of the excuses:

1. I Evangelize in My Church Building.

TRUTH: He probably does, at the invitation time of his weekly sermon. Problem is, very few neighboring lost people come by and visit (most people he preaches to are Christians!), and even then, God NEVER commanded lost people to go anywhere to hear how to go to heaven—it's the Church's job to go and tell them the message.

2. Everyone Has Already Heard.

TRUTH: Many have, but can you prove that all have, especially those nearest to your church building? And even if all of those have heard, how many times should we speak with them about eternity (vs. giving up), if we love them? It takes, on average, seven presentations for a positive response, and the thief on the cross shows that God can be softening hearts to be white unto harvest even up to one's death bed!

3. That's the Laymen's Job.

TRUTH: According to Eph. 4, that is absolutely true. However, it is also true that minister leaders are to train and raise up those same laymen to do that work of ministry. A pastor cannot shirk his duty before God by passing the buck to those he is supposed to be training and leading!

4. I Can't Force My People to Evangelize.

TRUTH: That, as well, is true. However, has the pastor tried everything in his power to influence individuals to evangelize, till they make up the majority? Our website lists at least ten things a pastor can and should do, and I venture to guess most of them he has not yet done—only, or primarily just preaching sermons on the subject!

5. I am Not an Evangelist and This Church is Not an Evangelism Association.

TRUTH: By profession, and maybe even by spiritual gift, this can be true, but it is irrelevant. All Christians are called to do evangelism, and especially the so-called “leader(s).”

6. If I See Enough Laymen Getting On-Board With our Evangelism Program, I'll Consider That This Needs to be Addressed.

TRUTH: A leader does not wait for the followers themselves to gain crucial mass before he actually leads! That is not influence, but pandering and following! And even if a local church HAS an evangelism group (usually small, unheralded and meeting on off-days or hours), that is NOT the collective church being involved, and usually is not large enough to actually reach all nearby lost people.

The time for pastor excuses is OVER! The goal is to get American pastors to accept their God-given top-priority responsibility, and start implementing some plan for its achievement, within about a 1 to 3 mile radius of their church building. At the same time, getting all U.S. pastors to do so is likely a pipe dream, so it will require those who are willing to probably branch out beyond their own “Jerusalem” too, if we are to have any hope of all lost Americans hearing the Gospel anytime, if ever.

As a side note, a wonderful group I recently found out about has done exactly what I am speaking about, named Going The Second Mile, from Southwestern Seminary in Ft. Worth, TX. Their participants have already objectively reached every lost soul within one mile of their seminary campus, and they are currently working on the next mile out. Don't tell me it can't be done!

And no matter what efforts we all do together, at a minimum, American pastors MUST be put on notice and be held accountable to knowing of their responsibility before God to lead their people to reach all nearby lost people as soon as possible! Even if no American pastors ever agree to make this commitment, before the God Who sees all, your efforts are NOT in vain to hold pastors accountable, or even to publicly expose their decision to reject that calling! The ultimate goal is to find enough workers to completely evangelize one zip code or small town, so those results could be broadcast world-wide, to inspire others!

Pastors...

- ▶ Laymen can blame clergy not inspiring them, and clergy blame laymen not obeying their sermons, but ~no one is manning the Great Commission fort!
- ▶ The Good Shepherd leaves the 99 saved to find the one lost sheep. Many of today's pastors never leave the one saved to find the 99 lost sheep.
- ▶ If you want the privileges you must accept the responsibilities; the praise and the constructive criticisms.

- ▶ Presbyterian pastor Dr. D. James Kennedy had a vision of FULL evangelism & he was NOT crazy. Crazy are all pastors who don't share his vision!
- ▶ It is ministry malpractice for any claiming pastor to NOT know the spiritual condition of EVERY lost person within three miles of his church (with laymen's help).
- ▶ If you don't know who is lost or saved, how can you know where not to go or that all lost have heard?
- ▶ Even if Christ were not to have died for every person, Calvinists, you don't know which ones He omitted, so you can't omit any lest you omit one He died for.
- ▶ You don't evangelize Christians. That's like EMS personnel performing CPR or a cardiac defibrillator on a perfectly healthy person.
- ▶ An evangelistic sermon invitation as a pastor's primary method is like offering adoption to any outsiders at a family reunion. Leave your building! GO and tell!
 - a) Evangelizing the Church is like a Coke salesman targeting the national Coca Cola headquarters meeting. Fish where the fish swim, because they're biting!
 - b) Evangelizing the Church is like looking for a wife at a nun's convention. It's possible, but the REAL candidates are just outside your STAINED glass windows.
 - c) Evangelizing the Church is like searching for a glass of water on a boat while floating on the OCEAN! LOOK OUTSIDE YOUR BUILDING!
- ▶ God never said make the Gospel accessible, available to people groups or have a steeple within walking distance. He said go and tell everybody!
- ▶ The world wasn't turned upside down by people evangelizing ONLY 'as they went,' unless they were HUGE jet setters! (Ac. 17:6)

Disclaimer:

You will not get 100% cooperation, but you can get 100% completing with those cooperating.

Action:

So what can you, the viewer of this video do to prayerfully help change this situation? Let me first address what you should NOT do, then share a few tips that can help. You are WELCOME to try these methods, if you think they will work, but I have tried most if not all of them, and I am of the opinion—from years of experience—that they do not (and I don't want any time wasted in this venture):

1. Meet with your pastor and ask him if he will commit to lead the church to evangelize all nearby lost people ASAP. If he says 'yes,' stop there and start planning your targeted area. If he does not say 'yes,' expect to hear some of the excuses I addressed above.
2. Organize concerned laymen to send a letter to your church staff asking for the same.
3. Asking deacons to head-up a push to get the pastor to do the same.
4. Holding prayer meetings, as laymen, hoping that alone will lead your pastor to choose the same.
5. Earmark your gifts to evangelism and helping the poor, if you want to prioritize your church's ministry.

Here are some methods that have worked, either to hold pastors personally accountable (where they really know some people are watching their decision in this regard), or better, which actually effected some change in their leadership for their church's evangelism output. **Make sure you are NOT a hypocrite** in asking anyone else to do what you yourself do not do! If you

are not yet quite evangelistic, start there first. [Please note: These activities have NOTHING to do with promoting any ministry, books or website, and ZERO money is being asked from anyone]:

- Ninety-Five Thesis notes taped on church doors
- U.S. Pastors Evangelize Signs
- My resume send-out to churches (on website, as it describes what needs to be done)
- Email churches about the 95 Thesis (you can get a list of global and US mega churches by a Google search)
- Tweets to churches (especially with our Go Evangelize sign next to their church's sign)

Other possible activities include:

- ▶ Airplane streamers.
- ▶ Billboards (**See:** John 3:16 billboards, at Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org).
- ▶ Christian radio and TV interviews.
- ▶ Church protests. Placard signs held in protest of resistant pastors or churches?
- ▶ Earmark 'tithes' to direct evangelism.
- ▶ Email churches globally asking pastors to fully evangelize.
- ▶ Fill-in as interim pastor to speak on evangelism.
- ▶ Film our Go Evangelize! Sign events, and post them on social media.
- ▶ Go evangelize! notes placed in visited churches' offering plates.
- ▶ Go Evangelize Signs taken to public Christian events (Ex.: National Day of Prayer; Promise Keepers, etc.)
- ▶ Lost people protest churches with pickets (Ex.: Why do you not love me enough to tell me the Gospel?).
- ▶ Magazine articles.
- ▶ Newspaper Op-ed pieces.
- ▶ Pedestrians circling a church, praying (with some set, holding Go Evangelize Signs?, or our newest sign reading: WHWN will these Christians tell YOU how to go to heaven and avoid hell?)
- ▶ Place fliers on cars in (church and other) parking lots.
- ▶ Prayer sit-ins?
- ▶ Public access TV, exposing this problem.
- ▶ Sky writing (Pastors GO evangelize).
- ▶ Voicemails to pastors.

I'd like to show you a few examples of the physical objects God has used to bring about some change (along with our website and twitter account): *****See our T-shirt & Signs*****

- ▶ If you view our Twitter profile, you can see pictures of our taking the Gospel Signs and Go Evangelize Signs to various churches and public events (most of which were never filmed!).
- ▶ You will also see the exact wording for our Ninety-Five Thesis note you could tape on nearby church's front doors.
- ▶ You could adapt my embroidered website shirt to either start your own ministry, broadcast our website address, or just have a slogan, like FULL evangelism NOW!
- ▶ You are also free and encouraged to duplicate any of our Signs (pictured at our website) if the wording remains the same, and I can connect you to a Dallas-area business who can make a two-sided sign for about \$75.

Just like when I was on a mission trip in Cambodia (where lost people handed out Gospel tracts and one served as my interpreter on the streets, because he wanted to use his English skills), I don't personally care if the people who do these things are saved or lost—just that God uses the message to stir U.S. pastors' hearts, and I don't care that much what their motivation is, except it should be moral.

To see a list of activities which, *in combination*, have been used to bring about some change, **See:** “Successful Strategies for Spiritual Success (at Changing Churches),” at our Will You Live Forever? button, at AmericanAnswers.org.

Please contact me if you are convicted to participate and do any of the above things (at **AAorg2020@gmail.com**), as my great burden is multiplying the impact and calling upon the Church for evangelism workers—not just praying and letting status quo remain abysmal!

These signs have been to the following venues: Promise Keepers, National Day of Prayer, 7 major Dallas mega churches, Osteen's church, Second Baptist Houston, several smaller DFW churches (only as Twitter picture messages), Dallas Seminary and Criswell College.

APOLOGETICS QUESTIONS ADDRESSED

(9/3/23; @JamesMeroney)

*****(Further evidence & documentation at pp. 133-255)*****

Let's further address the 250 apologetic questions people have raised, found on our website:

1a. How do you know God exists?

- a) How do you know He doesn't? Electricity is invisible, but we see its effects.
- b) The Bible tells me so.
- c) I know and have met Him personally, in the Person of Jesus Christ. Have you?
- d) The fact that men come with consciences, though seared through aging, often, is proof. Rom. 1:20-21
- e) The vast beauty and complexity of earth and the galaxies tells us so. Rom. 1:20-21
- f) The order and workings of our human bodies tells us chaos comes from an explosion, and things don't turn into such sophisticated machines as our bodies by time merely passing, as Evolution teaches.
- g) Plus, WHERE did the materials come from for the Big bang or primordial soup? What, or Who, caused the bang, or evolving? Mere chance?
- h) Finally, YOU KNOW in your inner man/subconscience/spirit that God exists, and more urgently you naturally fear death, because that part of you is rightly worried about what would come next!

We're born with a God-consciousness, and natural fear of dying, and aversion to living naked! The Bible explains why, for all three of these phenomena!

1b. How do you know Christianity is true?

Jesus (in the Bible) says He is the only Way to heaven, and He never lied. God cannot lie, and Jesus is the truth. The Bible is a record of God's truth. Jn. 14:6; Ac. 4:12; Jn. 17:17; Heb. 6:18

And it is not a religion that we advocate for, but true religion. Jas. 1:27: Doing good, after having been made certain of heaven, not hell. That's why carnality is such an issue! It defies the reason God saved us. Eph. 2:8-10. Worldliness is an atrocious beast many U.S. Christians suffer from!

I Jn. 2:15-17 defines worldliness (love of sex, money/assets/materialism, and the pride that often accompanies these human "achievements"). God says a worldly Christian is His ENEMY! Jas 4:4. HE says believers' minds are to be set on the world above; NOT on the one below. Many Christians have made this earth their home, and where one's treasures are, there will their heart be also! But I digress.

Faith in Christ and living for Him is true, because the Bible says so. I won't write why to believe it (done so at our website: 'Why Read The Bible'), but if you read, you will come to understand, if you prayerfully seek God through that process! TRY it, today! And just look how it can change lives. (next retweet)

[Private account:] We had a man speak during the Sunday school hour who was a double murderer and served 33 years in prison. He was saved by reading the New Testament in solitary

confinement for 4 months while he awaited trial. He spent the next 33 years preaching the gospel on the prison yard.

2. If God existed, He would be impersonal.

You are assuming things, from some source! First, that God is a male, and second, that He would be impersonal. Assumptions make bad things of the assumers! It is correct that God is a He, but not that He's impersonal! The basis/authority for your conclusions is founded upon mere speculation! And it contradicts what the Bible says about God, so it is errant.

3. Who made God?

He is self-existent. He had no beginning. He is eternal and timeless. That's what the Bible teaches about God. Before all things existed, He was. He would be less than God to have a beginning or end!

YES, Jesus is God, and had a human beginning and end (for three days), but only in his mortal/fleshly form, when God came to dwell among men. But even He was pre-existent, as was the Holy Spirit, Who is also God/deity: Three Persons, one God/Godhead... the Triune godhead.

4. The Trinity belief is irrational.

It's what the Bible clearly teaches, and truth is sometimes above logic! Revelation truth tells we mere mortals that hell and heaven exist. No human has gone there, and come back to testify of it, but Jesus came down from heaven and tells us truth.

See: Will You Live Forever?, pp. 405-407, at <http://WillYouLiveForever.org>

5. Is the Old Testament God meaner or different from the New Testament?

a) He is the same God. Heb. 13:8; Mal. 3:6

b) In different periods of time, He interacted differently with people, especially the Jews. The more man developed, the more responsibility he took on for knowing what God required of him. It's called "Dispensationalism," and harems and slavery and murdering foreign nations in holy wars were acts that the Bible describes of earlier dispensations.

There are likely seven, throughout history, and we are to be the most enlightened. The New Testament clearly "updated" some prior teachings, just as grace eclipsed Law. Mt. 5-7 (the Sermon on the mount) repeats 'You have heard, but I say to you...' Jesus had a HIGHER standard that what came before, though most of the Old Testament is still applicable (NOT the ceremonial law, or things taught as surpassed by the New Testament). Same God; different interactions in different times with different generations of people.

Meaner? He is exactly the same regarding judgment! He judges in ways we attribute to natural causes, often, and He is withholding miraculous interventions so that the coming 7-year Tribulation is not validly criticized by anyone as too severe/harsh, and to give everyone as much time as it takes to get saved, before it's too late. Same God, displaying different character traits more prominently, according to purposes and needs of the differing times.

6. Did Jesus actually exist?

It's 2023! Approximately 2023 years ago, all history focuses on His life as the center point! READ the materials at our website, on Non-Christian historians who testified to His existence.

The existence of billions of Christians also shows their lifestyle and beliefs originated in time, space and history.

Christmas and Easter, as well, though often started as pagan holidays, have now reached prominence, because there's a reality behind what men changed pagan ritual days into! His birth and resurrection celebrated. For a reason our nation honors those events, even as not all our nation is Christian.

Yes, Jesus was real, both God and man, 100% each, and walked this earth as flesh and blood, and Who was not a ghost, a phantom or figment of one's imagination, or mere mythic legend. and the eye-witnesses to His 33-year earthly life precisely wrote of what they saw and heard (Mt.-Jn.).

7. Was Jesus God?

Yes, and I'll retweet my evidence, vs. reinvent the wheel:

Deity of Christ proofs:

1. Fulfilled Old Testament prophecies
2. The virgin birth
3. A sinless life
4. His many miracles
5. His perfect words/teachings
6. His humble deity claims, and
7. His resurrection from the dead. (12/22/19)

See: Will You Live forever?, pp. 408-410, at <http://WillYouLiveForever.org>

8. Did Jesus resurrect, or was that claim a sham?

I refer you to Lee Strobel's exhaustive work on the various theories doubting men propose, with their being accurately, thoroughly and authoritatively rebutted: The Case for Christ.

- a) NO ONE has EVER found His bones!
- b) Those who knew Him best became world-changers, after seeing Him alive, and people don't typically choose to be martyrs over a lie. Most of Jesus' apostles died as martyrs.
- c) The Bible says He was raised from the dead, and every Christian who knows Him knows a living Savior, alive in heaven, and soon-coming!

See also:

https://www.google.com/search?q=theories+on+jesus+resurrection&oq=theories+on+jesus+resurrection&gs_lcrp=EgZjaHJvbWUyBggAEEUYOTIKCAEQABiGAXiKBTIKCAIQABiGAXiKBTIKCAMQABiGAXiKBTIKCAQQABiGAXiKBdIBCDcxNThqMGo5qAIAAsAIA&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8

9. Is it arrogance to say heaven is only thru Jesus? Isn't that too exclusivistic?

- a) If that's what Jesus said, its arrogance to say otherwise
- b) It's actually EVIL to say something different, and it leads people to hells fire, forever! That's murderously evil!
- c) It's open to EVERYONE! No one is excluded from God's free offer of salvation and heaven through Jesus! NO ONE! People may choose to reject the offer, but the offer never cut anyone out of the possibility of never burning forever in hell. Zero are left out by God, from His marvelous invitation! Jn. 3:16

10. If God made us, He's to blame for our sins.

- a) He made us perfect. Adam chose to sin, and we all suffered the consequences in our natures!
- b) He made us not as robots, but gave us free will. He forces no one to sin, and 'the devil made me do it' is just an excuse for our bad choices!
- c) We're made in His image, and we can choose to reflect it, or to go according to our only one spiritual nature of sin, pre-salvation. Even the good deeds unsaved people do are not wrought of God, and are valuable, but not toward heaven's entrance. You must be born again. Jn. 3; Eph. 2:8-10

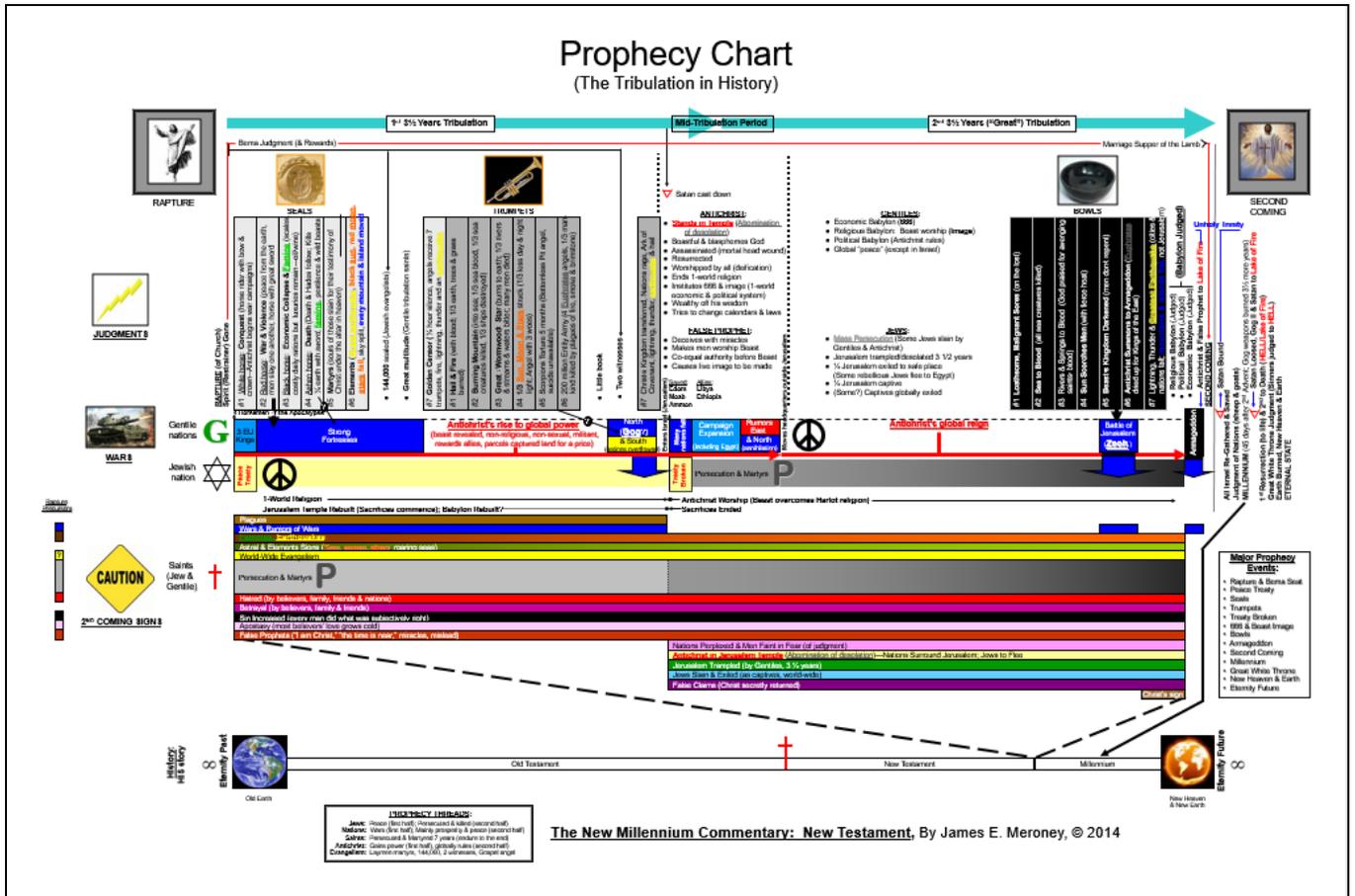
11. Why does God allow so much evil in our world?

- a) He does not cause it, but His will has four facets:
 - 1] What He wants and causes to happen
 - 2] What he wants and doesn't cause to happen
 - 3] What He doesn't want and doesn't allow to happen, and
 - 4] What He doesn't want but allows to happen.

He does NOT want the evil we see so prevalent! He teaches against it (but men have free will). He warns against it, and will judge it, in this and the next life.

And finally, He is letting our sins pile to the uttermost, so His coming judgment of the 7-year Tribulation, then hell, is extreme to NO ONE, but fully seen as just and deserved.

We live in a fallen world, ever since Adam. In Noah's day it got so bad God flooded it all (excepting ark passengers), and tried a re-do/do-over. He promised never to flood us again (the rainbow as a sign), but not that He'd never judge us again. It's coming!



12. Christians have a low view of humanity.

NO, we believe man was made in God's very image! We simply assert that ever since Adam's sin/fall, all men have inherited one spiritual nature from him, and that is our propensity to sin. TRY to live perfectly. It's impossible. WHY? Because you are a sinner (one who sins). It's your nature.

You cannot choose moral perfection in this life, even as a Christian. The flesh/sin nature is still resident even in saved people. Men sin; they have free wills. This is reality. News headlines confirm the truthfulness of our assertions, daily!

It doesn't mean lost souls can't do good things. It means they will inevitably do wrong, because that's their nature, post-Adam.

13. Is the Bible true?

Besides looking at our evidence, read Evidence That Demands a Verdict. And READ Pv., Ps., Jn., and ALL of it, several times, but start by knowing these limitations to your understanding, if you aren't born again: II Cor. 4:4; II Pet. 3:16 Make a list of all verses you find difficult, then be looking for our book, Answers to Difficult Verses in the Bible.

14. Does the Bible conflict with science?

NOT honest science. Science can have agendas, and biases, like rejecting the possibility of anything miraculous or supernatural. How many times have you heard science says do this, and years later they update their findings, like how bad salt is, or how much water to drink in a day.

No, the Bible doesn't contradict science, but God's workings supersede laws of physics and nature, sometimes, and the better our knowledge gets, the more the Bible gets confirmed. It says 'taste and see that the Lord is good.' Test it out for yourself.

15. Are miracles real/possible?

- a) If you've never experienced or seen or heard of one, of course the natural reaction is to deny.
- b) If you don't believe in, or have never met the miracle-working God, you would also reject such a notion.
- c) But if you learn of the God of the Bible, they're totally consistent with His nature and character. OFTEN, humans don't experience miracles because they're doubters, or especially because they don't first encounter the God of the Bible.

16. Does the Bible conflict with archaeology?

Quite the opposite. Archaeologists now, often start with Bible claims, then dig where they are claimed to be, to find old relics! There are books written that show all the archaeological finds that have verified God's word's claims.

For example, look at: Archeology and the Bible - Institute for Creation Research
<https://store.icr.org/archeology-and-the-bible.html...> via [@ICRscience](#)

17. Do near-death experiences disprove Christianity?

Those white light experiences prove or disprove NOTHING! The ONLY way they could prove anything is if people actually died, and came back from heaven (or hell) and told about it! Body parts failing likely cause such light experiences, perhaps even feeling peaceful. WE would never know.

Jesus came back from death and says what's on the other side. And even Christian movies that purport to prove the afterlife, from someone's near-death experience, are to be greeted with complete skepticism; they can NEVER prove ANYTHING, positive or negative!

18. Do difficult to interpret or understand Bible verses disprove the Bible and Christianity?

100% no. They are SO few! I've probably found 2 percent, maximum, and so many of them are pretty simple to work out! A handful still baffle me. I'm writing a book to explain these types of verses. And our website has a Bibliography listing four books that cover some, until then.

19. What about those who have never heard?

- a) Christians will be judged for them not hearing, unless getting the word to them was impossible!
- b) They are FEW and far between!
- c) Though they deserve hell, as we do, scant evidence is that God will judge them based on how they would have responded, had they had the opportunity. But there is mainly only Rom 2:14 for such a possible assertion.

One might argue, wouldn't that mean salvation is based on the goodness of man? No. AS much as God does to get people saved, He does not rape with His love, or force us to choose to respond! Forced love is not love.

20. Can you know you're saved?

Yes. The Bible makes it very certain. BUT, it is a supernatural knowing, based on the witness of the Holy Spirit within. It's not how much information you can acquire.

21. Isn't salvation by faith too simple?

- a) How simple or complex is it supposed to be? How do YOU know that answer?
- b) It's easy enough that Jesus bids CHILDREN to come to Him, and commends child-like faith. Ease or difficulty aren't the issue, but experiencing it for yourself.

22. What does it mean to believe?

To have faith, to trust, and wholly lean. Do you sincerely believe Christ died, was buried, and was raised, so He is alive, and that if you ask Him to forgive all your sins (past, present and future), He will do what He said, and forgive them all? Then you believe enough to ask Him to do so!

23. Why doesn't God just make Himself obvious, then demand obeying, rather than requiring faith?

- a) God is invisible. He has made Himself as obvious as is needed, in creation and conscience, etc. Rom. 1:20-21
- b) God isn't looking for robots, or slaves. He wants a relationship with the creatures He created.
- c) We still have a sin nature. If He expected perfection, He is working with the wrong people.
- d) Faith says I trust Your character, and I know only You can do this work I so desperately need, of changing my heart and forgiving all my sins I could never work off, make up for, or wash before You, as if they never occurred!

24. Why bother to pray?

Why bother to breathe? Why accept supernatural help, when you can blindly stumble and get by, bruising yourself banging into walls, being so arrogant that you reject help from Someone much smarter than you?

You pray because God has promised good things to you if you do. If you don't want good things, want no eternal rewards, want a rougher life until you die, don't pray. No one is forcing you to. Feel free to miss out on amazing and miraculous answers, if that's your sinful and dumb choice. Try prayer, keep records of answers, and you'll continue to pray!

And, by the way, prayer is the means/vehicle by which you express your sincere faith that god will save you when you ask, based on His Bible's promises.

25. Living as a Christian is too hard of a standard.

That is true, and God never asked anyone to do it alone! His Spirit empowers and helps you do so. On your own, you can do nothing, for no good things dwells within you, and all our own deeds are filthy rags before Him. Let Him live through you. Gal. 2:20

26. I'm so weak.

Even if you're strong, you aren't strong enough to go it alone, successfully. Weakness only means you realize you can't do it alone, and need Someone much stronger than yourself. The arrogant say they're strong enough, but their sins prove they fail going solo through this life.

27. I can't break from my sins.

True, and God never expected you to be able to. You're born a slave to sin. And some people have addictions and strongholds. You aren't presenting deeds as a gift to God. You're receiving His gift to aid your overcoming evil habits and behaviors, over a lifetime.

28. I can't hold out.

True. God never expected that you could. 'Enduring to the end' isn't a Bible verse referring to you holding on to willpower until death (but a prophecy physical survival context)! God empowers you to live the life He called you to. Christians can apostatize, but rewards are for those who prove faithful, relying through life!

29. What is the role of good deeds?

- a) They get no one to heaven
- b) Every human is expected to live holy, before God
- c) Only Spirit-empowered deeds are credited in heaven as "good"
- d) Christians are born again to produce good deeds. Eph. 2:8-10

30. It doesn't matter what you believe, if you're sincere.

Jim Jones' and David Koresh's followers SINCERELY believed the bull honkey they were espousing. A STUPID but enjoyable songs says 'I just got to have something to believe in.' No you don't. You have to have something real and truthful to put your faith in! Do so!

31. Sincerely asking for pardon of individual sins is all that's needed.

That's NOT what the Bible teaches, or God says. Salvation is NOT serial forgiveness, to keep getting re-saved! That sin confessing is for fellowship and power restoring! One is born again ONCE, and forever. There's no repeating it.

32. All named gods are just the same Being.

False! LOOK at how they are variously described! One religion has hundreds of gods; some are female; Jesus never said He matches the description of any other beliefs or holy books but the Bible!

One religious leader was polygamous (a sin); another was obese (a sin). Jesus wasn't just a good man or a great prophet. He was God, and there is only one almighty, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent God, even though men have dreamed up many "gods." I Cor. 8:5-6 NO alleged gods are Jesus, or ever can or will be. He is divine/deity.

33. All religions are good.

Most religions teach people to live good, or morally, but you would be hard-pressed to say people teaching others things that ensure they go to hell, forever, completely innocently but ignorantly or wrongly are "good" for those who go to hell as a result!

34. We can't know who's right or wrong in religion.

Jesus claimed He told the truth. He never lied. He worked miracles, rose from the dead, and claimed to be God. If anyone or any belief contradicts Him, it is wrong. He is the standard. He was right; anything else has to be wrong. Sorry.

35. You want me to change religions.

Not really, and not mainly. I don't care what faith you are part of, I want you saved, first and foremost! How that decision affects traditions, beliefs, and practices your culture cherishes is secondary, but if you miss heaven, all your life was for naught.

36. What about the law of attraction?

I don't really care about some such alleged law. You don't control life's events, even if you meditate or make confessions all day long! God is sovereignly in control. We make our plans, but He decides our steps! Pv. 16:9 You don't create your own reality, but can delude and lie to yourself.

37. Christian superstars are only after the money.

That is OFTEN true, always sinful, and such claimers of Christ need to repent! Great observation, but Jesus has NOTHING to do with their sin-filled idolatry choices!

38. Christians are bigoted, racist, sexist and homophobic.

Some are, but no matter what sins any Christian is guilty of, that has zero relationship to the character Jesus has! They just haven't emulated Him, yet, in the areas you describe! And 'homophobic' means you fear gays. FEW fear them, but all real Christians rightly oppose the sin of homosexuality.

39. Religion has sparked wars, murders and conflict.

False religions have, as with falsely practiced true religion. Holy wars are a biblical concept, but most cases you would cite are evil people abusing God for their own sinful ambitions, violently! That's evil, and needs repentance.

40. Many unsaved people are holier than some Christians.

That is 100% true! Salvation doesn't guarantee righteous deeds, and everyone's fruits differ. And lost people have free will, and some of the image of God remaining in them. It is atrocious, but what you say is a fact! It shouldn't be this way! Jas. 3:10

41. Is Christianity rational?

Much of its logical, but the exclusively spiritual, revelatory and supernatural/miraculous parts are beyond reason, because we serve a God Who is far beyond normal, logic, and evidentiary facts you prove in court. Anything less, and you've tried to put God in a man-made box.

42. Isn't Christianity a psychological crutch?

- a) Those who need no help from God go to hell
- b) Jesus is a very strong Person to lean/rely on. If that makes Him a crutch, I'd never call Him such

c) Christianity breeds bold, strong people who need nothing more than total empowerment by God; not timid weaklings

43. Christianity is out of date.

a) It's as modern and relevant as the fact you don't know when you will die, but you know you will die!

b) The message is timeless, though its events bases were about 2,000 years ago

c) What's popular and hip/trendy today fades some soon tomorrow! Don't follow fads, but Jesus

44. Christianity is on the decline.

Where that's true, churches may have failed, or it's just that 'sin will be increased in the last days.' Many people leave church, but that can be from sin, or because of sin in the churches they leave. Either way, Jesus hasn't changed, or "declined."

45. Isn't death the end of it all, and we just decay?

Your body decays; slower with embalming fluids, or cryonics, possibly. It's the end of your life on this earth! But, Jesus and the Bible says your physical death only begins a next life, in heaven or in hell, forever. Death is NOT the end!

46. I hate God.

You MAY hate Him, but you may just hate circumstances you blame Him for. I've had times I was angry with His leading, but it always was that I didn't yet see His bigger plans. You've been bruised and scarred by life. He wants to heal you! Hate the devil, who does evil; NOT God.

47. I'm my own boss, and answerable to no one.

You'll change your tune on the other side of life, but it's much smarter to learn that you're accountable to God for how you lived this life, before you meet Him face-to-face, in eternal damning judgment! Rom. 14:12 It sounds to me like you have an arrogance problem!

48. I don't need God.

NOT if you want to burn forever in hell. If that's your goal, do absolutely nothing different! You're right, you have the devil, and devil has you. You can be miserable with him in hell, but you're being played and deceived! II Cor. 4:4 You can't get to heaven on your own!

49. What's in it for me to become a Christian?

a) It's not a purchase, and no one is selling anything to you.

b) You are a hell-bound sinner. You NEED forgiveness

c) What's in it for any who will believe is eternal life, sins forgiven, and heaven forever. That's enough, IF you have it!

50. I'm not convinced.

That's OK. Many times in the book of Acts, apostles strove to convince lost people. Sometimes it succeeded; sometimes it didn't work. Pray/seek God, and read the Bible. By His grace it will convince you, more and more, until you get saved from hell, one great day, hopefully soon!

51. I don't believe that.

- a) That's fine, but what is the basis for your beliefs?
- b) Any beliefs that are contrary to God's are errant/wrong, no matter how sincerely and confidently someone believes them
- c) Read the Bible, so at least you have a BASIS for your beliefs; not just opinions and feelings

52. I have no feeling.

NO ONE ever spoke to you about having a feeling. You are placing your faith in a Person, based on the facts of God's revealed word, the Bible. Feelings come and go. Facts never change, nor does Jesus. Heb. 13:8 Trust Him, volitionally! Bad or poisoned food can bring a feeling!

53. I'll think about it.

- a) I pray you sincerely do, but have thoughts informed by the Bible.
- b) Don't wait too late, as God never promises tomorrow, or tells us how long the window of opportunity remains open.
- c) Is there REALLY something to ponder about avoiding hell's eternal fires, escaping for free?

54. The Trinity arose around 1300.

- a) The Trinity existed from all eternity and forever
- b) Christians' full understanding of the Bible's teachings on it came well after Jesus had ascended
- c) How long it took mere mortals to comprehend it somewhat never changes its reality and existence

55. God loves people; He'd send no one to hell.

- a) God loves all people. That's why Jesus died for their sins
- b) God can't lie, and He says eternal flaming fire is the destiny of all who reject His Son's free salvation gift. You can hate me for saying so, but you'd just be hating the truth. Gal. 4:16

56. Why didn't God just create people who'd obey Him?

- a) I don't know, but He didn't
- b) Human expression isn't full if we were made mere robots
- c) We were made in God's image, and He has a will, and He always uses it for holiness. We don't always do the same.

57. God will only save the elect.

- a) If you receive Jesus, you know you're in that bunch.
- b) If you do nothing with Jesus, you've chosen to be "non-elect."
- c) God never randomly chooses some, and forbids any from access to heaven, if they'll believe! He is not a rapist with His love.

58. Hell is a state of mind; not a place.

People describe horrible circumstances as hell, because the real hell is horrific, and Jesus said it is a real place. He never lied. One day you will know that, first-hand, unless you accept the only way out, which is Jesus. Jn. 14:6; Ac. 4:12

59. How can God send kids to hell?

I believe the Bible teaches that before the age of accountability (knowledge of right from wrong), they are sinners, but they don't go to hell, like aborted babies don't. Jesus had a fondness for kids getting saved. They need to, when "of age!"

60. Why does everyone suffer the same in hell?

I'm not certain the Bible says that they do. Being in hell is horrible for all, but there is scant Bible evidence there may be degrees of punishment, and that's consistent with a virtue God supports: Justice.

61. Why are people punished infinitely for finite sins?

- a) One sin makes all people guilty of all sins
- b) An infinite relationship directly with God was broken by one sin (Adam's), and we confirm his decision with but one sin. God gives you all your living years not to suffer for eternity. Do you take advantage of it?

62. Can't God force everybody to go to heaven?

He can do anything, but has never indicated He'd ever do that, so it's a futile speculation of nonsense that that will never occur. I won't waste time wondering what if's that are detached from Gods reality and promised actions. He is not a rapist with His love.

63. How can hell exist alongside heaven?

They're separated by a wide gulf! Lk. 16:26 They're NOT alongside. How God could make a great and a horrific place is His purview to decide, but He rewards and punishes, and that's all these two places demonstrate, though heaven isn't a reward for good works.

64. Is God an environmentalist?

He's more of one that many conservatives, and less of one than many liberals! The tree hugger type idolize the creation, not worshipping the Creator. Rom. 1:25 The pollute-at-will person is sinning against Gods assigned stewardship! Gen. 1-3

65. Who was Jesus?

In a verse, Acts 10:38. In short, the prophesied, virgin-born, sinless, eternal Son of God, Who died, was buried, and was raised on the third day, Who reigns and is soon-coming, God-man; fully God, fully man, God with us for 33 years, and Savior of all who believe.

66. Was Christ really convinced He was the Son of God?

As a human, for 33 years, He grew and learned. Yet, being always the eternal deity, He did know, but His humility produced self-restraint. Yet, He revealed His deity, too, by word, deed, miracle and claims: Jn. 8:58, 10:30, 14:9, etc.

67. Was Christ crazy (or deluded) when He claimed to be the Son of God?

Does the record show any indications of delusion or insanity? Maybe you don't believe He was God, but that's because you reject what God said about Him. That's NOT Gods problem, but yours. Align your mind with Him.

68. Did Christ, and Christ alone, match the identity of the Messiah?

For this answer you'll have to look at all the prophecies about the Messiah, then compare them to His life. We've done that in quoted sources in our answers to 250 Apologetic Questions section, at our website's Will You Live Forever tab.

69. Why is Jesus better than other religious leaders and teachers?

It is no insult to any to say they were not perfect, but He was. They were not eternal, all-knowing, all-powerful, and omniscient (before His earthly ministry self-emptied some demonstrations of such—'kenosis'; Phil. 2). He never sinned. He was God, and said so. There are NONE like Him.

70. Was Christ seen after His death on the cross?

There are at least eight post-resurrection appearances recorded in Scripture, and in one instance, more than 500 people saw Him. So, in a long-winded answer, YES, He was seen after He arose!

71. Christ was only a good man.

Good men don't claim to be God, if they aren't.

Good men don't live perfectly.

Good men can't save anyone from hell. Jesus can save everyone from hell.

Therefore, Jesus was NOT just a good man, any more than a Maserati is a pretty OK or average car!

72. Christ was only a moral teacher.

Good moral teachers don't die on a cross for sins they never committed, but for others.

Good moral teachers never live perfectly, and have never been God almighty, and eternally-existent.

And good moral teachers never claim to be God, because they are not. Jesus was.

73. Jesus sinned (Ex.: Mt 21:12-13).

Righteous indignation isn't sinful anger. NO allegation of anyone as to where Jesus sinned will ever stand the test of scrutiny of God's word, rightly interpreted. Jesus didn't initially answer a person. Mt. 27:14; Jn. 8:6 And He was stern with His mom. Jn. 2:4 Nowhere was He commanded to answer everyone, immediately, or never sternly. List His sins.

74. Jesus was culturally biased for whites.

Jesus was a Jew; not exactly white, and any whiteness attributed to Him is a cultural construct, if it doesn't conform to what's written in Scripture. It just so happens that many white people believe His teachings, and know Him, personally, in America!

75. What is the origin of evil?

Satan's fall, from having been a great arch angel, because he had pride and a free will which he misused. God allowed evil to be in the world, but He did not create it, nor does He ever condone or encourage it.

76. What is sin?

Anything evil, wrong, or contrary to God's character or Book/will.

77. There is no evidence of sin in the world.

You never hear or read the news! Mass shooters, murderers, lying politicians, hating, divisive voters, idolaters, money lovers, selfish, unrepentant sinners, everywhere. OPEN YOUR EYES! Understand and define sin, and you'll see it!

78. Sin in the world is not why men die, but our bodies obey the law of entropy.

That law came into existence the day Adam sinned. Ever since, everyone dies, except two people who were miraculously translated directly into heaven: Enoch and Elijah. We do wear out; we weren't created to/to die.

79. Everyone sins every once in awhile.

True. None of us are perfect. That has nothing to do with how you avoid hell. The fact that none of us will ever be perfect, in this life, has nothing to do with the believer's duty to live holy, until they meet God face-to-face. The assertion becomes a pointless point.

80. I am a sinner, but so are you, Christian--what's the difference?

Jesus lives in me; not in you. Therefore, I'm going to heaven; and not you, until he does. At a minimum, that's the difference, and the only one that matters in this life! There are other things He did for me, but that's numero uno (number one).

81. You are still going to sin after you get saved.

Yes, but those sins aren't separating you from a relationship with God; only from fellowship with and empowerment by Him.

82. God will weigh my good deeds against my bad deeds, and I'll be fine.

That's NOT what God believes or teaches. You're in severe trouble, and you could die at any moment, of unexpected causes, or a plane or vehicle crushing you, or a door-knocking murderer. IF God weighed our sins, you'd still be in terrible trouble, as one sin makes us guilty of all! Jas. 2:10. You believe in a non-existent "god."

83. The sins I have committed are not serious--I never killed or raped anyone.

Jas. 2:10 says YOU are guilty before God of ALL sins, and murder and rape are sins. IF you've committed one sin, you are guilty of all sins. It's good you haven't murdered or raped, before men, but your guilt before God is for much more than the sins you choose, before you're saved!

84. I am as good as others.

Great. You've joined the vast humanity of hell-bound sinners. It's not how good or bad your deeds are; that's relative. It's that you're born a sinner, and one sin confirms that fact, and makes you guilty of all sins. DO behave better than most, but that won't earn you heaven.

85. My sins are small, so why worry?

IF God says one sin makes YOU guilty of ALL sins, before Him, even your little white lie makes you guilty of every sin you could ever name. Your sin cutting you off from a relationship with God is much more serious than you can, apparently, conceive.

86. I have never sinned.

You just did! You lied or you are deceived. You're just not very aware of what sin is, or the many sins you have committed.

87. Is truth absolute or relative? What happens when absolutes conflict?

They are absolute. They rarely conflict, but God has a hierarchy of ethics.

88. I can write something and claim it as inspired.

True, but you can't live a sinless life, be pre-existent and eternal, raise from the dead, do miracles, accurately claim to be God, or write the type of things we see in the Bible.

89. Do Christians engage in circular reasoning (i.e., I believe the Bible is God's Word because it says it is).

Test it for yourself! We believe it is His word, but we have also experienced and tested it for ourselves, and seen that it is as claimed. Take that test, and see where it lands you.

90. The Bible was written to make Christ look like He fulfilled prophecy.

The impossible odds that He could do that are the mathematical SAME as the state of Texas filled with two feet of quarters, and you pick the ONE quarter marked a certain way. Read the prophecies, written often hundreds of years earlier! You can't conform to them that way.

91. Men decided the contents of the biblical canon. Why do we have no original manuscript autographs?

Because papyrus fades and crumbles, over time. But we have MANY fragments; more than any other book of antiquity. Of course men were involved. God didn't throw down seven golden plates! Yet, they were moved by His Spirit to write the contents, and the canon had very strict principles of what was accepted or rejected. Close relation to an apostle and eye-witness, etc.

Learn them:

renew.org

[Canonization of the Bible: Its Definition and Process](#)

[The "canonization" of the Bible was the process of recognizing which books were considered Scripture by the people of God.](#)

92. Hasn't the New Testament been changed since it has been copied and recopied throughout history?

VERY little, and mainly subjective synonym choices, like Jim or James, or ran vs. rushed. Scribal errors even make much less than 1% of any such changes.

READ this:

christianpublishinghouse.co

[How Are We to Explain the Scribal Errors in the Hebrew Manuscripts? - Christian Publishing House...](#)

[We know that there are mistakes in the Hebrew Old Testament manuscripts because they all have some different readings in them. If...](#)

93. Is it best to interpret the Bible literally?

Yes, but in the Charles Ryrie definition of literal (RIP, hero): ‘The simple, plain, normal, ordinary, direct, basic, face value, and everyday language’ (paraphrased) Figurative language exists within literal interpretations! Logic and common sense/practical wisdom.

94. There are so many different Bible interpretations; why should I believe yours?

Believe the one that’s clearest with the context, the whole of Scripture, and the majority of verses, clearest verses, and the character of God, as clearly revealed in His word! Test the spirits, and use sound hermeneutical principles! I Jn. 4:1; II Tim. 2:15

95. Don’t the two Creation accounts’ orders contradict both themselves, and what we know from modern science?

If I recall, one is a chronological account, and the other more of a highlights summary. I refer you to Dr. Henry Morris and Institute for Creation Research for proofs that they don’t conflict.

<https://www.icr.org/article/does-science-conflict-with-bible>

<https://www.publicchristianity.org/youth-resource/bibles-account-creation-compatible-science/>

96. Where did Cain get his wife, and how were they able to populate an entire city?

Try these articles on for size:

<https://christiananswers.net/q-aig/aig-c004.html...>

<https://harvestbiblechurch.net/blog/cainite-city...>

<https://answersingenesis.org/bible-characters/cain/creation-basics/>

97. Why doesn’t the Bible record the existence of prehistoric man, or dinosaurs?

a) It speaks of all creatures God created, which would include them

b) See also:

<https://bibleinfo.com/en/questions/are-dinosaurs-mentioned-bible...>

https://genesisapologetics.com/sevenmyths/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=googlegrant&gclid=EAIaIQobChMI1-e-1bOOgQMVVTHUAR1WygWBEEAAYASAAEgLulPD_BwE...

biblereasons.com

[20 Epic Bible Verses About Dinosaurs \(Dinosaurs Mentioned?\)](#)

[Here are 20 Epic Bible Verses About Dinosaurs! Are there dinosaurs in the Bible? Are they really mentioned? Does Scripture talk about their extinction?](#)

<https://answersingenesis.org/human-evolution/cavemen/when-did-cavemen-live/>

<https://creationmoments.com/article/where-does-prehistoric-man-fit-into-the-bibles-history/>

98. What is the probability that Noah's Flood actually occurred, given what we know from modern science and archaeology?

See:

https://genesisapologetics.com/sevenmyths/?utm_source=google&utm_medium=googlegrant&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIhojO9paPgQMV11N_AB01oAQbEAAYASAAEgK8NfD_BwE...

https://real-life.thehills.org/answers/creation-versus-big-bang/?utm_source=Google&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIhojO9paPgQMV11N_AB01oAQbEAAYAyAAEgIiIPD_BwE...

https://considerthegospel.org/2014/03/28/the-noah-controversy-could-that-flood-have-happened/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIhojO9paPgQMV11N_AB01oAQbEAAYBCAAEgIc7_D_BwE...

abcnews.go.com

[Evidence Noah's Biblical Flood Happened, Says Robert Ballard](#)

[In an interview with Christiane Amanpour for ABC News, Dr. Robert Ballard, one of the world's leading underwater archaeologists, talked about his findings. His team is scouring the depths of the...](#)

99. Is the existence of the Jewish nation proof of the Bible's inspiration as a fulfillment of prophecy?

The totality of Scripture is its inspiration proof, but Israel as a modern nation, dispersed for almost 2,000 years, is one piece of and among further evidence.

https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1023&context=pretrib_arch...

100. The Gospel is irrelevant for social issues.

- a) Until your eternity is set, you have no basis for this-life decisions, for you can die at any time.
- b) The gospel is NOT divorced from all the other teachings of the New Testament, which address morals related to social issues!

101. The Gospel message has been disproved.

By who?; when?; where? what document/book? No, it actually has not. People have tried, but Jesus' bones have never been found, never will be, and His life impact on those who know Him can't be disputed (though other people can and have influenced others, some; not nearly as much).

102. Luke-Acts was written before the Gnostics allowed the Book of John to enter the canon. The message of the Synoptics differs from John's Gospel, and the Synoptics are the true Gospel.

FALSE! All four gospels are consistent (with variant emphases), and equally inspired.

103. Jews wrote the New Testament (presumably meaning they were inaccurate or biased).

- a) Jewish Christians
- b) They're no less accurate based on nationality

c) Jews would be more biased against promoting Jesus accurately, as Jews saw Jesus as a threat to their religious traditions

104. Biblical writers were biased/partial.

Personal isn't a synonym of partial. Experiencing something doesn't mean you're incapable of accurately describing it. For example, have you ever been married? If anything, their self-deprecating statements show attempts to be completely honest, and sugar coat nothing! That's called objectivity.

105. The Gospel's appeal is based on the ultimate fear tactic (hell), vs. the love of God.

- a) UN-true, but maybe in the way someone inaccurately presented it to you.
- b) However, omitting telling people the risks of rejecting Jesus is incompetence, as hell is real.
- c) Gods' love sent Jesus to the cross for you, and He would have gone just for you, though He went for all.

106. Which Bible do you believe in?

The canonized Old and New Testament. NOT the Apocrypha, or any other religious books others add, which are not on par, inspiration-wise. Genesis-Revelation ONLY.

107. Can the biographies (Gospels) of Jesus be trusted? Do they hold up under scrutiny? Were Jesus' biographies preserved for us?

See:

<https://influencemagazine.com/Practice/The-Reliability-of-the-Gospels>

youtube.com

Are the Gospels Reliable Biographies of Jesus? Dr. Craig Keener

The Gospels are widely accepted to be ancient biographies of Jesus. But, many scholars have not considered what this classification means for the reliability...

<https://quizlet.com/312729210/case-for-christ-concepts-flash-cards/...>

108. Is there credible evidence for Christ outside the biographies of Christ?

See: <https://www.josh.org/evidence-jesus-lived/>

<https://bigthink.com/thinking/was-jesus-real/>

<https://aleteia.org/2018/04/12/heres-the-historical-evidence-from-non-christian-sources-that-jesus-lived-and-died/>

mormonr.org

[Historicity of Jesus](#)

[Was Jesus a real, historical person? Are there non-Biblical accounts attesting to the historicity of Jesus? What is the consensus of biblical scholars on the historicity of Jesus?](#)

109. The Bible is not intellectual enough for me (i.e., it's too simplistic).

With ALL due respect, I suspect you are not speaking from having read it all! There are several intellectual challenges it has taken people years to figure out, and/or to get consensus on. Read more Bible.

110. The Bible is a story book. That stuff is for children.

- a) There are many historic non-fiction recountings in the Good Book
- b) Made up imaginative fiction stories aren't therein
- c) God's word is glowingly offered to innocents/children, but also for all men/humans

111. The Bible has some weird beliefs and ethics (Ex.: God is male), including belief in miracles.

"Weird" is how you are defining concepts you are unfamiliar with, or haven't experienced, like a miracle-working supernatural God. Christians might think you "weird" for facing hell unafraid!

112. You call yourself educated, yet still believe in a literal 6-day Creation story and a 6,000 year old earth?

- a) My beliefs about Creation could never defy my secular educational achievements. They're unrelated.
- b) The belief that what we see happened over billions of years is simply a myth that such sophisticated things as humans and the galaxies randomly formed from materials that got there from some unknowable original source!?
- c) How God created (spoke into existence, ex nihilo) was instant maturity, like Adam and Eve as adults. Evolution posits maturity over eons.

113. I'm going to live forever through electro cryonics or time machines.

Those two imperfect or not even yet created inventions will NEVER keep you alive forever. They may keep your dead body preserved longer, but your soul will never return to it, except at the resurrection of the dead.

bethinking.org

[The Evidence for Christianity](#)

[A 40 minute talk presenting evidence for the truth of Christianity. Followed by 30 minutes Q&A.](#)

114. Do you believe in the Shroud of Turin?(i.e., that it's authentic/the real thing/Christ's burial cloth).

Whether it is or isn't changes no Bible facts, so I don't care. If you do, read this:

[https://returntoorder.org/2022/05/carbon-14-dating-method-is-outdated-new-evidence-defends-authenticity-of-the-shroud-of-turin/...](https://returntoorder.org/2022/05/carbon-14-dating-method-is-outdated-new-evidence-defends-authenticity-of-the-shroud-of-turin/) <https://history.com/news/shroud-turin-forensic-study-not-jesus-burial-cloth...> I don't need mementos to bolster faith.

history.com

[Shroud of Turin Isn't Jesus' Burial Cloth, Claims Forensic Study | HISTORY](#)

[The latest analysis adds to a centuries-long debate over the shroud's authenticity.](#)

Gospels reliability: <https://bible.org/article/historical-reliability-gospels...>

115. Why did Christ have to die on a cross for me to go to heaven?

God has always demanded blood for sin atonement. Lambs were often used as symbols, in the Old Testament. The spotless/sinless Lambs death paid the price YOU owed to God for your sins. You can pay it in hell, or let His payment cover your sins.

116. Why did Christ have to shed blood?

Because God has said, "Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins." Heb. 9:22 There's punishment due and owed for unforgiven sins.

117. How can the death of one man 2,000 years ago help me today?

- a) Because it was made for everyone who ever lived, and,
- b) Because He is alive, in heaven, today; ready and willing to forgive

118. What is salvation?

- a) Receiving eternal life as a free gift
- b) ALL sins forgiven
- c) Knowing and starting a relationship with God through Jesus
- d) Heaven secured for your certain afterlife; and not hell
- e) Receiving a new nature and identity; being made a new creation, instantly, by being born again. By the way, you must be born again! Jn. 3:3

119. Why would God give you the only reward which alone motivates men to live good?

- a) Heaven is NOT a reward for doing good, just as
- b) Hell is not a threat so you won't do bad
- c) Heaven is for those who receive salvation, and hell is punishment for sin, for those who rejected salvation.

120. What must I do to be saved?

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved. and let your family learn this, as well! Ac. 16:31 Trust Him to save you from hell, based on His death, burial and resurrection, and promises to do so. I Cor. 15:1-8a

121. Should Christians give away all their possessions?

- a) Usually not!
- b) If God insists on it, sort of like the widow's mite, better to obey God than man
- c) Being willing to abandon possessions is a requirement for discipleship, so the heart has no idols above Jesus as #1. Mt. 19:21

122. What makes Christian conversion valid? Can't it be explained psychologically?

- a) You can't psyche yourself into securing heaven, or force your entry there. You'd only deceive yourself that you're going! You also can't stir up the supernatural power of God's Spirit to change behaviors, by psychological manipulation.
- b) What makes the experience real is that a real God really does change your inner man/spirit, and begins dwelling within a person's heart. That miraculous transaction occurs instantly, and no amount of hypnosis can bring forth the same effects.

123. Can Christianity be proved?

See:

<https://time.com/77676/why-science-does-not-disprove-god/...>

<https://gotquestions.org/Does-God-exist.html...> <https://bethinking.org/is-christianity-true/the-evidence-for-christianity...>

You've also got to define "proof," and the level required (of at the 3 courts use); reasonable doubt, preponderance of the evidence, and clear and convincing evidence.

124. That's easy believism. I can believe for, say, five minutes, then return to a life of sin?

- a) You are believing for eternal life, and receiving eternal life, for certain and forever.
- b) Apostatizing to a sinful life is always a possibility, with a sin nature and free will, but you're never morally free to do so, without hefty consequences in this and the next life, nor is that ever to be encouraged! Heaven as eternal fire insurance is that, but is also so much more than that, if you ever read the Bible.

125. There have to be strings attached to this "gift."

Your human experience with fallen/sinful humans has you predisposed to fear that's the case, but that's what's so amazing about grace. You are so incapable of doing anything "good" before God, being a fallen sinner, that God has to do everything for you (if you allow Him to)! And it's free; there's no gotcha or catch! Rom 10:11

126. Is baptism necessary for salvation?

Spiritual baptism (i.e., receiving the Holy Spirit) is. Water baptism is a symbol of that death, burial and resurrection to new life, but it does not save, so it can never be said to be required to be saved, Campbellite claims notwithstanding.

127. There are things I must do before I become a Christian.

Like what? There's NOTHING more important than ensuring you don't go to hell, God forbid, even today, were something unforeseen to happen to you! Nothing.

128. God can save people without human intervention.

He can; He NEVER promised that He would, and never says for anyone to depend on Him doing so.

129. Isn't God going to save everybody in the final analysis, anyway?

Universalism; one of the devil's great deceptive myth (lies). WHY would God allow unforgiven people the same destiny as those who prayed to receive His Son? And if God can't lie, He never lied that hell is real for all unforgiven sinners. You may feel good about yourself, thinking there's another option after death, like Purgatory or Universalism, but you must know before you die that those are untrue. Hell is real!

130. What's the big deal about salvation—you may lose it later anyway?

Once it is possessed, it can never be dispossessed, because no one is stronger than the God Who holds the believe securely in His hands. It's only as big a deal as not going to hell, but heaven. It's EVERYTHING!

131. I think you're making too big a fuss about this.

Perhaps some zealous person can overly speak to you about the gospel, but *someone* doing so can never be overdone, until you positively respond, because getting you out of the risk of hell is all life is about, until that occurs—if ever!

132. What do you know of Greek, Hebrew of textual criticism? (i.e., are you a Bible scholar?).

I've studied all of those. Most evangelizers have not, but they need not to understand what you need, which is a simple and clear presentation of the eternal gospel. A child can believe. It's no more intellectually complicated or detailed, academic or scholarly than that!

133. You can know God without "receiving Christ," or being "born again."

You can know of or about Him, or maybe even feel like you know Him, but not in the way He requires for heaven. Intimate, direct, one-on-one, real.

134. Why are we here? Why did God make us?

Until you're saved, your purpose for having been here will all have been wasted and in vain, as your life will be forever lost. God made us to be in relationship with Him, and to do His will. You can't, remaining unsaved. Fulfill your purpose for being.

135. Heaven and hell are not real. I don't believe in them.

- a) Your belief doesn't make them exist/real, or not exist. It's only a position or feeling you randomly have, or choose.
- b) The sinless, never lying, miraculous God of all, Who rose from the grave says they both exist. He (Jesus) would know way more than you, I, or any humans, combined, as He came down from heaven, and descended into the lower depths, only to rise again on the third day.

136. The devil is not real. Are you one of those who believe there's a demon behind every doorstep?

I do NOT believe a demon is behind every evil choice, disease, bad circumstance, or negative emotion! But your stating that the devil isn't real is proof he is successful at his schemes toward you! Jesus and the Bible both attest to his reality, as does the ever-present prevalence of sin in our world.

137. If satan does exist, so what?

Number one, he has deceived the minds of the unbelieving, as he wants as many humans as possible joining him in the forever fires of hell. His purpose is to steal, kill and destroy. Jn. 10:10 You can deny his existence, but your evil deeds prove his power over you, as slave-master/boss.

138. Isn't demon-possession really mental illness?

I believe, in many cases, modern psychology has diagnosed mild demonic oppression. But in rare and severe cases, it's clearly more than that! First century people didn't have our medicines or brain studies; but they are we are subject to demonic activity, even if the psyche is somewhat or mainly involved.

139. Respect others' beliefs (i.e., "tolerance").

Respect that people want to obey a god, and do right, and have historic traditions and practices. You don't have to accept them, or value them highly when they destine adherents to hell! That's not worthy of high regard, but praising satan, spiritually/ultimately.

140. Religion is whatever you feel is right.

Maybe religion can be, but heaven vs. hell, through Jesus, is not. People feel justified murdering masses of people they don't believe like, or like. Whatever your standards of morality are, they'll never get you out of hell, even if you follow them perfectly.

141. That's your opinion.

It is my opinion, but for good reason, and based in authority. Much more importantly, it is God's opinion, and what He thinks is all that matters!

142. Everyone has God in them.

Every human has some residual image of God remaining, which they were created in. However, you only have God dwelling within you if you ask Him to do so, by Christ's work on the cross. People also have a lot of satan in them, as our evil deeds show.

143. Everyone must live by his own moral compass.

It's good to obey your conscience (if consistent with the Bible), but the heart is deceitfully wicked, and consciences can grow cold and get seared. Even perfect obeying of conscience will never secure heaven for anyone, so behaving morally has its limits, called hell.

144. I'm seeking, but I cannot find Christ.

I respect that attitude, and trust it's sincere. If so, you have to have been looking in the wrong places, for God is not far away from any of us, if you learn His message for how to meet Him, directly and personally, today! Jer. 29:13; II Cor. 6:2

145. Wouldn't the world be boring if all believed the same, and no one had any fun?

Christianity is not anti-fun, but anti immoral fun. And if everyone believed the same about clothes to wear, yes, that would be boring. But about eternal things? That's necessary, to be accurate about life.

146. Jesus is going to solve every problem, and I'll enjoy a life on a bed of roses thereafter, in Paradise.

He is, and maybe heaven will be good for you, but NOT fully, if you're just waiting for His return, and not serving Him in this life. There's a Bema judgment for believers' deeds, and lost rewards.

147. All Americans know the story of Jesus.

With less church-going, and generations X-Z, that's un-true. And just knowing the story saves no one. It's not being aware of the facts, but being related to the Person, that changes everything. That requires a faith decision.

148. I know God already. I'm a church member, and attend regularly.

Two separate issues. It's good you joined and attend church. That saves no one. If you know God, that means you agree with the message I'm espousing, so there should be no resistance or defensiveness to what I'm sharing, but Spirit unity.

149. I believe in God (i.e., intellectual assent; Ex: the Apostle's creed.

Demons intellectually believe God exists. It's from the heart that faith secures heaven; not acknowledging facts about Jesus.

150. I used to be a Christian.

If you actually were, you still are, though wayward.

151. I did that when I was a little boy.

If true and sincere, GREAT! But what happened with you and Him since then? Apparently you drifted/fell away!?

152. I have tried before, and failed.

Trust, don't try. Try is works/effort; faith is effort in God's power, by God's children. Works don't work.

153. I ask forgiveness for my sins, every day.

You should, but if you're saved, it's NOT to re-gain salvation, but to restore fellowship and power broken by sin. The relationship remains unphased/unchanged.

154. I was born or raised a Christian.

It is impossible to be born anything but a sinner. Being raised in church makes no one a Christian, by osmosis, any more than working at McDonalds makes one a hamburger (Keith Green-ism).

155. I'm Catholic, or Jewish.

That's fine; you're also a sinner, and that's NOT fine. You need to be saved/born again! Jn. 3:3, 16

156. I pray to Mother Mary daily.

Jesus' earthly mom cannot save you from hell, and NOWHERE does God EVER say we are to pray to dead people. Respect that she was the carrier of the virgin-born Son, but pray to God! Don't daily waste breath on deceased people. They never answer you! They can't.

157. My mother is a saint.

Every Christian is a saint, by God's definition. Even if your mom was a very holy person, good deeds save NO one, and certainly her behavior or status before God isn't something you inherit. Her life is her life, and we all face God, one-on-one, on Judgment day.

158. I'm going to Purgatory. Why doesn't God give man a second chance?

There is no Purgatory. That's a myth, and tradition of man (and of satan). God gives you so many chances! Every day you awaken alive, you could have received Jesus. ALL YOU GET is your days before you are no longer!

159. I may be punished, but not eternally.

There are temporary trials, and judgments for our bad decisions, in this life, but God makes "perfectly clear" that hell is the punishment for all who die without Jesus. That is eternal, and it is fiery/painful, every day, without end.

160. I'm an agnostic (or an atheist).

You can deny God's truth, or not commit to whether you do or don't believe it, and sound objective, but you are subjectively risking hell. One is not a superior intellect by remaining aloof. The truth is out there. Read it (i.e., the Bible). Get saved!

161. Are you one of those Jehovah's Witnesses, or Mormons? You've been brain-washed.

We aren't members of any sect some call a cult. I'm a member of God's body, the Church. And if the Bible has washed my brain, that's a beautiful transformation we all need! It should control our thoughts.

162. Look at the Mormons (religious and moral, but some call them a 'cult').

I've NEVER met one who was anything but very morally upright! But works save no one. Plus, if you fear you'll go to hell if you don't behave good, you're likely to behave really good, if you have any love for yourself.

163. Jesus is going to make me become a monk, be unmarried, miserable, poor or a foreign missionary.

That's a possibility, but we don't see the majority called to that (unless they're rebels). And that's unrelated to you needing salvation, first! Whatever He calls you to will be blessed.

164. God grades on the curve. I'm a good person, and have hurt no one.

Great! Keep up the good work. But it will never secure heaven for you. Works don't work. God nowhere even hints that he will grade on any curve. That's a notion you picked up in school.

165. I am good enough as I am.

Have you ever sinned once? Then you're guilty of ALL sins! Jas. 2:10 That's NOT very good!

166. Works are required for Christians.

Very true, to walk rightly with God, but one has to become a Christian first.

167. What do you think about the various alternatives to Christianity?

- a) My opinion isn't determinative, but,
- b) I believe ANY belief system that damns people to hell, because it at all differs from what Jesus taught, is, at its core, intended or innocent, satanic, in spiritual origins. The devil wants everyone in hell with him!

168. What is the difference between a cult and a mainstream church?

Several things:

- a) Usually books beyond the Bible
- b) Usually exclusivity, and separation from family, friends or culture
- c) Usually some odd practices, because of odd holy books added
- d) Usually a strong male leader, usually with money or sex heavily involved
- e) ALWAYS beliefs NOT consistent with Scripture; often practices

169. Does Christianity welcome or reject 'New Age' teaching?

Reject. Short enough an answer for you?

170. Have you been around the world and seen how different cultures believe different things (variant morays) change.

I might have; others might not have. God doesn't require world traveling to know the truth. Cultural morays differ, but compare them all to God's word and morals! What is eternally true has NOTHING to do with where you live, were born, your skin color, language, or who your family is or the work they do! God's truth is the same for all people created in God's image!

171. I'm going to be reincarnated in the after-life.

God 100% disagrees with you. That's a satanic lie, used to keep you hell-bound, by the devil who doesn't want to burn alone, there.

172. God's name is Allah.

Sorry, but UN-true. His name is Jesus Christ the Lord. They are NOT the same, though many want them to ambiguously seem to be presenting the same Person.

173. You've never read the Koran, so how do you know?

Whether I have or haven't, I know the Bible says any writing contrary to it is spiritually errant, and I know the Koran is NOT 100% congruent with God's word, the Bible. The FBI doesn't study all the various counterfeit dollars, but study intensely the real thing/deal, so they can instantly spot the fakes.

174. Don't you really just want to increase your church membership?

I'm certain many pastors would like that. I have NEVER mentioned a church when I speak about heaven! You need heaven, today, or its hell for you.

175. Have you ever known a good preacher's kid?

PK's are a well-known phenomenon. The devil can cause them to burn out about hearing spiritual things, likely much more than others, so they get cantankerous if not rebellious. That doesn't prove what they heard was untrue; perhaps overdone by some.

176. Christian theological disputes and church splits disprove Christianity.

Amazingly, the intensity of people's sincere beliefs is what often causes divisions, because people are sincerely trying to obey God. Yes, sin and pride also can get involved, and that's bad/regrettable. Christians aren't perfect, nor will they ever be until they see Jesus face-to-face. I Jn. 3:2

177. I'm too bad to be/get saved.

Sadly, for your belief, the Bible proves it to be error, as the apostle Paul said he was the foremost of sinners. I'm GLAD you feel badly about your sins (acknowledging them as wrong)!

178. I think I have committed the unpardonable sin.

The fact that you're still engaging concerns for your eternal destiny shows you haven't. It is a rejection of Jesus, forever, to which God gives you over, unable to get saved, thereafter! You can still be saved; will you do so? Jn. 3:16

179. I am afraid Jesus will not receive me.

That fear is unfounded, and conflicts with everything Jesus promised. If He received the foremost of sinners, Saul, He will certainly and in no way cast you out.

180. I am not respectable enough to be a Christian.

Many Christians are not respectable. That's not what God requires for people to get saved. Be respectable, but it will never save you.

181. I have no encouragement at home.

That's regrettable, but they aren't needed—only you and God. That's all you'd ever need, but you need Him, with or without anyone else's support.

182. I'm afraid of persecution.

It is not guaranteed, but possible. But God is worth it, more valuable, and there were even two private Christians/secret disciples in Scripture. God may not always have you run into danger, but be wise, but if you suffer, give Him glory, and endure it ethically and faithfully.

183. I've heard that so many times before.

Well, it seems, you never heard it with an open heart, because no one gets saved by mere hearing, but by believing.

184. I don't know enough yet to make that decision.

If you know Jn. 3:16, you know enough! It's not the quantity but quality.

185. I cannot understand.

As a child, were you able to understand when your parents gave you gifts at Christmas? Can you comprehend that hell is certain, for everyone with unforgiven sins? Then pray to receive the gift of forgiveness. It's so uncomplicated, a kid can understand it!

186. You need to speak to my wife.

I would be happy to speak with your wife, but she can't decide for you, and you are facing hell, with unforgiven sins. Let's get that solved, first, then please let me tell her how to, too.

187. I'm really busy right now.

When would be a better time, and please read this tract between when we speak again.

188. I'll deal with that subject (and with death) when I'm older.

You agree you'd have to deal with this before you die, right? What day is your demise scheduled? You never know, so today is the day for your salvation! II Cor. 6:2

189. I'm too young or too old.

The only person too old to get saved is a dead person. The only person too young to get saved is someone incapable of understanding right from wrong. You don't look to fit those two descriptions.

190. I do not think I am old enough to make a decision.

Let's figure out if you are: Do you know what doing wrong means? Have you ever done anything wrong? If so, you are of age/old enough. If not, I'll pray God calls you to Himself, as soon as you understand.

191. I'll take my chances.

You're a REAL gambler! Risking burning in hell, for what benefits?

192. I'll worry about that in the next life.

It is my solemn duty to warn you that it will be too late, and already settled for you to go to hell, if you don't get this settled before you die.

193. Would not suicide be the best way out of my trouble?

It's a sin, and changes no destiny in eternity.

194. I see no harm in worldly amusements.

Not all amusements in this life are evil. Even those that are, I never spoke about what to do with them—yet. I said if you have sinned, you are heading to hell, if your sins don't get forgiven.

195. I'm happy, and like my lifestyle, living in sin.

It's good to enjoy life; it's not good to live in sin. But as happy as you may be, no one is going to be happy or enjoy burning painfully in hell, every day, forever. That's what you're facing.

196. There is too much to give up.

The only thing you are giving up is the certainty of eternity lived in hell.

197. I would like to be a Christian, but I cannot forgive my enemies.

God can help you forgive, but you need Him inside, first! Your sins need forgiveness, by God.

198. My friends mean so much to me.

You seem to be assuming they will abandon you, if you get saved. You may even lead them to Jesus! And any such so-called friends, who reject you for choosing to go to heaven, aren't the type of friends who really care about or love you! That's an enemy to your soul.

199. People would laugh.

The right people would cheer, and they number in the billions. Any who would laugh at someone avoiding hell face an unlaughable eternity we should all cry over!

200. Does this have to be done publicly?

No, but that's a good thing to do; it can psychologically cement/secure it/your decision even further.

201. I'm not Interested.

Was it avoiding hell's fiery forever that wasn't interesting to you, or what was it, specifically? I must warn you, if this is the end of our conversation, hell is certain for everyone who rejects Jesus. Don't make that dumb decision! I'll pray for you, even if we never speak again.

202. Please do not talk to me about it.

If you don't want to hear how to go to heaven and not go to hell, I will not tell you, but I must warn you that hell is for everyone who rejects Jesus' free gift of all sins' forgiven for free.

203. My parents preached religion to me so much, I want nothing to do with it.

They may have over-done it. I'm sorry if that was the case. But you facing going to hell is more important to me than to let psychological damage/scars force you to go there unwarned. Receive Jesus, today!

204. I'm just not ready yet.

You aren't ready to ensure you don't risk going to hell, if, God forbid, something happened to your life unexpectedly? I don't understand that. Can you please explain that to me?

205. I want to get established in business first.

These aren't mutually exclusive things! If you're certain you couldn't die before the time it takes for your business to achieve success, if ever, you must be a god, because no one knows the day the undertaker will knock. Get saved, and grow a successful business! Don't risk hell out of ignorance or confusion!

206. Door slammed in your face (rudeness). [RARE, in my experience!].

Through the screen door: "Be warned: do not go to hell and burn forever, rejecting Jesus Christ!" (at an apartment, near Second Baptist, Houston, late 1990s, with a former BFF, after he took the lead. Fun times)!

207. Sharing one's faith is too personal.

I'm here, in person. I'm sharing my faith, personally. The sky never fell down. If your eternal destination is too personal to discuss with me, read this tract, and be warned: Life without Jesus inside means a certain hell, be that topic personal or impersonal to anyone.

208. That's none of your business: keep that to yourself.

Because God loves you, I am instructed to love you, and someone who loves you would never let you go to hell, uninformed and unwarned. I'm warning you it is certain hell without Jesus living within.

209. I prefer to remain open-minded.

Don't be so open your brains fall out. The Bible has facts. Remaining neutral about those facts means you remain risking fiery hell, every day you reject Jesus. I'm not wanting you to lose open-mindedness, but to gain heaven, for free.

210. Moralistic, dogmatic Bible-beater fanatic extremist/fundamentalists turn me off.

They do, me too. But people who know they're going to heaven, and not hell, would interest me, if I risked ending up in hell, as you do.

211. I'm not religious.

I'm not either; I just love the Lord. I'm not asking you to become religious, but to make certain you will go to heaven when you die, by receiving Jesus as a free gift He paid for, dying on the cross.

212. I'm trying to be a Christian.

Trying means working at it. Works don't work. You receive Jesus, or you do not.

213. I'm already religious.

I'm glad you see the need to try to obey God, in this life! But no acts you ever do will secure heaven for you, unless you pray to receive Jesus, for the forgiveness of all your sins. Can we pray together, to get that done for you, today?

214. I am doing the best I can.

The greatest anyone does falls short, as no one can be perfect. God never asks us to work hard to qualify to go to heaven. Jesus did all the work, so His hard work on the cross gives you eternity with God, as a free gift.

215. Can I be a Christian without losing my moral integrity?

That's a hilarious and sad statement, because many Christians' lifestyle would be beneath people sincere about morality! God encourages moral integrity. He will give you the power to be even more so, and those deeds will be wrought by Him, vs. you (which gets rewarded).

216. You're trying to convert/proselytize me.

Like the apostle Paul said to a politician, in Ac. 26:29, you're right: I would that you would get saved! I'm trying to get you certain you're going to heaven, and miss hell. That's not evil, but good and loving. I'm not asking you to join anything.

217. Are you pushing a religion or denomination?

No. People call Christianity a religion, but I'm "pushing" having a direct and personal relationship with God, through Jesus. I'm certainly not saying anything about any denomination or specific local church. That's NOT the good news/gospel.

218. I don't like your method/approach.

There could have been other ways to present this to you, but you can't like your condition, facing hell at any time! I pray someone else approaches you another way, but if you die before they do, I pray you remember what we discussed! Love you.

219. The Gospel is for poor people.

- a) It's for people spiritually poor, able to see their need
- b) It's for ALL people; not all sense that need, however.
- c) Jesus came to the poor, specifically because they are rich in faith; nothing else to rely on. Jas. 2:5; Lk. 4:18; Mt. 19:24, etc.

220. God will make me be poor, like a Monk.

There's zero Bible evidence that poverty will be God's specific will for your life. It might be, but even if it were, you're more blessed walking with Him, that satanically blessed by the hell-bound devil.

221. You can't have any fun as a Christian. Christianity is just a bunch of prohibiting rules.

Legalism is that; freedom in Christ sanctification is NOT that, nor is it license. It's the power to do God's will. And fun isn't anti-Jesus, if it's pure/holy.

222. Didn't that Discovery Channel filmmaker find Jesus' crypt and bones Feb. 26, 2007 (or the 2012 Resurrection Tomb Mystery)?

No, and it would be hard to prove His exact grave, as there are no bones, there. Research articles on this for yourself, if interested. I'm not, enough!

223. Have you ever sincerely thought something (to be true), only to discover later that it wasn't?

Rarely, but even when anyone does, that's unrelated to knowing facts about Jesus. You could just as easily believe you are correct, and in hell discover you were wrong. Your analogy proves zero about Christianity, positive or negative! It's just an illustration.

224. The virgin birth and a talking snake are not credible, and years of Christ's life are unaccounted for.

- a) IF you disbelieve in an all-powerful God, meaning He can perform miracles, no wonder the first two things are preposterous to you! You aren't addressing the God of the Bible!
- b) The years from age 12-30 aren't addressed, as they were pre-ministry. That has NOTHING to do with them never having transpired. We simply don't know much if anything about them, but that He lived sinless, throughout those 18 years. I've experienced miracles; I'd guess you haven't!?

225. New Testament prophecy (Ex.: "Revelations") was written by those who knew Old Testament.

John, Paul and Peter probably knew the Old Testament well. But complete ignorance or complete intelligence has nothing to do with God revealing future things to men moved by His Spirit. God uses informed people much easier than idiots, though even lobotomized humans can still be used by God, in some way(s).

226. Those who wrote of Jesus never met Him, and the Gospels should all have the same accounts.

Paul never met Jesus? Ac. 9 Peter and John never knew Jesus? READ THE GOSPELS! Everyone in a family has their own perspective and stories after a vacation! Not contradicting, but emphases, with MUCH overlap.

227. Religion is just selling the invisible—which is easy.

It is NOT easy to ignore historical evidence of Jesus, or first-hand recountings of those nearest to Him, about what He did and said! Creation shows the handiwork of the invisible God, if your eyes aren't blind. II Cor. 4:4; Rom. 1:20-21

228. Religion shuts off rationality and impedes human progress—grow up already.

Jesus' impact on humans, who then impacted our world, is likely the greatest advancement for mankind of any Person ever known in the history of our world. Hospitals, encouragement, social advancement, etc.

229. There's no proof Christ existed. He's like Santa Claus and Jack and the Bean stalk.

And you live in 2023... BC? You're brilliant (sarcasm)

josh.org

[Does Historical Evidence Prove that Jesus Lived?](#)

[Historical evidence shows that Jesus lived. Both Christian and secular scholars have concluded that we can have this confidence.](#)

230. It's fishy that God spoke privately to His prophets instead of simply audibly to everyone. And isn't it a low emotion that God is a jealous God?

Others weren't called as such, or may not have been as capable of hearing, or that being in God's will. God loves with the same jealousy any husband has for his wife. That's holy.

231. Fully surrendering to "God" just opens one up to manipulation by men with agendas (such as money, control over other's hopes, adoration by the masses, etc.).

That can happen, but you're relating one-to-one with God, directly. I never even mentioned a church, or preacher! The Bible teaches believers to be discerning, and test the spirits, and in Rev. 2:2 a church tested their so-called leader(s), and found them to be false. So they can be, but Christians are to fear not, and not be fools, or fooled, or to worship ministers like gurus (I Cor. 1-4).

232. Why don't the 10 Commandments include rape, child molestation and torture? All men could agree with no stealing or murder, without the need for religion.

Love God, first, and your neighbor as yourself covers those. Lost people can have morals without God, but never heaven, and that's more important.

233. If God's all powerful, why doesn't He eliminate the devil and solve the problems?

He also has self-restraint, or you'd be crushed for asking! He also made man, to do much of that type of work. We're not mere spectators in a theater, watching Him act, but co-laborers with Him.

234. Many ancient gods were born on December 25—Christ's not unique.

No one asserts that Dec. 25 is the day Jesus had to have been born! It symbolizes the day that occurred.

235. The Gospel is a story of God birthing Himself through a virgin, as His Son and Himself/God.

The trinity is not monotheistic.

The Father didn't self-birth. Humanly, the Son came from Mary and the Father, miraculously. One God, in three Persons IS monotheism, compliant with God's full counsel.

236. Religion just makes men arrogantly feel they have the answers to all life's questions. Doubt is more humble.

Doubt is dumb, unless you have to. Doubt of God is evil. Doubt is also smart, if the person you hear isn't trustworthy. God is. It's not arrogance to be right, though you can be arrogant about being right.

237. Christians call coincidences "miracles," and many have a low threshold for identifying miracles.

There's NO possible coincidence in parting the waters, walking on water, turning water into wine, calming the sea, and fully healing people, instantaneously; or being translated. Ac. 8:40

238. The Old Testament has non-credible parts, such as Lot being a holy man who offering his daughter to be raped, God killing off a lot of people in the first 5 books, Jonah inside a big fish for 3 days, a 900 year old man and 39 acts being guilty of the death penalty.

a) JUST LIKE Abraham slept with a maidservant, Lot was desperately (in the flesh) trying to prevent horny homosexuals from sexually attacking his family! Imperfect, but drastic/frantic to assuage horn dog immoralists.

b) Holy wars are not evil, though rare to nonexistent in our age, as we aren't the nation of Israel (i.e., a theocracy).

c) A man survived being swallowed by a large fish, about a year ago. Why does that seem impossible to you, because God said it happened? Perhaps a bias to doubt God? Sin!? (yes, sin).

capecodtimes.com

['I was completely inside': Lobster diver swallowed by humpback whale off Provincetown](#)
["I was completely inside \(the whale\); it was completely black," said Michael Packard as people compare the New England man to Jonah and the whale.](#)

d) People lived much longer, way back, and 70-80 year lifespans were expectations later on, especially after the Noahic flood.

e) Dispensationalism explains commands not applicable to us. Learn why it's true, and what it means!

239. Doubt is a luxury for those who have. Those who are desperate cling to faith, as a jailed inmate or someone in a fox hole.

The poor have only faith. Jas 2:5 Circumstantial faith isn't necessarily saving faith in Jesus, but can be stirred up emotion, and temporary, from desperation.

240. If Christ is God, how was He omnipresent while on earth? Can one be both God and yet not possess all God's powers?

Ever heard of the self-emptying of Christ (kenosis)? Phil. 2 He gave up some powers access, to be able to live as a man; never losing those powers, as divinity, but the self-restraint virtue.

241. Isn't Christianity just true for you, or because you were raised to believe it by what your parents told you?

Deciding what clothes or art or movie is good is just for you; subjective. Jesus said ALL go to hell without Him, and He died for all; objective! If not Jesus: hell!

242. You cannot prove God exists without seeing Him, hearing His audible voice, a video of the same or the testimony of eye witnesses.

Conversely, neither can you disprove Him! But He offers evidence, and requires faith. What nobility would there be if He were obvious? There is no faith required, for that. Electricity exists, yet you don't see it.

When you see a snakeskin by the side of a hiking trail, you don't say "there obviously was never a living snake around here." Thanks to @Libin_A (Rev. Libin Abraham) for this awesome analogy, mirroring Jas. 2. You see a horse carcass. It had life, earlier; the body is evidence! Rom. 1:20-21 Conscience and creation are Gods snakeskins!

https://baysidechurch.com.au/blog/does-god-really-exist/?gclid=EAJalQobChMIh5q8uKyPgQMVFTfUAR2mngHeEAAYBCAAEgKqjPD_BwE...
josh.org

[What Kinds of Proofs Are There That God Exists?](#)

[The majority of people in the world believe there is a God. Does believing that God is the creator help you to trust that he created you for a purpose?](#)

243. Don't the good deeds/lifestyle of Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons prove their theology is superior?

It proves to me they're much more dedicated to morals than many Christians! BUT, their dogma teaches hell if you don't do works. And Christians OFTEN abuse grace, because God never holds the threat of hell over anyone, to pressure ceased bad deeds, or the carrot of heaven, to pressure good deeds.

244. Doesn't the sinful/carnal deeds and lifestyle of so many claiming Christians disprove their claimed beliefs?

When your kids misbehave, *did you force them to*, or teach and encourage them to? Christians have free wills, and a sin nature. If unrenewed, the old man can win in believers' behaviors.

245. The writers of the Bible were biased, and wrote their stories to prove the conclusion they sought to prove.

Do they read like they're trying to accurately recount, or to organize stories to make a biased conclusion? Their self-deprecation would argue against bias; warts and all, and TRUTH!

246. How do we know Christ literally lived on our earth?

See:

https://josh.org/es/evidence-jesus-lived/?mwm_id=241874010215&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=MW_JMM_445C-46255_google-grant-fy23_20220901_JC9GGA&utm_content=nil_nil_nil_nil&mot=JC9GGA&mwm_id=241874010218&mwsc=JMM-445C-JC9GGA&mot=J79GNF&gclid=EAIAIQobChMI_7bpw62PgQMVsDrUAR0kKQCcEAAYAiAAEgKKDPD_BwE...

Trace back history books, and genealogies, as well! And 2023 AD; what's that based on? (weak argument, but an argument)! You accept A.D. 2023. What happened 2023 years ago? More lives and living/history came before it. *Why* 2023?

josh.org

[Does Historical Evidence Prove that Jesus Lived?](#)

[Historical evidence shows that Jesus lived. Both Christian and secular scholars have concluded that we can have this confidence.](#)

247. Anyone can claim their Scriptures are perfect and from God. Claiming is much easier than proving the claim True!

Test them out for yourself, and verify the Bible and Jesus' claims, and taste and see that the Lord is good. No one trusting Him is disappointed that they did so! Rom. 10:11

248. Many religious leaders have taught ethics, performed miracles, and many other men have claimed to be God.

Few did miracles; certainly not as profound or numerous. Probably all religious "leaders" teach morals. Crazy people claim deity. Jesus proved His claims...

Deity of Christ proofs:

1. Fulfilled Old Testament prophecies
2. The virgin birth
3. A sinless life

4. His many miracles
5. His perfect words/teachings
6. His humble deity claims, and
7. His resurrection from the dead. (12/22/19)

See: Will You Live forever?, pp. 408-410, at <http://WillYouLiveForever.org>

249. Christ studied the Old Testament from childhood. He could easily have chosen His life path to fulfill prophecies about Messiah, and made claims based on those verse He already knew.

That may seem possible, UNTIL you READ those prophecies! HOW could He choose His birth city? How could a child force His parents to move to another town, escaping the wrath of a vengeful politician? How did Jesus decide to not be One we would look upon (i.e., handsome)?

There are hundreds of other such Old Testament prophecies He couldn't devise obeying! READ before opining, foolishly!

250. Don't Christians have two different Gospels? Is God's word that confusing?

One is wrong. Gal. 1:8 They agree on everything but what 'repent' means, and if surrender is required for heaven. Free grace is accurate, but others fear that guarantees carnality, so they can't accept truth, from the sins of fear/timidity, or lack of courage/dishonesty (or lazily never having studied the evidence in its entirety), in my opinion!

HIGHLIGHT YOUR BIBLE: NEW TESTAMENT

(9/11/23; @JamesMeroney)

Like Mr. T used to say, "I pity the fool" who doesn't read the Bible. LOOK at these jewels I would first read, before all else.

IF your NASB New Testament doesn't have those verses underlined or highlighted in yellow, I question if you read very deeply, or sincerely:

Mt. 1:21, 23-25, 4:4, 23, 5:13-14, 16, 38-39, 43, 48, 6:7, 19-21, 24, 33, 7:1-2, 7-13, 21-23, 8:8-10, 16-17, 24-27, 29, 9:6, 12-13, 20-21, 27-29, 37-38, 10:14-16, 26, 32, 34-39, 11:19, 28-30, 12:25, 28, 30, 32-33, 35, 37, 48, 13:19-23, 44, 46, 55-57, 14:4, 27, 15:18-19, 37, 16:12, 18, 21-23, 18:3, 11, 21-22, 19:13-14, 21, 26, 28-30, 20:4, 13, 21:13, 21-22, 22:9, 21, 29, 37-39, 23:11, 37, 24:45-46, 25:35-36, 26:41, 54, 27:46, 28:18-20;

Mk. 1:11, 10:28-31;

Lk. 10:2, 11, 35-37, 42, 11:27-28, 41-42, 12:3, 13, 33, 13:6-9, 14:10-11, 23, 26-33, 15:20-22, 16:14-15, 17:7-10, 18:13-14, 16;

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Ac. 1:8, 2:38, 42-44, 3:6, 19, 4:12-13, 19-20, 5:20, 29, 42, 6:4, 7:60, 8:4, 9:31, 10:38, 43, 12:24, 13:43, 48-49, 52, 14:3, 15, 21-22, 26, 15:35-36, 16:30-34, 17:6, 11, 13, 18:28, 19:8, 18, 24:15-16, 26:4, 7, 18, 20, 23, 26, 28:23-24, 31, 20:20;

Rom. 1:15-16, 18-20, 2:6, 3:10-12, 20, 23-24, 28, 4:7-8, 5:1, 5, 8-9, 6:1-2, 11, 15, 7:15-17, 7:25, 8:1-2, 5-6, 13-14, 16, 23, 31-39, 10:4, 8-13, 15, 17, 11:33-36, 12:1-2, 9, 17-18, 21, 13:1, 11, 14, 14:8, 11-12, 17, 22, 15:4, 13, 16, 18, 16:19, 25-27;

I Cor. 1:8-9, 17-18, 28-30, 2:1-5, 14-16, 3:6-9, 16-17, 4:1-5, 20, 5:11-13, 6:11-12, 17-20, 7:5, 19, 29-31, 8:3, 13, 9:7-9, 14, 19-27, 10:11, 13, 31, 33, 11:1, 12:3, 13, 13:4-8, 11-13, 14:33, 5:1-8, 10, 19, 32-34, 51-58, 16:13-14, 22;

II Cor. 1:3-5, 9, 12, 20-22, 2:11, 14, 3:3-6, 16-17, 4:1, 3-5, 13, 16-17, 5:6-12, 17, 20-21, 6:1-3, 17-7:1, 9:6-7, 10:4-6, 12, 11:28, 12:15-18, 13:5-6;

Gal. 1:10, 2:16-17, 20-21, 3:6-7, 10-12, 19, 21, 26-28, 4:6-7, 29-30, 5:1, 3, 5, 13-25, 6:1, 8-10, 14;

Eph. 1:3-19, 2:1-2, 8-10, 18, 3:1, 12, 14-21, 4:1, 4-6, 11-16, 22-25, 30, 5:1-2, 5-6, 10, 14-19, 6:10-18, 20;

Phil. 1:6, 9-10, 14-18, 21, 29, 2:3-13, 20, 29-30, 3:1-16, 18-21, 4:4, 6-9, 12-13, 19;

Col. 1:9-19, 28-29, 2:6, 9-10, 3:1-4, 15-17, 4:5-6, 17;

I Th. 1:5-6, 9, 2:5-13, 3:5-6, 11-13, 4:1, 10, 16-18, 5:8-11, 16-24;

II Th. 1:4-12, 2:10, 13, 16-17, 3:3-5, 13, 16;

I Tim. 1:5, 15-18, 2:12, 3:15-16, 4:1, 6, 10, 13, 16, 5:8, 17, 24-25, 6:6-19;

II Tim. 1:7-8, 12, 14, 2:2-13, 15, 22, 3:16-17, 4:1-8;

Tit. 1:5, 15-16, 2:7, 10-15, 3:4-8, 14;

Phm. 1:6, 12, 14, 18-21;

Heb. 1:1-4, 14, 2:1-3, 11, 14, 16, 2:18, 3:1-2, 6-11, 4:1-3, 7-16, 5:12-14, 6:1-5, 9, 18, 7:19, 25, 8:1, 6, 12, 9:11, 26-28, 10:10, 13, 19-27, 35-39, 11:1, 6-40, 12:1-11, 25-29, 13:5-8, 15, 20-21;

Jas. 1:2-8-12, 13-18, 21-27, 2:1, 5-6, 10, 19, 22, 3:6, 10, 17, 4:1-7, 10, 17, 5:7, 17-20;

I Pet. 1:3-9, 13-17, 22, 2:23, 2:1-2, 6-12, 16-17, 3:15, 4:1-8, 5:6-10;

II Pet. 1:3-11, 16-21, 2:4-9, 12, 15, 20-22, 3:1, 8-13, 15-16, 18;

I Jn. 1:1-4, 7-10, 2:1-3, 9, 12-17, 20, 23-29, 3:1-4, 11, 16, 19-24, 4:3-4, 7-10, 13-14, 16, 19-20, 5:1-5, 10-14, 18-21;

II Jn. 1:4, 6, 8, 12;

III Jn. 1:2-4, 11, 14;

Jude 1:3-7, 14-15, 17-25;

Rev. 1:1, 5-8, 17-20, 2:1-3:22, 4:8, 11, 5:4, 9-10, 12-13, 7:16-17, 11:5, 15, 12:6, 9, 11-12, 17, 13:8, 10, 15-17, 14:4-5, 11, 13, 15:2, 16:14-15, 19-21, 17:17, 18:3-4, 9-10, 20, 19:7-11, 15-17, 19-20, 20:1-8, 14-15, 21:1-27, 22:3-8, 12-20;

SHOW me a Christ follower claiming Christian's Bible, and list me names of who they evangelized this year, and I will tell you if they are carnal or spiritual! It's no magic trick. The proof is in the pudding, based on God's word/standards!

HIDDEN, HARD & HARSH VERSES OF THE BIBLE: NEW TESTAMENT

(Unfamous Gems, Interpretive Challenges & Sternly Firm Truths)

Mt. 1:1, 2:16, 5:3, 13, 17, 19-20, 28-30, 45, 48, 6:3, 6, 14-15, 19-21, 31-32, 7:1-3, 12-13, 16, 19, 22, 8:22, 10:27, 32-34, 38-39, 41, 11:12, 14, 12:25, 31, 50, 13:12, 25, 16:18, 17:26, 18:19, 19:17, 21, 21:21, 22:11-14, 45, 23:9, 24:40, 25:30-40; **Mk.** 11:13-14; **Lk.** 2:37, 6:46, 9:53, 10:9, 18-19, 13:24-25, 14:28-33, 16:16, 17:21, 23:43; **Jn.** 2:4, 24-25, 5:14, 46, 6:37, 45, 70, 8:34, 10:35, 2:32, 14:12, 17:19, 19:7, 34, 20:17; **Ac.** 2:19, 11:19, 15:28-29, 21:24, 26, 23:3, 26:20; **Rom.** 1:4, 11, 23, 2:13-16, 22, 26-27, 4:4-5, 5:13, 18, 20, 7:9, 17, 22, 8:10, 20-22, 28, 9:7-8, 11-13, 18, 11:28, 30-31, 13:8, 14:7-8, 14, 23; **I Cor.** 1:20-22, 24, 26-28, 2:3, 8, 3:13, 5:1, 5, 13, 6:3, 6, 12, 15, 18, 7:5-6, 11, 14, 16, 20, 30-31, 9:18-19, 27, 10:4, 11, 21, 23, 11:5-6, 10, 14, 29, 12:13, 13:9, 14:5-6, 14-16, 18-20, 21-23, 24-26, 28-30, 34, 15:13, 15, 23, 29, 51-52, 56, 16:11, 22; **II Cor.** 1:9, 20, 3:1-3, 4:4, 5:10-11, 21, 7:11-12, 9:13, 10:13, 12:1, 18, 13:12; **Gal.** 2:6, 14-15, 2:17-18, 3:13, 15, 17, 19, 23-24, 4:8, 10, 12, 15, 26, 5:4, 23, 6:3, 11-12, 16-17; **Eph.** 1:10, 18, 2:10, 15, 3:5, 9, 18, 4:5, 9-10, 5:5, 20, 23, 6:17-18, 24; **Phil.** 1:6, 2:10, 3:2, 8, 11, 19, 4:15; **Col.** 1:2, 6, 18, 2:8, 14-16, 20-21; **I Th.** 2:8, 4:6, 11, 16-17, 5:2-3, 17, 20, 26; **II Th.** 1:6, 8, 2:3, 6, 11, 13, 3:6; **I Tim.** 1:4, 13, 18, 20, 2:8, 15, 3:8, 11-12, 4:1, 7, 10, 14, 16, 5:1, 5, 10, 12-13, 20, 22, 6:5, 9, 14, 21; **II Tim.** 1:6, 14, 18, 2:8, 13-14, 25, 3:5-6, 13-14, 17; **Tit.** 1:6, 14-16, 2:5, 3:10; **Phm.** 1:19; **Heb.** 2:2-3, 7, 15, 3:12, 4:1-3, 8, 10, 5:8, 6:1-2, 4, 6, 18, 7:14, 16, 8:10, 9:8, 10, 12, 15, 22, 10:27, 29, 11:39-40, 12:13-14, 18, 23, 13:9, 11; **Jas.** 1:3, 5, 8, 11-12, 19, 21, 27, 2:5, 14, 17-20, 24, 3:9, 4:2, 5:3, 5-6, 9, 12, 14-15, 20; **I Pet.** 1:9-12, 20, 2:24, 3:1, 4, 15, 18-20, 4:1, 6, 17-18, 5:13; **II Pet.** 1:1, 10-11, 19, 21, 2:1-3, 10, 13-15, 22, 3:5, 10, 12, 15; **I Jn.** 1:8, 2:1-2, 13, 17-20, 23, 3:6, 9, 4:12, 17, 5:6-8, 5:15-18; **II Jn.** 1:7, 9; **Jude** 1:3, 5, 12; **Rev.** 1:1, 9, 15, 20, 2:4-5, 7, 9, 13-15, 17, 20, 23, 28, 3:1-5, 9-12, 16, 4:1-8, 10, 5:8, 6:2, 4, 6, 8-9, 12, 15, 7:1-4, 9, 16, 8:3-4, 7-8, 10, 9:1, 3, 5-17, 21, 10:1-4, 7, 11:1-3, 5, 18, 12:1, 3-9, 11, 14, 13:1-3, 5, 7, 10-11, 14-15, 18, 14:1-4, 12, 14-15, 20, 15:2-3, 5, 16:2, 10, 12-21, 17:3-5, 8-12, 18, 18:2, 8, 10, 13, 19, 19:1, 6-7, 11-12, 14-15, 17, 20:1, 4, 9, 11, 21:1-4, 9-22, 24, 22:1-4, 11, 14, 16, 19.

RECOMMENDED READING SCHEDULE FOR NEW CHRISTIANS

(or Christians new to reading the Bible)

Stage 2:

Mt. 1:18, **3:**6, 11, **5:**48, **6:**28, **7:**11, **10:**14, 19-20, 22, 28, 32, **11:**11,18-19,
13:23, 44, **15:**17-18, **16:**23, **17:**20, **18:**14, **19:**14, **20:**16, **21:**16f,
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23, 27;

Ac. 2:23-24, 36, 42, 46-47, 3:16, 4:20, 5:38-39, 41-42, 8:35, 9:15, 22, 10:43, 13:28, 37-
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28:23-24, 27-28, 31;

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14:9, 22, 15:1-2, 16:20;

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II Cor. 1:3, 9, 22, 2:9, 3:4-6, 17, 26, 4:13, 5:14-16, 21, 6:3, 9:8, 15, 11:3, 14-15, 12:9,
13:5, 14;

Gal. 2:19, 3:3, 6-7, 10, 13-14, 26-27, 4:6, 30, 6:7;

Eph. 1:18, 2:5-6, 3:14, 16-18, 4:13, 22, 29, 5:10, 15-17;

Phil. 1:18, 20, 27, 3:3, 16, 4:11, 18;

Col. 1:9-14, 2:13, 3:3-4, 10, 12-13, 4:1, 3-4;

I Thes. 1:3-5, 7-8, 17, 2:8, 3:8, 4:1, 3, 9, 12, 5:2, 9, 24;

II Thes. 1:11, 2:13, 17, 3:8, 4:12;

I Tim. 1:12, 18-19, 2:1, 5, 3:16, 4:4-5, 10, 5:17-18, 23-25, 6:7,16;

II Tim. 1:17, 2:13, 3:7, 4:18;

Tit. 3:4-7

Phm. 1:21;

Heb. 1:2-3, 2:7, 14, 4:9, 11, 5:12-13, 6:18, 7:25, 8:10, 10:14, 16-17, 11:25, 12:1-3, 10;

Jas. 1:5-8, 2:26, 3:8, 4:2, 5-6, 10, 16-17;

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II Pet. 2:9, 19, 3:8, 12;

I Jn. 1:3-4, 2:1, 10, 12-14, 27, 3:8-9, 11, 18, 4:7, 13-18, 5:1, 10, 20;

II Jn. 1:6;

III Jn. 1:11;

Jude 1:3, 15, 20;

Rev. 1:8, 4:11, 12:10, 14:3, 19:4, 7, 9,11, 16, 20:7, 10, 15, 21:23, 22:7, 12-13;

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4:24, 5:6-22, 6:4-5, 7:21, 10:14, 12:23, 16:20, 17:19, 28:12-14, 30:19, 32:21; **Josh.** 22:5, 24:15;
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22:19; **II Kings** 2:1, 11, 6:17, 10:16, 17:36, 19:15, 27; **I Chron.** 28:9; **II Chron.** 6:14, 7:14, 15:7,

16:9, 19:7, 34:27; **Ezra** 7:10, 9:10; **Neh.** 8:10, 9:17; **Job** 2:10, 5:17, 19:25, 22:25, 41:11; **Ps.** 3:5, 4:3, 5:3, 8:1-9, 12:6, 14:1-3, 16:11, 18:3, 33, 46, 19:7-10, 12-13, 23:1-6, 24:1, 25:4-5, 32:1-2, 33:8, 34:1, 8, 46:10, 47:1, 50:10, 51:1-4, 10-13, 53:1, 3, 55:22, 73:25-26, 84:10, 86:5, 15, 96:2-4, 100:1-5, 103:6-14, 17-18, 105:4, 111:10, 113:3, 116:15, 118:24, 119:89, 97, 105, 127, 165, 122:1, 126:5-6, 139:14, 23-24, 150:6; **Pv.** 1:7, 3:9, 32, 6:23, 8:13, 10:24, 11:4, 14:14, 34, 16:1-4, 17:17, 18:22, 24, 20:27, 22:1, 4, 23:17, 25:22, 26:11, 28:5, 22, 29:18, 30:8, 31:10, 28, 30; **Ecc.** 3:12, 5:2, 7:14, 16, 8:11; **Song** 2:4; **Is.** 5:20, 6:1-3, 9:6, 25:3, 40:11, 28-30, 43:18-19, 45:9, 53:1-8, 54:6-7, 12, 64:7-8; **Jer.** 5:22, 9:23, 15:16, 19, 17:7-8, 20:9, 31:3, 32:27, 42:6; **Lam.** 3:38-40; **Eze.** 3:18, 10:14, 11:19-20, 22:30; **Dan.** 3:17, 7:13, 12:3; **Hos.** 10:12; **Jonah** 2:8; **Mic.** 2:1; **Nah.** 1:3; **Hab.** 1:5, 13, 2:3-4, 14, 3:19; **Zeph.** 3:17; **Zech.** 7:9, 14:4; **Mal.** 3:10, 4:6;