

# HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO MY DOUBTS?

NUMBER 190

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Living by faith in the mist of confidence certainly sounds inviting. Some Christians, however, do not feel certain in their faith in every circumstance. Life is often “unfair”; all too often, at those times, it is difficult to maintain faith.

Continued on page 3

## COC WORSHIP SERVICES!

Preparation of a sermon, song service, communion, and prayers are frequently a burden for many of our smaller congregations. Oklahoma Christian University is starting a program on September 1 to provide free online services to help with this need.

They will be full services less taking care of responses, local announcements, and taking up the collection. Every effort is being made to give the services a feel that they are “their” service.

See page 2 for more information.



## THE BIBLE WOULD BE DISCREDITED

The following are some “scientific truths” that were wrong:

- The world was flat
- Spontaneous generation of life.
- The appendix was a vestigial organ.

Continued on page 10

## INVEST IN THE FUTURE

Imagine that the son or daughter you raised in the church meets and marries someone they found in a nightclub. What are the likely impacts of that situation and decision.

Continued on page 11

## ETERNAL LIFE

Here are some of the things that John wanted us to know so that we would have confidence in eternal life. He writes these things in the little book of I John.

Continued on page 13

## Look at God's People - What Have We Become?

A call to open our eyes, our hearts and minds to confession, praying for the strength to resist evil through our faith in the power of grace provided by the blood of Jesus Christ – for

all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Continued on page 14

### IN THIS ISSUE:

Impossible for Evolution	17
Advertisements	18
Calendar of Events	22



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**STARTING SEPTEMBER 1ST**

## HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO MY DOUBTS? , P2

Continued from page 1

Today there is widespread teaching there is potentially very damaging to faith. Well— meaning but misguided people imply a message that is almost certain to destroy the very faith it is intended to strengthen. That message says, "If you would embrace Christian faith, you will be a success in life, and all your troubles will be over." Neither Christ nor any of his apostles made such a promise.

No faith can guarantee success in life or freedom from life's crises and calamities. Failure, disaster, disease, and death are part of the common lot of all of us, regardless of the faith by which we choose to live. Although Christianity does not guarantee freedom from life's crises, it is the best faith alternative language we can live in the midst of a crisis. Christianity, likewise, does not guarantee that the Christian will be free of doubt and uncertainty. However, Christianity does offer the best solution to doubts and uncertainties experienced by everyone at one time or another.

The atheist says, "There is no God". Do you not suppose there occasions when even the world's most notable atheist on a clear, dark night looks into the Milky Way constellation and wonders, "What if there really is a God who will hold me accountable"? Do you not supposed even the most diehard materialist ponders, "Can I possibly be wrong? What if mind did precede matter"? The Christian has no monopoly on doubt – just as a no Christian has a monopoly on faith.

### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FAITH AND DOUBT

Many people believe that faith and doubt are opposites. It is important to understand, however, that faith and doubt are not on opposite ends of a belief continuum as the following biblical example illustrates.

A concerned father brought his son to Jesus. The boy was sporadically cast into convulsions, during which he would roll on the ground, foam at the mouth, or fall into fire or pools of water (Mark 9:14-29). The father, desiring to have Jesus heal his son, said "If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus replied "If you can? All things are possible for one who believes." Immediately, the father cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

Perhaps we can better understand this story if we look through the eyes of a loving father who had frequently seen his boy convulsing upon the ground or falling into fire. Surely the father of the boy would have given anything in his possession if his son could have been relieved of the torture his body experienced on those awful occasions.

It is apparent that when the afflicted boy's father said to Jesus, "I believe; help my unbelief," he actually meant something other than what he said. Belief and unbelief are complete opposites. The mind cannot simultaneously entertain belief and unbelief. What the father meant was "I believe; help me in my doubt," or "I believe, but help me in those areas where I have difficulty believing." The boy's father clearly wanted to believe that Jesus had the power to heal his son, and he wanted to yield to the authority of Jesus' power. Yet he had reservations. His desire was for Christ to remove whatever was hindering his belief. Most of us have, at one time or another, shared the same frustration.

Continued on page 4

## HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO MY DOUBTS? , P3

Continued from page 3

Although a person may claim that he or she has never entertained doubt, it is likely that the person who has never doubted has developed very shallow faith. My intention is not to encourage doubt, but, just as iron sharpens iron, doubt sharpens faith if it receives the proper response. A person who uses the intellect as a part of the faith process will experience doubt.

Many biblical characters doubted. You will not find an example of anyone in the Bible who encouraged another to doubt the fundamental teaching of Jewish or Christian faith and did so with God's blessings. Nevertheless, a study of the scriptures shows that doubt is an integral part of the faith process. People of faith experience doubt for many reasons.

### REASONS FOR DOUBT

In chapter 1 we learned that faith development is a process; that is, obedient, trusting faith does not come suddenly. Biblical faith initially comes by hearing (Romans 10:17). That one hears and intellectually agrees that God exists and that Jesus is divine does not mean the he or she has obedient, trusting faith. Almost all of us initially believe by hearing spiritual truth from a significant adult – such as a parent, friend, or teacher. At this stage we have a faith that is merely inherited. As we grow in faith, however, we progress from having an inherited faith to having a faith that we have personally won.

### HOW FAITH DEVELOPS



In order for faith to progress from the inherited stage to the stage in which it is personally owned, faith must be *tested*. Faith is tested by life's daily natural circumstances. Here we see the reasons why Christians should "count it all joy...when you meet trials of various

kinds" (James 1:2). *It is through experience that faith matures and becomes personally owned.*

Here is also a reason why some Christians doubt. A person with an inherited faith will not respond to a faith crisis in the same way as a person whose faith has already been tested and has matured. The Christian life is a process by which a person who initially believes is gradually transformed into one who possesses the mind of Christ. One is naturally far more susceptible to doubt early in the transformation process. This fact recommends that mature Christians should be benevolent toward newer Christians who frequently experience doubt.

A second reason why some people doubt is that they may not be willing to pay the price of believing. Believing in Christ and His teachings may require the adoption of a lifestyle completely opposite to that which one has become accustomed. The price of believing is obedience. According to John, a person who does not obey does not believe (John 3:36). Many people avoid faith in God because they are not willing to obey.

One implication of the existence of God that many find unacceptable is moral responsibility. If God has created us in His image, we are morally responsible, and moral responsibility is inconsistent with a lifestyle oriented toward hedonistic pleasures. The only way to live this self-focused, worldly lifestyle is to doubt or to discard Christian faith all together.

A third reason why people doubt is that they have hard questions in their minds – questions that nurture doubt. But hard questions are not to be avoided. Since God created our intelligence, He expects us to ask difficult questions. Paul says, "Test everything; hold fast to that which is good" (I Thessalonians 5:21).

Continued on page 5

## HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO MY DOUBTS? , P4

Continued from page 4

It is not an insult to God to ask why there is so much evil in the world. It is reasonable to expect intelligent individuals to ask, "Why would a benevolent God allow 2000 birth defects to result in congenital disorders?" "Why would He allow the atrocities of a Hitler or Stalin?" "Why would a lovely, young Christian girl be killed in an automobile accident by a drunken driver?" These are indeed difficult questions, but there is no shame in verbalizing them. In fact, there is honor in seeking meaningful answers. In the process that leads to answers, the best minds of every generation have, on occasion, experienced doubt. It is indeed better to have asked and experienced doubt than never to have asked at all, for in the process of asking and searching, answers come and faith matures.

A fourth reason for doubting is that the inquiring man is always discovering new evidence – evidence that may challenge faith. One's response to new evidence may be to avoid new learning situations altogether and simply avoid exposure to information that may cause doubt. In college, a person may avoid a career in the behavioral sciences because some behavior there is based in humanism. One may avoid a career in a physical or biological sciences because of the perceived threat of chemical and biological evolution. To be sure, any Christian who pursues a career in these – and many other fields of study – is going to experience doubt. However, if Christians correctly respond to doubt, they will overcome their doubts, and faith will be enriched and matured. This approach is preferable to avoiding difficult fields of study such as psychology and natural sciences. Deeply committed Christians are greatly needed in these fields.

A fundamental belief of Christian faith is that all truth has its origin in God. When questions that threaten faith arise in any field, the Christian

should not be afraid to search for answers. As a student on a state college campus, I was told that Jesus Christ is no different from Confucius, Buddha, or any other great spiritual leader. My initial reaction was one of fear and dread. I was fearful that my informant was right, and dreaded discovering the truth about the matter.

Eventually, I went to the bookstore where I purchased a copy of the sayings of Confucius, and to the library, where I checked out and read the best literature I could find on the living world religions. I discovered that Confucius was not a religious leader and Confucianism is an ethical system with no concept of sin or redemption. Confucianism does have merit for the value of his ethical teachings. My study led me to the conclusion that Christ has no peer among the world religious leaders, living or dead, And that Christianity has no equal among world's religions, present or past.

We must not be afraid to compare Christ or Christianity with the best that human philosophy has to offer. C. S. Lewis has correctly observed that Christ is either lunatic or Lord. Christ does not deserve our allegiance if he is not everything he claims to be. In preceding issues I have presented evidence that Christ is precisely who he claims to be – the Son of God.

Over a period of years, I have asked many of my students, "What bothers your faith most?" One of the responses most frequently given, and our fifth reason why Christians doubt, is "the way I see some Christians treating other Christians." This may sound like a weak response, but scripture teaches the visual evidence that God exists and that Jesus Christ is His Son as seen in the way Christ's disciples treat one another (John 17:21).

Continued on page 6

## HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO MY DOUBTS? , P5

Continued from page 5

The church is the visible body of Christ on earth today. Fragmenting his body into parts that do not communicate with or fellowship with one another is wrong. The fact that this has already occurred is, for many, a great deterrent to the development of faith. Division within the body of Christ is *not* Christ's desire. Fragmentation is the result of men's actions, not the work of God's Holy Spirit. The solution to overcoming this threat to faith is for the Christian who truly wishes to be Christ's disciple to look beyond divisive human tendencies to Christ, who desires that we love one another.

A sixth reason why some people doubt or even discard Christian faith altogether is because they misunderstand Christian doctrine. Bertrand Russell was a world-renowned mathematical logician. Early in his career he delivered a series of lectures later published under the title *Why I am not a Christian*. It is apparent from reading the lectures that he had a poor concept of Christianity and, partly for this reason, he rejected it. One reason why Russell was critical of Christianity was that he saw crimes committed in the name of Christianity or claimed to be sanctioned by the Bible. We know that neither Christianity nor God was in any way responsible for such atrocities as the Spanish Inquisition, or so-called "holy wars" fought in the name of Christ. Nor did He sanction conquering the native Americans with force, and requiring them to convert to Christianity.

### EXAMPLES OF DOUBT

A common characteristic of all the great examples of God's faithful followers, leaders of His

people, is recorded in Hebrews 11—they all doubted. Abraham is our example of one who trusted in God to keep his promises. Yet Abraham experienced doubt on multiple occasions.

Nevertheless, God was patient and renewed the promise of the land of Canaan to Abraham. His response to God was to ask, "How am I to know that I shall possess it?" (Genesis 15:8). Abraham, in asking for a sign, was not walking by faith. He was walking by sight; but God accommodated him in his doubt. Eventually, he overcame his doubt and learned that he could, without reservation, trust in God who keeps His promises (Genesis 22).

Moses was a great Old Testament deliverer of the people of God. God, through Moses, led the people of Israel from Egyptian slavery to the promised land of Canaan. We would find it difficult to produce an example of one who has more intimately drawn into the presence of God than Moses. Nevertheless, the story of Moses' life was one of both great faith, and tension with doubt. The first example of this tension as seen in the story of God appearing to Moses by the burning bush (Exodus 3). Although Moses talked directly with God, he still required two signs and assurance of Aaron's support as spokesman before he consented to accept God's call.

Continued on page 7.

## HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO MY DOUBTS? , P6

Continued from page 6

Leading more than 1 million people across the Red Sea into the wilderness, Moses performed miracle after miracle, constant reminders of the direct presence of God. At Marah, bitter waters were sweetened (Exodus 15). At Elin, the Israelites were providentially refreshed by twelve springs of water and seventy palms (Exodus 15). In the wilderness of Sin, manna from heaven fed the people (Exodus 16). At Rephidim, Moses-as spokesman for God commanded, and water gushed forth from a rock (Exodus 17). At Sinai, Moses received 10 commandments directly from God (Exodus 19, 20).

Later, God told Moses to speak to a rock and to produce water; but Moses decided to do it his way and struck rock instead (Numbers 20). For his disobedience, Moses gave up his right to enter the land Canaan. Moses is a great example of trusting, obedient faith. Yet he knew the disappointment of wavering faith.

Before being critical of others for doubting, we should imagine how we might have responded, had we been in their places. For example, John the Baptist had been imprisoned by Herod for condemning the king's sins. There probably has never been a more confident and stern preacher than John. At Christ's baptism, John acknowledged Jesus as Messiah (John 1:34). Yet in prison, John doubted (Matthew 11).

The conditions of John's in prison were far from the conditions found in most modern prisons. It is likely that John's cell was underground and poorly lit, if lit at all. The prison was probably cold, damp, and insect infested. A new day threatened the possibility of the palace guards to get a prisoner for execution. Under such conditions, John the man had second thoughts and sent word by his disciples, asking Christ, "Are you the one to come, or should we look for another?" (Matthew 11:2). In this we see doubt,

but we do not see despair. We see a mixture of doubt and confidence.

### IS IT A SIN TO DOUBT?

It is not my intention to encourage doubt or to portray it in a favorable light. However, that is an inevitable part of the process by which trusting, obedient faith develops. God was not pleased when Abraham lied (Genesis 22), Sarah laughed (Genesis 18:12), or Moses argued (Exodus 3). Likewise, God is not pleased when we doubt his existence or his promises to us. Surely Elijah must have expressed God's disappointment in doubting Israel when he cried out on Mount Carmel, "How long will you go living between two different opinions?" (1 Kings 18:21). Christ probably looks upon us in our doubt with the same disappointment as he did when Peter he asked, "O you of little faith, why do you doubt?" ( Matthew 14:31).

As Christian fathers and mothers, we are disappointed when our children doubt our judgment or question our wisdom. God, as our father, is surely disappointed when we doubt His word or His existence. Nevertheless, the evidence from Scripture is that it is not so much the *doubt* that determines sin as it is *our response to doubt that determines whether we sin*. We do not necessarily cease to believe when we doubt, our confidence can be stretched and strained.

Continued  
on page 8

### When Grandparents Babysit

Me: How was he?

My mom: Great!

Me: No tantrums?

My mom: None.

Me: Even when you said "no?"

My mom: Well... we never really said that.

@WittyOtter

## HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO MY DOUBTS? , P7

Continued from page 7

Romans 14:23 has been understood to mean that all doubt is sin: "whatever does not proceed from faith is sin." This verse is misused and abused if taken as proof that all doubt is necessarily sinful. The context in which Paul writes these words relates to the eating of meat after it has been offered to idols. Although not included in the above translation, the word "action" is implied. In other words, the intended message is "Whatever action (eating of meat offered to idols) that is not done in faith is sinful." The conclusion then, is that doubt itself may not be sinful, but acting upon one's doubt is sinful. *It is our response to our doubts that determines whether we sin.*

### HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO MY DOUBTS ?

We cannot avoid all circumstances in life that seem to be fertile soil for doubt, apprehension, and uncertainty. We have some, but often little, control over circumstances. Nevertheless, there are helpful things we can do when doubt arises. First, make it a point to associate with those who will help you think positively in circumstances that lead to doubt. Since faith comes from what is heard (Romans 10:17), be diligent in attending devotionals, Bible classes, and worship, where God's word is taught and where the warmth of Christian fellowship is an experience in nurture.

Second, when you are inclined to doubt, pray – even if you do not feel like praying. The prophet Jeremiah (12:1) and Asaph, who apparently wrote Psalm 73, both doubted when they saw the prosperity of the wicked. However,

er, both found refuge in Jehovah and, in the words of the Psalmist, "It seemed to be a wearisome task, until I went into the sanctuary of God) (Psalms 73:16–17). In times of doubt and apprehension it may seem that God is far, far away, but that is when He draws nearest to us to provide the special strength we need.

Third, when doubt comes, remember that Christian faith is not inferior to other faith alternatives. It is not true that the Christian relies on faith while others rely on knowledge. *Everyone* relies on faith. It is not Question for the way we will walk by faith, but rather, "By which faith we will choose to walk?" Human philosophy, which is not based in God, leads to despair. But Christians are not left to despair. Christ gives us an understanding of our origin and purpose. He gives meaning to existence as he interprets reality for us

Continued on page 9

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12-12-2000  
I'M FROM THE CHURCH DOWN THE STREET AND I WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW THAT GOD'S GOT A BETTER PLAN THAN WHATEVER PLAN YOUR CHURCH FIGURES HE HAS



## HOW SHOULD I RESPOND TO MY DOUBTS? , P8

Continued from page 8

Fourth, when you are deeply discouraged, remember the crises and tribulations in life are inevitable. It is through meeting affliction not all alone, but with God, that the Christian life takes on full significance. Paul, at Lystra, after having been stoned and left for dead, revived and continued "strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying that through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

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This article is formatted to look like a regular article, but it is not. It is actually a copy of pages 149-159 of the book *GOD ARE YOU REALLY THERE* by Dr. Don England. Don is a Shepherd at the College Church of Christ in Searcy, AR and was a professor at Harding. The book is shown in the graphic and can be purchased on Amazon for \$16.95.

Kirk Castleman, a long-time friend, sent me the book and asked if I would review and advertise it in this newsletter.

Here is my review. I have just purchased 24 copies to put in our children's Christmas stockings, our grandchildren's Christmas stockings, to give to each of my siblings, and give to a

number of friends. That action should speak louder than words, but I am going to give you some words also.

The book is a spectacular compilation of information on faith, suffering; what nature tells us about God, whether Jesus was both a man and the Son of God; whether God is silent, whether

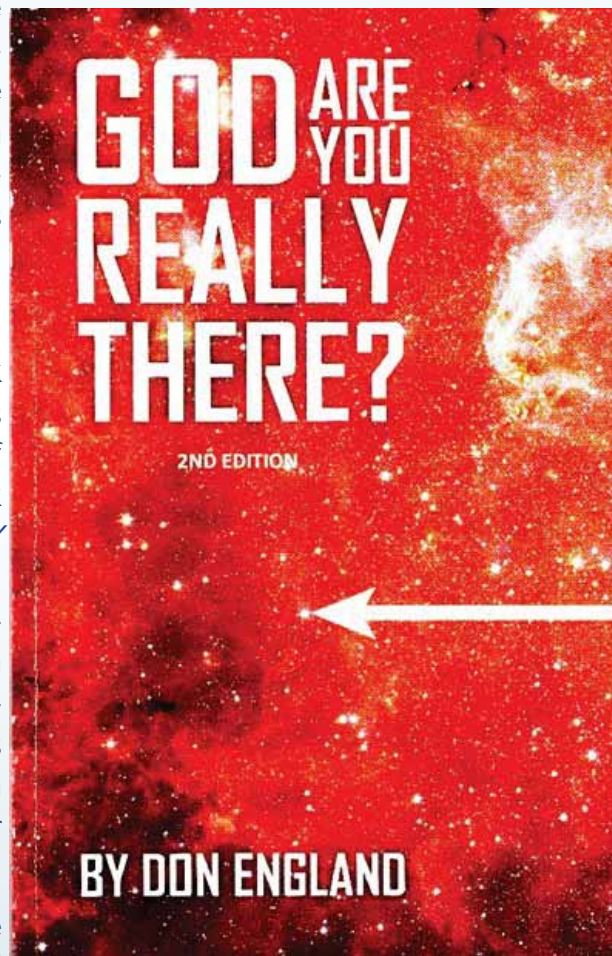
I can trust the Bible; whether a scientist can trust the Bible; whether a scientist can believe Genesis 1; doubt; and many other critical subjects.

It is not a long tedious book with hundreds of pages on each topic. It is 160 pages of clear, concise reading. I put it in the Hemingway Editor, which indicated it is written at the 9<sup>th</sup> grade reading level, so it is very readable. The beginning of this article is an example of what you can expect to read.

Don offers a fresh point of view on a number of topics which should enrich your life as a Christian.

I would encourage you to buy a copy for yourself. If you are as impressed as I am, you will have time to order some for Christmas stockings also.

Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E.



## THE BIBLE WOULD BE DISCREDITED, P 2

Space is filled with ether which allows for the travel of light in space.

The earth was the center of the universe and the Sun and other planets orbited around the earth.

Hummingbird tongue drew nectar into its mouth by capillary action.

We would reach the end of the supply of oil in 20 years, in 1970, 1980, and 1990. We have found more than ever since.

Diamonds are indestructible. Large diamonds were lost when they were smashed.

Pluto was a planet.

You could have bad blood and could cure people by draining their blood.

The dust on the moon was predicted to be about 20 feet thick, turns out to be about 2" thick.

Square sails were the most efficient way to make a sailboat.

Air was weightless.

Hardening of the arteries.

Recapitulation. The fetus went through the stages of evolution in development.

See lesson 3.9 at [www/ocg.institute/topicallessons](http://www/ocg.institute/topicallessons) for more information on these and other erroneous "scientific truths".

**If the Bible said any of these things, it would be completely discredited.** Some religious people have taught these "truths", but the Bible doesn't teach them. The Bible was written over a period of 1500 years by 36 authors and does not make this kind of mistake.

It is easy to imagine that when each of the writers of the Bible were writing, there were numerous myths and erroneous "truths" which were commonly believed at that time. If The Bible were not guided by God, you would expect some of the contemporary scientific errors to be included.

**That the Bible does not include contemporary scientific errors is not only a proof of the Bible, but also a proof of God.**

As a comparison, contemporary scientific books are a relic 50 years after publishing and frequently a joke 100 years later.

The Bible is 2000-3500 years old and has withstood attacks from all sides for 3500 years. It is simply amazing. It has all the signs of supernatural assistance in the writing of it. There is no other book written which comes close to the truths found in the Bible!



**"Where can I reach you if I want to repent, reverend?"**

## INVEST IN THE FUTURE, P 2

Continued from page 1

The person who grows up in the church is likely to presume:

1. Marriage is for a lifetime.
2. Sunday morning is for going to church.
3. Unfaithfulness is a sin.
4. Divorce is the last choice and for adultery.
5. Your social group is at the church.

The potential spouse you meet in a nightclub is likely to presume:

1. Marriage can be dissolved when you figure out there is a better prospect.
2. Sunday morning is leisure time for activities such as sleeping in, golf, or going to the lake.
3. Adultery is a social choice; it is normal in their home.
4. Divorce is a normal social process.
5. They will find their social group in another nightclub.

The chances of a long-term marriage and remaining in the church are certainly not guaranteed, but are much higher if you marry someone you meet at church.

That is not to say you cannot find a perfectly good spouse in a bar, but the likelihood is greatly reduced. You are making a lifetime decision, so you need to expose yourself to the best outcomes possible.

Common goals and presumptions of the church raised and the not church raised, even if not stated, tend to be very different.

### WHAT IS THE POINT?

The point to this is that if we want the church to have sustainability, we need to focus on this situation.

We focus on personal evangelism to infrequently convert someone. We have youths in our congregations that we are allowing to fade away. Instead of being involved in church related activities, we allow them to become en-

gaged in secular activities instead. What if we focused on keeping our kids?

There are 3 groups to focus on:

### HIGH SCHOOL:

I once taught an Impossible for Evolution series to a high school class. The regular teacher, the youth minister, observed that when he taught the class the girls paid attention and the eyes of the boys glazed over. When I taught a more technical topic the eyes of the girls glazed over and the boys paid rapt attention. That says among other things that boys and girls are different and we should plan classes and activities which would appeal to both groups.

COLLEGE AGE: A youth who goes to a Christian college is more likely to find a Christian mate who goes to a state school. We should encourage visits to Christian colleges, and visits by Christian colleges. If a student goes to a state/secular school, they should be encouraged to go to church and be involved. When they come home for the Summer, interesting classes and activities should be planned for them at church, including area wide activities.

### SINGLES:

By the time our youth become "singles", we have frequently already lost a lot of them. We need to do what we can to retain the remainder of them and encourage the ones who have left to come back. A local congregation needs to do all they can to involve the singles in the activities of the church. If they attend a large

Continued on page 12

## INVEST IN THE FUTURE, P 3

Continued from page 11

congregation, they may have a natural social grouping and a pool for dating. If it is a smaller congregation, they may be the only single. Several smaller congregations can cooperate in engaging the singles in such ways as rotating singles fellowships. A larger congregation can effectively be the host for several smaller congregations. It is in everyone's interest for one of our singles to have a pool of prospects for dating.

### INVESTMENT

If you want to know how much to invest in these groups, consider the economic and social costing of your son or daughter marrying someone they met in a night club when it didn't work out. Being raised in a broken home and with multiple step in-laws is just a start of the complications. If you are a grandparent, how much would you spend to have your grandchildren in a stable happy home? We are all sort of grandparents to the children at church. We need to work on a balance of helping our "grandchildren" succeed and allowing to live their own lives.

There is no cookie cutter solution which will work for everyone. Each church, and each family, needs to address this and find solutions that work for your situation.

.....  
The following is taken from the satirical app "The Babylon Bee" and was the inspiration for this article:

### 9 Ways To Spot A Good Potential Future Spouse At Church

CHURCH·Jun 23, 2024 · BabylonBee.com



If you're cruising the pews for a husband or wife, there are some helpful tricks to spotting a great future spouse.. Here are nine things to look for at Church this Sunday:

- Has a worn Bible** - Excuse me, but I believe your holiness is showing.
- Sings all the words to classic hymns even with eyes closed** - Hubba-hubba!
- Volunteers for VBS** - Is it getting hot in here? It feels hot all of a sudden.
- Rolls eyes when worship leader starts playing Hillsong** - Yowza!
- Turns to the book of Hezekiah without even looking at table of contents** - Be still, my beating heart.
- WWJD bracelet** - like a beacon saying, "come, enjoy fifty years of wedded bliss."
- Sighs dreamily and says, "if only I could find godly spouse to raise many children with."** - GO GET A RING!!
- Has completed Awana vest** - the foundation on which so many years of happy marriage are built.

Continued on page 13

## INVEST IN THE FUTURE, P.4

Continued from page 12

**Says, "Hey, check out this funny Babylon Bee headline - This is the one**

Find these at Church next week and a lifetime of loving matrimony could be all yours!

Note:

**Hillsong** Worship is a praise and worship collective from Sydney, Australia. They started making music in 1983 at Hillsong Church. Fifteen of their songs have appeared on the Billboard magazine charts in the US, with "What a Beautiful Name" representing their greatest success, reaching platinum in the US..

**Awana** equips local volunteers in churches around the world with biblical discipleship solutions. Our programs serve kids 2-18. Awana is an international evangelical Christian nonprofit organization in child and youth discipleship founded in 1950. The headquarters is in St. Charles, Illinois, United States. The name is derived from the first letters of "Approved Workmen Are Not Ashamed" as taken from 2 Timothy 2:15. As of 2019, Awana claims to work with over 61,000 churches in 122 countries.

As is typically true of satire, there is truth in

it. The Babylon Bee is a really good satirical app to get, and it is free.

## ETERNAL LIFE

*"I have written this to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know you have eternal life." (1 John 5:13 NLT)*

**Believe the evidence:** John was an eye witness to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. "...now we testify and proclaim to you that he is the one who is eternal life." (1:2) We have three witnesses, the Spirit, the water of Jesus' baptism and the blood of his sacrifice. (5:6f) These three agree. "And this is what God has testified: He has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." (5:11)

**Grow in love:** Real love is the love that God has for us. We are to grow in love for one another. (4:17) "Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God." (4:7) Real love is having compassion for our brothers and sisters.

"We know we love God's children if we love God and obey his commandments. Loving God means keeping his commandments."(5:2, 3)

**Live in Jesus:** "And we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us understanding so that we can know the true God. And now we live in fellowship with the true God because we live in fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ. He is the only true God, and he is eternal life." (5:20) We live in fellowship by living in the light, practicing the truth, confessing our sins and asking forgiveness. We have confidence in eternal life because we live in Jesus Christ.



Elizabeth Brown, Texarkana, TX

## Look at God's People - What Have We Become?

Continued from page 1

In these end times we are all at risk of afflictions arising from complacency, incompetence and apathy because we are succumbing to contentment and satisfaction found in excesses and diversions practiced by worldly cultures and celebrated as entitlements. As we default to lifestyles in conformity with the worldview we become dulled and lethargic in spirit as if hypnotized – unaware of impending risk of spiritual and physical death as many around us welcome opportunities to escape persistent pain of conscience by venturing into the semiconscious mythical realm of zombie-like disconnection from reality provided by indulgence in alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, opiates and other substances which authorities have by popular demand endorsed as legal for public use. The consequences of such behavior are described with the Latinized clinical language of medical and psychiatric science which obscure the realities and scope of destructive effects that reverberate through families, relationships, businesses, communities and our Nation.

The collective toll of popular perverse behavior in our progressive, permissive, and condoning culture is measured by uncontrollable cost of health care, the virtual absence of mental health care, great losses of productivity and decline in effectiveness of education. The adoption of ethereal post-modern philosophy of relativism invokes the "purity" of "personal truth" as a foundation for self-determination and self-realization in a random universe. With this paradigm we have positioned mankind beyond the call and reach of any force outside ourselves and are thus becoming blinded, deaf, and dumbed to any notion of a singular crea-

tive source that constrains us by natural laws and a supernatural force of love that binds everything together.

Even those who profess to live according to precepts of common law derived from Biblical commands – while claiming to be shielded by faith – can be seen to be falling away, less and less prepared to resist temptation, less competent and less willing to follow in obedience as disciples of Christ – to minister to one-another and to the outcasts of our communities whom are paralyzed by poverty, fear, lack of knowledge, hope and faith. We have "learned" in conformity to the majority to overlook the growing numbers of this "caste" in our midst – just as ancient people of God overlooked the unfortunate among themselves, only to be chastised by Jesus

Continued on page 15



## Look at God's People - What Have We Become?

Continued from page 14

Christ who explained that His mission included the rescue of these children of God – all created in His image - and commissioned his disciples to do likewise.

If we are unwilling to obey the Lord's commandments to love, care, heal, and minister to all children of God – and moreover; to acknowledge that others are better than ourselves as they are endowed with personal gifts and divine purposes which are vital to the salvation of all – then we are rejecting the Word of God and may find that although we anticipate invitation to enter the Kingdom of heaven, Jesus "will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you, away from me you evil doers!'" (Matthew 8:23).

We are at risk of becoming like those whom we shun and condemn as spiritually leprous. Paradoxically, we often acknowledge and honor "at a safe distance" those servants of God who sacrifice comforts and self to follow in Spirit and truth Jesus' commands to "go, the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few" (Luke 10:2), because "when He saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd" Matthew 9:37).

Therefore, let us pray for help to resist the temptation to withhold forgiveness for others who may have slipped in their walk following Jesus – but have not fallen in His eyes – who can be reset aright on the path alongside with us, so they may help us when we stumble. Let us be aware that "Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race, marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat

down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart" (Hebrews 12: 1-3).

Let the congregations consider Ezekiel's warning to the flock over which the Lord is their shepherd. "As for you, my flock, this is what the sovereign Lord says: I will judge between one sheep and another, and between rams and goats. Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture? Must you also trample the rest of your pasture with your feet? Is it not enough for you to drink clear water? Must you also muddy the rest with your feet? Must my flock feed on what you have trampled and drink what you have muddied with your feet? ..... Because you shove with flank and shoulder, butting all the weak sheep with your horns until you have driven them away, I will save my flock, and they will no longer be plundered" (Ezekiel 34:17 -22).

When Adam was confronted with his sin, he first "reacted" by blaming Eve, but God reached out to provide ways to resist temptation and He set them on a new path to reconciliation through obedience by choice. From Adam's seed some chose God,

Continued on page 16



## Look at God's People - What Have We Become?

Continued from page 15

some chose evil – until the days of Noah. Even today some will choose God, some will choose evil – until Jesus' return. The Word of God clearly describes and clearly explains the differences of choice – the difference between sinful behavior and righteous ways – “since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. Ever since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse” (Romans 1: 19-20).

We, the many congregations of believers, have separated ourselves from one-another by frequent disagreements and conflicts. As a result, we find ourselves like penitent children huddling in various groups, hoping to salve egos apart from the Teacher who urges them to become reconciled with their “offenders”. We must submit to Jesus' instruction and correction, learning to practice forgiveness to rid ourselves of “the bad seed” of pride which overshadows awareness of our weaknesses which can be overcome by reaching out to one-another, “unfreezing” the remembered mistakes of others which remain unhealed and unforgiven by our own self-righteous, unforgiving disobedience to Jesus' commands. We must learn to bandage the wounds of one-another so that we may carry on in new

strength of unity and zeal for service to our Lord and Savior. In so doing we can hold on to the hope of restoring the leprous church by joining together to purify the Bride - Jesus' Church - purchased with His body and blood. Let us test the Spirit to witness that love is stronger than hate. “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.” (Galatians 5:22). God's love endures forever. Jesus has overcome the world and will keep His promise that His own can receive their inheritance as sons of God eternal.

Revive your people oh God, wherever we may be found. Hear the weakest of our cries of confession as we humble ourselves, pray and seek your face. By Your mercy and grace, grant us strength to turn from our wicked ways, “forgiving us our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors” and heal our lands. Our prayer echoes through the ages and is lifted up once more. Amen

Larry S. Grubbs, Harrison, Ohio





## IMPOSSIBLE FOR EVOLUTION #146: SEX: INDEPENDENT DEPENDENCE

A species is a group of living organisms consisting of similar individuals capable of exchanging genes or interbreeding.

Beetles (Order Coleoptera) are known to include some 350,000 described species. These figures are rising constantly due to the naming of new species by taxonomists.

There are more than 1,000,000 different kinds (species) of insects known in the world. About 7,000 new species are found each year. They are, by far, the most common animals on our planet. Scientists have estimated that there are around 8.7 million species of plants and animals in existence.



More than 99% of all species that ever lived on Earth, amounting to over five billion species, are estimated to have died out.

Taking the 350,000 species of beetles as an example, this means that there are 350,000 different kinds of genitalia (male and female sexual parts) which can only breed with other. In other words there are 350,000 female genitalia designs and 350,000 male mating genitalia parts. The sustained existence of the 350,000 species of beetles is dependent upon the appropriate male and female genitalia parts getting together. They are dependent upon each other.

In the theory of evolution, these mating male and female genitalia develop by beneficial mu-

tations over millions of years.

The first catch to this is that half evolved genitalia don't work. They have to be fully developed to work.

The second catch is that when a male or female genitalia magically evolves to a state of working after millions of years, the other of the female or male genitalia have to also be independently evolved to a state of workability in the **same generation**. The first developed part of the pair cannot wait a million years for the second part to evolve. If the other is not immediately available and found, the species simply goes extinct.

Even if some beetle couple beats the fantastic odds and evolves to completion in the same generation, such luck is even more inconceivable for 350,000 beetle pairs to do it also. The theory of evolution is based on all 350,000 beetle pairs being able to do so.

The commonsense logic to this is easy for anyone to see. One would have to be naïve to think this could happen by chance.

It is not just that this is inconceivable, the design of genitalia (and the whole of beetles and animals) is fantastically complex. It takes a truly intelligent designer to do this.

Benton F. Baugh, Ph.D., P.E

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ZONE LEADER: 7 Tactics for Leading in the Zones

TURNER



# ZONE LEADER

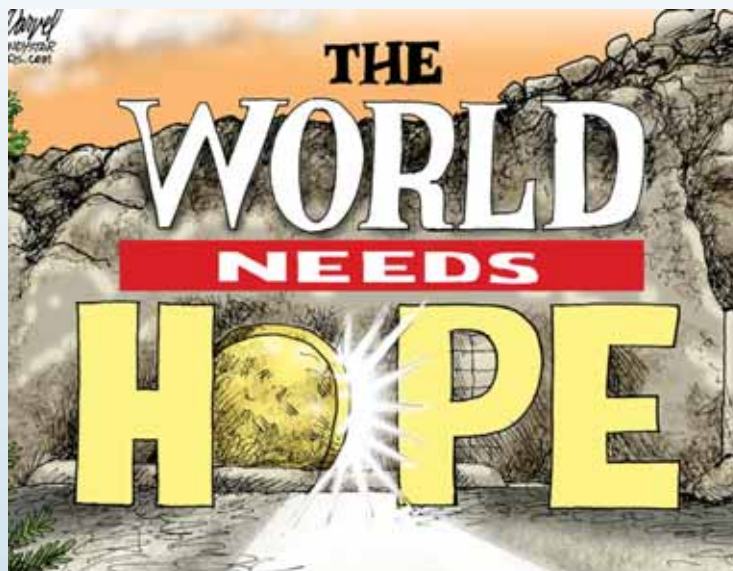
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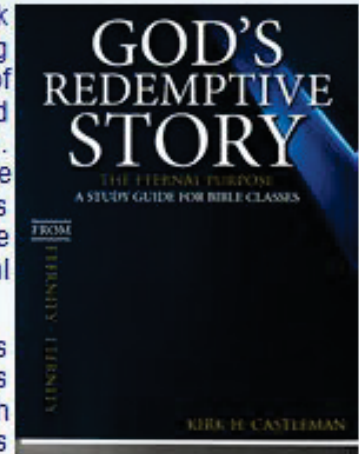
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FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT 1 TIM 1:18



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**Albert Einstein**

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

**September 1: Beginning of Online Virtual Worship Services for smaller congregations.** For more information see page 2 and/or contact [bbaugh@occg.institute](mailto:bbaugh@occg.institute).

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