

*As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another. Proverbs 27:17*

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#### **EASTER FACTS AND FICTION**

The largest chocolate Easter egg is taller than a giraffe and weighs more than an elephant. (FACT – the egg is 34' tall & weighs 15873lbs)

Before Easter egg hunts, children used to search for pretzels. (FACT – hundreds of years ago, pretzels were strongly associated with Easter, with many noting that the twists of the pretzel resembled arms crossing in prayer)

Americans buy more than one billion marshmallow peeps during the Easter holiday. (FICTION – but we do buy more than 700 million!)

The word Easter is only mentioned in the bible 1 time. (FICTION – The word Easter is **never** mentioned in the bible.)



#### **FORMER INMATES GIVING ADVICE TO THOSE GETTING OUT OF PRISON**

#### **What advice would you give inmates about to re-enter society?**

Stay focused and determined. There are going to be a number of battles and deterrents throughout this new phase of life. Things will not be easy by any means. However, use the bad days as motivation. Remember where you have been and how far you have come, and mostly stay focused on where you are headed.

You've already made it through the darkest part, keep heading toward the light at the end of the tunnel. – **April P.**

The No. 1 ingredient required to make it is humility. When humble, I am teachable. When full of myself, I am full of crap. One cannot graft new ideas on a closed mind. – **Tim H.**

Be respectful to your parole officer and to those that are helping you to get through a difficult time. Apply for educational grants and better yourself through continued education. Be careful with whom you associate. Stay away from friends that use drugs or alcohol. – **Jerry S.**



## Moses BY PASTOR MIKE HERNANDEZ, CHURCH OF THE HARVEST

*Every month this year we will look at a different man from the Bible.*

One of the greatest leaders in the Bible was Moses. In fact, he was one of two that appeared at the Transfiguration with Jesus (Matthew 17:3). His many miracles include parting the red sea and bringing water out of a rock. He was the chosen one to lead the Children of Israel out of slavery. But how many of you know he wasn't perfect and he didn't do everything right. We are going to look at some struggles Moses dealt with and how we can learn from these struggles.

As you may know, Moses was born at a time when the Pharaoh of Egypt gave the order to have all the Israelite baby boys killed. Moses' mother hid Moses and put him in a basket and put that basket into the Nile River. By chance (or by God's sovereign hand), Pharaoh's daughter discovered the basket so Moses, though was an Israelite, grew up in the house of Pharaoh.

"And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed and struck down the Egyptian. For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand." - Acts 7:22-25

Moses knew that God had chosen him to deliver the Israelites. However, he tried to deliver them by his own hand when he killed the Egyptian. Moses tried to do the right thing (deliver the Israelites) the wrong way (in his own strength). This is the first issue that Moses struggled with that we can learn from. Moses' heart was in the right place when he wanted to help the Israelites. He even was trying to follow the Lord's plan for his life as the deliverer of Israel. However, instead of seeking the Lord on the strategy to achieve this, he took matters into his own hands. We need to learn that even though we receive a word from the Lord, that we still need his strategy and timing.

At 40 years old, Moses understood his purpose. He understood that he was the chosen deliverer of Israel. In fact, Moses refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter and instead chose to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasure of sin (Hebrews 11:24-25). At 40, Moses was ready to be used by God! Unfortunately, the consequences of killing the Egyptian caused him to flee from Egypt and take refuge as a shepherd in Midian.

After being a shepherd for 40 years, God visits Moses in a unique way - a burning bush. I wonder if over those 40 years as a shepherd, if Moses forgot his purpose. Instead of being a deliverer, he was tending sheep. Instead of leading a nation, he was leading a flock. When things don't go like we plan, we tend to give up on our purpose. I wonder if Moses got bitter towards God during those years, or worse yet, he forgot about God. I wonder if Moses ever felt forgotten by God. I wonder if Moses ever felt trapped in his life and he saw no way out. I wonder if sometimes we are like Moses.

When God visited Moses through a burning bush, God gave Moses the assignment of leading God's people out of Egypt. The time has come for Moses to be a deliverer. But instead of getting excited for the time of his purpose has come, he instead starts making excuses - who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, why would they listen to me and I am not a good speaker.

"And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds." - Acts 7:42

Moses forgot who he was. The many years of being a shepherd and the disappointment of unmet expectations caused Moses to doubt himself. Moses didn't believe that he could do what God told him to do. Who better to go into the throne room of Pharaoh than someone raised in the wisdom of the Egyptians? Who better to speak to Pharaoh than someone mighty in words and deeds? Moses was set up perfectly for this assignment, but he forgot who he was.

We all have been given assignments from God. God made us for a purpose. We can forget our assignment when we forget who we are. If you are a Christian, then you are a child of the Most High God. You may wonder how God can use you in your current situation. May I suggest that you may be the only Bible someone else may ever read? How you live and how you treat others should show others the love of Christ.

"You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." - Matthew 5:14-16

A light shines the brightest where the place is the darkest. I'm not sure there is a darker place than our penal system. The people around you need the Lord. They are lost and their only answer is Jesus. They may never read a Bible or read this article, but they will read you. Are you shining the light? Or are you hiding your light? Don't forget who you are! You are a child of God!

Now back to Moses. He ultimately went and talked to Pharaoh. Through incredible miracles, Pharaoh let the people of Israel go. Moses led them into the desert and they were trapped by the Egyptian army and the Red Sea. God used Moses to part the Red Sea, which perhaps became his most famous miracle. Moses led the Israelites for 40 years and he communicated the law to the people (including the Ten Commandments). Moses became one of the greatest leaders who ever lived. I believe that those 40 years as a shepherd helped him be a better leader of people so God didn't waste those years in Midian. God doesn't waste years in our lives as well.

Moses is one of my heroes. He had such a strong relationship with God that the Bible says that God spoke to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend (Exodus 33:11). I long for that kind of relationship with God. Moses was the most humble man on the face of the earth (Numbers 12:3) and Moses had the boldness to ask to see God's Glory (Exodus 33:18-23). And finally, Moses wanted the presence of God more than he wanted the Promised Land. God offered to send Moses to Canaan and even said he would send his Angel before him, but Moses did not want to go anywhere, even the Promised Land flowing with milk and honey, if God's presence didn't go with him (Exodus 33:15). We have so much to learn from the life of Moses!

“Words to Grow By” BY LINDA LEWIS, GMI DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

## Favor

The dictionary defines “favor” as an act of kindness beyond what is due or usual; approval, support, or liking for someone or something; to feel or show approval or preference for.

Sound like anyone you know? If not, then I suspect that you really don't know how much God really loves and favors you, but He truly does.

God's favor falls fresh upon each and every one of us at the dawning of each and every new day.

Being in God's favor means your blessing may be delayed...but it is never denied.  
God is always on time! NEVER forget that!

It is our continued prayer that  
The LORD bless you, and keep you [protect you, sustain you, and guard you];  
The LORD make His face shine upon you [with favor],  
And be gracious to you [surrounding you with lovingkindness] *Numbers 6:24-25 (AMP)*



## Write Us

We would love to hear from you. If you have a testimony, a prayer request or a question about your walk with the Lord, send us a letter. We would love to pray or rejoice with you.

Maybe you are a writer and you have a spiritual word of encouragement for the readers of our newsletter. We would love to review your article to see if we can use it in our newsletter. We also like to share poems from the more artistic saints.

## New Stuff

We are excited to announce that we will now be ministering at the Women's prison in Topeka. Special shout out to Shannon Myer for meeting with us and working out some programming for that facility. We should be ready to make our first visits in May after sending our new volunteers through training.

We would like to give a special hello to all the women at Topeka Correctional Facility that we will be visiting very soon.



We took a tour of the facility this month.

## From the Yard - Why Temptation Follows on the Reception of Grace

by **Gordan M. aka "Lil G" El Dorado**

God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able but will with the temptation also make a way to escape that ye may bear it. (1 Cor. 10:13). Every man is tempted when he is drawn away on his own lust, and enticed (James 1:14). That temptation tests the virtue of the just. Man is largely a mystery

to himself. He does not know what he can endure and what he cannot. It is only when temptation comes to search him that he discovers himself. Secondly that temptation comes to test man's ruinous tendency to pride, which can make even God's goodness to them an occasion of sin. Temptation will remind them of their own weaknesses, and their dependence on God. Temptation may be permitted for the discomfiture of the devil, to show them their powerlessness against the grace of Christ as in the case of Job (Job 1:8). Temptation can serve to harden and strengthen the man who is tried by it. So as in Job's case, God will allow the just to be tempted to show the greatness which grace bestows on them.



Certain conditions of mind and body, in fact, make us an easy prey to temptation. In times of extreme body fatigue or mental tension, we are much more readily open to suggestion, than when we are well and strong in body and tranquil mind. It reminds us that our Lord's example is there for our need to arm ourselves against temptation by fasting and self-denial. That His own fast was meant to be an example for us. Christ Himself said that there are some devils who are only to be driven out by prayer and fasting (Mark 9:28). For resistance to temptation means quelling powerful impulses, and this, only the disciplined personality can do. If we are in the habit of giving way to every passing whim and desire we shall be in no position to exercise self-control in the moment of temptation.

The Spirit dwells in the soul as a principle energy of action. He comes to arouse the soul, to kindle a fire in it, to spur it forward. The more fully a man is given to God, the more truly will the Spirit be his leader, and the less he will think of himself as being at his own disposal. It is tragic folly (foolishness) to concentrate on trying to be what one cannot be, resulting in having no time or energy to give to the real task of trying to become what one can be. Our Lord said not solicitous (eager). You are to work, to struggle, to pray, but not to fret (worry) because you are what you are; your heavenly Father has care of you, in this matter as in all, you then are to accept what you are and trust in Him (Matt. 6:25).

Conclusion: Our great defense is the grace of God, and it is freely given, but only if we sincerely desire it and show our desire in the ways appointed by God. We are to approach God, with a humble and contrite (repentant) heart, not merely acknowledging our weaknesses and failure, but determined, with the help of His grace, to improve the situation, to be less selfish and more generous for the future.



A Little Humor

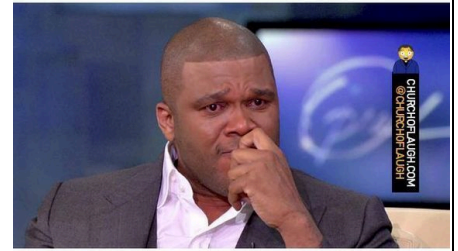
The drive home from church when the sermon was about ur whole life



My face when I realized that God did something for me and I was too stupid to notice.



WHEN THEY DO AN ALTAR CALL

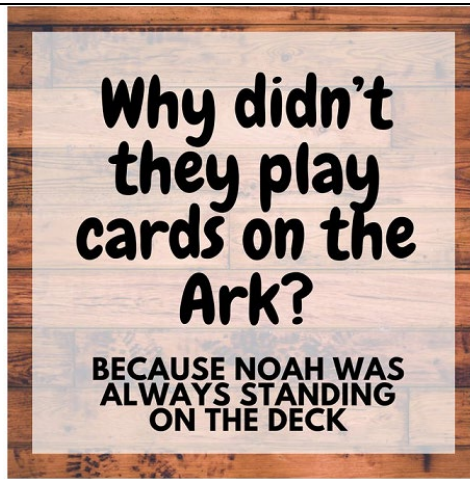


AND YOU TRY TO ACT LIKE YOU DON'T NEED TO GO

The best mathematical equation I have ever seen: 1 cross + 3 nails= 4 given.

Some people are kind, polite, and sweet-spirited until you try to sit in their pews.

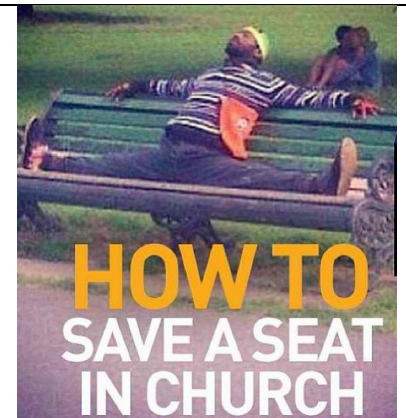
Plan ahead – It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.



Knock knock!  
 who's there?  
 Luke  
 Luke who?  
 Luke through the peephole and find out...  
 Knock knock!  
 who's there?  
 Mark  
 Mark who?  
 Mark my words, yuh better open this door

How long did Cain hate his brother?  
 As long as he was Abel.

What sort of lights were on Noah's Ark?  
 Floodlights.



GMI WORD SEARCH BY LONNIE JOHNSON  
THE RESURRECTION

E	N	O	I	T	A	V	L	A	S	A	Z	B	M	A	L
C	J	R	I	S	E	N	B	Y	N	C	W	D	Q	A	L
I	L	E	N	T	L	T	H	O	L	Y	R	E	S	T	A
F	S	S	S	O	N	G	I	Q	B	M	O	T	L	M	C
I	O	R	X	U	V	S	O	D	D	P	R	E	F	N	H
R	W	R	F	I	S	U	P	P	E	R	E	R	L	C	U
C	E	R	D	A	U	G	H	T	A	L	V	N	E	R	R
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G	O	O	D	S	F	R	I	D	A	Y	F	L	R	R	T
E	S	N	S	S	S	O	R	C	I	N	G	U	O	A	S
J	O	Y	O	U	S	M	M	N	O	S	E	A	M	E	A
G	O	A	N	O	I	X	I	F	I	C	U	R	C	T	E

JESUS  
RESURRECTION  
LENT  
EASTER  
GOOD  
FRIDAY  
MASS  
CHURCH  
CROSS  
LAST  
SUPPER  
CRUCIFIXION

PASSION  
TOMB  
LAMB  
DEATH  
SACRIFICE  
RISEN  
JOYOUS  
HOLY  
POWER  
FESTIVE  
SALVATION  
GRAVE

BLOOD  
SON  
ETERNAL  
EARLY  
MORNING

## Closing Words LONNIE JOHNSON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, GROWTH MINISTRIES INC

### What would it take for you to disown your child?

Your kids can put you through a lot. They can test and try your patience, strain your finances and do things that honestly make you become enraged. Especially when they grow older and you feel they should know better. After you have given them your best and taught them right from wrong, they intentionally choose wrong over right. Then you have to cover their consequences. How far will you go before you say enough is enough? When are you done claiming that child as your own? The human nature has its limits. We all have breaking points. Once we turn that child away, they are on their own to figure it out. I hear many of you saying, "Maybe that's what they need..."? Maybe it is. I don't know your kids and I don't know what they have done.

Let's look at this from God's perspective. We are His children. He is our Father. He calls us His Own. We are very precious to Him; even more than our kids are precious to us. We put God through **a lot**. We often grieve His Holy Spirit as a nation of His Kingdom and individually. He gives and gives and sometimes we take what He gives and misuse it. What is His tolerance for our disobedience? The bible says his mercy endureth forever (**Psalm 136**) and for that we should be thankful. God does not give up on us as easily as some may give up on their kids. He promises that He will never leave us nor forsake us. (**Deuteronomy 31:6 and Hebrews 13:5**). So if we do slip, if we do stray off the path, we don't have to stay in that state believing that God is ready to cut us off. We do have to understand that there are consequences for our actions at times that we may have to pay, but we are still God's loved ones. We don't have to hide from God like Adam did when we sin because we know that there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ (**Romans 8:1**).

Even though God has constantly taught mankind right from wrong since the beginning of time, He too covered the consequences of our sins by putting His Son Jesus on the cross in our place.

No matter how bad you messed up, no matter what you have done, God is willing to forgive you if you are willing to repent. If you go to Him and confess your wrongs, He will forgive you and cleanse you of that thing (**1 John 1:9**). Try Him.

#### **What must I do to be saved?**

If you have never accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, or if you have turned away from Him living a life of unrighteousness, and wish to be connected to Him, then take a moment and say the prayer below:

**"Lord, I confess that I am a sinner and ask for your forgiveness. I believe that your son Jesus died on the cross for my sins and was resurrected with all power. I invite Jesus to be the Lord of my life and your Holy Spirit to come into my heart to guide me for the rest of my days. Amen."**

Romans 10:9 says that *if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

If this is you, please write Growth Ministries and we will gladly help you start your new life in Christ.

**Growth Ministries, Inc., Attn: Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 4375, Olathe, KS 66063**