

food for thought >>>

"Knowing God is your single greatest privilege as a Christian".
~ Sinclair Ferguson



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Proverbs 27:17 As Iron Sharpens Iron, So One Person Sharpens Another

The Growth Journal



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Friend of God

James 2:23 AMP

And the scripture was fulfilled which says, Abraham believed God, and this (faith) was credited to him (by God) as righteousness and as conformity to His will, and he was called the friend of God.

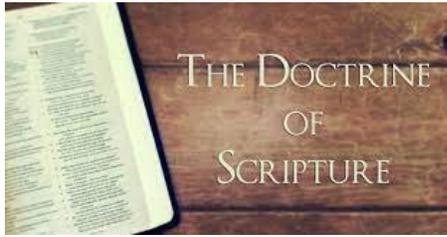
Lord, by faith, I receive and embrace you as my friend, and me a friend to you. I haven't always had healthy relationships and I don't always know how to be a good friend. My prayer today and every day, is that I form a relationship with you, that I come to know you. I ask that you prepare my heart to love and share freely; that I lean on you in times of gratitude and need; that I learn to trust You; that your character is revealed through Your Word. Teach me how to have toxic-free, God-inspired relationships with others. Thank you for all the things you've done and will do; that in spite of me, you consider me a friend.

E. Butler

*Perhaps You
were born for
such a time as this*
ESTHER 4:14

The Doctrine of Scripture

by Alywin Mitchell



The Bible is complete, authoritative, and true! *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”* 2 Timothy 3:16.

Sola Scriptura

Sola scriptura means, that Scripture alone is authoritative for the faith and practice of Christians.

The Holy Scriptures are a revelation from God, coming from God and pouring through and to Man. Phrases like “God Says” are found over 3800 times in the Bible, which confirm that the words came from God Himself. The heavens declare the glory of God, but Holy Scripture declares His glory and His Words.

The Holy Scriptures are the only inspired, unerring and infallible divine revelation ever given to man and are the absolute authority in all matters of faith, ethics and beliefs. ALL the words in scripture are God’s words. God can not lie or speak falsely, *“that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us.”* (Hebrews 6:18). Therefore, All the Words in Scripture are completely True and Without Error in any part, *“Every word of God is flawless, he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. (Proverbs 30:5).* God’s Words are the ultimate standard of truth, *“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”* (John 17:17) Scripture’s authority doesn’t depend on whether we cooperate with it or understand it. Its authority is determined by the power, authority, and sovereignty of its Author, the Lord God.

The Bible is what is called “the Divine library”, and the Bible enjoys great diversity and unity. The Bible was written by more than 40 authors, living in different countries from Egypt to Rome. It was written by kings, farmers, prophets, fishermen, and men in prison. The text was written over the course of 1,500 Years. The Bible was written in three languages across three Continents. On average, the Bible is over 600,000 words long. However, different translations of the Bible are even longer. In fact, the King James Bible (KJV) is 783,137 words.

The Bible has 66 separate but related books and is the ONLY authoritative written revelation of God. It is divided into the Old Testament with 39 books and the New Testament with 27 books. The Bible is also called the canon of Scripture. Canon simply means “a measuring rod,” a collection or list of sacred books accepted as genuine.” The Bible canon, or the collection or list of sacred books, makes it possible for the person reading it to gauge and determine their faith, their doctrine, and their conduct.

The Doctrine of Scripture cont.

Amazingly, although the eighth commandment of the Ten Commandments is “thou shalt not steal,” the Bible is the most stolen book in the world. Bibles are regularly stolen from hotels, hospitals, bookstores, and even churches.

The major teachings of the Bible about itself can be classified into four characteristics: **(1) the authority of Scripture; (2) the clarity of Scripture; (3) the necessity of Scripture; and (4) the sufficiency of Scripture.**

Authority: The authority of Scripture means that all the words in scripture are God’s words and to disbelieve or disobey any word of scripture is to disbelieve or disobey God.

Clarity: The clarity of Scripture means that the Bible is written in such a way that its teachings can be understood by anyone who will read it seeking God’s help and willing to follow what it says.

Necessity: The necessity of Scripture means that the Bible is necessary for knowing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, for taking care of your spiritual life, and for knowing God’s will for your life.

Sufficiency: The sufficiency of Scripture means that Scripture contained all the words of God He intended his people to have at each stage of redemptive history and that it contains all the words of God that we need for salvation, for trusting Him perfectly, and for obeying Him perfectly.

The Bible has changed the lives of murderers, thieves, drug addicts, assailants, government officials, businesspeople, and people from every walk of life, *“to every nation, tribe, language, and people.”* No other book can make such a claim. This is because the Bible is not just a book about how to live a good life, *“for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”* The Bible is the Word of God with the power to change lives.

Jesus Christ is the living Word, the Word made flesh; *And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* (John1:14) And the Bible is the Written word. Both are the “Logos”. The living Word is revealed in the Written Word and the Written Word directs us to the Living Word. THEY ARE ONE!

From, *“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”* (Genesis1:1) to, *“The grace of the Lord Jesus be with God’s people. Amen.”* (Revelation 22:21), Scripture reveals to us that God is eternal, just, unchanging, incomparable, unequalled, righteous, sovereign, and we could go on and on. Our God is PERFECT in all things!

“The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever” Isaiah 40:8

I Wish I Had Better News

by Susan

“I wish I had better news...” Those are the words nobody ever wants to hear from their doctor. Nothing you do can prepare you for those words, or for what comes next.

The CT scans were read by the radiologist and he was certain that it was cancer. It really doesn't look good. It has spread. We will have to send you to an oncologist that specializes in this type of cancer and we'll go from there. And so it began.

I've built my life on one truth. There is only one person who won't EVER let me down. That person is Jesus. I know I can count on him alone because he found me at my worst and loved me anyway. I gave my whole heart to him and he has been with me ever since.

I can't lie and say that I wasn't upset by the news. I was. But I also knew for sure that I had a friend that would stick by me through whatever came next.

I have seen God perform miracles: I saw a blind woman get back her sight after praying for help. Another woman who hadn't slept in years because she had such bad asthma that she couldn't breathe asked God for help. After praying, she said she gave her whole heart to Jesus and then she could breathe. I saw a man delivered from demons when he gave his heart to Jesus. I prayed for my rebellious son to come back to Jesus for 20 years and then witnessed his life changing transformation.

I am not a stranger to the power of prayer. So, with very little time to digest the diagnosis, I called the people in my life that I knew really believed like I did and I asked them to pray. Not just once, but to cover me as I walked through my sickness. If you're anything like me, it's not easy to ask for help. Each one of them confirmed that they would pray...believing for a miracle.

I also spent time with God on my own. Lots of time! I read Psalm 91

1 Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.

2 I will say of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

3 Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence.

4 He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.

5 You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day,

6 nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday.

7 A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you.

8 You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked.

9 If you say, “The Lord is my refuge,” and you make the Most High your dwelling,

10 no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent.

11 For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways;

12 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.

13 You will tread on the lion and the cobra; you will trample the great lion and the serpent.

14 “Because he loves me,” says the Lord, “I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.

15 He will call on me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will deliver him and honor him.

16 With long life I will satisfy him and show him my salvation.”

I Wish I Had Better News cont.

I believe that every word of this scripture is true and is written for all of us that know him as our savior. I believe that my relationship with him is far more important than a miracle cure from my cancer. So I prayed that I would know him in a deeper way than ever before.

So I was ready to face anything. It began with exams, chemotherapy, extreme fatigue, horrible sickness, and the loss of all my hair. Every chemo took 8 hrs. I felt pretty good right afterwards, but on the 3rd and 4th day it got real. But you know what? No matter how bad I felt, I knew that I was covered in prayer and I knew that I was under his wing.

After a few treatments I got a CT scan to see how things looked. The doctor came into the room, sat down, and said “these results are nothing short of miraculous! I checked to make sure I was looking at the correct scan.”

The chemo continued and I scheduled the date for my surgery. I spent my time by getting alone with Jesus and trusting in the faithful prayers of my trusted group of prayer warriors.

The day of surgery arrived. It took about three hours and the doctor came out to talk about how it went. He said, “There was one cluster of tissue that I removed and everything around it looked perfect.” God had done it again!

As I am writing this, my hair is starting to grow back. I’m feeling like my precancerous self again. But I have to share the things that I learned from this trial. The things that matured me and gave me wisdom to move on. Don’t get me wrong. I’m totally grateful to Jesus for my healing, but I appreciate my relationship with him even more.

I learned that the quiet place you find with Jesus isn’t like anything else on earth. In fact, the rest of the world falls away when you are wrapped under his wing. I learned that if you place your trust in your friends, they will rise to the occasion to pray, really pray. And, through those prayers powerful bonds are formed. I learned how to be on the receiving end of giving. That was hard for me. I learned that I may have been a little vain about my appearance before I lost all my hair, in one day. I think, to sum it up, I learned not to fear; not to fear anything when the creator of the universe loves you. Think about that!

Deuteronomy 31:8 “The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

I want to share one more thing with you that helped me keep my mind centered on Jesus. It comes from the Psalms I shared at the start of my story. Psalms 91:4. “He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.”

A day or two after I read this verse. I heard a story about a mother hen watching over her chicks. There was a vulture circling overhead ready to swoop in and take them. She didn’t run around frantically trying to gather them under her feathers. No, she sat down and spread her wings so each one of her chicks could run to her for protection.

That’s what Jesus wants us to do. Don’t wait for him to chase you down. He is waiting there with feathers spread for you to run to him. There is no safer place.

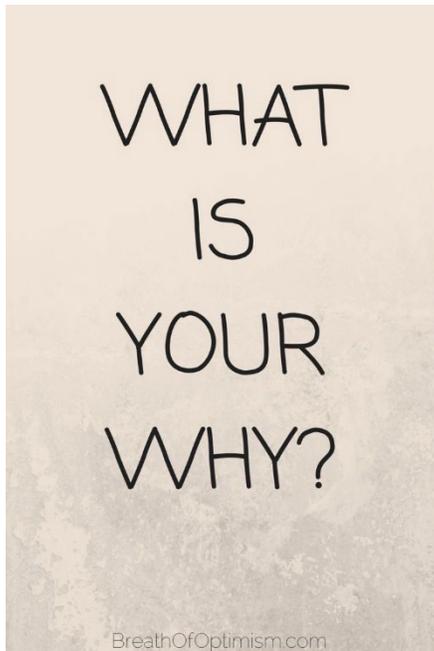


Susan Mountain



James 1: 2-3 NLT (2) *Dear brothers and sisters, when troubles of any kind come your way, consider it an opportunity for great joy. (3) For you know that when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. NLT.*

This message is about You! I know enough about me. I know why I work every day to better myself spiritually, mentally, and physically. I can remember growing up in a single-parent home, until the crack epidemic ruined it. Being passed around from family to family until I dropped out of high school and jumped into the streets, just to receive my G.E.D. from the Kansas Department of Corrections. I know enough about the people who made sacrifices for me, and prayed over my life hoping that I would get my act together and make something of myself. I can remember the look in their eyes that poured out passion and love. The verbal reassurance of, "life is what you make it and only you can make it better if you want." I can remember my many failures, until I failed so hard, I had to fall on God to give me the strength, wisdom, understanding, patience, and love to carry out my purpose in life. I know plenty more about what motivates me.



This is why I want You to look deep within yourself to find out what motivates you. It has been repeated by many successful people that a person should write down their goals. And the steps to achieving their goals, and how long it should take to achieve your goals, etc.. which is fine and a highly recommended practice of successful people. While you are writing all these things down about your goals, on a separate sheet of paper, I also want you to write down who, what, and why you want/need to achieve these things in life. The WHO; could be your grandparents, your parents, yourself, your kids (future kids) or Our God. The WHAT; could be because you want to be the first in your family to achieve a goal, bounce back from adversity, live a better life than your yesterdays, or even to become an overachiever because simply achieving is normal. The WHY; is like the purpose of your ambition; like something that you know can make a difference in people's lives, which in return actually makes a difference in the world. You have to think about what it is that drives you almost as much as you think about what it is that you want to accomplish in life.

Proverbs 3: 9-10 KJV (9) *Honour The Lord with thy substance, And with the first fruits of all thine increase: (10) So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, And thy presses shall burst out with new wine.*

Your portion with good faith leads to abundance. If abundance is what you want for yourself, your family, and generations to come, that's why, "This is about You."

Reasons to Read the Bible

by Bev Brown

When I saw what the topics were for this month, I jumped at the chance to share about one of them. I love the Bible, God's word, so much. It has been my guide throughout my life. The standard by which I strive to live.

The most important reason to study the Bible is because it is God's word. His love letter to us. That alone should make us want to know what it says – what HE says.

The Bible reveals His love for us. How from the very beginning He made what we need and knowing we would sin, planned a way for our salvation.

The Bible gives instruction for everyday life. It tells us how to live. Not only does it tell us right from wrong – don't kill, steal, covet, pride, etc., -- but it instructs us in things such as giving, loving, forgiving, faith, and praise; things to give us a full life.

It is full of wisdom. This is shown all throughout the Bible but especially in Proverbs. Proverbs has 31 chapters – one for each day of the month if you want to read it that way.

The Bible is full of praise to God. In much of Psalms the psalmist sings the praise of the Lord. King David wrote many of the Psalms. He was a man who had struggles and fell short in some of the same ways we do. He cried out to the Lord when He was hurting, just like we do, yet he always found a way to praise the Lord.

The Bible does not hide the sins and failure of people. It shows our humanity but it also shows the grace and forgiveness of God.

Living by the Bible can give you true freedom; the freedom that comes from inside.

If you don't read and study the Bible, you will never know God's perfect will for your life. You will also never really know if something is from God – a thought or a word from another person.

You will also miss hidden gems in the scripture such as, "He has removed our sins far from us as the east is from the west," Psalm 103:12 NLT. And "God saved you by His grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it," Ephesians 2:8-9 NLT.

When reading the Bible, read it in context. Ask the Lord what He is saying to you in the verses.

As you read you will find verses that apply to your situation. You will gain encouragement from them. You will see that you are not alone.

Sometimes when you read the Bible, the verses will not apply to you at the moment but they are stored in your heart and spirit. Then when you have an issue and you seek God, He will often answer with a verse. And His answer for you might be exclusively for you. He might not answer everyone in that same way. For example, He may give them a different verse.

God speaks to us through His word. He gives us comfort, encouragement, guidance and sometimes chastisement, all so we will be free.

I could go on and on but I am running out of space.

With each of the statements I made, I could give examples taken from my life's experiences.

I love the Bible so much and am so thankful for it, God's word. I encourage you to read and study it, not just to say you've read it, but seeking God as you do.

The Bible is a precious gift.



I was raised in the Methodist Church in a small community. I was taught about God and Jesus from an early age from church service and bible study. My parents talked about the ten commandments and taught me Christian morals and values. At age 14, I went through confirmation at the Methodist church and became a member. The first thing the church requested was a commitment to an annual offering amount. Even in my immature mind, I found that to be offensive. As an adult, I know the obligations of meeting bill and mortgage payments; but I didn't feel like the house of God should be run like an enterprise. If God was in the organization, he would make a way no matter what.

Since I was taught from an early age, I always knew God and Jesus existed and were with me. I realize that may not have been your experience. Maybe your journey with God is just beginning. When you accept God in your heart, he meets you where you are. Below is the poem "Footprints in the Sand":

One night I dreamed a dream.
As I was walking along the beach with my Lord.
Across the dark sky flashed scenes from my life.
For each scene, I noticed two sets of footprints in the sand,
One belonging to me and one to my Lord.

After the last scene of my life flashed before me,
I looked back at the footprints in the sand.
I noticed that at many times along the path of my life,
especially at the very lowest and saddest times,
there was only one set of footprints.

This really troubled me, so I asked the Lord about it.
"Lord, you said once I decided to follow you,
You'd walk with me all the way.
But I noticed that during the saddest and most troublesome times of my life,
there was only one set of footprints.
I don't understand why, when I needed You the most, You would leave me."

He whispered, "My precious child, I love you and will never leave you
Never, ever, during your trials and testings.
When you saw only one set of footprints,
It was then that I carried you."

There have been many challenges and trials in my life, just like there have for you. When I am sad and lonely or I am not feeling good about my circumstances, I think of this poem. It amazes me how quickly things can happen in your life, both good and bad. Your decisions and faith play a large role in what your journey is going to look like.

Romans 8:38-39 "I am absolutely sure that not even death or life can separate us from God's love. Not even angels or demons, the present or the future, or any power can do that. Not even the highest places or the lowest, or anything else in all creation can do that. Nothing at all can ever separate us from God's love because of what Christ Jesus our Lord has done."

I have heard over and over again; accepting God and Jesus into your heart will be a lifechanging experience and believe it to be true. There will still be trials by fire and times when you are tested and tempted. As you get closer to God and Jesus, the trials will happen more frequently. Satan doesn't want you to have a relationship with God. He wants you to continue down the path to his ultimate destiny.

John 14:27 – "I leave my peace with you. I give my peace to you. I do not give it to you as the world does. Do not let your hearts be troubled. And do not be afraid."

No matter where you are on your journey with God and Jesus, I challenge you to be obedient and have faith. You will be rewarded beyond measure. God bless you and keep you safe.

Words to Grow By – Linda Lewis

Did You Know?

Did you know that God wants a deep and fulfilling relationship with YOU?

Did you know that God created YOU with the ability to have a relationship with Him?

Did you know that God looks beyond all of YOUR faults and sees all of YOUR needs?

Did you know that God will supply all of YOUR needs according to His riches in glory?

Did you know that God loves YOU no matter what your past has been?

Did you know...

Jacob was a cheater; Peter had a temper; David had an affair; Noah got drunk; Jonah ran from God;

Paul was a murderer; Gideon was insecure; Miriam was a gossip; Martha was a worrier; Thomas was a doubter; Sara was impatient; Elijah was moody; Moses stuttered; Zacchaeus was short; Abraham was old; Lazarus was dead?

But in spite of all of their sins, weaknesses, and shortcomings, God used each and every one of them in mighty ways.

You see...God doesn't call the qualified, He qualifies the called.

My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. 2 Corinthians 12:9

No God...Know God

Anthony J. Butler: Founder | CEO of The VIP Movement | Multigenerational Speaker
| Author | Consultant |

No God. No real Growth. Know God. Know that we will experience real growth when we worship God and thank him.

Romans 1:20-23 in the New Living Translation states this: "For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky.

Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God. Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. They began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. Instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles."

The benefits of knowing God flow into every area of our lives. I'm talking about knowing God from a personal perspective. Knowing when he showed up on time, time and time again! Knowing that when we thought we were all alone, he was there. Knowing that when we need wisdom, God will give us an on time word. Knowing that when we are maligned, misunderstood, lied on, talked about, targeted...Knowing that if we hold our peace, God will fight our battles.

The benefits of knowing God are numerous. Life is full of challenges, trials, and triumphs.

Let's continue to know God through prayer, reading the Bible, observing nature, connecting with other believers, praise, worship, godly actions, and thanking him through it all!

Women Empowering Women – Linda Lewis

Getting to Know God

There is absolutely nothing compared to our Heavenly Father's love.

It is agape; love that seeks nothing in return. If you could ever fathom it, His love alone would heal the aching of your broken heart. God absolutely adores you.

There are many women in the Bible who chose getting to know God and He loved and blessed each of them way beyond their worth and if you get to know Him and let Him, He will do the same for you. We encourage you to read His Word...get to know Him.

Knowing God is more than believing in His existence.

Even Satan and his demons believe in God.

James 2:19

He is your Father, and the devil can't stop Him!
What are you waiting for?

Why God Should Not Be an Option, but an Obsession

by LeAnn McGranahan



For me there is absolutely no reason NOT to develop a personal relationship with God. I was born Catholic, went to church and did the best I could to be a good person. It wasn't until October 9, 2014, I realized just how much God has helped throughout my life without me fully comprehending it. If you are like me, you had many ups and downs. There were times that you knew God was worth everything-like when your child was born, when you made it through a terrible experience alive, etc. But life happens and in an instant that happiness leaves because it wasn't the true joy that getting to know God provides.

I have lived through many near death experiences and came out the other side traumatized but always functioning enough to keep going, but on October 9, 2014, I had an accident that left me with a traumatic brain injury. When I finally thought I could get out of bed, I quickly found out that I was not myself. For a while I just tried telling myself that I was sick and it would pass. That never happened. For seven years I had nothing but doctor appointments, work-comp accusing me of lying, migraines, seizures, shingles, severe swelling, asthma, and I could go on. I lost my business and was losing my life. My days were spent in bed and maybe up for around 15 minutes. Eventually, I was able to be up for a couple hours a day, but I couldn't be in crowds, talk to people, type, write, read or do much of anything except watch TV.

One day I started listening to Prophetic ministers from Elijah Streams on Rumble. They were explaining that all of us are called to have a personal relationship with God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit and with that comes an authority given to those that believe in Jesus with all your heart and confess with your mouth that He is your savior.

When I heard this revelation, it hit me like a ton of bricks! ***“Have faith in God. For assuredly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, be removed and be cast into the sea, (the word mountain means ANY problem you are experiencing) and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that those things he says will be done, he will have whatever he says. Therefore, I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you WILL have them.” Mark 11:22-24.***

So, I started speaking to my mountain (my migraines and headaches) that they would be gone in Jesus' name. I had no idea how to pray or speak to it but as I kept listening to different people like Robin D. Bullock, Kent Christmas and Hank Kunneman, I learned how to declare healing for myself. I wanted to read the Bible, but wasn't able to. So, I listened and learned how to pray with the authority that Jesus gave us ALL. I started feeling stronger and in touch with God on a new level and most importantly NEVER stepped back on the declaration of my word because scripture tells us in ***Mark 16:17-18 “And these signs will follow those who believe: In My name (Jesus) they (believers) will cast out demons; they (believers) will speak with new tongues (the language of the Holy Spirit); they (believers) will take up serpents; and if they (believers) drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them (believers); they (believers) will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover.”***

The beautiful part about this is that simple declaration I did gave me my healing! I found that out on February 12, 2021. I woke up in the morning and ABSOLUTELY knew that my migraines and headaches were gone forever, Praise God! Just in time for what was next.

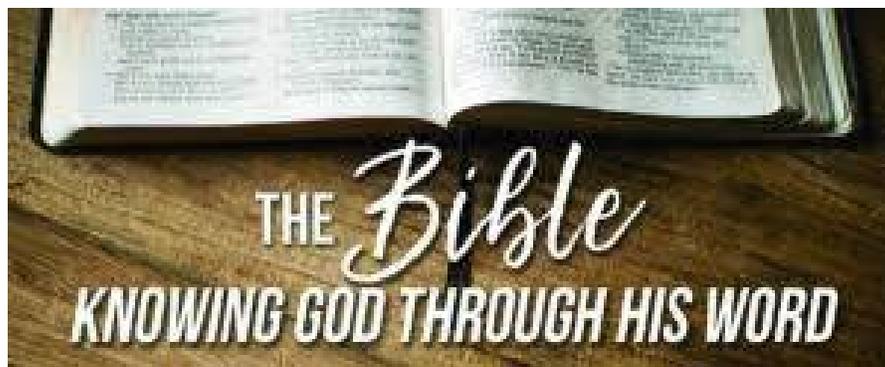
Why God Should Not Be an Option, but an Obsession cont.

On February 20, 2021, my father died unexpectedly of a massive heart attack. Before February 12, 2021, I wouldn't have been able to attend the funeral or be around people. The even greater miracle was that I wrote, typed and read his eulogy. No one else in the family wanted to do it so I called on my newfound personal relationship with God to get me through it and He did because God is absolutely Good all the time. Satan comes to steal, kill and destroy. Anything bad that happens in your life is directly from Satan and I know that with ALL my heart. It can be something as small as stubbing your toe. If you give him just a little piece of you, he can start stealing parts of your mind, heart and emotions (which makes up your soul). Once that happens, it can keep growing because God will NOT ever try to manipulate or control you. God wants you to come to Him freely of your own will. That is why getting to know God shouldn't be an option but an obsession!

Now let's get to how I am able to do this! On March 14th, 2021, I went to visit a Prophetic healer named Tony Kemp. I didn't go for healing but went because I wanted to know why God was speaking to me in the night, what God wanted me to do for His Kingdom and what I could learn from this man. Remember, I had only gotten rid of my migraines. Everything else was still there. I was sick and knew that if I went to see this guy, I would be sick in bed for at least a week based my history. I didn't care! My uncle found a ride for me to get their and instead of getting answers God totally healed me! I felt the pain shoot out of me, I watched my left leg grow 2-3 inches, felt all my bones move and my body was on fire! I knew at that moment based on what I had heard on TV that the Holy Spirit was inside my body. All Glory to God for that miraculous day!

Now I have the benefit of not just hearing the written word, but reading and studying the Bible, the written Word of God! Studying the Word has given me many gifts of the Spirit. I have healed others for God, (a brain tumor, a person who was dying that had been in an explosion lived, several knees restored to normal, etc.) the Holy Spirit is working through me to get others delivered, and to get people saved. My life has not been easy, there have been many other things not mentioned but I was blessed with parents that loved me and introduced me to God Almighty. That is why I chose to write this.

I want to introduce you to someone that is greater than anything you could ever go through on this earth. His name is Jesus. He loves you because God, his Father created you in His own image. That means you are special, loved and wanted. He will heal everything that is broken if you let Him. So, take some time to get to know Him and reap the benefits of studying the Bible. It will forever change your life!



May God Bless you, keep you and hold you in the palm of His hand as you go on your journey with Him!

Trusting God's Word

by Glenn North



Glenn is a nationally known poet, writer, teacher, public speaker and Director of Inclusive Learning and Creative Impact at the Kansas City Museum. He is also a longtime friend of GMI's Executive Director and we are honored to have him as a guest writer this month.

*"... what a beautiful picture
God's Word paints
On the canvas of my heart
Consequently, I view the world biblically
No longer concerned
With being correct politically
I proceed analytically
So that my testimony
Will be received for its authenticity.
– Excerpt from "Even So Come Lord Jesus" by Glenn North*

I met Jesus in my mother's basement on December 1, 1999. It really is that simple but here's how it happened. Several years prior, I was leaving the liquor store after purchasing my daily 40oz when I came across one of those gospel tracts that gives the plan of salvation. It was laying on the ground, all stepped on and tattered and torn, but for some reason, I picked it up and put it in my pocket. From that point on, no matter where I went, or where I moved, I always kept it with me. In the years that followed, my life began to unravel. Too many forties. Too many parties. Too many blunts. Too many illicit

drugs. Too many poor choices followed by too many harsh but well-deserved consequences. When I finally, as folks say, reached the end of myself, I moved out of my cramped, cigarette-stenched apartment and into my mother's basement. Witnessing the disappointment on my mother's face day after day was a constant reminder of the mess I had made of my life. Late one night, I cried out; no, I actually dared God to reveal Himself to me. Before I realized it, I had jumped out of bed, and like a career gambler looking for a lost lottery ticket, I started tearing through the stacks of boxes and piles of trash bags containing my belongings. And there it was – the gospel tract I had been carrying around all those years. I began reading it feverishly and when I reached the last page, I prayed as instructed,

"Thank You, Lord Jesus, for coming to Earth. I believe You are the Son of God who died on the cross for my sins and rose from the dead on the third day. Thank You for Your forgiveness of sins and for giving me the gift of eternal life. I invite you, Jesus, to come into my heart and be my Savior."

The clouds didn't roll back, there was no voice thundering from the sky, no celestial vision of a gossamer Christ floating around the room... just a still small voice, God's blessed assurance, quietly filling every corner of my heart with His overwhelming love.

Trusting God's Word Cont.

Thrilled that I finally had a relationship with God, the question now was how do I really get to know Him? So, I called out to God again, "How do I get to know You?" And in a that same still small voice His response was, "Read My Word." The problem was at that time I didn't trust the Bible. While I had gotten over the erroneous idea that Christianity was the white man's religion, I still had issues with the fact that the Bible had been used to justify slavery. Not only that, but I also believed that the Bible was a collection of fables and myths rather than a factual historical account of God's design for the universe and His relationship with humankind. I didn't know the Bible was divine in origin. I thought it was just a book written by men expressing their opinions about God. I also assumed that even if the Bible was true when the various books were originally written, the process of translating it into English and other languages, along with passing those translations down from one generation to the next, left us with a well-intentioned but heavily flawed religious text. However, I did believe in the power of prayer.

So, I got real with God and just as plainly as if I were talking to you, I said to Him, "God, you really have to help me with this whole Bible thing cause I just ain't feelin' it." One day, not even a week later, I was listening to a Christian talk show on the radio and the guest was a man named Lee Stroebel, the author of a book called *The Case For Christ*. What I discovered later was that his book was an introduction to *apologetics*. Apologetics is a branch of Christian theology that examines the historical, archaeological, prophetic, and even scientific evidence for the existence of God and the truth of the Bible. Stroebel, a highly skilled lawyer, Yale trained journalist, and card-carrying atheist, set out to prove that God didn't exist. But after interviewing a multitude of both secular scholars and prominent theologians, he wound up getting saved. All of them were experts in apologetics and presented Stroebel with facts he couldn't deny. Not long after hearing the interview, I bought *The Case for Christ* and read it in one sitting. I was stunned to find so much proof for the claims of the Bible. For example, approximately 2200 years before Ferdinand de Magellan's attempt to sail around the world proved that the earth was round, the prophet Isaiah wrote the following words when most people believed the world was flat.

"It is he that sitteth upon the **circle** of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers..." Isaiah 40:22.

Another compelling example that strengthened my trust in the Bible was learning more about *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, which were discovered in 1947, give us archaeological proof that God's word has been kept perfectly intact. One of the scrolls found was a complete Hebrew text of the book of Isaiah. It is dated by paleographers at circa 125 B.C. This text is more than 1,000 years older than any other text previously discovered. When the Isaiah scroll dated 125 B.C. was compared with the text of Isaiah dated 916 A.D., they were exactly the same event though they were written 1,000 years apart. This demonstrates the unusual accuracy of the copyists of the Scripture over a thousand-year period. It is just like God tells us in Psalm 12:6-7:

"The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O Lord, thou shalt preserve them from this generation forever."

By the time I closed Stroebel's book, my heart was open to the teachings of the Bible. Now just to be clear, facts and evidence are important, however, it is our faith that draws us closer to God. It's just such a blessing to know that ours is not a blind faith. Not only that, my dear brothers, and sisters, we have the perfect means by which we can truly get to know God – His infallible Word. Now somebody ought to say Amen!

The Value and Burden of Knowing God

by Nate Satterlee

In the history of mankind, all cultures, people-groups, and civilizations have sought one thing: purpose. Kings have conquered other kings to expand their influence and leave a lasting mark on history. Great thinkers have searched for higher forms of knowledge. Entire religions have been born out of one man's struggle to discover why he even exists. As Solomon wrote, "... (God) has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end." – Ecclesiastes 3:11.

Every man and woman have a sense of purpose beyond this life on earth ingrained in their hearts. And because many do not know God, they have searched for it in places that have ultimately left them unfulfilled (careers & wealth), broken (substance abuse and/or other addictions), or living in delusion (adhering to one organization's practices/strict rules for living, such as a cult, religion, or political party). The unfortunate truth is that many Christians have fallen into all three of these categories at some stage of life. Now I do want to point out that these things, of themselves, are not always inherently evil. God calls all men to very different places in life for His own purposes. Some are called to be wealthy, and some poor. It's the love and pursuit of wealth that brings evil. Many things that people become addicted to can be enjoyed quite healthily in a disciplined and limited measure. Many Christians tie their entire identity to their ministries or their role in the church, similar to cult members, but that does not make the Church evil. The Church is the body of Christ. It is God's tool to spread His Gospel throughout the entire Earth. The problem is that we can be easily deceived into believing our sole purpose is our ministry. Jesus warned us of this in Matthew 7, when at the judgement, many will point to their works, and He said "Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'" And this is the subject I want to get to: Knowing God.

The importance of knowing our God simply cannot be understated. Just read again what Jesus said. "I never knew you. Away from me..." I believe that statement should provoke us to know the Lord above all other things in our life. The difficult thing about this is that I can offer no strategy or method to do this. I mean, this is GOD we are talking about. The creator of Heaven, Earth, and the ever-expanding universe in which it sits. The one who needs only speak a word to create life. While he exists in our natural realm, He dwells in the Spirit realm. He is both near us and very far from us. He is an unapproachable light of glory which words cannot describe. The One who's ways are higher than our ways, and thoughts higher than our thoughts. Yet somehow, we have been given the privilege and ability to know this God.

While there can be no "method" to knowing Him, in His mercy and kindness, he has given us a way to know Him. One way, and that way is through Jesus Christ, His son. Our savior. Our king. Our hope. Our friend (see John 14:6-7, John 1:14). And alongside Jesus, you have been gifted the Holy Spirit. Your helper. Your counselor. The Spirit of Truth, who will teach you all things (see John 14:26). Through Jesus Christ, with the help of the Holy Spirit, you will come to know God, and it will be a lifelong journey. Just read what Paul wrote in Philippians 3:7-14. After all his study, and even mastery of scripture, his time spent with the Lord, with the apostles, spreading the Gospel, seeing miracles, he had not attained that closeness and intimacy with Christ that he so longed for. The Christian journey is not easy. It is not for the faint of heart. Knowing God does not come out of your actions. Your actions come out of knowing God. Why else would Paul and so many others since him have been so willing to lose everything, endure beatings and torture and death and public mockery? The value of knowing Christ, far surpasses that of any possession you can attain on earth. It's greater than your knowledge or skills, your dignity, even your life.

The Value and Burden of Knowing God Cont.

Why? Well, it certainly is not because your life is not valuable. God sacrificed His only Son in order to attain your life. But remember, when Jesus found you, and offered you salvation, and you said “Yes”, you gave your life to Him, and it is no longer yours. It may seem like a heavy burden; the willingness to face persecution and humiliation and loss for this God. But in reality, the burden is quite light. When times are challenging and things don’t go the way you expected, you always have Him to lean on. In your situation, perhaps you were hoping for an early parole, and it was denied. That would be quite frustrating for anyone. But remember, your life is now His. He could have an assignment for you during your remaining term to share the Gospel with someone who may not have had a chance to receive it if you were released early. God has made his dwelling place in your heart. He is always close enough for you to speak to Him, and to hear from Him. Take as many opportunities as you can to listen, pray, and share God’s love with others. This is a great way to grow in relationship with Him. Jesus equated serving others, to serving God (see Matthew 25:34-40).

No kind act, or kind word spoken is so small that it cannot be used by God for great purposes. Knowing God can be seen in practical actions like this, and it also exists in unseen matters of the spirit. I think the unseen element of this subject is what confuses us the most. There is so much beyond our comprehension in the spirit realm, we can start believing that because we struggle to hear from God in a way that we understand, that we don’t know Him. I encourage you to stop believing these fears or any others like it. God has found you. Your life is in His hands. You are in the best place you could possibly be. Remember this is a lifelong journey. I would even say it’s an eternal journey. God has promised you that if you seek Him, you will find Him. Never give up, and enjoy the journey!

Across

- 1 Change direction
- 5 Unborn babies
- 9 Keep me as the _____ of the eye,
hide me under the shadow of thy wings
- 14 It may be proper
- 15 Strips of palm leaves
- 16 Tiny amount
- 17 Performing _____
- 18 Well-off
- 19 Working smoothly
- 20 _____ of orient are
- 23 Track
- 24 Welsh river
- 28 Model behaviour
- 31 Missing from action

- 33 Mountain pass
- 34 Conversation starter
- 36 Tiny bit
- 37 Fork prong
- 38 Swedish currency
- 39 Tortoise racer
- 40 Bronze
- 41 Tottering
- 45 Greek letter
- 46 Rash reaction?
- 47 Mistakes
- 48 What God did to Sarai, Abram and Jacob
- 50 Red and Dead
- 51 Precepts
- 57 Roughly
- 60 Roundish
- 61 Feline cry

- 62 So then _____ worketh in us, but life in you
- 63 Jab
- 64 Great-grandson of Shem
- 65 In tune
- 66 Flock members
- 67 It smells

- 9 Staring in amazement
- 10 Rainbow maker
- 11 Friend
- 12 There's no truth to it
- 13 Finish
- 21 Indian princess
- 22 Midnight's opposite
- 25 Common choir music book size
- 26 Shouter
- 27 Church officers
- 28 We are the clay, and you are our _____
- 29 Poppy plant derivative
- 30 Japanese city
- 31 First Hebrew letter
- 32 User-edited site
- 35 Isalmist militant group
- 39 Biblical quartet
- 41 New Testament book
- 42 It's on the agenda
- 43 Christmas tree debris
- 44 Fraction of a kilo
- 49 Sharp
- 50 Serpent
- 52 Sulk
- 53 Affirm solemnly
- 54 Biblical peak
- 55 They may get stepped on
- 56 Certain
- 57 Fuss
- 58 Big _____
- 59 Absalom catcher

Down

- 1 Chew on
- 2 Long ago
- 3 Adjoin
- 4 Hold sacred
- 5 Alien
- 6 One of David's mighty men
- 7 Nail
- 8 Head of a Simeonite family

Bible Crossword #1

by Philologus

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13	
14					15					16					
17					18					19					
20					21					22					
			23						24			25	26	27	
28	29	30						31	32				33		
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48			49							50					
			51					52	53				54	55	56
57	58	59						60						61	
62								63						64	
65								66							67

Solution

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

ACROSS: 1. GYBE, 5. FETI, 9. APPLE, 14. NOUN, 15. OLAS, 16. GRAIN, 17. ARTS, 18. RICH, 19. OILED, 20. WE THREE KINGS, 23. RAIL, 24. OGMORE, 28. POSING, 31. AWOL, 33. COL, 34. OPENING LINE, 36. TAD, 37. TINE, 38. SEK, 39. HARE, 40. TAN, 41. TIPPING OVER, 45. ETA, 46. ITCH, 47. ERRORS, 48. RENAME, 50. SEAS, 51. COMMANDMENTS, 57. ABOUT, 60. OVAL, 61. MEOU, 62. DEATH, 63. POKE, 64. EBER, 65. ON-KEY, 66. EWES, 67. NOSE.

DOWN: 1. GNAW, 2. YORE, 3. BUTT, 4. ENSHRINE, 5. FOREIGN, 6. ELIEL, 7. TACK, 8. ISHI, 9. AGOGGLE, 10. PRISM, 11. PAL, 12. LIE, 13. END, 21. RANI, 22. NOON, 25. OCTAVO, 26. ROARER, 27. ELDERS, 28. POTTER, 29. OPIATE, 30. SENNAN, 31. ALEPH, 32. WIKI, 35. GSPC, 39. HORSEMEN, 41. TIMOTHY, 42. ITEM, 43. NEEDLES, 44. GRAM, 49. ACUTE, 50. SNAKE, 52. MOPE, 53. AVOW, 54. NEBO, 55. TOES, 56. SURE, 57. ADO, 58. BEN, 59. OAK.

Just for Laughs

NOT TALKING TO YOU

At our weekly Bible study, the leader asked an elderly gentleman, Walt, to open the meeting with prayer. Walt did so in a soft voice. Another man, straining to hear, shouted, "I can't hear you!" Walt replied, "I wasn't talking to you."

WATER TO WINE

A trooper pulls over a priest and immediately smells alcohol on his breath. The next thing he notices is an empty wine bottle lying on the passenger seat. "Have you been drinking?" the officer asks. "Just water," says the priest. "Then why do I smell wine?" The priest looks at the bottle and shouts, "Good Lord! He's done it again!"

LAUGHING IN HEAVEN

**Q. How can you make God laugh?
A. Tell him your plans.**

A SIGN FROM ABOVE

Spotted on a church marquee: "Love your enemies; After all, You made them."

SERMON TIME

During our priest's sermon, a large plant fell over right behind the pulpit, crashing to the ground. Acknowledging his reputation for long-windedness, he smiled sheepishly and said, "Well, that's the first time I actually put a plant to sleep."

GOOD EULOGY

The pastor asks his flock, "What would you like people to say when you're in your casket?" One congregant says, "I'd like them to say I was a fine family man." Another says, "I'd like them to say I helped people." The third responds, "I'd like them to say, 'Look! I think he's moving!' "

THE END IS NIGH-ER THAN YOU THOUGHT

A priest and a pastor are standing by the side of a road holding up a sign that reads "The end is near! Turn around now before it's too late!" A passing driver yells, "You guys are nuts!" and speeds past them. From around the curve, they hear screeching tires—then a big splash. The priest turns to the pastor and says, "Do you think we should just put up a sign that says 'Bridge Out' instead?"



The bible is a unique collection of 66 books written in three languages over the course of 1500 years by 40 different authors, numerous accurate prophecies, interwoven threads connecting all the books, and God had a hand in writing every word; 2-Timothy 3:16-17 (NIV) *'All scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.'*

God reveals himself to us throughout each book in the bible. God wants us to know him so we can have a relationship with him. God also reveals himself to us in many other ways in addition to the bible (Psalm 19:1-6 and Romans 1:18-21). God also reveals to us our origin so we can fully appreciate our relationship with him by understanding our story and what it means to be human, through the first book in the bible, Genesis.

Genesis probably wasn't the first book written, most scholars believe the book of Job was probably the first book written. However, Genesis starts at the beginning and chronologically is the first book that establishes all of the creation story from the beginning of time as we know it. The storyline of Genesis took place about 3 centuries before Moses but Tradition credits Moses as the author of Genesis, and there is no evidence to suggest otherwise. Moses had a unique history growing up in the royal house of Pharaoh giving him a high level of education (Acts 7:22) which served him well in writing the first five books of the bible. The story of Genesis probably came directly from God to Moses's hand. Genesis is our story. Genesis answers that internal question of where we came from. Genesis is our origins as described to us by God. Knowing our origins, we can better understand how we are hardwired as members of the human race.

Genesis is divided into two parts, Genesis 1-11 tells the story of humanity and Genesis 12-50 tells the story of Abraham and his prodigy for the creation of Israel. The two parts fit together at many levels and together paint a clear picture of our intended relationship with God. Genesis helps us navigate the rest of the bible with more clarity and understanding. It is quoted over 35 times in the New Testament and countless times in both Testaments. It is foundational to a lot of the narratives.

The bible doesn't try to prove God's existence, it boldly declares it. Genesis 1:1 (NIV) *'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.'* Genesis 2 describes the Garden of Eden, living in a perfect utopia in full relationship with God. God made us in his image, to rule the world he created, on his behalf.

Genesis 3-11, mankind rebelled against God. We wanted to define good and evil for ourselves. What God made good, we humans turned away from God and it would turn bad. It was so bad at one point that God literally destroyed the known world and started over with one family. Genesis is full of stories that reflect like a mirror to allow us to see ourselves.

It was not just individuals but the entire world (all the nations) had the same human mindset. In Genesis 11:4 (NIV) *'Then they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, with a tower that reaches to the heavens, so that we may make a name for ourselves; otherwise we will be scattered over the face of the whole earth."'* As a nation, they wanted to make a name for themselves to replace God in their lives, much like Adam eating from the fruit of the 'Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil'.

Our Origins cont.

Time and time again throughout Genesis (and quite frankly, the entire bible) we discover that God made us, God knows us, God wants us to be happy. God's way is the right way. Unfortunately, we humans continue to turn away from God and try to do it our own way. We may be God's creation made in his image chosen by God to rule the world he created, but we are part of the human race, as such, we tend to focus on ourselves and our own needs and do it our own way. At what point would we throw up our hands and declare the human race hopeless. Not our God, he is faithful. He continues to reach out to us.

God started over once more and chose Abram (later Abraham) to show the world of the blessing he gave us. Genesis 12:2 (NIV) *"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

Genesis 12-50 tells the story of God's chosen people, chosen to be the priests for the rest of the world, Exodus 19:4-6 (NIV) *"You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."* It starts with Abraham, then Isaac and Jacob then Jacobs sons. The common plot is God's faithfulness even though we humans (including the great patriarchs) keep messing it up. God is perfect and faithful to us. We can see by our origins just how imperfect, prideful, and self-centered we are and how we frequently turn away from God to our humanness. The rest of the Old Testament continues to build on that narrative.

God also reveals to us our origin so we can fully appreciate our relationship with him by understanding our story and what it means to be human, through the first book in the bible, Genesis as well as the other 65 books in the bible (library). Genesis is a foundational book that helps us know ourselves and some of the background context so we can better appreciate the New Testament proclaiming the good news of Jesus as our Lord and Savior.



closing words...

God Has it All Worked Out!

Jeremiah 1:5 NIV "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations."

Jeremiah 29:11 NIV For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.



Lonnie Johnson
GMI Executive Director



I remember when my son was really small we were teaching him to tie his shoes. One day we were going somewhere, and I told him to put on his shoes. He was trying to tie his shoes and seemed to be struggling, so I reached down to assist him. He brushed my hand away and said, "I know how to do it". I smiled and let him finish. He didn't want my help and wanted to do it on his own. He wanted the satisfaction of saying, "I did it!". With shoes and a five-year-old, that's ok. Sadly, as Christians many of us go through our life brushing God's hand away and ignoring his attempts to speed up our progress and elevation.

In the two scriptures above God speaks to Jeremiah informing him that his life was already mapped out for success.

First, in chapter 1, verse 5, God gets really deep on Jeremiah. He lets him know that even before he was born, God had ordained a purpose for his life: to be a prophet. This speaks to God being all knowing and operating outside of time as we know it. A God that sees our future before it even exists.

Before you were born God ordained you to be here and what He had planned for you to be. Maybe it wasn't to be a prophet, but it was to have an impact. He knew you would make mistakes and He planned for that too.

That brings me to the second scripture. Here in chapter 29, verse 11, God reminds Jeremiah again about the plans He has for him, and that the plans are good; plans to prosper him, and not to harm him; plans for hope and a future. That is a great recipe. God made sure that this Word to Jeremiah made it in the bible so that you and I could hear it. God is not a respecter of person. What He does for one, He will do for others. Peter said it best in the book of Acts. *Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism. Acts 10:34 NIV.*

Just like Jeremiah, God has a plan for your life that will make you prosperous, safe from harm, filled with hope and a future you can look forward to. You may ask yourself, "Well if God has it all worked out then what choice do I have in the matter?". You have plenty of choices. You get to pick what clothes you wear, where you work, what neighborhood you live in, what car you will drive, what you will eat for dinner. You even get to choose if you will pursue this future God has for you. God has put special gifts inside you and set unique opportunities in front of you. As you go through life you must constantly seek His voice so you will hear where he is leading you to fulfil that purpose.

I like helping people. I used to help people do bad things. But when I turned my life over to Christ I started helping people find Christ, helping them get their lives on track, standing in the gap for people, helping them connect to the resources they needed. Little did I know I was created to follow the path of an evangelist and a missionary. That is why you are receiving this magazine today.

Your path is still out there waiting on you. As long as you are still breathing, God can use you for His glory and you can start living a prosperous life.


Growth Ministries Inc.

P.O. Box 4375
Olathe, KS 66063
www.growthministriesinc.org
info@growthministriesinc.org

Changing the World One Life at a Time