

# infuse

WINTER 2003/2004

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***“The best way to love God is to focus on knowing Christ and doing his will.”***

# infuse



This past Feast of Tabernacles at Jekyll Island, Georgia, the new generation of Sabbath Keepers spoke to me about what his and her needs are from the Church of God. I listened carefully to what each of you had to say and Infuse is the result of those discussions.

Infuse was created for you, the teen/young adult, to have the opportunity to make strong friendships with people your age and with those who are older than you, in addition to the ministry. The teen/young adult years are a time when one begins to seriously ask questions about his or her faith and it is a time when developing a firm commitment to being a Christian begins.

Infuse is a place you can visit every day, once a week or casually. Whatever you decide, it is a place you can hang out with your friends, make new friends and talk about the things that matter in your life. My desire is that it meets your needs and it is a place you can be encouraged and challenged to grow in your relationship with God. You may not know now what a relationship with God means, which is OK. This is the place to find out.

Finally, myself along with the other committed leaders in the church really do care about you and we care about what is happening in your life. Welcome to Infuse.

God bless you,

**Noni McVey**  
Editor in Chief

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**in·fuse** ( n-fy z ) v. To fill or cause to be filled with something; imbue; inspire 2. To instill, as principles or qualities; to introduce; impart

**EPHESIANS 3:14-21**

<sup>14</sup>For this reason I kneel before the Father, <sup>15</sup>from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. <sup>16</sup>I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup>so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup>may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, <sup>19</sup>and to know this love that surpasses knowledge--that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

<sup>20</sup>Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, <sup>21</sup>to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

# What Does the Bible Have for Me?

By Anika E. Sandy-Hanson

**Life never ceases to amaze me. Just when we think everything is flowing smoothly, a bump comes up and throws our reality into a cyclone.**

The question becomes, “what next”? What will be the next problem, what will be the next solution, what should we do next? I rarely know the answer to the first two questions, but I have learned the answer to the last one. It may seem hard, because we are taught to solve our own problems, but the Bible should guide our actions. It took me a few years to really learn the meaning and application of this statement, but hopefully some of you will be able to master the technique early enough to save yourselves a lot of headache.

There is a scripture that says there is nothing new under the sun, Ecclesiastes 1:9 to be exact. I sometimes imagine that problems are unique to my situation and I am the only one dealing with some of these things; and indeed I sometimes find myself in very special predicaments. Yet, I have learned even these problems can be boiled down to issues

that are common to many people on earth today and many situations in the Bible.

I recently had a disagreement with my executive board (I take student leadership very seriously and I am currently the Coordinator/President of my University graduate student government). I had a disagreement with several members and I was very angry they voted against me on this matter when we could have worked out the situation in a better way. After thinking about the issue for a while I realized one of the officers was not elected properly and I could get rid of them by applying the correct voting procedures.

In the midst of my planning, I happened to slip in a prayer while finalizing my strategy. I don't even remember if my prayer included a request for guidance, but I do know God provided it. I met with both of our organizational advisors and they helped me to see that enacting this "solution" was an attempt at revenge and would be much more damaging to everyone involved than if I just left things alone. That strategy took much more prayer, and that's when I decided to consult our little "handbook," the Bible. I have

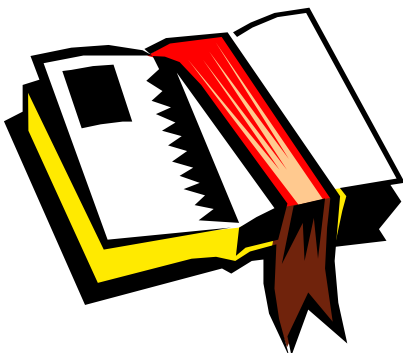
to say I didn't find a single scripture to support my original plan. In fact, the Bible told me to do the opposite. In other words, I could have saved myself the time and aggravation of meeting with human advisors by consulting our spiritual advisor, Jesus and His Word, the Bible, in the first place. I still cringe to imagine what would have happened if God had not lead me to talk with these two people.

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**I still cringe to imagine what would have happened if God had not lead me to talk with these two people.**

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This event made me think about the Bible and what it truly means to be a follower of Christ, Joshua the Messiah, and what things we can do to be effective in our daily Christian walk. I am sure once you see my list you could probably add rules of your own and I look forward to reading them on the message boards. First, life takes on a whole new perspective when we focus on living life for God, our father Yahweh. Second, it can be easy to find just the scriptures we



need when we need them, especially if we have the right tools. Third, making time for our spiritual health is the only way we can have good health in any other area of our lives.

Ecclesiastes 12:13 reads, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." This scripture is not the only one to give us this perspective on life's priorities. Many people search their whole lives for a "purpose". We all search for our calling and the careers we should be working toward. Well, the Bible already gives us our mandate. We should make our salvation and living for God the most important thing we do. This should be our focus--everything else is a derivative of this goal. For example, now that I know my priorities, I can tell an organization I am not going to attend an important event on the Sabbath and not even worry about what might happen. Growing up in the church meant I always kept the Sabbath, but depending on what was going on I would worry about what I missed and think I might be letting people down. Now, I only think about the importance of the Sabbath and how obeying this command is important to God and to me. It is not only one of the components of living for God, it is one of the things that gets me through life; having a weekly rest saves me from the stress that dominates my

friends' daily lives. Focusing on a Godly life makes decision-making a lot easier as well. I don't have to ask myself some really intricate questions when making a plan because my choices should only be those that would improve my relationship with God. This lifestyle does require some adjustment and it takes getting used to, but the reward, a contented life, is much better than the alternative.

The second item, finding the right scriptures, is even easier. Try to remember the time you just wanted to know how to forgive someone, or you had no clue how to tell someone you didn't want to do something you knew was wrong? Well that's when the Bible becomes your guide, but most of us don't have the Bible memorized so sometimes it's hard to find the right scriptures. I have found that a concordance is the most helpful tool for studying the Bible. I use the Strong's Concordance, which is huge, and heavy, and intimidating, but it is excellent. Basically, it can list every word contained in the Bible, from "a" to "Zerrubabel". So if I am looking for forgiveness I look in the concordance and find all the scriptures dealing with that subject, sometimes the good old back-of-the Bible concordance is just what we need to find those scriptures that speak to our situation. But a concordance is even better and it's a great investment.

The last bit of advice ties back into the first two. If

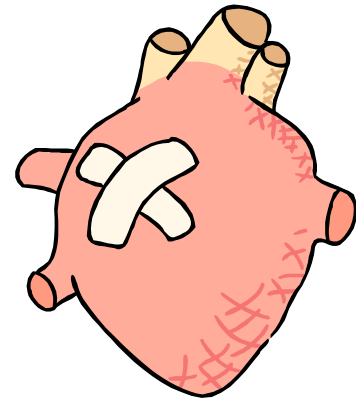
we want to have good outcomes in any other areas of our lives we need to work on our spiritual health. Praying every day and reading our Bibles will help us in making split-second decisions. When we have a good spiritual foundation we can make decisions and react to life's challenges in a Godly way. There is no need to fish around and try to think of the best thing to do, we will be used to doing the right thing and our mind will be lead to the right solutions. It is true that practice makes perfect and if we practice we can be used to living God's perfect way of life.



The Bible is one of the only tools we have for navigating this eventful life. Advice from family and friends can be helpful, and our mental abilities assist in our decisions; however, the biggest challenge is finding that one place to which we can always turn. That place is to God through our prayers, to His Word through the Bible, and to His guidance through His Holy Spirit. When we use these strategies we can be guided in our daily walk and we can find that it is much easier to ride the waves that are a part of our earthly lives.

# Start With Your Heart

By George James



In I Corinthians 6:12-31, the apostle Paul embarks on a discussion about the human body. In those scriptures Paul speaks of how a Christian ought to live. In verses 19 and 20, Paul says that the “body is the temple of the Holy Spirit.” Taking care of your body shows respect to God, Christ’s sacrifice for you and a respect for yourself.

**A**t what age do we begin to concern ourselves with heart disease? We have to be pretty old before we start thinking about heart disease, right? After all, heart disease is just a natural part of growing old and young people need not worry about it. It is true, according to the American Heart Association, men 45 and over and women 55 and beyond have a greater risk for heart disease. But does heart disease begin in middle-aged adults? Do we just wake up one morning, notice symptoms we have not experienced before like persistent chest pain and then decide to visit our doctor who then diagnoses us with heart disease? Does heart disease just happen to us all of a sudden because we are getting older, or is there something else we ought to know? My answer would be yes, most definitely, there is something else we ought to know.

The blocking of blood flow to the heart muscle may first begin in our early 20s or even teenage years. Yes, it is true heart disease, in its initial stages, may manifest itself in people who are not middle-aged, but rather those who are really quite young. One very notable example was the discovery of heart disease in soldiers who had been killed during the Korean and Vietnam wars. How old were these soldiers? The average age was 22.

What happens for heart disease to ensue? One or more of the coronary arteries begins to accumulate fat deposits known as cholesterol. Therefore, the arteries begin to narrow. This is significantly detrimental because the arteries carry oxygen and blood to the heart. The reduction in the arterial wall is called arteriosclerosis.

It is true that some of us have more of a natural proclivity to develop heart disease, but

every one of us has the capacity to eliminate some of the major risk factors. For instance, high blood pressure, one of the capital symptoms for heart disease, can be reduced through exercise. A blood pressure reading of 120/80 mm Hg is an appropriate level for quality health maintenance. A reading of 140/90 mm Hg or more places an individual at more dangerous levels that need consistent monitoring. Know your cholesterol level. Levels exceeding 200mg/dl are reason to be concerned. Remember, it is cholesterol that clogs the arteries, and a high accumulation of saturated fat in the diet will cause an elevation of cholesterol. Cholesterol is in foods derived from animals such as: milk, cheese, butter, liver, beef and lamb. Instead of whole milk choose skim milk and rather than beef choose turkey or tuna. Aim for balance in your diet; eat plenty of fruits and vegetables, particularly cauliflower and broccoli. Your heart will thank you.

Smoking is another factor that can magnify an individual’s risk of heart disease. Performing exercise consistently is another area where our own human decision takes precedence and not genetic factors. Regular exercise equates into a stronger heart muscle and increased cardiovascular endurance. Cardiovascular endurance is one of the five components of fitness, and it correlates with the body’s utilization of oxygen in a continuous activity.

There will always be things out of our control such as genetic predisposition and age, but do not forget we have more in our control when it comes to our heart. So accentuate the positive by taking control of your life and your health. Do it for your heart.

# The Truth About Christmas May Pay Off In the Future

By Mike James

Christmas is a very difficult subject to explain to friends and family who don't see things the way we do. One reason it is difficult is because Christmas appears to be such a positive celebration. Another reason is that long held traditions are difficult to change. A third difficulty may be your fear of being an outcast among your peers. I'd like to give you a few ideas of how to address this subject with people in your social circle.

First of all, don't attack your friends' feelings about Christmas. You will not win many over to your view by putting down what they do. Instead, ask them questions about their Christmas celebration. Find out why they like the holiday so much. After they tell you, it is your turn to relate how your celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles is similar to the feelings your friends may have about Christmas.

Next tell them the Feast is a celebration you believe God has commanded us to keep (Leviticus 23, John 7:37, Zechariah 14:16-18) unlike Christmas, which became a celebration due to the decision of men. God commanded His Holy Days to be kept. When we focus on holidays man has created, we lose sight of the significance of the days God has commanded us to keep.

Another point to raise is the fact the Bible speaks about Satan deceiving the whole world (Rev. 12:9). Part of that deception includes the celebration of Christmas. Christmas is a deception because it is said to be the day of Christ's birth, but all scholars agree Christ was not born in December. God tells us not to bear false witness yet Christians call December 25<sup>th</sup> Christ's birthday even though many of them know he was not born on or around that day.

*(continued on page 7)*

## The Facts About Christmas

WHAT GOD SAYS ABOUT IT

- **CHRISTMAS IS A PAGAN HOLIDAY** God says, "Keep my requirements and do not follow any of the detestable customs that were practiced before you . . ." (Leviticus 18:30).
- **CHRISTMAS IS A COMBINATION OF WORDS** Christ and Mass. Mass means death. Is this a holiday about Christ's birth or death?
- **CHRISTMAS IS NOT MENTIONED** in the Bible nor discussed by the apostles who were instructed by Christ.
- **THE CHRISTMAS TREE** "Thus saith the Lord, learn not the way of the heathen . . . for the customs of the people are vain: for one cutteth a tree out of the forest, the work of the hands of the workman with the axe. They deck it with silver and with gold; they fasten it with nails and with hammers, that it move not" (Jeremiah 10:2-6)
- **CHRISTMAS PRESENTS** It was the custom of the day to bring a gift when in the presence of a King. In honor of the newly born King of the universe, they paid homage to Jesus as a King, by presenting Him, not each other, with gifts.
- **THREE WISE MEN** The Bible does not say how many wise men there were. There could have been twenty or even one hundred twenty. It is supposed there were three only because three categories of gifts are mentioned, gold, frankincense, and myrrh.
- **BABY IN A MANGER** When the wise men saw Jesus, he was in a house (not a manger) and he was no longer a baby, but a child.

*(continued on page 7)*



## Feature

*(Facts continued from page 6)*

- **FOLLOWING A STAR** The shepherds visited Jesus in Bethlehem in the manger and they did not follow a star. It was after they were informed of His birth by the angel of the Lord that they “hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger” (Luke 2:16).
- **DECEMBER 25<sup>TH</sup> A LIE** When Christ was born, “. . .there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night” (Luke 2:8). Shepherds would not be tending their sheep in Judea in the month of December because it would be cold and rainy. “It was an ancient custom among Jews of those days to send out their sheep to the fields and deserts about the Passover (early spring), and bring them home at commencement of the first rain,” says Adam Clarke Commentary (Vol. 5, page 370, New York ed.).
- **YULE LOG** originated from ancient pagan tree worshipers who celebrated their winter solstice in honor of their pagan gods with noise, clamor, feasting and rejoicing. Today “yuletide” is found in music and poetry meaning the “Christmas season.”
- **SANTA CLAUS** The origins of “Santa Claus” have nothing to do with the birthday of Jesus Christ. Everything that has come to us today about “St. Nicholas” is of a purely legendary character. It is believed he was bishop of Myra during the reign of the emperor Diocletian and was persecuted and tortured for his faith.



***“Thus saith the Lord, learn not the way of the heathen.”***

*(Truth continued from page 6)*

Many teens and young adults are not aware of the basic facts about Christmas. For example, the actual date of December 25<sup>th</sup> was originally a celebration for the pagan sun god. All of the things we associate with Christmas like the tree, wreaths, mistletoe, lights and much more, were all used in the celebration for a pagan god.

You may hear from your friends, “so what?” What’s the big deal? Even if Christmas came to us from a pagan celebration, why should it matter? We don’t believe in these pagan gods anymore so why not use the things they used for the pagan god. That’s when you tell them God makes it very clear in the Bible He does not want His worship mixed with the worship of false gods (Deuteronomy 12:29-32 and Mark 7:7-9).

The thing to remember, don’t lose friendships over your beliefs. When I was in high school, a friend of mine told me the truth about Christmas. I didn’t know how to react to it at that time and I continued to celebrate Christmas for a few more years. But when I began to learn the facts about Christmas on my own I remembered what my friend had told me. That helped me realize what I was learning about Christmas was true. So you may think you are not getting through to your friends, but at some point in the future the fact you told them the truth may help them see the truth later.



# Bend It Like Beckham

**MPAA Rating:** PG13 for language and sexual content.  
Review by Noni McVey

Jess (Parminder Nagia) is a British born teenage girl whose goal in life is to play soccer. Her dream is to be on the soccer field with David Beckham, the world famous soccer player. The only thing standing in her way is her Indian parents. Allowing Jess, as a young girl to play soccer, was never a problem for her parents. Now she must put away “childish things” (the soccer ball) and do what good Indian girls do—learn to cook, wear saris, prepare for marriage and go to university. Jess is faced with quite a conflict.

**THINK ABOUT IT:** How can Jess be both the obedient daughter and follow her passion for soccer?

While Jess knows her parents disapprove of her playing soccer, it is no excuse for disobedience. When Jess finally honors her parents through truthfulness, her parents help her reach her dreams.

I appreciated how the movie dealt with the themes of betrayal, deceit, acceptance, peer pressure, parents and traditions and showed the consequences of bad choices. I especially embraced the way the compassion in the family was portrayed. No matter what one’s cultural differences are, family dynamics are easy to relate to because family is universal.

Jess’ family adheres to strict beliefs, which are not popular. She has to learn how to deal with her beliefs not being accepted, much like your own religious beliefs are not accepted. How you interact with those who keep the traditions of men, i.e. Christmas, etc. is a challenge. How one keeps friendships and conducts business without compromising ones belief is not always easy.

**THINK ABOUT IT:** Was the movie’s use of a mistaken lesbian relationship necessary?

Unfortunately the movie decided to use a mistaken lesbian relationship and one character coming out of the homosexual closet to teach the rumor lesson, which could have been taught with another topic. While the message about the evil of rumors is a good one, it could have been achieved on another level. No matter how difficult, one should always go directly to the source to clear up a misunderstanding. Spreading rumors, passing judgment on assumptions and making decisions based one what one thinks was said or seen is never a good idea.

In spite of the on-going lesbian joke in this sleeper of a movie, I am certain everyone who watches will not only it, but will learn a lesson or two in the end.

## Ten Ways to Have Fun With Your Friends

1. Pack a lunch and go to the beach or park to eat.
2. Start a book club.
3. Go on a walk or bike ride together.
4. Rent some good movies and have a movie day with popcorn and all.
5. Visit a local museum.
6. Have a game night and play different board games or card games.
7. Cook a meal together and share your favorite recipes.
8. Take a fun class together and learn a new hobby.
9. Go out for ice cream.
10. Attend a community event.

## Serving Your Community

A great way to serve those in your community is to volunteer at a soup kitchen, homeless shelter or church that has a kitchen. Many of these organizations serve holiday meals to those who are less fortunate and do not have a hot meal to eat. Look up in your local phone book for organizations that serve meals to the less fortunate. Give them a call and see if they could use your help by serving a meal or donating food. The public tends to only remember the less fortunate and hungry in December. Remember, these people are hungry all year long. Organizations that serve meals do it all year. They are always in need of volunteers and food donations. Volunteer to serve a meal weekly.





# Pathway to the Future

By Loren Chamberlain

Thinking about the future and what you are going to do with your life can be scary! First of all, in that place we call the future anything is possible. Bad things can happen as well as good things. How can you know ahead of time how to avoid the bad things in that place called the future? Well, no one knows exactly what the future holds for him/herself. But you can do certain things now to insure your success and safety in this life and the life to come, like making Jesus your best friend and companion.

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**How can you know ahead of time how to avoid the bad things in that place called the future?**

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Many people think they must have their lives totally together before they turn to God. They think they need to make themselves worthy of Jesus' friendship. The problem is nobody will ever be worthy of what God is offering. That's a surprising part of God's truth, which is sometimes difficult to accept. It is Satan the enemy who wants people to believe they somehow have to earn God's favor. By causing people to believe this he keeps people from taking the first step toward the Kingdom of

God. "All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out" (John 6:37).

A few years ago I stood at the top of the Olympic ski run in Utah and watched the skiers practice their downhill routine. They seemed to simply float through the air as they arched their bodies forward into the wind trying to gain as much air time and distance as possible. Other skiers were practicing every twist, turn and flip known to man, and then landing in a swimming pool. Just by looking down the slope my stomach was doing its own flip-flops. I decided in about one second this was something I would never do. The thrill of victory can be intoxicating, but the agony of defeat was not going to be a part of my life experience. Then it came to me, these young athletes did not suddenly decide to be skiers. They grew up skiing, and one learning step at a time became very proficient in this thrilling sport. If you walk with Jesus you too can approach life one step at a time and one prayer at a time to become proficient at living life.

Thinking about life in the future without the friendship of Jesus can be like huddling fearfully at the top of a ski run having made no preparation for the trip down. It wouldn't be so bad if you'd done it before. But without any

training or experience, and trying to go it alone, the trip could be disastrous and very frightening to say the least.



However, in a way, you have been planning or not planning for the future for some time. In school you have either chosen classes with your future in mind or you didn't. You worked hard in class or you didn't. Whatever you did in school will certainly have an impact on your life. The friends that you hangout with will probably influence your life as much as the skills you have and the interests you have developed. So why not hangout with Jesus, and make Him your best friend? "If you ask anything in My name, I will do it. If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that it may abide with you forever, the spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees it nor knows it; but you know it, for it dwells with you and will be in you. I will

not leave you orphans; I will come to you” (John 14:15—18).

Most likely you still have time to make Jesus your partner before you jump off into life all alone. It might be a few months or years. Nevertheless, it is never too late to work out a strategy or a plan that will not leave you stranded, looking down the pathway of life into a fearful future with more questions on your mind than available answers.

When you put your faith in God’s Son, His Spirit becomes a part of your life. God knew you would need His Spirit to help you live the way He wants you to live. You can let God’s Spirit choose the road you’re going to take. Living that way pleases God.

In order for your mind to be ruled by His Spirit, you’ve got to stay tight with God. Spend time in prayer, in worship, and in His word. If you make these disciplines a part of your life, then you’ll know when the Spirit is leading you, and you’ll be able to follow.

**SIDELIGHT:** While looking at the stars on a clear night, thank God for a way He has shown His love for you. Think of a way for each star you see.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

**Q:** Why do you quote from the Old Testament in establishing doctrine for Christians? Shouldn’t Christians get their beliefs from the New Testament alone, especially from the epistles of Paul?

**A:** Listen carefully to what the apostle Paul says about the so-called “Old Testament”:

To Timothy, Paul writes, “and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. 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 3:15, 16)

The only Scriptures Timothy could have known from childhood was the collection of books we call the “Old Testament.” Therefore, Paul is speaking of the Old Testament when he says that the Scriptures can make a person wise for salvation, and training in righteousness, thus equipping the man of God for every good work.

According to the New Testament, then, doctrinal truth applicable to Christians can be derived from the Old Testament!

**Q:** Isn’t it true that God can give His Holy Spirit to a person who has not been baptized?

**A:** It is true that God can give His Holy Spirit to a person though that person has not been baptized. However, that fact is aside from the real question. The real question is: Should a repentant believer be baptized? The clear scriptural answer is a most decided yes. Jesus commanded His disciples, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:19, 20). Later, on the Day of Pentecost, the apostle Peter said, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

Scriptural example show that even in a rare instance in which someone receives the Holy Spirit without first being baptized, baptism should still be administered (Acts 10:44-48).



# Everyone Is A Someone to God

By Noni McVey

The ultimate purpose of human life is to be fulfilled at the resurrection. That does not mean God neglects the present physical life. The fulfillment, abundance, happiness and success of this human life are an integral part of God's plan. The entirety of the book of Proverbs is filled with instruction and exhortations explaining how men, women and children should act to achieve the maximum success in their lives. God truly wants all of us to prosper. He wants everyone to achieve in all areas of life whether it be socially, economically, intellectually, family and personal. So why then do we compare ourselves with others and allow a feeling of inferiority to overtake us?

When I was a young mother, I became very involved in volunteer work at my children's schools. In addition to volunteering for the school, I did community service. Throughout the years I have had the privilege to meet and work with some exceptional people. These individuals are mothers, entrepreneurs, authors, attorneys, judges, teachers, administrators, dental hygienists and computer whizzes. Many of them not only held undergraduate degrees but also Master and Doctorate degrees. Working on projects with them allowed for opportunities to get to know one another better. I would always cringe when someone asked me about my education or what my career was. Listening to all they did made me feel extremely inadequate. I had the silly notion that because I did not have a college degree or fabulous career, I was a nobody and served no real purpose in life. I was sure my peers thought being a wife and mother was not impressive work, because anyone can do that. After all, I didn't bring home a paycheck.

This attitude has since changed. While today, I do bring home a paycheck; I now realize the most satisfying work and the greatest position I have ever held is being a wife and mother. I have been married for 27 years and God blessed us with two wonderful children. The volunteer work I have done over the years and do today

allows me the exercise my talents while fulfilling a need.

God does not create unless He has a purpose in mind. God places value on everyone's life and our self-worth is grounded in that value. God created us only a little lower than the angels. "For you have made him a little lower than the angels, and you have crowned him with glory and honor" (Psalm 8:5). God has committed a tremendous amount of trust in all of mankind. Any honor that we hold is only a reflection of the greater glory of God. We, humanity, bear the stamp of our Creator because we are in His image (Genesis 1:26:27).

I was guilty of putting a low value on myself because I based it on what my peers thought of me. Our value is what God estimates our worth at and He estimates it high. God cares about sparrows, He knows how many hairs are on our head and He values each and everyone of us above the sparrow (Luke 12:6-7). Peers and friends evaluate us according to how we look, our achievements, degrees and possessions. To criticize ones self for lacking physical beauty, lack of a degree and/or lack of possessions is wrong. Have you ever said to your parent, "I am ugly or dumb?" If you have, what was the first thing your parent responded to you with? They were probably a little bit angry at you and set you straight about how you are not ugly or dumb. Just as a parent doesn't like to hear his child denigrate himself or herself, neither does God like hearing us malign ourselves. When we belittle ourselves, we belittle God.

We have been made in the image of God, which means we share His characteristics. We have been given the ability to reflect God's character through our actions of showing love, kindness,  
*(continued on page 13)*





# Can God or Satan Make Me Sin?

Some believe both God and Satan can make an individual sin. To prove this, one might use 2 Samuel 24:1 and I Chronicles 21:1. These verses tell about the same event, which is when David took a census. When one reads 2 Samuel 24:1 it sounds as though God incited David to sin, but when one reads I Chronicles 21:1 it appears Satan did the tempting. Which is it?

Just as God allowed Satan to trouble Job (Job 1:12; 2:6), and torment Saul (I Samuel 16:14) God allowed Satan to incite David. God does not today, nor has He ever caused someone to sin. God uses one's sin to teach a lesson and show what is truly in ones heart by his/her actions. James 1:13 says, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man."

Does Satan have the ability to make someone sin? No. Satan can tempt, but it is up to the individual to make the choice to succumb to the temptation or walk away. This has been going on since the Garden of Eden. When we make the wrong choice and sin, God uses that opportunity to instruct us just as He did with David.

The next time you hear someone say, "the Devil made me do it" or "It's God's fault." nothing could be further from the truth. Each of us has the opportunity to make right choices in life, which includes running from temptation.

## AFTER EDEN

by Dan Lietha



For since the creation of the world God's invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. Romans 1:20

(Someone continued from page 12)

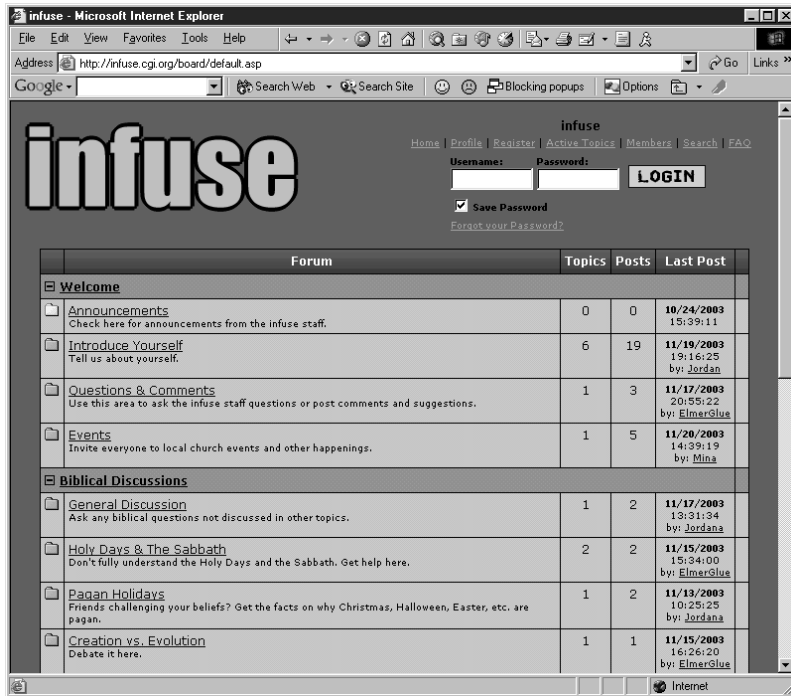
patience, faith and forgiveness. We need to realize that secular education; the establishment of a career and subsequent professional development are all vital keys for building a successful life. But, it all must be done by exemplifying the characteristics of God. If it is not, the success is empty.

The opportunity to become professionally accomplished and prosperous by the world's traditional standards, to gain a good reputation in one's field, a position of responsibility, social recognition and financial rewards, are not only good but desirable, as long as God and His laws always come first.

The next time you discount or have a direct to malign yourself, remind yourself of whose image you are created in. Do not neglect or belittle yourself, rather give praise and glory to your Creator for all He has given you to accomplish your dreams.

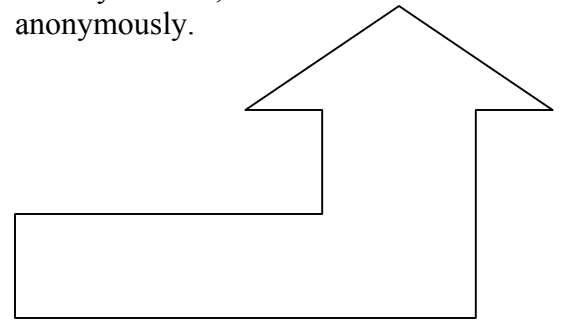
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