



THE INTERNATIONAL NEWS

The Official Newspaper of the Church of God International

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"Put on the whole armor of God" (Ephesians 6:13)

Spring 2017



Bill Watson

THE NEW TREND—A GROWING GENDER REVOLUTION

A new trend has emerged and is beginning to socially resonate—questioning one's gender identity. Essentially, this pertains to people confused about their sexual disposition and considering alternative genders—becoming "transgender." The notion of an individual not sexually identifying with their biological reproductive assignment at birth is gaining momentum. How and why is this "gender dysphoria" happening?

by Bill Watson

Many have heard of the most recent transgender news about Bruce Jenner becoming the woman he "felt" he should have been for many years. Today he goes by the name of Caitlyn Jenner, and has become the "poster person" of this invigorated and infused *transgender revolution*.

This Decathlon Gold Metal winner of the 1976 Summer Olympics was considered the epitome of masculinity. His face was all over many of the social magazines at the time, including tens of thousands of boxes of *Wheaties*. Later in life he was married and divorced three different times from some very beautiful women, one of whom was the former Kris Kardashian.

All of his former wives claimed he was a "man's man." All of them had only the most glowing comments and stories of their years of marriage with him as a husband, father, and stepfather to all the children under his care. So, you can't help but wonder, how does this happen? What causes someone who seems so comfortable in his or her own skin to come to doubt their "God-given" sexual anatomy?

We see this gender dysphoria beginning to gain acceptance and now becoming legitimized by the fashion industry embracing male models made up to look effeminate. For example, most recently, *Cover Girl* announced for the first time it would use a male model to advertise its line of products—Mr. James Charles (<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/cover-girl-boy-james-charles-us-57fbf36ee4bob6a43034bd60>). Let me reiterate—James is *not* a girl; he is a young man willing to be made up to look effeminate, using *Cover Girl* cosmetics for its advertising.

Maybelline, not wanting to be outdone, hired a male model named Manny Gutierrez as its brand representative. Manny is also willing to be used for advertising *Maybelline's* line of cosmetic products, competing with *Cover Girl*. Let me be clear: neither of these young men, as far as I know, identify as females.

The point is, this just goes to prove the fashion industry is beginning to "push the envelope" of femininity in a rather provocative way—offering perhaps, *modern, progressive, and subtle ideas* to certain males in the public who "feel" like women; and it can now be suggested they can satiate these impulses by putting something on (make-up) when the "mood" strikes, and remove it when the "feeling" passes. By using boys to market make-up, this opens a whole new liberal minded consideration for "gender fluidity" to be appeased and normalized—or so it is that some would want you to believe!

Currently, this "transgender" movement has caused a lot of debate from the confusion it presents. Already, some political skirmishes have occurred over how to manage public bathrooms. There has been a lot of resistance concerning whether a man who "feels" like a woman should be allowed into the women's bathroom, when biologically he's a male. And this applies in reverse as well—after all, a women standing at the urinal in the men's bathroom would obviously be rather odd—don't you think?

So What Are We Missing?

Many are unaware that modern research into this phenomenon of transgenderism CEN-TERS ON PROMOTING THE IDEA that gender and our biological assignment are *two different things* to keep in mind. This is a **most important premise** to recognize. A recent pamphlet published by the *American Psychological Association* (APA) states:



Bruce Jenner, Before and After

"Sex is assigned at birth, refers to one's biological status as either male or female, and is associated primarily with physical attributes such as chromosomes, hormone prevalence, and external and internal anatomy. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for boys and men, or girls and women. These influence the ways that people act, interact, and feel about themselves. While aspects of biological sex are similar across different cultures, aspects of gender may differ."

This idea, of separating the a) *biological assignment* at birth from the b) *gender expression*, advances and promotes the acceptance that we can be a boy/man, or girl/woman biologically, but our *gender expression* can be socially constructed—it is *separate*—it has *nothing to do* with our biology. This allows *justification* that we can be a male, but *act and feel* like a female (or vice versa), depending on how we've been *influenced* by our social *environment*.

Ann Oakley initially wrote about this concept, regarding the distinctions of our sex and gender in 1972. She wrote a book titled *Sex, Gender, and Society*. This book, along with a few others in the 1970s, presented this

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www.cgi.org

Open Church Policy

The Church of God International is an open church.

We have many people attending who are new in the faith. Some will not always keep each of God's laws as they should, and some will not believe everything we teach. We pray that they may be strengthened through the services we render and the examples we set as they come to a closer walk with their God. We request that you be neither judgmental nor base your standard for obedience on what you see your brother do. Christ is our standard, not weak and sinful men. Always remember that you will be judged for what *you* do, not what others do. Your job is to pray for them, set the right example, and please the Father in all that you do. Ω

God's Holydays 2017

New Testament Passover

April 9, 2017 (Observed at sundown)

Feast of Unleavened Bread

April 11–17, 2017

Pentecost

June 4, 2017

Feast of Trumpets

September 21, 2017

Day of Atonement

September 30, 2017

Feast of Tabernacles

October 5–11, 2017

Last Great Day

October 12, 2017

Holydays are observed beginning sundown the previous evening and end at sundown on the days listed. Passover is observed at sundown on the day listed.

Download the *Holy Day Calendar 2015–2017*

Notice!

- It is the desire of the staff to publish *The International News* quarterly. We can do this only if *you*, the reader, help by submitting timely articles, reports, and pictures.
- With few exceptions, submissions should be from 800–1000 words in either .doc, docx, rtf, or .txt format.
- Submissions may be sent either to vancestinson@cgi.org or lloyd Cary@gmail.com or, preferably, to *both*.



DEADLINE for the *next* issue is **May 15th 2017**.

We look forward to seeing you soon... *in print!*

Watch Sabbath Services Live On Your Computer!

You are invited to attend church services in Tyler, Texas via the Internet. We invite you to tune in Saturdays:

11:00 Central Standard Time
at www.cgi.org

Simply go to the website, choose "Media," then click on the link for "Weekly Webcast." Best results are achieved with a high-speed Internet connection. *Please be patient and be prepared to retry the link until you connect.*

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NOTICE: *The International News* welcomes submissions of articles, features, church news, pictures, or manuscripts. However, it cannot be responsible for the return of unsolicited materials. Materials submitted can sent through the postal service, but electronic submissions are preferred.

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Our Crumbling Society

by Horane Smith



by Horane Smith

A newspaper headline blared at me recently with the words, “The World is Crazy Right Now; It’s Complete Chaos.” The headline describes precisely the prevailing condition of our society today. You look around and there appears to be decay everywhere—from both the physical and spiritual perspectives.

From our public buildings, roads, bridges, the environment, goods and services, to the moral depravity, disregard for the God of the Bible and a tendency to ridicule and ignore any notion of sacredness is rampant. Yes, we can boast about our average life span of 82 years in Canada or 84 among women in Japan. We can claim victory in the treatment of many cancers that prolong life by as many as 15–20 years. We can measure our advance in travel by having breakfast in Toronto in the morning and dinner in London, Paris, or Berlin, the same day. We can send a man to the moon and we can send unmanned spacecraft to Mars and Jupiter and to the outer ends of the solar system, but guess what—those advancements are still not stopping our society from crumbling. According to a recent survey, 71 percent of people think, *The world is going to the dogs*.

Despite the glowing reports of this post-modern era where we can communicate anywhere on the globe with the touch of a button, our society is in a frightening state of decay. It’s crumbling faster than we can ever imagine, if you keep abreast of what’s happening in our daily lives.



Our Crumbling Society

The challenge for the Christian is: Are *you* crumbling *with* it?

When a major newspaper’s editorial board can say the people ultimately responsible for the shooting at a Florida gay nightclub recently are those who believe in traditional marriage, our society is confused about right and wrong. When a woman gives birth to a baby and dumps her in the garbage, or a nine-month’s pregnant woman is murdered, or the police taser a pregnant woman, the crumbling is happening faster than we anticipated. When 21,000 people die daily from hunger or hunger related diseases, don’t boast about how well we have advanced. When fellow soldiers remove a US Army veteran from a retirement ceremony because his speech refers to God, you know how far as we have slipped as a society. When scientists start to look at ways on how to get men pregnant, you know we are at the precipice of disaster. I could go on and on.

Commentator Michael Snyder: “It isn’t just our economy that is crumbling. Something is happening to America [not just America] that no amount of money will be able to fix. Everywhere around us we can see evidence of the social decay that is systematically eating away at the foundations of our society. It can be found on the streets of our inner cities, in dark basements in extremely rural communities, in the most prestigious boardrooms on Wall Street, and definitely in the halls of power in Washington. Bringing in an entirely different crop of politicians or printing gigantic mountains of money is not going to solve this problem, because it exists in the hearts of millions of ordinary men and women.” The claim of a crumbling society is not a silly notion; if we care to open our eyes, we can see the reality of it. It’s a pity the vast majority have their eyes opened, but they cannot see the slide that is going to take us to the brink of disaster.

We take many things for granted, and treat them as just another evil event. The way we’re heading, only Jesus Christ can rescue us. He says this is how it is going to happen, and this is how it *will* happen.

“If those days had not been cut short, no one would survive, but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened” (Matthew 24:22, NIV).

Proverbs 29:2 states, “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice: but when the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.” Psalm 11:3 asks, “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” What we are witnessing now is the removal of the very foundations on which society is built—the destruction of the family and disregard for the Law of the Most High God. Jesus, the risen Christ, warns His people, “Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come” (Matthew 24:42). There’s an interesting scripture in Isaiah 1:4 that is so relevant to our day: “Woe to the sinful nation, a people whose guilt is great, a brood of evildoers, children given to corruption! They have forsaken the LORD; they have spurned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him.”

The crumbling is everywhere. The pastors who refuse to teach the truth from the Scriptures is another matter, especially this time of year when they preach a Christ who was never born on December 25th—the pastors who have joined the politically-correct bandwagon—the pastors who merchandise the Word of God and lead people astray, preaching false doctrines (Jeremiah 50:6; Ezekiel 13:13; Ezekiel 34). These are also signs of the crumbling that Matthew 24 speaks about as well. Jesus warns about the false teachers as a sign of the end time.

The slide will continue, and Christians must brace themselves for some tough times ahead. You have to remain on that straight and narrow path the Bible mentions. These things must happen, and what we are experiencing now are just the “birth pangs” Matthew 24 speaks about. Just as how an old building crumbles and rises again when a new structure is erected, so must the people of God look to that hope of rising from the rubble to be born again as a child of the coming Kingdom of God in which the Saviour of the universe says, “Behold I make all things new” (Revelation 21:5).

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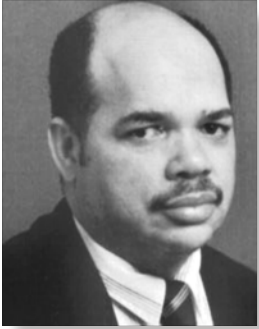






The Road to Damascus

by Horane Smith



Horane Smith

“You’ll be going that far to hunt for Christians?” the High Priest asked.

“Why not?” Saul replied. “It gets better every time. I’ll go to the ends of the earth to capture these Christians. I’ll be greatly rewarded for it. You forget that?”

Saul of Tarsus was standing before the Jewish High Priest asking for a letter to take with him to Damascus to arrest “disciples” or any follower of “The Way,” and return them to Jerusalem to stand trial before the Sanhedrin. The Roman authorities had given permission to the Jewish Sanhedrin to control their own affairs. The synagogue in Damascus, which was about 140 miles north of Jerusalem, had to give support to Saul because of this letter of authorization.

The journey would be a tough one, but Saul, a zealot in the Jewish faith, considered it no great sacrifice to make for what he believed in. In fact, he had been so successful in hunting Christians that he considered it a pleasure.

“You’ve done well, Saul. No one can deny it,” the High Priest said, scratching his long white beard. “My dear sir, we need our synagogues to worship in peace rather than being disturbed by these disciples of one purporting to be the Messiah.”

“I’m glad to help, Rabbi. There isn’t yet any greater pleasure than to put a stop to these converts.”

“I see you’ve traveled throughout the land of Judea arresting and bringing these disciples before us. You’ll be greatly rewarded by the Holy One of Israel. I’ve no doubt in my mind that you need such a letter.”

“Thank you, Rabbi,” Saul replied, elated that he was about to get what he needed.

The High Priest pulled out a sheet of parchment, scribbled something on it, and handed it to Saul. “May the God of our fathers be with you on this journey. Peace be unto you. Peace be unto you, too, Rabbi. I’ll see you when I return.”

Saul wasted no time in getting ready for this rigorous trip. He was eager to go; he was ready to make more arrests. Saul recalled the last Christian he hunted down two days ago. A young man, as dedicated as Saul, refused steadfastly to renounce the so-called Christ, who claimed to be Messiah.

“I’ll do no such thing,” the man who called himself Obed, had declared to Saul. “He’s the Christ, the promised Messiah...”

Saul would hear no such bold talk. He had tried to shut him up with the back of his hand, but Obed wouldn’t stop talking. Saul’s reaction must have strengthened his resolve.

“The prophets said he would come. He came, died right there at Calvary, and rose after three days and three nights as he said he would do. Glory to God in the Highest,” Obed had said with a broad smile on his face. Saul could not forget that glow of joy on his face. For a man who was about to be arrested, that was a paradox of some sorts. Paul was puzzled for a while because it was not only Obed who had shown such contentment in what was supposed to be a time of duress, practically all of those whom he had personally arrested had expressed similar outbursts of elation.

“He died for us, we’ll get arrested for him,” Obed had said, while he was being led away to the Sanhedrin. Obed began to repeat a psalm of David. “The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want...”

Saul tried not to dwell too much on his last experience. He was ready to go to Damascus and it was all that mattered to him now.

Saul took a few soldiers with him. After all, he would need help to bring the prisoners back, and they would provide good company on the way.

“This is a bold move,” Talmak, one of the men accompanying Saul said, as they packed their provisions. “Damascus is a huge place—do you think we’ll find any?”

“If I didn’t think they were there, I wouldn’t be going,” Saul answered sarcastically. He was in no mood for uncertainties; he was feeling way too excited to listen to doubtful statements.

“It will be a rough trip,” Talmak said. “Somehow we’ll manage, though.”

“Good! That’s how you should speak. Let’s all tell ourselves that we’ll be marching into Jerusalem with a long line of disciples,” Saul said, addressing the other men.

They looked at him with doubt painted all over their faces. They weren’t zealots like Saul, although they wished they could be described as that.

“We leave at the break of day,” Saul told them. “Get some rest early tonight,” he advised.

By the time the cock made its second crow the next morning, Saul and his men were on their way to Damascus. The journey would take several days, and they were ready for it.

The first day of the journey went well. The men traveled until dusk and then took an early night’s rest. They camped on the bank of a small river that ran along the road leading away from Jerusalem.

The next morning they were up before the sun, had something to eat, and were off again. The more journey they could cover before the sun got miserably hot, the better. Perhaps they would have to take a break when they could no longer take the heat. On the other hand, it was not a wise idea to push the horses too much. They, too, needed to take a break at times.

The trip to Damascus had not turned out that bad after all. Saul guessed Damascus should not be that far away with seven days already behind them.

Lying on his back under the shade of a palm tree after he had a light meal at midday, Saul was already forming images in his head on how the arrests would go. Maybe they would not turn out that way. However, one thing Saul was certain would happen was the prospect some of these followers of the Way would sing praises even when they were being arrested. How could they? The images were haunting him. Some nights he had dreams about them. He tried not to allow that to bother him. He got personal satisfaction from the successful arrests, and that was what mattered to him.

Saul estimated that he should be in Damascus early tomorrow. He could barely wait.

Saul was right. As the sun was hovering about midway in the sky, Saul started to see signs that the great city of Damascus was near. The mere fact that he had passed many people on the road was a clear signal that they were into the final leg of the journey.

Suddenly, out of nowhere, and unexpected, a beam of light, much brighter than the shining sun, too bright to be taken for granted, parted the sky and shone directly on Saul.

The men who were with him were so frightened they backed off, turned their horses in the direction as if they were taking the long road back to Jerusalem. Their horses neighed frantically and refused to move from where they were standing. The men covered their eyes and tried not to look because they were sore afraid. They fell to the ground one by one.

A frightened Saul joined them as well. Saul was aware the light was shining around him in particular. He was speechless. The man who had been persecuting the followers of Jesus, the Christ, felt like he was not that important anymore. Somehow, he had a funny feeling his deeds with regard to the disciples had something to do with this stunningly bright light shining out of the heavens.

“Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” asked a thunderous voice as it roared over his head. Saul felt his head vibrating against the resonating voice while every lock of hair expanded.

“Who are you, Lord?” a trembling Saul asked, looking all around him.

“I’m Jesus, whom you’re persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.”

Saul was shaking like a leaf blowing in the wind. He recognized instantly what hovered above him. This was Jesus, the same one whom they crucified. He himself never believed the story that he was resurrected. Saul believed Jesus was dead, one of his followers stole his body, and spread the word that he rose again. Now, Saul was hearing him with his own ears. The light that surrounded him was no ordinary light. It was from heaven, and he had no doubts anymore this was the voice of the risen Christ, the glorified Christ.

“Lord, what do you want me to do?” Saul asked with teary eyes.

“Arise and go unto the city, and you will be told what you must do.” In a flash, the voice and the light were no more. They disappeared mysteriously as they had come. All was quiet again. The silence was deafening.

Saul’s companions were speechless. Saul could see nothing after he rose from the ground. He was blind. His men brought him to Damascus at his command, where he stayed for three days without sight.

In Damascus, a certain disciple named Ananias had a vision from God that he should visit Saul, who was staying at a street called Straight, and lay hands on him so he could receive his sight again.

Damascus, continued on next page

Damascus, continued from page 4

Ananias told God that he had heard of Saul and his terrible deeds against Christians, as his reputation had spread near and far.

“Go, for he’s a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel,” God told Ananias. “For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My sake.”

Ananias went to the house where Saul was staying and did as he was told by God.

“Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.”

Scales fell from Saul’s eyes immediately, and he received his sight right away. Saul was baptized shortly after.

Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus, following his baptism. Soon after, he began to preach the Christ, and that he’s the Son of God, the promised Messiah.

Those who heard his message were amazed because they couldn’t believe it was the same Saul who had been persecuting the disciples. But God was with Saul, and he increased in knowledge and power, and he confounded the Jews in Damascus, that indeed this Jesus is the Christ. Ω

> From time to time we reprint some of the many letters we receive asking specific Bible questions. We hope they will be helpful to you.

Questions & Answers

Most of Christendom traditionally believes that Jesus was crucified on Friday afternoon, placed in the tomb before sundown Friday night, rested in the tomb on the Sabbath (Saturday) and was resurrected on Sunday morning before dawn. Shockingly, either that tradition is false, or you have no Savior!

One reader wrote the following: “I have known this for years that Christ Our Savior did not die on Good Friday, but many do not wish to seek the truth as it requires them to reevaluate their beliefs (i.e. Christmas) and man made traditions even in the face of insurmountable evidence. Thank God for the CGI.” R.M.

Another wrote, “Regard to the ‘three days and three nights’ and how you explain that Jesus was murdered on a Wednesday, NOT a Friday and that there were two Sabbaths that week. However, according to my Interlinear Bible (by Jay P Green) on John 19:31, it was a ‘great’ Sabbath. Which from my studies means two legal Sabbaths fall on the same day. So the way you make it work, two separate Sabbaths (with a normal in between them) works fine except for John 19:31 where it says the two Sabbaths fell on the same day that week.”

Thank you for writing, We appreciate your questions. It is true that there were two Sabbaths the week Jesus was crucified: an ANNUAL Sabbath (which can occur on ANY day of the week), and the WEEKLY Sabbath, or Saturday.


“The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day, (for that Sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away” (John 19:31).

The preparation day (the Passover) was the day before the annual High Day Sabbath, which was the First Day of Unleavened Bread. This first Day of Unleavened Bread was the FIRST, or annual High Day Sabbath that week. The SECOND Sabbath that week was the regular weekly Sabbath.

Christ was crucified late afternoon on Wednesday, Nisan 14th—the Passover ended at sundown as God counts time. Sundown Wednesday began the “High” annual Sabbath—[Nisan 15th], which was the First Day of Unleavened Bread. Three days and three nights—72 hours—from Nisan 14th brings us to Nisan 17th, which was the WEEKLY Saturday Sabbath. Christ was resurrected exactly three days and three nights from the time He was buried, which was just before sundown.

Three Days and Three Nights, continued on page 10

Infuse News You Can Use



infuse wants to hear from you

Is Infuse meeting your needs?
Please take a few minutes to answer our survey. It's your opportunity to tell us what you like, what needs improvement and any ideas you have.

The survey is available online at <http://infuse.cgi.org>

Or request a copy from Mike James by writing to 11271 Valley Bend Drive Germantown, MD 20876

Sparks

Sparks is the name of our new program for the children! Targeting children under 13, we will start having printable lessons for children on the Infuse website near the Spring Holy Days. These will be accessible on the CGI website, as well. We want to help parents and Sabbath School teachers teach children God’s love and the wonderful things that God and Jesus have done for us. Getting children involved when they are young is one of the best ways to keep them involved in the church as they get older. If you have questions or anything you would like to contribute, please e-mail:

sherriwilkes@hotmail.com
infusecgi.org
CGI.org

Infuse

Our theme this year is *Truth in Actions*, based on 1 John 3:18: “My little children, let us not love in word neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.” This theme helps us to remember it is not about what we say, but what we do. Looking at our fruits, *Are they good fruits?* Do our actions speak of the God we are to serve or the god of this world?

This verse started out attached to our *Making Mats* project. With this project, we are helping the homeless and those without adequate heat with sleeping mats/blankets made entirely out of plastic bags. Not only are we helping those in need, but we have learned that we are helping ourselves. What’s meant by this is that we are seeing groups staying longer after services and getting to know each other at “plarning” parties. One of our members was asked to help at a local homeless shelter after seeing the love and work that had gone into making these mats. Conversations are being started about Scriptural issues and common misinterpretations. God’s love and truth are coming to those who need it. This project is not about just telling them God loves them, but about really showing them they are loved by God and others.

The yearly Infuse Retreat will be in Memphis, Tennessee this year. Through the last weekend of June, we’ll be holding seminars with guest speakers, fellowships, serving, and making “plans” to our hearts’ content. Check our website at infusecgi.org for more information as it becomes available!

Submitted by Kyle and Sherri Wilkes

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; (Ecclesiastes 12:1)

New Trend, continued from page 1

consideration: that gender is a product of social influence—that “two sexes”—this concept—is the result of the combination of “socially constructing” that reality. At the time, this was considered a *progressive* view that was defining new boundaries and bringing into consideration new definitions and views of how to look at “gender expression”—an incremental change of paradigm, affording us a new avenue to consider from what was accepted as the norm within the sciences of psychology and the psychiatric community.

Obviously, this leads one to consider that if this new view is true, it should then be possible to “deconstruct” the social norms of two sexes—that of distinct male and female—*destroy* this binary relationship of distinctive sex roles, and become a genderless, androgynous society, where biological sexual assignment has *no relevance* to any sexual difference. We become one and the same—*asexual*—embracing each other as equals, and if necessary, finding alternative ways to reproduce, or perhaps completely stop the reproduction of the human species. Obviously, I’m being hyperbolic, but nonetheless, it’s plainly undeniable when framed in this new paradigm.

We may attempt to dismiss this “gender fluid” approach or outlook and try to marginalize it, but clearly, it is becoming much more attractive than one might realize or like to admit. An example of this is *Facebook’s* acceptance of this popular, all embracing move back in 2014, when they began to offer 56 different ways—that’s right, 56 different ways a subscriber might describe an *alternative gender*, as opposed to the standard binary description of simply male or female. I’m not kidding. *Facebook* explains this allows the user to “feel comfortable being your true, authentic self,” which in today’s world is vitally important—that of having the freedom to express one’s gender as one “feels.”

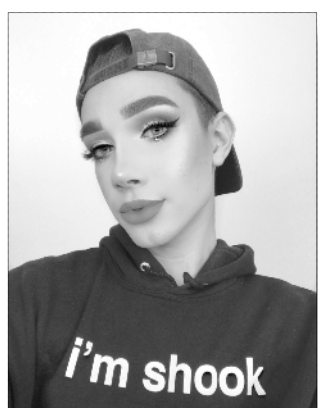
The *Virginia Commonwealth University’s* office of Multicultural Affairs recently published an *LGBTQQIAPP Terminology Guide* to help assist with a variety of labels to help sort through this twisted and entangled “gender maze.” It was primarily designed to help students and professors better understand the “differences” that exist among people and how they identify and express their gender in relationship to their biological natal, or sexual birth assignment. It’s both surprising and astonishing. Take some time and view the document here: <http://www.zerohedge.com/news/2017-02-06/lbttqia>

Clearly, this movement is growing, and if you are not “sensitive” to the needs of this approximate 0.6 percent segment of the population (ref. *Williams Institute* 2016 Study), well—you are just simply labeled clueless and need psychological help for your insensitivity and pinheaded outlook. Sadly, this is exactly what some of the more tolerant and embracing individuals want you to believe; and that’s now being advanced by the progressive minded groups promoting this “segmented” portion of the LGBTQ movement!

Gender fluidity is an important concept to accept and embrace in the transgender world, if you want to understand the logic behind this “gender dysphoria.” And the logic goes something like this: *Some individuals experience conflict between their a) biological assignment and b) gender identity. If this struggle drives them into significant distress, or diminished social and/or occupational functions directly underscored by this gender confusion, obviously then, there is some psychological trauma the individual is experiencing—this anguish is considered “gender dysphoric.”*

In the 5th edition of the *American Psychiatric Association’s* “Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders” (or DSM-5), gender dysphoria is defined and confirmed as this “incongruence between one’s experienced/expressed gender and assigned gender,” but including a “clinically significant distress of impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.” With that said, what is “key” in defining gender dysphoria is the *degree of the struggle*—when it becomes distressing, causing a degree of anguish—then it is considered to be abnormal and now defined as gender dysphoric.

Now, combine this current acceptance into mainstream social science, defined as a mental disorder by the DSM-5 document, along with the ideas presented in some of the more modern day proposals that gender can be socially engineered, and you have a means by which to recognize how an environment can be rationalized to nurture concessions as “therapeutic” against what would appear to be the natural and normal resistance to this incongruity—this struggle *against* gender confusion.



Obviously, keeping this logic in mind—that we can socially engineer gender expression apart from our biological assignment—allows us then, to *surrender* to this mental disorder, enabling us to embrace the dysphoria, thereby *legitimizing* transgenderism. This is all done in the name of modern science’s diagnosis of “mental disorders.”

This thereby provides and promotes treatments like hormone programs and cocktails of drugs, even including sexual reassignment surgery. Our “healthcare” industry can create

people into whatever sexual gender they want to be, regardless of their biology. And in the opinion of those advancing this, they will say, shame on any parent, guardian, sibling, uncle, aunt, or grandparent, friend, or otherwise who would *not* enable and allow, regardless of the God given biology, the gender expression most comfortable for the individual. This would be a grave injustice to that person, they would argue—it would be unquestionably abusive, irresponsible, and enormously emotionally and mentally destructive to the individual, in the view of those who support this reasoning and methodology.

In light of the social trends, and as disappointing and sad as this gender dysphoria is, in the world of “counseling” it is discouraged to advise or instruct someone to question this conflict, this struggle, with the intent of *reconciling* their gender expression with their God given biology. In fact, it could be considered cruel, and in some cases illegal, now that it is categorized as a legitimate mental disorder. Consequently, in today’s secular and humanistic social environment, Christian ministers, psychologists, and psychiatrists are encouraged to reconcile this conflict by allowing the individual’s confusion to *concede* to embrace their dysphoria, thereby *enabling* them to do what “feels” most comfortable for them, even if it results in their gender expression to be at odds with their natal biology.

Unfortunately, this type of therapy and counsel—or as some might describe it, “gross malpractice or child abuse”—is indeed growing more prominently since this new paradigm has been “normalized” through the incremental legitimization of the social science community’s acceptance of this gender dysphoria as a legitimate mental disorder.

And it’s spreading into other areas. *National Geographic* is doing a program and dedicating issues of their publication to exploring the gender revolution and our associated identity. Also, those responsible for instructing our youth—as young as four, five, and six years old—and are responsible for the upbringing and education of children, be it at home, youth camps, or clubs like the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, or in our public schools, are grossly mismanaging the direction of our youngsters, causing greater confusion in their minds as they grow older, on into adolescence and adulthood.

Interestingly, all of this is based on a misappropriated premise that the *natural* sense of resistance and anguish experienced is *not* a normal reaction, but rather something that should be *appeased* by enabling it to take the course of accommodating and surrendering to the incongruity—the gender conflict, regardless of our biology—even if it requires sexual reassignment surgery! This is enormously unfortunate, and incredibly sad that it’s not recognized as “thwarting our nature,” but instead, stunningly, considered perfectly *normal* and acceptable! Oh, how far we have drifted and how upside down our reasoning—by calling that which is wrong to be right (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25, KJV).

So Where Does This Lead Us?

The humanistic social environment we find ourselves living in has a counterintuitive affinity toward anything that imposes itself as an *absolute*. This is disappointing but true, because it affords secured and absolute boundaries of our human associations to be *compromised*. And in particular, when those absolutes are interlinked with something considered *spiritual* in nature, it becomes even more unacceptable to the secularist.

Yet, the human genome is very spiritual, regardless of how much we relate this definition to the physical. It has everything to do with our mental, emotional, and spiritual well being. The order and functionality of our genes, chromosomes—our full DNA, including our hormones—have everything to do with how we think, feel, and act. If anything gets “out of balance,” this can possibly contribute to some kind of dysphoric proclivity. Unquestionably, there are exceptions and additional, sometimes extraordinary contributing factors; but suffice it to say, the human body and mind is an interconnected complex chemical and electrostatic organism, that demands management and self-control, physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—and far too many of us are too cavalier about how we take care of managing ourselves, both physically and spiritually.

The Bible reveals man is a *spiritual* species, made in the image of God, with a destiny that allows him access to immortality if he can achieve a healthy relationship with his God. But this requires, for any human being attempting this, to overcome his or her natural animosity, resistance, or dysphoria toward everything God represents and expects of us when building that relationship with Him through His grace and forgiveness. Remember, when striving for a “healthy” relationship with God, we must realize it no longer is about us—but rather, it’s about Him and what *He* wants for *us*. Notice what the apostle Paul says, “For to be carnally [fleshy, physically] minded [inclined] is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity [opposed, at variance] against God: for it



New Trend, continued on next page

New Trend, continued from page 6

is not subject [subordinate, obedient, submissive] to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:6–7).

This is really at the heart of it all, getting right with God—and that's not an easy thing to do. It goes against our nature. Sometimes it requires things we're not comfortable with doing. It demands the abandonment of our former "comfort zones," sometimes physically, emotionally, or mentally. Frankly, this is not easy, because you're battling your natural behaviors, your natural inclinations—that are at *variance* with God's absolutes. As a matter of fact, we are told those who want the kingdom must take it by force and press into it (Matthew 11:12; Luke 16:16). It is a struggle!

Throughout God's Word we're told over and over again the life of a Christian won't be easy. It can be filled with pain, anguish, suffering, and sacrifice. We're warned about trials, and not to think it strange to be tried. Notice, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as you are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, you may be glad also with exceeding joy" (1 Peter 4:12–13).

But, most importantly, what many don't realize is *why* this is the burden of individuals who choose the Christian way—why Christ said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Keep in mind, to "deny yourself" is an incredible *challenge*! Fighting your own nature can be brutal. Clearly, the Christian lifestyle is contrary to our nature, which is basically selfish and prefers the path of least resistance. It's not easy to "kick against the pricks." Paul knew that very well (Acts 26:14). Peter explains it this way, "For as much then as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that has suffered in the flesh has ceased from sin" (1 Peter 4:1).

Did you get that? Read it again! Anyone who follows Christ, be prepared—get ready—it *will cause some suffering*. Why? Because you are going to abandon your sinful ways—it's God's *mandate* on all of us. You are now going to follow God's ways on His terms—fulfilling *His expectations*. It won't be easy, because His ways are *counter* to our nature and turning from sin is *painful*. It can be ruthlessly uncomfortable and downright traumatically merciless when we actually try to change our thinking, our habits, our proclivities, and lifestyles!

It has ramifications, consequences, and life-changing effects. You see, our life's journeys are different from each other. Each one of us comes to Christ with a unique set of circumstances. Our story, background, and established personality, particular to us, has been constructed over our life's experiences and makes us who and what we are. Each of us is required to repent (change) from how we were at the start of this conversion process, and then aspire to something that matches the model of Jesus Christ, since we are now accepting His terms. He now becomes our guide, example, and standard, astonishingly foreign to us, and perhaps disorienting and a bit frightening, especially if we're used to getting our own way and are comfortably ensconced with habits, addictions, moods, methods of thinking, or styles of dressing and acting, which are totally contrary to the standards and values of God's ways. Obviously, when one finally grasps and understands the breadth and scope of God's expectations, it has to be a life changing experience within us that affectionately grows out of a renewed vigilance and blossoms into a level of commitment and dedication that knows no compromise because of our deep respect, love, and affection for Jesus Christ and our Father.

Notice what Paul says to the Roman Christians as he addresses the human tendency concerning what mankind thought was right and good with God. "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts and creeping things" (Romans 1:21–23). Paul obviously is referencing the enormous amount of idolatry at the time. However, today, we could include the humanistic teaching of evolution as well, and how it denounces humanity being created in the image of God, and instead, promotes the idea we are offspring of the creation that somehow has mutated into the human species. God calls this foolishness!

Rather than argue with humanity, since by nature we are adverse to any absolute God reveals, He says this: "Wherefore, God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator who is blessed forever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate [void of judgment] mind, to do those things which are not convenient [becoming]" (Romans 1:24–28).

Undeniably, this is portraying homosexuality (and by association, a variety of inappropriate sexual habits in this category) as an "unnatural

behavior," which results from not retaining a relationship with God and His values in their minds. Paul describes this void as something harmful to the balance of our "nature." It "messes" with our minds and emotions because we allow ourselves to behave adversely to the natural order of God's intents—all because we don't exercise self control and don't discipline our lustful inclinations, or weaknesses in our personalities, or character for whatever reason; and there *could* be legitimate reasons, which can and does include the *trauma* that comes with the abuse of individuals who are now mentally, emotionally, and/or spiritually damaged. However, that still doesn't justify enabling the "incongruence" or the "perversion" of our natural balance, which in the context of gender identity should be "in balance" with our birth biology. Remember, two wrongs never made a right.



So What Are We Saying?

The clear and short answer to this gender conflict and confusion is to embrace the distress and struggle, consider it healthy and normal; and then prepare mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, to settle in for the long haul. Understand, if we have inclinations to act or behave "unnaturally," out of sync with our assigned biology, the discomfort we feel is a healthy sign and is naturally expected—it's the right thing to happen and "feel." So just commit to the fight and maintain the discipline to resist the proclivity, which is fighting our natural born biology and sexual attraction. Draw close to God—stay focused. Commit to your discipleship and follow through with an aggressive spiritual strategy to combat your confusion, anxiety, and stress with God and His Holy Spirit as your partners!

Look, all of us are in recovery. Every one of us has been damaged in some way to varying degrees due to sin in our lives. When we come to Christ we're all suffering with the burdens we bring with us. Admittedly, some sins, habits, addictions, or lifestyles may be more difficult and complex than others, but that doesn't make it impossible to root it out of our personalities, behaviors, and way of life. Remember, if God is for you, nothing can stop you if you set your mind to it—all things can be done with Christ Jesus as your partner (Romans 8:31; Philippians 4:13).

We know everyone is different, but be assured, we'll never be tested beyond what we can handle (1 Corinthians 10:13–14). With that said, God expects us to uproot the idolatrous habits in our lives. It's no longer about us—our passions, our lusts, or our terms—instead, it's about God and pleasing Him in our lives. Finding our balance with Him is our new mission, and if we can persevere under the pressures and tensions that come with conversion, eventually we'll do just fine and come out on the other side a better person for it! And that is what God expects of us.

Christ says, "Come unto me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28). Those of us who are "heavy laden" and overburdened, those of us who are loaded up and having difficulty in the conversion process—perhaps are depressed, tense, stressed, and overwhelmed. Christ says, "Take my yoke [obligations, beam of balance] upon you and learn of me [study Christ, His model of thinking and living]: for I am meek [humble, gentle] and lowly [humiliated in disposition and circumstances] in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:29–30).

This is His way of encouraging us to recognize we are in the "throes of change," and it is a humbling experience; but if we take on His obligations and "beam of balance," we will become stable and find rest in our souls eventually. He will heal us from the emptiness and ruin of our lives, and we will be filled and have a healthy relationship with God over time, who will fill the void in us and bring peace into our lives.

However, we need to understand that this won't happen overnight, or in one day, one week, or even one year. It's taken years in most cases to ruin and mess ourselves up with the sins we've grown comfortable with. Depending on how bad the damage is determines just how much time and labor it will take to construct new "comfort zones" with Jesus Christ. I can assure you that change won't come easily, quickly, or comfortably! Most withdrawals from any addiction—and sin *is* an addiction—takes hard work and an indeterminate amount of time. So again, stay *focused*!

The best advice we can keep in mind as we embark on this journey dedicated to recognizing, resisting, and replacing our sins with godly behavior is what Jesus mentions in Luke. Notice: "In your patience possess you your souls" (Luke 21:19). That is the key to successfully managing the conversion process with God's Holy Spirit. It will take time, but that is exactly what God needs and wants. Let Him have the time with you so you can "learn of Him" for the benefit of the conversion process to work, so you can become like Him. Clearly, it will be well worth the pain and sacrifice for the present, and on into the future. It's the least we can do. It's our "reasonable service," considering what God is offering!

Why Observe the Seventh Day Sabbath?

by Tom Kauffung



Tom Kauffung

We hope for eternal life (Titus 1:2). To realize that, we have to live according to God's ways.

In Matthew 7:21, Jesus says, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."

The seventh-day Sabbath was established at creation as related in Genesis (Genesis 2:2–3). It was for all mankind, not only for Israel or the Jews, who did not exist until over 2,000 years later. The 10 commandments, given to Israel per Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, had nothing new in them, but were necessary to reeducate Israel in God's ways of living, which they lost knowledge of during their servitude in Egypt.

Exodus 31:12–18 reflects how important observing the Sabbath is to our Creator and says that it is a perpetual covenant (never ending).

Revelation 12:17 describes the dragon (Satan) being enraged with the woman (God's church) and making war with her offspring (church members) who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ (requirements to be one of God's people).

Exodus 20:8–10 and Deuteronomy 5:12–14 say to keep the Sabbath holy, and that the Sabbath is the seventh-day. Thus, saying that it is allowable to replace the seventh day Sabbath with Sunday, the first day of the week, is tantamount to saying you can keep the seventh day of the week as holy on the first day of the week, the sixth day of the week or which ever day of the week that you choose—very illogical "logic."

Israel was a chosen people to be an example to other nations, but failed to keep their promise in the covenant with the Lord God (Exodus 24:3, 7). The seventh day of the week was intended to be a Sabbath of rest from work and a day of worship (Leviticus 23:3). There were acceptable exceptions from not doing any work, like removing an ox from a ditch and healing the sick, lame, and afflicted, thus showing mercy to the ailing and afflicted.

There are two scriptures that are often used and twisted (or not understood) to justify replacing God's appointed seventh-day Sabbath with Sunday worship. It is like Peter said in 2 Peter 3:16, the untaught and unstable twist the Scriptures.

The 10 commandments, given in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, had nothing new in them.

One is, "We worship on the Lord's Day (Revelation 1:10)." This would be better understood if John had said, "I was in the spirit witnessing events in the Lord's Day." Most of the book of Revelation describes the Lord's Day, like in Jeremiah where Israel's sins are related in chapter 23, verses 10 and 11; then in verse 12, it says that He will bring evil upon them in the year of their *visitation* (KJV), *punishment* (NKJV) and *doom* (Jewish Publication Society translation).

The second is, "We worship on Sunday because Jesus was resurrected that day."

In a sense, saying that Jesus was put to death and then "buried" late Friday and arose Sunday morning, is like saying that Jesus lied to us. When asked for a sign, Jesus said He would be three days *and* three nights in the heart of the earth (Matthew 12:40), as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish (Jonah 1:17). Unfortunately, Matthew, Mark, and Luke allow for confusion on this since they only say that the next day was the Sabbath. Most think only of the weekly Sabbath. John elaborates and says that Sabbath was a high day (John 19:31), which means an annual Sabbath, not the weekly Sabbath. That Sabbath was the first day of unleavened bread (Leviticus 23:6–7), which was the fifth day of the week (Thursday) that year. Thus, Jesus was put in the tomb just before sunset on Wednesday and arose just before sunset on Saturday (the weekly Sabbath)—three days and three nights, as He said.

Much more could be said, but I feel the significant points on this subject are addressed here.

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The Truth in Action!

by Murray Palmatier



Murray Palmatier

This year, the *Infuse* team has selected "Truth in Action" as its theme for the year. The Biblical text that forms the basis of this year's theme is found in First John 3:18. Here, John reminds us, "My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth." A strong reminder that it is not sufficient to SAY the right things, we must DO the right things.

Christ, in Matthew 7:16, tells us that "you will know them by their *fruits*." As followers of Christ, we understand this to mean that our character and where we are in the spiritual maturity process will be reflected in what we do, how we act, and how we treat others. Throughout His Word, God provides us with several checklists against which we can grade our progress. Galatians 5:22–23, Philippians 4:8, 2 Peter 1:5–7 and the messages to the churches in Revelation (chapters 2 and 3) are just a few examples of these checklists.

However, have you stopped to consider that there are two aspects to this concept—*truth* and *action*. Our focus naturally is placed on the "action" part of the equation because we can tangibly assess our progress through the things we do. As we approach Passover in the coming months, we should be actively doing just that—examining ourselves against the mirror that is the Word of God.

Have you ever considered that the New Testament writers actually place the emphasis on *truth*? They tell us that if our focus is on correct understanding of doctrine (truth), godly behavior (action) will naturally result. Let's take a quick look at some of these texts and see what they mean for us in our spiritual development.

John is called by many as "the apostle of love" because of how many times he writes about the subject. In fact, his relatively short first epistle uses the word 44 times. But let's take a deeper dive and see what he really is saying. First John 2:5 tells us, "But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him." Note how the emphasis is placed on belief in and adherence to the Word of God, and that love (action) is the by-product. What this is telling us is clear: *Acceptable action is the product of adherence to truth*.

Building on this year's foundational text, John develops this thought further. Take time to read 1 John 3:16–24. In verse 22, John explains that "...whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." This tells us that we are blessed first because we follow God's law. Following His law necessitates an understanding of the truths contained in His Word. Continuing along in the text, this obedience to truth causes our actions to please Our Creator. Truth drives action, not the other way around.

Consider this passage from the Sermon on the Mount known as the "Golden Rule" (Matthew 7:12). Christ tells us, "Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the

Law and the Prophets." How can this be any clearer, and from the mouth of the One who is the source of the Law and the Prophets? The whole purpose of the Hebrew Scriptures (the only written source of God's truth at the time) was to affect the actions of God's people.

Paul continues with this sentiment in Titus 2:1–8. Digest the deep meaning of this passage. In verse 1, Paul tells Titus to "speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine," and then proceeds to list behavioral expectations for Christian followers. He repeats this same teaching in verse 7, writing, "...in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, sound speech..."

As we embark on a year here in *Infuse* based on the concept of *Truth in Action*, let's take heed to what that really means. Be diligent in your study of the Scriptures. Always be deepening your understanding of God's precious truth. Follow King David's example of meditating on it "all the day" (Psalm 119:97). Ask God to teach you His ways. Then share that truth in how you treat others. God's way is so simple, if we just take the time to learn it.

Ω

God's way is so simple, if we will just take the time to learn it!



Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
He gave up His heavenly position
And came down to the earth
To redeem me from sin and death
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
He was born in a manger
That was no place for my king
From a cruel king He fled to Egypt
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
As a boy He read in the synagogue
He spoke with great wisdom and knowledge
To the amazement of the scribes and elders
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
He grew up as an ordinary man
As a carpenter He did work
Until the time of His ministry
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
John told that He was the Son of God
He was here to take away the sins of the world
It pleased God for him to be baptized
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
Fasting and praying into the wilderness He went
To each temptation by that evil one
He responded and He stood strong
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
He traveled, preaching and teaching
Repentance, forgiveness, and the Kingdom of God
The good news of a better world tomorrow
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
Many miracles He did perform
Healed the sick; raised the dead
Made the lame to walk; the blind to see
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
On more than one occasion
With minuscule portions
He feed the great masses
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
He humbly washed the disciples' feet
He showed how to love and how to serve
To teach that I must do the same
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
He was scorned and betrayed
Arrested and treated like a criminal
To the charges He said not a word
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
He was beaten, spit on, and scourged
It was my place that He took
When they nailed Him to that stake
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
Between criminals He was placed
While others mocked and stared
He hung His head and He died
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
The Messiah gave up His life to ransom me
From sin and eternal damnation
And reconciled me back to the Father
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
He was wrapped in a shroud
His body was laid in a tomb
The third day he arose from the dead
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
He commissioned believers, Jews and Gentiles
To have faith and to spread the gospel
He promised that one day He would return
Why Did He Love Me So?

Why Did He Love Me So?
He promised to remove sin, death, and sorrow
And provide a new heaven and a new earth
Where I may dwell with Him forever more
Why Did He Love Me So?

No, I do not know why He loved me so
I am just thankful that His love for me never fails.

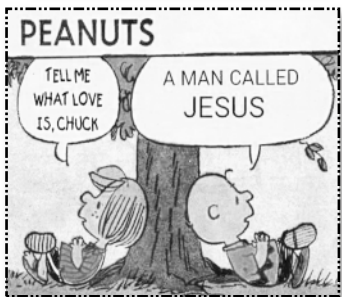
Ω

Submitted by Johni M. Pernell

Love is...

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. Ω
(1 Corinthians 13:4-8 KJV)

Snoopy sez love is...
by Charles Schultz



HOW TO KEEP FROM DISCOURAGEMENT

Many in the world today are fighting depression and discouragement. Have you ever felt stressed, down, blue, discouraged? Today we live in a busy, stressful, sinful world. It can be discouraging sometimes. We all have trouble multi-tasking. God designed our minds so we can concentrate on only ONE thing at a time.

by Lloyd W Cay

A mini- Bible Study



Lloyd W. Cary

Everyone deals with discouragement at some point in his or her life. The highs and the lows are part of what makes the human experience rich—if we didn't experience the lows, we wouldn't appreciate the highs.

Discouragement, disappointment, failure, and setbacks—these are all things that can help us develop godly character if we maintain a proper mindset. The key to the Christian life is to learn from these experiences, and minimize the amount of time that we allow ourselves to stay discouraged.

Some people seem to be able to accept difficulty as a challenge, and others feel overwhelmed. When we become discouraged, we are apt to respond unwisely to situations and people. We withdraw. We complain. We blame. We draw negative conclusions. We quit—or we go on with the above feelings churning inside us.

In the Bible, we read of many people who became discouraged. Let's look at several examples and see what their discouragement actually came from:

- Jonah was a depressed and discouraged prophet because things were not going his way (Jonah 1:12; 4:3,8). Jonah was overruled by God Himself. Jonah did not want Nineveh to be saved; he wanted to destroy them. He was exasperated because he felt all things—including God—was against him. He angrily resisted against God's will, but lost.
- When the Israelites heard that the Canaanites were giants and lived in fortified cities, they "lifted up their voice, and cried; and the people wept that night" (Numbers 14:1). Their low spirits came from *comparing a seemingly insolvable situation to their resources instead of God's resources*.
- Rachel could not have children. She blamed her husband and finally burst out, "Give me children, or else I die!" Rachel's melancholy came from *resenting a situation she had no power to change*.
- David was about to be stoned by his own men when they were distressed about the loss of their wives and possessions. David's low point came through *experiencing rejection and misunderstanding from those he loved*. However, we see that "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God" (1 Samuel 30:6).
- When the Israelites traveled in the wilderness, the Bible says, "The soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way" (Numbers 21:4). In this case, they were discouraged because they were *focusing so much on their difficulties that they lost sight of God's promises and provisions*. "Job said, 'My soul is weary of my life.'" And shortly after we hear him asking God, "Is it good unto thee that thou shouldest oppress, that thou shouldest despise the work of thine hands" (Job 10:1,3)? In light of Job's enormous trials, we hardly blame him for feeling depressed. We can certainly sympathize with his reasoning that *God is not fair in allowing the bitter experiences I am facing*.
- Elijah came to the point of wishing to die (1 Kings 19:4). He was having a "pity party." He had "had enough." Two things contributed to Elijah's discouragement. First, he was *physically and emotionally exhausted*. Second, and perhaps more significant, he seems to have *pressed on in God's work without a clear sense of direction from God*. The Bible records that Elijah ran for his life into the wilderness, but there is no indication that this was God's bidding. How many times have we felt "burned out" from "running on empty" and declare, "I'm out of here!"?

- At one point, Nehemiah appeared so melancholy that King Artaxerxes asked him what was troubling him. Nehemiah was depressed because *he saw the work of God going backward*. The rebuilding of Jerusalem was very dear to Nehemiah, and he told the king that it "lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire" (Nehemiah 2:3). How many people today feel angered or discouraged because certain undertakings—or even churches—they have devoted their lives to, turn to naught?
- Out of these biblical examples, we can draw some conclusions for avoiding discouragement in our own lives. We need to:
- Realize God has plans far above and beyond what we grasp in the present.
- Distinguish between the "changeables" and "non-changeables" in our lives. "Non-changeables" can be conditions in our lives that God is allowing for His purposes.
- Review God's promises and recall ways He provided for us in times past. "I remember the days of old; I meditate on all thy works; I muse on the work of thy hands" (Psalm 143:5).
- Realize that our friends and relatives may not always agree with us—or with God (Romans 8:7). See things from *God's perspective*. Keep our eyes focused on God's power and resources.
- Rejoice that God is working with you—even if you cannot understand it at the time. It *is* what it *is*. Realize our heavenly Father knows best.
- Wait on the Lord's time. Major decisions should never be based on discouragement, doubt, or fear (Hebrews 11:6).
- Do not try to "force God's hand" by your "high priority" request or bad attitude (Ecclesiastes 5:2). Realize He has our best interest at heart.
- Realize that what may appear as a set-back to us may be God's way of showing us greater plans. Learn to cooperate with the inevitable.

We need to discipline ourselves to meditate—to keep our minds STAYED on God, not on circumstances.

Here are three sure-fire ways to see the "Big Picture" and keep from discouragement.

I. REMEMBER WHAT GOD *HAS* DONE: [the PAST]

Psalm 126:3: "The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad."

- We can keep from discouragement by meditating about what God **HAS DONE** in the past. We can offer prayers of thanksgiving for what God has done with a sincere attitude of gratitude.
- The Bible is primarily a history book, showing what has *been*, what *is*, and what *will be*. *Prophecy* is but **history** written *in advance*!
- God has created the angelic realm, the heavens, and the earth (Genesis 1:1).
- God gave us His Son to die for our sins. Jesus gave Himself that we might be cleansed from all unrighteousness (John 3:16).
- The man of faith knows that every good gift comes from God—including his *health, life, and possessions*. All are gifts from the hand of God (Romans 6:28; 1 Corinthians 4:17; James. 1:17).

II. RECOGNIZE WHAT GOD *IS* DOING: [THE PRESENT]

- We can keep from discouragement by meditating about what God **IS doing** presently. A positive attitude will help us to see the good and expect the best from God.
- Realize Jesus Christ is acting as our High Priest every day on our behalf. Go to Him often *every day*.

- Remind yourself daily God is alive today. He is working in the lives of those of us who allow Him. We always need to be aware of His power and presence (Isaiah 26:3).
- God the Father is **begetting** sons and daughters, children of God, and bringing them to fruition. Sometimes the conversion process can be uncomfortable. But know it is for our overall good (Romans 8:28).
- Be constantly aware God is seeing to it that we are physically and spiritually nourished each day. His angels watch out over us, but we must do *our* part; we must *BE* here.

III. REJOICE ABOUT WHAT GOD *WILL* DO: [THE FUTURE]

Joel 2:21 says, “Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things.”

We can keep from discouragement by meditating, or thinking, on what God **WILL DO**—what God has promised!

We must learn to face the future with an attitude of optimistic faith. Faith is believing what God says is true. God has promised to help us in time of need, and to give strength and courage for all our tomorrows. Relying on God, we can do it!

We are promised eternal life with God. He is preparing wonderful things for those who trust in Him. How ironic that the atheist denies God exists; in reality, unless he repents, *he* will not exist!

So, What *WILL* God Do?

- “Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but *rather* give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance *is* mine; I will repay, saith the Lord” (Romans 12:19). He will punish the wicked. Satan and his minions will finally be put away.
- At His Coming, Christ will resurrect the righteous dead and give them eternal life forevermore (1 Corinthians 15:51–53).
- He will establish His Kingdom and His Laws on the earth (Hebrews 10:16).
- He will reward the saints (you and me); we are joint heirs of God (Romans 8:17).
- He will appoint offices for us. He will renovate the earth—it will become like a literal Garden of Eden (Isaiah 51:3)!
- There will be no more sickness. The nature of animals will be changed. Mankind’s long desire for utopia will arise! (Isaiah 65:25; Revelation 21:4).
- There will be a restitution of all things (Acts 3:20–21). “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness” (2 Peter 3:13).
- The whole earth will be filled with the glory of God (Isaiah 11:9; Habakkuk 2:14).

We Christians already *know* how the story of man will conclude; there is *no need* to be discouraged! We’ve read the Book: *We win!* Suggestion: in your private study do a word analysis on the word “Joy” (John 15:11).

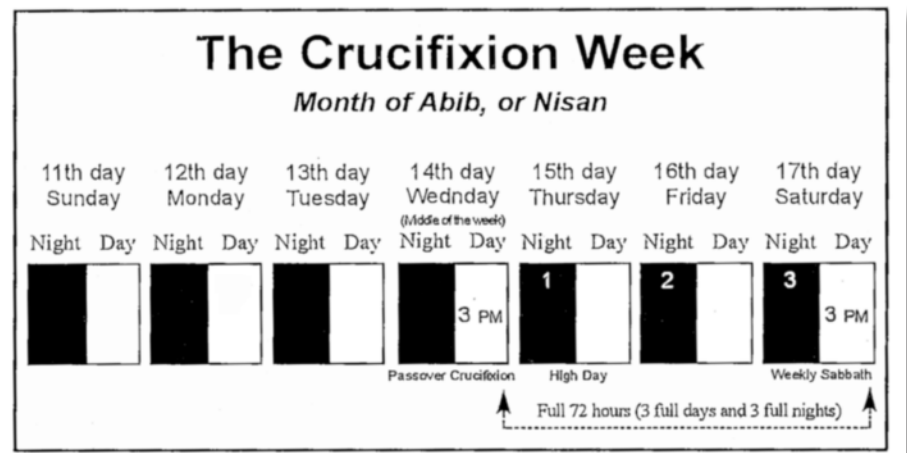
Here is God’s “positive thinking course:” “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are *true*, whatsoever things are *honest*, whatsoever things are *just*, whatsoever things are *pure*, whatsoever things are *lovely*, whatsoever things are of *good* report; if there be any *virtue*, and if there be any *praise*, think on *these* things” (Philippines 4:8). “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). While the world around us seems to be going insane, be thankful that God “hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a *sound mind*” (2 Timothy 1:7).

Whenever you feel discouragement creeping in, meditate—think deeply—on these three categories. Actually “see” them in your mind’s eye. Think about what God *has* done historically and in your own life, what He is *presently* doing, and what He will soon do. If you actively and persistently meditate on these points you will have more peace of mind and will never need to be discouraged! Ω

For further details on *what God will do*, see our free booklet, *The Second Coming—and Beyond!*

Three Days and Three Nights, continued from page 5

If you have not already done so, be sure to send for our free booklet, *Three Days and Three Nights—Did Christ Die On a Friday and Rise On a Sunday?* This booklet is thoroughly documented and prints out all the Scriptures you need to demonstrate the “Good Friday/Easter Sunday” tradition is biblically false. We are admonished to “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (First Thessalonians 5:21). For your convenience, we have printed out pages 26–27 of our free booklet below—just one of many diagrams showing what really happened the day Jesus the Christ died.



In Conclusion

In answer to the subtitle of this booklet, *Did Christ Die On a Friday and Rise On a Sunday?* we must reply with an emphatic, absolute NO! The alleged “mystery” of the three days and three nights is really no mystery at all. The authors of the Gospels, honest men with a wonderful story to tell, gave us a straightforward account of the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. *They gave us all the pieces of the puzzle we need* to construct a clear, precise picture of those events. When placed in the correct order, the pieces tightly interlock like a jigsaw puzzle. Everything fits together tightly and perfectly when the puzzle is solved.

And in a way, the chronology we have reconstructed throughout this chronicle is only one detail of a much larger puzzle we call “the truth.” It goes on to illustrate, not only the historical facts of the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, but also the way of life that God has given us to live. The details of the death and resurrection of Christ, when properly understood, serve to undergird the truths of the Sabbath and holy days, and these in turn reveal God’s plan for man. Be sure to request our booklet, *God’s Seasonal Plan*.

Of course, beyond the details of His death and resurrection is the amazing fact that our Savior voluntarily gave Himself to be crucified to pay the penalty for our sins. “The wages of sin is *death*” (Romans 6:23), not eternal life in another location. Either we will pay for our *own* sins, or we can accept the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as payment for our sins in our stead. His perfect life and sacrificial death paid for our imperfect and self-centered lives. As the author of Hebrews writes, “So Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation” (Hebrews 9:28).

It is for this second appearance that all creation eagerly awaits (Romans 8:19). Just as Christ rose from the dead, so will His faithful disciples—“the saints”—when He returns. Of this promise Paul writes:

“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians 4:14–17).

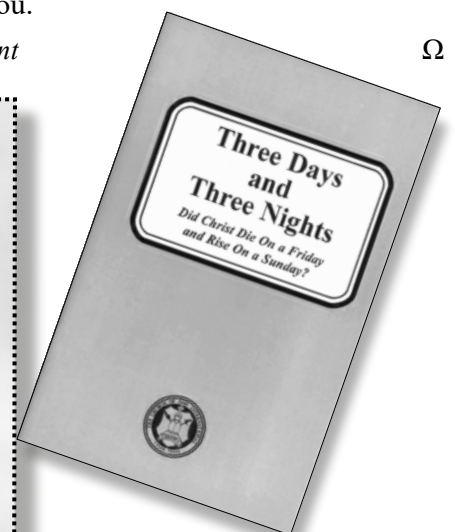
May God hasten that day! Thanks again for writing. We hope you will send for our booklet. God be with you.

Personal Correspondence Department

Ω

Take this simple test!

Christ was in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights (Matthew 12:40). Can you figure three days AND three nights (72 hours) between Friday sunset and Sunday morning? Solve this puzzle by sending for our detailed free booklet, *The Three Days and Three Nights*.



Communicating With God in the Age of Technology

by Murray Palmatier



Murray Palmatier

In a 2015 study commissioned by the Microsoft Corporation, it was concluded that “people now generally lose concentration after eight seconds.” (“You Now Have a Shorter Attention Span Than a Goldfish,” Kevin McSpadden, *Time*, May 14, 2015). The report, while acknowledging that “our ability to multitask has drastically improved,” shows how “our digitalized lifestyle” has had adverse effects on our concentration.

While these statistics are shocking, consider what this means for today’s generation of Bible students. The situation presents a dichotomy for us: We have more biblical resources at our fingertips than anyone in history has ever had, yet many of us cannot focus long enough to reap the benefits.

Christ, in His last prayer with His disciples before heading off to His crucifixion, noted that eternal life is to “know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent” (John 17:3). Building relationships requires quality time spent together talking and listening to one another. This is especially true of our most important relationship, with God. So, how can we best combat the effects of the digital era in which we live, and how can we coach new converts in this age of technology? Let’s explore some helpful tips together.

The tools we use to communicate with God require setting aside time, in a quiet setting to devote to them. Consider prayer, Bible study, meditation, and fasting. None of these can be properly done amidst noise, distractions, and leftover bits of your day. Consider the tranquil setting described by King David in the 23rd Psalm. Lying down in green pastures and walking beside still waters helped restore his soul, which then allowed him to be led by God, through those four tools, towards righteousness (Psalm 23:2–3).

It was this devotion to time with God that helped David see the beauty in studying the Law of God (which was the only available written Word of God available at the time). In fact, he wrote a magnificent 22-stanza (176 verses) Psalm about how much time (“all the day,” Psalm 119:97) he spent in study and meditation of it.

We would do well to follow the example of our Lord who often went off by Himself to be with the Father. He knew He simply could not focus completely amidst all of the distractions around Him. Mark 1:35 and Luke 5:16 are just two accounts where we are told that Christ “departed to a solitary place” or “withdrew into the wilderness.” In His instructions on how to pray, Christ told His followers to go into a private room and pray in secret, one-on-one with God (Matthew 6:6).

Ultimately, a sound relationship with God provides us with peace of mind in a world rife with anxiety. While our work, school, or personal lifestyles may advocate quick eight-second snippets of our time, God needs much more than that from us—or rather, we need much more than that with Him.

As Paul was closing his letter to the brethren in Philippi, he reminded this faithful group to “be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6–7).

Finally, as we contemplate how to engage the Millennial generation in the reading of the Bible, it would behoove us to see the Word of God for what it really is, and explain it that way: the story (sometimes called a narrative) of how God is building a family to share eternity with. Everything else (from Genesis to Revelation) fits into that storyline: creation, covenant, birthright, law, redemption, holy time, worship, prophecy, the Gospel, the Church, the tribulation, Revelation, the Kingdom of God, etc. When we think of it in these simple terms, the Bible comes to life and becomes a staple that we cannot live without.

So put down those gadgets (unless you use an electronic Bible), turn off all of those distractions, find a quiet place, and connect with a power greater than any device.

Ω

Our Young People... Our Future and Our Present

By Pam Nolen

The Church of God, International has long recognized the very real need to have our youth engaged as part of the body of Christ. Our young people are important to the future of the church, and they are important to the present. In keeping with this recognition of our young people, we have always had special classes in place at the Feast of Tabernacles geared toward different age groups: children (ages 3 to 12), teens (ages 13 to 18), and young adults (ages 18 to 30). While these classes have always been consistent with children ages three to twelve, we have found that our teen classes have been inconsistent in what we offer at each Feast site. Our young adult program, *Infuse*, is offered at only a few Feast sites, but has an outreach year-round in their leadership and service projects.

As we have continued to consider the needs of our young people, many discussions have taken place, with a strong emphasis on our teens, as they have been the group with inconsistency of structure within the church. Among the many early considerations of these discussions was to give a name to the teen program we are trying to build. With our young adult group labeled *Infuse*, it was determined *Ignite* would be an appropriate name, as our hope is to help ignite in our teens their passion for God’s Word and a burning desire to know Him. Of equal importance is the very real knowledge that our young people can also help ignite, or re-ignite, that same passion in the long-time members of the body of Christ, knowing the passage of time sometimes lessens our passion as we get older and face the many trials of life.

Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity (1 Timothy 4:12, NIV).

In keeping with *Ignite* and *Infuse*, it was also a thought that our children’s program should have a name. That group is now our *Sparks*, some of the youngest among us. As we help light the sparks in our children, they begin to watch, listen, and question, and they begin to throw off their own sparks of knowledge. These precious children are the light that always makes us smile.

Isaiah 54:13: *All your children will be taught by the LORD, and great will be their peace.*

Matthew 18:2–3: *He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: “Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.”*

It is a humbling and refreshing experience to see old things “new” through the eyes of our children, of our young people. We have lessons to learn from our young people, and we have many things to teach and share with them. Understanding this, as we gave the names for our teens and children much consideration, we began to lay the groundwork for our teens. Our first introduction of *Ignite* was at the Feast of Tabernacles 2015 in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. We had daily teen sessions, patterned after the *Infuse* format. That meant presentations based on a theme chosen by *Infuse*, given in a manner meant to be interactive, inviting participation and discussion. It was a great start; we did it again in 2016, but we need to continue to build on this. We need to offer more, not just at the Feast, but year-round and church wide. We have many thoughts and ideas on how we can grow *Ignite*: a website presence, social media, participation in the *Infuse* magazine, adding teen activities during the Feast, and more. One thing we can all do now and always, when given the opportunity, is talk to our teens. Engage the teens in local worship and fellowship; make them a part of your church family. We not only need to serve our teens, but, by their own admission, they would enjoy opportunities to serve God and His people.

We would ask for your prayers and help as we try to grow our teen program. We have established a committee to share thoughts and ideas, to implement those thoughts and ideas which are doable. The committee is made up of several people committed to creating a lasting program for our teens. We have a variety of age groups represented on the committee as well as in those we seek out for their thoughts and advice. This very much includes seeking the input of our teens, their parents, and guardians. We invite you to share your thoughts with us, and thank you for your help. We hope to keep you updated as we move ahead.

As we consider every one of our youth, we hope to grow in all aspects of our service to them, and in allowing for opportunities in their service to the church.

Sparks...Ignite...Infuse

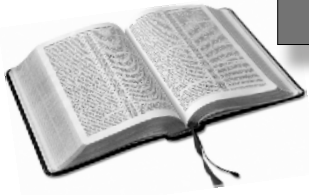
If you would like to contact us regarding *Ignite*, you may email: Murray Palmatier at murraypalmatier@yahoo.ca and Pam Nolen at tmnolen@homesc.com

When emailing, please copy us both to your email. We appreciate it very much!

Ω



Warning—Do Not Replace Your Bible!



Have you noticed? There seems to be a subliminal pressure from the world on Christians to be embarrassed or ashamed of carrying the Book of God in public.



Yes, it's true! Years ago it was prestigious, even enviable, to be seen in public carrying a Bible. Today, many even go to church with no Bible. The pressures of the world on Christians tend to make them feel *embarrassed* or *ashamed* of carrying the Book of God in public, while carrying popular electronic devices proposes no real threat. In fact, it is "hep," "cool," admirable, whatever you want to call it—to be seen with the latest electronic device even if it has a Bible app in it. And then there is the testimony of the Old Bound Book itself. The Bible can be seen and *should* be seen by others, both by believers, and by unbelievers. Today, one might even be *arrested* for carrying a Bible across the street of an abortion clinic (Romans 1:16)! Are *you* ashamed?

Friends, let us ask this: is the testimony, result, or fruit, of all these electronic devices the same as carrying that big, old black Bible? Have they brought about any real repentance or revival? They can claim to try to make Bible study "simpler" and "easier," but cannot claim to have helped produce more mature and zealous Christians.

Just seeing Christians with the Book in their hands may challenge and encourage others to open their Bibles. Onlookers may think, "Wow, how nice! He or she must be a Christian!" or "Uh-oh. A religious nut!" or, "I wonder what they would say if I asked them..." You may want to "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15). Now admittedly, there is a great advantage in keeping and using devices containing the Scripture in places where the Bible is forbidden. But who knows what conversations that big old black Book might engender? Can we demonstrate, "For *I am not ashamed* of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Romans 1:16).

Indeed, an ongoing concern among many Bible believing and preaching churches has been that fewer and fewer believers are bringing their Bibles to church services or even taking time to read and study them at home. A new concern now, is that many Christians who *do* take the Word of God seriously, are spending much more time using and enjoying the features of their new electronic devices and programs in studying the Scripture than to the devotional use of the old bound Book. TV or computer games seem much more exciting! This article is an appeal to the believer who loves God and His Word and to maintain a proper perspective of the prominent use of "The Book" over devices such as desktops, laptops, tablets, iPads, cell phones, and whatever else may be available for studying the Bible. Some believers come home from Sabbath services, throw their Bibles on the end table, and do not pick it up again until next Sabbath—but would not think of leaving their homes without their electronic device. Touché?

Some have traded their Bible entirely for an electronic device. Electronic devices should not become a permanent replacement for your regular Bible. Hopefully this startling disclosure does not upset any electronic device users! The Bible is a precious, divinely inspired Book that no electronic device can fully simulate and give the complete perspective, view, and appreciation of all of its features. As one holds the Book in his hand, one has vividly before him all the pages of God's Word; the order and the relative size of each book can easily be noted. One can keep a finger on the text being read or studied, while easily skimming and meditating on the context, and freely flip back and forth to view various cross references without getting "lost." One can color code special places or make special study notes in the Book and it will be available to review for you and perhaps for your children for grandchildren for years to come. Many people have passed down their "Family Bibles" complete with noted events and genealogies and have deemed them priceless. The more one *uses* the Book, the more readily he or she is able to locate specific sections of the Bible, even to flip to a particular verse of recent or past significance without remembering the specific "address." For example, "I know the verse I want is in such-and-such book and is on the left-hand column about half way down the page and is colored in yellow." A well-read, well-marked Bible becomes like an old familiar friend—you'll love it more and more.

There are vulnerabilities of electronic devices. Confining oneself to a device, one may lose the overview and context of the Bible. The order of the Bible books may become irrelevant (just punch in the address). In fact, even the full spelling of the names becomes unnecessary; just punch in the abbreviation or just speak to the device. Restricting oneself to the device can rob one's personal skill in the Bible. It is noted that reliance on electronic devices have weakened many other personal disciplines such as math, English, writing, etc. Apparatuses will keep changing (and costing), just like modern translations, but God's Book remains the same (Psalm 12:6-7). These devices contain much distraction other than the Bible and

other biblical material; they can contain or have access to a world full of information and entertainment, including unholy, unwholesome, and perverted things. Electronic devices usually have many games, programs and are used for many other purposes, of which the Bible is just *one* of its many features. One cannot help but wonder how many electronic readers actually *read* the whole Bible from cover to cover on their device. Further, these devices may lead one to the temptation during church services to appear to be following the text but to actually be placing some kind of makeshift distraction or "idol" before the Word of God. Jumping from translation to translation during a sermon more often results in confusion rather than clarification. Plus, it appears distracting and discourteous to the speaker to be staring into one's lap while busily typing a keypad rather than keeping focused on the speaker—not to mention the distraction if your app begins to *ring* during services!

Even during personal devotions, one may be distracted by the device. Even more serious, by confining oneself to a device, one can miss some of the supernatural features of the Book. One may find himself relying more on technology than the Spirit of wisdom and guidance. One would do better to place the Book before him as he seeks guidance from the Holy Spirit to communicate the truth to him. Just as the overuse of electronic devices robs face to face personal communication between people, over-reliance on devices in Bible study misses the face-to-face divine communication between the disciple and the Master of the Holy Scriptures.

There is even a peril of preaching from the electronic devices in that it often appears the preacher is paying more attention to his device than to the people. We *need* that eyeball-to-eyeball personal connection to drive the message home! The Book gives more freedom to the preacher to be led of the Spirit beyond his sermon notes and to freely turn to other pages and notations that are placed in his mind and heart while proclaiming God's Word. The preacher can boldly raise up the holy Book and declare "*this is the Word of God.*" (Picture doing that with one's app!)

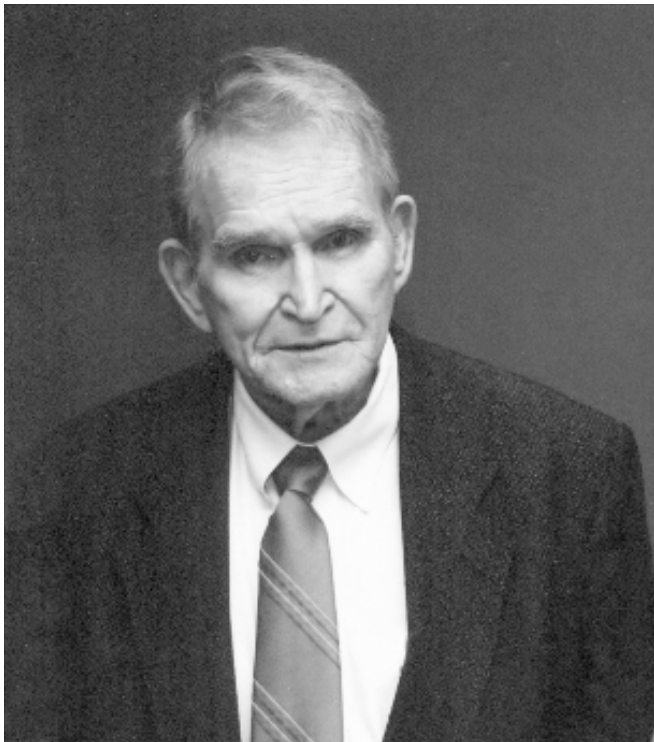
It's true that God's Word still speaks powerfully, whether from a page in the Book or on the screen of a device. Be balanced. There's something "magic" about the Book. Nothing can weaken God's Word, but the believer can become weaker by not giving himself to all of its richness. Do not let handy devices rob you of holy devotion and all the benefits of the Old Bound Bible. Encourage use of the holy Book in the church and in the home; emphasize that one should first read, meditate on, and study the book prayerfully by itself, before referring to all the available helps and devices. Do not replace the Book God gave you for modern technology.

Do not be deceived; while having a Bible app on your electronic device may at first be fun, novel, handy, cool, or even faster in some cases, it should not permanently *replace* your faithful Bible in paper and ink. Remember, God will judge you by His Book of life—not by His electronic device (Revelation 20:12). Ω



In loving memory...

Roy Geddes
(July 12, 1926 – August 31, 2016)



Roy Geddes

Roy Darrell Geddes, age 90, of Zionsville, Indiana, fell asleep in Christ on August 31, 2016, at his residence. A graveside service was held for Roy on the morning of September 10, 2016, at Garden Oaks Memorial Park in Berryville, Texas, Charles Groce officiating.

Roy was born July 12, 1926, in Pleasant Grove, Texas to Roy Thomas and Henrietta (Brister) Geddes.

He was a faithful member of the *Church of God International*.

Roy was preceded in death by his parents.

Left to cherish his memory are his wife, Angeline (Angie) Geddes; stepson, Charles Groce; daughters, Ann Ninness, Betty Kost; and brothers, Gerald Geddes and Jack Geddes. There are nine grandchildren: Tanya, Talia, Rachel, Rebecca, Andrew, Melissa, Jonathan, Kirsten, and Anna Lisa; and several nieces and nephews.

Roy and Angie lived in Tyler, Texas for more than 25 years and worked at the home office of the CGI for most of those years. Angie worked as receptionist, and Roy did a variety of jobs, including operation and upkeep of the recording and other electronic equipment.

A longtime member of the Church of God, Roy attended Sabbath services and participated in church sponsored activities for as long as his health would permit him to do so. Members of the Tyler CGI, with many others who had the pleasure of meeting and getting to know Roy, will fondly remember him. Ω

Vivian Hall Redd
(August 2, 1937 – January 2, 2017)



Vivian Hall Redd

The family and friends of Vivian D. Hall Redd, age 79, were deeply saddened to learn that this faithful servant of the Lord had died. Vivian, known to many as “Viv,” fell asleep in Christ on January 2, 2017. She was a longtime member of the Church of God.

Funeral services were at New Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Crockett, Texas (Johnny Thacker, pastor), with Clifton J. Buchanan officiating, and Ray Hall, Sr., bringing the eulogy.

Vivian was born August 2, 1937, to the late Robert Lee Hall and Carria Duren Hall. She was the youngest daughter of the family. She attended school in Houston, Texas, graduating from Jack Yates High School.

She was employed by BBQ Inn in Houston. Upon relocating to Kansas City, Missouri, she worked for Holiday Inn and the Social Security Administration. Returning to Houston in 1980, she continued her employment with the SSA until retirement.

Vivian was preceded in death by her parents; son, Demetrius Buchanan; brothers, John and Billy Hall; and sister, Carriaeran Ards.

Left to cherish precious memories include her husband, Freddie Redd of Houston, Texas; sons, Ray Hall, Sr. (Patricia) of Yonkers, New York, and Clifton Buchanan (Demetra) of Sugarland, Texas; daughters, LaVette Calvin and Roary “Rose” Hall, both of Houston, and Barbara Hall (Kevin) of Bronx, New York; brothers, Elmer Hall (Nina Lee) of Los Angeles, California, and Curtis Montgomery of Crockett, Texas; sisters, Florarean Overshown of Grapeland, Texas, and Gwen Jones “Little Sister” (A.J.) of Houston; aunt, Birdell Duren of Houston; special and devoted nieces, Stephanie Richardson, Cherrel Arps, and DeAndrea Bastite; 17 grandchildren; 20 great-grandchildren; a host of nieces, nephews, cousins, additional relatives, and many friends.

Confessing and showing her love for Christ, Vivian was a faithful member of the *Church of God International* in Houston. Those who knew her best knew she was “joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer” (Romans 12:12)—a true “prayer warrior” who daily carried the burdens of her brothers and sisters in Christ before the Throne of Grace to request help for them in their times of need.

Her brothers and sisters in Christ miss her, but have full assurance they’ll see her again...in that day, when the trumpet sounds. “For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.... Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: *Death is swallowed up in victory*” (1 Corinthians 15:52, 54). Ω

In loving memory...



Bettie Brown

Long time Church of God member **Bettie J. Brown, 85, of St. Matthews, South Carolina, passed away on Friday, November 4, 2016.**

Bettie was born on October 4, 1931, in Nashville, Tennessee, to the late James Ferguson and the late Patricia Wood Ferguson. She graduated from high school in Nashville, Tennessee. While in St. Matthews, she worked for the Voter Registration in Calhoun County. She was the wife of a veteran who fought in three wars. She had been a member of the CGI for over 20 years. She loved meeting with her church family and serving God and His people.

Survivors include two daughters, Nany Haynes of St. Matthews, South Carolina, Sherrie Parker of Summerville, South Carolina; a son, James A Brown of Nashville, Tennessee; three sisters, Joan Bolster of Hendersonville, Tennessee, Patricia Lee of Nashville, Tennessee, and Gloria Beard of White House, Tennessee; a brother, Richard Ferguson of Hendersonville, Tennessee; in addition to six grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren.

An empty chair endures each Sabbath among our little congregation in Santee, South Carolina, which represents a void that can never be filled. We are all better children of God for having known this sweetest of ladies. Despite her failing health, Bettie insisted on attending the Feast of Tabernacles with her daughter Nancy in Myrtle Beach this past year. She was unable to attend the entire eight days; however, we are grateful to our Father in heaven for the time she was with us. Eleven days after the Feast our beloved Bettie was asleep, awaiting the eternal King’s return. Rest your soul, Bettie...we will see you again.

Ω

Submitted by Mike Nolen



Donald Thomas Atherton

Donald Thomas Atherton, 85, was born on September 15, 1931 to Claude and Mary Atherton. He grew up on a farm in Martinsville, Indiana. He had five brothers and three sisters. He was the last surviving sibling. He enlisted in the U.S. Army in February of 1950. He served three years, including 15 months of combat time in South Korea.

When he returned from his military service, he continued to work around the farm with his dad, and various places around Martinsville. Shortly after his military service, he began working for Detroit Diesel Allison, Plant Five, in Maywood, Indiana. He retired in 1992.

He married Helen (Susie) Stott and had three children: Tom, who passed away in 1985, Virginia Owens, and Mona Leonard. He and Susie divorced when Mona was six months old, and he was granted custody of the children. He raised them as a single father. He had his parents around to help out for several years.

In 1960, he was led to the church that he dedicated himself to until he was too sick to attend services in early 2016. He loved his church friends, those friends he’d known since the early 1960s and the new friends he would meet each year at the Feast of Tabernacles. He enjoyed helping out with ushering and giving the occasional prayer. He wasn’t much of a public speaker, but he would have loved to have been able to give a sermonette now and then. Believe me, some of the prayers before meals and especially at Thanksgiving dinner could have been sermonettes!

After he retired from Allison, he set up a woodworking shop in his garage, where he made many pieces of furniture over the years. He was always working around his house and garage.

He was a very special man. He was a dedicated father and grandfather. He spent a lot of time with his two oldest grandsons. He taught them many lessons over the years, and he helped to make them the men and fathers they are today.

The other grandchildren, Tamara Thompson, Dara Berry, Andrea Collier, Ben “Ricky” Owens, and Kelley Hensley, were all special to him as well. It was a rare occasion that he ever turned them down if they came to him for help. He gave unselfishly to them and his children. He also loved his American Eskimo dog, Fang. They were inseparable for the 16 years they were together.

In addition to the family, he left behind several close friends he’d made in the church. He will be missed by many people.

Ω

Submitted by Mona Leonard

Great Leaders Speak About the Bible

- “Here is a Book worth more than all the other books which were ever printed.” Patrick Henry
- “That book, Sir, is the Rock upon which our republic rests.” Andrew Jackson
- “The more profoundly we study this wonderful Book, and the more closely we observe its divine precepts, the better citizens we will become and the higher will be our destiny as a nation.” William McKinley
- “The best religion the world has ever known is the religion of the Bible. It builds up all that is good.” Rutherford B. Hayes
- “There are a good many problems before the American people today, and before me as President, but I expect to find the solution of those problems just in the proportion that I am faithful in the study of the Word of God.” Woodrow Wilson
- “The whole inspiration of our civilization springs from the teachings of Christ and the lessons of the prophets. To read the Bible for these fundamentals is a necessity of American life.” Herbert Hoover

- “We cannot read the history of our rise and development as a nation, without reckoning the place the Bible has occupied in shaping the advances of the Republic.” Franklin D. Roosevelt
- “Within the covers of the Bible are all the answers for all the problems men face. The Bible can touch hearts, order minds and refresh souls.” Ronald Reagan "In all my perplexities and distresses, the Bible has never failed to give me light and strength.” Robert E. Lee
- “I say to you, Search the Scriptures! The Bible is the book of all others, to be read at all ages, and in all conditions of human life; not to be read once or twice or thrice through, and then laid aside, but to be read in small portions of one or two chapters every day, and never to be intermitted, unless by some overruling necessity.” John Quincy Adams
- “I have read the Bible through many times, and now make it a practice to read it through once every year. It is a book of all others for lawyers, as well as divines; and I pity the man who cannot find in it a rich supply of thought and of rules for conduct. It fits a man for life—it prepares him for death.” Daniel Webster Ω



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