

Hidden Paths to the Heart



A Guide to *Friendship Evangelism*

By *Michael Bronson*

Contains
"Understanding
the Trinity"

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This book is a partial printout of my website Bible**Help**.org. Bible**Help**.org has 18,000 new visitors a month from 120 countries. Over 100,000 chapters are accessed every month. Although this website was started as a small personal ministry, it has taken on a life of its own. It has become a ministry in-and-of itself. I still work full-time as a Corrections Officer, but this website has given me opportunities I never thought would be possible.

Now that the website has grown, I feel it is important to raise prayer support for it. Therefore, I am asking you to consider praying for this website on a daily basis. Not only would it be greatly appreciated, it would give your prayers an international impact. You can download a prayer card at:

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Section 1: Hidden Paths to the Heart

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Hidden Paths to the Heart



Chapter 8.01

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Fifty-eight nuclear subs and the bulk of the Soviet's surface fleet were dispatched towards America. Is this a military exercise or could this be a pre-emptive strike against NATO? The official explanation the Soviets gave was they had lost a submarine and this movement was a massive search and rescue operation. Later, the Soviets ambassador told the American leaders the commander of one of the ballistic missile submarines, Captain Marko Ramius, had taken it upon himself to make an independent nuclear strike against the United States. The Soviets were asking the United States to help them hunt down and destroy the submarine.

This scenario, of course, is taken from the movie *Hunt for Red October*. The American military was afraid the Soviets had a renegade on their hands and were scrambling to develop a defense. Dr. Ryan, a CIA analyst, knew a great deal about Captain Ramius and felt he was not a mad man, but rather, his actions indicate he is probably planning to defect. Unfortunately, Dr. Ryan was having a difficult time trying to convince a concerned military.

Giving him one chance to prove Captain Ramius wanted to defect, they airlifted him out to a submarine in the middle of the Atlantic. He had only a few dozen hours to find Captain Ramius and prove his defection. Throughout this movie, Dr. Ryan had to use his special insights of Captain Ramius to find the submarine and orchestrate the defection.

Near the end of the movie the American and Soviet submarine commanders are standing face to face. During this tense moment, Captain Ramius makes a humorous comment to one of his fellow officers. To the surprise of Captain Ramius, Dr. Ryan starts to laugh. Captain Ramius asked Dr. Ryan if he speaks Russian. Dr. Ryan replied in Russian, "A little. It is wise to study the ways of one's adversary. Don't you agree?"

In English, Captain Ramius answers, "Yes."

As Christians desiring to share Christ, we should not, of course, consider unbelievers our "adversaries." Yet, we should follow this principle of having a sound understanding of the people we would like to reach. Although this principle is obviously essential for foreign missionaries, it also applies to all other types of ministries. The better you understand a culture and its subcultures, the more effective you will be with your outreach.

You should study the culture, customs, sports, etc. of the people you want to reach. It is especially important to fully understand their *history*. I cannot emphasize this enough. When you understand the forces that have shaped their society, you will have a much better understanding of what makes them tick. Knowing how a person thinks and what they value is essential if you want to reach their hearts.

The Japanese culture is a good example of this. This culture is considered to be one of the hardest to reach because they view things entirely differently from westerners. In fact, they are quite different from the other Asian countries.

At first glance, there are many things in this society we find confusing and even contradictory. For

example, Japan's inhumane treatment of POWs during WWII was as bad as Nazi Germany. Their brutality, violence, and total disregard for human life were staggering. Yet, the streets of Japan are some of the safest in the world. There is very little violence in this country.

The thing that makes this phenomenon even more puzzling is the contents of some of their leisure reading material. Many of their magazines have detailed drawings of women being brutally raped and tortured. (Source: *Japan: Sword and the Chrysanthemum*, Coronet Film and Video.) You would think this would create a society rampant in violence. Well, the answer is yes and no.

Within this culture, it is not a simple issue of whether a certain act is "right" or "wrong." As westerners, we usually view certain wrong actions as being *inherently* wrong, whereas the Japanese would view it as being wrong only under certain conditions. For example, during WWII, the prevalent attitude of many Japanese was that non-Japanese were considered "inferiors," therefore, it was not considered wrong to mistreat them. To make matters worse, since the Japanese viewed the act of surrendering as the ultimate dishonor, they felt POWs did not deserve any *honorable* treatment. This is part of the reason it was not considered wrong to rape, torture, and even murder POWs.

I would like to point out most of the victims in these violent Japanese magazines, mentioned earlier, are not Japanese. It is not honorable to do these things to a Japanese person. This is the reason the streets of Japan (which is filled predominantly by Japanese) are safe. Although I don't think it is openly discussed, the superior/inferior perspective is still a central part of Japanese culture. This is why I don't think they view reading these violent magazines as being dishonorable.

Although this barbaric behavior appears to be driven by national pride and ethnic hatred, it goes much deeper than that. Doing what is "honorable" drives much of their culture. More specifically, it is important not to do anything that would bring

dishonor to their dead ancestors.



An in-depth study of the Samurai and Shogun is needed to better understand this culture. If you can understand what they view as honorable, you will have a solid foundation of their value system. If you understand their value system, it'll be much easier to reach their heart.

If you are going to a foreign country to be a missionary, there are many ways to learn about the people of that land. The following are several approaches you should consider:

- Talk to at least a dozen missionaries from that country
- Go to a large university and talk to the students (or professors) from that country
- Read several books on the country
- Reading testimonial books of missionaries from that country are an excellent source of culture
- Search the Internet for relevant information
- Watch as many documentary videos on that country as possible

There are over 1,000 documentary videos available on various countries. You should be able to find many of them at libraries (which usually provide them for free) and at large video stores. I have watched a large number of these videos to give myself a better understanding of the world around me. A side benefit of studying numerous cultures is it gives you a better understanding of the people you met on a daily basis. I realize time is a premium, but I think missionary schools, Bible schools, and seminaries should strongly encourage their students to watch a large number of these videos.

Probably one of the biggest mistakes missionaries have made in the past 400 years is assuming they can share Christ with Indians (or other diverse ethnic groups) the same as they would with their neighbor. Not only is this approach ineffective, it is usually counter productive. When missionaries fail to carefully study the culture and religion of these Indians they are trying to reach, one of two things can happen. First, the Indians may resent what appears to be a total disregard and disrespect to what they hold sacred. As a result, they may become hostile to your message and to “outsiders” in general.

Second, a failure to clearly understand their *concept of God* can result in unintentional misunderstandings. Instead of leaving their pagan gods for Jesus Christ, the Indians will combine their religion with Christianity. There are many examples of this, such as the people in the Caribbean, whose religion is a combination of voodoo and Christianity.

George Santayana said, “Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it!” (Actually his original statement was, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it,” but I like the current paraphrase better). Studying the successful and unsuccessful mission endeavors of the past can profit you a great deal.

There was a cannibalistic tribe (Sawi) in New Guinea that placed a high value on treachery. They were a cruel people who viewed treachery and deception as a virtue. Since overt killing didn't

require much skill, it held no real pleasure for them. However, they obtain great pleasure from winning a person's friendship and confidence for the sole purpose of murdering them. The part they cherish most is the look on the victim's face the moment they realize they've been betrayed. Just before they kill their surprised victim, they would often say, “We have fattened you up with friendship for the slaughter.” This philosophy of betrayal is so highly prized amongst this people that they were thrilled to hear how Judas had betrayed Jesus. (Source: *Peace Child*, Regal Books Divisions.)

How can you reach a people like this? More important, how do you live amongst a people like this? You will always be wondering, “Are they only being nice to me for the sole purpose of betraying me?” Another question is, if two tribes *really* want peace, how would they bring this about. Obviously, any overture of peace would be viewed as a setup for treachery.

Don and Carol Richardson found the answer to this question deep inside the Sawi Culture. The tribe that was “in the wrong” would give the other tribe a baby to raise. This child is called a Peace Child. As long as this child lives, they must maintain peace. In this situation, treachery is not allowed.

Seeing the similarities between the Peace Child and Jesus Christ (God offering His son for our redemption), the Richardsons found an opening to share Christ. In summary, Jesus Christ is God's Peace Child to us. Since Jesus Christ will live forever, we can have everlasting peace with God.

It is fascinating that a culture, which appears to be lawless, is actually governed by some very strict laws. Every culture has a set of rules that govern how it acts and thinks. Fully understanding a foreign culture is imperative if you want to reach them for Christ. Your success or failure as a missionary is dependent upon your understanding of their culture. This is why culture is just as much a barrier to the gospel as is a foreign language.

What Bible is your Neighbor Reading?



Chapter 8.02

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Bill is the name of this wild-hair boy. Most of his T-shirts and jeans have holes and he seldom wears shoes. This brilliant and rather eccentric college student is laid back in his approach to life. Some would say he is lazy and sloppy while others would say he is focused and undistracted by the trivial things of life.

Recently, Bill became a Christian. The Christian fellowship he is attending is very informal and the atmosphere of these meetings is similar to that of the

“Coffee Houses” of the 60s. The format of these meetings fits right in with his informal approach to life.

Across the street from his campus is a very formal conservative church. The people there are very influential and are well dressed. Although they desire to develop a ministry to help reach the college students, their formality has been a hindrance. One day Bill decided to visit the church, so he walks in with his normal attire. Since the service had already started, many eyes turn toward him as he walks in.

The church is completely packed and since he can't find a seat in the back, he walks further down the aisle. By now people are starting to feel uncomfortable with this unconventional wild-haired person. As Bill gets closer to the pulpit, he realizes there are no seats, so he sits down on the carpet. Although this is a common practice at the college fellowship he has been attending, he doesn't realize this is not done at this church. By now the auditorium is totally silent and people are wondering what's going to happen next.

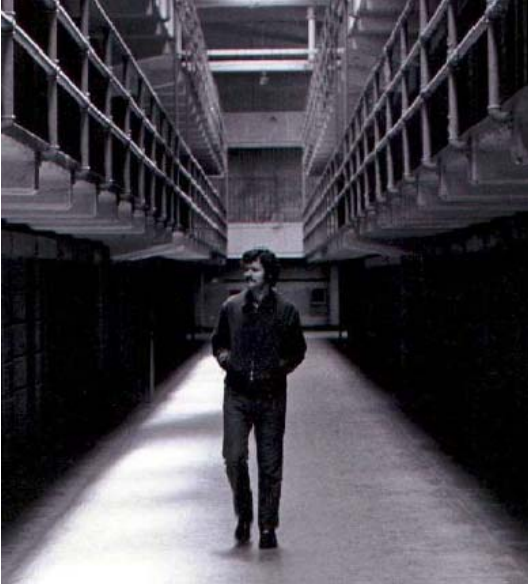


The door in the back of the auditorium opens and everyone's attention is drawn to the Deacon as he makes his way toward Bill. The distinguished Deacon, in his three-piece suit, walks slowly toward the boy. Everyone understands what this elderly man is going to do. It's an unpleasant task, but it has to be done. There has to be dignity and order in a church service. Of course, everyone is wondering how this distinguished 80-year-old man is going to be able to communicate with this kid without hurting his feelings.

It takes a long time for the old man to reach the boy. The church is utterly silent except for the clicking of the man's cane. All eyes are focused on him. The air is filled with tension and anticipation. The minister can't preach the sermon until the Deacon does what he has to do. The Deacon drops his cane on the floor and with great difficulty he lowers himself down and sits next to Bill. To everyone's surprise, the Deacon starts worshiping God with Bill so he won't be alone. Everyone is choked emotionally. After the minister gets his emotions under control he says, "What I'm about to preach, you will never remember. What you have just seen, you will never forget."

Be careful how you live. You may be the only Bible some people will ever read. What are people reading in your life? Are they reading that you faithfully attend church and always wear the proper attire? Or, do they read that these things are secondary in comparison to your love and compassion for others? As someone once said, "People don't really care how much you know, until they know how much you really care."

Honor Amongst Thieves



Chapter 8.03

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The door slams behind the prisoner as he is taken out of his cell. Garcia is led down a corridor toward several large, intimidating iron gates. This is a special day for Garcia. In a couple of hours, he will be breathing “free air.” Prison life had been difficult for him. He had made a couple friends and many enemies. Before Garcia leaves prison, he has one favor he wants to pay off. He asked the officer in charge if he could speak to Greg.

Greg, along with his other duties, was in charge of tracking the Security Threat Groups (gangs) inside the prisons in his state. For security reasons, I won't mention the state. Garcia told Greg that his gang had planted a mole deep inside his office. In fact, it was Greg's personal secretary who was spying for this gang. After a thorough investigation, the allegations were substantiated. Somehow, the gang had discovered that the secretary's husband had a drug problem and they started to supply him with drugs. One thing led to another and the wife was blackmailed into working for the gang.

Why did this paroling prisoner reveal this information? A couple years earlier Garcia's mother was dying, so he went to talk to Greg. To Garcia's

amazement, Greg was considerate enough to actually listen to him. When the prisoner asked to be moved closer to his dying mother, Greg told him he would not do anything outside of the standard operating procedures, but if there was a vacant cell at the other prison, he would transfer him. As it happened, there was an opening. Garcia said that the reason he revealed this valuable information about the mole was because Greg had shown him respect and treated him fairly. There is “honor among thieves.”

Think about how you treat your neighbors and coworkers. Are you respectful of their feelings and rights? Are you always fair and equitable in your dealings with them? The bottom line is this: If God were to provide you an opening to share the gospel with them, would your past treatment of them make them more receptive to the gospel, or less?

If you are respectful and fair in the way you treat others, they will remember it. It does not matter who you are or what position you hold, you should always be fair with those around you. You may say, “That might be true in a perfect world, but you don't know my situation. You don't know the type of people with whom I have to deal. Showing kindness with these people will be interpreted as weakness.”



Although it is true that I may not know your situation, I do understand the principles of kindness and fairness. If there is *any* environment where kindness could be interpreted as weakness, it is in the prison setting. Yet, in the prison, an officer can be respectful and fair without being viewed as being weak. In fact, the officers who are “firm, but fair” are the most successful. As this situation with Greg shows, being *fair* is beneficial to all people involved.

To tell the truth



Chapter: 8.04

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In the previous chapter, *Earn the Right to be Heard*, we saw how our listening skills greatly influence how a person receives our message. Another area that affects how a person receives our message is our truthfulness. You may not have given it much thought, but people do remember when we stretch the truth or tell those little “white lies.” The more we do this, the less authority our words have.

It had been a long day for the two correction officers. Gary and Tom had transported prisoners to and from the hospital all day. Rex, a maximum-security prisoner, was the last one to be taken back to the prison. As they walked down the hall, the prisoner spat on Gary’s face. Anger raged within Gary as he escorted Rex to a remote room for a little “talk.”

The door closed and Gary sauntered over to the now defiant prisoner. The officer spat into the prisoner’s face and said, “Look punk, you may be able to get away with this with the other officers, but I won’t put up with it. I won’t tolerate this type of disrespect on the street and I certainly won’t take it from some lousy criminal. My job doesn’t

mean that much to me. I’d rather get fired than let someone spit on me. I’m giving you fair warning right here and now. If you ever do that again, I’m going to beat the crud out of you.”

After the prisoner returned to his cell, he filed a grievance stating the officer had spit on him and threatened to beat him up. When presented with the grievance, Gary wrote out exactly what had happened. To the surprise of the grievance coordinator, Gary’s statement was consistent with the prisoner’s statement. However, the prisoner had conveniently left out the small fact he had started this incident by assaulting the officer first.

The grievance coordinator did not expect Gary’s admission. When interviewed, Gary said, “I won’t lie about what happened. The prisoners know where I stand. I’m fair with them and I don’t feel it’s my business to punish them. You will never find me picking on prisoners just for the fun of it. However, if anyone assaults me, I will rip into him. If I were to do it all over again, I wouldn’t change a thing.”

Because of the officer’s honesty and the fact he was assaulted first, the Coordinator gave Gary the minimum punishment, a seven days suspension. The coordinator later made the comment, “If the time came where I had to decide between Gary’s word and someone else’s word, even the warden’s, I would believe Gary. He has demonstrated he can be trusted.”

If this officer had just told his acquaintances an incredible and hard-to-believe story, would they be inclined to doubt him or believe him? Here is a little test: If you told your acquaintances the *exact same* story, would this officer have a higher percentage of people believing him than those believing you? If he would have a higher percentage, I would have to conclude your lifestyle is a hindrance to the gospel. It is one thing for a person to reject the gospel because they don’t care to have a relationship with God. It would be a tragedy, however, for a person to reject the gospel because we are not trustworthy.

Since we are talking about speaking the truth, I thought I would include something that shows how easy it is to distort the truth. It is a humorous, but classic example on how you can lead a person to a false conclusion by the way you *present* the “facts.”

There was a freshman at Eagle Rock Junior High School who won first prize at the Greater Idaho Falls Science Fair for attempting to show how people have become conditioned to be easily alarmed to environmental concerns. His project, *How Gullible Are We?* was an experiment that involved persuading people to sign a petition demanding strict control, or total elimination, of the chemical “dihydrogen monoxide.” To make his case, he cited the following:

- It is a major component of acid rain
- It can cause excessive sweating and vomiting
- It can cause severe burns in its gaseous state
- Accidental inhalation can kill you
- It contributes to erosion
- It decreases the effectiveness of automobile brakes
- It has been found in tumors of terminal cancer patients

He asked 50 people if they would support a ban on the chemical, based on the above data. Forty-three said they would sign the petition, six were undecided, and only one person knew the chemical was *water*, H₂O. (Source: *The Un-Reported News*, February 1998)

Political and environmental groups are notorious for misrepresenting “facts” to enhance their cause. Even if their cause is truly worthy, it is still wrong to sway people to their side by presenting an inaccurate picture.

Unfortunately, many Christians have resorted to these tactics. My brother-in-law received a *personal* letter from a major TV evangelist. This evangelist talked about how he was concerned for him and was personally praying for him. He

mentioned how he wanted to come and visit him (even listing the city), but couldn’t right now because of his busy schedule. The only problem was, this evangelist didn’t even know my brother-in-law and this “personal” letter was actually a form letter asking for money. I found this misrepresentation to be very offensive. Any ministry built on a lie will not have the blessing of God and its *true* eternal impact will be minimal. (It should be noted later on, this evangelist started another fundraising gimmick by saying God was going to kill him if he didn’t raise a certain amount of money.)

We have all received *bulk mail* that was packaged in an envelope marked with something like, “*Express Mail, Deliver Immediately.*” What was the actual intent of this packaging? Was the organization trying to give you the impression this inexpensive slow bulk mail was actually an important personal letter being rushed to you? Is this organization trying to be deceptive? What is your reaction to these types of letters?

What is your reaction to Christian organizations doing this type of mailing? Are you happy they are being good stewards of their resources or are you offended because they thought you were stupid enough to fall for this ploy? What impression do you think this type of letter would make on the non-Christian community?

Although we may find this behavior inappropriate, can you say you have never stretched the truth? Think about the times you have witnessed to someone. Have you ever embellished the facts to help persuade the person to accept Christ? Have you exaggerated how bad of a sinner you were? Have you ever overstated how becoming a Christian helped your marriage and relationship with your kids? Have you ever stretched the truth when you described the inner peace you were experiencing? Have you ever enhanced the testimonies of others to convince someone to become a Christian? Remember, any activity based on a lie will have minimal eternal value.

Here’s a humorous story on honesty. At the end of

a service the preacher (Chuck Swindall, I believe) asked his congregation to read the 25th chapter of Joshua. The next Sunday he asked how many people had read the chapter. About a third of the people had raised their hands. After looking around at the congregation, the preacher said, "Today's message is about truth and I am preaching it specifically to those who raised their hands. You see, Joshua only has 24 chapters."

As a recent President has discovered, lies have a nasty habit of getting exposed. Here's a humorous story of another person caught in a lie. A technician in the former USSR was trying to sell a costly radar missile-tracking system to the Kremlin, so he was making some wild claims about its ability. On April 28 when the U.S. was scheduled to launch a space shuttle, the technician triumphantly declared that the lift-off had been detected and tracked. Several hours later, NASA announced that the takeoff had been postponed. Oops! (Source: *Time Magazine* Sept. 24, 1990)

The gospel should stand on its own merit. The *truth* is what sets people free, so the truth is what we must present. Present the facts as accurately as you can and let the Holy Spirit do the rest.

The Perils of Misunderstandings



Chapter: 8.05

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The General grabbed the phone and heard his aid report the grim news, “The Germans have launched an invasion against us.” “OK,” the General acknowledged. “Mobilize the defense and I’ll be over as soon as possible to take charge.” As the General hung up the phone, he yelled out to his dinner guests, “I’m sorry folks, tonight’s party is over. Our base has just come under attack.”

There was, however, no invasion. The flares that were dropping from the sky were not a prelude to a nighttime assault as originally thought. As it turned out, an American soldier was using the flare gun as a substitute for fireworks. It was July 4th and he figured the lonely and isolated base in the desert of Africa needed to celebrate. It never crossed his

mind it would be mistaken as an invasion.

What started out as a celebration of Independence Day was misinterpreted. Granted, shooting off flares on a military base probably wasn’t the grandest of ideas. But, then again, my dad had always been a prankster. The thing which makes this whole situation comical (and probably explains some of the overreaction) is the fact it was a British base. The British don’t understand our obsession with fireworks on the 4th of July. They also don’t appreciate the fact that we still make such a big deal of becoming independent from British rule. As a result, they didn’t see the irony of the situation as humorous. Captain Bronson was transferred later that week.

There will always be misunderstandings. Sometimes we bring them on ourselves, sometimes they’re unavoidable. No matter who you are or what you do, there will always be times you will be misunderstood. Sometimes the consequences of misunderstandings are benign, other times they can be very traumatic and even deadly.



The reason I’m writing this chapter is twofold. First, many misunderstandings can be avoided simply by being more observant and exercising common sense. This is especially important when

witnessing. It would be a pity to turn a person away from Christ because of an avoidable misunderstanding. Second, it is important to understand that even if you are faithfully following God's leading, you still may become a victim of misunderstandings.

Sometimes seemingly innocent comments can be stumbling blocks in witnessing. Some friends and I from Bible School were going to a sporting event and asked a non-Christian friend to come along. We were hoping for an opportunity to share Christ with him. As we drove through a rich part of town, my friends made multiple comments about the vanity of the expensive homes. When we were ready to take our non-Christian friend home, he was reluctant to tell us where he lived. Finally, he said, "You know those homes you were condemning? That's where I live." Talk about major blunders. I am happy to say these careless comments did not stop him from becoming a Christian.



In 1 Peter 5:8, God says Satan roams around like a roaring lion, seeking to devour us. Because of his pride, Satan lost his position as the most powerful created being. He is a very bitter and angry being who would love to take his revenge out on God. Although Satan cannot directly attack God, he can hurt God by attacking His children; the "apple of God's eye." This, by itself, makes us a target. If, however, you are effective in your ministry, you'll

become even more of a target.

I was going door-to-door with a member of my church trying to find children interested in riding our bus to Sunday School. At one house the mother showed an intense interest. After sharing the gospel with her, she accepted Christ as her savior. She began to weep with joy and relief. Just then her husband called. Concerned, he asked why she was crying. She said, "Two men are here and..." That was all she was able to get out before he told her he was coming home immediately. She told us to leave right away to avoid the wrath of her husband. Follow-up calls revealed a very angry husband. To this day, I wonder how she is doing. Please pray for her.

Jon Hus was a gentle 14th century priest who was burned at the stakes because he refused to follow church tradition contrary to the Bible. The priests in his region despised him because his life and teaching exposed their sins and hypocrisies.

He earned the favor of the king and archbishop because he didn't back down from the threats of the other priests. These men provided him with friendship and protection. Although the priests continually tried to turn these protectors against Hus, all of their schemes failed. Then one day, a lack of clear communication resulted in a misunderstanding and the wrath of his friend, the archbishop. The archbishop, feeling betrayed by his friend, Jon Hus, had him excommunicated. In reality, Jon had not betrayed the archbishop, it was simply a misunderstanding. Nevertheless, not only did Jon lose a protective friend, he gained an enemy who triggered events which eventually resulted in his death.

Misunderstandings are an effective way for Satan to attack a believer. The turmoil and frustration may be enough to cause him to quit his ministry. If Satan cannot destroy the Christian's ministry, he will be happy if he can just discredit his testimony.

As mentioned earlier, some misunderstandings can be easily avoided. Male Christians, in particular,

should be very careful to avoid the *appearance* of inappropriate behavior with females. The moral failures of prominent TV evangelists have shown the world that Christian leaders are very capable of immorality. If a person spreads a rumor that a Christian leader has committed adultery, the public, justifiably, may say, “Well, that possible. He wouldn’t be the first preacher to do it.” For this very reason, Billy Graham has made it a policy never to meet with a female alone.

John Bunyon, the 17th century author of *Pilgrim’s Progress* and three dozen other books, fell victim to this type of misunderstanding. A church member asked John to take a young woman, Agnus Bomount, to a revival meeting. John refused because he said it would be inappropriate. After the person said, “Are you going to deny this girl the opportunity of hearing the gospel?” John reluctantly agreed to take her. They rode horseback together to the revival meeting. Shortly afterwards rumors began to fly. When her father died a sudden and premature death, accusations arose that they had poisoned him because he objected to their relationship. She was even charged with murder. Although she was acquitted, John’s effectiveness in that region was greatly diminished.



Normally we would expect non-Christians to be the primary source of most misunderstandings. However, Christians have also been guilty of deliberately lying about other Christians in order to discredit them. Many church splits bear witness of this.

Most Christians are familiar with the tragic story that inspired Horatio Spafford to pen the encouraging words to the song, *It is Well with My Soul*. Many Christians, however, are not aware of what happened to him in the following years. After the shipwreck that claimed the lives of his four children, friends at church secretly felt this calamity was a judgment of God for parental sins. I call this *Job’s friends syndrome*. The church, with a strong puritan background, viewed calamities the same way Job’s friends did; God does not punish the righteous.

A couple years later, after the birth of their son, little Horatio, they began to rebuild their lives. Then tragedy struck again. Seven years after the *SS Ville du Harve* disaster shattered their lives, their only son died of scarlet fever. Once again questions of parental sins were raised. A close family friend, disturbed that Spaffords would dare to question God, offered to adopt their only living child. The Spaffords were deeply hurt. Later, conflicts arose and the Spaffords were asked to leave the church. There’s a lot of truth in the phrase, “The Christian army is the only army that kills it’s wounded.”

Over the past few decades there have been several Christians leaders involved in what I call “Holy Wars.” In his magazine, one leader will accuse another leader of being “liberal” because the doctrine of the second leader doesn’t completely line up with his. The second leader then retaliates in his own magazine. These wars continue for years. There was one leader who rose above this. Although he had been heavily condemned, I have never once seen him condemn his accusers in his magazine. God will be the judge of whether he deserved to be condemned. Nevertheless, I feel his response to the accusations has brought glory to God.

Some of the greatest Christian men and women in history were attacked more by Christians than by non-Christians. Although I would never dare to group myself with these dynamic people, I have run across similar problems. I was blessed at a previous job with the opportunity of leading two co-workers to Christ. This joyful experience quickly turned sour as a result of a fellow Christian co-worker. He was jealous. He had invested a great deal of time witnessing to these people, but I was the one who got the “credit.” A few things then happened. First, he tried to discredit me with the new converts. Second, he tried to get me fired. Third, he started to spread rumors among the local pastors that I was denying the inspiration of the Bible.

There was another occasion where something similar to this happened. A friend and I were working with youth in the community and the parents of one of the youth wanted to discredit us. They went to their pastor and asked to have us “investigated.” Many of their “findings” were humorous while others were profoundly revolting. Besides “finding” us liberal, etc., they also concluded my friend and I were homosexual lovers. Things got so out of hand we decided to meet this problem head on. We approached the parents about this investigation. After initially denying there even was an investigation, they finally admitted they had initiated it. When we asked them to substantiate their conclusions, they recanted. I find it very troubling that Christian leaders would conduct themselves in such a manner.

I recently heard about a single female missionary who had been very successful in tribal work. Unfortunately, I don’t remember her name or mission board. Since this woman was very talented, the head of the mission said to her, “You have been blessed with two great qualities: Energy and creativity. Unfortunately, these great qualities combined together often produce misunderstandings and resentment among other believers. Make it a point to pray for patience and understanding.” I think that is very sound advice.

What lessons do we learn from all of these examples? First, use common sense to avoid unnecessary trouble. Second, realize and accept the fact that at one time or another you will be misunderstood. This fact of life is unavoidable. Therefore, when it happens, be sure to fully commit it to God.

Section 2: Friendship Evangelism

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The Missile Principle



Chapter: 9.01

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It is postwar (WWII) Germany and a bulldozer is pushing its way through the rubble of a collapsed building. Suddenly, a massive explosion hurls the bulldozer backwards. The driver escapes serious injuries but is shaken. Others have not been so fortunate.

Germany was trying to rebuild its battered cities. Near the end of the war Germany started, the U.S. and England had dropped thousands of bombs, some of which failed to explode. These bombs remained hidden in the rubble until their unmarked graves were disturbed.

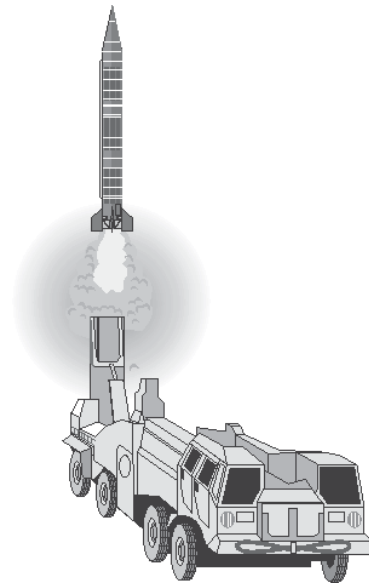
There were two phases involved in the bombing of Germany, the *bomb itself* and the *delivery* of that bomb. The combination of these two parts makes up what is called the “missile principle.” Our modern-day missiles, such as the ones used in the Persian Gulf War, were derived from this principle. Each missile has a payload (the warhead) and a delivery system (the rocket engine and guidance system). Both parts must be effective and accurate. A failure in either part will result in a failure of the mission. In the air raids over Germany, there were some failures of both parts. We had planes that were shot down before they delivered the bombs, and bombs that did not explode when they hit their targets.

Although some people may not see the necessity of

it, when sharing the gospel message, we need to employ this missile principle. The “payload” is, of course, the actual gospel message, while the “delivery system” is our approach and the way we effectively earn the right to be heard. Unless both parts of the missile function properly, we have not *presented the gospel*.



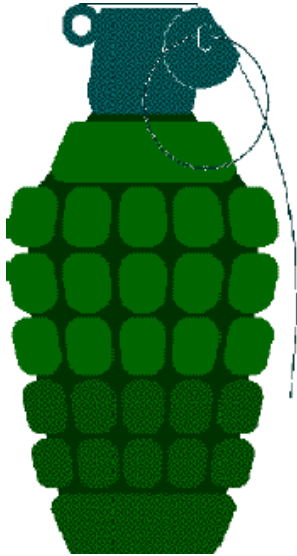
A missile has two parts: The actual bomb and a delivery system that gets the bomb to the desired location. Both parts must work correctly in order to accomplish the goal.



Likewise, presenting the gospel has two parts: The actual gospel message and the "delivery system" to get the gospel to the desired location (the person's heart).

The next few chapters have been written to help you strengthen both parts of your witness. The chapter, “*Earn the Right to be Heard*,” deals with presenting Christ in a non-pushy, inoffensive manner. The chapter, “*What Would You Say?*” will help you develop a clear and simple presentation of the gospel message.

Earn the Right to be Heard



Chapter: 9.02

The American private crawled over to his Lieutenant's tent and pulled the pin on his hand-grenade. Carefully placing a rubber band around it, he tossed it into the tent. The Lieutenant ran outside to see who had thrown it, but his adversary had slipped into the darkness of the jungle.

Unfortunately, stories like this one are all too real. The unexploded grenade was a warning to the Lieutenant. If he does not change his ways, the next time will be for real. During the unpopular Vietnam War, many West Point Lieutenants were shipped over to Vietnam immediately after graduation. Although these men had a firm grasp on the rules and regulations, some of them did not know how to lead men. To make matters worse, they had not yet developed that *sixth sense* of jungle survival. As a result, they carelessly led their men into dangerous situations where many Americans died needlessly.

Often when soldiers approached their Lieutenant to

point out something the Lieutenant had overlooked, the Lieutenant viewed the recommendation as an attempt to undermine his authority. The Lieutenant often responded with something like, "Sounds like a personal problem to me. Now, go do as you were told, and, if you don't like it, call 1-800-**TOO-BAD**." After a period of time, some of these shunned soldiers developed a distorted sense of personal survival. If the Lieutenant did not heed the hand grenade warning, he often ended up being shot during combat. "Friendly Fire" (casualties inflicted by one's own side) is an easy way to resolve life-threatening problems while in the combat zone.

In contrast to this sad scenario are the Lieutenants who earned the respect of their troops. These Lieutenants *lead* their troops, not *push* them. Their troops were willing to go anywhere for their leader. The respect they earned brought obedience and compliance.

Respect has to be earned. You cannot force someone to listen to you. They have to *want* to hear what you have to say. A person has to *want* to change before any real change will take place.



A person that we perceive as being "hardened to the gospel" may actually be receptive if approached differently.

When presenting the gospel, we should be careful

not to force our opinions on others. Our mission is to present the truth, not force others to believe it. Each person has to make his own decision. “You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.” You cannot force someone to accept your views. Although your aggressive debating tactics may allow you to win the argument, you have accomplished nothing. A person convinced against his will is of the same opinion still. You cannot force a person to make the right choice.

Calvin was already under considerable stress. Now, with the loss of his job and girlfriend, it was too much for him. He went over the edge. Calvin became very depressed, hiding in his room for weeks. His parents took him to psychiatrists and therapy groups, but with no success. He was diagnosed as schizophrenic. When asked a question, he would carry on a whole conversation with himself before answering.

Calvin’s condition began to deteriorate quickly. Unable to stop this digression, his parents decided to have him committed to a hospital. Calvin did not want to go so a couple friends and I were asked to help persuade him. Of course, Calvin found the argument of going to the hospital much more convincing when three large weight lifters spelled out the benefits.

Once admitted, Calvin was taken to a room filled with about 30 patients. Although he was sick, he was definitely out of place. These patients were totally out of it. They were grabbing imaginary objects out of the air and making funny little noises. People were in their own little world, some walking around with their heads tilted sideways and speaking incoherently

A friendship is an effective springboard for sharing the gospel. People are often more open to the gospel when you approach them as a caring friend.

Later that month we started receiving letters from

Calvin that exhibited vast improvement. A couple of months later, he was released a changed person. Since the doctors had been unsuccessful in the past, I asked Calvin what brought about the change. Calvin responded, “I appreciated all of the help you guys were offering, but I was not willing to pay the price to change. It wasn’t until I was taken to the hospital and put into the recreation room that I saw a real need to change. I realized if didn’t change, I would end up just like them. Once my heart made the decision to change, my head began to change.”

As we deal with the non-Christian, we must keep in mind that until their heart is ready they will not change. Do not become discouraged when a person’s life does not change as quickly as you think it should. It may take a while for the person to see a true need.

“Sharing the gospel” is more than saying the right words. A person has to be receptive before he will take to heart what you are saying. We have to get their attention. This usually involves earning the right to be heard. Many Christians assume a person has “heard” the gospel simply because he has stood politely as a Christian preached *at* him.

The Florida rain beat down on me as I ran into the grocery store. While I was ringing out part of the Atlantic Ocean from my shirt, a stranger, Tom, walked by and made a comment, “The antiperspirant is located in isle 5.” My laugh gave away my Michigan accent and Tom asked what a snowbird was doing down in Florida. I explained I was in the Boot Camp training phase of New Tribes Missions. Tom said, “New Transmission, I never heard of that auto repair shop.” I proceeded to explain that New Tribes Missions was not a repair shop. Rather, it is a missionary organization that specializes in reaching tribal groups who have never heard the gospel. When I finished about three minutes later, Tom replied, “Well, if I ever need any transmission work, I’ll look you guys up.”

That was a sobering and humbling experience. This solid example demonstrated to me that people enjoy talking, but very few practice listening.

Unfortunately, many Christians are not good listeners either. Ironically, these same Christians expect others to listen to them, though they are unwilling to take the time to listen to the unbeliever.

There are many lonely people in this world. Everyone has concerns and problems. Being able to talk to someone who cares is helpful and therapeutic. A college student decided he would conduct a small test. He put an ad in the paper that read “I’LL LISTEN. You do all the talking and I’ll do all the listening. Your cost is \$25 per 1/2 hour.” To his surprise, dozens of people responded. If we are willing to listen, we will be tapping into a natural resource. If we show respect and courtesy by listening, we will find others will begin to reciprocate it back to us. When we win their hearts, we earn the right to be heard. In fact, people will start asking you for your opinion. A native once said to a missionary, “You have built a bridge of love from my heart to yours and Jesus walked over.” People can tell if you care about them or just care about making another “convert.”

████████████████████

A good communicator is someone who spends more time listening than talking. Showing a person that you are interested in him will open his heart more than polished oratorical skills.

████████████████████

“Are you German?” the elderly man asked. “I have some German in me,” I said, looking rather puzzled. “I thought so,” the man said proudly. “You have strong German features. I saw you a couple hours ago and have been watching you since.” At this point the theme song from the show *Twilight Zone* started playing in the background. I was 20 years old at the time and in my third year of missionary training. This firmly built man, Albert, was once a Nazi SS storm trooper in World War II. Although it has been 30 years since the war, the ideology of the “superior race” was still burning deep in his soul. Albert proceeded to tell me how the Jewish population was destroying the economy of the prewar Europe. He explained, in intricate

detail, why it was necessary for Germany to remove this “cancer” from society. “The Jews had to be exterminated!”

During our conversation Albert asked me what brought me to the Fort Lauderdale Beach. I explained I was on spring break from school and was here visiting some friends. After learning that I was attending a Christian school, he asked me, “You don’t really believe in God?”

I responded, “Yes. In fact, I had a good talk with Him this morning.”

Tilting his head sideways, like a dog listening to a high pitch sound, Albert stared at me in total disbelief. Finally he said, “No. No, you can’t be serious!”

Seeing I was serious, Albert asked how an intelligent man like myself could possibly believe in something so absurd. After explaining the difference between “religion” and a relationship with Christ, Albert wanted to hear more. At his request, we talked for two more hours about God.

During our conversation, Albert told me how earlier that day two Christians had approached him on the street and tried witnessing to him. Albert had told them, “You obviously have mistaken me for someone who cares. You guys appear to be intelligent men, so stop giving the impression that you’re brain dead. Now, beat it.”

I learned many things from that experience. Yet, the lesson with the most impact was the realization that what we perceive as a heart “hardened to the gospel” may be *receptive* if approached differently. What we sometimes assume to be a rejection of the gospel message, is only a rejection of the way it is presented.

We should be aggressive in our witnessing, but never rude or inconsiderate. There are many styles of witnessing and each has its own place. We must realize that some of our approaches actually turn people off to Christianity. Do not assume that just

because you have blasted the gospel at someone, you were doing God a favor. If your approach turns the person off to the gospel, you are only making it more difficult for the next Christian who wants to share Christ.



A college student placed this ad in the local paper and to his surprise, he had dozens of responses.

People have an inherent need to talk about their lives. It is therapeutic for people to be able to discuss their concerns. Seldom, though, are they able to find someone interested enough to listen.

Listening is an excellent way to demonstrate that you care and are interested. It also develops an emotional tie between your heart and theirs.

If you are willing to take the time to LISTEN to those around you, you will have more opportunities to share Christ than you ever thought possible.

I do not want to give the impression that all “cold turkey” witnessing (approaching a complete

stranger) is counterproductive. Although cold turkey witnessing has a greater potential for turning non-Christians off, many people have been led to the Lord through it. Thus, be open when the Lord tells you to go to a stranger and share Christ with him.

The snow and wind burned into Karen’s skin as she fought her way down Fourth Street in New York. Crossing the busy street, she felt God leading her to speak to the policeman directing traffic at the middle of the intersection. Karen tried to brush aside this absurd notion, but the burden grew more intense. Finally, Karen did what was probably the craziest thing she had ever done. She walked to the middle of the intersection and began sharing Christ with the policeman. In front of thousands of people, the policeman began to weep. His life was falling apart and he had planned to kill himself that night. Because of Karen’s obedience, the policeman accepted Christ.

Although God uses cold-turkey (CT) witnessing, it should be motivated more by God’s *leading* than our zeal. We should focus most of our energy on aggressive “friendship evangelism” (FE). In FE, friendships are used as springboards to share the gospel. You will find people much more open when you approach them as a caring friend, rather than a religious zealot. In addition, because the person has shared with you many of his personal problems, you can help him with a variety of difficulties.

I feel it is very important to emphasize that you are not to use friendship as a means to an end. You must genuinely seek to develop true friendships with those you meet. Your concern for them must be sincere. If you are not, people will view you like the used car salesman who pretends to be friendly for the sole purpose of selling a car. You must make it a point to ask God to give you a true love for those you meet.

FE is not sitting back and witnessing only to your friends. It involves actively seeking new opportunities. CT and FE are similar in that both continually seek out new opportunities. Both often involve

denying your own desires in order to present the gospel to a lost soul. However, CT and FE are very different in several ways. CT is usually a one-time-deal, whereas FE involves building a friendship over a period of time. The biggest difference, though, is the effectiveness of this style of witnessing. First, FE removes much of the fear and intimidation associated with witnessing, making it something that any and every Christian can do. As a result, the gospel is shared more often. Second, this approach produces more openness to the gospel, thus more converts.

FE, by its very nature, is non-pushy. It is, therefore, less “offensive” to the non-Christian. The non-Christian does not feel the Christian is “after something” and because of this, he does not put up the normal mental barriers. This is the key to the success of FE. With these barriers down, the non-Christian is open to what the Christian has to say.



A native once told a missionary, "You build a bridge of love between your heart and my heart and Jesus walked over."

Mental barriers stop the heart from hearing the gospel. Reducing the mental barriers should be a high priority for the Christian. Any approach that causes a person to become defensive is counter-productive. Being argumentative seldom accomplishes anything. No matter what, do not allow the discussion to deteriorate into an emotional debate. The higher the emotions, the less receptive the person becomes. The purpose of your discussion with the non-Christian is not to prove that you are correct, but to present the truth. It is easy to let

your pride take control so that your only objective becomes winning the argument.

When discussing a topic, be careful not to put the person down with your words or the tone of your voice. Do not make fun of a person's beliefs; this is a quick way to turn him off. Mocking them by saying something like, “Are you operating with a few light bulbs burned out?” or “What color is the sky in your little world?” will only cause them to resent you and your beliefs. Sarcasm should have no part in your presentation.

As a correction officer at a prison, I deal with many tough, unsavory and sometimes violent men. Many of these guys have never developed refined communicative skill and are tactless in their approach. It does not take much for a conversation to develop into an argument, or something worse. Even with these volatile men, I have found it is possible to de-escalate most situations. There is truth in the phrase, “It takes two to tangle.” It is difficult to have an argument with someone who does not argue back. In fact, the person provoking the fight begins to look silly when everyone else remains calm. Proverbs 15:1 states, “A soft answer turneth away wrath.” Even when a person is angry, I have found that a soft, calm, yet firm, response defuses most situations. If these principles are effective in the prison environment, just think how effective they will be in eliminating arguments concerning “Christian topics.”

There are two types of FE; short-term and long-term. I use short-term with people I will probably see only once and long-term with people I can arrange to see again. I continually look for new opportunities. Whenever I go out, I make it a point to be friendly and I regularly strike up conversations with people I meet. Some conversations last only minutes, while others may last hours. A friendship will start with some of these people, then arrangements can be made to meet them again. After several talks, the non-Christian's heart is prepared and open to the presentation of the gospel.

Early in the *initial* conversation the person begins

to see I am a good listener and truly care. This opens many new doors. I ask many questions regarding comments they have made. Though they are doing most of the talking, I am controlling the conversation. The *direction* of the conversation is controlled by the questions I ask. These questions allow them to express their feelings on a variety of subjects. As the conversation progresses, they begin to open up even more and express personal concerns. Listening carefully as they open up provides a wealth of information. I watch for facial expressions, changes in their voice or other clues of problem spots. Then I say something like, “I noticed that you cringed when you were talking about your brother, is that a sore spot?” They often respond with, “Yes, he’s dying of cancer.” or “Yes, we haven’t gotten along since he wrecked my new car.” Pursuing these issues allows the person to share his heart with you.

After the conversation is over, the person will often say, “I really enjoyed this conversation. I’ve told you things that I’ve never told anyone before. I can’t believe it, I just met you. We ought to do this again sometime.” At this point, I am free to arrange to meet him again for coffee in the near future.

During the following meetings, I direct the conversation to more sore spots and other areas involving church or God. I have found that if you talk to a person long enough, the subject of church, death, or God will come up. Since these subjects arise through natural conversation, the person does not feel defensive and thus, can talk freely about them.

When death becomes the topic of conversation, I control the outcome with questions like “You mentioned that your friend had cancer, is he afraid of dying? What are his feelings about heaven or hell?” Church is another hot topic, usually used with negative connotations. “My neighbor goes to church, but he’s the biggest hypocrite around.” I usually take the lead with questions about what church the neighbor goes to or what they feel is the purpose of church or religion.

Once the conversation is started, I can interject the

question, “Do you think your friend knows for sure he’s going to Heaven?” This often causes them to ask me if I think it is possible. “Yes, beyond any shadow of doubt, I know for sure I am going to Heaven.” I put out enough bait to stir their interest, and yet, I resist the temptation to give a full explanation. They will usually ask for more information, thus, it appears that this conversation about God is their idea.

Most non-Christians assume that a person’s eternal destiny is based on how good or bad they live, thus, no one can know for certain that they are going to Heaven. Therefore, when I mention I have a “contract” with God that guarantees I am going to Heaven, people become curious. I say something like, “Just as you have a contract written in black and white that says the car you bought is yours, I have a contract with God that says I am going to Heaven.” Once again I wait and let their curiosity prompt them to ask for more of an explanation. I then explain how the Bible clearly shows the way a person can go to Heaven. We do not have to “hope” we are going to Heaven. The Bible states in “black and white” what is necessary, we can know for sure.

As I mentioned earlier, long-term FE may take days or weeks. Short-term FE condenses the process into a couple hours. Future opportunities to see the person and the Lord’s prompting are the primary factors in determining which style should be used.

What Would You Say?



Chapter: 9.03

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Driving down a lonely back road, you see a car that has recently smashed into a tree. You rush over to the pile of crumpled metal and find a badly injured man pinned in the wreckage. After trying unsuccessfully to free the man, he says to you, “In an hour, I’ll be dead and I’m not ready. I’ll probably go to hell and I don’t know how to avoid it. Do you know what I must do to go to Heaven?”

What would you say? Would you be able to explain the gospel in a *simple* and *concise* way so that it could be easily understood? Remember, you cannot tell him to go and talk to your pastor. You do not have time to go home and search your Bible or ask a friend for help. He will be dead shortly, so you must give a clear and precise presentation of the gospel now.’

Having enough knowledge to become a Christian yourself does not mean you have a clear enough understanding to explain it to someone else. Putting your thoughts into words is not always easy. You may know how to get to a certain restaurant, but that does not necessarily mean you can clearly explain to someone else how to get there. Have you ever become lost because someone gave you

unclear directions?

How prepared are you to present the gospel to others? Get alone sometime, and pretend that you are faced with this car crash situation where you must verbally explain what is needed to go to Heaven. In the past, Steve Huntoon and I have been in charge of several Bible study groups and we often gave out weekly assignments to the members. One of our assignments was to have them *write* down what they would say to the dying man in the accident. Their presentation had to be clear, simple and short enough to be read in less than five minutes. Since we were known for our difficult assignments, they were excited because this one sounded like a breeze. The next week, though, they all returned expressing how difficult they had found it. The members of the Bible study realized that although they understood the gospel enough to become Christians themselves, they were unable to explain it quickly and efficiently to others.



The previous chapter demonstrated some simple ways to open up opportunities for sharing the gospel. Now that you have an opportunity, what will you say? If you tried the car crash assignment, you may have found your presentation needs some polishing. Before you can share the gospel message clearly and simply with others, you must develop a thorough understanding of it yourself.

The presentation of the gospel can be likened to the three main body structures: The skeleton, the muscle and the skin. The skeleton is the raw

structure, the muscle gives power to the skeleton and the skin provides a pleasant appearance. In comparison, the raw *gospel message* is the skeleton. *Bible verses* provide the power for the message and the *illustrations* provide clarity and make the presentation interesting. In the next chapter we will learn how to utilize this concept in presenting the gospel.

When presenting the gospel, you must show the person he is lost before you can show him how to be saved. Of course, this is easier with some people than with others. In a medical context, the doctor must first show the patient he is sick. Next, the doctor explains how a special drug can cure him. Finally, the doctor tells him where he can obtain this drug. Applying this to Christianity, you first need to show a person he is a sinner and he will be condemned to Hell for these sins. Next, you explain to him how Jesus' dying on the cross can resolve his sin problem. Finally, you show him how he may personally accept Christ as his savior.

The following chapter has a quick two-minute presentation of the gospel. This presentation has been a useful tool in teaching Christians to witness. We encouraged the people in our witnessing class to memorize the presentation verbatim and then practice reciting it to each other. This served two purposes. First, it helped them become familiar with the gospel message. Second, it helped them overcome their "fear" of sharing Christ. Once they become confident, they would practice inserting verses at appropriate times. Next, they would add specially tailored illustrations. Finally, they start improvising as much as the situation warranted. This two-minute presentation is intended only as a tool to help Christians learn to witness. In real-life situations, it is not recommended to quote it verbatim.

The Fireman's Job



Chapter 9.04

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Pastor Jerry steps up to the podium and says he has a skit to do and needs five volunteers. After the volunteers make it to the platform, he says, "You guys are all firemen and part of the Berry County Fire Department. If we ever have a fire around here, we are counting on you guys to protect us by putting out the fire."

Putting his hand into his pocket, Pastor Jerry pulls out 5 tin badges. After handing them their badges, he says, "Now, I'm going to assign you guys extra tasks to perform in-between fires." Tossing an apron to the first volunteer, he says, "You're going to help out as the cook." Tossing a towel to the second, he says, "You're going to wash the truck." Tossing some gloves to the third, he says, "You're

going to clean the firehouse." Tossing a wrench to the fourth, he says, "You're going to maintain the equipment." Tossing a can of dog food to the fifth, he says, "You're going to feed the Dalmatian."

He then says, "To make sure there isn't any misunderstandings, I want each of you to tell me your job."

The first volunteer says, "My job is to cook."

The second volunteer says, "My job is to wash the fire truck."

The third volunteer says, "My job is to clean the firehouse."

The fourth volunteer says, "My job is to maintain the equipment."

The fifth volunteer says, "My job is to feed Spot."

Looking at the volunteers, Pastor Jerry says, "You're all wrong." The responsibilities you listed are not your jobs. You're firemen. Your job is fighting fires. Yes, it is true I gave you other assignments, but your primary responsibility is still fighting fires."

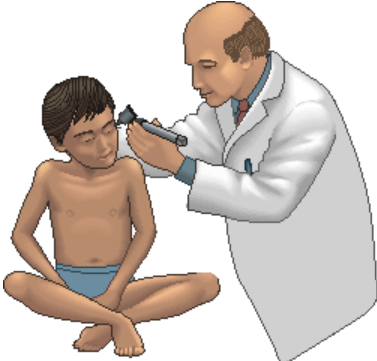
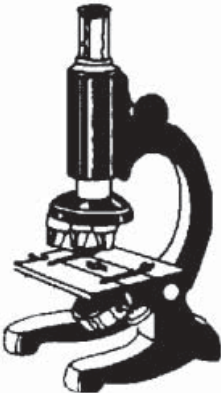

Turning around, Pastor Jerry says to his congregation, "Obviously, there was some confusion over what their jobs are. Many Christians have the same problem. Our primary job here on earth is to be fishers of men. We may have other duties like being accountants, policemen, bankers, or even pastors. Nevertheless, our primary duty is to bring others to Christ. Don't let your other tasks distract you from your primary job."

You must show the Need before you can Provide the Solution

Chapter: 9.05

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A person must first be shown he is sick and needs help before he will seek treatment. This is a three-phase process. First, show the need. Second, show the solution. Finally, show the personal application of the solution. Listed below is an example of what a doctor would do with a patient.

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
<p>A doctor examines a patient and he is diagnosed as having a serious disease. (Phase 1)</p>  An illustration of a doctor in a white lab coat examining a young boy. The boy is sitting on the floor, and the doctor is leaning over him, using a stethoscope to listen to his chest.	<p>The doctor then tells the patient about a treatment that can cure the disease. (Phase 2)</p>  A black and white illustration of a compound microscope, showing the eyepiece, objective lenses, stage, and base.	<p>Finally, the patient is told what he must do to personally apply this treatment. (Phase 3)</p>  A photograph showing a spoon with a red liquid being poured from a glass. The liquid is thick and has a granular texture, possibly representing a medicine or a specific treatment.

Presenting the Gospel

Chapter: 9.06

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Many Christians have never developed a clear understanding of the basic points needed to lead a person to Christ. Instead of addressing the primary issues of salvation, they usually ramble on covering many unrelated subjects. This lack of direction makes it difficult for the non-Christian to obtain a clear understanding of the gospel.

The process of developing this clear understanding of the salvation message can be simplified if the message is broken down into easy-to-understand units. The three units are: A basic outline, memory verses and illustrations. This process is called the "Outline" approach and it is the framework upon which a simple or complex gospel presentation can be built.

Every person we share the gospel with has different needs and varying levels of understanding. One person may not need to be convinced he is a sinner and going to hell. Another person, however, may need a greater explanation in this area. The "Outline" approach gives the Christian great flexibility in tailoring the message to fit each person's needs.

There are many good witnessing programs available that can teach Christians how to share the gospel message. Of course, one witnessing style obviously does not fit everyone. Each person has to find a style that fits their personality and comfort level. This "Outline" approach may not be the best style for you, but it has helped many Christians overcome their fear of witnessing.

As I mentioned before, the "Outline" approach is made up of three units. These three units can be compared to the three main structures of the human body. Listed below are the three structures.



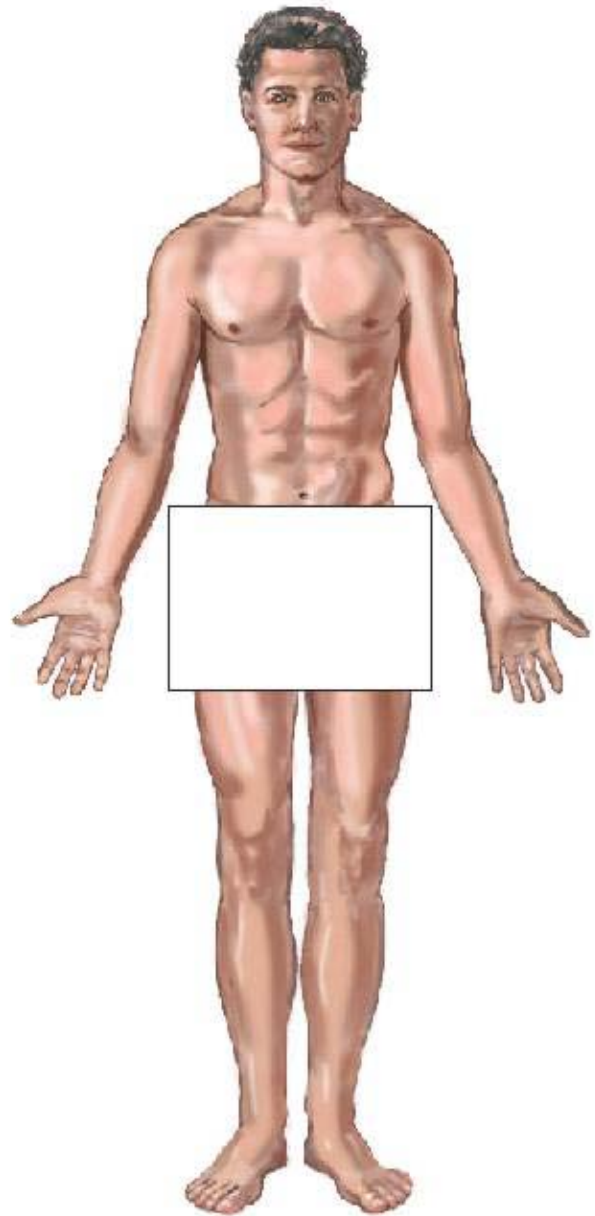
**Skeleton
(Gospel Message)**

The skeleton is the main structure on which everything is built. Likewise, the basic gospel message is the main structure. Everything else in the presentation is added only to complement it.



Muscle
(Bible Verses)

The Muscle gives power to the skeleton. Likewise, Bible verses provide the power and authority of the gospel message.



Skin
(Illustrations)

The skin provides a pleasant and uniform appearance to the body. Likewise, illustrations help make the presentation interesting and more easily understood.

Skeleton: The Frame that Everything is Built Upon

[Part ONE of Presenting the Gospel]



Chapter: 9.07

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As stated earlier, the skeleton is what everything is built upon. In this situation, the skeleton is a simple quick presentation of the gospel. Listed below is a quick two-minute outline that many people have used to learn how to witness.

To get the most out of this chapter, the Christian should memorize the two-minute outline and practice saying it word-for-word to other Christians. This rehearsal ingrains the outline into the Christian's thinking. Once the Christian feels comfortable with the outline presentation, he may build upon it by adding memory verses and illustrations. Versatility is dependent upon the amount of practice.

It should be noted the purpose of rehearsing the outline word-for-word is only to help the Christian learn the presentation. It is not practical or recommended to quote it verbatim in real-life witnessing. This outline is only provided as a tool to get a person started.

The outline is broken down into the three phases mentioned earlier in the chapter You must show the Need before you Provide the Solution. When you memorize this outline, think of it as three parts. This will help you build upon it later on. As a reminder, I will review the three phases at the end of the chapter.

**Following are the
The 3 Phases of the "Outline"**

Phase 1

God's original intent for mankind was to have a personal and loving relationship with us. This relationship was destroyed when sin separated us from God. Sin not only placed a barrier between God and us, it also gave us a death sentence. Sin has to be punished and the punishment is eternal damnation in Hell. Not sinning or living a good life will not keep a person from going to Hell. Contrary to what some people think, God cannot ignore sin. God's holy and righteous nature requires that every sin must be punished to the fullest extent.

Phase 2

Despite our rebelling against God, He still loves us and wants us to return to Him. This is impossible, though, because this barrier of sin is still separating us. God had to find a lawful way to remove this barrier without violating His righteous nature. This could only be accomplished by paying the penalty of sin, which is what happened when Jesus was on the cross. He was punished as though He had committed each of our sins. After He was punished, Jesus died and then rose from the dead. Now, not only can God satisfy His desire to forgive us, He can satisfy His righteous nature.

Phase 3

Just because this barrier of sin had been removed does not mean a person will automatically go to Heaven. God will not force Himself on anyone. Before a person can receive the pardon God is offering, he must acknowledge two things. First, he is a sinner and going to Hell, and he is not worthy of going to Heaven. Second, our salvation is based totally on what Jesus did on the cross and not on any of our good works. If, and only if, we are willing to personally accept these conditions of God's pardon, will we go to Heaven.

**Following is a
review of the three phases**

Phase 1

A person must first realize he is a sinner and on his way to Hell. In other words:

- Show them that they are sinners and going to Hell.
- Show them that they cannot work their way to Heaven.

Phase 2

The person must be shown how the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross can pay his penalty of sin. In other words:

- Show them that Jesus is the way to Heaven
- Show them what He has done for us.

Phase 3

The person must be shown how he can personally apply this salvation to his life. In other words:

- Show them how to apply what God has done.

Muscles: The Power of Memory Verses

[Part TWO of Presenting the Gospel]

Chapter: 9.08

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Listed below are the memory verses to use with the "outline." The first table shows which phase the verses are to be used and the next table the verses in an easy to memorize format (KJV). The verses with an "*" are the ones to be memorized first.



Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
<p>To show them that they are sinners and going to Hell ...</p> <p>Romans 3:23 * Romans 6:23 * Psalms 53:3b * Ecclesiastes 7:20 * Isaiah 64:6 Psalms 39:5b Revelation 20:15 Jeremiah 17:9</p> <p>... and that they cannot work their way to Heaven.</p> <p>Romans 3:20 * Titus 3:5a * Ephesians 2:8,9 * Romans 4:5 Proverbs 14:12 Galatians 2:16a,c</p>	<p>To show them that Jesus is the way to Heaven ...</p> <p>John 14:6 * Acts 4:12 * 1 John 5:12 * 1 Timothy 2:5 John 3:16</p> <p>... and what He has done for us.</p> <p>1 Timothy 2:6a * 1 Peter 3:18a * Romans 5:8 * Hebrew 2:9 Isaiah 53:5a John 1:29</p>	<p>To show them how to apply what God has done.</p> <p>Romans 10:13 * John 1:12 * 1 John 1:9 Revelation 3:20</p>

Memory Verses

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."

Romans 6:23 "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Psalms 53:3b "...there is none that doeth good, no, not one."

Ecclesiastes 7:20 "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."

Isaiah 64:6 "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away."

Psalms 39:5b "...verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity."

Revelation 20:15 "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?"

Romans 3:20 "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin."

Titus 3:5a "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us..."

Ephesians 2:8,9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast."

Romans 4:5 "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."

Proverbs 14:12 "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Galatians 2:16a,c "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ ... for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified."

John 14:6 "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

Acts 4:12 "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

1 John 5:12 "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

1 Timothy 2:5 "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

1 Timothy 2:6a "Who gave himself a ransom for all"

1 Peter 3:18a "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God"

Romans 5:8 "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Hebrews 2:9 "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

Memory Verses Continued

Isaiah 53:5 "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."

John 1:29 "The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

Romans 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

John 1:12 "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

1 John 1:9 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

Revelation 3:20 "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Skin: The Beauty of Illustrations

[Part THREE of Presenting the Gospel]

Chapter: 9.09

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Listed below are the illustrations to be used with the "Outline." The first table gives you a brief description of each illustration and the second table the actual illustration. One again, note that each illustration is designed to work with a particular phase.



Phase 1	Cliff	To show that being "close" to God's standard will not get us into Heaven.
	Accident	To show that living a good life will not make up for previous sins.
	Unfair Judge	To show that God cannot ignore our sins.
Phase 2	Judge's daughter	To show how God can forgive us and still not violate His righteous nature.
	Punishment	To show why Jesus was punished in our place.
Phase 3	Pardon	To show that just knowing Jesus died for our sins is not enough to let us into Heaven.

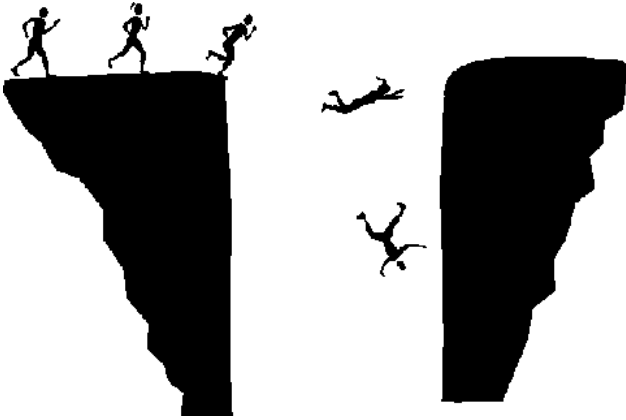


ILLUSTRATION: Cliff

PURPOSE: To show that being "close" to God's standard will not get us into Heaven.

Five explorers were hiking through the jungles of Peru in hopes of finding the lost treasure of an ancient Aztec civilization. One day as they approached their destination, they found a deep canyon that had to be crossed. Although it was 20 feet across, their passion for unlimited wealth intoxicated their judgement. One by one, they tried jumping to the other side. The first two explorers jumped about 10 feet and fell to their death. The next two jumped about 15 feet, also falling to their death. The fifth jumped 18 feet. Although the fifth explorer jumped further than the other four, the end result was the same, death. Being closer did not help the fifth hiker.

Keeping most of God's standards will not help a person into Heaven. Being close does not count. If you have not kept all of God's standards perfectly, you are going to Hell.



ILLUSTRATION: Accident

PURPOSE: To show that living a good life will not make up for previous sins.

Kathy was late for work again. In her haste, she backed into another car. Obviously, Kathy was upset and she vowed to never rush or drive carelessly again. Assuming that Kathy is able to maintain this vow for 5 or even 20 years, it still would not remove the damage from her car. Driving carefully does not undo the damage done in a previous accident.

Likewise, if a person has become tired of sin and vowed to never sin again, it will not undo the damage brought on by his previous sins. Living a good and sinless life does not take away sin. Our faith in Jesus Christ is the only way our sins can be removed.



ILLUSTRATION: Unfair Judge

PURPOSE: To show that God cannot ignore our sins.

The Thanksgiving parade was in full swing when Carl walked up to the Governor, pulled out his gun and shot him. The Governor's bodyguards quickly apprehended Carl and hauled him off to jail. When Carl went to court, the judge said, "Carl, there is no doubt that you committed this crime. There were hundreds of eyewitnesses, not to mention those who saw it on TV. I realize, though, that anyone can wake up on the wrong side of the bed and have a bad day. If you promise not to do this again, I'll let you go with only a warning." Would this judge be just and right for doing this? Of course not! It is the judge's responsibility to uphold the law.

Likewise, God would not be a just and righteous judge if he ignored our sins. His nature demands that He punish every sin. We will all one day have to stand before God's judgment seat and give an account for every sin.



ILLUSTRATION: Judge's Daughter

PURPOSE: To show how God can forgive us and still not violate His righteous nature.

Everyone's eyes were upon the judge. He looked up and slowly pronounced the judgment. "Bonnie Jean, I find you guilty and hereby fine you the maximum possible: \$10,000. The courtroom gasped in astonishment. The judge then got up, took off his robe and walked to the front of the bench. Taking out his checkbook, he wrote a check for the full amount. Turning to the courtroom, the judge said, "This is my daughter and even though I love her, I cannot overlook what she has done. Her actions still must be punished."

Even though God loves us, He cannot overlook the fact that sin had been committed. The penalty for this sin must be paid in full. This is what happened when Jesus was on the cross. He took the full punishment for our sins. If we personally accept this remedy for our sins, we will not be required to pay the penalty ourselves.



ILLUSTRATION: Punishment

PURPOSE: To show why Jesus was punished in our place.

Picture two guys standing side by side. The first person is only 4 feet tall and weighs 80 pounds, while the second person is 7 feet tall with 350 pounds of solid muscle. If an experienced boxer were to hit each of these guys in the stomach, which of the two do you think would be hurt the most? The second guy would not be affected by the punch as much because he has a greater capacity for taking that kind of punishment.

Jesus has a greater capacity to endure spiritual damnation than we have. This is why Jesus took the punishment in our place. God punished Jesus as though He had committed each of our sins. Instead of having to be damned for eternity, He bore all of the punishment during His time on the cross.



ILLUSTRATION: Pardon

PURPOSE: To show that just knowing Jesus died for our sins is not enough to let us into heaven.

The footsteps echoed off the old Gothic walls as the guard worked his way down to five block. His lantern barely gave enough light for him to see the name tag on the prisoner's door. "Henry," the guard said, "pack up your stuff, you've just been pardoned." To the guard's surprise, Henry Williams refused. He said that he had committed the crime and wanted to be punished for it. Since no one had ever refused a pardon before, a special congressional session had to be called. They decided that a pardon is not automatic; it has to be personally accepted. If it is not, the prisoner must pay for his crime as though he was never offered the pardon.

This is similar to the pardon God offers us. Although Jesus died for the sins of all the world, His pardon is not automatic. If a person does not personally accept this pardon, he will go to hell as though his sins were never forgiven.

Discussing Evolution? Keep it Simple



Chapter: 9.10

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Flying low and under the cloak of darkness, the helicopters and transport planes approached *Desert One*. The mission of *Blue Light*, an elite Pentagon antiterrorist team, was to free the 53 Americans being held hostage in Tehran by Iran's Revolutionary Guard. *Desert One* was the code name given to the first staging area of this ultra-secret mission. The Dasht-e-Kavir Desert was chosen as the refueling point because the C-130 transport planes could land on its salt flats.

Their mission had already been plagued with several serious problems. Two of the eight Sea Stallion helicopters that had left the nuclear carrier, *US Nimitz*, had been rendered inoperative. The first chopper was forced to land due to mechanical problems. The second chopper turned back because its gyroscope failed in a sandstorm. Once

on the ground at *Desert One*, other problems developed. A bus with 44 Iranian citizens stumbled across them. The passengers were held captive while the commandos shot into the engine to incapacitate the bus. Then, a gas truck and a pickup truck drove by. While trying to incapacitate these engines, the gas truck exploded and two people from the pickup escaped. The element of surprise was no longer guaranteed.

However, the nightmare was not yet over. A third chopper was found to have a severe hydraulic malfunction. Thus, the mission had to be aborted. Six choppers were needed, only five were left. Adding insult to injury, as they retreated, the prop of another helicopter sliced into one of the transport planes producing a blazing fireball. Eight brave servicemen died.

The impending investigation produced much criticism; some warranted, some not. One criticism often voiced was that the mission was too complex, leaving little tolerance for error. Some of the planners conceded that this complex mission violated an old Army rule called *KISS* (Keep It Simple, Stupid). The simpler the concept, the more understandable it is and easier to execute. (Source: US News and W.R., May 5, 1980.)

This principle of "keeping it simple" is important in diffusing the issue of evolution as well. For most lay-Christians, a simple approach is the best. This simple approach will be easier for you to explain and easier for the evolutionist to comprehend.

There are several different ways to kill a tree. It can be killed by cutting off all the branches or by cutting through the trunk at ground level. Both approaches will work, but the first is much more complex and requires more time and energy. Likewise, a person can be shown the errors of evolution either through a simple or a complex approach. The errors of evolution can be shown by either disproving the main premise of the theory itself (the trunk of the tree) or by disproving each of its MANY details (the branches).

There are three prominent problems with trying to disprove the very technical *details* of evolution. First, since the theory of evolution is so complex, it is easy to be sidetracked with time-consuming topics that are seldom profitable or convincing. Second, to disprove adequately the theory of evolution, many complex issues must be covered systematically. Since a lack of time and interest usually makes this difficult, many issues are left unresolved. As a result, the evolutionist does not see a need to change his view. Third, since it is difficult to be an *expert* on the many complex issues, a knowledgeable evolutionist can “snow” or “push around” the uninformed Christian with many confusing facts. Since the Christian cannot refute that for which he is unfamiliar, the discussion is left a draw.

“Keep it simple” applies mainly to the Christians who are not well-versed in the study of evolution. There are many creation researchers who are effective in refuting evolution on a deep and more technical level. These people, though, have spent much of their lives researching the material. They are familiar with many complicated issues and can hold their own with knowledgeable evolutionists. The intent of this chapter is not to provide the Christian with an *in-depth* understanding of the errors of evolution; several books would be needed to accomplish that. This chapter was written to provide the lay-Christian with some basic tools to help them avoid being lured into fruitless arguments that would sidetrack them from presenting the gospel.

Often, it is not necessary to go through the complicated process of proving humans did not evolve from lower life-forms. Generally, all that is needed is to show that matter, on any level, cannot advance on its own. The easiest way of doing this is to look at the very first stage of evolution. If evolution cannot get beyond the first stage, there is no need to disprove the following stages.

I spent hours making precise measurements of my bathroom to cut the new carpet. I drew my lines and carefully made each cut. When I finished, I had

a masterpiece. I had even impressed myself! However, when I went to lay the carpet down, I found one small problem. I drew the lines on the wrong side of the carpet resulting in a mirror image. I must have checked my brain in at the door when I started working on the carpet. Although my carpet had some very impressive and complicated measurements, it was still wrong. It was worthless.

The accumulation of many complicated and impressive measurements can produce the illusion of authenticity. Numerous measurements, in and of themselves, do not prove that something is right, it only proves that numerous hours have been spent making measurements. William Shanks, a famous mathematician, spent most of his life trying to calculate the elusive decimal value of the geometrical *Pi* (3.14 ...). In 1874, he achieved a new record that lasted for 73 years. Unfortunately though, it was later discovered Shanks made an error in his math, rendering many years of his work worthless. (Source: *History of Pi*, 1989)

In case you are interested in putting the current record in your *Who Cares Book*, *Pi* can now be expressed to 1,011,196,691 decimal points. If this number were to be printed, it would produce a stack of computer paper 125 feet high. This number is also available on 2000 pieces of microfiche. So, if you have been thinking about ordering a copy for yourself or your college-bound student, be prepared to pay extra for shipping. The collective weight of these 2000 pieces is 100 pounds. (Source: *Discover*, January, 1990)

It only takes one fundamental flaw to make any work worthless. Although evolutionists have accumulated millions of complicated and impressive measurements that give the illusion of authenticity, the theory of evolution is still wrong. The theory is built upon a false foundation, thereby rendering most of these complicated measurements worthless. We will focus our attention on this false foundation.

The theory of evolution, of course, is the idea that matter can spontaneously (on its own) become more complex and useful. This theory, though, is

clearly contrary to all known science. In fact, one of the most fundamental laws of science, the *2nd Law of Thermodynamics*, clearly refutes this. Basically, this law says that matter naturally moves toward a state that is less complex and useful. Matter will never become more complex and organized on its own. (Source: *Encyclopedia America*, 1988)

The universe is running down and eventually will “die.” This “death” means there will be nothing more in the universe to deteriorate. Nothing will be functioning. Never again will there be any movement or activity in the universe. (Source: *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 1988)

Although schools currently teach the theory of evolution as one continuous process, it is actually made up of two main components: The *evolution of the universe* and the *evolution of life*. In the 1800s, not much attention was given to the origin of the universe. The evolutionists had the luxury of saying the universe had always been in existence and no one could *prove* otherwise. Since the universe had always been in existence, there was no need for a “creator God.”

The only thing the evolutionists had to concern themselves with was to convince the general public that life could actually evolve out of a pool of chemicals and then advance into more complex creatures. This really wasn't that difficult of a task for two reasons. First, the evolutionists showed many animals that were quite similar in appearance, but yet, were obviously different creatures. These similarities in appearances were presented as *proof* that gradual evolutionary changes are taking place.

The second reason people have been easily swayed toward evolution is “nature” itself appears to have a propensity toward creating life. Nature is often viewed as this mysterious force which struggles to produce life out of bareness. When you listen to science documentaries, they talk about nature as if it has a personality and a will. They talk about nature like it is some type of a mystical person.

This misconception is reinforced when people see areas that have been totally destroyed by volcanoes, fires or bombs, and yet plant life still finds a way to spring up. People think to themselves, “If nature struggles so hard to bring forth life in these desolate areas, then nature has the will and ability to produce life out of a pool of chemicals.” It is important to note the only reason these devastated areas are capable of producing “new life” is because seeds (which already exist) are being spread all over the world via wind, storms, and bird droppings.

Later, in the 1900s, when the second law of thermodynamics became accepted as one of the most fundamental laws of physics, the evolutionists had a problem. They no longer had the luxury of being able to say the universe had always been in existence. The fact that the universe is deteriorating and will eventually die, means it could not always have been in existence. It *had* to have had a beginning. Therefore, they came up with the “Big Bang” theory to explain away the need for a Creator God.

I would like to point out there is absolutely no evidence supporting the possibility of the Big Bang. In fact, the books of many leading evolutionists openly admit they believe the Big Bang is not possible, but since this theory is all they have, they have decided to stay with it.

The science used by the evolutionists is bad science. You cannot selectively ignore evidence that happens to contradict your beliefs. If I wanted to, I could say the universe came into existence because a gigantic chicken sneezed. Incredibly, I would have just as much evidence to support my claim as the evolutionists do to support their claim of the Big Bang. All I can say is if the scientists at NASA blatantly ignored basic laws of physics and falsified their research the same way the evolutionists do, we would never have made it to the moon. In fact, we would have never even made it into outer space.

I am not going to try to disprove the “Big Bang” theory. It should be obvious a chaotic and violent explosion cannot produce something more complex

and organized than it's original state. In fact, the laws of thermodynamics clearly state the more intense and powerful an explosion, the faster all objects in its proximity will deteriorate. *If* there was any organized structure before the so-called Big Bang, it would have been torn apart by the explosion.

The best way to approach the issue of evolution is to discuss the universe in its *original* state. The very fact evolutionists deny the existence of God forces them to concede that *everything* in the universe started out in its simplest and most unorganized state. To believe otherwise would mean there was an "organizer." This, of course, is something the evolutionists would never admit.

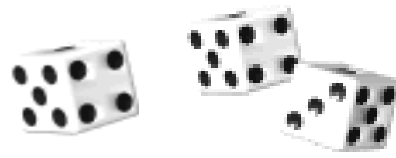
When something is in its simplest and most unorganized state, it is defined as being "dead." As mentioned earlier, the laws of physics clearly dictates there will *never* be any movement or activity when something is in this state. Therefore, if there is no activity or movement, there can never be any evolution. If there was no activity, there was nothing that could even trigger the Big Bang.

Evolutionists try to sidestep this impossibility by saying *time* and *chance* can make anything possible. They feel that increasing the number of chances always increases the possibility of an event occurring. They point to dice as an example. If you roll a dice enough times, you will eventually roll a "6." Therefore, they reason, even though there is only a "1 in 10 billion" chance of the first step of evolution occurring, it will eventually happen.

However, before there can be a *chance* of an occurrence, there first has to be the *potential*. As with the example of the dice, the dice must have a "6" on it before there is the potential of a "6" being rolled. What would happen if there was no "6" on the dice? You would never roll a "6." No matter how often you rolled the dice, a "6" would never come up. There is not even a 1 in 10 billion chance that a "6" would turn up. There is no chance!

Likewise, before we can say there is a *chance* that

evolution will take place, there first has to be the *potential* for it. As already discussed, the universe had no movement or activity, therefore there is no potential!



Evolutionists say given enough time and chances, anything is possible. They point to a dice as an example. If you roll a dice enough times, you will eventually roll a "6."

Before there can be the chance of an occurrence, there first must be the potential. If there was no "6" on the dice, it would not matter how many times you rolled the dice, it would NEVER turn up "6."

Likewise, there is no potential for evolution, thus there is no chance that it will occur.

Here is another question for the evolutionists. They say the universe started as a mass of unorganized matter/energy. Where did this come from? Just because something is unorganized does not mean it came into existence by itself. It, too, must have come from somewhere.

Why, then, do intelligent people, some of whom are scientists, believe in a theory that is so contrary to basic science? We must try to understand the evolutionist as well as refute his ideas. Evolutionists fall into two groups, those who *have* thoroughly researched the facts and those who *have not*.

The reason people still believe in evolution although they *have* researched the facts, is not because science validates evolution, but rather there is a *moral* problem in their life. They realize there are major contradictions within their theory, but they still choose to believe a lie. They do not want to accept the idea that life and the universe were "created" because this would mean there is an Almighty Creator God. The existence of a supreme being mandates moral accountability for their *actions*. These evolutionists cannot find God for the same reason thieves cannot find a cop; they deliberately are not looking.

The other group consists of evolutionists who *have not* thoroughly researched the facts. Generally, they do not realize that there are gapping contradictions in the basic theory of evolution. They assume what they have been taught in school and by the media is true. They are unaware they have been deliberately misled. Although they may not believe in God, their acceptance of evolution is not an attempt to avoid God.

When I am talking with a person and the subject of evolution comes up, I first try to determine the sincerity of his interest. The subject of evolution may have been brought up to sidetrack our original discussion of the gospel or it may have been a natural extension of the conversation. To determine this I ask, "If I could show you, beyond any reasonable doubt, that there is an Almighty God, would you be willing to admit His existence?" If the person says yes, I take the time to pursue the subject. If he says no, I usually say, "Well, it is obvious you are not being honest with yourself and are not using facts to substantiate your beliefs. I am not going to waste your time or mine discussing this further."

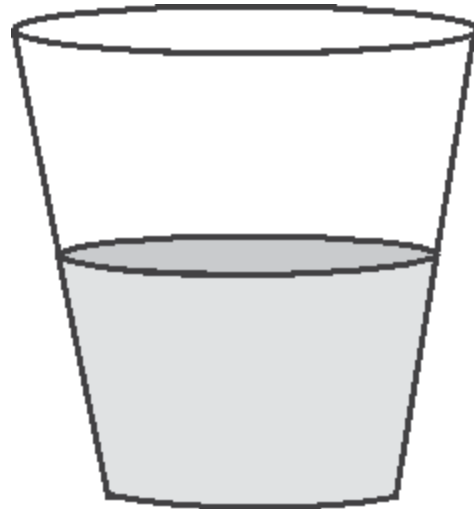
Some people have committed what is called "intellectual suicide;" a denial of facts. Intellectual suicide takes place when a person sees something is true, and yet, still refuses to believe it. It is similar to a person touring a major airport and then denying the existence of airplanes. I have found that usually if a person is unwilling to take an honest look at the facts, he will only be argumentative when involved in a discussion.

An avid evolutionist was once asked, "If you could be shown there is a God who loves and cares for you, would you be willing to accept His existence?" His response was "No. I like being in control of my life and I do not want to be under someone else's rule." Do not give up on the spiritual destiny of an evolutionist such as this. Pray for him and seek new opportunities to share the gospel with him, but do not waste your time with fruitless arguments.

If the universe did not evolve on its own, where did

it come from? The universe was not organized into its complex state by a natural force. It had to be built by something above the natural, by something *supernatural*. Scientific deduction demands that we arrive at this conclusion.

This supernatural creator has to be eternal and almighty. Otherwise, he too would need a creator. God Almighty is our logical choice. You may ask, "Where did God come from?" I do not know. God, by His very nature, is supernatural and, therefore, His eternal existence cannot be explained. However, science does not support evolution. In fact, it disproves the theory. Although a person may refuse to believe in a supernatural being such as God, he cannot say science disproves the existence of God.



The actual size of 20 ml of water

*If each atom in 20 ml of water were the size of a pea, they would completely cover the entire United States. to a depth of 3.7 miles. *1*

The atom is not the smallest of particles though. It is made up of protons neutrons and electrons which are made of even smaller sub-atomic particles.

*All of this shows that even the simplest life form is a complicated structure of trillions of well-placed particles (not just a few as some evolutionist would have you believe). *1 SOURCE: Precision and Design, 1986*

Addition vs. Multiplication



Chapter: 9.11

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Growth by multiplication is much more effective than growth by addition. Consider these two savings plans. In plan A, you add \$100 to your savings every day for a month. In plan B, you put a penny into your savings on the first day, double your input the second day and continue to double the input for the whole month. Which of the two plans do you think would accumulate more money? If you chose plan B you were correct. Plan A would accumulate \$3,000, but plan B results in \$10,737,418. With multiplication, you can start with something very small and quickly develop into something very large. (A chart is at the end of the chapter.)

The principles of multiplication and addition apply to world evangelism as well. There are two basic approaches of leading people to Christ. In one approach, all our energy is spent on evangelism and none on discipleship for the new believers. The other approach combines evangelism and discipleship. After a person has been led to the Lord, he is disciplined to maturity and trained to lead others to Christ.

Addition happens in churches that preach the

gospel message and weekly have new converts. Yet, once the people are saved, there is little or no spiritual follow-up. This often results in stagnation in the life of the new believer. Although the new believer is saved, he never learns to reproduce himself by leading others to Christ.

Churches that use multiplication techniques generally spend 20- 40% of their time on evangelism and the rest of the time on comprehensive discipleship. As a result, not only is the church leading people to Christ, the converts are also leading people to Christ. Each convert learns to multiply himself.

When I was 16, a friend and I led about 15 people to the Lord during the summer. I felt we were being very productive because we led so many people to the Lord. I was so busy witnessing that I spent very little time on follow-up and discipleship. The next summer I returned to find 15 backslidden Christians. I had left them as “babes in Christ,” and they remained “babes in Christ.” Not only were they making no effort to share Christ with others, they were actually turning people away from Christ because of their poor testimonies. This, of course, is the second reason it is important to spend a great deal of time on in-depth discipleship.

Often Christians feel there is not much we, as individuals, can do for the cause of Christ. One person, however, can make a tremendous difference. A believer does not need extraordinary skills or great financial resources to make a noticeable impact for the cause of Christ. All a believer has to do is be consistent in using the principles of multiplication.

Consider this possibility. A Christian leads only one person to Christ each year, but spends the rest of the year in extensive discipleship. By the end of the year, both the original Christian and his convert each lead someone else to Christ, and the process starts all over again. If this simple process continued for 25 more years there would be over 33 million new Christians. Theoretically, the world’s population of 6.3 billion people could be reached in less than 34 years.

Obviously, there will always be setbacks in this process due to death, sin and laziness, but the power of the individual remains impressive. Not only does multiplication produce a large quantity of Christians, it produces quality Christians. These believers are strong, mature and well-versed. They are more fervent in their witnessing, and their deep spiritual maturity allows them to be better mates and parents.

100,000 churches using addition cannot come close to the power of one individual using multiplication. If each church led one person to Christ a week (52 converts per church each year) it would still take over 1000 years to reach the world's present population. Discipleship is obviously the most powerful tool of evangelism. Evangelistic efforts should not focus all their attention on witnessing, but rather most efforts should be on making disciples of new converts. (A Chart is at the end of the chapter.)

I am not trying to oversimplify the task of world evangelism or to minimize the spontaneous moving of the Holy Spirit. However, even Jesus, Himself, trained His disciples in the principles of multiplication. Methods are a supplement, not a substitute for the Holy Spirit. If we want to reach the world for Christ, we must use the same principles Jesus used. We must turn our converts into disciples. We must make them "fishers of men."

Table 8.10a: Two Different Savings Plan

In plan A, you add \$100 to your savings every day for a month. In plan B, you put a penny into your savings on the first day, double your input the second day and continue to double the input for the whole month. The following chart shows the input of the two plans.

Plan A would accumulate \$3,000, but plan B results in \$10,737,418. With multiplication, you can start with something very small and quickly develop into something very large. The following chart shows the accumulations of the two savings plans.

Day #	Plan A	Plan B
1	\$100.00	\$0.01
2	\$100.00	\$0.02
3	\$100.00	\$0.04
4	\$100.00	\$0.08
5	\$100.00	\$0.16
6	\$100.00	\$0.32
7	\$100.00	\$0.64
8	\$100.00	\$1.28
9	\$100.00	\$2.56
10	\$100.00	\$5.12
11	\$100.00	\$10.24
12	\$100.00	\$20.48
13	\$100.00	\$40.96
14	\$100.00	\$81.92
15	\$100.00	\$163.84
16	\$100.00	\$327.68
17	\$100.00	\$655.36
18	\$100.00	\$1,310.72
19	\$100.00	\$2,621.44
20	\$100.00	\$5,242.88
21	\$100.00	\$10,485.76
22	\$100.00	\$20,971.52
23	\$100.00	\$41,943.04
24	\$100.00	\$83,886.08
25	\$100.00	\$167,772.16
26	\$100.00	\$335,544.32
27	\$100.00	\$671,088.64
28	\$100.00	\$1,342,177.28
29	\$100.00	\$2,684,354.56
30	\$100.00	\$5,368,709.12

Day #	Plan A	Plan B
1	\$100.00	\$0.01
2	\$200.00	\$0.03
3	\$300.00	\$0.07
4	\$400.00	\$0.15
5	\$500.00	\$0.31
6	\$600.00	\$0.63
7	\$700.00	\$1.27
8	\$800.00	\$2.55
9	\$900.00	\$5.11
10	\$1,000.00	\$10.23
11	\$1,100.00	\$20.47
12	\$1,200.00	\$40.95
13	\$1,300.00	\$81.91
14	\$1,400.00	\$163.83
15	\$1,500.00	\$327.67
16	\$1,600.00	\$655.35
17	\$1,700.00	\$1,310.71
18	\$1,800.00	\$2,621.43
19	\$1,900.00	\$5,242.87
20	\$2,000.00	\$10,485.75
21	\$2,100.00	\$20,971.51
22	\$2,200.00	\$41,943.03
23	\$2,300.00	\$83,886.07
24	\$2,400.00	\$167,772.15
25	\$2,500.00	\$335,544.31
26	\$2,600.00	\$671,088.63
27	\$2,700.00	\$1,342,177.27
28	\$2,800.00	\$2,684,354.55
29	\$2,900.00	\$5,368,709.11
30	\$3,000.00	\$10,737,418.23

Table 8.10b : Two Different Types of Church Growth

The chart below shows how multiplication is much more powerful than addition. To demonstrate addition, we start out with 100,000 churches that will lead one new person to Christ every week. It will take 1,154 years to reach the the current world's population (6 billion).

To demonstrate multiplication, we start out with one Christian. This Christian will lead only one person to the Lord each year. The Christian will then invest a year bringing the new convert into spiritual maturity. The following year, the two Christians will each lead a person to the Lord and spend a year leading them into spiritual maturity. Every year, this doubling process continues. Using multiplication, the present world's population can be reached in less than 34 years.

Day #	Addition (# of converts)	Multiplication
1	5,200,000	1
2	10,400,000	2
3	15,600,000	4
4	20,800,000	8
5	26,000,000	16
6	31,200,000	32
7	36,400,000	64
8	41,600,000	128
9	46,800,000	256
10	52,000,000	512
11	57,200,000	1,024
12	62,400,000	2,048
13	67,600,000	4,096
14	72,800,000	8,192
15	78,000,000	16,384
16	83,200,000	32,768
17	88,400,000	65,536
18	93,600,000	131,072
19	98,800,000	262,144
20	104,000,000	524,288
21	109,200,000	1,048,576
22	114,400,000	2,097,152
23	119,600,000	4,194,304
24	124,800,000	8,388,608
25	130,000,000	16,777,216
26	135,200,000	33,554,432
27	140,400,000	67,108,864
28	145,600,000	134,217,728
29	150,800,000	268,435,456
30	156,000,000	536,870,912
31	161,200,000	1,073,741,824
32	166,400,000	2,147,483,648
33	171,600,000	,294,967,296
34	176,800,000	8,589,934,592

A Practical Example of Sharing Your Faith



Chapter: 9.12

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As I mentioned in a previous chapter, friendship evangelism involves looking for unique and effective ways to share Christ. At work, I have had many people come to me seeking financial advice. This came about for two reasons. First, I had researched financial planning in great depth for my own personal benefit. When word got around I could answer some of their questions, several people came to me for help. Second, I made it a point to be as helpful as possible in order to develop new friendships and converse on a more personal level.

Helping others to plan for retirement provided me with several opportunities to plan for eternity. It was not a discussion I forced, it was something

which developed naturally.

One day, after talking in-depth to a fellow worker about planning for retirement and eternity, I decided to write him a letter, re-explaining the plan of salvation. Later on, I had the opportunity to share the letter with others who asked for financial help.

There are two reasons I am including the letter in this book. First, I want to demonstrate how opportunities to share Christ can be developed from unusual sources. Second, the letter provides a real-life presentation of the gospel. It is an example of putting all the pieces together.

My letter to Jay

Jay,

Recently we were talking about IRA investments and planning for retirement. As discussed, it is difficult to know how much to invest for an uncertain future. If you are wise, you will live simply now so you will have enough money to retire early and comfortably. However, if you die before you retire, you won't receive any benefit from your preparations.

During our discussion I mentioned that there is another area of future preparation you should address. This area, although often neglected, is much more critical than planning for your retirement. I am, of course, talking about "eternity" which comes after death. Retirement may not come, but eternity will. Therefore, you must be prepared.

When we were discussing this, I mentioned if I were to die tonight on my way home from work, I know beyond any reasonable doubt I will be going to Heaven. The reason for my certainty is not because I am a good person or have done some great deeds for mankind. Neither of these is true. Even if they were true, it still would not make any difference.

The reason I know I'm going to Heaven is because I have a *contract* which clearly spells out this privilege. When you buy a car, you make a binding contract that shows the car belongs to you. If someone were to question your ownership, you could show them, in black and white, the car does belong to you. Likewise, God has made it possible for a person to know, with certainty, he is going to Heaven.

Before I discuss this contract, I want to lay a little groundwork. As you read the next couple questions, take some time to answer them. In fact, *write* out your answers. First, what do you think is necessary for a person to enter Heaven? Second, what do you think a person has to do in order to be condemned to Hell?

Many people feel if their good deeds outweigh their bad deeds, God will allow them into Heaven. The logic for this is quite simple. Since there are no perfect people, obviously God cannot demand perfection. And, since it is unreasonable to think God will allow an incredibly evil person to enter Heaven, it must be a comparison of our good and bad. Although this sounds reasonable, it is inaccurate.

As we discussed in our earlier conversation, it does not matter what method of salvation we think is correct. The method God has established is the only method. There are no exceptions. An example of this would be a lock on a door. There may be many people who have a "key" which looks like it will work, but unless the key unlocks the door, it is worthless. So, the question is, "What does God say is the way to Heaven?"

In the physical world, there are "universal truths." Universal truths are things that are true throughout the universe and throughout time. The laws of physics are universal truths. They are consistent and universal. It doesn't matter if you believe in them or not, they still exist. For example, even if you do not believe in gravity, if you walk off a cliff, you will fall.

I have to believe the God who created an orderly and precise universe, which is full of universal truths, also created a spiritual realm with universal truths. God

has established His requirements and we must follow them if we wish to enter Heaven. Just being sincere with your intentions is not sufficient. Sincerely believing gravity does not exist only means you will have a sincerely long fall when you walk off a high cliff. Just because a concept is currently popular does not make it correct. The historical debate on the shape of the Earth (flat or round) demonstrates the need to have one's beliefs based on *facts*.

I have come to the conclusion that the Bible contains God's method of salvation. In fact, I believe the Bible is the final authority. I have not come to this decision lightly. A great deal of research and analysis has gone into this conclusion. Using the same methods of deductions used in a court of law, a person can show that the claims of Christianity are true. Although I will not cover this information now, we can talk about it later.

I would like to emphasize you should not assume everything I say is correct. You must check the facts out for yourself. Each person is responsible for their own eternal destiny. I will show you conclusions I have come to, but you must verify them for yourself.

From this point on, I will refer to the Bible when explaining God's method of salvation. To help you verify the different points I make, I am including the references so you can look them up. I strongly recommend you take the time to read them.

The reason I am emphasizing the importance of having your beliefs based on an authority which can be substantiated is because if your belief is based on something which is not real, you're in trouble. For example, this last decade alone, thousands of people have been victimized by various con games. These cons are usually very legitimate-looking with many impressive documents. Although these investments seem sound, they are not legitimate because they do not originate from a valid authorized source.

Just as there are investment schemes that are not authentic, there are many religions which are not authentic. The main difference, of course, is that the members of a con team are trying to deceive you,

whereas the members of a religion are not. Although many of these religions have a tremendous positive impact on society, they are not authentic if they do not originate from a valid authoritative source (God). In other words, if man developed the religion over time, its method of salvation is ineffective.

When I am talking about true “religion,” I am not referring to a specific church or denomination. There are no “religions” or “denominations” in Heaven. The only people who will go to Heaven are those who follow the instructions God has laid out. This is the reason it is so important to know what *God* says about this subject.

Since I believe the Bible is our final authority, we should see what it says about Heaven and Hell. What does it say? It says sin is what separates us from God and is sending us to Hell. Although no one is perfect, a person must be perfect and sinless to enter Heaven (Matthew 5:48). Even if you have sinned only once, you are as guilty as if you were a great sinner (James 2:10). The penalty for sin is spiritual death and damnation (Romans 6:23) and since everyone has sinned, this applies to everyone (Romans 3:23, Ecclesiastes 7:20). Following are verses that say our good works are not worth much: Psalms 53:3, Isaiah 64:6, Psalms 39:5, Romans 3:20, Titus 3:5, Ephesians 2:8,9, Romans 4:5 and Galatians 2:16.

Trying hard to live a good clean life will not solve the problem. For example, let’s say you got into a fender bender because you were careless driving your dad’s new car. As a result, you became determined to never get into an accident again. Even if you successfully avoided accidents for the rest of your life, did that repair your dad’s car? No. Likewise, vowing to live a sinless life will not correct the sins you have already committed.

Here’s another example. Let’s say you are a doctor who specializes in brain surgery. One day a sewer pipe in your basement breaks and starts spraying all over some important documents you have stored there. In your attempt to save the documents, you are drenched with sewage. While you are moving the boxes, the phone rings. A girl had been severely in-

jured in a car accident and you are needed at the hospital immediately to operate on her.

Without even washing up, you rush to the hospital and into the operating room. Even though you are really needed in the operating room, do you think you will be allowed into that clean and sterile room while you are still drenched with sewage? No. Likewise, an unclean person cannot enter God’s clean and perfect home. Although God wants you to be with Him in Heaven, He cannot allow you to enter in your sinful state.

Many people say doing good works and helping others will make up for past sins. This is not true. Interestingly, though, most religions incorporate good works one way or another. Most religions recognize there is a great gulf separating us from God. They each have various methods to reach God. The problem is we are incapable of moving closer to God. If the gulf is to be eliminated, *God* must reach down to us.

In reality, religions fall into one of two groups. The first group is man reaching up to God and the second group is God reaching down to man. In my opinion, any religion that is based on man trying to bridge the gap between God and himself is doomed to failure.

What, then, will keep a person from going to Hell? There is nothing *we can do* to make up for our wrongs! Realizing this is the first step in resolving this problem. Once you realize you cannot resolve the problem yourself, you must look for help elsewhere. To illustrate this, let’s consider a person with a brain tumor who has been trying to cure his problem with aspirin. As long as he feels aspirin can cure his problem, he will not seek out any other help. He must come to the realization that his remedy is ineffective before he will seek outside intervention.

What is this “outside” solution? First, we have to realize God cannot simply ignore sin. Even the laws of physics demonstrate this. Everything in the universe has a *cause and effect* relationship. Every action has an *equal and opposite reaction*. The concept of *accountability* is the heart of the universe. It

is deeply woven throughout every law of physics.

The God who created both the physical realm and spiritual realm has instituted accountability in both realms. When we violate a spiritual law, God is *obligated* to respond. His holy and righteous nature prohibits Him from ignoring it. In fact, if He did ignore it, He would be violating His own laws.

God loves and cares for you greatly. Although *we* severed our relationship with Him, He still wants to bring about reconciliation. In order for Him to do this, He has to *completely* punish every wrong doing. If we were to be punished for our sins, we would have to be punished in Hell for eternity. The only one who is capable of receiving this intense punishment and surviving is God Himself.

This is the reason Jesus came to Earth and died on the cross. He came to be punished in our place. Although Jesus endured severe physical suffering, the spiritual punishment He took for us was the spiritual damnation He was subjected to while on the cross (1 Peter 3:18, Hebrews 2:9 and Isaiah 53:5). God the Father looked at Jesus as though Jesus had actually committed each of our sins. He was then punished for each of them. The sky darkened and Jesus cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” At that moment, God the Father had to turn His back on His own Son because of our sin.

As I mentioned earlier, the first step is to recognize we are *totally* incapable of correcting our sin problem. The second step is to understand *how* God was punished on our behalf. The third step is to personally *accept this forgiveness*. This means you must be honest with God and tell him how you feel. Tell Him you are sorry for your sins. Ask Him to forgive you; to provide you the forgiveness which is now possible because of what Jesus has done for you on the cross (John 1:12 and 1 John 1:9).

That’s it! If you were honest with God, your sins have been forgiven. You are now part of His family. You have been pardoned for all your sins, past, present and future. I would like to point out that if you do not personally accept His pardon, it is as if it does not

exist. John 3:36 and Revelations 20:15 says if a person has Jesus, he has eternal life. If he does not have Jesus, the wrath of God is on him already.

At the beginning of this letter I said I was certain I’m going to Heaven because of a “contract.” This contract is the promises clearly spelled out in the Bible. Since the Bible is of God and its contents has authority, I can point to these locations in the Bible and say, “Because of these written promises, I know my sins have been forgiven.”

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A case for Christianity



Chapter: 10.01

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With over 6,000 different religions in the world, how does one choose the correct religion? Is choosing the correct religion a random chance, such as finding a needle in a haystack, or is there a logical deductive way to find the correct method of salvation? Considering the eternal consequence, it is important to be sure of the decision you make. It only stands to reason God would provide a way for us to know what is the correct method of salvation. How, therefore, do we find this hidden truth? What method of investigation should we pursue?

There are several ground rules you should follow. For example, never assume you were raised in the correct religion. There is no guarantee your parents' religion is correct. You must make the choice for yourself. Next, as much as possible, verify everything you are being taught. Never assume something is accurate simply because a person in "authority" has said it. A few years ago the TV show, "Dinosaurs," was making fun of how people use their credentials as verification they are telling the truth. In one episode a scientist from the *We Say So Company* was making a presentation and said, "...and what I'm saying is true because I am wearing a white lab coat." Just because a

person is called an "expert" does not mean he is correct. There still are scientists and doctors who say there is no link between smoking and cancer.

The Bereans were commended in Acts 17:11 for examining the scriptures daily to see if what Paul said was true. I cannot over emphasize the importance of verifying the claims of others. Even the information provided in this book should not be taken at face value. Check it out for yourself.

When evaluating a religion, the most important item to look at is how does this religion deal with sin and its consequences. Since sin is what's separating us from God and will send us to hell, the way a religion deals with sin is extremely important.

What is God like? How can we learn about someone we can't see? Although God is an invisible spiritual being, there is still much we can learn about Him. Basically, we can use indirect analysis to evaluate things we cannot see. For example, looking at some footprints in the snow can tell you a lot about the creature who left them. Likewise, we can learn about God by looking at His creation. His "footprints" supply us a great deal of information.

As we look at nature we see an organized and well thought-out system. We see cause and effect. We see an environment where every action produces a reaction and consequences. There is an accountability system in nature, and everything has to add up. The cause and effect principle is woven so deeply into every aspect of nature, nothing gets ignored. Even our social cultures reflect this. No matter what society you look at, there is always a judgment system for "inappropriate" behavior.

There should be many similarities between the physical world and the spiritual world. Therefore, we must conclude God will hold us accountable for our actions. More important, if God's spiritual world is consistent with His physical world, God cannot *ignore* sin. When He serves as judge, He must fully meet all the requirements of His laws. If He fails to do this, He would become a trespasser



With over 6,000 different religions, how do you know which one is correct?

of His own laws.

As I mentioned earlier, the first thing you should look at in a religion is how it corrects the sin problem. Unfortunately, very few religions offer any reasonable solution for the consequences of sin. What most religions offer are superficial remedies that look “religious” but are of little value. There are many other issues you should consider when evaluating a religion. However, since this is a major study in itself, we will not go into them.

I have come to the conclusion “true Christianity” is God’s method of salvation for mankind. I use the term “true Christianity” because there are many groups which call themselves “Christians” but deny the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus as the

sole method of salvation. Many people (and religions) say although Jesus was a good man and a great teacher, He was not God. They say His teaching should be viewed with the same authority as all the other great men.

Simple logic dictates Jesus could not be “just another good man.” Either Jesus is Lord God Almighty, a liar or a lunatic. On many occasions Jesus claimed to be God. If Jesus was not God, He was either lying about it or He was so deranged He actually believed He was God. Either way this would make him a bad person and His teaching invalid.

Without going into great detail, I would like to point out a couple of facts that convinced me Jesus is the

only method of salvation. True Christianity hinges completely on the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. If you can prove Jesus did not rise from the dead, the claims of Christianity collapse.

Although the resurrection took place 2,000 years ago, it is still possible to prove, beyond a reasonable doubt, Jesus rose from the dead. Josh McDowell does an excellent job demonstrating this in his book *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*.

Historically, there is no way a person could reasonably deny the existence of the person we call Jesus Christ. There is too much secular evidence supporting His existence. Nor can a person reasonably deny Jesus' death on the cross. Finally, a person could not reasonably deny that Jesus' tomb was empty on the third day. The question that is up for discussion is *how* it became empty. Either Jesus rose from the dead or something else happened to the body.

On many occasions Jesus said that he would be killed and then would rise from the dead on the third day. His prediction was so well known, the Pharisees, after Jesus was killed, went to Pilate about their concerns. They told Pilate they were afraid the disciples would steal the body and then claim Jesus rose from the dead. As a result the tomb was sealed and Roman soldiers were assigned to guard the tomb.

Despite all these precautions, the stone was rolled away and the tomb was empty. What are the reasonable and plausible explanations for the empty tomb? Two of the most common explanations are: The disciples sneaked by the soldiers and stole the body or the disciples overpowered the soldiers and stole the body.

Josh McDowell goes into great detail on how the Roman Empire ruled with an iron fist. They had severe penalties for soldiers who fell asleep or failed to perform their duties. The penalty was often death. There was also a severe penalty for breaking a Roman seal. Josh points out the Roman soldiers were so well-trained and disciplined, the

American military has incorporated much of the Roman training into their own training.

Even if all the Roman soldiers fell asleep, thus allowing the disciples to steal the body, the disciples would have committed a major crime by breaking the Roman seal. Nowhere in any ancient writings is there any mention of the disciples being hunted down or arrested for breaking the seal. In fact, the disciples walked freely in public after the resurrection.

Reviewing the writings that were written during the time of an incident is extremely important in validating a claim. For example, let's say someone is now claiming a gunman in a theater did not shoot Abraham Lincoln, but rather an arrow killed him while he was playing golf. While this claim sounds ridiculous, how can you prove it to be false? You weren't there when it happened and none of the eyewitnesses are still alive.

Basically, you will look at the books, newspapers and letters written during that time period. If there is no reference to Lincoln being killed by an arrow at a golf course, you can reasonably conclude this was not the cause of his death. This same approach is used to determine what happened 2,000 years ago. Since there are no records of the disciples being hunted down for breaking the seal, we have to conclude they did not break the seal.

The second explanation for the empty tomb is the disciples overpowered the soldiers and stole the body. This is even less likely than the first explanation. The possibility the disciples could overpower these trained soldiers is remote. Even if they did, they would have been wanted for attacking Roman soldiers and breaking a Roman seal. Once again, there is no evidence indicating they were wanted or arrested for such crimes. Since there are no other plausible explanations for the empty tomb, I have to conclude that the predicted death and resurrection of Jesus took place.

There is another reason I have concluded the death and resurrection of Jesus is God's method of

salvation. In fact, I find this next reason even more convincing than the empty tomb. I am referring to the reason the disciples died a martyr's death. All but one of the 11 disciples died a martyr's death and the one who wasn't martyred lived a difficult life and died in exile. You may say, "What is so special about that? Many people have died and suffered for various causes. Thousands of people have died for religions other than Christianity. In fact, thousands of people have died for causes which have later been proven to be false."

While it is true many people have lived sacrificially and died for false causes, it is important to note they *thought* they were true. Seldom, if ever, will someone live sacrificially and die a martyr's death for a cause that he knows to be false. For what *reason* did the disciples live sacrificially and die a martyr's death? The main theme of all of their messages is they saw Jesus after He was resurrected from the grave. The reason they lived lives they knew would most likely lead to suffering and a painful death was their desire to tell others they *saw* the risen Christ.

During the first century, there was nothing to gain by being a Christian leader. There was no wealth or status as we have in some Christian circles today. Being a Christian leader only meant loss and suffering. Either the disciples actually talked and walked with Jesus after the resurrection, or they were lying. I find it highly unlikely all of the disciples lived this kind of a life based on a lie. Therefore, I have to conclude their claims of the resurrection are true, validating Jesus as the Christ, the method of our salvation.

A Walk of the Wild Side



Chapter: 10.02

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The State Trooper walked into the room and approached a young man sitting on a bench. “Joel Bryan,” the Trooper asked. Looking up, Joel acknowledged his identity. The Trooper said, “Stand up, I’m placing you under arrest.” In one quick motion, Joel was pulled up and handcuffed. Stunned as to what just happened, Joel was hauled off to jail.

Joel worked for a fire inspection company and was contracted to inspect the fire systems in a prison. A routine LEIN check was done on him to see if there were any “wants or warrants” for him. Unfortunately, Joel had some outstanding tickets and since he skipped a court appearance, a statewide bench warrant was issued against him.

Joel knew he had some outstanding tickets and knew he had missed his court appearance. When he was filling out the clearance form (to enter the prison), he was told if he had any outstanding warrants, the police would come over to arrest him. He figured, however, that his traffic violations were not *real* crimes so they wouldn’t cause him any problems. His rationale went something like this, “Compared to the other offenders, my offenses are quite mild. Since my infractions are so insignificant, they will probably fall through the cracks. Even if they don’t, the consequences shouldn’t be severe.”

Obviously, he misjudged the situation. Unfortunately, many people make the same type of miscalculation when it comes to salvation. They assume that when their sins are compared to the sins of others, their sins will pale in comparison. Therefore, God will probably ignore or gloss over their sins. I’m sorry to say that there will be many surprised people, who will find out God views all sins seriously. Unfortunately, they will probably find out too late.

Most people realize they have sinned, but do not consider themselves a “bad” person. They consider themselves a “good” person in comparison to most other people. They assume that since they are a good person God will allow them into Heaven. This is how the logic goes: Since everyone has sinned, a sinful person can still make it to Heaven. Hell, of course, must be for the really bad people. So, the dividing point of making it to Heaven must be somewhere between being a real good person and a real bad person. Therefore, since I am probably better than 80% of those around me, I must be one of the people going to Heaven.”

The only problem with this logic is the Bible says that one sin is enough to keep a person from going to Heaven. Everyone who has sinned must go to Hell. All sins are serious and have serious consequences. It does not matter if you told a lie or murdered someone. It doesn’t matter if you’ve committed one sin or committed a million. God’s judgment of us will not be based on how we compare to other people, rather, it will be based on

how we compare to His standard. I have given the following illustration elsewhere in this book, but it's worth repeating.

A six-foot tall man is much taller than a four-foot tall man. The difference is quite obvious. Yet, when you compare these two men next to a 60' foot light post, the men look quite similar in height. Likewise, when you compare a "good" person next to Hitler, we can see a major difference. However, when you compare them against God's high standard, the difference between Hitler and the "good" person shrinks tremendously. Therefore, if you have committed one sin, you are destined to Hell. The only way a person can enter Heaven is by receiving the atonement offered by Jesus.

Delusions of Grandeur



Chapter: 10.03

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“That was a fantastic movie,” Sam said to Tim. “I loved the way we taught those aliens a lesson.” The two of them had just seen the hit movie *Independence-Day*; a movie where aliens are attempting to conquer Earth. Near the end of the movie the military had lost most of their pilots and were looking for anyone who had any type of flying experience to fly the F16 jet fighters. As a result, many people volunteered, including a drunken crop-duster.

Since both Sam and Tim had flown small single engine airplanes, they found this concept intriguing. “I think I could do it,” Sam said. “I believe I am skilled enough to fly an F-16 fighter. I may not be able to kick ET’s rear-end on the first day, but I would be able to handle an F-16 okay.” Tim, on the other hand, has no delusions of grandeur. He became a quadriplegic last year in a car accident and is realistic about what he is capable of doing. In reality, neither of them have the skills and abilities to fly an F-16. Yet, in this situation, the truth is only *obvious* to one person.

Likewise, a person’s desperate spiritual needs may not be as obvious to someone who has lived a good and moral life. The person’s good life may give him the delusion that he is good enough to meet God’s standard. His good life may stop him from realizing he is incapable of working his way to Heaven.

A person who is living in deep sin, on the other hand, clearly understands he is unfit for Heaven. He has no delusions of his ability to please God or to work his way to Heaven. Both people are incapable of fulfilling God’s holy requirement to enter Heaven, but only one realizes it. Both people are destined to Hell, but one person is blinded to the fact.

Good Intentions



Chapter: 10.04

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“We have another alarm,” the copilot said to the pilot. “What’s going on here? It looks like we’re running out of fuel. Oh no! We’ve just lost an engine.” Within a short period of time this “ultra new” 757 loses all of its engines. Desperately, the pilots try to control the crippled plane. The confusion of what has happened to their engines is overshadowed by the fear of what to do next. The plane slowly loses altitude and speed. It is just a matter of time before it crashes.

The pilots are now looking at the maps to see if there is a place to crash the plane without killing people on the ground. Fortunately, somebody remembers there is an old abandoned drag-racing strip nearby and hope is renewed. Despite the fact that people are having a picnic on the old strip, the plane is able to land without any casualties.

An investigation of this incident revealed a simple, but near fatal mistake. Before the plane took off on its voyage, it was discovered that the jet’s fuel gauge was not working. Although you would think it would be standard practice to always try to keep the fuel tanks full, most airlines don’t because of the added cost. It depends on the aircraft, but each

additional pound of weight will burn around \$5,000 to \$10,000 worth of fuel a year. As a result, it would be very costly for each plane to carry a couple thousand pounds of unneeded fuel. Therefore, only the fuel that is needed (plus a reasonable margin of error) is pumped into the plane.

Since the gas gauge was not working, the gas crew used the “drip method” (dip stick) to determine how much fuel was already in the plane. After taking the measurements, the gas crew calculated how much more fuel was needed.

Unfortunately, the gas crew assumed that the measurements on the dipstick were like most other planes, showing gallons and not liters. However, this jet was one of ten planes the Canadians were using to test the upcoming metric system (mid 1980s). As a result, their calculations were wrong and not enough fuel was put in the jet.

Good intentions applied incorrectly can still create undesirable results. Likewise, good intentions will not get a person into Heaven. Most of us have heard something similar to, “I may not be perfect, but I’m sure God will let me into Heaven because I have good intentions.” Will God let someone into Heaven because of good intentions? Will God’s requirement for perfection be satisfied simply because a person tries hard? No, good intentions will not get a person into Heaven. Only the atonement offered by Jesus will get a person into Heaven. For more information, look at my chapter *What about the Seeking and Sincere*. This chapter shows why sincerity will not get a person into Heaven.

Making up for Past Wrongs



Chapter: 10.05

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Buck, a member of a violent motorcycle gang, was very vocal on the importance of racial purity and the supremacy of the Aryan race. He gave my friend a passionate speech on the inferiority of certain races and the evils of interracial marriage. During the conversation, my friend asked Buck about his racial heritage. To the surprise of my friend, this biker was half American Indian.

Baffled, my friend said, “Doesn’t that contradict everything you have been telling me?” The biker said, “Well, not really. Since I married a pure Aryan, my children are only one fourth Indian. My children’s children and their children will all marry

pure Aryans. Eventually, the racial purity will be restored.”

In the unlikely event that all of his future descendants will breed with only pure Aryans, Buck still has two problems. First, he is still only half Aryan. Second, even if his descendants marry only pure Aryans for 100 generations, his descendants will still have non-Aryan blood in them. You cannot eliminate the supposed “inferior” blood by refusing to introduce more “inferior” blood. Future perfections do not make up for past imperfections.

Likewise, you cannot eliminate your past sins by not sinning in the future. If you have sinned at least once, you will always be a sinner. Even if you were able to live an additional million years and did not sin during this time, you are still a sinner. Perfect living in your future will not correct the imperfections of your past.

I have used this grape juice illustration in another chapter, but it is worth repeating. Let’s say you were drinking some grape juice and spilled it all over your white shirt. In your anger over your carelessness, you vow never to spill anything again. Even if you are successful and never spill anything again, you still have the grape juice stain on your shirt. An absence of future spills does not eliminate past spills.

The only way you can eliminate the stain on your shirt is by putting the shirt in the washer and washing it with a special cleaners that gets out grape juice stains. Likewise, the only way you can eliminate your past sins is to accept the amnesty that Jesus is offering. Only Jesus can eliminate the imperfections in your life. Vowing to live a sinless life will not take away your sins. Only Jesus can make you spotless before God Almighty.

Misguided Commitment



Chapter: 10.06

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Jerold's knees buckled as he is hit squarely on the face. Pulling himself up off the ground, Jerold faces his attackers. Again, he is struck with brutal punches. He collapses to the ground as blood pours from his nose and mouth. Crawling toward his attackers, he is kicked until he drifts into unconsciousness.

Minutes later, Jerold is awakened with some smelling sauce. After being helped off the floor, he sticks out his hand and thanks his attackers. Jerold has just been initiated into a gang. The initiation for this particular gang is to allow others to beat you while you put up no defense. Afterwards, you must thank those who have just beaten you.

Why would a person go through something like this? There are many reasons why a person joins a gang, but it usually has something to do with a lack of love and acceptance at home. Jerold said he joined the gang because he wanted to be part of a "family."

As with most gangs, Jerold had to vow total unconditional loyalty to the gang. He can never leave the gang and he has to defend it with his life.

The ironic thing about this commitment is if he had lived only two blocks away, he would have joined a gang that is the enemy of the gang he just joined. He would have made vows to destroy the gang he had just joined.

Loyalty is often a result of circumstances, not a commitment to principles. Think about the loyalty of a dog; he is loyal to whoever happens to be his master. If a policeman were his master, he would be loyal to the policeman and would probably spend his life helping the policeman hunt down criminals. If a criminal were his master, the same dog would be loyal to the criminal and would probably be used to help defend criminal activities.

The reason we have this contradiction is because this type of commitment is usually based on blind loyalty. Jerold did not join the gang because he has strong convictions about their by-laws or he felt the people who lived two blocks down were *inherently* evil. Rather, he joined the gang because they treated him like "family."

There is nothing wrong with being passionately devoted to something, but it is important to carefully evaluate the *object* of your devotion. A case in point is the devotion some people have for their Macintosh computer. There are very few products that have developed such a passionate following. These people are passionately devoted and committed to Apple Corporation. I believe if communism had such a devoted following, the world would now be communist.

Recently, a person wanted to buy a computer for her new Pfaff sewing machine so she posted a question on the Internet. She asked which computer would be better for her situation: a Mac or a PC. I was surprised by the intensity of the initial responses. The very first emails were Mac users who said that the Mac was the only choice for an "intelligent person." Instead of clearly detailing the advantages of the Mac, they bitterly condemned the "IBM World." The letters did not contain a comparison of Mac's features versus IBM's features, it was simply an *us against them* argument.

Within a day there had been several dozen posting. About 80% of the postings were from Mac users. There was such passion and anger in these postings. In fact, the angrier some of the people became, the more spelling and grammatical errors they made. These postings became so rude that the site's administrator had to take them off the site.

I realize the rude and uncivilized behavior of these Mac users is not a fair representation of all Mac users. (The IBM world also has its share of rude and obnoxious people.) I do feel, however, the passion and devotion they have shown to the Mac is typical of most Mac users. I would hate to be walking down a dark alley with an IBM laptop and run across some Mac users. (Just kidding.)

I would like to point out there is nothing wrong with passion and devotion. There is nothing wrong with having a strong appreciation of quality equipment. The appreciation, however, should be for the quality and craftsmanship and not the actual brand name of the machine. I have to believe that if the quality of the Mac were to diminish greatly, the Mac users would probably still be as passionately devoted to the Mac as they were before.

I bring this issue up because many people are devoted to their religion (or denomination) with the same blind loyalty. Their loyalty to their religion is not based on a careful systematic study of their religion's plan of salvation. Rather, it is usually based on something more superficial.

Some people are in their religion because their parents were in that religion. Others are in their religion because the people are friendly and make them feel at home. Others, yet, are in their religion because when they were going through their darkest hour, a person from this religion came to their aid. Many people have said, "I don't think it really matters that much what religion you are in as long as you believe in a God and sincerely try to do your best."

It is easy for us to see the dangers of blind loyalty to a gang. It is more difficult, however, for us to see

the danger of blind loyalty to our religion. Yet, what is more important? Shouldn't our choice of religion be based on a careful study? I challenge you to take a close look at what you believe and ask yourself why do you believe it.

Grace: Unmerited Favor



Chapter: 10.07

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The boy stands defiantly with his head cocked back and hands clenched. “Go ahead. Give it to me; I can take it.”

The principal looks down at the young rebel. “How many times have you been here?”

The child sneers rebelliously, “Apparently, not enough.”

The principal gives the boy a strange look and says, “You have been punished each time, have you not?”

“Yeah, I’ve been punished; if that’s what you want to call it.” He throws out his small chest and says, “Go ahead, I can take whatever you can dish out; I

always have.”

Carefully studying the boy’s face, the principal says, “Are there any thoughts of punishment when you break these rules?”

“Nope; I do whatever I want. Ain’t nothing you people gonna do to stop me neither.”

The principal looks over at the teacher who is sitting nearby and asks, “What did he do this time?”

“Fighting. He took little Tommy and shoved his face into the sandbox.”

The principal turns to look at the boy and asks, “Why? What did little Tommy do to you?”

“Nothin’, I didn’t like the way he was lookin at me; just like I don’t like the way you’re lookin at me now! In fact, if I thought I could do it, I’d shove your face into something.”

The teacher stiffens and starts to rise, but a quick look from the principal stops him. He contemplates the child for a moment and then quietly says, “Today, my young student, is the day you will learn about grace.”

“Grace? Isn’t that what you old people do before you eat a meal? I don’t need any of your stinkin’ grace.”

“Oh, but you do,” says the principal. After studying the boy’s face he whispers, “Oh yes, you truly do need grace.” The boy glared as the principal continued. “Grace, in its short definition, is unmerited favor. You can’t earn grace, my child. Grace is a gift and it’s always freely given. Grace means you will not be getting what you so richly deserve.”

The boy looks puzzled. “You’re not gonna whup me? You just gonna let me walk?”

The principal looks down at the unyielding child and says, “Yes, I am going to let you walk.”

The boy studies the face of the principal and says, “No punishment at all? You’re not going to punish me even though I socked Tommy and shoved his face into the sandbox?”

“Oh, there has to be punishment. What you did was wrong and there will always be consequences for our actions. There will be punishment. Grace is not an excuse for doing wrong.”

“I knew it,” sneers the boy. Holding out his hands he says, “Let’s get on with it.”

The principal nods toward the teacher and says, “Bring me the belt.” The teacher presents the belt to the principal. He carefully folds it in two and hands it back to the teacher. He looks at the child and says, “I want you to count the blows.” The principal slides out from behind his desk and walks over to the child.

The child stands defiantly with his hands outstretched. The principal gently moves the child’s expectant hands down to his sides. Turning to the teacher, the principal stretches out his own hands and quietly says, “Begin.”

The belt slaps against the principal’s outstretched hands. Crack! The young boy jumps. Shock registers across his face, “One” he whispers. Crack! “Two.” His voice raises an octave. Crack! “Three.” He is unable to believe this. Crack! “Four.” Big tears well up in the eyes of the young rebel. “Okay, stop! That’s enough. Stop!” Crack! The belt continues to come down on the principal’s swollen hands. Crack! The child flinches with each blow. Tears start streaming down the child’s face. Crack! Crack! “No, please,” the former rebel begs. “Stop. I’m the one who did it. I’m the one who deserves the punishment. Stop! Please stop,” the boy sobs. Still the blows come. Crack! Crack!

Finally it is over. The principal, with sweat glistening across his forehead, turns to the former rebel and kneels down. Carefully cradling the child’s face with his swollen hands, the principal softly says,

“This, my boy, is grace.”

This story is an excellent example of God’s grace (unmerited favor). Just as the boy received the opposite of what he deserved, we too can receive the opposite of what we deserve.

Although some people feel that an Almighty God can “forgive and forget” our sins, He can’t. His holy and righteous nature demands He properly deal with our sins. Every transgression has to be punished. There are always consequences for our actions.

Fortunately for us, God stepped forward and was punished in our place. He bore the stripes we deserved. He was bruised and pierced in our place. God’s grace (unmerited favor) means we did not get what we so richly deserved.

Is Jesus God?

(Understanding the Trinity)



Chapter: 10.08a

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“You better get out of there,” Walter Covich’s father pleaded. “The territory will soon be under communist control. If you don’t leave, you’ll never be able to get out. You know what the communists have done to Christians in the past.”

Although it is unknown to most Americans, Russia and the United States view the Alaskan purchase quite differently. According to American history, the United States purchased Alaska from Russia in 1867 for \$7,200,000. According to Russian history books, Russia only leased Alaska to the United States for 100 years. Just as American schools teach Alaska was purchased, Russian schools teach it was only leased.

Walter, and his wife, Eldy, were missionaries in Alaska and the “lease” was about to expire. Walter’s father, an immigrant from Russia, just assumed it was common knowledge to Americans that Alaska was leased and would be under Russian control in 1967. There was nothing Walter could do to convince his father that Alaska belonged to the United States.

What is the source of this misunderstanding? I

don’t think anyone really knows. I have a feeling, however, the discovery of gold and oil made this “frozen wasteland” much more desirable to Russia. Shortly before the purchase, Russia had ended the *Crimean War* and the need for cash was probably the motivation for “selling” Alaska. Conveniently, Russia says it lost the documents that prove Alaska was only leased. For those interested, the Treasury warrant (#9759) for the \$7,200,000 purchase can be found in the National Archives.



The reason I bring up this interesting piece of history is to show how easy it is to take for granted things others vehemently oppose. One such issue is the deity of Jesus. Most Christians believe the Bible clearly states Jesus is God. There are, however, several “Christian” groups that are absolutely opposed to the idea of Jesus being God.

Chances are, if you ever run into one of these people, you would have a difficult time proving (from memory) Jesus is God. This is because you probably never felt it was *necessary* to memorize supporting documentation for something so obvious. Just because it is obvious to you does not necessarily mean it is obvious to someone else.

I have written this chapter to help you gain a better understanding of this subject. I have divided the reference section (at the end of this chapter) into two parts. The first part is a quick overview of the places in the Bible that shows Jesus is God and how He is part of the trinity. You should become very familiar with this part. The second part is more of an in-depth reference. Refer to this part only when you need to show a person some in-depth

proof of Jesus being God.

If a person does not believe Jesus is God, he obviously does not believe in the trinity. In fact, people like this are usually quite vocal and critical of the doctrine of the trinity. I have often heard them say something like, “You Christians believe in *three* Gods.” If you have ever tried to explain the trinity, you have an appreciation of its complexity. There have been many attempts to explain how *one* God is made up of *three persons*. Although some of them are helpful, all of them still fall short of providing a clear picture of the trinity.

Some people point to water and say water can be found in three physical states: Solid, liquid, and gas. Although it can be observed in three different forms, it is still water. This analogy is then compared to the trinity: There is only one God, but He expresses Himself as three persons.

Another example people use is a concept called triple point. This is a phenomenon where a sample of water actually exists in all three physical states (solid, liquid, and gas) at the same time. They point to triple point and say, “See, it is possible for one thing to be found in three physical states at the same time.”

Incidentally, for you trivia buffs, water will boil and freeze at the same point when it is placed in a near vacuum (0.6 psi). Water, of course, boils at 212°F at “normal” atmospheric pressure (14 psi). As the pressure decreases so does the boiling point. Eventually, the temperature that water boils is also the same as when it freezes. This is why a tear in an astronaut’s suit is so deadly. When a space suit is torn, the pressure inside the suit begins to decrease. As the pressure drops, the blood begins to boil. When the pressure drops to about 0.6 psi, the boiling blood suddenly cracks into a solid piece of ice. (Source: *Popular Science*, May 1998, page 84)

Others will point to a person who is someone’s father, someone’s son, and someone’s husband as an example of the trinity. Although this person has

three titles, functions and purposes, he is still one person.

What does the Bible say about the trinity? The actual word “trinity” does not appear in the Bible. The Bible does, however, portray God as being made up of three persons. It says that the Father is God, Jesus is God, and the Holy Spirit is God (see the verses listed below.) There are also two places in the Bible where God refers to Himself in the plural form. Gen. 1:26 says, “Let *us* create man in *our* own image.” Isa. 6:8 says, “Also, I heard the voice of the Lord saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for *us*?”

Although the Bible says that the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are God, it also clearly says that there is only one God (see the verses listed in Reference section 1). How can we believe all three are God and still believe there is only one God? I have no explanation that is *completely* satisfying. Therefore, I see that we have only two choices. The first choice is we can simply recognize the doctrine of the trinity is one of those aspects of God we are not going to be able to fully understand with our incredibly limited minds. The only other choice is to conclude these references to the three persons of the Godhead means there are some serious errors in the Bible. The repercussions of this choice are obvious.

What is your perception of God? Imagine being raised your whole life in a windowless room. You were never allowed to go or even look outside. Your mother, who has previously lived on the outside, tries to explain what the outside world is like. She draws pictures of trees, birds, flowers, sky, etc. Although she is trying to be as open with you as possible, you would still have a very distorted view of the outside world.

Probably, your perceptions of flowers and birds would be more two-dimensional than three-dimensional. In your mind’s eye, there are probably many things that are hard to understand or even seem contradictory. This is part of the reason we have difficulty understanding God. We’re trying to look

at an infinite being through finite eyes.

Do we really think we can comprehend the magnitude of a being who has created a universe with more than a million billion galaxies; where *each* galaxy has hundreds of billions of stars? Are we naive enough to think we can understand the complexity of a being who created a universe where every ounce has more than a 100 million trillion highly organized atoms? (Source: *National Geographic*, June 1983. *ChemCom*, Kendall/Hunt Publishing, 1993.) I think this complexity of God is part of the reason we find the trinity so difficult to understand.

Think about this for a moment: a single cell bacterium has no capacity to comprehend or understand human beings. Likewise, even the simplest aspects of God are way beyond our comprehension. Of course, the difference between God and us is far greater than the difference between the bacterium and us.

I am not saying the trinity is correct simply because we can't understand it. That would be wrong and inappropriate. However, it would be just as wrong to say the trinity does not exist simply because it is not understandable.

Very few people can understand quantum physics. The theories and concepts of quantum physics are too complex for most people. In fact, some of the theories seem ridiculous or totally illogical to the untrained eye. Yet, quantum physics is used every-day to make our lives better. We must be careful not to discredit something simply because we can't understand it.

Another reason people have a hard time accepting Jesus as God is the fact He had so many "limitations." They wonder how Jesus could be God if He was so limited? The following chapter talks about these limitations.

Before I provide you the reference sections, I want to give you one more piece of interesting information. A cosmonaut, who lived in the troubled

Russian Space station, Mir (1997) recently visited the missionaries I have mentioned earlier (the Covichs), looking for a Russian Bible. Like most Russians, he was raised as an atheist. However, when he first entered outer space, he realized there had to be a God. He said it would be impossible for this finely tuned universe to have come into existence without a creator God. Interestingly, the first thing he saw when he entered *Mir* was a Russian Bible. Since all of his time was spent trying to fix one disaster after another on this aging space station, he didn't have a chance to read the Bible. I am happy to say he now has a Russian Bible of his own.

The following two chapters are the reference sections referred to in this chapter. They are:

Reference 1: Verses Teaching the Trinity.

This a quick overview of the places in the Bible that show the Father, Holy Spirit, and Jesus are all God. It also contains verses showing there is only one God.

Reference 2: Verses showing Jesus is God.

This reference provides an in-depth list of verses showing that Jesus is God. It clearly shows that the Bible teaches the divinity of Jesus.

Reference 1: Verses Teaching the Trinity

Chapter: 10.08b

This a quick overview of the places in the Bible that show the Father, Holy Spirit, and Jesus are all God. It also contains verses showing there is only one God.

Verses saying Jesus is God:

Heb. 1:8 God the Father called the Son "God."

Isa. 9:6 The "child" is called the "Mighty God."

Mt. 1:23, Is. 7:14 Jesus is called Immanuel, which means "God with us."

John. 1:1 Jesus (the "Word") is called "God."

1 Tim. 3:16 Paul said Jesus was God "manifested in the flesh."

Col. 2:8.9 Paul said Jesus was the "fullness of the Godhead bodily."

John. 20:28 Thomas said to Jesus, "...my God."

Titus 2:13 Paul called Jesus "the great God."

Phil. 2:5,6 Paul said Jesus didn't feel it was wrong to be considered "equal with God."

John 5:18 The Jews wanted to kill Jesus because He was "making Himself equal with God."

John 10:30 Jesus said, "I and the Father are one."

Gen. 1:1; Col. 1:16 The Bible said God created all things and that Jesus created all things.

Mic. 5:2 The messiah (Jesus) had always been in existence.

Isa. 44:6; Rev. 1:2,8, 11,13 God claimed to be the "First and the Last." So did Jesus. God clearly states that He is the only savior. The Bible also says Jesus is our savior.

Verses saying the Father is God:

John. 8:41 "The only Father we have is God Himself."

Eph. 4:6 "... one God and Father of all ..."

Verses saying the Holy Spirit is God:

Acts 5:3,4 "... you have lied to the Holy Spirit ... you have not lied to men, but to God."

Acts 28:25,26 Referring to Isaiah 6:9,10, Peter said the "Holy Spirit" spoke to the prophet Isaiah. In the book of Isaiah, it says the "Lord" spoke to the prophet Isaiah.

1 Cor. 3:16 "Don't you know you are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?"

Verses saying there is only one God:

Mk. 12:32 "You are right in saying God is one and there is no other but him."

Mk. 12:29 "The Lord our God, the Lord is one."

1 Tim. 2:5 "For there is one God ..."

1 Cor. 8:4 "... and there is no God but one."

Gal. 3:20 "... but God is one."

James 2:19 "You believe there is one God. Good! ..."

Ps. 86:10 "... you alone are God."

Deut. 6:4,5 "The Lord our God, the Lord is one ..."

Isa. 44:8 "Is there another God besides me?"

Isa. 45:21 "There is no God apart from me ... there is none but me."

Isa. 45:22 "For I am God and there is no other."

Isa. 46:9 "I am God, and there is no other"

Isa. 45:5 "I am the Lord, and there is no other; apart from me there is no God."

Isaiah 45:18 "I am the Lord, and there is no other."

Mal. 2:10 "Did not one God create us?"

Reference 2: Verses showing Jesus is God

Chapter: 10.08c

This reference provides an in-depth list of verses showing that Jesus is God. It clearly shows that the Bible teaches the divinity of Jesus.

Others viewed Jesus as God

1 Timothy 3:16 -Paul Said Jesus was God manifested in the flesh.

"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the nations, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

John 20:28 -Thomas called Jesus God.

"And Thomas answered, and said unto him, My Lord and my God."

Colosians 2:8,9 -Paul said Jesus was the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

"...Christ. For in him dwelleth all of the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

Titus 2:13 -Paul said Jesus was God.

"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our savior, Jesus Christ."

Luke 8:39 -After Jesus healed a demon pos-

sessed man, Jesus said:

"Return to thine house, and show what great things God hath done unto thee. And he went on his way and published throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done unto him."

Rom. 14:10b-12 -Paul uses the words Jesus and God interchangeably.

"For we shall all stand before the judgment Seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So, then, "every one of us shall give account of himself to God."

Luke 8:39 -After Jesus healed a demon possessed man, Jesus said:

"Return to thine house, and show what great things God hath done unto thee. And he went on his way and published throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done unto him."

Phil. 2:5b, 6 -Paul said Jesus was God.

"... Jesus Christ, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God."

The people around Jesus understood Jesus was claiming to be God

John 10:33 -The Jews felt Jesus was claiming to be God.

"The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy: and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God."

John 5:18 -The Jews felt Jesus was making himself equal with God.

"Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."

Jesus claimed to be God

John 10:30 - Jesus said He was part of God. He said, "I and my Father are one."

Exodus 3:14 -God identifies Himself to Moses by calling himself "I AM." Twice Jesus refers to Himself as the "I AM." Those around him knew exactly what he was saying and they were greatly offended.

"Jesus said unto them, Verily verily, I say you, before Abraham was, I am. Then they took up stones to cast at him ..." (John 8:58, 59a)

"Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them I am he. As soon as he said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground." (John 18:4b, 5, 6)

[Note: In the Bible, the word "he" is in italic. Whenever a word was not in the original Greek or Hebrew, but was put in for clarity, the King James translators put the word in italic. This was done so there would be no misunderstanding about what was and was not part of the original text]

Revelation 1:8-18 -Jesus said, he is the Almighty Lord. The following is a vision John had of Jesus. Verses 2, 13, 17,18 identify Jesus as the:

(v 2) "... testimony of Jesus Christ ..."

(v 8) "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty."

(v 11) "Saying I am alpha and Omega, the first and the last..."

(v 13) "And in the midst of the seven lamp stands, one like the Son of man ..."

(v 17b. 18a) "Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead..."

Isaiah 44:6 -In Rev 1:11, Jesus says He is the first and the last. Isa. 44:6 shows that the one who is "first and the last is actually God. "Thus saith the Lord, the King of Israel, and his redeemer, the Lord of host: I am the first, and I am the last, and beside me there is not God."

The Bible says Jesus is God

Hebrews 1:8 -God the Father said Jesus was God.

"Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom."

Isaiah 9:6 -Jesus (the Messiah) is called the Mighty God.

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

Matthew 1:23 -Jesus is called Immanuel, which means "God with us."

"Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which, being interpreted, is God with us."

Micah 5:2 -Jesus (the Messiah) is everlasting.

"But thou, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall come forth unto me that is to be the ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Zechariah 12:10 -God uses the first person ("me") and the third person ("him") to describe Himself as the one who will be pierced.

And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon ME whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for HIM, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.

John 1:1 -Jesus (the "Word") is God

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Revelation 22:6, 16 -The book of Revelation says that Jesus and God are the same.

(v6) "And he said unto me, These words are faithful and true; and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to show unto his servants the things which must shortly be done."

(v 16) "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches ..."

Every knee will bow to both God and Jesus. Here are verses talking about every knee bowing to God.

"Look unto me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God and there is none else. ... that unto me every knee shall bow, every

tongue shall swear" (Isaiah 45:22,23b)

Here are verses talking every knee bowing to Jesus.

"... stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God." (Romans 14:10b, 11)

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow ... and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." (Philippians 2:10a,11a)

John 5:23 -We have to honor Jesus that same way as God the Father.

"That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father who hath sent him."

Both God and Jesus are called our "Savior." Here are verses calling God our savior.

"... I am He, before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord and besides me there is no savior." (Isaiah 43:10b, 11)

"... And there is no God else beside me, a just God and Savior; there is none beside me." (Isaiah 45:21b)

Here are verses calling Jesus our savior.

Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

"But hath in due time manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God, our Savior;" (Titus 1:3)

"Not purloining, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God, our

Savior, in all things." (Titus 2:10)

"But after the kindness and love of God, our Savior, toward man appeared." (Titus 3:4)

"To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God, the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, our Savior." (Titus 1:4)

"Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior," (Titus 3:6)

Both God and Jesus created all things. Here are verses that say God created all things

"Ah, Lord God! Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by Thy great power and outstretched arm, and there is nothing too hard for thee: ... the Great, the Mighty God, the Lord of hosts, is his name," 1 (Jeremiah 32:17, 18b)

Have we not all one father? Hath not one God created us?" (Malachi 2:10b)

"Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he who formed thee from the womb: I am the Lord who maketh all things; who stretcheth forth the heavens alone; who spreadeth abroad the earth by myself." (Isaiah 44:24)

"And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the Heavens are the worlds of thine hand." (Hebrews 1:10)

Here are verses that say Jesus created all things

"... Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come. ... Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for thou has created all things, and for thy pleasure they were created." (Revelation 4:8b, 11)

"All things were made by him (Jesus), and without him was not anything made that was

made." (John 1:3)

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation; For by him all things were created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers - all things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (Col. 1:15, 16)

"Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds." (Hebrews 1:2)

Both God and Jesus raised Jesus from the dead. Here are verses that say God raised Jesus from the dead.

"And to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." (1 Thes. 1:10)

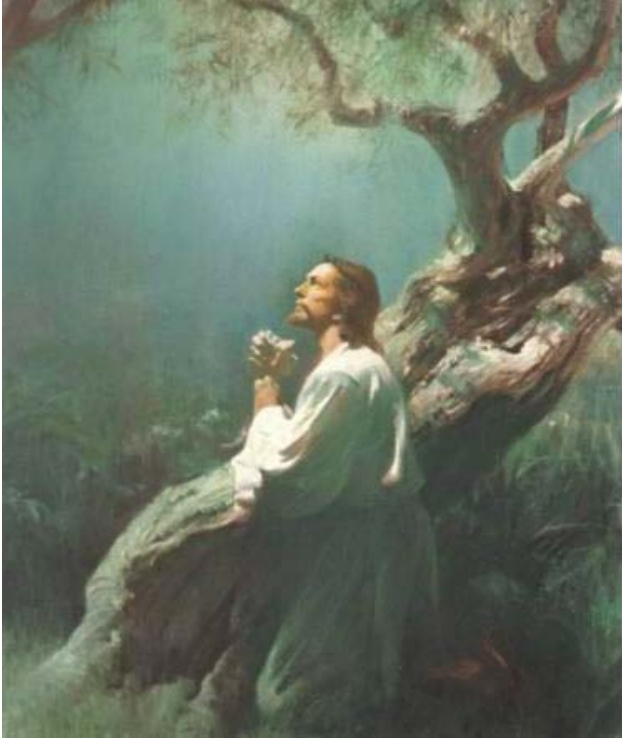
"But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also give life to your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (Romans 8:11)

Here are verses that say Jesus raised Himself from the dead.

"Jesus answered, and said unto them Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." (John 2:19)

"Therefore doeth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (John 10:17, 18a)

If Jesus was God, Why did He have so Many “Limitations?”



Chapter: 10.09

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In the previous chapter (*Is Jesus God?*) I talked about how many people have a hard time believing Jesus is God. One reason for these doubts is the “trinity.” People have a hard time understanding how there can be only one God and still have three people in the Godhead.

Another thing that gives people a hard time is the “limitations” Jesus had when He was here on Earth. They wonder how Jesus could be God if He was so limited. Following are some of the limitations they refer to:

- ·Jesus was weak physically (in comparison to what you would expect from an Almighty God).

- ·There were many things Jesus didn’t know.
- ·If Jesus was God, why was He “talking to someone else” when He was praying.
- ·Jesus couldn’t keep Himself from being murdered.
- ·How could God “die?”



Are there reasons Jesus was limited or should we consider His limitations substantial proof He isn’t God? I believe Jesus is God and I also believe there were fundamental reasons why He was limited here on earth. To help you understand what I mean, I want to give you a hypothetical situation.

Let’s say, for the sake of argument, God wanted to get a closer look at what it was like to be a human; He wanted to see firsthand what it was like to walk in our shoes for a while. Let’s say He wanted to

know what it felt like to be limited in His powers and abilities. Let's also say God wanted to accomplish a specific task while He was here on Earth.

The first question we need to examine is, "Could God actually do this?" I think it is safe to say an Almighty God is capable of doing whatever He wants. The next question we need to look at is, "How could He do it?" Would God have to go on a "leave of absence" from Heaven? Would He have to abandon His throne in Heaven in order to take on human form? Would He had to put someone else in charge (such as a powerful angel) while He was gone?

I have an analogy that might help you understand this. Let's say I'm doing a puppet show for a children's party. I'm hiding behind a wall and my two hands are in the puppets. The kids, with a limited view, see two characters performing.

Although the kids see two identities, there is actually only one person. Both identities are an extension of me. They are not *all* of me, but they are part of me. Likewise, God can bring an extension of Himself down to earth. This extension would not be all of God, but it would be part of God. In other words, God would not have to take a "leave of absence" from Heaven in order to have an extension of Himself come to earth.

Take a few moments to think about how God could accomplish this. What would be necessary for God to perform this task? The first thing He would need to do is provide Himself a human body. This, of course, would not be a big-deal; considering God creates over 200,000 bodies a day. The next thing He would have to do is put part of Himself in the body. Considering the fact that God is able to create life out of nothing, I don't think this would be a difficult task for Him.

Now, we have a situation where God is still functioning as "God Almighty" in Heaven, but is also functioning as a human (or God-man) here on earth. This God-man would have a variety of self-imposed limitations. He would have a body that will grow

old and die (or could be murdered). There will be many things He doesn't know. He would have an inherent knowledge He is part of the Godhead, but otherwise, His knowledge would be very limited.

Although this God-man knows He is part of the Godhead, He is limited in His communicative skills. He has to communicate in the same primitive way as other humans. As part of His self-imposed limitations, He is forced to communicate with the Godhead the same way as everyone else. (Look at the note below for more information about Jesus "praying to someone else.")

Apart from experiencing the limited life of mortal man, God also has a specific task He wants to accomplish. He, therefore, gives Himself the ability to perform certain miracles in order to show others this is a mission from God. Tragically, halfway through His life, a riotous crowd murders Him.

The God-man's death, however, was not a mistake; it was actually part of His plan. In order to accomplish His mission, the God-man needed to be murdered. The rioters didn't take His life; He gave it up freely.

Does the death of the God-man's body mean God actually "died?" No, of course not. Physical death is the separation of the person's soul (their true eternal identity) from their temporary physical body. When our physical bodies die, we are not "dead." Likewise, when the God-man's body died, He continued on living.

In many ways this scenario parallels the life of Jesus. This scenario addresses many of the questions people have about Jesus. It shows Jesus didn't have to be all-knowing. It shows the "death" of Jesus does not distract from His divinity. It provides us a better understanding of the trinity. It also explains why Jesus was "talking to someone else" when He was praying.

Our view of God's realm is incredibly limited. We are only able to see a minute fraction of Him. We should not be surprised if He came to us in the

limited form of a human. The fact Jesus was limited does not mean He wasn't divine. Remember, the Bible says it is impossible for mortal man to look upon God in His full glory. Therefore, if God were to come down to visit us, it would *have* to be in a very limited manner.

Side Note on “Jesus Praying to Others”

There are two things we need to keep in mind concerning Jesus' prayers:

·First, I think many of Jesus' audio prayers were done for our benefit. I think Jesus used His audio prayers to teach us more about Himself and the Godhead. There are a couple places in the Bible that talk about how the audio communications between Jesus and the Godhead were for the benefit of those nearby. In John 12:30, Jesus said the voice from Heaven (God) was for *their* benefit, not His. In John 11:42, Jesus was raising Lazarus from the dead. He said His prayer was for the benefit of those who were around Him.

·Second, our *audio* prayers are not the full essence of our prayers. Romans 8:26 says, “We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.” Our audio prayers are not the full communication being sent to God.

We have no idea what type of internal communications Jesus had with the Godhead. I believe even if the disciples could have heard His complex communications with the Godhead, I'm sure it wouldn't have made any sense to them.

Computer Internet modems are a good example of limited communication. Since traditional telephone lines were never designed for computer use, modems are very slow. Modems are literally thousands of times slower than the internal speed of the computer's CPU. It's like having a 100 lane super-highway merging down to a single lane dirt bike path. Traffic almost comes to a standstill.

Likewise, human communication compared to God's communication is very simple baby talk.

Is Hell really for “Eternity?”



Chapter: 10.10

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“Put your hands in the air!” the soldier shouted. “Men on this side of the room and women on the other side.” Horrified, the people stumbled across the rubble to their assigned positions. The look in their eyes showed they knew what was going to happen next. Walking over to the group of men, the soldiers began pointing to different men. Sobs rang out from amongst the women. After the old men and young boys were separated from the other men, they were told to sit down. The remaining men were led out the back door of the bombed out building. The sobs of women and children were drowned out by the sounds of gunfire.

While the smell of gunpowder still lingered in the air, the soldiers walked back into the room with smirks

on their faces. Slowly they walk toward the group of women, eyeing the young girls. Grabbing one of the girls by her hair, a soldier pulls her to a back room. One by one, the soldiers have their way with her.

Killing the men who are of military age and raping the young girls was standard practice for many of the Serbian soldiers. The brutality that took place during the Baltic War equals the atrocities that were common during WWII. Those who survived the mass killing have to live with scars that will last a lifetime.

When I think about these soldiers, I have no problem visualizing them rotting in Hell for eternity. It is, however, more difficult for me to visualize some other “nice” people burning in Hell forever. It is hard to visualize someone’s sweet, old grandmother (who happens to be an unbeliever) having to be in Hell for *eternity*.

Is the punishment of Hell eternal? Will a person sent to Hell have to stay there for eternity, or will God, after a period of time, show special mercy and end the punishment? If God does end their punishment, will He do it by terminating their existence or will He allow them to go to Heaven? If God is going to end their punishment by terminating their existence, wouldn’t it be even better if He simply terminated their existence without even sending them to Hell (as the Jehovah Witnesses believe)?



If you were to survey the fundamental churches, you would probably find that most, if not all of them believe the punishment of Hell is for eternity. Yet, if you were to talk privately to many of the members in these congregations, they would secretly express their doubts. They would tell you they have a hard time understanding how God could keep the “sweet old grandma” in Hell for eternity. They have no problem with people like Hitler being kept in Hell for eternity, but they can’t see why a “good” person should be kept in eternal punishment.

Although the idea of a reduced term in Hell seems similar to the doctrine of purgatory, these Christians are quick to point out it isn’t. In purgatory, a person “works off” his sentence by being punished. These Christians don’t believe this. They believe a person’s sentence is reduced because of God’s mercy. Incidentally, several hundred years ago, someone calculated (don’t ask me how) that a person would be in purgatory for exactly 1,902,202 years and 270 days to pay for their sinful life (source: film called *Martin Luther*).

What does the Bible say about this issue? It obviously doesn’t matter what we think God is going to do, it only matters what God is actually going to do. Remember, God’s judgment of us will not be based on how we compare to other people, rather, it will be based on how we compare to His standard.

A six-foot tall man is much taller than a four-foot tall man. The difference is quite obvious. Yet, when you compare these two men next to a 60’ foot light post, the men look quite similar in height. Likewise, when you compare a “good” person next to Hitler, we can see a major difference. However, when you compare them against God’s high standard, the difference between Hitler and the “good” person shrinks tremendously.

As discussed in other chapters, we must take our doctrines from the Bible. If the Bible is clear on a subject, we are bound to follow its teaching. So, the question is, does the Bible clearly teach the punishment of Hell will be forever? Hell, of course, was created for the fallen angels. The Bible does

say these demons will be punished in Hell for eternity. The following verses talk about Hell being forever:

Mt 25:41 “... *eternal* fires prepared for the devil and his angels.”

Jude 6 The angels will be bound with “*everlasting* chains.”

Rev. 20:10 The devil, beast, and false prophet being tormented “*forever* and ever.”

Mt. 18:8 “... thrown into *eternal* fire.”

Mark 9:43 “...fire *never goes out*.”

Mark 9:48 “...worm *never* dies and the fire is *not quenched*.”

Is. 33:14 “... with *everlasting* burning.”

Luke 3:17 “... with *unquenchable* fire.”

Mt. 3:12 “... with *unquenchable* fire.”

The Christians who believe in limited punishment point to the fact that Hell was not created for the fallen human race, but rather for the fallen angels. They say it is the angels who will be punished for eternity, not the humans. Therefore, the verses talking about the eternal fires only mean the fires will be burning forever for the demons.

Although I would love to believe Hell is only a temporary punishment for humans, I cannot find any verses that indicate it. I do not like the idea of a person being punished for eternity, especially the “sweet old grandmother.” As much as I dislike the concept of eternal punishment, I have to abide by what the Bible teaches. The question is, therefore, what does the Bible say about punishment for the fallen human race. Following are verses that deal with the punishment for *humans*:

Mt. 25:46 “They will go away to *eternal* punishment.”

Heb. 6:2 "... the resurrection of the dead, and *eternal* judgment."

Jude 7 The people of Sodom and Gomorrah serve as an example of those who suffer the "punishment of *eternal* fires."

Dan. 12:2 "... some to everlasting life, other to shame and *everlasting* contempt."

2 Th. 1:9 "...they will be punished with *everlasting* destruction."

Gal. 1:8 If someone preaches another gospel, he is to be "*eternally* condemned."

Is. 66:24 Those that rebelled against God, "Their worm *will not die, nor will the fire be quenched.*"

Rev. 14:10-11 "And the smoke of their torment *rises for ever* and ever"

Mk. 3:29 Those who blaspheme will be guilty of an "*eternal* sin."

Is. 34:8-10 "Lord has a day of vengeance ... it will not be quenched night or day. Its smoke will rise *forever.*"

The Bible does teach the punishment in Hell will last forever. I don't understand it nor do I like it. I am, however, obligated to accept it. I have two choices: I can either spend my time thinking about how unfair God is for doing this, or I can spend my time and energy trying to find ways to keep people from going to Hell in the first place.