



MAP ♦ 575 US Highway 250 ♦ Greenwich, OH 44837 ♦ (419) 962-1515 ♦ May 2020

The Problems of Life

— Unknown

In the Picture Below, What do You See?



Some time ago, a friend showed me a sheet of paper much like the one in the picture above and asked, “What do you see?”

At first glance, I told my friend that I saw a black spot. My friend asked me again, “Is there anything else at all that you see?” Then I began to wonder the purpose of his question. So I looked closer for any clue that might be hidden on the piece of paper, but there was nothing else standing out, so I answered, “A black spot and that is it.”

My friend waved the paper in his hand, and said, “Can’t you see the paper?” I looked at him and agreed, “Yes, I can.”

God has given us specific information on

how to handle the difficulties of life. All believers are surrounded by persons, places, events, situations and problems. As we live and move among people and problems, God has told us what we should be doing.

Instead of coming to God with our problem, we often get caught up *with* the problem, and caught up *in* the problem. Just as with a tornado, we allow the problem to suck us up into itself and we are overwhelmed by it. We get *overly* and *excessively* concerned about someone (spouse, parent, in-law, child), about some place (home, work, church), or about something (a problem at home, an illness, the loss of a friend, etc.). All of our efforts and energies are concentrated and *focused on that one problem* to the neglect of the whole situation.

Please take another look at the black dot on the sheet of paper.

The spot is only one small part of that sheet of paper. There is much more than just a spot. The problem is that we tend to see only the spot and nothing else, and the little spot becomes bigger and bigger to us.

How many people live on your road? In

your entire county? Your state? How does this number compare to the 7 billion people who are in the world today? Is not the number of people who live on your road a tiny speck compared to the whole?

Is there a problem in your home with your family? How many homes and families are there in the world? Was an unkind word spoken to you today? How does that compare with all the words spoken all around the world? Was an unfriendly look sent your way? What is that compared to all the many unpleasant looks worldwide? When we begin to see the whole picture, then our little problem is only a very tiny speck!

The issue is that I can so easily get wrapped up with ME, MYSELF, and I, and then forget that there is something more than ME, MYSELF, and I. It is always my church, my opinion, my schedule, my spouse, my parents, my grandmother, my soap, my bed, my letter, my trip in the buggy, my _____, and my _____.

The world is more than just me! It is BIG and IMMENSE and your part of the whole is but a tiny little microscopic speck! Instead of looking at only one piece of the puzzle, we must learn to look

at the WHOLE PICTURE, which is made up of thousands of pieces.

For example, you may receive a letter in the mail, which *to you* may seem like the most important event in the world! This letter totally occupies your mind so that there is no room for anything else. It is all you think of, and you lose your proper perspective. The whole world becomes ONE BIG LETTER IN THE MAIL! If someone were to ask, "What's going on today in the world?" you would immediately cry out, "I RECEIVED A LETTER!" A very *minor event* (compared to the whole) has now become a very *major event*, and that letter becomes the only thing that you see. We do this all the time with many different things.

And when this happens...

1. I lose my confidence in God. My problem has become very big and my God has become very small.
2. I lose the confession of my lips. I can no longer say, "For this, I have Jesus!" It is not on my lips and it is not in my heart. All I can say is, "My problem has me!"
3. I lose my peace and joy, and replace it with worry and fear.
4. My physical health could suffer because even my physical system may be affected by how I handle, or fail to handle my problems.

God meant for us to face reality and solve problems. The spot on the paper is very real and must be faced. But the danger comes when we get too close to the problem, lose our perspective, and fail to see the entire picture. My whole life is

not one letter, one boss, one spouse, one twenty dollar bill, one weekend, etc. My situation, problem, event, or crisis is only one tiny part of my life.

Often an event passes *in time* but not *in mind*. We cannot, or will not, stop thinking about it; and thus we are unprepared for the next moment of time. ---*A boy buried his dead cat and then every day he dug it up to see how it was doing!* We often do the same thing with yesterday's events and problems.

I would like to take a look at several different examples of people in the Bible who became wrongly focused on **ONE THING**, and how that ended up affecting their lives in a painful way. Oftentimes, it also affected other people's lives who were totally innocent.

The first example is found in 1 Kings, chapter 21, where the Bible tells us of a king that wanted his neighbor's vineyard so badly that he couldn't think of anything else. All he could think of, day after day, was the **ONE THING** he did not have — his neighbor's vineyard.

What makes this story even more strange is that King Ahab owned many vineyards in his kingdom. The truth be told, the King had pretty much everything he could ever want in life. He had fame. He had fortune. And he most likely, had more possessions than anybody else in the kingdom. It is probably fair to say that he had more stuff than anybody else in the whole land of Israel. But the **ONE THING** he did not have was the vineyard that belonged to his neighbor Naboth. All he could think of was the **ONE VINEYARD** he did not have.

Let's read the story, and then I would like to make a few simple comments. Oh, and while reading it, let's not point fingers at the King, but rather let's look at ourselves and be reminded that we have probably done the very same thing, even as adults.

1 Kings 21:1-4

And it came to pass after these things, that Naboth the Jezreelite had a vineyard, which was in Jezreel...

And [King] Ahab spake unto Naboth, saying, Give me thy vineyard, that I may have it for a garden of herbs, because it is near unto my house: and I will give thee for it a better vineyard than it; or, if it seem good to thee, I will give thee the worth of it in money.

And Naboth said to Ahab, The LORD forbid it me, that I should give the inheritance of my fathers unto thee.

And Ahab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

Wow! What a silly story! Have you ever heard of such a miserable story? The King did not get the **ONE THING** that he wanted. So what does he do—he lays on the bed, buries his face in his pillow and refuses to eat.

Wouldn't you agree that if most children acted like this, they would receive a spanking and be told to grow up?

You may also be thinking along the lines that I am—How in the world did such a big baby ever become a king?

This publishing work is registered as a charitable organization in the USA. We welcome your articles, testimonies, and questions, We reserve the right to edit or decline any material and are not responsible for the return of any articles.

Since our beginning in 2000, many people have written to us, asking to be added to our mailing list, while others have sent us names of their friends and family members. We think it's important for us to tell you that the cost of *The Amish Voice* is \$.50 a copy and is totally funded by readers from across our great country who appreciate the ministry and care to support it. If the Lord would lay it on your heart to come alongside of us by helping with expenses, it would be a great benefit, as well as highly appreciated. In order to continue receiving *The Amish Voice*, please keep us informed of any changes to your address. Thank you. —Joe Keim, Executive Director

But the story does not stop there. As you will see here in a minute, because the King was not able to get his mind off the **ONE THING**, it caused other innocent lives to be hurt forever.

We are told in verse 5, that Naboth's wife, Jezebel, came into the bedroom and asked the king, *"Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?"*

The king replied to her, *"Because I spake unto Naboth the Jezreelite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee another vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard."*

His wife, Jezebel, told him not to worry—that she would get the vineyard for him. In verses 9-12, we are told that Naboth was set up to look as if he blasphemed against God and the king. In the end, he was stoned to death. Yes—Naboth was killed because the king could not get his mind off the **ONE THING**.

The Bible says in 1 Kings 21:16, *"And it came to pass, when Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, that Ahab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, to take possession of it."*

Before we say too much, let's take a few minutes and look into our own life. How many times have we done something similar to what the king did? Oh, maybe not to this extent, but ... sure we have! Probably more often than we would want to believe. And when we do get so focused on the **ONE THING** in our life, we hardly ever hurt just ourselves, we also hurt our loved ones who are totally innocent by-standers.

Ok, let's shift gears and look at some other stories in the Old Testament where certain people became so focused on **ONE THING** that it got them and many others in trouble.

For instance, think about Samson. Samson was a strong man who was born

for the very purpose of delivering the Israelites from the Philistines. We are told in the Bible that in order for Samson to become strong, and stay that way, he could never cut his hair, touch a dead body or drink of the vine.

As Samson grew into adulthood we begin to see his lust for Philistine women was the **ONE THING** that he focused on more than anything else. In Judges 14:2, Samson came to his father and mother and told them what he had in mind:

"And he came up, and told his father and his mother, and said, I have seen a woman in Timnath of the daughters of the Philistines: now therefore get her for me to wife."

When his parents heard about the woman, they warned him NOT to marry her, but he would not listen. Samson married her in spite of their objections, and as a result of this union, well over 1,300 people lost their lives, including his wife and his father-in-law.

Some time later, Samson's **ONE THING** comes into play again as he nurtures a relationship with another Philistine woman, Delilah. His desire for Delilah was stronger than the reality of knowing that she was trying to trick him into revealing the secret of his strength. Eventually Samson perished along with 3,000 people, including the Lords of the Philistines, in the collapse of the pagan temple.

You see, Samson was in the very same predicament that King Ahab was—all he could think about was the **ONE THING** on his mind, even though it led to the destruction of so many.

I can't help but wonder, if Samson had known the outcome, would he have been able to let go of that **ONE THING** on his mind?

Is there something in your life that you are hanging onto? Possibly, your most

trusted friends have informed you that you need to let go and move on, but you have told yourself that you can't.

You have told yourself over and over again that nothing else in life really matters except the **ONE THING** you are hanging onto. And you are willing to lose friends and family members, if that is what it takes. In fact, you have told yourself, "I will do anything that is necessary to NOT let go of it."

Well it is quite possible that you may very well regret not letting go, particularly if your family and friends have advised you to do so.

Let's look at another story in the Bible that goes right along with the stories of King Ahab and Samson. It's the story about Adam and Eve.

God told Adam that he could eat from EVERY tree in the garden except ONE.

Genesis 2:16-17

"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it..."

Did God make Himself clear enough? He most certainly did, because later on He informed Eve about it, too.

However, we are told in Genesis 3:1 that the devil came along in the form of a serpent and had a meeting with Adam's wife, Eve.

"Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?"

And just like Eve, when the Devil comes along to tempt us, we sort of hang around and chit chat with him. We tell ourselves,

Continued on Next Page

“Surely I am strong enough to handle anything that comes my way!”

May I remind you that the Bible is clear about trusting in your own heart. Proverbs 28:26 says, *“He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool...”*

But none-the-less, Eve hung around and carried on a conversation with the Devil.

In the next two verses, Eve is going to tell the Devil that she and Adam are allowed to eat from ALL the trees in the garden EXCEPT the **ONE** which is in the middle of the garden. Let’s listen in on their meeting.

Genesis 3:2-3

“And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of [all] the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.”

Before we go further in our story, let's take a good look at what may have been taking place at this very moment:

1. It appears that Eve may NOT have been at Adam’s side and was alone when the Devil approached her.
2. Another thing that seems quite clear is that Eve was standing next to the forbidden fruit and may have been wondering how tasty and pleasant looking the fruit was.

Isn’t it interesting how Satan always knows exactly when to come along and tempt us; he knows just when to catch us off guard.

1. It happens at a time when we are walking outside of God’s protection.
2. It happens when we are at our weakest point spiritually.
3. It happens right when we are standing under our own tree of forbidden fruit.

No one knows just how much time went by after the Devil and Eve had their meeting. It could have been days and it could have been years. But one thing we do know, Eve must not have been able to get the **ONE TREE** out of her mind.

Again and again, she walked past the forbidden fruit, and each time she must have wondered to herself, “Oh, if only I could have one bite!” She may have had thoughts like, “Surely one bite is NOT as bad as eating the whole fruit.”

The Bible tells us that the day finally came and Eve just could NOT hold back another minute.

Genesis 3:6

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”

Again, I would like to make a point that was already made several times before in this article. When Eve and Adam finally took of the forbidden fruit, they brought unbelievable disaster to billions and billions of innocent lives.

If only Eve could have kept her eyes and mind off of the **ONE THING** she was not allowed to have, then...

1. Broken lives, diseases, sorrow, pain and death would never have had to happen.
2. Murder, hate, cursing God, lying, cheating, homosexuality and sexual abuse would never have had to happen.
3. Jesus would not have had to come and die on the cross to redeem God’s creation back to Him.
4. The pain of child bearing, sweat, thistles and weeds would never have been a problem.

5. Millions would not have had to go into eternity and spend forever in the Lake of Fire, separated from God for all eternity.

And, oh, so many other terrible and evil things would never have been IF ONLY Adam and Eve would have stayed away from the tree.

The Bible says in Romans 5:12, *“Wherefore, as by one man, sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”*

Yes! Just **ONE** person opened the flood door for sin to com into this world. But regardless of how terrible the story sounds, there is hope.

The Bible also says that because of **ONE** person, Jesus Christ, we can now also be saved from our sin and from being cast into the everlasting lake of fire.

Romans 5:18-19

*“Therefore as by the offence of **ONE** judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of **ONE**, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.*

*For as by **ONE** man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of **ONE** shall many be made righteous.”*

And dear reader, just like the Scripture points out, only Jesus can get us back on track and make us right with God. Nothing else can make us right.

The next portion of Scripture is one of the most welcomed and exciting passages for all of breathing man-kind. Please read carefully and understand what Almighty God is saying.

2 Corinthians 5:19-21

“...God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses [sin] unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation...be ye reconciled to God.

For he hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.”

Will you accept God’s required sacrifice and payment for sin, by believing that Jesus Christ, God’s only Son came and died, was buried and raised again the third day so that your sin could be paid for in full?

Just like the Scripture pointed out in Roman’s 5:18, to be delivered from your sin is a *free gift* and does not cost you anything. All you have to do is believe it.

Since we have been talking about **ONE** a lot, there is **ONE THING** I would like to point out to you, before we end this article, and that is, the Bible does point out in two places that there is **ONE THING** that we should focus on.

The first one is found in Psalms and the second one is found in Philippians.

In Psalms 27:4, David writes:

“ONE THING have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may

dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple.”

And later, in the New Testament, the Apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 3:13-14: *“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this ONE THING I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”*

—Author Unknown

God Has a Gift For You!

—by Joe Keim



Eternal life is free! It is a gift from God! You cannot buy it! You cannot earn it! It never stops giving! It has no end! It is forever!

Are you still searching for it? Do you have it? When did you receive it?

Romans 6:23 says, *“For the wages of sin is death; but the GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

Ephesians 2:8-9 says, *“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 3:24 says, *“Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.”*

If a person wants to be saved, these verses tell him or her how to be saved. Salvation is ALL the work of God, of God's grace and of God's grace alone. It is not of man, not to any degree whatsoever.

Titus 3:5 says, *“Not by works of righteousness which we have*

done, but according to His mercy He saved us...”

Salvation is a free gift of God. It is by grace alone that a person is saved. Man can do nothing whatsoever to save himself. He cannot earn, win, or merit salvation. All a person can do is accept the fact that God says He will save him and accept the free offer of salvation (Romans 11:6).

But before we go further, let’s stop and talk about what a gift is. A gift, no matter how valuable, must be received from the giver, before it becomes theirs. **Thousands of people die every year, having known all about the gift of eternal life but have never personally reached out and received it.** Some hear about the gift so many times that they could travel around the world and tell others all about it, **but just knowing about the gift is not going to make it theirs.** Each person must receive the free gift of eternal life personally, or they will die and spent an eternity in the lake of fire.

John 1:12 says, *“But as many as received Him [Jesus], to them gave He power [or the right] to become the sons [children] of God...”*

In other words, as many as reached out and took Jesus, received Him into their life; to those God gave the right to belong to His family.

1 John 5:12 says, *“He that hath the Son hath [eternal] life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not [eternal] life.”*

To have Jesus living in your heart is to have eternal life; to have eternal life is to have Jesus. You cannot have one without the other. So, the question we must ask ourselves is, have I accepted, received, or taken Jesus and His eternal Life?

When you understand these things more clearly, then the rest of

Continued on Next Page

the New Testament makes more sense, too. For instance, look at the following portions of God's Word:

Romans 8:9-11 says, "*But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 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 quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you.*"

The Spirit dwells within the believer, putting the Spirit of Christ within him. The word "dwell" is the picture of a home. The Holy Spirit dwells within the believer: He makes His home, takes up residence, and lives within the believer just as we live in our homes.

1 Cor. 3:16 asks the question, "*Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?*"

And again 1 Cor. 6:19 asks the question, "*What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?*"

Jesus, right before he went away, told His disciples in John 14:16-17, "*And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.*"

The world *cannot* receive the Holy Spirit. Note the word "cannot." It is impossible for the world to receive the Holy Spirit. The world lives only for what it can see and know, only for what it can touch, feel, and taste, only for what it can follow and belong to. And, don't be fooled into thinking that only non-Amish are of the world. Any person who is putting their trust in man-made religion and traditions of the forefathers for salvation is considered an unbeliever by Scripture - and of the world. Eternal Life does not come through a certain church denomination, nor does it come through baptism. It comes through Jesus Christ and Him alone! That is why we can say with assurance and confidence, that if the Holy Spirit dwells inside you and He dwells inside me, we are brethren in Christ; we belong to the same family. Being from different cultures, or belonging to different church denominations, or having different color skin, makes no difference (Rom 10:12).

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me hath everlasting life.

John 6:47

Romans 6:23 says "... *the GIFT of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*"

Anyone who has, at some point in the past, received Jesus Christ and made Him Lord of their life, also possesses eternal life today. However, maybe you are reading this today and in all honesty, you cannot remember of a time when you reached out and received eternal life through Jesus Christ. If that is the case, please read the next few verses very carefully and consider its powerful and everlasting truth. Jesus spoke these words:

John 5:24-26 says, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath [right now] everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the [spiritually] dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath [eternal] life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have [eternal] life in Himself;*"

1 John 5:12 says, "*He that hath the Son hath [eternal] life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not [eternal] life.*"

The consequences of not having Jesus Christ dwelling in you will be devastating at Jesus' return. In the next portion of scripture, the Apostle Paul outlines very clearly what will happen to those who don't know God and have not obeyed the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ:

2 Thessalonians 1:8-10 says, "*In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power: When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.*"

Will you receive the GIFT of eternal life today?

Romans 10:8-13 says, "*But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Who-soever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall*

call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

To those who already possess the GIFT of eternal life!

1 John 3:1-2 says, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons [children] of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”

Oliver Greene makes an excellent statement on this verse. He says, “What we shall be hereafter is not fully revealed, but we know that we are sons of God now and that we are predestined to be conformed to the image of His dear Son (Romans 8:29).

We shall be like him.” What is involved in this tremendous declaration we do not fully know now, and even if God had seen fit to explain it to us, we would not be able to understand it with our poor, limited, finite minds! Why do I say that? The Scriptures tell us that after His resurrection, Jesus ascended to the Father and then returned to earth again—perhaps in a matter of seconds. He entered a room where all doors were closed and the windows were locked, and appeared in the midst of His disciples (John 20:19-28). He invited them, “Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have...and they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them (Luke 24:36-43).”

—by Joe Keim

Consider

—by Ann Peachey Detweiler

It was one of those days. Everything was going wrong, I thought. The children were both sick and fussy, the work was piling up, and I wasn’t feeling the best myself.

I had spent most of the night comforting my son in vain, while I prayed that he’d settle and sleep for a few hours.

I was exhausted, physically and emotionally. It felt like God wasn’t really listening – He definitely wasn’t answering my prayer. Feelings of anger and frustration boiled up inside of me. God knew I needed my sleep too. God knew I was half sick myself. Why wasn’t He answering my prayer?

When life brings circumstances such as these, I naturally point fingers at God. It’s almost like I take Him by the throat and shake Him. I get angry because He isn’t doing anything to “make it better”.

Ridiculous, you say. And you’re right. It is terrible. After all, who am I to order God around?

As I thought about my attitude toward God and what steps I should take to actively change it, I came across a verse.

1Samuel 12:24 “*Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.*”

The last part of the verse especially convicted me.

God has done so much for me in the past. He has extended His mercy and love to me in so many ways. But here I am – pointing my fingers at Him and accusing Him of not caring, not listening, not answering my prayer.

It is only by the grace and mercy of God that I am where I am today. I could be in a thousand different situations. Literally.

How can I forget what I’ve been saved from?

A few years ago, as I was sitting in a counselor’s office with my husband-to-be, the counselor looked up from across his desk after hearing only a fraction of my story, and asked, “Why aren’t you a prostitute?”

I should be exactly opposite of who I am today. Statistically, with a history of abuse and self-destructive habits as I have, I should be a prostitute or a single mom with four kids to four different men.

If it wasn’t for the grace and mercy of God Almighty, that is who I would be today.

But I’m not. Instead, I am married to an amazing man of God. I love being his wife. I enjoy being a mom to his children, (most days, even though I’ll quickly admit

that it’s the toughest responsibility God has handed me so far). I love the community and church we are a part of.

And slowly, God is reshaping my view of Him and myself.

After only a few minutes of considering God and the great things He has done in my life, I repented of the ungrateful spirit that was causing me to question the goodness and sovereignty of God.

When I really take time to consider my life, I can see His fingerprints all over it.

My friend, you have a unique story too. God has a plan for you. Not an evil plan, but a good plan. Take heart. Consider the great things God has done for you in the past. And then trust Him for the future.

Remember that someday, whether it’s here or in Glory, you will look back and see His fingerprints in your life.



END

I Was Sexually Abused

—by Sarah

Why would cause a father to have a sexual relationship with his own daughter? How about the brother who takes advantage of his sister? For most of us, the thought is far removed. We cannot comprehend or fathom why. But the truth is, it is happening every day and all around us.

Do these men not know how selfish and sinful it is? Have they ever stopped long enough to consider the fact that they are destroying the lives of young innocent women?

What can you and I do to prevent it from happening? Would it help to hear from some of the women who fell victim to their father, a brother, an uncle or an acquaintance?

In a moment, we will read a true story, written by Sarah. Her desire is not only to share her own story, but also bring hope and healing to others who were forced to travel her painful journey. Will you pay close attention, and will you pray and reach out to others who you know have fallen victim? If so, Sarah's testimony was worth her time and effort.

— Joe Keim

Sarah writes:

When I was 16 years old, I was sexually assaulted by a boy I knew at the time.

It took me several weeks after the incident happened to realize that it was rape. Before this incident happened, I was under the impression that rape was only something that happened with a person that you didn't know. I was so ashamed about what happened to me that I was afraid to tell anyone. I was afraid that no one would believe me - that I was raped. I believed that it was my fault and I tried to keep it buried because I wanted to just forget that it ever happened.

I was traumatized by the assault and immediately became a completely

different person. I suffered from depression, anxiety and PTSD as a result of this incident. I struggled with drug abuse in an attempt to numb the emotional pain I was experiencing. When I was 19 years old, I became pregnant with my first child. Several months after my baby was born, I gave my life to Jesus Christ.

Even after I was saved, I still struggled with the mental and emotional effects of the trauma I endured. About 10 years after the assault, the memories of it and not healing from what happened began to come to the surface and I opened up to a close friend about what happened to me. She suggested I seek sexual abuse counseling.

I have been in and out of therapy for the last several years. God has brought me down a very long and difficult road of healing that is still a process for me. I am so grateful for the way that God has worked in my life to use what someone meant for evil as a way to help other people who have been through similar situations.

Before I started counseling, I could not even talk about what happened to me, but now I can because of God's healing in my life. Through the whole process He

has brought the right people in my life at the right time to support me and love me through this journey.

I never, at any point during the time following the assault, questioned God's existence. I did struggle with wondering where He was when this happened to me and why He did not stop it from happening. During my healing, I heard another assault victim explain her struggles with these same thoughts. She said that God helped her see that He was right there with her when it happened.

It has been a source of comfort to me to know that God has been with me to guide me and walk with me. God cares about and loves people who have been affected by sexual assault. God sent His Son to redeem us and make a way for us to know Him and be saved.

Jesus experienced horrific abuse when He went to the cross to lay down His life and make a way for our salvation and He did this because of His great love for us. There is hope and healing available for every person that is affected by sexual abuse. My life is evidence of this.

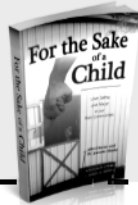
Romans 8:28: *“And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.”* --Sarah



Protecting Their Purity (\$13.00)
17 authors, many of whom have personally experienced abuse, provide Biblical encouragement and practical answers. They offer how-to, encouragement, and hope.



Restored (\$15.00)
These stories and “how-to” shine a ray of hope into the soul of abuse victims. The pain of the process is worth the joy of restoration.



For the Sake of a Child (\$10.00)
Passionately written, this book explains and explores the aspects of love, safety, and abuse within our Plain Communities. Some topics include: parenting, working with social services, foster care, and adoption.

To order, call (270) 886-6766
or, mail order to:

Love to Share Bookstore
848 Vaughns Grove Fairview Rd
Pembroke, KY 42266

Your name and address:

Circle the book(s) you wish to order. Please include \$5 for shipping.

Feedback and Response

To Whom it May Concern,

I do agree with some of your articles, like the one on homosexuality, but your view of voting for our country is not good. If you say that you are being a good citizen by voting, will you feel the same way when asked to help our government in other areas? If we get someone in office by our votes, and that person would decide to go to war, how could we say we want to be exempt from helping if we elected this person? The more we get involved in the government, the more will be expected of us. We can be good citizens by praying for our government and letting God take care of that. God never made any mistakes and never will (including who gets elected). — S. L., PA

S.L., Thank you for your letter and for expressing your concerns. The Bible does not teach us not to be involved in government, but simply that this world is temporary. Jesus told us to occupy until He comes. We are to do what we can while we are here. Jesus told us to give to Caesar what is his, and to God what is His. We see Joseph, Nehemiah, Ezra, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Mordecai, and others used by God in government. We can see godly men such as William Wilberforce who served God in politics to help end slavery. There have often been godly leaders who helped oppose evil and promote good.

Let's look at this another way. What if God gave you the opportunity in this nation to choose your own leader, and you had a choice between a candidate who persecuted Christians and one who supported biblical principles? What if you could vote and choose a candidate who worked to oppose abortion, but instead you did not vote, and the pro-abortion candidate won by a few votes. You might just be held responsible by God for not doing what you could to save the lives of those babies.

Certainly you should pray. However, if your house was on fire on a Sunday, and I drove up in a fire truck and got out and prayed, would I be pleasing God and doing what was right? Of course not. I would be foolish, uncaring, and letting legalism and self-righteousness prevent me from doing what I should.

Long ago, Noah Webster wrote an American history book in which he gave the children some advice: "When you become entitled to exercise the right of voting for public officers, let it be impressed on your mind that God commands you to choose for rulers, 'just men who will rule in the fear of God.' The preservation of [our] government depends on the faithful discharge of this Duty; if the citizens neglect their Duty and place unprincipled men in office, the government will soon be corrupted."

God gave us the freedom in this nation to choose our own leaders. If Christians do not vote, wicked people still will - and they will vote for wicked leaders. Those wicked leaders will promote sin and evil. Imagine if you had the opportunity to cast a deciding vote as to whether a man like Hitler would be elected. Would you vote and save the lives of millions, or would you sit home and refuse to take advantage of the freedom that God gave you to do good?

Voting does not obligate you to take part in all parts of government. It does not sign you up for military service. It simply allows you to cast a vote (while we still have the freedom to do so) for godly leaders and to vote against wicked leaders. It allows you to take a little step in opposing abortion and homosexuality and other sins that are supported by wicked leaders.

God sends the rains, and causes the crops to grow, and you trust Him to do so; yet you still go out and plow and plant and harvest the crops. What would you think of someone who never plowed or planted, but said that he was only going to stay home and pray, because God will provide food if it is His will? As Puritan Richard Sibbes said, "No man should pray without plowing, nor plow without praying." If you want freedom, if you want leaders - good leaders, then you must both pray and plow. Pray. Pray fervently. Pray often. And vote. We should not complain about our leaders if we do not do our duty. We ought to vote. We ought to pray. We ought to do what we can to tell the ungodly about Jesus so that they will turn from sin and turn to Him. Are you praying and plowing? — Paul Miller

We love hearing from our readers! We want to read your letters, testimonies, responses to our articles, suggestions, lessons that you have learned, and poems. We would even like to hear from you if you don't fully agree with one of our articles! Please write to us—and we will try to publish much of what you send.

You can write to us at the Amish Voice, 575 US Highway 250, Greenwich, OH 44837

As I'm writing this, we are experiencing world-wide panic regarding the Coronavirus. Some think it is blown way out of proportion (and it may be), while others are panicking and stocking up on aspirin, food, and enough household goods to last for several months.

What will the future bring? At this point, we can only watch and see. What we do know is that around 300,000 people have been infected, more than 10,000 have died, schools, churches, and many public places have been closed down, some store items are hard to find, many people are off work, and the stock market is falling fast. If this continues, things will certainly become interesting.

Some Facts About the Coronavirus

The Coronavirus (the exact strain of the virus is called COVID-19) likely originated in the country of China, although that hasn't been 100% confirmed at this point. The virus mutated (changed) and spread from animals to humans, even though it wasn't something humans could get sick from before. COVID-19 is thought to have first infected humans in an open market in the city of Wuhan, China. After it spread throughout China, it was carried by humans to other countries around the world, including the United States.

The Coronavirus is not that different from the flu, yet there are several things that make it different enough that some people are concerned:

- This virus originated from animals, likely from bats or perhaps pangolins (a type of scaly anteater).
- At this time, there is no known medical treatment for the virus.
- The virus has been mutating

(changing) and as it changes, it is getting worse, which makes it more dangerous than other viruses, simply because we don't know how it will change next.

- This virus is spreading around the world very fast, and the fear is that if it isn't stopped, it will infect millions and millions of people.

Other Similar Epidemics from the Past

The following is just a short list, but it is enough to show that this is not the first time that a strain of the flu has killed large numbers of people.

- In 2009, between 151,700 and 575,400 people died worldwide from the pandemic H1N1/09 virus.
- In 1968, 1,000,000 died worldwide from Influenza A H3N2.
- In 1957 – 1958, 2,000,000 died from Influenza A H2N2, worldwide.
- In 1918 – 1920, around 100,000,000 died from Influenza A H1N1, worldwide.

One thing that becomes clear from this list is that in the past, more people died from these viruses than they do now. Of course, this is a partial list, and each virus strain acts differently. It certainly is no guarantee of what may happen in the future. Yet, a logical conclusion is that as medicine further developed with time and governments learned to react faster, it helped to minimize the spreading of the viruses.

Getting Past the Facts, the Unknowns, and the Fears

There is so much information available that it is overwhelming. Who is right, and who is wrong? Is the government trying to

scare us on purpose? Should we obey the new "social distancing" laws or not? And should Christians even worry about things like this at all? It's easy to become afraid of things that we don't understand, and scripture makes it clear that we should not be anxious, but to take everything to the Lord in prayer.

**Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4:6-7**

Also, through all of this, Christians should be an example to others by respecting their government leaders. The following verse makes it clear that God put these people in control, and as such, God is also in control of their decisions. Even the government leaders themselves often do not realize this, but it's true, and it's why we should pray for them.

"Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." (Romans 13:1-2)

Several things are clear to me:

- We should respect and obey the government as long as it doesn't compromise our faith.
- We must not be anxious.
- We shouldn't complain.
- We must pray, not only that we won't

get sick ourselves, but also for our government and for those who are afraid – we should pray that people everywhere will put their trust in the Lord.

Prayer

Sometimes we know something but it's not truly real to us. We may *know* something, but not actually *do* something. For example, we may know that there is food in the refrigerator, but as long as we don't open the door to get the food, we won't be able to eat it. It doesn't help knowing that food is in the refrigerator, we actually have to get it out and eat it in order to enjoy the benefits.

Similarly, we know that God answers prayer, but yet we often don't pray with faith. Even after God has answered many prayers for me, I still sometimes doubt. Yet, God has answered many prayers when I truly, humbly, and wholeheartedly bring my requests to Him. Just one example: I have allergies and asthma, and often haven't been able to lie in bed at night because my nose and throat would start closing off so much that I'd have a hard time breathing. But after having others pray for me, the Lord would heal me so much that I could stop taking medications for a while. Why I didn't remain healed is unclear to me, but I suspect it was so that I'd have to humble myself, pray, and have others pray for me, time and again. We are often too proud to obey the commandment to pray. Pride is so sneaky, but I confess that is often what keeps me from truly praying.

"If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Has the Lord answered every one of my prayers? No, and I suspect sometimes that has been because of my own lack of faith

and prayer, and sometimes also because He had something bigger in mind than what I wanted.

What I do know is that we're told in the Bible to pray much. We're told to pray with faith, and we're told to pray for others, including our government and nations.

**I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority.
1 Timothy 2:1-2a**

Is God in Control of the Coronavirus?

It is so easy to blame people for problems, and sometimes we are indeed the cause of our problems. But scripture makes it clear that God allows things to happen to us to test our faith and loyalty to Him. God has bigger things in mind than our day-to-day comfort, and the reality is that if things sail along smoothly, it doesn't take very long, even for Christians, to forget to look for God for help.

"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things" (Isaiah 45:7).

"There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand" (Proverbs 19:21).

"Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (James 1:3).

James 1:3 is especially helpful, because it shows us that what is really happening is that our "faith is being tried," or tested. That is how God knows if we'll stay true to Him or not. What He really wants is for all people, from every background and of every color, to turn to Him in repentance and faith.

Will God Take Care of Us Financially?

We don't know yet how much the Coronavirus problem is going to cost us personally and as a country. Right now, with so many people out of work and businesses impacted as they are, it appears that the cost may be fairly significant. But, scripture makes it clear that God is in control of our finances, and we can truly depend on Him for everything we need.

"Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things" (Matthew 6:31-32).

Looking at This as an Opportunity to Serve the Lord

So many people are scared right now. This is an opportunity for the body of Christ to work together, to be a light to our communities, and to point people to Christ. Stand strong in faith, my friend, and do not be afraid to speak to others about Christ. He is the one we must lean on, and people are now more willing to hear than before. The words that come out of our mouth can be words of complaining and blaming. Or, the words that come out of our mouth could be a public demonstration of faith, of prayer, and of pointing others towards Jesus Christ, the Savior and Sustainer of the world.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:16).
—Jeremiah Zeiset

**Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear.
1 Peter 3:15**

Sermons and Testimonies over the Phone

Call in and listen to a variety of topics that cover things such as family, parenting, testimonies, and biblical teaching. Pick up

Dial-in Number: (641) 715-3800

Access Code: 478499 #

the phone, dial the number, and add the access code. Listen to a whole new set of messages every month!

May

Better Together, Part 3—Communication B

Good communication is about unity and mutual understanding, not about who is right or wrong. (Message by Duane Sheriff.)

Better Together, Part 4—Forgiveness

What is true communication? Did you know that you cannot hear if you are angry, hurt or defensive? Learn how to successfully communicate within your marriage, home, and life. (Message by Duane Sheriff.)

The Midnight Cry and the Rapture of the Church

Are you ready to hear, “Behold the Bridegroom cometh?” Adrian Rogers describes the who, what, when and why of Jesus’ exciting return for His own!

Living Free from Shame and Guilt (Part 1 of 2)

Jamie Ivey discusses the struggles she once experienced over guilt about her troubled past, and describes how she found freedom from shame in a discussion based on her book, *If You Only Knew: My Unlikely, Unavoidable Story of Becoming Free*. (Message from Focus on the Family.)

June

Better Together, Part 5—Finances

There are three important things to remember about marriage and finances: create and maintain a simplistic budget, while borrowing is not a sin; it’s not always wise, and if you can’t be at peace without it, you won’t be at peace with it! (Message by Duane Sheriff.)

Better Together, Part 6— Roles and Responsibilities

Roles in marriage are divinely designed. Husbands are to love their wives as themselves and wives are to respect their husbands. (Message by Duane Sheriff.)

Five Ways to Draw Closer to Jesus

We want an intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ, don’t we? We want more than redemption; we want a relationship. Listen as Adrian Rogers discusses five ways to draw closer to Jesus.

Living Free from Shame and Guilt (Part 2 of 2)

Jamie Ivey discusses the struggles she once experienced over guilt about her troubled past and describes how she found freedom from shame in a discussion based on her book, *If You Only Knew: My Unlikely, Unavoidable Story of Becoming Free*. (Message from Focus on the Family.)

July

Better Together, Part 7—Sex and Romance

We are called to cleave to our partner. Intimacy and romance in marriage is God-ordained. Intimacy and romance honor your wife and your husband. (Message by Duane Sheriff.)

Better Together, Part 8—Sex

The only safe sex is sex within marriage. Sex should be an expression of our love for one another. Sex is not love, but rather an expression of love. There is sex without love, but no love in marriage without intimacy. (Message by Duane Sheriff.)

Overcoming Emotions that Destroy—Rage: Understanding the Monster Within, Part 1

What can turn a normal, rational person into an out-of-control monster—destroying relationships, abusing children, spewing threats, and alienating lifelong friends? Join Chip Ingram as he reveals the source of that devastating power, and how to keep it under control.

Making Daily choices to Love Your Spouse

Ron and Deb DeArmond discuss the importance of being intentional when it comes to loving your spouse, and offer practical suggestions for how you can do so in a conversation based on their book, *I Choose You Today: 31 Choices to Make Love Last*. (Message from Focus on the Family.)

Does God Expect Christians to Vote?

—by www.gotquestions.org

It is our contention that it is the duty and responsibility of every Christian to vote and to vote for leaders who promote Christian principles. God is most certainly in control, but that does not mean we should do nothing to further His will. We are commanded to pray for our leaders. “*I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth*” (1 Timothy 2:1-4).

In terms of politics and leadership, there is evidence in Scripture that God has been displeased with our choices of leadership at times. “*They have set up kings, but not by me: they have made princes, and I knew it not: of their silver and their gold have they made them idols, that they may be cut off*” (Hosea 8:4).

The evidence of sin’s grip on this world is everywhere. Much of the suffering on earth is because of godless leadership. “*When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise, a man is hidden*” (Proverbs 28:12).

Scripture gives Christians instructions to obey legitimate authority unless it contradicts the Lord’s commands. “*And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them, Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us. Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men*”. (Acts 5:27-29) “*Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of*

God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake. For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour” (Romans 13:1-7).

As born-again believers, we ought to strive to choose leaders who will be themselves led by our Creator.

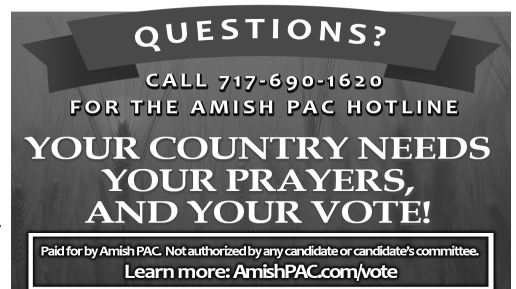
“*Now therefore behold the king whom ye have chosen, and whom ye have desired! and, behold, the LORD hath set a king over you. If ye will fear the LORD, and serve him, and obey his voice, and not rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall both ye and also the king that reigneth over you continue following the LORD your God: But if ye will not obey the voice of the LORD, but rebel against the commandment of the LORD, then shall the hand of the LORD be against you, as it was against your fathers. Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. Is it not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king. So*

Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel. And all the people said unto Samuel, Pray for thy servants unto the LORD thy God, that we die not: for we have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king. And Samuel said unto the people, Fear not: ye have done all this wickedness: yet turn not aside from following the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart; And turn ye not aside: for then should ye go after vain things, which cannot profit nor deliver; for they are vain. For the LORD will not forsake his people for his great name’s sake: because it hath pleased the LORD to make you his people. Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way: Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye shall still do wickedly, ye shall be consumed, both ye and your king” (1 Samuel 12:13-25).

—Continued on top of next page,



REGISTER TO VOTE TODAY



Candidates or proposals that violate the Bible's commands for life, family, marriage, or faith should never be supported. *Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people* (Proverbs 14:34). Christians should vote as led through prayer and study of both God's Word and the realities of the choices on the ballot.

Christians in many countries in this world are oppressed and persecuted. They suffer under governments that they are powerless to change and governments that hate their faith and silence their voices. These believers preach the gospel of Jesus Christ

at the risk of their own lives. In the U.S.A., Christians have been blessed with the right to speak about and

choose their leaders without fearing for themselves or their families. In the U.S.A., in recent elections, about 2 of every 5 of self-professed Christians took that right for granted and did not vote. About 1 in 5 self-professed, eligible Christians are not even registered to vote.

In our day and age, there are many who want to drive the name and message of Christ completely out of the public arena. Voting is an opportunity to promote, protect, and preserve godly government. Passing up that opportunity means letting

those who would denigrate the name of Christ have their way in our lives. The leaders we elect—or do nothing to remove—have great influence on our freedoms. They can choose to protect our first amendment right to religious freedom and the right to spread the gospel, or they can restrict those rights. They can lead our nation toward righteousness or toward moral disaster. As Christians, we should stand up and follow our command to fulfill our civic duties *“They say unto him, Caesar’s. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s”* (Matthew 22:21).

END

How Can I Be Sure I've Been Born Again?

Of course, *claiming* to believe that Jesus is the Christ is not proof that one actually does believe. I know that, because I publicly claimed that I believed in Jesus when I was confirmed as a church member at age 12. Looking back, I realize that I really didn't believe what I claimed to believe. If I had truly believed in Jesus, I would have been spiritually reborn and would have become a new creature—just as Jesus promised—and *I would have started acting like it*. The New Testament teaches that there are two primary marks that identify those who are genuinely born again:

- (1) *“If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that everyone that doeth righteousness is **born of Him**.... Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is **born of God**”* (1 John 2:29; 3:9, emphasis added).
- (2) *“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is **born of God** and knoweth God”* (1 John 4:7, emphasis added).

The first identifying mark of those who are born of God is that they practice righteousness and do not practice sin (1 John 2:29; 3:9). That is, they consistently do what is right. They are not perfect, and they may sometimes stumble (see James 3:2), but their lives are characterized by righteousness and holiness. Those whose lives are characterized by sin and unrighteousness are not born again. As Paul warned in his letter to the Corinthians:

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God” (1 Cor. 6:9-11).

Take note that Paul credited the transformed lives of the Corinthian Christians, not to human efforts to reform, not to fence laws, nor to church membership. Rather, he credited God's Spirit. The Corinthian believers had been “washed,” “sanctified” (set apart for holy use) and “justified” (declared righteous)

by the work of God, not by the work of man. They had been born again!

The second identifying mark of those who are born of God is that they love others who are born again (1 John 4:7)—those who are fellow members of their spiritual family and who have the same Heavenly Father. If they mock, resist or don't want to associate with those who are born again, it proves they are not born again. As John also wrote:

*“We know that we **have passed from death unto life**, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death...If a man say, ‘I love God,’ and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”* (1 John 3:14; 4:20, emphasis added)

How tragic it is when people who profess to be Christians shun or disassociate themselves from family members who are born again. By their actions, they demonstrate that they are not Christians, but just religious.

The love that born-again people have for their spiritual family also motivates them to make sacrifices for members facing hardships. Jesus' foretelling of the future judgment of the sheep and goats makes

that ever so clear (see Matt. 25:31-46). To not care for the “least of these” among Christ’s brethren is to not care for Jesus. As John echoed:

“Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in Him?” (1 John 3:16-17).

The Assurance of Salvation

Notice that so many of the passages I’ve quoted from the Bible are from the apostle John’s first letter. John wrote that letter to help his readers ascertain, by self examination, if they were truly born again and genuinely possessed eternal life. Near the end of that letter he wrote:

“These things I have written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:13).

It is not only possible to know that you have eternal life and are born again, it is the normal experience of every true Christian. To say that we can’t know if we have eternal life or if we are born again is to take sides against the Bible.

To claim that people are born again simply because they are water baptized, even though they continue to live sinful lives or don’t love born-again people, is also to contradict the Bible. Baptism is a *symbolic picture* of being born again, not a *means* to be born again. New believers should be baptized, yes, and they should be told that their baptism represents their death, burial and cleansing resurrection to a new life—as spiritually reborn children of God. But those who are baptized without genuine faith in Jesus are like dry pigs who temporarily become wet pigs! They are still pigs!

A Gradual Rebirth?

Occasionally, I’ve encountered religious people who tell me their church teaches that Christians are gradually born again over their lifetimes. This, too, is an idea that you will never find in the Bible. Consider the many Scripture passages I’ve already cited that make some reference to being “born again,” “born of God,” “born of the Spirit,” “passing from death to life,” and so on. Most of them make it abundantly clear that the new birth, like the physical birth of a child, is an event that takes place in a relatively short amount of time.

The apostles wrote to the early Christians as if they had already been born again at some point in the past, not as if they were gradually being born again throughout their span of their lives.

For example, Peter wrote:

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead” (1 Pet. 1:3, emphasis added).

“Being born again [past tense], not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever” (1 Pet. 1:23, emphasis added).

If you encountered an adult who said, “I can’t say that I’ve been born yet, but I believe I’m gradually being born over the course of my life,” you’d have to conclude that person doesn’t understand the plain meaning of the word “born.”

Similarly, the person who claims he is gradually being born again over the course of his life does violence to the simple word “born.” Moreover, he clearly has not investigated what the Bible says on the topic of the new birth and has no idea what it actually means to be born again.

What About You?

Have you experienced a life-changing spiritual rebirth so significant that you view the span of your life so far as “pre-born-again” and “post-born-again”? Has your inward nature changed so that, more than anything else, you want to please God? Do you look at God as your Heavenly Father rather than as “the Man Upstairs” or the distant God whom you sing about on Sunday mornings? Have your eyes been opened to see God’s kingdom, and do you consider all of those who have been born again to be your spiritual brothers and sisters? Are you sure that when you die, you will enter God’s kingdom?

If you cannot answer “yes” to all of those questions, then there is one thing you must do: You must believe in Jesus:

“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” (John 3:16).

If you believe in Him as He has revealed Himself in the Bible—as the Son of God, the Creator of the Universe, the Future Judge before whom everyone will stand and give an account—He will become your Lord. Your life and eternity will dramatically change.

Don’t wait until you are in hell to finally take Jesus’ solemn words—*“You must be born again”*—as serious as He intended for you to take them. Don’t wait another second! Fall on your knees and pray to the God who created you, loves you, and who will re-create you! —David Miller

The author welcomes thoughtful discussion of his article through written correspondence, phone conversation, or in person. Please feel free to contact him:

David Miller
P.O. Box 33
Smicksburg, PA 16256
(412) 722-3075

Receiving duplicate mailings?

Please note your correct name and address and return all labels to the Amish Voice

Moving?

Please send us your new address

Not interested in the Amish Voice?

Please remove the label from your newsletter, mail it to 575 US Highway 250, Greenwich, OH 44837, and we will take you off the active list. **Without the label, we are unable to remove your address from the active list.**

Current Resident

Non Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Ashland, Ohio
Permit No. 188

What Does it Really Mean to be Born Again? Part 2

—By David Miller

The Difference

People who are born again are radically different than they were before they were born again. From the moment of their spiritual rebirth, they immediately see themselves and others differently. They know that every person is either born again or not born again, a new creation or not a new creation. The first thing that enters their minds when they see or meet a new person is, “Are they born again or not?” They want everyone to experience the same rebirth that they’ve experienced.

When religious people experience a spiritual rebirth, they no longer look at the world as consisting of everyone who is in their religious group and everyone who is not. Again, they realize that there are only two categories of people in God’s eyes—those who have been born again and those who have not been born again. When religious people are born again, they are immediately concerned about everyone who is not born again, especially those within their religious group. They can’t keep quiet about it any more than they could keep quiet if they saw their neighbor’s house on fire — because people who are not born again are on the road to hell—unless Jesus was

lying when He said, “*Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God*” (John 3:3).

Spiritual rebirth is just one of numerous *immediate* blessings God pours out upon those who believe in His Son. God forgives their sins, makes them His children, gives them the gift of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and promises them eternal life. These blessings are like birthday gifts, but gifts that are given at birth!

How Can I Be Born Again?

Babies in the womb can’t birth themselves. They are birthed by the action of their mothers. Similarly, no person can cause himself to be born again. Spiritual rebirth is the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit. This is why the New Testament refers to those who have been born again as people who are “*born of the Spirit*” (John 3:6, 8) and “*born of God*” (1 John 3:9; 4:7; 5:1). Being born again is a divine miracle that no one can fully understand or explain.

The Holy Spirit, however, doesn’t regenerate people’s spirits arbitrarily. He regenerates the spirits of those who believe in Jesus. John wrote, “*Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ*

[Messiah] *is born of God*” (1 John 5:1, emphasis added).

John also wrote, “*For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*” (1 John 5:4, emphasis added). Faith is the key that opens the door to being “*born of God*” and “*overcoming the world*” (that is, not living like the people of the world who are not born again).

Similarly, and just a few seconds after telling Nicodemus that he must be born again, Jesus told him:

“*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*” (John 3:16, emphasis added).

It is simply by believing in Jesus that eternal life and spiritual rebirth is gained. If we had lived sinless lives of perfection, perhaps we would not need to be born again, and perhaps we might have earned eternal life; but sinners, like all of us, need forgiveness and transformation. The New Testament repeatedly reveals that these things are graciously granted to those who believe in Jesus.

Continued on Page 14