



# The Amish Voice

MAP ♦ P.O. Box 128 ♦ 575 U.S. Highway 250 ♦ Savannah, OH 44874 ♦ (419) 962-1515 ♦ July 2016

## My Story, Part 1

—By Emanuel Schrock

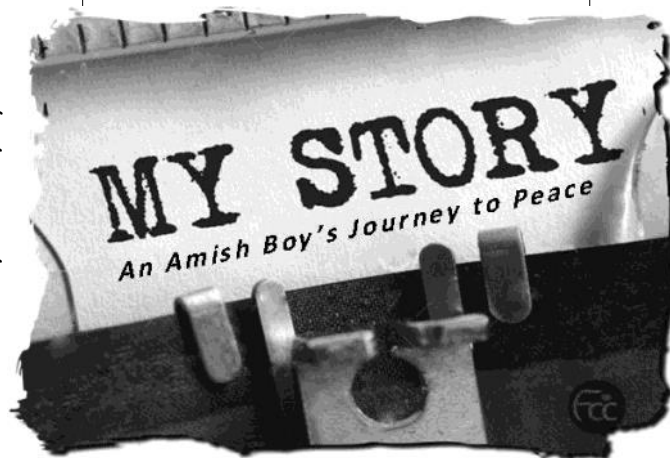
Welcome to part one of Emanuel Schrock's true life story.

### 1. Church

The sound of the steady beat of Betty's hooves on the pavement mingle with the soft, rumbling din of the family buggy wheels. It's a sound that is so much a part of who I am that it is like music in the background of my life, constantly reminding me of who I am and what I belong to: I am Amish, not by choice, but by birth. I was born into a family of twelve, and since my parents and grandparents were Amish, fate had already decided that I was destined to be Amish as well – like it or not.

To me it is strange how this works: Except in a few rare cases, the only way to be Amish is to be born that way, and the only way to stop being Amish is to become a sinner and turn one's back on everything one has been taught. It is as though a sheepfold has been prepared in which exists the one true way to live and the right way to please God; to be born into that fold is to be privileged and chosen above the rest of the world. One is on the right road to God because of his Amish birth and not by choice.

Being Amish, then, becomes your life, and to you, nothing else matters more. Your existence becomes a life-long mission of preserving this precious heritage into which you were born and had no part in creating. You accept it



without question as the right way, simply because your ancestors have always done it this way. You trust that somewhere in the history of your heritage there was a person who had the authority and the information to know what way in life is the right way; that he had some special revelation of God or a deep insight into the ways of righteousness that gave him the right and power to create this blessed fold into which you were born, and in which, if you remain, you are assured

that you are safely on the right road to being in favor with God. This is the Amish way.

It is Sunday morning and my family is on the way to church. I am nestled in the front seat of the buggy with my father, who is driving, and my two brothers. My mother and my sisters are in the back seat. Dad is sitting silently on the edge of his seat with a blank expression on his face. Mom is giving occasional orders to the young girls on how to be behave, while chatting with my older sister in anticipation of meeting with the other women at church.

In my mind, I am secretly dreading the ordeal of church. Why couldn't today be an in-between Sunday? There were a few things about church that I didn't mind. I enjoyed some of the singing, and if there was a good preacher, I enjoyed the preaching as well. But generally, going to church was a matter of waiting for the day to be over. I didn't really fit in with my friends very well, and I didn't try very hard to. I was a quiet thinker, and would

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rather be left alone than be with others.

Today's church service is no different than it has always been. After waiting in the barn until it is time to go to the house, I follow the line of boys behind the grown men into the living room where the service takes place.

The German hymnbooks are passed and soon the singing starts. The slow, mellow singing drags on and I wonder what the words are saying. As I sit there, my mind wanders to the two weeks that have passed since the last church service. Where did they go? What had become of my resolutions and promises to myself and God that I would do better after leaving church? Every time I sit here and hear the preachers speak of the righteousness and the judgment of God, I am convicted of my sins, and I promise myself I will do better. I hear the bishop's thundering messages on hell and the awful fate of those who fail to please God, and I am desperate to make it to heaven. I promise myself that I will live better, that I will do whatever I must in order to make it; yet I can't put my finger on what it is that I need to do. I know I have shortcomings and faults in my life for which I feel guilty. I am constantly angry with my siblings; my temper often gets out of control. I swear all the time, and my mind is often filled with awful thoughts of lust. I know all these things are bad, but still, I have a hard time thinking of them as bad enough to make me deserve hell. In my mind, I am not worse than most of the Amish members of the church who are sitting in the room with me, and I would think most of them would be good enough to make it to

heaven. If not, what is the use of being Amish? Is this not what the Amish way is all about—to make a person good enough to please God? Yet I can't shake this uneasy fear inside of me—this feeling of being distant from God, and feeling His anger and judgment over me.

As I sit there, I once again promise myself that next week will be different, that this time I will surely do my best to improve my life to a condition that is acceptable to God. Until then, I desperately hope and pray that my life will not be snuffed out and I must go to meet God. I tremble at the thought.

The singing is finally over, and one of the preachers gets to his feet to preach the first sermon of the day. He begins in the normal way: the greeting, the wish of God's blessing and grace on all present, and the reminder that we are still in the land of preparation. Then he quotes the familiar verses that are always, without fail, recited by all the preachers. Even though I have heard the words a hundred times, they once again wash over my soul with a glimmer of hope:

**Psalm 106:1** *Danket dem HERRN; denn er ist freundlich, und seine Güte währet ewiglich.*

*2 Wer kann die großen Taten des HERRN ausreden und alle seine löblichen Werke preisen?*

*3 Wohl denen, die das Gebot halten und tun immerdar recht!*

*4 HERR, gedenke mein nach der Gnade, die du dem Volk verheißten hast; beweise uns deine Hilfe,*

*5 daß wir sehen mögen die Wohlfahrt*

*deiner Auserwählten und uns freuen, daß es deinem Volk wohl geht, und uns rühmen mit deinem Erbteil.*

Interpreted in English:

**Psalm 106:1** *Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*

*2 Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord? who can shew forth all his praise?*

*3 Blessed are they that keep judgment, and he that doeth righteousness at all times.*

*4 Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people: O visit me with thy salvation;*

*5 That I may see the good of thy chosen, that I may rejoice in the gladness of thy nation, that I may glory with thine inheritance.*

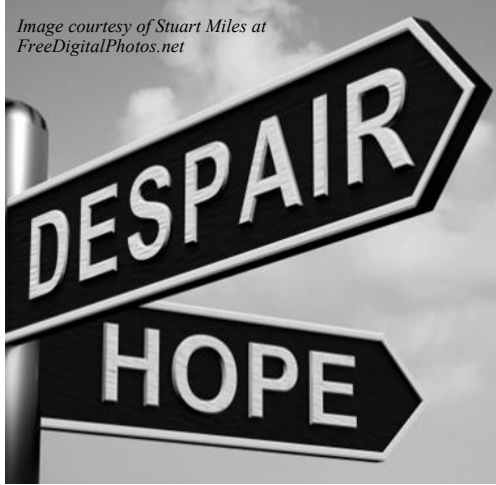
*Thank God, for he is friendly, and his goodness endures forever.* The words have a reassuring effect on me. God is friendly and good after all. To me, God is a constant reminder of my failure and guilt, and I'm afraid of Him, yet the Scriptures say that He is friendly and good.

I almost believe it.

*Blessed are those who keep the commandment, and always do right.* This verse always brings me a mixture of hope and despair. Hope, because it contains the answer, the secret that I have been looking for. If only I can keep the

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commandment and always do right, I'll be blessed by God. Despair, because so far I have not been able to keep the commandment to my own satisfaction, let alone God's. It is as though the great mountain of doing right and keeping the commandment is always a steep climb ahead of me, and I never see the top of the mountain. I desperately want to do what's right and good. I want to please God and want Him to be pleased with me; yet it always remains just ahead of me, just outside of my reach. It always remains at the end of my promises to do better, and I never reach it.

The preacher has now begun another familiar passage of Scripture. The words flow from his mouth in simple eloquence; they are so familiar to him, he says them without thinking:

**Psalm 103:1** *Ein Psalm Davids. Lobe den HERRN, meine Seele, und was in mir ist, seinen heiligen Namen!*

**2** *Lobe den HERRN, meine Seele, und vergiß nicht, was er dir Gutes getan hat:*

**3** *der dir alle deine Sünden vergibt und heilet alle deine Gebrechen,*

Interpreted in English:

**Psalm 103:1** *Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*

**2** *Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:*

**3** *Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases;*

The words of the Bible once again bring a ray of comfort to my tormented soul. *Who forgives all your sins, and heals all your sicknesses.* This sounds so much like what I am looking for; it seems to match so perfectly to that of which I stand in need. I wonder what the conditions are to qualify for this blessing of having one's sins forgiven. What gave the Psalmist the confidence to say that God has forgiven his sins? How did he know?

The words continue:

**8** *Barmherzig und gnädig ist der HERR, geduldig und von großer Güte.*

**9** *Er wird nicht immer hadern noch ewiglich Zorn halten.*

**10** *Er handelt nicht mit uns nach unsern Sünden und vergilt uns nicht nach unsrer Missetat.*

Interpreted in English:

**8** *The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy.*

**9** *He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever.*

**10** *He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*

*Merciful and gracious is the Lord; patient, and of great goodness. He does not deal with us after our sins, and does not reward us according to our iniquities.*

I wonder if these words are for me, or if they were written only for the rest of the world. Did God even care enough about me to know what sins I had that needed to be forgiven? Even though I didn't dare believe the words, still they brought me comfort and a sense of relief. It was

comforting to know that even though I wasn't sure how to make it happen, God was willing to forgive and to show mercy and goodness. It was a relief to hear from a secure and authoritative source that God was still open to receive me and forgive my sins. I wondered how and when it would happen. How would I know when God has forgiven me? How long would I have to wait?

**11** *Denn so hoch der Himmel über der Erde ist, läßt er seine Gnade walten über die, so ihn fürchten.*

**12** *So ferne der Morgen ist vom Abend, läßt er unsre Übertretungen von uns sein.*

**13** *Wie sich ein Vater über Kinder erbarmt, so erbarmt sich der HERR über die, so ihn fürchten.*

Interpreted in English:

**11** *For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.*

**12** *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.*

**13** *Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him.*

Once again, the words are powerful and sound wonderful, but I don't dare believe them. I have no trouble believing that God forgives sins and removes them from people, but I can't believe He did it for me. Sure, I believe God *can* do it, but I just take it to mean that God is able to if He wants to and if the right conditions are met. I feel like I will never arrive at the place where I fear God enough for Him to show mercy and grace to me.

The first preacher, after preaching for a while, sits down. After a portion of Scripture is read by the deacon, the bishop rises to preach the main sermon. After reciting the same

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sayings and Bible verses that have already been said by the first preacher and the deacon, he begins to expound on the Scripture that has been chosen by Amish tradition to be his subject.

Today's Scripture readings are out of Christ's *Sermon on the Mount*. The deacon has read one chapter, and now the bishop is expounding on his portion of Scripture.

**Matthew 5:17** *Ihr sollt nicht wahnen, da ich gekommen bin, das Gesetz oder die Propheten aufzulosen; ich bin nicht gekommen, aufzulosen, sondern zu erfullen.*

**18** *Denn ich sage euch wahrlich: Bis da Himmel und Erde zergehe, wird nicht zergehen der kleinste Buchstabe noch ein Tuttel vom Gesetz, bis da es alles geschehe.*

**19** *Wer nun eines von diesen kleinsten Geboten auflost und lehrt die Leute also, der wird der Kleinste heien im Himmelreich; wer es aber tut und lehrt, der wird gro heien im Himmelreich.*

**20** *Denn ich sage euch: Es sei denn eure Gerechtigkeit besser als der Schriftgelehrten und Pharisaer, so werdet ihr nicht in das Himmelreich kommen.*

#### Interpreted in English:

**Matthew 5:17** *Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*

**18** *For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.*

**19** *Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be*

*called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

**20** *For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

The words pressed down on me, and I squirmed with discomfort on the hard bench. *Not a single letter will pass from the law till all will be fulfilled.* I wondered what Jesus meant when He said that. Who would be the one fulfilling the law? Was I supposed to be the one responsible for fulfilling the law to the letter? This looked like a mountain of impossibility. No one I knew was able to keep the law, especially not to the letter. No one I knew even claimed to keep the law. In fact, everyone, including the bishop, readily confessed that they fell far short of keeping it. If even the preachers were sinners and didn't keep the law, what hope was there for me? The seriousness of where I would spend eternity was so real, I wanted desperately to do something—anything—to make sure I ended up in the right place.

*Except your righteousness is better than the scribes and the Pharisees, you will not enter into the kingdom of heaven.*

These words added to my feeling of hopelessness. I knew I wasn't better than the Pharisees, and how would I know when I was? What could I do to make sure that I was better than they were? I didn't know, except to keep trying. Once again, I promised myself that I would do better, that this time I would really get serious about living a better life.

The bishop continued, quoting the words from memory:

**Matthew 7:13** *Gehet ein durch die enge Pforte. Denn die Pforte ist weit, und der Weg ist breit, der zur Verdammnis abfuhrt; und ihrer sind viele, die darauf wandeln.*

**14** *Und die Pforte ist eng, und der Weg ist schmal, der zum Leben fuhrt; und wenige sind ihrer, die ihn finden.*

#### Interpreted in English:

**Matthew 7:13** *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:*

**14** *Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.*

The question of my life was whether I was on the narrow road that leads to life or on the broad one that leads to damnation. The problem was, I didn't know. Certain days I was satisfied enough with my life that I thought maybe I was on the right road, but then I would do, say, or think something that would cause me to question whether I was. Sometimes I wished that I would at least know that I was on the broad road. That way I would know where I was headed and could do something about it. This uncertainty and constant wondering if I was headed for heaven or hell was miserable and hopeless, and I longed for a way to know for certain.

I was told that the Amish way is the narrow way that leads to life. Sometimes I believed it, but most of the time I questioned it. If it really was, then why is there no Amish person who knows whether he is going to heaven or hell? More personally, since I was Amish, why didn't I have confidence that I was on the right road? I guessed maybe I just wasn't a good enough Amish person, or that maybe it was because I hadn't yet joined the church. Yet, when I saw my Amish friends and neighbors, I got the feeling they didn't know where they were headed, either. I hoped the Amish way was not what Jesus meant, because I was Amish and I wasn't convinced that I was on it, and I didn't want my entire life to

be a big question mark of where I would spend eternity.

Finally, the bishop neared the end of his sermon and began to read the customary ending chapter. I knew the words by heart:

**Matthew 7:21** *Es werden nicht alle, die zu mir sagen: HERR, HERR! ins Himmelreich kommen, sondern die den Willen tun meines Vaters im Himmel.*

22 *Es werden viele zu mir sagen an jenem Tage: HERR, HERR! haben wir nicht in deinem Namen geweissagt, haben wir nicht in deinem Namen Teufel ausgetrieben, und haben wir nicht in deinem Namen viele Taten getan?*

23 *Dann werde ich ihnen bekennen: Ich habe euch noch nie erkannt; weicht alle von mir, ihr Übeltäter!*

Interpreted in English:

**Matthew 7:21** *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

22 *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?*

23 *And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*

These verses always scared me. I knew that someday I would die and I would stand before God to be judged. I tried not to think about it too much, but I knew that I couldn't keep it from happening. Time would tick away, and even if I lived to be old, death would get me sooner or later. Every time I was faced with the issue of the judgment, I searched my mind for the right way to prepare myself for that event. I was desperate not to

arrive at that place without being prepared for it. There was nothing I wanted more than to be in that small crowd on God's right hand, hearing the words, *Well done, thou good and faithful servant*. Yet, when I searched my life for something that could provide me with the assurance that I would hear those words, I couldn't find enough evidence to convince me.

*Not everyone who says LORD! LORD! will enter into the kingdom of heaven, but those who do the will of my Father in heaven.* I wanted to do the will of God, but I wasn't exactly sure how. I knew that He required me to live a good life, but I wasn't sure that I was good enough. When I looked at the list of people who didn't make it, I was scared. *Have we not prophesied in your name? Have we not cast out devils in your name? Have we not done many wonderful works in your name?* I didn't even come close to doing those things. If these people were spiritual enough to do the good things they did, and still God said that He didn't know them, what hope was there for me?

I longed to know God. I wanted Him to be more personal and more approachable. I wished I could get on His good side and know that I was. I longed to be accepted by Him, to know that He was pleased and not angry with me.

The bishop finished the chapter, and after a few closing remarks, sat down to hear the other ministers give testimony that what he had preached was founded on God's word. After they finished, he rose, made some more remarks, and then we knelt for the long prayer.

The long prayer meant different things for different people. For some, it meant a good time to take a much-needed nap. For some of the boys, it meant a time to whisper and poke each other and do the rowdy things that were expected from them if they were cool. For me, it was something to be endured. The prayer was read from a book, in words that were

difficult to understand. Even though the prayer was a better one than I could ever pray (or even the preacher, for that matter), it was read in a tone of voice that made God seem far away and out of touch with reality. I wanted God to be near, and not just some far-off God that must be approached with a perfect prayer from a book. Yet, I myself didn't know how to pray. I didn't even know if God heard my prayers.

After the bishop's blessing to the congregation, another slow hymn was sung and then church was dismissed. Like a tidal wave, black hats flew to the heads of their owners the instant that the last word of the song was finished, and the boys and young men rushed out the door. We waited around the barn, trying to tell jokes and laugh until it was announced that lunch was ready. After eating *bohne soup und lattveig brott* (*bean soup and apple butter bread*) and waiting impatiently until Dad was done visiting with the men, the family was once again seated in the buggy, and Betty was trotting patiently homeward. I was once again in the front seat as I had been so many times before, thinking about the day and what had been said. Once again the questions pushed into my mind, and I wearily shoved them aside. Already, though, I could sense that my promises to do better were fading and becoming weaker. The timely warnings and the reminders of righteousness and judgment and thoughts of eternity somehow seemed less serious now that church was over. The strange and scary thing was, I discovered that I didn't care.

—Emanuel Schrock

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**This is the end of Part One. You can read Part Two in the next issue.**

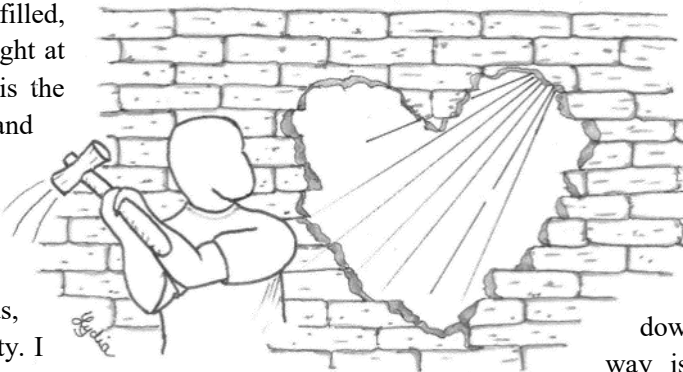


Good morning from gorgeous Kentucky! I have some things on my heart that I am excited to share with you! That being said, let's just dive right in. I have a lot of friends in a lot of different places, and I have listened to quite a few women. As you know, many of us women face similar issues. Many of us feel trapped in various circumstances beyond our control. The enemy loves to make women feel trapped and unfulfilled.

Nothing makes a woman more anxious, angry, frustrated, and overwhelmed than when she feels trapped and unfulfilled, especially if she does not see the light at the end of the tunnel. When this is the case, you begin to feel hopeless, and you respond from that hopelessness and the fear, anger, and frustration that go along with it. This spills over to our husbands, children, families, and friends, creating something like a principality. I am not judging you for where you are. I am only now seeing some of this as the attack it is—upon women and their families. I am currently in the process of facing it head on and tearing down this stronghold or principality, so I just want to write about this now.

God revealed an area in my life recently in which I was bound by fear. I felt trapped and hopeless by the things others were doing that affected me and I saw no way through it or around it, and nothing I was doing seemed to be working. I was afraid I would never make progress in my life and never achieve my dreams. When He revealed this fear and removed it from

me, I saw the truth that by using the right keys, I can tear down principalities that are over me. It was like a whole world opened to me. You see, what had bound me to fear was the belief that others could control my success in life! I knew that we don't wrestle against flesh and blood, but against spirits. I knew that I could wage warfare and tear down strongholds in my life, but I didn't realize that by using the correct keys, I could also tear down the strongholds that bind others around me and influence me!



For example, let's say there is someone in your life, perhaps your husband or a son, who struggles with anger, and can fly into a rage at the drop of a hat. If you believe you have no power or authority over this, you will feel like a victim; you will feel trapped! When we feel trapped, we will do one of several things. 1. We will fight back, creating more anger and abuse. 2. We will run, which gives that anger more control. 3. We will react in some other way that isn't healthy. Any of these ways will result in giving the anger more room to grow and becoming more serious and abusive.

HOWEVER!! Listen to this: If you realize you are not fighting flesh and blood—in other words, you are not fighting a person, but a spirit of anger—you can remain in love to the person you love, while you attack the spirit of anger by disarming it. *Disarm* means to remove the power from something. So, if you know the way you usually respond is to run in fear, you need to stand up to it, but in love. If your reaction is normally to respond back in anger, you need to respond calmly, with respect, and appeal

to the person's emotions without anger or fear lacing your words.

We need to listen to God—He will give us wisdom; but the important thing is to disarm it by not responding in a way that gives it power.

This is only one way we tear down principalities. Another major way is that when we realize we are fighting a spirit, we can pray against that spirit by asking God's Spirit to come and bring light to the situation. We have so much power when we realize we are not fighting people!

When we are no longer living out of a victim mentality, but realize our power, we are allowing Jesus to fight our battles! We can save our breath and energy for important things, and let go and let God fight our battles for us. What freedom! I hope this empowers you as much as it did me. You are not a victim! Go forward in who you are today, Mighty Warrior Princess! —Norma Miller



## Do you struggle with lust or other sins and addictions?

*To Kill a Lion*, written by Bruce Lengeman, is designed to help men find the roots of their sexual addiction. The theme is, "Men cry out, 'I know it is wrong, but why can't I stop!'" The book is for both counselors and strugglers. *To Kill a Lion* will help men understand their

own sexuality and what makes it operate "out of alignment" with God's design. You'll learn why it is healthy to be sexual as a man, but in a pure and Godly way. Though this book was not written for women, many are reading it and getting understanding of things they never knew about sexuality.

To order, call MAP at (419) 962-1515 or mail a check to The Amish Voice, PO Box 128, Savannah, OH 44874. The price of the book is \$15 (includes S&H).

# Topics and Testimonies Over the Phone

## New Call-in Options

We hope that you have been joining us and will continue to call in to our live Amish Voice conference calls, held on the first Sunday night of every month at 8 P.M. If you missed our latest calls, you can still call in and listen to the audio recording of the calls.

We have also added a new call-in option for you. Now, you can call in and listen to a variety of topics and testimonies. We plan to change them every month, so call in, listen, learn, and leave us your thoughts at the end of each session. Information is below:

### July

**In the Father's Footsteps, Parts 1-2, by Charles Stanley (25 min each):** Are parents responsible for their child's faith?

**What if Love and Respect Do Not Work with My Spouse?, by Emmerson and Jonathan (36 min)?** Some people live in fear that as they seek to apply the Love and Respect message, their spouse will not respond in like manner, and then when that happens it confirms their fears.

**The Prayer Life of the Lord Jesus Christ, by Adrian Rogers (35 min):** There is much we don't understand about the mystery of prayer, but God has commanded us to pray, so we must learn how.

**Transformed: Is a Changed Life Really Possible? Parts 1-6, by Chip Ingram (30 min each):** From where do you get the power to change? How do you become the person you have always longed to be?

### August

**Things to do Before the End of the World, by Greg Laurie (40 min):** Believers are encouraged to be shining lights in a dark place and watching in readiness. We are to be anxiously and eagerly awaiting His return, working out our faith to draw others to Him.

**True Women Speak Out, by Barbara Rainey, Family Life (25 min):** If you could have a "do over" in life, what would you want to redo? Barbara Rainey and Karen Loritts comment on the hardest part of living out Biblical womanhood in their

own lives.

**Independence, by John Majors and Michelle Hill (30 min):** How do we help our children through these transitional waters called adolescent? John Majors and Michelle Hill discuss a teen's longing for independence and how parents want this too, but that tensions often arise as they guide a son or daughter to successfully stand on his or her own.

**Dial-in Number: (641) 715-3800**

**Access Code: 478499**

**Who is Jesus—Man, Myth, or Messiah, Parts 1-6, by Chip Ingram (30-min each):** What would it be like to meet Jesus today? Chip presents a picture of Jesus that you may not have considered. This is one you don't want to miss!

**Integrity: Don't Leave Home Without It, by Adrian Rogers (20 min):** Our character is far more important to God than anything else. Integrity means unity—singleness of heart and mind, a heart purely devoted to Him. Think of what it would mean to be full of nothing else but God's light—for Him to be THAT real inside of you!

### September

**Connecting with Your Child, Parts 1-2, by Focus on the Family (30 min each):** Dr. Karyn Purvis offers practical advice for parents on building and maintaining a

trust-based relationship with their children. She explains how parent-child attachments are designed by God to work, what happens when that connection is broken, and how parents can give their children a voice for their thoughts and feelings.

**Resting in God's Faithfulness, Parts 1-2, by Charles Stanley (25 min each):** How do you respond when you find that your faith is being tested—when you don't know what God is doing in your life, and your prayers seem to go unanswered?

**Let us Arise and Build, by Adrian Rogers (35 min):** There is rubbish and debris in all our lives, and if we're going to build the life God intends for us, we must deal with it. You are special to God. He made you for a great purpose. Learn the three "F's" of getting there: FIX, FOCUS, and FORM.

**My Story, An Amish Boy's Journey to Peace, Parts 1-2, by Emanuel Schrock (40 min each):** I was Amish; everywhere I did and everywhere I went, I could not be anything else. My clothes were Amish, my house was Amish, my parents were Amish, my brothers and sisters were Amish, and, above all, my church was Amish. But I did not know God.

**Somewhere Forever, Parts 1-2, by Andrew Coblentz (45 min each):** Someday, we will open our eyes in eternity. There is no escape. When that takes place, we will either end up in heaven or end up in hell. The choice must be made today, not in eternity.



As the world continues to turn its back on God, we want to take a look at what the future holds according to the One who is the Beginning and the End—God! We hope you enjoy and benefit from this series, courtesy of Middletown Bible Church. Follow along, fill in the blanks, and look up! May we all be ready for the return of Jesus Christ!

**You will need a Bible for this lesson.**

**The Diabolical Dragon**

People sometimes talk about the devil. Is the devil real or just pretend? Is the devil some imaginary, fictional, mythical character or is he for real?

If the devil is real, have you ever seen him? What is he like? Is he red with horns on his head and with a pitchfork in his hand? Is he powerful? Is he intelligent? Is he clever? What is he doing in the world today? What is going to happen to him in the future? Should I be afraid of Satan?

The Bible has much to say about the devil. Indeed, it is impossible to have a correct understanding of the devil apart from what God has revealed in His Word. The devil is a very real person. He is just as real as you are. Read what the Lord Jesus said in Luke 10:18. Did Jesus Christ believe that the devil was a real person? \_\_\_\_\_ In this lesson, we want to learn about the devil and what will happen to him in the future!

**An Angel Called Lucifer**

God did not create the devil. That is, He did not create a wicked, sinful creature. God created a beautiful angel who was righteous and holy and good. He was a special kind of angel known as a CHERUB (Ezekiel 28:14).

This angel is sometimes known by the name of L \_\_\_\_\_ (Isaiah 14:12).

He was very close to God and he served in the very presence of God. He was one of the most important angels that God created.

In Ezekiel 28:11-19, God tells us what this angel was like. Did God create this angel perfect or imperfect (Ezekiel 28:12, 15)? \_\_\_\_\_

**The Fall of Lucifer**

Something terrible happened to this angel! Concerning Lucifer, the Bible says, "Thine heart was \_\_\_\_\_ because of thy beauty" (Ezekiel 28:17). He became PROUD of his beauty and his wisdom and his power. In his heart he said something like this:

**LUCIFER SAID: "How beautiful I am! How wise I am! God is not the only One who is great. I'm great, too. Why should all the angels worship God? I want them to worship me. I WILL BE LIKE THE MOST HIGH" (see Isaiah 14:12-14).**

For Lucifer to think this way was sin. Lucifer was once perfect, but he was perfect no more: *Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till \_\_\_\_\_ was found in thee* (Ezekiel 28:15).

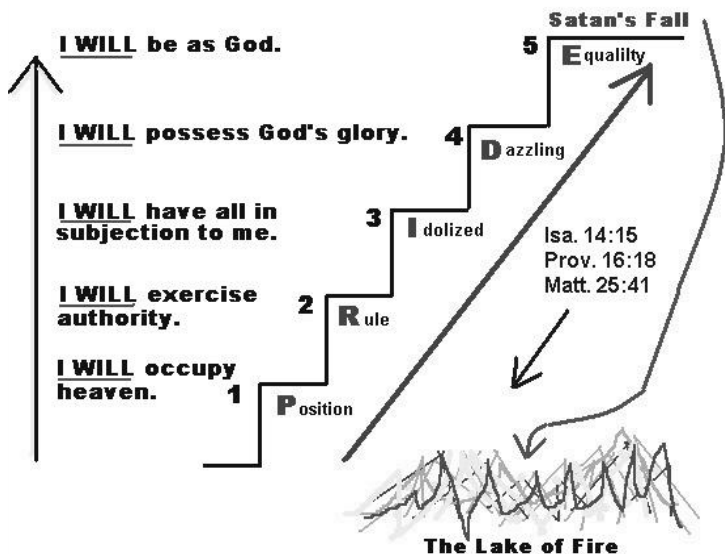
The word "iniquity" means "SIN, EVIL, CROOKEDNESS." God found evil and sin in the heart of this angel. This angel sinned and became Satan, the devil. God did not create Satan. Lucifer became Satan because of sin.

Pastor George F. Parsons created this helpful diagram to show Lucifer's five haughty "I WILLS": (SEE NEXT PAGE, TOP)

**The Devil's Five Names**

In the Bible, names usually have meaning. For example, the name "JESUS" means "Savior" (see Matthew 1:21). The devil has several names, and each name tells us something about what he is like.





In Revelation 12:9 and 20:2, we find four names for this wicked person. What are these four names?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_

Let's learn about these names:

### 1. The Dragon

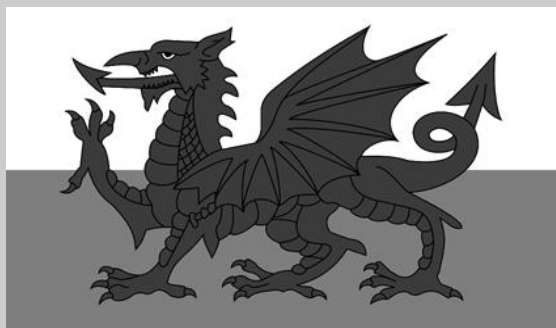
Usually when we think of a dragon, we think of a huge, imaginary creature that looks like a dinosaur and breathes fire out of its mouth or nostrils. The devil is no imaginary creature. HE IS FOR REAL! The devil is a creature who is very deadly. Jesus described this dragon in John 8:44 and said, "He was a m\_\_\_\_\_ from the beginning."

From the very beginning of human history, Satan the dragon has been trying to get people to choose his way (THE WAY OF DEATH) instead of God's way (THE WAY OF LIFE). God told Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, because if he ate from this tree he would surely \_\_\_\_\_ (Genesis 2:17). Did Satan the dragon try to get him to eat this fruit (Genesis 3:1-5) \_\_\_\_\_? Was the devil successful (Genesis 3: 6) \_\_\_\_\_?

**Please note:** There is evidence that "dragons" were real creatures living on earth. Many ancient societies mentioned dragons in their written records or in their legends. Those who are students of history know that throughout man's time on earth, there have been stories of dragons. Dragon legends and pictures can be found in Africa, India, Europe, the Middle East, the Orient, and other parts of the world. The stories and pictures

bear certain similarities. The dragons are described as being very strong and having massive bodies, long strong necks, and huge, powerful tails. Could it be that the dragon stories and dragon pictures are actually based on fact? Were the ancients familiar with real animals that fit these kind of descriptions? Even the national flag of Wales shows a dragon:

Many have concluded that these dragon legends, though full of exaggerations and fictional elements, have their basis in truth, and that these dragons were actually reptile-like creatures which are known today as dinosaurs (terrible lizards). For two remarkable Biblical descriptions of dinosaurs (behemoth and leviathan), see Job chapters 40 and 41. Evolutionists believe that dinosaurs became extinct long before man supposedly evolved, and it is unthinkable to them that men and dinosaurs could have lived on the earth at the same time. However, the Biblical record is very clear. Land dinosaurs were created on the very same day as man, Day 6 of the creation week (Genesis 1).



### 2. That Old Serpent

When the devil tricked Eve, through what animal did he speak (see Genesis 3:1-4)? \_\_\_\_\_

When the devil is called "that old serpent," it reminds us of the time when he tricked Eve in the Garden of Eden. Was the serpent (the devil) trying to help Adam and Eve or harm them? \_\_\_\_\_ Was this serpent their friend or was he their foe (their enemy)? \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. The Devil

The name "DEVIL" means "one who slanders, one who accuses, one who says false things about someone." The devil loves to accuse God and God's people.

After Lucifer fell into sin, God sentenced him and told him what his punishment would be: EVERLASTING \_\_\_\_\_ (Matthew 25:41). When Satan learned this, he probably accused God and said something like this:

**THE DEVIL SAID: "That's not fair! How can a loving God send His creature into a lake of fire forever and ever?"**

He accused God of being unfair. Satan is not the only accuser in the world. Many other

Turn  
Page...

people accuse God just like the devil did. They might say something like this: "GOD IS NOT FAIR TO SEND PEOPLE TO HELL JUST BECAUSE THEY DO NOT BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST!" But God is fair and God is righteous, and we know that the Judge of all the earth will do what is right (Genesis 18:25)!

Satan once accused Job and said something false about him. Read Job 1:8-11:

*And the LORD said unto Satan, Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil. Then Satan answered the LORD, and said, Doth Job fear God for nought? Hast not thou made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.*

**THE DEVIL SAID: "Job does not really love God. He only serves God because of all the blessings God has given to him. If God takes away all of Job's blessings, then Job will curse God."**

Did God let Satan take away Job's blessings by bringing destruction and death to his possessions and to his family (Job 1:12-19)? \_\_\_\_\_ Did Job curse God (Job 1:20-22)? \_\_\_\_\_ Was Satan right or wrong? \_\_\_\_\_

The devil loves to accuse God's people and speak against them. How often does he do this (Revelation 12:10)? \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Satan**

The name SATAN means "the adversary, THE ENEMY, the foe." Satan is no friend; he is the dreaded foe! He is the enemy of God and he is the enemy of God's people. He hates God and he hates God's people. Jesus spoke about this ENEMY in Matthew 13:28 and 39. Satan is not for God; he is AGAINST GOD.

Jesus once said, "He that is not with Me is \_\_\_\_\_ Me" (Matthew 12:30). There are only two sides, and no one can really sit on the fence. A person is either WITH GOD (on God's side) or AGAINST GOD (on the devil's side). Every person is either a child of the devil \_\_\_\_\_ or a child of \_\_\_\_\_ (1 John 3:10).

How does a person become a son or child of God (John 1:12)? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Satan wants people to be on his side. He does not want people to become children of God.

According to Luke 8:12, what is it that the devil does not want people to do? Satan does not mind if people are religious. Can people go to church and still be unsaved? \_\_\_\_\_ Can people say prayers and sing hymns and still be unsaved? \_\_\_\_\_ Can a person be religious and still be on the devil's side? \_\_\_\_\_ In John 8:44, Jesus was speaking to a group of people who were very religious. He said to them, "Ye are of your father the \_\_\_\_\_."

Satan wants to blind people and keep them in a state of UNBELIEF (read 2 Corinthians 4:3-4). He is the great enemy of our souls!

Even though Satan is our great enemy, does the Christian need to be afraid of him? The Bible tells us in 1 John 4:4 that "greater is He that is in \_\_\_\_\_ than he that is in the \_\_\_\_\_." The GOD who is in you (if you are a believer) is greater than the DEVIL who is in the world! Satan is much greater than you, but is Satan greater than your God? \_\_\_\_\_ Do you need to be afraid of the devil? \_\_\_\_\_

**5. The Tempter**

Matthew 4:3 records another name for the devil, where we learn that the T \_\_\_\_\_ came to Jesus. Who was this TEMPTER (Matthew 4:1)? \_\_\_\_\_

The devil loves to tempt people and try to make them sin. In Matthew chapter 4, the devil tempted the Lord Jesus, but he was not able to make Jesus sin.

This does not mean that we should blame everything on the devil and always say, "THE DEVIL MADE ME DO IT!" No, our own sinful hearts made us do it (see James 1:14)! When we fall into sin, we really have no one to blame but ourselves. The devil loves to see people fall into sin and he will do all he can to lead people into sin, but we must not blame the devil for the sins which we do. The one who should really be blamed is the person who has sinned! When Eve sinned in Genesis 3:1-6, did the devil play a part in it? \_\_\_\_\_ Did he tempt Eve? \_\_\_\_\_ Whom did Eve blame (Genesis 3:13)? \_\_\_\_\_ Whose fault was it? \_\_\_\_\_

**What are Satan's Limitations?**

**1. Satan is not present everywhere (OMNIPRESENT).**

The devil can only be in one place at a time. He cannot be everywhere at the same time. He cannot be in India and in California at the same time.

The devil can, however, get to places in a hurry. In Job 1:6-7, we learn that Satan can go from earth to heaven (v. 6) and he can travel all over the earth (v. 7). Also, the devil has thousands and thousands of demons (wicked angels) that serve him and carry out his work. So even though Satan cannot be everywhere at once, he has so many helpers, so that it almost seems like he is everywhere in the world. Think of Santa at Christmas time. There are so many people dressed up like Santa in the different stores throughout the country that it almost seems like Santa is everywhere. There are many people who look like Santa and who are doing the work of Santa. The same is true with Satan because of all of his helpers. Of course, Satan is real and Santa is not.

## 2. Satan is not all knowing (OMNISCIENT).

The devil does not know everything. Only God knows everything. In Job 1, Satan thought he knew why Job feared God, but he was wrong. He does not know everything, but this does not mean that Satan is stupid. He was created "full of wisdom" (Ezekiel 28:12), and even though he fell into sin, he is still very smart, clever, and intelligent. He is so smart that he has tricked and fooled millions of people who have believed his clever lies (John 8:44).

## 3. Satan is not all powerful (OMNIPOTENT).

Satan is very powerful, but he is not all powerful. Who is greater than Satan in power (1 John 4:4)? \_\_\_\_\_

In Revelation 12:7-9, we learn that Satan and his army fought against Michael (another angel) and his army. Was Satan powerful enough to win this battle? \_\_\_\_\_ (Note: Actually, this battle has not yet taken place, even though it is described in Revelation 12 as if it already took place. It will take place in the future.) Are Satan's darts powerful enough to destroy the believer if the believer is wearing God's armour and holding God's shield (Ephesians 6:16)? \_\_\_\_\_

Satan is not all powerful, but he is much more powerful than we are. A little boy was asked, "What would you do if Satan were to knock at your door?" The youngster had the right idea: "I would send the Lord Jesus to the door!" God can handle the devil! We cannot!

## Two Extremes to Avoid

There are two extremes to be avoided in dealing with the devil.

### 1) Over-emphasizing the devil

Some people emphasize the devil too much. They think about him all the time. They see the devil's hand in everything that

happens. They talk about him all the time. They are all wrapped up in Satan; but the believer in Christ needs to be all wrapped up in God. We need to have our thoughts centered in the Lord our God. We need to see God's hand in everything that happens. We don't need to constantly be thinking about the devil, because the God who lives in us is infinitely greater than Satan (1 John 4:4).

## 2) Under-emphasizing the devil

We do need to recognize the reality of the devil and clearly understand all that the Bible teaches us about this evil fallen angel. We need to know our enemy and understand his deceptions. We should not be ignorant of Satan and his devices, but God should always be our main focus.

## What Is Satan Doing Today?

Today Satan is very much alive, and he is very busy! Satan is quite active on planet earth.

1. He is deceiving and tricking the nations (Revelation 20:3).
2. He blinds the minds of unbelievers and tries to keep people from believing the gospel (2 Cor. 4:3-4, Luke 8:12).
3. He is like a roaring lion seeking to attack those whom he can (1 Peter 5:8).
4. He is the prince or ruler of this world. He rules in the hearts of unsaved men and carries out his wicked program in the world (John 16:11, John 12:31).

## Satan Expelled From Heaven

Today, it appears that Satan is allowed to have some access to heaven, as we learn by reading Job 1:6 and Job 2:1. However, there will come a time when Satan will be forced to lose all access to heaven. We read about this in Revelation 12:7-12. Since the devil can no longer be near heaven, where must he be (Revelation 12:9, 12)? \_\_\_\_\_

Read Revelation 12:12 carefully:

*Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them. Woe to the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*

**Those in heaven say,** "Rejoice! Be glad! Let's celebrate! The devil is gone! He has been kicked out of heaven! HURRAY!"

**Those on earth say,** "Woe unto us! This is bad news! The devil has been cast down to earth and he is very angry. He has been causing trouble on earth for thousands of years, but he is really going to cause trouble now! HELP!"

Later, we will learn about the man whom Satan will use during this time. This is also the time that the DRAGON (Satan) will persecute and try to destroy the WOMAN (the nation Israel). We read about this in Revelation 12:13-17. If the devil cannot fight God directly, then he fights against God's people (Rev. 12:17).

## Satan Will be Put In a Special Prison

When Jesus Christ returns to the earth, Satan will be put into the bottomless pit (the abyss) and chained there (Revelation 20:1). This is a special jail that God will use to keep Satan away from the earth. How long will the devil be bound (Rev. 20:2)?

During these years Jesus Christ will be ruling as king over all the earth. At the end of these 1,000 years what will happen to Satan (Revelation 20:7)?

\_\_\_\_\_ This will be Satan's last opportunity to cause trouble in the earth. We will study this more later in this study.

## Satan's Eternal Home

Where will the devil's final home be (Revelation 20:10)?

\_\_\_\_\_ This is the place God has prepared for him (Matthew 25:41). It

is here that Satan will be tormented (punished, tortured) day and night for \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ (Revelation 20:10).

Will other people also be in this lake of fire (Revelation 20:15; 21:8)? \_\_\_\_\_

Those who are on Satan's side will spend their eternity in the same terrible lake. Those who are on God's side will spend their eternity in the place that Christ has prepared for them (John 14:1-3).

Where are you going to spend eternity?

Yes, the devil is very real, but God is very real, also. Satan wants to curse us; God wants to bless us. Satan wants men to spend eternity with him, but God wants men to spend eternity with the Lord Jesus Christ. The devil is our foe; God is our friend. Whose side are you on? Are you on the winning side or the losing side? Are you on the right side or the wrong side? Are you for God and against Satan or are you against God and for Satan? Who are you serving? For whom are you living? Who are you following?

**Luke 16:13 says:** *No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.*

**THE CHOICE IS YOURS!**

**END**

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said that we must be born again, so we should certainly know what He meant.

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# A Testimony of Change

H. B.—Ohio

I always thought that I was doing well as a member of the Amish church, and that I was on the right road to Heaven. I believed that—even though I spent many hours smoking and drinking with my friends. One of my co-workers once told me that she was praying for me, and I wondered why. I thought that I had things all figured out. I was working hard and making lots of money, getting together with my friends after work, and going to church just to be seen. I did not realize it at the time, but I was trying hard to fill the void in my life and heart.

I was many miles away from home with nobody to tell me what to do, convinced

that I was happy and well. Slowly, my friends pushed me away, and I had no idea why. I became homesick and very lonely and felt so far away from everyone and everything that was important to me. I wanted to go home, but I did not have a job there and I did not know how to pray or what to pray for. I was at rock bottom.

A friend whom I had known for many years kept telling me how much Jesus loves me and that there was nothing that I had to do or did not have to do to be saved. When I finally realized that I could do nothing of myself, I surrendered my life to Jesus Christ.

As I look back, I realize that the choices I made were led by the Lord to get me where He wanted me to be—broken and alone. I praise Him every day for changing my heart and filling it with His joy. His assurance of salvation is the greatest gift that I will ever receive. I am aware of Satan’s presence around me. I choose not to acknowledge him, but to focus on Jesus. If we fill our hearts and minds with Jesus Christ and the things of above, there is no room for evil.

May His peace and His presence fill our hearts and lives! —H. B.

**END**

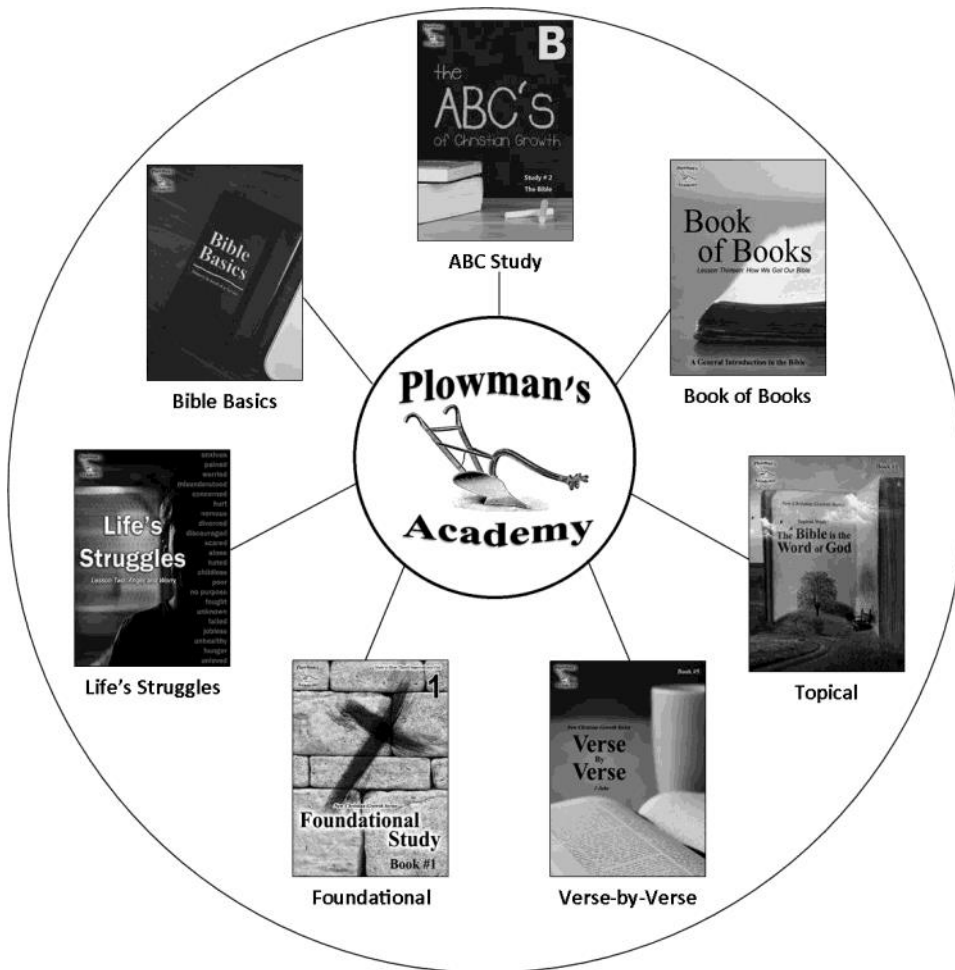
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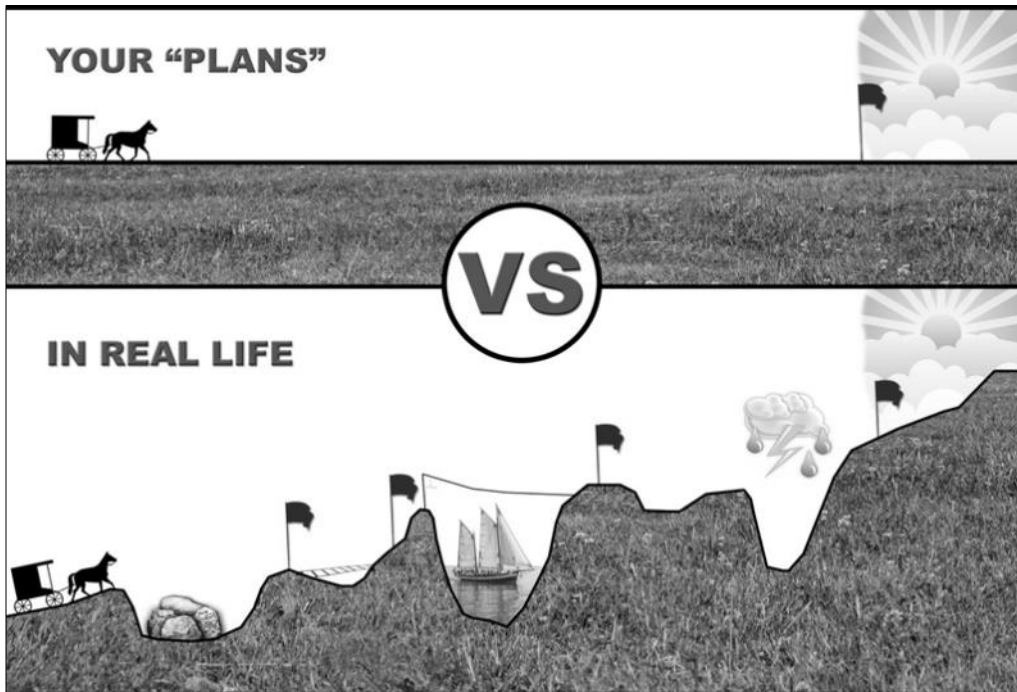
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*Jesus said, No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.*

Luke 9:62

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Isaiah 43:1-3 says, *.Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour. . . .*

Notice that the Lord didn't promise them they would not pass through the waters, rivers, and flame. He promised them safety in the midst of these things. God's people do still suffer, because we live in a fallen world; but the Lord has promised to sustain us through all these things.



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wicked hearts. Our hearts are stained and cannot be cleaned—no matter how hard we try to clean them or how good we try to be. The only answer is a new heart to replace our wicked heart.

*A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them (Ezekiel 36:26-27).*

You cannot clean up your old heart. Notice that God says that He will give us the new heart, and then He will cause us to walk in His ways. We do not first walk in His ways and then get the new heart as a reward. All the good that we try to do with our old sinful hearts counts as nothing—or worse than nothing.

*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 (Isaiah 64:6).*

I was recently reading a book by 19<sup>th</sup>-century pastor, Ichabod Spencer. In that book, he tells of a lady reminding him of a sermon that he once preached that helped to lead her to Jesus. The lady reminded him:

*I know you represented us in that sermon as lost sinners, lost in the woods, wandering over mountain after mountain, in dark and*

*dangerous places among the rocks and precipices, not knowing where we were going. It grew darker and darker. We were groping along, sometimes on the brink of a dreadful precipice, and didn't know it. Then some of us began to fall down the steep mountains, and thought we should be dashed to pieces. I know I thought so. But we caught hold of the bushes to hold ourselves up by them. Some bushes would give way, and then we would catch others, and hold on till they gave way, broke, or tore up by the roots; and then we would catch others, and others. . . .*

*You said our friends were calling to us, as we hung by the bushes on the brink, and we called to one another, "Hold on—hold on." Then, you said this cry, "Hold on—hold on," might be a very natural one for anybody to make, if he should see a poor creature hanging over the edge of a precipice, clinging to a little bush with all his might, if the man didn't see anything else. But you said there was another thing to be seen, which these "hold on" people didn't seem to know anything about. You said the*



*Lord Jesus Christ was down at the bottom of the precipice, lifting up both hands to catch us, if we would consent to fall into his arms, and was crying out to us, "Let go—let go—let go." Up above, all around where we were, you said they were crying out, "Hold on—hold on." Down below, you said, Jesus Christ kept crying out, "Let go—let go"; and if we only knew who he was, and would*

*let go of the bushes of sin and self-righteousness, and fall into the arms of Christ, we should be saved. And you said we had better stop our noise, and listen, and hear his voice, and take his advice, and "let go."*

Are you holding on or letting go? Are you in spiritual darkness holding on to your own righteousness, your church membership, or your traditions? Will you not look and see Jesus calling out to you to let go of those things and fall into His arms and trust in Him alone? As long as you are holding on, you cannot be saved. It is only when you let go and have nothing else to hold on to that you are safe in the arms of Jesus. —Paul Miller

**END**

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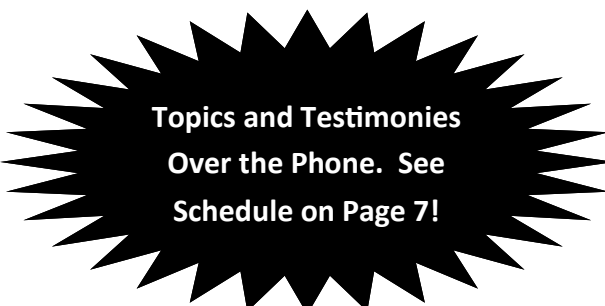
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Topics and Testimonies  
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## Let Go

By Paul Miller

The way to heaven is simple, yet narrow, and most won't be going there, according to what Jesus said (Matthew 7:14). Even a whole lot of good, nice, religious people will miss eternal life—even though they think that they are good Christian people. See the parable of the ten virgins with lamps, for example (Matthew 25), or read when Jesus told about the many people who did good and wonderful works and called Jesus “Lord,” yet ended up eternally lost (Matthew 7:21-23).

There is only one way to heaven, and that is through Jesus Christ (John 14:6). That is pretty specific. That is a good thing for those who are sincerely seeking the way to God. That is bad news for those who do not like the way of Jesus. That is bad news for those who are depending upon their good works or their church attendance. That is bad news for those who believe that being a member of a specific church will get them to heaven.

Like Naaman (2 Kings 5), our pride causes us to want to do great things in

order to please God and earn our own salvation. If we had to donate a lot of money, visit Jerusalem, attend church every week, pray an hour a day, read the Bible through every year, wear certain clothing, visit the sick, donate a kidney, give up certain habits, paint our neighbor's house, or anything else like that, most of us might work hard in order to be sure that we would meet the divine requirements. However, all Naaman was told was to go wash in the Jordan River and he would be clean. He did not like that. He would have done great things. He would have donated much money. He would have visited the best rivers in the world. Instead, God wanted him to go wash in a little muddy river in Israel. Thanks to the urging of his servants, Naaman swallowed his pride, washed himself in the Jordan River, and was cleansed of his leprosy.

What about you? All God requires of us for salvation, for eternal life, is to wash ourselves in the blood of the Lamb. He tells us only to look to Jesus, to believe in

Him, and live. *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life* (John 3:14-15). Does that offend you as it offended Naaman? Would you not rather do great things? Would you not be more pleased if God required church membership and attendance? Wouldn't it help your pride if God required you to wear certain clothing and follow a list of manmade rules? Wouldn't you rather make it to heaven because of how much good you think you have done and of how religious you think you are?

Yet all God requires of us to be born again is to repent—to turn from our ways and look to Jesus for salvation. Will you not seek Him? We must give up our ways and our thoughts. They are wicked to God (Isaiah 55:6-7). He has told us how things are, and He did not ask our opinion on the matter. We are sinful people with

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