America: Searching For Reality



Roger Himes, J.D. The Gospel Life Coach

Don't We All Desire a Little Better Reality?

This is a unique book. It is written, line for line, after a song I wrote: *America – Searching for Reality.* Well, let me say this differently: it was a song I was used to compose. I was just sitting with my guitar and singing when the lines of this song began imposing themselves in my mind. I wasn't even thinking about writing a song at all. I was just enjoying the beautiful Rocky Mountains of Colorado USA.

I think I was singing John Denver's **Rocky Mountain High** when the words to this song began imposing themselves on me. John has always been a favorite of mine, and I even had a brief chance to sing with him for a brief time in his 'BC' days – before he was a celebrity. He's why I wrote a book **A Fire in His Heart & A Light in His Eyes (John Denver's Legacy).** It is no longer in print, unless I decide to re-do it on my web page.

Yet, in less than 60 minutes the song was born. The complexity of the song, is amazing. This internet link lets you listen to the song if you choose to:

https://www.gospelpowerofgod.com/e-books/america-searching-for-reality/

The song is negative. It's a satire. But what this message does is it takes each of the 39 lines of the song and transposes them into positive, helpful, inspirational thoughts. I hope you will ponder them and let them produce positive, fresh ideas of living life to the max.

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Each stanza begins with 'America!' This is how the song came to me, probably because I live in the state of Colorado, USA. But it is obvious the thoughts are for anyone, anywhere in the world.

We are all made of the same stuff down in the fiber of our being. We are different sexes, races, languages, personalities, temperaments, ages, colors, sizes, and other things.

But our hearts are all very much the same.

We all have the same needs and desires and hopes for living life in this world. So this book is for anyone who has a desire to embrace these concepts, and see them birthed into a better reality.

This book is written from the perspective of a lawyer, and from that of a Pastoral Counselor. I am licensed in both areas. It is largely of general content for anyone interested in the concepts. It has a lot of common sense in it. But also, most sections have a spiritual application: A Spiritual Chat with 'The Gospel Life Coach.'

Roger Himes, Lawyer, The Gospel Life Coach



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Table of Contents

The table of contents of this book are the lines of the song on the front cover,

but here they are a little easier to read. Each line is a segment in this book where my attempt is to change satire and negatives into positive thoughts.

America! Land of pride and plenty!
People rushing to nowhere
Idle time beyond compare
Ignoring others in despair
Searching for some certainty.
People hear yet seldom listen
Others look but cannot see
Competing in the wrong directions
Acting out facsimiles.
People full yet always hungry
Reaching out but seldom touching
Outward laughing inward crying
Avoiding our Gethsemane.

America! Land of opportunity!
Money is our hidden treasure
Wealth becomes the standard measure
As we seek our fleeting pleasures
Pride without humility.
Great concern but no compassion
Fighting hard for selfish justice
Becoming slaves in all dimensions
While striving hard to be set free.

Seeking answers while avoiding issues
Learning facts but never knowing

Seeking knowledge, seldom wisdom
Intellectual security.

America! Land of milk and honey!
Many songs yet few have meaning
Voices filled with empty chatter
Noise abounds but peace is fleeting
Clanging like calliopes.
Countless children yet few fathers
Many houses yet few homes
Many plans for great tomorrows
While today remains a mystery.
Many smiles but shallow greetings
Religious people with no true God
Many Christians without Christ
Searching for reality.

Land of Pride and Plenty

Most of us have so much, but life isn't defined by having bigger barns, more toys, and treasures on earth. The man who built a bigger barn to keep all his stuff was called a 'fool' by Jesus. Life is defined by the heart, and what occupies it. Life must be defined by what is deeply important to us. Life is a temporary assignment. We don't live forever. But our souls do live forever.

Defining life in terms of having plenty is pride. Pride is one of 'the seven deadly sins which are: (1) pride, (2) lust, (3) laziness, (4) anger, (5) gluttony, (6) envy and (7) greed. These are attitudes and emotions that run our lives if we let them. We are meant to rule over them.

We Were All Created Equal



No, we are not equal in all ways, and sometimes not in many ways. But we are equal, at least in the western world, when it comes to things like opportunities and choices.

This is what the United States was based on, but things haven't always been equal here, and still aren't in many ways. We were established on the basis of "One Nation Under God," and "In God We Trust."

The concept of 'manifest destiny' was all about God and us having religious freedom.
But during the 1800s, this was changed to:

(1) subduing the Native American Indians,
(2) keeping the Black man enslaved to the White man,
(3) keeping women subservient to men and not allowing them to vote.

In the United States, we have the greatest Constitution ever created, and it is used as a model by other free nations. Yet, it has largely been put into 'dry-dock' the past 100 years, and we're in danger of losing it totally. It's true that children used to know our Constitution better than most lawyers do today.

We Have Less to Work with Today

The best example here is our educational system. It started going downhill about 1900, and by 1950-1960 it was totally unrecognizable from what it used to be. Our system used to emphasize four very important things:

(1) THE FAMILY was directly involved and responsible in their kids' education.

(2) ABC's were highly taught good ways: reading, writing and arithmetic.

(3) MORAL VALUES were taught (they later became the Boy Scout creed).

(4) HOW TO SUCCEED in our capitalistic free enterprise system was taught.

Today, reports say all that is left are the 'ABC's,' and they are taught very inadequately. The family is usually uninvolved, and there is no depth anymore. Graduating seniors lack some of the basic skills to survive and succeed. Our corporations say they must often re-educate the people they hire.

This Is Not Just a Dumping Session

My point here is not just to complain about things. Instead, it is to make the point that we must protect what we have, or it is going to evaporate and cease to exist. It is said, "The worst thing is for good people to do nothing."

We Are Here To Help and Serve Each Other

One of my mentors was John Denver. In college, I played guitar and sang with John for a short period of time. He was one of the most insightful men I'd ever met. He had a worldview that was contagious and very unique. You never just talked about 'stuff' with John, but about things that were meaningful, and could maybe make a difference. He knew his music was going to make world-wide impact. He sure succeeded.



John was always reaching out to people and trying to help them. He was a servant. He'd stop and help anyone, and he was always ready with a hug, or at least a handshake for anyone who wanted one. The first time I met him, he acted like he had been waiting for weeks — just to meet me.

Comedian Woody Allen says, "Service to others is the rent we pay for our space here on earth." That's pretty good coming from a comedian, isn't it? He was a lot more than just a comedian.

Life Consists of Obstacles, Problems and Offenses

This is true, but our job is to work around them, or climb over them, or dig under them. Jesus promised us in this life we would have problems. But hey, if life was perfect, we'd never have any desire for heaven, would we?

People Rushing to Nowhere



Studies show most people have no life purposes, plans, goals or mission or in life. Life just exists, day by day, and it's habitual and even boring. Most young people today say that they are just 'hanging out.'

We Get Caught In Ruts

We get up at the same time each day, eat the same breakfast (many don't eat), and rush off to work or school, usually taking the same route each day.

I read an article: "We're a nation of speed, but without direction."

Singer Mac Davis has a song: "Stop and Smell the Roses." It basically says we shouldn't live this way. Will Rogers said, "Half our life is spent trying to find something to do with the time we've rushed through life trying to save.'"

We live emotionally if life impacts us: especially problems, and obstacles and offensive people. We tend to view everything as urgent, if they impact us in the lease. I sure learned this as a lawyer. Lots or people called me at night to do something about a situation that couldn't be handled until the next day.

But we reason that if something affects us, it must be important. And if it's important, it must be urgent and handled right now. This is not living in logic, but emotion. We're conditioned to rush even if it's not important. Highway speed control signs are only there to show us how fast we're speeding.

Goals Are Important

We're told that those who have goals have 80% of life's good stuff. And those who have written goals, that they see and review daily, gain even more than this. Having direction tells us we're on the right road, and making good progress. Without any direction, it doesn't matter which road we take.

Studies say that 60% of people never even considered making any specific goals for life, either short or long-range. Of the remaining 40%, three-fourths of them had considered making goals, but hadn't really ever followed through.

This accounts for about 90 out of every 100 people. Of the remaining 10 folks, 7 had mental images or visions of what they wanted in life, but only 3 had taken the time to write their goals down where they could see them regularly.

What's the point? The very small minority of 3% were decisively more well off and successful, and more influential and financially independent. The study revealed that these 3% enjoyed over 50% of life's pleasures and possessions.

Developing Mental Images and Visions

Life becomes exciting when we have clear images and visions of where we are going. Can you imaging a football game played on a field without any yard markers? Players wouldn't know for sure when they made a touchdown, or even a first down.

We all know the excitement if we have something special planned. It's what we look forward to and plan for. This creates motivation and enthusiasm. We can learn to live more exciting days. The problem is that too many people only 'pass the time of day,' and soon those days start creeping into years. The Bible says 'life is but a vapor,' or like a mist.

I know God has a purpose and plan for all of us, at least if our hearts are still pumping blood and if we're still breathing. And I know that our beliefs are most important.

I've discovered a truism:
"Good behavior will never produce correct belief,
but correct belief will eventually produce good or better behavior."

When we live in a Godly worldview, all things look different. We're no longer just a person who is 'rushing to nowhere.' We have purpose and a sense of destiny.

Idle Time Beyond Compare

Become aware of your idle time – it produces major problems in life, even health issues. With too much idle time we become couch potatoes. We become

lethargic. Few people want to take the time to even walk around the block. Most of us have more idle time than we realize. Idle time creates delinquents in teens – run-away teens, and those who just 'hang out' and have no hope. It also produces hardened criminals in adults. It produces couch potatoes. It makes us lazy, which we saw was one of the '7 deadly sins.'

We Have Lots of 'Down Time'

We have 168 hours per week, and 8,736 hours per year. If we work 8 hours a day, and sleep 8 hours a night, we still have 3,744 idle hours per year to just waste away. This is 22 weeks per year out of only 52.



Yet studies show the busier we are, the more productive we are. There's an old saying, "If you have a job that must get done, give it to the busiest guy you know and they'll find time for it." But it's also true the more idle time we have the more we try to look busy, so it seems like we're over worked. Yes, there are many people who are over-worked, but this is the exception.

Studies also show the less we have to do, the more we are tired. Laziness wears you out so you sleep. More sleep can be good, but we need balance. The truth is we can use all the idle time we can get — IF we use it wisely. Idle time can help us discover the reason for this merry-go-round we call life. It can solve dissatisfaction by helping us connect with God and others, and help us figure out life purposes and convert them into priorities.

Laziness, Procrastination vs. Creativity

Idle time can be a burden resulting n laziness and procrastination, or it can be soul-searching and creative, and useful if used wisely. The job we need to assume is to transform our idle time into productive time. I don't mean to be a workaholic. I was one of those for years. What I'm talking about is finding some good things and purposes to engage in that are beneficial to your family, and to other people.

There's a song I like: "I'm Just Going to Have A Little Talk With Myself." We should all have a talk with ourselves and use our idle time to create new directions, purposes, priorities and good, helpful practices.

A Spiritual Chat with "The Gospel Life Coach"

God says, "Aspire to live quietly." This is a hard word in today's fast-paced world. We can't do it all the time, but we can do it more. This doesn't mean take a nap. I take power walks almost every day and commune with God. This is living quietly. The Bible also says to 'labor to enter into God's rest.' This is a

contradiction to many of us: labor to enter into rest. Most of us just labor. We get wound up like a spring ready to break, and too tight to unwind.

But again, idle time can be a blessing if we manage it correctly. I'm 'The Gospel Life Coach,' and most of my idle time is spent meditating on all the good things God gives us. He's the 'Sower,' and I just let him plant his good gospel seed into me — so that he produces good things from me. Part of this is 'keeping myself in the love of God,' which we're also told to do.

The Apostle Paul says God's love produces faith in us, and the Apostle John says that love also eradicates fear in us. It gives us total, absolute assurance of our salvation. There are so many good things about God's gospel, his grace and his love that we need idle time to think about and receive. When we do, good things happen because the gospel is 'the power of God.'

Ignoring Others In Despair

Ignoring others is apathy in action. On my daily power walks, I pass folks who won't even acknowledge my greeting. Most do, but quite a few don't. We live in a world that is so over-populated, and so alarming at times, it's easy to

ignore each other sometimes. We often relate better by long-distance.

Being concerned about world-hunger is easier than getting involved in the needs of our next-door-neighbor. Our neighbor is too close to home. And what if they are too high-maintenance for us? We can't take the chance. It's easier to be abstract because it doesn't cost us anything. We don't want to become vulnerable. Hurting people can be messy, so we stay away from them.

Philosophy Calls This 'The Age of Despair'



At least this is one phrase I've heard describing today. We often feel helpless. We know we can vote, but what else can we really do except write our Congressman, or attend a political meeting. Besides what good does it do to write our Congressman?

A Congressman was recently asked how many folks like him who are elected

work in Washington D.C. His reply was, “Oh about half, I guess.”

Another comment I heard was this: “We have a transvestite, transgender government. We used to have a tall, lanky, energetic Uncle Sam. Today we have a big, fat, lazy Mama Washington.” All of this causes a sense of helplessness to come upon us, which causes depression and even despair.

It also cause suicides that are out of control today, even among teens. If we don’t have drive and direction and purpose and priorities we talked about, then life gets out of control.

Anger Is A Major Problem Today

There are good things to get angry over, like famine and genocide, and diseases, and pollution, and our dwindling natural resources. Of course we can’t mention government corruption or abortion or sex trafficking, or other things that some folks consider to be politically inappropriate.



But psychology says many people are just angry at the world. They are not angry at anything in particular. They are just in a state of anger, and it consumes them.

There is a lot of ‘road rage’ reported by the press today. And today, airplane rage is hot on its heals competing for ranking. I think movies and T.V.

contribute to a lot of this, including the violence we see in teens — even murder. I have stopped watching the late night news too because it's just too negative and violent.

Modern music is another culprit. It's often violent, rebellious, sexual, drug promoting and feeds the fires we already have burning. This is why I like John Denver's music and others who are like him. I even try to copy John and others in music I compose and sing. Good music is wonderful, but some music can really drag you down low.

Schools Contribute to This

A lot of schools don't teach any absolutes today. There is no real right or wrong. There are not principles or precepts to live by. It's just 'create your own life.' Kids are left to fend for themselves, and figure life out alone.

Even in law school I observed that some students did very well, even thought they were absolutely wrong in their beliefs. If they could mere support a position intellectually (I didn't even say logically), they could get a good grade. Nothing was black and white. And how about theology schools?

It is said: "It's uncertain whether
the doctors of law, or the doctors of divinity,
have made the greatest strides in the lucrative business of mystery."

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The book of Judges in the Bible says, “Everyone did what seemed right in his own eyes.” Things are a total mess when we are left to our own devices. We must have hope. “Hope is the anchor of the soul.” Without hope, all we have is despair, which we talked about.

Our beliefs are so very important. “As a man thinks in his heart (believes) so is he.” Jesus says we are to believe the gospel and throw away (repent) of all other beliefs. But we don’t like being told we have to believe something, even by God himself. It’s a strange attitude so many have today. They just want to create their own concocted opinions. “Everyone just does what seems right in his own eyes.”

It’s like forgiveness. We can’t love without forgiveness. It’s an automatic block to love. Forgiveness can tear down walls and build bridges. But so many just refuse to forgive, and it causes sickness not health. The Bible says that living God’s gospel truth produces (1) prosperity and (2) health. But many can’t even spell the world ‘gospel’ let alone define it or live it.

It’s amazing: if we just give out a little bit, we get back so very much more. God calls it a 100, 60, or 30 fold ROI (return on investment). We can’t out give God. He tells us no bad fruit comes from a bad root. It’s God’s good gospel seed that produces good roots in us — and thus good fruit.

Searching For Some Certainty

We all want security in our lives. We want to experience peace, not conflict, and yet many things we do promote conflict, not peace, resulting in insecurity.

Have you noticed that most arguments are over things we DON'T know for sure? When is the last time you argued about whether $2 + 2 = 4$? But if we are unsure, then we argue to gain certainty.

What Is Certain Is Today

Today is certain, but little else is. So we don't have to search very far to find some certainty. We may not like our certainty, but it is certain. Many folks have bad times today, and they want them to change. They want a better life.

They want God to answer their prayers the way the direct him to. It doesn't always happen, does it? There is a book I've read and like: "Healing Life's Deepest Hurts" by Edward Smith (just Google it: it's cheap used on Amazon).

As a life coach, dealing with the past is something I help people with. Of course fear over tomorrow is as bad as guilt or anxiety over yesterday.

"Yesterday is a cancelled check.
Tomorrow is a promissory note that may not be collectible.
Today is cash — so spend it."



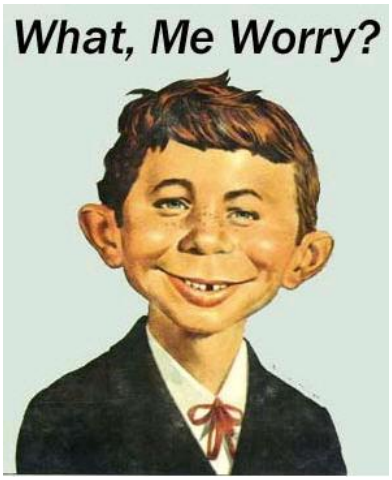
We don't like a sign like this about uncertainty. It just hits too close to home. We want certainty, and we want it right now. We want to be in control. We want to dictate how life will be. We were created for relationship, and relationships aren't always certain either.

As a street lawyer for 25 years, I can't even begin to tell you how many divorces I handled — even for pastors of churches who denounced it.

Worry Comes From Uncertainty

It has been said that worry is 'public enemy number one,' because so may people are attacked by it. Yet, according to statistics, 90% of what we worry about is needless. Mark Twain said, "I've had many worries in my life, most of which never came to pass."

This is the way it is with worry. I used to always like "Mad Magazine" — although I haven't seen one for years, and don't even know if they are still in publication. "What, me worry?" was their slogan.



I've even heard people say that when they come out of worry, and encounter something encouraging it is like a "mirage." It isn't real. They spend so much time in worry they don't really see hopeful reality.

A Spiritual Chat with "The Gospel Life Coach"

I tell people we are meant to be responders in life more than initiators. I know we like to be 'movers and shakers.' I do too. In my earlier years especially, I was a mover and shaker. And I've fought with God, and with my wife Eileen and my daughters Lisa and Shawn, trying to get life to conform to

my desires. It hasn't worked.

Plus I've represented many, many clients trying to do exactly the same thing. Since I let God be in control more, life has turned out a lot better. Trust is amazing. It shortens the learning curve in life.

One certainty we all have is death. I wrote a book: **"DEATH: The Ultimate Life Experience."**

If you know God, and trust him for your salvation, you think this way. If you don't trust him, your knees can knock together. I know many folks bury thoughts of death deep inside of them. But they bury them alive, not dead, so they continually rise from the dead to haunt them.

Someone said we're not ready to really live until we're ready to die.

Peace is what produces certainty much of the time, but if we don't have peace about death, we often lack peace altogether. The Bible is the only thing I know of that gives peace about death.

People Hear Yet Seldom Listen

How many times have you been talking with someone, but you could tell what you said was not being heard? They could hear, but they weren't tuned in to listen. You could tell what you said was going in one ear and out the

other.

Now put the shoe on your foot: you've probably done this too. Sometimes it's like we just put our fingers in our ears.



Simon and Garfunkel say this: "People hear what they want to hear and disregard the rest."

We engage in what I call 'selective listening.'

God Gave Us One Mouth and Two Ears

It is said, "If God wanted us to talk more than listen, he would have given us one ear and two mouths." But we like expounding our own opinions and theories more than listening to others. We often don't try to get inside of someone else's head, or see things from their perspective.

We just want to tell what we think — and maybe even correct them. We often mostly just listen for a break in what they're saying so we can speak our mind.

Being a lawyer, I know that most lawyers only hear enough to be able to better defend their position. Their attitude most often is: "My mind is made up! Don't confuse me with the facts!" We hear with our ears but we don't often listen. When we truly listen, it is with our minds and hearts.

We Often Must Tune Unwanted Things Out

I read an article that said we all have 'a bubble of apathy' about us. This is something we all put on, to some degree today, because of all the stuff that bombards us continuously. There is so much advertising, and other things that compete for our attention, that we all have some type of mechanism to tune out what we don't want to hear.

Of course we don't like to hear criticism, but sometimes we need to. And we often don't want to hear negative things, or at least not take them into our heart too deeply. I know I see depressing stories, especially on the internet, and I'll read the headline, so I know what's going on, but I filter out the story and don't read all the details. My spirit just can't house all that stuff.

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Too often, we tune God out too. Especially if we think he's angry at us we tune him out. But three times it says in Hebrews, "Today, if you will hear his voice… don't close your heart." God wants to connect with us personally, and the gospel tells us God is NOT MAD AT US. He took out his anger on Jesus on the cross, and he has unconditional love for us today.



This is impossible for some people to see because they don't love unconditionally. We tend to love conditionally: if you give me what I want I'll love you and give you what you want. It's a type of horse-trading not love. But God knows all things about us even if we don't voice them. We are told that God looks at our heart.

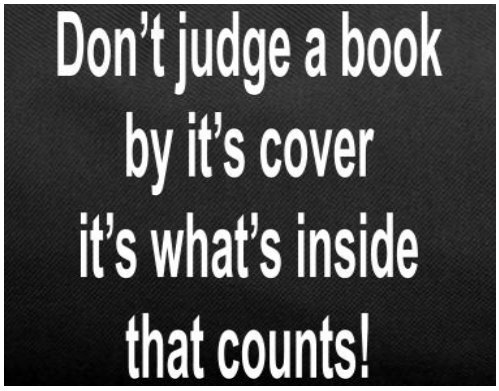
Others Look But Cannot See

There are two ways we miss things. First, if they go by too fast. The other is if we go by too fast. Some of us don't notice the tree growing until years later when it's nice and tall. Other people seem to sit and watch the rings form. It's all a matter of how we approach things in life— of what's

important to us.

Like listening, looking is a type of sense perception. Do we really perceive or do we just glance? We see everything that comes into our line of sight, but we don't always see everything. Again, I call this 'selective seeing.' Webster says seeing is to witness, to perceive, to learn, to encounter, to understand. So even the dictionary agrees that 'seeing' or more than a passing glance.

We Shouldn't Judge a Book by Its Cover



"Man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart." We do see outward appearances, but we need to practice looking deeper. Only passive concern will never generate interest in the value of the potential of others. I shared earlier how John Denver made me feel like he had been waiting weeks — just to meet me! It's a knack I sure try to cultivate as often as I can. We need to look more deeply than just at the cover.

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We need to appreciate things, and people more than we do sometimes. God

says only two things live eternally are (1) his word and (2) people. Jesus says, "He who has eyes to see let him see." We all have eyes, but we don't all see, just as we all have ears, but we don't all hear.

The New Testament talks a lot about light and darkness. We are in the light when we live by God's gospel truth. We are in darkness if we don't. We all have what we think of as 'a truth box,' but it isn't always filled with truth. It's often filled with wrong assumptions, false beliefs, and incorrect perceptions.

When we live in truth, then we see others more as a spiritual being, and not so much as what we see with our eyes. Few of us are truly 'beautiful to look at,' like we would like to be. That's why Paul says not to know anyone 'after the flesh.' If we know them in truth, we see them more like God does.

Competing In the Wrong Directions

Few of us are completely satisfied with our life status. Satisfaction is often not attained, so we want more. Often, happiness is defined in terms of what we DON'T have: "If I only had THAT…" that thing or that person. If we're broke, we think having more money will make us happy.

But there are lots of stories about rich people who commit suicide. At least if they become sick, they learn money can't always buy them health.

Money doesn't hold the magical cure many of us think it should. So we look for more 'pots of gold.' Competition is often produced by envy (one of those 7 deadly sins). We have an envy for something, like getting one or more of our needs met, and this becomes like our main focus: getting our needs met.

Sometimes we compete to get our needs met when we should be meeting the needs of someone else.

Six Human Needs Dominate Us

Actually there are 7 needs we have, but the last one is for believers in the things of God only, so I'll save it. But the first 6 needs are as follows.

(1) Security. We need to be secure in relationships and in our livelihood. God meets this need in us by giving us absolute total assurance of salvation, if we believe his gospel and trust him.

(2) Spontaneity. We must be free, and at liberty to be ourselves, and to be accepted for who we are. We also need variety in life, even to the point of risk at times. Security is number one, but it must be balanced with this need. God meets this need in us by giving us freedom to be ourselves, and to relate to him in the spirit, and not by laws, precepts and principles like existed in the Old Testament. He allows us to live in faith, and develops confidence in us.

(3) Significance. We all need what psychology calls 'self worth.' We all need to feel valuable. If we don't at least have security (need number 1) in

our close relationships, then this need is not being met. God meets this need by giving us his grace and love. Jesus even says he gives us his glory, but it's something we can't see with our eyes. When we look in the mirror, we should see 'the glory of the Lord,' according to Paul. I usually only see Roger.

(4) Love. Actually this is where our need focus starts, and should be our goal for others. Our goal should be to live in love, which is the great command of Jesus. So, this should be #1. But the truth is, unless we have the first three needs met, we really can't experience or give love. God meets this need for us by giving us his unconditional eternal love. He doesn't make us work for it or earn it. It is a free gift. But we can only truly receive his love if we're assured of our salvation, which was talked about in the first need: security.

(5) Increase. If we are not growing and maturing, we are dying. There is really no stagnancy in life. We need positive movement — betterment — or we are decreasing and fading. Thus, we must have goals and priorities and purposes as we talked about. This is true of both individuals and marriages.

God's gospel is what gives us increase by the good gospel seed he sows and plants into us, producing good results. This is increase growth in God's Kingdom.

This is what flows into us, empowering us to love others and relate to them as we should.

(6) Overflow. We must see ourselves as here to make a contribution to the lives of others, if only our spouse, kids, or a close friend. We need to help lift others 'to higher ground,' as John Denver used to say. It is our job to help and edify and encourage and listen to others. The Bible sees this as us

'overflowing' onto them. God fills us with his Holy Spirit, thus allowing us to impact others with the presence and power of God that we are given.

Making Sure Needs Are Met

As I said, we all have these needs. None of us are excluded. We need them met in our lives, and we need to meet them in the lives of others, especially those closest to us. The extent these needs are met in us, or in others who are close to us, there are problems. They should be met at least at a 6 level on a scale of 1-10, or there is going to inappropriate behavior and response. There will be problems.

A Spiritual Chat with "The Gospel Life Coach"

I've mentioned God in all these because it's important to see how God first meets our needs. God is always the giver. We are always the receiver. If we don't live this way, life doesn't flow very smoothly. There's too many bumps.

There is also a 7th need I mentioned for those in God and spiritually minded.

(7) Identity. God gives us absolutely everything we have in this need. Only God gives this need. God sees us as he does his Son Jesus, with all of his righteousness, glory, love, and everything else. "As Jesus is, so are we in this world."

Paul even uses the phrase, "We put on Christ." It's like a Jesus costume. In one letter he calls it the armor of God. It is living here that we know God's love the most, and know he not only forgives, but forgets our sin.

It's a big hurdle for the non-spiritual mind to grasp because we've been told that God is all-knowing. Besides, we know that we don't do this. We have memories like an elephant, especially if someone does us wrong. If God is all-knowing, then how can he forget our sin? It's just one of his divine attributes he has that we don't have.

This is why we Christians are called 'believers,' and not 'understanders.'

Actually, our identity in God is as vast as his creation, if you believe his gospel. The Apostle Paul even says we were conceived in the heart of God before the world began.



Acting Out Facsimiles

A facsimile is a 'look alike,' but it's not the real thing. It's a fake, but it looks real. In the business and legal world it's called a copy, a reproduction, a photocopy made with a mechanical device. It's an imitation of the original.

One way we act out facsimiles or play-like fantasies is with regard to who we are as people. We often try to copy the good traits of others, even if we

don't have them.

Young people do this all the time, copying the top kids' dress, hair, looks, and other things. But adults do it too. Not all copying or modeling is wrong. I shared how John Denver was model to me. I never tried to copy him, but I did employ his good traits like the music he chose, and his friendly approach to folks.

We shouldn't wear masks to hid the real us, and we can't ask God to deal us a new hand in life. We've got to play the hand we've been dealt. But there are things we can do to make life work better.

The 5 'B's of Living Life

Advertisers say we need all of what I call 'the 5 B's' —
(1) beauty,
(2) bucks,
(3) brains,
(4) brawn and
(5) booze.

Booze just means the pleasures of life. I don't mean that one literally (I just had to make the B's line up). But they say we need to be as beautiful, wealthy, smart, and as physically kept as possible, plus have all the toys, gadgets, cars, etc. possible. And of course we always need a new and bigger house about every 7 years, right? This defines the 5 B's.

Roles We Play Do Change

We might have one role we play at home and a different role at the office. Of course the mask we wear to church is different. We don't want folks we socialize with to see the person we want to be known as with religious folks.

This can all come from not having a good self-image or significance that we talked about on page 15. Something I heard is so true: "We can't consistently act, on the outside, different from what we think on the inside." The key word here is 'consistently.

We can fool some of the people all of the time, but we can't fool those close to us much at all. We shouldn't develop a "Dr. Jeckyl and Mr. Hyde complex."



The "Act As If' Principle

There is a human development theory called 'the act as if principle. If we 'act as if' we are something we're not, trying to grow into that role, then it's not all wrong. It's not just role-playing, but trying to adapt and develop to be something more than we are. It's like a goal to make you become better.

Psychology also says it's good to 'act as if' you are like the other person if you are in a certain situation with them like negotiations or sales. It's called the commonality principle. The more the other person sees you are like them,

the more they trust you and open up to you.

So if they fold their arms, or cross their legs, or lean forward, or gesture a lot, then you do the same things. It is said this is not 'cheating,' but merely 'creating space' for better and more open, receptive relationship.

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The Bible tells us to try to live better, like Jesus. "What would Jesus do?" is a common phrase today. This is not just pretending or 'play acting.' I know I'm not Jesus, and I'm very far from it. But I do use Jesus as a model to try to live just a little bit better than I might otherwise.



But our faith is meant to be in God, not in ourselves. And we're not trying to cover something up, or hide it. We're trying to become better. This is relying on the power of the Holy Spirit inside of us.

People Full Yet Always Hungry

There is something inside us humans that fights against us being content. The Bible calls it our flesh. You've heard about, "The world, the flesh and the devil." Well, some of the things we do fall into one of these categories.

We sometimes define life in terms of what we lack, and what we think we need, or at least want. We what a better life, we want more money, we want more charm and better looks, we want a better physique.

These are all part of 'the 5 B's' we looked at. Psychology has a term for this: 'deprivation anxiety.'

Most of the time if we think of being hungry, we are thinking of food. And it can be food, but most often it is about other things than just food.

One such thing we hunger for most is more money. We'll talk about this later in 'Money Is Our Hidden Treasure,' (the 15th line of this song). But in general, Benjamin Franklin said it best:

"Money has never made a man happy yet, or will it.
There is nothing in its nature to produce happiness.
The more a man has, the more he wants.
Instead of filling a vacuum, it makes one. If it satisfies one want,
it doubles and trebles that want another way."

Commercial advertisers know a profound truth,and they use it against us: "the human soul is almost incapable of being satisfied.'

Billboards are always telling us to get more — especially of what they advertise. I'm glad that where I live they've almost outlawed billboards.



Religion Is One Area We Want Satisfied

It is reported that there is a spiritual hunger among people, but it's often not satisfied by the traditional church. This is because the traditional church is

also most often built on this same principle: get people to want more and to try to be better. Often, religion is no better than things in the world.

We all have unfulfilled areas of life we want to see better. But if anxiety is created trying to accomplish some end we are driven toward, this can cause physical, mental, and health problems. Most people just want to see 'more' in their lives— something that helps them, not controls them.

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Much of philosophy/psychology says we humans are 'dichotomous.' This means we are a two-part being: a body and a soul. The soul consists of our intellect, emotions and will. Here the struggle in mankind is seen as one that is between the body and the soul.

Sigmund Freud actually came closer to truth when he said there were three parts to the human being: (1) the id, (2) the ego, and (3) the super-ego. He called this a trichotomy, not a dichotomy.

Some think Freud got his thinking from the Bible that talks about a body, a soul and a spirit. The Bible says our spirit should be in control — the part that connects with God. If we allow our spirit, and God in our spirit to control, life tends to go a lot better than if we just listen to our soul (Freud's ego).

Of course we should not be run by the devil. But the Bible says not to let the

world control us or we can't know and experience the love of God. We can't know his grace and peace either, because things drive us. Also it says we shouldn't let our flesh, or just our humanness control us.

I quit my law practice after 25 years, due to stress, and became a western U.S. coach tour guide for 8 summers. My driver and I took groups of 40-50 happy folks to see all the GOD-made, and MAN-made wonders in the west. To me this was a very simple distinction, but to many people, they had never thought of the world in terms of what GOD does, and what MAN does. This was foreign to them.

They never looked at the world this way before. To them it was just the 'world.' I received more comments from people who said they left my trip viewing the world, life, and other people differently, and for the better. I couldn't always preach a 'gospel message' in such a situation, but I could share things without preaching, and people always knew where I stood in my faith.

It is only God who creates satisfaction and contentment. The devil doesn't do it, and neither does the world or our human flesh. Without having a spiritual side to us, it's almost like we're not playing with a full deck of cards. You can't win with a partial deck. We are a dichotomy, not a trichotomy.

Reaching Out but Seldom Touching

A sign I saw said, “Fragile! Human Beings! Handle With Care!” We live in a very stand-offish world for the most part. People can pass almost shoulder and never notice the other person. Many folks have been ‘burned’ in close relationships, and are just cautious of people by nature. In handling lots of divorces, I know they create a lot of ‘baggage’ and bruises and wounds that is carried over to new relationships.

Many are afraid to commit to a new marriage or relationship because of old memories. Their motto is, "If you hurt me once, shame on you — if you hurt me twice, shame on me." A sign that appears in a lot of shops is, 'Look but don't touch.' This is how many folks approach life in general. We're afraid of being broken, or even chipped or scratched. We're protective to a fault. We insulate ourselves from being close to others.



Writer Henry David Thoreau said, "We live lives of quiet desperation."

We want to get involved, but we fear doing so. We too often react from selfishness and fear rather than respond in love. We look at ourselves first rather than look at others first. When it comes to human NEEDS that we looked at, our focus is more on our own needs than on the needs of others. And it's true that we must have our needs fulfilled, but they should not be our only focus.

Our action toward others reveals the depth of our need for security.

Aptitude, Attitude and Action

And action always begins with attitude, and before attitude comes aptitude.

APTITUDE means the thoughts we allow into us (the seed we spoke of).

ATTITUDE is the mind-set we develop and house in us from those thoughts.

ACTION is what we do with the thoughts and attitudes we house inside of us.

Self Confidence Must Be Our Foundation

Self confidence is vitally important in our relationships. This comes from having our six needs met we looked at earlier: (1) security, (2) spontaneity, (3) significance, (4) love, (5) increase and (6) overflow.

It is best to have the seventh 'identity' met too, but this is only accomplished in a close, GOSPEL relationship with God. It can't come from religion, or any type of living by law, principles or precepts.

Self-confident people don't have to fight to grab and hold onto others, or to keep them at arms length because they are fearful or feel guilty. They are not a victim of jealousy or envy. They are first secure in themselves, apart from the relationship, and so they bring strength to the relationship. They are not afraid to give because they are not afraid of being used, abused or misused.

So, the best way to reach out and touch others without intimidation is to build our own personal net worth by recognizing our own needs, and the needs of others we can better fill once ours are at a satisfactory level. Just living life being cognizant of these 6 NEEDS we all have, can raise the level at which we live life much higher.

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"You can't give away what you ain't got,' is an old expression. Jesus says it more positively: "As you have received, so freely give." Earlier, in talking about the needs, I showed how GOD meets our needs in every area. That's why living in the spirit, in God, is so important. It produces life and love, and then more of what Jesus calls light — more revelation from God.

Also, living in the gospel that I coach so consistently gives us confidence before God, as the Apostle John says. It even gives us boldness in the day of judgment, which many people realize is coming. But the gospel says we're not judged for the bad things we do (sin). Instead, we are judged for our belief in the gospel that God predicted several centuries before Jesus, and that Jesus brought us to live. The gospel is totally BLESSING from God, and we are judged for not trusting God, having faith in his faithfulness to us, and living it.

God doesn't expect much from us, but he does require our belief.

When we allow God's Spirit to impact us, then our needs become fulfilled much better, and we are able to give — what we have received, as Jesus says.

He says, "My way is easy." If we just learn to live in his gospel blessings, life becomes much easier — almost like rolling off a log. Then our focus becomes more on helping others, and lifting them to higher ground. It's not so much on just picking ourselves up off the ground.

Outward Laughing, Inward Crying

We need to be the same person inside that we are outside. Let me repeat one of my favorite maxims that I shared earlier: "We cannot consistently act, on the outside, different from what we think, on the inside." In other words, we can't be crying on the inside and really be happy on the outside – consistently.

What We Are Inside Is Formed When We Are Alone

It's a lonely process to form who we really are. We don't do it in groups, or in family, or with peers. These can all contribute, if they're positive, but they can't finish the job.

Gordon Powell said, "Doctors, and those who treat people suffering from nerves, are realizing more and more that just as you must keep the laws of health if you want a healthy body, so there are certain laws of the spirit you must keep if you want a healthy mind, peace and inward happiness."

One law of the spirit is to be the same on the inside as on the outside.

We spoke of aptitude, attitude and action last time. It all begins in aptitude, or what we allow inside of us (like the seed we spoke of earlier). Like an underwater swimmer who much eventually come to the surface, what is inside of us will also surface at some point.

So often we allow too many negative things to influence into us, and so this is what comes out of us. We must learn to guard against negative things and allow more positive things into us. We need to cut down on too much bad news, or too many bad movies, or too much bad music. One thing we can control is the choices we make.

An old song my dad used to sing from decades ago says, *"Accentuate the positive, eliminate the negative, latch on to the affirmative, don't mess with 'Mr. In-between'. You've got to spread joy up to the maximum, bring gloom down to the minimum, and have faith or pandemonium will come upon the scene."* It may be old, but it's very good advice.

The Workings of Our Subconscious Mind

Psychology admits there's lots we don't know about our subconscious mind, but one thing we do know is that it constantly dwells on what we have been feeding into it: the seed we plant in it. They don't have the ability to accept or reject what we plant into them. They just accept everything.



As we think in our minds, so are we. And our minds are often like a movie that is constantly playing, and it almost all comes from what our subconscious mind has been fed. For instance, most of what influences our dreams are the last things we have fed into our minds just before going to bed. Most people watch the late night news just before going to bed, so our minds dwell on these things: rape, robberies, murder, terrorism, etc.

Is it any wonder we often wake up on the wrong side of the bed?

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God's word says to guard your heart with all diligence, because out of it flows the issues of life. I've learned to replace the late night news with a little Bible reading, or something else of a positive nature. Then when I sleep, my subconscious has some positive things to dwell on. And there is nothing I miss if I skim the morning headlines in the newspaper or on the internet.

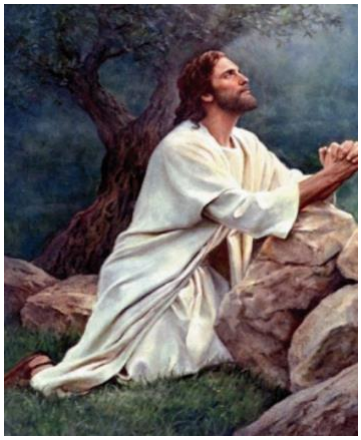
Also I live by the maxim of 'THE FIRST 7 MINUTES.' We're told that the first 7 years of life are the most formative, and that much of how we think of our self, the world, and other people is formed during this time.

The same thing applies to the first 7 minutes of each day. Before feet even hit the floor I wake up in a state of gratitude and worship, thanking God for the day, and committing my spirit into his hands, as Jesus did. Then I begin on a positive note and have a lot more inner peace and joy than I might gain any other way.

Avoiding Our Gethsemane

The Garden of Gethsemane is the place where Jesus was taken prisoner before he was crucified. It was a time of agony and soul-searching. He had a decision to make about what he would do, and his conclusion was, "Father, not my will, but your will be done."

Jesus was making a decision we all have to make, albeit not on the level that he had to make.



We all must face up to a decision about God. Many don't want to, and fear what he might require of them, so put off the process until they are faced with something horrific like their own death, the death of someone they love, or some other tragedy or problem.

You see, we like to be the head. We like to be in control. We want to run the show. We want to be the captain of our ship. Life just has a way of backing us into a corner until we finally see we can't even figure life out. But sadly, many people have to be confronted with something too big to handle before they are willing to seek God's guidance and help. Then of course, in our state of mind of wanting to be in control, we want to tell him exactly what he should do.

We Have a Self-Help Mentality Today

We want to figure out the puzzle of life, and then keep it together in exactly the way we want it to be. We don't want outside problems, or problem people, but the truth is Jesus promised us both problems and problem people

in our life. I like the cartoon I saw of the guy rushing into a bookstore with a horrified look on his face. He said to the clerk, "Quick! Where are your 'self help books'?"

We must come to the point of realizing we have limitations. An illustration I saw said: "Within many limitations, there is absolutely nothing I cannot do."

People often seek help in church, and mostly what they get there too is 'self help' in one way or another. The preacher usually says, "Go try A-B-C this week and see if it works for you. If it doesn't then come back next week and I'll give you X-Y-Z to try."

Of course the common preaching is, **"DO** read your Bible, go to church, pray, and give lots and lots of money," or **"DON'T** lie, cheat, steal, cuss, commit adultery, yell at your spouse, kick the cat, or be a bra."

Everything in life seems focused on a type of 'self help' mentality.

And there are so many philosophies and religions in the world that people have a hard time making a decision which one to embrace. Even in Christianity there are so many denominations that Wikipedia even has a disclaimer that it can't even list them all. There is a church on almost every street corner or strip mall. I refer to all of this as, "The SECOND Tower of Babel."

According to philosopher Buckminster Fuller, what he calls 'spaceship earth' should have a much better set of instructions. I guess he never read his Bible, which some call 'The Manufacturer's Handbook.' Actually, the Bible tells us the most about life, death, and how to get the most out of life.

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People who spend time getting to know God then have a much better chance in handling life than those who don't spend this badly needed time getting to know God.

As a lawyer, I became interested in the Bible after reading a Readers' Digest article about it.

This article was about 1970, and it made the point that since the end of WWII, or about 25 years, there had been research institutes set up to prove anything in the Bible to be wrong — things about truth for daily living, the history it presents, or future prophecy. And for 25 years these institutes had been silent.

As a lawyer who lived in a world where nothing is black-and-white, but a shade of grey, this was of real interest to me. So I began my study of the Bible. I even went to a theology school at night for a time to learn more about God. But I discovered they didn't know much that the Bible said. Their interest was in the theology of man, and what man thought about God. What God had to say wasn't even hardly given honorable mention.

Many make a decision about God strictly from their emotions. They either like the thought of God or they don't like the thought of God. Their motto is, "Whatever I believe is OK to me." They have no foundation, or input.

The truth is you can't know what Jesus claimed about himself and remain neutral to him. C. S. Lewis said it best, "He's either a liar, a lunatic, or he's

Lord." There is really no middle-ground when you truly know what Jesus said. He's not just a smart teacher, a good prophet, or a moral man. He didn't leave that choice open to us.

Jesus stood before Pilate after the Garden of Gethsemane. Pilate asked, "What is truth?" It was a scoffing comment, like truth didn't really exist. Pilate thought he was the judge of what was truth.

The fact is that Pilate wasn't the judge of truth, he was being judged by Truth. Jesus very boldly says, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me."

Land of Opportunity

President Calvin Coolidge said, "America's business is business." There is more freedom for business in this nation, in the free enterprise system our founding fathers set up for us, than anywhere else in the world. We have a land of unlimited potential. Opportunity knocks on everyone's door.

Of course we must open the door to it, but it does knock. In other lands,

one's life is often planned for them by their parents, or by the government.

Some say, "Opportunity is no where." We say, "Opportunity is now here."

Psychologist Wayne Dyer wrote a book: "The Sky's the Limit." That pretty well describes the state of affairs in this nation. With a little inspiration, and a little perspiration, anything is possible.

However, with all the positives, there is a negative side to this. Some of us exploit our free enterprise system to such a degree that some places in the world call out with hatred against 'the American capitalists.' Even in this country there is so much greed and unwanted competition, that the federal government steps in to supervise and control some facets of business.

Many types of business become overly regulated. We're often pictured as a bunch of money-hungry, cut-throat businessmen who will step on anyone in our frantic climb to the top. Sometimes it even kills us.



Is Our Focus the Product or the Person?

There are lots of articles focusing on what is most important in our land of opportunity. These usually stress that the person we're dealing with is more important than the product we are pushing. Relationship should be more vital to us than the cash register.

Other people sense our concern for them and their lives and business — or our lack of concern. Returning to the NEEDS we discussed, at least showing them fulfillment in their needs of security and significance must be met before

they are going to trust us.

Opportunity Is Good, but It Is Not Everything

We all have opportunity, at least in the western world. But we must combine other things with it. Things like caring and showing others the respect they are due, before we try to put our hand in their pocket. Things like ability, and being able to deliver to others a knowledge and a presence in a situation that is going to help them, not just us.

A lot is said about win-win deals. I've done a lot of negotiating as a lawyer, and I know it comes across as a slap in the face if the other side only wants to win, and doesn't care about what is fair and just. We'll talk about that when we talk about 'Fighting Hard For Selfish Justice." I've also been a salesmen to a lot of juries, trying to get them to buy what I was selling. But in the end, the saying is true: "People don't care how much you know, until they know how much you care."

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Building bigger barns is OK, if God leads us in building them. Too often, we just want to acquire more, and we're like a guy with a tapeworm inside that gobbles up everything. God wants us to succeed in life, and he has a plan for us the Bible says. Also we are told, "Nothing is impossible with God."

God is on our side. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" But God cares more about our character than he does about our cash register. Money is not the root of all evil — but rather the love of money.

Money is only a tool, and any opportunity is only a road to walk on. On The Gospel Road I talk a lot about, God cares about our honor and honesty, not just how hard we work.

And Jesus says we should always seek the honor that comes only from God. If we have this in mind, we won't get off The Gospel Road so easily.

Money Is Our Hidden Treasure



Opportunity and money usually go hand-in-hand. Money is usually the goal of opportunity, so we're really not changing subjects in this section. We're just viewing things a little differently.

People think money can buy anything, even happiness. I had a divorce client who wanted to buy one of his children from this wife he was divorcing. He was going to offer her a lot. I had to convince him children couldn't be bought.

Money is like treasure to many people. I've had people in a family fight over a deceased mother's property that wasn't worth more than about $15,000, and they paid much of that amount fighting over it. Our court system has people fighting over the dumbest things today, just because there is 'opportunity' to do so, as we were talking about in the last section.

I love lawyer jokes, and have lots of lawyer jokes in a book on this site, and also on my site: Rogers-Inspiration-Books.com. It is. . .

Lawyers, Laws, Justice and Judges.

Along the line we're talking, this lawyer walks into the law library and talks to his legal associate who was reading. He said, "I just got back from a meeting with a client, and found out the deal he wanted me to do was crooked, so I got out of it." Without looking up, his associate said, "Oh? How much?" It seems so many people have dollar signs for eyeballs.

And, then some people have no handle on money at all, especially if it's not their own. Two Congressmen were walking together and one said to the other: "Did we just appropriate $3 Million on that last measure, or $3 Billion?" His friend just shrugged his shoulders and said, "Whatever."

What Is Your Pot of Gold?



We often miss the pot of gold under our noses because we don't recognize it when we see it. It's like the classic story, *Acres of Diamonds.* We often go off in search of riches, when they are buried in our backyard.

The true pot of gold is life itself. We only go around once. There ain't no dry runs. Life is only a temporary assignment.

We have so many things that pull our focus away from what is truly valuable about life. We've got to remember that life is a journey, not a destination. Yes, there are things we want, and strive for, including money. But they should not rob us of the wealth that is truly ours each and everyday. "This is the day the Lord has made! Rejoice and be glad in it!"

Money Becomes Increasingly Fleeting

There used to be travel books available. I still have one in my library just for the sake of remembrance: "Europe on $5 a day." A few years ago I saw a printed copy in the library where the author had crossed out $5 and write in $50. Today, as I write this, I'm sure it's closer to $250.

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I've already quote the Bible: "The love of money is the root of all evil." It's not money itself, but our attitude toward it. Jesus says, "Where your treasure is, there is your heart also." It's a mater of how we define things in our minds. All of us is HAD by something we shouldn't allow to influence or control us.

If sexual pleasure is what has you, then the sex goddess Aphrodite controls you. If your thing is meeting the boys at the bar, then maybe it's the Greek god Bacchus. If you direction in life is education, perhaps you're in the clutches of the goddess of knowledge, Athena. Of course our mental images of them have changed over the years. Bacchus is no longer the roly-poly guy

with the silly grin on his face and the strand of grapes in his hand. Instead, he's the sharp looking celebrity with his arm around a sexy girl and a beer in his hand.

But Jesus says to seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness. If I had space to go into detail, this is actually talking about our 7th human need: that of our identity, that God gives us in his Kingdom righteousness.

Wealth Becomes the Standard Measure

I won't say a lot about this because we've already covered the subject. But the fact remains we like to compare the toys we have in our garage, shed, or at our beach or mountain home. A common phrase is, "He who dies with the most toys wins."

I know when I was in full time law practice, I knew lots of lawyers who loved talking about their 'measure in life,' which usually meant money. But a lot of them had poor health, failing marriages, rebellious kids, etc. It's all about how we choose to measure things.

Many folks are familiar with the verse in the New Testament that talks about God wanting us (1) to prosper, and (1) be in health, even as our soul prospers. But they often don't know that the very next verse tells us how this happens:
(1) we have God's truth inside our hearts, and
(2) we walk and live in that truth.

Sadly, too many, especially men, are turned off to a spiritual dimension in life. They figure that is for women and kids. It is often spiritual things that help us overcome deficiencies and weaknesses. To me, the standard measure for all of us should be spiritual depth and maturity. Then other things fall into place.

In the last session I quote the verse: "Seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness…" I didn't finish that quote. It goes on to say, "And all these things will be added unto you." This doesn't mean we get everything we want. But it does mean when we get our priorities straight and quit playing life with a partial deck of cards, that 'things' start coming to us in greater

measure.

As We Seek Our Fleeting Pleasures

What pleasurable event doesn't come to an end too soon? Plan a vacation and it's gone in a heartbeat. You spend weeks in anxious expectancy and then it evaporates and you wonder where it went. At least you have pictures.

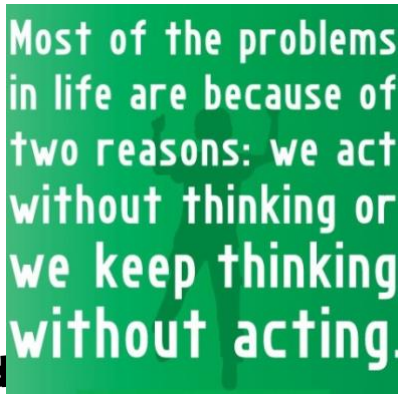
We must live by the motto, "This too will pass." Good or bad, nothing lasts forever. Life is often like sand seeping through our fingers. We must learn to endure what we don't like, and also put our pleasures in proper perspective. We should cry over every failure — once. We should celebrate every success — once. But, good or bad, we must pick up and go on. "This too will pass."

What Is Pleasure Anyway?

If we don't have a clear definition of pleasure, how do we know what it is we are seeking — that will soon be fleeting? Most people define happiness as on the outside of ourselves.

But the fact is that most things don't make us happy. Consider the weather as an overly-simplified example. At any given time the weather is usually too hot or too cold — too humid or too dry — too windy or too calm.

It's seldom exactly what we want, so we're not totally happy about it. We tend to gauge everything like this.



What Happens To Us vs. How We Respond

It's worth remembering that what happens to us, as important as it may be, isn't nearly as important as how we respond to what happens to us.

We can't control pleasure — everything that goes on around us. If we try, we're going to wind up with a bad case of ulcers, at best. Thus, knowing we can't control circumstances, we must also learn not to let the circumstances control us.

In one way of looking at this, this IS controlling our circumstances. We do this by learning to control our response to circumstances. When we realize that our response is more important than what happens to us, then we learn to respond more appropriately, and with more wisdom, and with more creativity.

Problems in Life vs. Pleasures

Whether we're dealing with problems, or with pleasure, we really deal with them about the same way: this too will pass. There is a lot more thinking in the world about dealing with problems than with pleasure. But they're somewhat similar.

Some folks live by the maxim: "If it feels good, do it." It's called 'the pleasure principle.' If we seek fleeting pleasures we're always going to be disappointed because they do pass.

A Spiritual Chat with "The Gospel Life Coach"

There is a saying that if we don't keep certain rules in life you're going to get lumps. These rules don't always let us do everything we'd like to do for

the sake of pleasure.

God didn't say, "Don't commit adultery" simply because he is God with an ego problem and wants to pull rank. In effect, what he is saying is, "Don't commit adultery because, if you do, you're going to get messed up. You're going to hurt a lot of people including yourself. You're going to get lumps."

Behind most wisdom there is reason. Jesus was made wisdom to us. We need to start looking for the wisdom behind the rules.

A theology student was trying to be funny when he was asked to write a paper summarizing the Ten Commandments. His one page paper had one word on it:

"DON'T."

But all this shows is a lack of revelation.

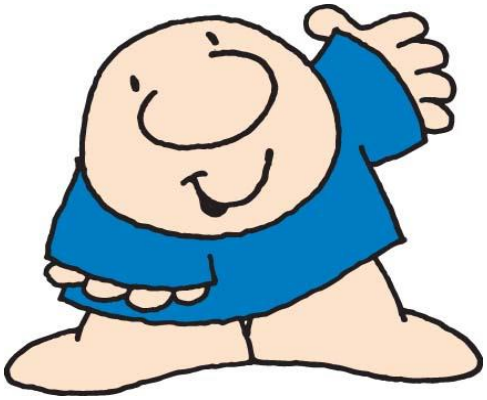


The gospel of grace isn't a license to believe or do anything we want. It reveals the heart of God helping and blessing us to live the abundant life of Jesus.

Pride Without Humility

Pride won't admit that I might be wrong. Pride won't admit that I might

have a problem I can't handle. Pride won't admit there could be something I'm doing wrong in my marriage, or at work, or at church, or just out having fun. Pride won't admit I don't have all the pieces of life's puzzle. Pride finds it hard to admit that I'm not an island — or an end in myself.



I saw at thought producing Ziggy cartoon. He was saying, "I'm a very proud person. But sometimes I think the only thing I have to be proud of is my pride."

Pride is most often an overly-high exaggerated opinion of myself, and it's usually displayed as superiority, haughtiness or arrogance. Pride involves both deceit and conceit.

First, we deceive ourselves into believing we're something we're not, or that we are more than we really are. Deceit evolves into conceit as we actually believe the deception and act on it, showing off to other people.

Pride Can Be a Good Thing

If pride is defined in terms of healthy self-love, a good self-image, or realistic recognition of talent, education or accomplishment, then pride is beneficial. We should be proud of things we have done. This is true as long as we don't consider ourselves better than everyone else because of them.

The problem is that most pride-filled people are out-of-balance, and are off on a head-trip about their own superiority. And they leave their minds and hearts behind.

Too Often Our Self-Image Isn't What It Should Be

To balance this, one problem we have developing just a healthy self-pride is that our self-image has often been torn apart since childhood. This is done by insensitive, negative, destructive comments from others. These comments can come from parents, peers, other students, teachers, bosses, etc.

Unless we take steps to counter-act these negative seeds that have been planted into our minds, our subconscious mind often just dwells on negatives we've heard. Most of these are lies, but we accept them as reality.

Humility Without Pride Is Not Good Either

Sometimes we over compensate for things we've been looking at by just saying that we are humble. The problem is if we are really focused on our humility, it is usually the result of pride. If I really believe that I'm humble, and you are prideful, where does my humility come from?

Humility isn't pretending to be less than you really are. It isn't taking a

back seat to others. It isn't pretending you don't have certain abilities that you really do have. It's not telling others you're poor when you're wealthy. It's not pretending to be dumb if you're smart. This is all false humility.

Humility is what gives pride balance. Our own particular balance of pride and humility is who we are as individuals. It defines us.

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Humility is recognizing the worth of other people, and this comes from knowing our worth to God. Remember, "As you have received, so freely give." What is planted into us is what is reaped from us.

God is smart! He knows if he plants apple seeds in us, he won't raise pumpkins. If we let him plant the truth of his gospel into us, then good things automatically come form us.

Humility is recognizing our need for God. There are 10 aspects of gospel truth and reality that I continually stress. When we RECEIVE these things from of loving Father on a daily basis, all of life becomes very different.

(1) Live knowing God's absolute, eternal, unconditional love for us.

(2) Live in absolute total assurance of God's gift of our salvation.

(3) Live knowing we're dead to law and religion that judges and condemns.

(4) Live knowing God shares all things with us and his gospel transforms us.

(5) Live in Christ's abundant, overcoming, victorious life of blessings.

(6) Live in God's all sufficient manifold grace, mercy and power.

(7) Live in total forgiveness of all sin, with diplomatic immunity from sin.

(8) Live in Christ's gift of righteousness, in his ministry and his inheritance.

(9) Live in total authority over the devil and all demonic forces of hell.

(10) Live knowing we're all equal in Jesus: we are all the same in God.

The last one particularly describes humility. The gospel is what I call 'the great equalizer.' It leaves no room for boasting, or pomp and circumstance. We are all great, glorious, honored and accepted in God's eyes, but it's not due to anything we do except believe. It's due to the finished work of Jesus.

Great Concern but No Compassion

We are all concerned about a lot of things. Things such as famine, rising populations, governmental manipulation, inflation, immorality, abortion, sex

trafficking, etc. And most recently there are terrorist bombings and shootings where even kids are being killed in schools.

But concern is passive. We all have some level of interest in such things, and are 'concerned,' about them. But concern is not active. It creates uneasiness and anxiety and even stress and worry in some cases.

I recently read about a parent who told their child they couldn't be worried about all this terrorist stuff — and then that child was killed by a terrorist's mass bombing. Go figure.

Concern Is Different from Compassion

While concern is more passive and abstract, compassion signals a depth of personal involvement. It involves true empathy and a degree of love. It's like the difference between liking something and really loving something. The word 'like' carries with it no depth or dimension of relatedness.

It's merely a word that tells of a preference, like I prefer baked potato over French fries — but I like both. Love on the other hand communicates more of a personal connection.

Compassion isn't passive, but is most often manifested by action and words. There must be a degree of love or other involvement in order for there to be compassion. Concern is more internal, and compassion is more external. Action (I-act-on) usually accompanies compassion. I take no action regarding a terrorist attack or inflation or abortion.

Love and Compassion

Love is manifested as compassion, which is to an extent 'giving yourself away.' Until we're self-confident and have healthy pride, we can't give us away. This is because fear of others, and fear of the unknown won't let us do so. The degree to which I love determines the extent to which I'm willing to get involved with others. As I mentioned, sometimes our next-door-neighbor is just too close for us to reach out and touch and get involved with. It may require too much risk and commitment.



It takes compassion to be a true leader, as opposed to being just a manager or supervisor. Leaders get involved with others and lead. In compassion, the emphasis is on our performance and action, and not just on internal feelings or concern. It is responding to the needs of others to the extent we are able.

When Judgment Is Involved In Compassion

Of course, if we judge people by our own inner evaluations, we often don't

show compassion. Judgments don't often produce decisive actions. If we must approve of someone first, before we become compassionate and help them, compassion usually goes out the window. We often only relate to others to the extent that we approve of them.

Years ago, I used to make the rounds with a friend of mine, who is now deceased: Bruce McBogg. He had a downtown Denver, Colorado ministry that helped street people like prostitutes, druggies, homeless, and the like.

I would occasionally walk with Bruce through the streets, and I was amazed how many homeless people knew and liked him. This is because Bruce greeted them warmly, hugged them, and would even sit on the curb and talk with them. He was an amazing man.

He didn't care what anyone's background was, and didn't seem to judge anyone. He just loved them and showed compassion.

Acceptance vs. Approval

There is a world of difference between acceptance and approval. We can accept someone as a human being, and as a creation of God, without approving of their actions or lifestyle. I think this is where the old saying comes from: "Hate the sin but love the sinner."

Approval is imposing our right to define life in terms of our own peculiar relationship to this world. We're all influenced by things in our lives, and these influences form our lifestyles — and our opinions of the lifestyles of others.

It is from these perceptions that we either approve or disapprove of others. But if I disapprove of you, and reject you, I assume the position of self-appointed judge. None of us are adequate judges. I may not approve of what you do, but I have no right to judge you or reject you.

Besides, if I point a finger at you, I've got 4 more pointing back at me.

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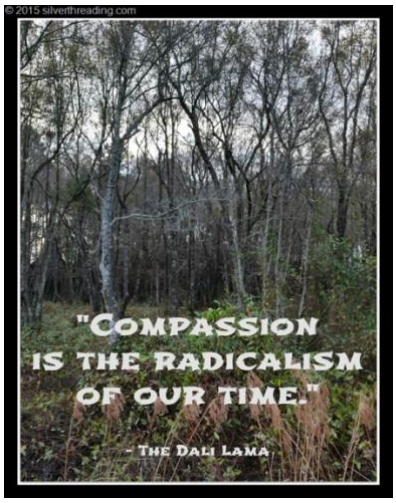
Jesus says, "Do not judge or you will be judged." A monarch has the power of execution at his disposal, and this is what we do to someone if we judge and reject them. We are in essence assassinating them, although not physically. Ours duty is not to judge, but to accept, forgive and love, if we live the gospel. This creates space for others to move and live in, instead of rubbing their nose in the dirt.



This is compassion in action.

In the story of the Good Samaritan, a man was beaten up and robbed and left alone. Religious leaders passed him by, not wanting to get involved with him.

They might have been concerned. Maybe not. But they had no compassion. Only the Samaritan (a half-breed Jew) had compassion on the man and got involved. He invested himself giving himself away to the follow in need.

Fighting Hard For Selfish Justice

Having been a street lawyer for 25 years, I learned that few people are truly righteous, at least in the natural sense. We believers are righteous in the biblical and gospel sense because of God's free gifts in the 7th aspect of the 10-part gospel that I just recently outlined .

Natural righteousness is not a common thing. The old saying is, "Everyone is looking out for number 1." Of course this means me.

What is right in general may not be right for me in a specific situation I'm in. You see, we think in terms of special rights, and entitlement, which we hear so much of today. Certain employees are 'entitled' to keep their jobs, even if they are lazy, unreliable, stupid and uncaring. And there is a big 'special rights' push today by various minority groups.

In the Practice of Law

In law practice, I've observed many people 'fighting hard for selfish justice.' There is no thing as this in reality, but like entitlement and special rights, it is manufactured out of a need to WIN… whether you deserve to win or not.

You may be guilty as SIN, but still you want to WIN. Is this justice? But we want to be on top. We want to trump the other guy. We want to be 'king of the mountain.'

If our system was based more on justice than it is on self-righteousness, there would be a lot of lawyers looking for work. But it's not based on justice.

It's most often based on, "He who has the best lawyer wins." And of course this means who can afford to hire the best lawyer. Money rules! Loot wins! "Money Is Our Hidden Treasure."

Too often we all want to employ what might be called a 'Super Lawyer,' so we



get what we want.

Our Founding Fathers

The founding fathers of this nation knew it was human nature to be selfish and self-serving.

This is why there are so many 'checks and balances' in our Constitution and Bill of Rights. This creates methods where everyone can check and supervise everyone else. This website about our Constitution and Bill of Rights also has a lot of lawyer humor. Just check the home page and you'll see it.

We were meant to implement this in our daily lives also. In the founders' way of thinking, everything starts at the top with the government, and then flows down to us. But times have changed! I said earlier: we did have a tall, lanky, energetic Uncle Sam; today we have a big, fat, lazy Mama Washington.

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This all started with the Bible story of Adam and Eve. Satan told Eve she could be like God — that she could be #1. This is the great American dream, although it's nothing more than a fantasy.

But the dream is if I'm good enough, God will answer my prayers as I want, and he'll do what I say. The problem is that we are not his co-pilot. At best, we are his co-pilot.

When we come into revelation of the gospel, we see that we are here for his benefit and glory. His job is not just to serve us and give us what we ask for. But still, we try to fight for 'selfish justice' with God too. We try to impress him with the fact we are entitled to be served by him. After all, don't we have 'special rights' in his Kingdom as his sons and daughters?

This type of humanistic thinking, once entered into, has no limits. We know God is just, but we just want him to define justice on our terms. And we will fight for selfish justice with all the strength we have.

We wrongly call this 'faith.'

If we come into a gospel relationship with God, when we are in any type of conflict with someone, God becomes like the third party in that conflict. He is the Judge, and he knows all about justice. The word 'selfish' is taken out, and God deals with us according to his just ways. Our job is to submit to him and allow him to have his way in us — not give us our way with him.

I keep saying 'gospel Christians,' or 'gospel believers' because not all who say they are believers in Jesus follow his gospel ways. The first words out of his mouth, after spending 40 days in the wilderness with Satan were, "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe the gospel."

As the first words out of his mouth, this was the most important thing on

his mind and heart.

But Paul says later, “Not all believe and obey the gospel.” He really means not many at all believe and live it. In fact, today, Gallop Polls says fewer than 10% of all professing Christians believe and live the gospel.

But if we are gospel believers, and put our faith in Jesus, then we have ‘The Jesus Factor.’ By him, we are held in check, just like in ‘checkmate’ in a game of chess. But it’s not because he imposes himself on us. It’s because we ‘deny ourselves,’ as he says, and we do believe and live his gospel truth and Kingdom-family reality.



For the gospel believer, Jesus is the third part of an invisible triangle. As our founders described, he becomes a built-in check and balance to our humanness. Then the term ‘selfish justice’ ceases to exist.

Becoming Slaves in All Dimensions

If you don't think we're slaves in various ways, try talking with someone who has quit smoking. My brother Tim quit smoking before he died. Or try talking to a reformed alcoholic. My brother Tim was also an alcoholic, but hadn't had a drink in the 10 years before he died. Or try talking to someone who has been on drugs. Tim was also on drugs for a time in his life. These

people will all tell you how enslaved they had been. Tim said he was a slave.

Tim and I were different. I never fought all this stuff like he did. He mostly inherited it from our dad who wanted to share all his bad habits with us. I said 'NO' to things dad offered, and left home early. Tim hung around and took him up on them. I still drink a couple glasses of wine a couple nights a week, usually while playing the guitar and singing. Tim stopped everything cold-turkey.

Now, don't try talking to someone who is still smoking, or can't put the bottle down, or is still popping pills or snorting something. They have no idea they are slaves. It's only when we're freed that we can look back and see how badly we were kept as slaves.

What We Allow To Be Fed Into Us

We need to see thus fact: we become slaves to what we feed into ourselves. And I don't mean food, although we become addicted to that as well. A human being is like a computer. If you feed incorrect data into a computer, the computer can't tell the difference, and doesn't know the information is wrong. It just takes what is fed into it. We're much the same way. We believe what we house inside of us, whether it's right or wrong.



And in fact, we will believe it more than anything else because it comes from inside of us. They're OUR beliefs, which are more important than other beliefs. It does not matter if they're wrong and should be replaced due to user

error.

What I; Planted in the Ground I; What Grows; in U;

We are the same way as the ground. In fact, John Denver has a song about what we plant, and how we plant. Remember: what we sow or plant into us is what we reap. It doesn't matter what we plant. What we plant is going to take root and grow.

The very first chapter of the Bible says, "Things grow after their own kind." If we plant weeds, we will grow weeds.

It's an old saying: "Sow a thought, reap an act; sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a lifestyle." But it all begins in our heads.

Our hearts are actually more important and this is why we're told to guard our hearts with all diligence because of out them grow the issues of life. But it's true our hearts can't accept what our heads reject. Our heads are the filter. Our hearts are the reservoir.

"Today is only a delayed reaction of what you thought about yesterday." Now the timing isn't as important as the thought. It could be days, weeks or months. Pictures are the language of the mind. We most often think in pictures. And what we visualize in our minds most often plays out in our actions.



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The Bible says, "Without a vision people perish." The truth is we are meant to establish good, valuable visions and work them out. This goes back to goals. A lot of times, we have to dig up and cultivate the ground before we can then plant something new.

One thing we need to dig up and get rid of is any guilt over yesterday. If we can correct something bad, and do something about it, do it. But more often we can't, so we need to dig it up and get rid of it.

A second thing to dig up and get rid of is doubt about today. "Whether or not you think you can, you're right." Doubt is the opposite of faith.

A third thing we need to dig up and get rid of is fear of the future. As Mark Twain said, most of us have worries that never come to pass.

The last thing we need to dig up and get rid of is lack of knowledge.

There is so much knowledge at our fingertips today on the internet it's really a miracle. God says, "People are destroyed for lack of knowledge." As the Gospel Coach, I know the most important thing to know is God and his

ways. Working against him when you believe in him is emotional suicide.

While Striving Hard to Be Set Free

We are constantly conditioned from the time we're born. This begins with our parents, and then our peers, and then our schools and teachers, and it goes on. Today, schools teach little or no absolute values of right and wrong.

Everything is a shade of grey, and not black and white. Children are

encouraged to just make their own decisions — often before they are too young to do so.

It was the same way in law school. It doesn't teach any concrete things either, and it's partly because laws and rules and procedures change over the years. The best thing I learned was where to find an answer.

We Are Free To Choose

One big freedom we do have is the freedom to choose. But for most of us we don't get all the facts before we do choose. This is something I've preached to my kids for years: just get ALL of the facts, and usually the decision is made quite easily. As I said, law school taught me where to find answers.

We're free to choose what shows we watch on T.V., or what job we take, or what church we attend, if any. We're free to choose how much we sleep, or what we eat, or whether we drink alcohol, smoke cigarettes, take drugs, or engage in illicit sex. And we're presented so many choices each and every day.

One source said we're exposed to 1,000 to 1,500 commercials and advertisements each day. WE may not engage that many, but we're expose to that many.

We All Get Into Ruts, and We Often Stay There

A saying I heard was, "Choose your ruts carefully. You may be in them for a

long while." This is especially true, as we saw in the last section, with regard to addictive things in life.

Habits, or getting into ruts, are easy. It's getting out of them that is hard. So many of us are 'striving hard to be set free' from some annoying thing in our lives that dominates us. It's just how life is I guess.

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Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." Freedom isn't found in a religion, or even in church. It's found in a Person. The Person of God in the form of Jesus. He also said, "I and the Father are One."

There are many people who claim to be able to show us the truth. And some of them are very good. I follow a couple of non-believers who I think have a better handle on the truth for daily living than many Christians. They can see into people, and know their needs and motivations and drives better than most. But they cannot say, "I am the way."

Only one Person can say this: God.

The gospel is the testimony of Jesus as to how to live life to the fullest. It is called 'the abundant life of Christ.' The book of Acts says the gospel is given to us to bless us. Jesus gives us all the promises of God in his gospel.

And it gives us freedom to live life anyway we want to, as long as we allow the Holy Spirit to direct us and guide us. It really doesn't take a lot of work. The rut I choose is to do things God's way, and live as he desires. It's a good rut to be in.

Seeking Answers While Avoiding Issues

We're always seeking answers to our problems. We even want magical-type cures for things we really don't like. We look for miracle workers, prophets, and we seek healing. This is often because our major problem is ourselves.

As an example, my mom died of lung cancer. She'd smoked cigarettes all of her life. Yet, when she was diagnosed with lung cancer she stopped smoking and wanted God to heal her. Some things we contribute to.

We attorneys see this all the time. Clients want to get out of a jam they've created, but they don't want any counsel on how to avoid similar things in the future. They only want relief at the moment. I had one guy in my office for his third divorce from his third wife in about 10 years.

Yet, when I tied to talk to him about what might be causing his marital conflicts, he very sternly said he wanted a divorce, not a lecture. Doctors see the same thing in patients who want relief from something, but don't want advice on what might be done to eliminate their problems.

If A Problem Is Definable, It Is Most Often Defeatable

We can defeat most problems we encounter in this life, but we have to be willing to change. We can't just want the problem to change. The problem is that most people are often not willing to make small changes in their lives to accomplish desired results. They just want some magical cure.

Reports say it takes $1 million in pills to put Americas to sleep at night. And I'll bet that doesn't count the two I took. It would be better to get rid of the 'cat' keeping us awake.

We don't like to examine ourselves to see what might be going on inside. That takes too much risk. It takes too much work. We just want a remedy.



"Wherever I Go, There I Am"

It is Aristotle who is given credit for this statement. There is a lot of truth in it. There is one common thing that is constantly present in every situation of our lives, whether good or bad: US. When we have a common denominator like this, it's a good idea to take a deeper look at both the good and bad things about this common denominator called US.

The Difference Between Answers and Issues

Answers are usually a matter for the head. Issues embrace our heart. Answers are thoughts and products of our minds and intellects, while issues reach down further into our inner being. In answers, we're trying to figure something out. With issues, we deal more with deep-down attitudes and convictions — where we really live.

Answers can often change on a daily basis as we get more facts. Issues are more engrained in us, more of a part of us, and take more effort to change. Issues take time to analyze and consider. But too often we don't handle issues in the best way because we don't take time to get all that facts that will give

us the best answers how to deal with them.

We sometimes live life trying to put a puzzle together with a lot of pieces missing. It's called living life by the seat of our pants.

Ignorance is not knowing something, and all of us are ignorant in many ways. But it's stupid to know something, or having facts and answers readily available to you, and refusing to make use of them. Someone has said there is a lot of common sense in the world — because so few people use much of it.

Answers we arrive at in our day-to-day decisions will be directly affected by the attitudes we have toward the issues we face. An earlier section said it's important to get all the facts so we can have the answers we need. But then it's also good to really analyze those answers to confront issues.

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If we begin with issues, and use answers to supplement them, answers will become more readily available and fall into place better. For instance, many people wrestle with the answer of whether or not to go to church. But the issue is God, not church. If God is not in the equation, don't bother going to church.

I think folks are better out of church if the church doesn't preach the gospel.

Also, many people wrestle with the answer of getting God to come into their life and handle an issue that is a problem. Again, they want the miracle worker with the quick fix. They want a genie in a bottle. The issue is God

wanting us to come into his Kingdom where he can deal with US, and not just deal with the issue or problem we are facing at the moment.

We must learn to deal with issues, and not just desire answers.

Learning Facts But Never Knowing

This section falls right on the heals of the last section. There are lots of people who are satisfied just storing up facts. Some are called knowledge junkies. And there are trivia experts. Some people spend half a life just going to school so they won't have to face trying to live life in the real world.

Psychology tells us our rate of forgetting is staggering, unless reinforced in

some way. So this requires additional learning of facts because the facts don't stay with us unless we are blessed with a photographic memory, which few are.

But some people can spew facts all day long. It's like they have a reservoir that is filled with facts.

Facts Must Be Translated Into Knowledge

To be useful, facts must be converted into something meaningful that in some way impacts us. This happens by personal experience and application. A geology or biology student becomes more knowing when they combine the classroom with a field-trip. Thus some studies include a lab, not just lectures.

I experienced the same thing in law. I learned a lot in law school, but I didn't really learn until I began law practice. I didn't really know how a lot of law was until I began working with it in an experiential basis.

Even Knowledge Can Be A Dangerous Thing

I've also had clients advised by the knowledge of friends. If we met, they would say, "But I thought thus-and-so was the law." When I inquired where they had learned this, it was always the knowledge of a well-meaning friend.

Facts can be misunderstood and misinterpreted. We've all been exposed to things we thought were true, but later discovered weren't true. A saying is true: "Don't believe everything you hear."

But many are gullible and do believe what they hear.

This is also true in God's family. As 'The Gospel Coach,' I hear a lot of things from others, and even preached or written, that just don't line up with gospel truth. They are off in 'foul territory' when compared to the gospel of Jesus, completed by the gospel Paul preached.

"There Is Safety In the Counsel of Many"

This is a verse out of Proverbs. Usually when we put our heads together we get closer to true knowledge as opposed to what we think are 'facts.' I guess the message here is don't just be a 'fact junkie.' Convert those facts into knowledge by experience, and then into wisdom, which is the next subject.



Seeking Knowledge, Seldom Wisdom

Knowledge is a body of accumulated facts that through experience we know is true. Knowledge must be acquired before a person can become wise. Using me as an example again, I heard a lot of facts in law school, and even became knowledgeable in them by seeing how they worked in court cases I read.

But it wasn't until I got into practice, and saw this all applied in real life that

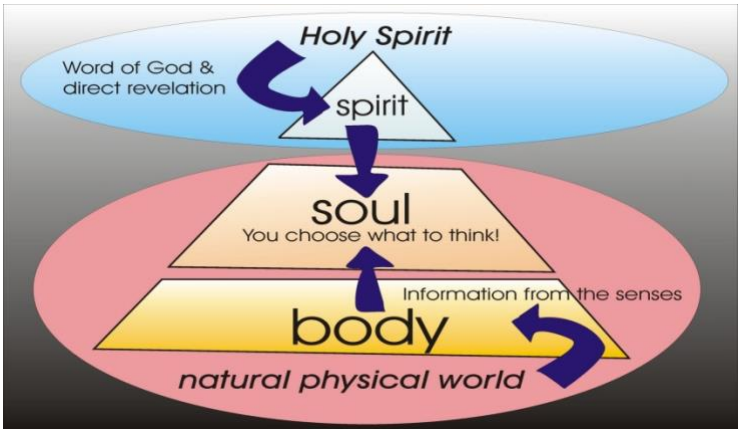
I became wiser. Facts became knowledge, but that knowledge wasn't converted to wisdom until later.

How Is It We Acquire Wisdom?

Originally, Plato believed wisdom came from three sources: (1) our five senses, (2) reason and logic, and (3) what he called 'divine madness'—spiritual intuition. Aristotle was Plato's student, and is one of the biggest influences in western thought. He disregarded the third aspect of Plato's and said wisdom only came from the first two — through sense and mental processes.

But the Bible tells us that all true wisdom comes from God, which is the spiritual realm, or what Plato called 'divine madness.' We talked about the dichotomous person earlier: the two-part person. This was probably partially developed through Aristotle's philosophy.

Of course much of psychology, and of course the Bible says we are a trichotomy: a three-part person.



When we believe that all wisdom is simply achieved by us as human beings, we get off on a dirt road that often is a dead end. Even those who don't believe in God literally know there is something larger than just our human faculties.

We need something more than just us, our minds can become like Satan's playground.

Wisdom Is Applied Knowledge

Knowledge is a wonderful thing, and thank goodness for good schools. But knowledge alone is like filling up a reservoir, but that reservoir has no place to go. The reservoir is good, but without a river flowing out of it, it just stagnates and dies. This is the story of 'The Dead Sea' is Israel. It is dead because it has no ingress or egress — anything flowing into it or out of it.

Wisdom is derived from facts and knowledge. It is applied knowledge.

King Solomon is said to be the wisest man in the world. His Proverbs contain more knowledge for everyday living than many sources combined. He was asked how a man becomes WISE. He said, "The first step is to trust and reverence the Lord."

In other words, tune into the spiritual realm, or what Plato called 'divine madness.' Three times, the New Testament says, "Today, IF you will hear (God's) voice, do not harden your heart."

And notice it says IF you will hear his voice. We can't hear things that we do not tune ourselves into and are ready to receive.

Intellectual Security

This section of course follows on the heels of the last two, but again views things from a little different perspective. I like to jokingly say I'm educated beyond my intellect. That's the way it felt when I left law school. My mind was racing and swirling in so many facts, and so much knowledge, but I had no idea what I was going to do with it. I was so confused.

Facts and knowledge create a type of intellectual security. This is what our

universities create in us (as well as law school). We feel smart because we know so much about so many things. I left school knowing a lot about every branch of law there was. But IN application and experience I was dumb.

I began law when the law was relatively easy. It wasn't complicated as I began. I could handle most things competently, at least with a little application that than gave me experience. I stayed away from certain areas of law, but I quickly became a competent attorney in most areas.

It wasn't until 15 years later that the law became 10 times more complicated. But for the first 15 years, I was intellectually secure.



A Spiritual Chat with "The Gospel Life Coach"

I experienced another round of this as I became a believer in Jesus Christ when I was 33 years old. This was the same year in his life that he went to the cross for me, which has always been meaningful to me. But I was really quite a 'no-good' for a lot of years.

I was only money-motivated, and as I alluded to earlier, my dad tried to pump me full of his bad vices, some of which I adopted. I even had one client paying me to keep my mouth shut, not open. But I became a believer in Gad

and in his Son, and all of this changed.

After 15 years in law practice, during which I felt very intellectually secure, I began to feel insecure when it seemed like the law exploded in intensity and all came crashing down on me. This happened to me as a Christian too. I began thinking I was smart, and I was intellectually secure. I had a conservative book published by a major publisher after I'd been a Christian only five years.

I was on speaking circuits, and even got a manager who was going to do big things with me. Again, I was only 5-6 years into being a Christian, so I was still wet behind the ears, although I didn't really know it. It's too long of a story, but my manager was tragically killed one evening.

Today, I'm very glad nothing came out of all that. I went through years of being a legalist, thinking that keeping the law was the only way to be right with God. I succeeded some, but I also failed a whole lot. It wasn't until 1990, during a hike in the mountains of Colorado, that I heard God's voice in my spirit: "You know that book you're so proud of?" I told God I sure did, and I was proud of it. He said, "It doesn't have a word of gospel truth in it."

I argued with God, which isn't smart, but I was intellectually secure at this point. I reminded God the book had been published by a conservative publisher, had received several endorsements, and was being recommended on book lists. God said that he didn't say it wasn't intellectually accurate. He then repeated himself: "But it doesn't have a word of gospel truth in it."

It's too long a story to go into, but it took me 4-5 years to figure out what he meant. Here I had an intellectually sound book on Bible doctrine viewed as

legal parables from a lawyer, but God said it wasn't sound in gospel truth.

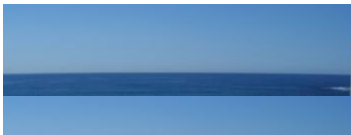
Something like this does make you search — and look at the facts you know, and the knowledge you have that all produces intellectual security. But your heart is listening to God and it knows something BIG is lacking.

Today, God reveals to me more and more of his gospel truth. At times I feel humbled. And yet, the more I learn, the less wise I truly feel, and the less I feel I truly know much.

At times it feels like trying to get the ocean into a swimming pool.

Land of Milk and Honey

This earth of ours is like a land of milk and honey. There are things about it that are troubling, like natural disasters that happen, fires, hurricanes, tornadoes tsunamis, droughts and famines. As I've alluded to, there is terrorist attacks like never before, more murders than we can count, runaway children and suicides among young people as well as old. This world is plagued with problems.



But recall that earth is cursed due to the fall of man. But largely, it's a beautiful, wonderful place. I especially realize this in Colorado, which in many ways is like paradise, with its tall mountains, lakes, rivers, etc. It's like a song I used to sing, "The Willowy Billowy Land." A country song says, "If God doesn't live in Colorado, it's where he spends most of his time."



Sure, you can find negatives in everything. We've seen such an influx of people the past 10 years, our population has almost doubled. Then there is pot, lots of illegal immigrants coming in, liberal 'anything goes politics,'

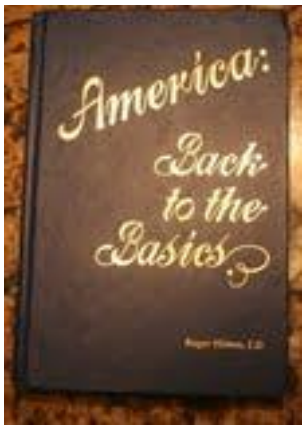
The song that this book is born from is full of negatives, and is a satire on life lived wrong. Hopefully, the pages of this book help convert that into something more meaningful.

Thinking About America's Founding Fathers

We spoke of these men earlier, but let's do so again. They had a dream and vision for this nation that was nothing less than God-inspired. America has gone a long ways downhill since then. We haven't hit bottom yet, and I pray

we don't. I pray God will help us turn things around and get us back on the right track again. Many say it's impossible, but it's said, "Nothing is impossible with God."

I wrote a book for the 1988 presidential race: "America: Back to the Basics." It was about getting our nation back on a Constitutional, 'In God We Trust' track. My slogan was, "Campaigning for America, not for political office." I was on lots of radio and T.V. talk shows, but did it do any good? It didn't visibly.



A Spiritual Chat with "The Gospel Life Coach"

One verse in the Bible is perhaps quoted more than many others. God says:

If my people, who are called by my name,
Will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face,

And turn from their wicked ways…

Then I will hear from heaven, I will forgive their sin,
And I will heal their land.

We want God to return us to being a land of milk and honey. But there is a price to pay to have this happen, and it's called 'repentance.' This means to turn your back on the way you've been doing things, and to go another direction. We often think this is only talking about sin. But Jesus came to solve the sin problem by becoming sin for us, and doing away with the judgment for sin by means of his cross. Again, like everything, there is a price to pay for this. We must believe and trust in Jesus and in his finished work, to receive this.

But if we're going the wrong way, God wants us to make a 'U-turn.'



What the New Testament is says is we will not be judged for sin. Because of Jesus, we can have boldness on the Day of Judgment, and not fear. But what Paul is adamant about is that it is belief in the gospel that will judge us. He says it will judge the secrets of our hearts, meaning our beliefs. God predicted to Moses, hundreds of years before Jesus, that he would send his Prophet, meaning Jesus, with a special message, and he would REQUIRE us to believe it.

And the very first words out of the mouth of Jesus say for us to repent of all other beliefs, and to believe his gospel.

The book of Acts repeats this same message, and says that we will be judged for NOT believing this message Jesus brought, and we would be

destroyed for not believing, obeying and living it. 'Destroyed' is not really defined, but it doesn't mean eternal damnation in hell. Later, Paul picks up this same baton and says Jesus will return with his with his angels and will take VENGEANCE on those who do not obey (believe and live) his gospel. Many say we'll be judged for sin. The New Testament doesn't say this.

This is why I'm 'The Gospel Life Coach.'

The Power of Beliefs

Many people I talk with can't believe that we won't be judged for our sins, but for our gospel beliefs. But the reason goes back to the planting and reaping principle we've talked about before: what is put into us is what comes out of us. "As a man thinks (believes) in his heart, so is he."

Beliefs are powerful, and they produce behavior: good or bad.

I'll say it again: good behavior will never produce correct beliefs,
but correct beliefs will eventually produce good or better behavior.

It's important for us to see the power in this. If we truly believe something, we act on it and we live it. It does not just stay inside of us, but comes out of us. It manifests itself many ways. We are inside-out creations. When our focus is only behavior, this is only on the outside of us. Beliefs come from the inside of us: from the heart. They then produce or 'reap' things on the outside.

Many Songs Yet Few Have Meaning

I'm a song writer, as you know from this book. But I can't write the music that most of the people of the world want to hear today. Most music reflects the age that we live in, and today has been dubbed by some philosophers as, 'The age of despair.' By definition, despair means an absence of hope.

But being the gospel coach, I am filled with hope and faith and vision, and I'm not influenced by this age of despair, so I don't write about it.

The song of this book is not one of despair.
It's a wake-up call to get back on track again.

John Denver really inspired me in my music. When I sang with John it was years ago when we were both in college. It was at the time of Viet Nam, and protest, and the songs were all negative and down beat and in a minor mode. They were mood-songs, and they weren't very uplifting.

One song was, "My Baby Died Tonight. He Lived Just 24 Hours." Another was, "I've Been Down So Long it Looks Like 'UP' to Me." There were lots of songs about anger, divorce, revenge, prison, etc.

John came in and he was whistling a different tune. He sang about love, and friends, and helping people, and mountains, and prairies, and wind and birds, and all types of uplifting things. I watched the people in the audience as he sang, and their faces were smiling and full of hope. They responded emotionally to him.

I thought: "I want to be like him. I want to sing like he does."

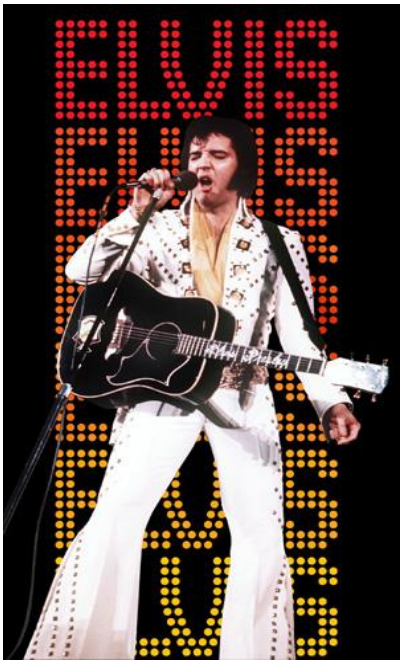
Today's Music Is Largely Different

But today's music, at least to a large degree, spells out negativism, and it reflects loneliness, divorce, drugs, despair, depression and suicide. Yes, there is also good music. But it's often trumped by the bad. In fact, a lot of today's music is cultic, and even satanic. Some bands even admit this.

I even read about a popular rock musician's suicide recently. He hanged himself in his home. One of his band members said something in support of him: "We sang to the demons, and even invited them into our concerts. Our fans loved them. But they turned on us." It really makes you wonder, doesn't it?



Some folks used to think Elvis Presley was the devil incarnate. But most of his music isn't rock, when you think of rock today. Most of his songs are love ballads if you examine them. But modern rock music is characterized by such terms as acid rock, sex rock, drug rock, orgasmic rock, rock orgy, and Satan rock. The lyrics of many modern songs (if you can even understand them) often even exploit hate, revenge, perversion, violence, suicide, rebellion, evil spirits, the black Sabbath and revolution. Some even give tribute to the devil. This is what many of our young people feed on.



I've often thought about a comment I read. "At this very moment, a future President of the United States is probably playing some arcade game: killing people, blowing away buildings, blasting spaceships and destroying worlds!"

A lot of modern music isn't far behind this.

Even if modern lyrics are hard to understand, not all of it is bad. But we are even told by psychology that the beat can be negatively stimulating. It's fast, loud, hard-hitting, emotionally stirring and image producing.

Psychology says this about the beat of the music. The mood of the music is hard to define, but it is addictive, and absorbs people and draws them into it, and can even be controlling. Mass murderers have been labeled as people who read about prior cases of mass murder and listen to this type music.

A Spiritual Chat with "The Gospel Life Coach"

I must confess that worship music is not all I listen to. I enjoy country, and

I enjoy cowboy songs, love ballads, and similar type music. I'm not saying all music is bad today.

But do be critical in your listening. I used to sing with a gospel duo that was quite popular. Roy and I worked in a lot of churches, and we had a very unique presentation: the gospel in song and scripture. If you'd like to hear the only two presentations I have, go here:

GospelPowerOfGod.com/The-Salvage-Company

You will have to scroll down about ½ page, but you'll see our picture – I'm white and Roy was black. We called ourselves 'gospel salt and pepper.'

Voices Filled With Empty Chatter

A proverb says, “A babbling fool is worthless.” This is a person who is says words, but nothing meaningful comes out of his mouth. You must think creative thoughts to have something meaningful to say. Another thought I like is this: “What you do speaks so loud I can’t hear what you say.”



Again I’ll mention John Denver. After we shared sets all night, sometimes we’d just sit up and talk and drink beer. But you did not talk about the ‘weather,’ or sex, or the news, other such things with John. He only wanted to talk about things that mattered, and that might make a difference in people’s lives, or in the world, or in music, or at the club. He was very focused on things that impact us or other people.

I heard a speaker a few years ago, and something he said stuck with me: “Little people talk about people, average people talk about things, big people talk about ideas.” It’s like another saying I heard: “Being average is where the best of the worst meets the worst of the best.”

Being average doesn’t sound too exciting. This is true except when you walk with the Lord Jesus. He was the servant of all. He even died for us. In his gospel, and at the foot of his cross, we are all just ‘average.’ But we are all also glorified and blessed out of our socks in relationship with him.

Big People Talk about Ideas

This is where our focus should be, at least part of the time. It's said the best way to change your status in life is to associate with people you want to be like. This is what I did with John's music, compared to mine that was downbeat and like everyone else's at that time.

It is said: "If you want to be a better golfer, play with better golfers." If you only associate with people on your level, it's hard to grow.

Another proverb says, "A fool doesn't delight in understanding, but only in voicing his own opinion." Opinions are a dime a dozen. And most of them aren't worth that much! But not everyone has wisdom, as we've talked about. Some are filled with facts, and some are only trivia junkies. Some have a lot of fed-in knowledge from college. Not everyone has true wisdom.

When we have a meaningful purpose and priorities, we have meaningful conversation. If we don't have a purpose and priorities, we don't.

A Spiritual Chat with "The Gospel Life Coach"

Most of my conversation with folks is NOT about the gospel. I look for open, searching, receptive minds and hearts. When I find them, then we have what Paul calls 'fellowship in the gospel.' He also says, 'we should all say the same thing.' This is again focusing on the gospel and its truths.

I used to argue with anyone about religious matters. I had a two-night talk with two guys from a cult, and they came back to talk to me. I tried to argue

them into faith in Jesus, and had all the logic for it. But I've since stopped doing this. I've learned you really can't argue someone into faith. It's either there, in the form of a searching receptive heart, or it's not.

As I read about Jesus, he didn't approach everyone he saw: "Hey, you should believe in me! I'm Christ!"

No, most often folks approached him, or he saw something in them that drew them. We are told no one comes to Jesus unless God draws them. And Jesus says he doesn't turn anyone away who seriously comes to him.

I love the saying: "Remain silent and be thought a fool. Open your mouth and remove all doubt." Also there is a proverb that says, "Even a fool, when he keeps silent, is considered wise." Even if I'm not a fool in the gospel of God, I am a fool to someone who is detached. I don't push it on them.

Hopefully, this book is not just empty chatter to you.

Hopefully it presents you with some things to truly think about and put into practice. But it is true:

What I say here isn't half as important
as what you think about what I say.

And we human beings don't agree on everything. We see life and things in life differently. So if I say something you disagree with, don't throw the baby out with the bathwater. Just go on and keep reading and thinking. A true maxim is: "If you agree with everything I say, one of us isn't thinking or necessary."

Noise Abounds, but Peace Is Fleeting

There are people who get all uptight and nervous inside when they are faced with quietness — when there is not some noise. They need distractions

around them all the time. When they get up in the morning, the first thing they do is turn on the radio or the T.V. They need stimulation from the outside of them. It's like they're addicted to noise.

Peace is often defined as the absence of conflict, and it does involve this too. But before this, peace is the absence of noise.



We Don't Like Confrontation

One reason many people don't like quiet is because they are confronted with themselves and their own thoughts. We don't want to be confronted with the fact that we might be to blame for some things in life — the way we think, or the way we are, or the way we behave. Outside noise distracts us from things we'd just as soon forget about anyway. Quiet times present a threat to some people. They present risk.

The fact is if we accept responsibility for ourselves, then we accept control, and we can do something meaningful. We can make appropriate changes. But it often takes an atmosphere of quietness to come to this place. If all we have

is noise blaring at us, we can't think personally.

Counseling and Psychotherapy

In the early 1990s, in addition to being a lawyer, I thought I might want to be a counselor, so I enrolled in a very good correspondence course with NCCA: National Christian Counselors Association.

I was doing a lot of 'hip pocket counseling' anyway as a lawyer. Many people will talk with a lawyer about personal issues that they wouldn't go see a counselor about. And they know that, like counselors, we know the meaning of 'privileged information.' This means: keep your mouth shut.

But I quickly learned that most counseling is not designed to help people get rid of a problem, but just to adjust to a problem so they can better live with it. It only helps them cope.

Part of this process is passing the blame for things off on someone or something else, to make the person feel better. All this does is create peace at the moment, but greater tension down the road. This avoids being confronted with reality: with a problem in our lives. After all, if something is not my fault, then I don't have to do anything about it. I don't take responsibility because I'm not in control. It's a type of 'scapegoat thinking.'

It's actually a type of noise abounding, but peace being fleeting.

I've had people in my office, especially in a marriage, and contemplating divorce, who wouldn't even admit there was a major problem in their marriage, let alone that they were contributing to it. With this type of attitude,

we don't see the need for help, and the need to make changes for the better.

People just make noise and complain and grumble without seeing the need for change, taking control, and taking action, that will produce peace.

A Spiritual Chat with "The Gospel Life Coach"

Peace of mind comes from knowing you're not alone in life, but that God is involved. It is allowing God to have a place in what you think, and in what you do, and in who you are. We are not isolated.

The wisdom of the ages is available to us. All we have to do is ask. Jesus says, "I am the truth." When we truly come to grips with what this means, it changes everything about our belief system.

I began my Christian life in the law of God. After all, we lawyers are raised on the law. Our lives are filled with laws, ordinances, procedures, etc. But after about 15 years, God began showing me how he'd put his law on a shelf – at least as far as New Testament believers are concerned – and replaced it with the Apostle Paul calls 'The Gospel of Grace' and 'The Gospel of Peace.'

This is why I'm "The Gospel Life Coach."

You can never experience God's love and grace, or experience peace with him without his gospel. The law sure won't put you at peace. This is why Paul calls it, 'The ministry of condemnation and death.'

The gospel is about God's love, life and light, and Paul says we should only minister the New Testament, which means God's gospel.

Clanging Like Calliopes



'Clanging like calliopes' reminds me of a circus or carnival. It is just an accumulation of things that make noise. They amuse us and demand attention, often because they are so obnoxious. They take our minds off reality and re-focus our attention. They don't let you muse on anything important.

We All Like Amusement at Times

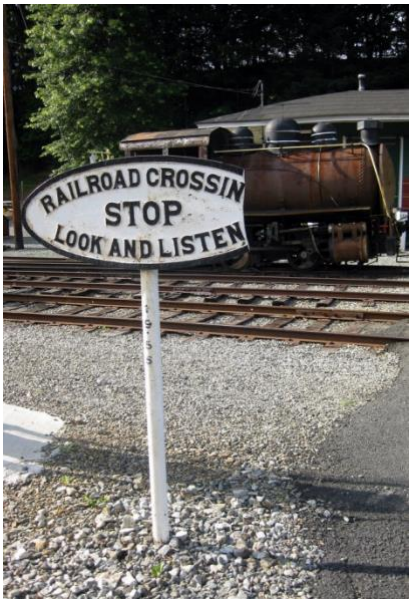
We talked about noise in the last section, and this is a continuation of that thought. Calliopes create noise which dominates our minds and erases anything that might be meaningful or relevant. It's a distraction. It refocuses our attention, and takes it away from one thing and puts it on something else. This is what turning the radio or T.V. on first thing in the morning does too.

If we 'muse' about something, the dictionary says we focus our thoughts on it and meditate on it. We consider it and think about it. The opposite of muse is 'amuse.' This means to divert your attention from thoughtful attention to what you might muse about, and let something else amuse you. Amusement is a type of thought-control that keeps you from thinking about anything important. Muse and amuse are therefore opposites.

There's nothing wrong with amusement. Just don't let it be a scapegoat.

Old-Time Railroad Crossings

We really don't have many old-time railroad crossings anymore. These are crossing when the arm comes down to keep you from crossing a railroad track, and you've got to sit and wait for the train to pass.



These crossings often used to have sign that said, "Stop, Look and Listen." This was referring to giving attention to the train that was coming so you would be safe. But it's also a good example of how we are meant to live life, at least some.

STOP. We need to stop and have times of stillness. We need to tune out the noise, and the calliopes, and everything else that distracts us.

LOOK. This causes us to look at things more clearly so we can take 'ownership' over things in our lives that matter and that can create positive results.

LISTEN. We need to learn to listen, especially to God. Prayer is not just motor-mouthing our needs. God gave us one mouth and two ears for a reason.

I would simply add that after we have done this, we then need to proceed with life. A lot of speakers and writers say we must take ACTION. I've begun to rearrange these letters so it says, 'I-Act-On.'

But we need to proceed being influenced by things we've stopped, looked and listened to. Quiet times allow us to assess, and to be aware of things we might not otherwise even notice. We need to muse more than we need amusement.

Countless Children Yet Few Fathers

Divorce is running rampant. Statistics say we only have about a 50-50 chance of staying married, at best. It used to be, "Until death so you part." Now it's more like, "Until divorce, when the attorney helps you part."

But then our commitment to things is lacking in a lot of areas today. I was

in a store one afternoon and the clerk was checking me out. She was very busy, and a little snarly. I asked her what was wrong, and she said a new clerk had begun work just that morning — a young person. But that person had left for lunch and never returned. She just didn't come back in.

There is little commitment from employee to employer today, but at the same time there is also little commitment from employer to employee. It's a two-way street, and it doesn't just apply to the business world.

We should anticipate problems in marriage and family relationships. After all, we are all different, unique human beings, with different needs as we've discussed. We have different temperaments, personalities and desires.

Someone has said, "You can't put two sinners under the same roof and not have conflict." How true this is.

Children Often Suffer the Most Today

So much is said about 'latch key kids' today, and parents who are just too busy with their own lives to really give quality times to their kids. Until the 1960s it was said that a family could exist on just one person's income. But after this, it became necessary for most families to have two incomes, so both dad and mom work outside the home.

People tend to put less effort into their families today, but the world actually demands that we expend more effort into our families. When I was growing up, things were much easier and laid back and peaceful. Today kids are faced with every evil imaginable,, beginning with cigarettes, drugs and

sex at an early age.

Of Course, Fathers Are Distracted By Life

Men become more and more preoccupied by outside needs at work and other things. Time demands on us are huge, and it's hard to find time to get all things done that need to be done.

Men are meant to be an image of a God-like influence on their children so they grow up with at least somewhat of a godly influence. But often men don't present a good influence, let alone a godly one.

Schools and churches are made the scapegoat for raising children in the best possible way. And studies show that churches are being used less and less, and schools are doing a poorer and poorer job. So kids are most often just left to their peers for influence. Raising kids is becoming less of a responsibility.

And sadly, because of the divorce rate, single parent families are common. Or else there is a new step-parent who often feels little responsibility for his new spouse's child. Hey, I'm just reporting what social service agencies say.

"A Chain Is Only As Strong As Its Weakest Link"

This is an old saying that is true. But the way many families are today, there is no chain. There are only weak links. This isn't the way things should be, and when responsible people begin seeing some of the pitfalls of modern society, they at least try to take steps to correct things.

Today, peers often educate our children more than parents do.

If not peers, then pastors, teachers, day care workers, and people like this.

When there is no strong chain link in the family, children must turn to something for this. We need children with strong fathers and strong mothers.

Instead of delegating responsibility to others, assume responsibility, and start making more of a difference in the lives of our kids and grandkids. In the 'old days,' there used to be a lot more father-and-son chats than there are today. We need to get back to the basics of truly raising kids instead of just releasing them to do their own thing.



A Spiritual Chat with "The Gospel Life Coach"

Love, especially in families, requires commitment and a loyalty. It's reported that there is an increased breakdown in authority in the home since the 1950s. We need to experience a role-reversal in this area, and start having families that are meaningful and responsible to our kids.

Raising kids isn't a part-time sport, it's a full-time job. And I'm learning that, as a grandparent, there are needs of my grandkids that sometimes their parents are too busy to fill. Kids look for nourishment and acceptance and

praise. They need to be affirmed.

Kids need more influence than just their peers. Peers are necessary and we all have them – at every age. But peer-pressure should not be the only thing we are influenced by. Peers aren't always well-meaning, let alone not being all-wise.

Many Houses Yet Few Homes

Naturally, this is just a continuation of the last section. In the law, there is a big difference between a residence and a domicile. A person can have many houses in different states or countries, and they can all be residences. But they only have one 'domicile,' which is designated as their one permanent home.

"Home is where the heart is." A home is meant to be the hub of life. It's where we retreat whenever possible. It's where our close relationships reside. It's where we connect personally more than anyplace else.

But still it is reported that there are 'many houses, yet few homes,'

A House Compared To a Home

A house is nothing more than a building for humans to live in. They come in all shapes, sizes and colors.

A home is determined by the people and affections inside a house. In divorce cases, of which as a lawyer I handled more than I can count, there is often more of a resentment between adults and children than there is a sense of responsibility between them.

The old saying that 'love begins at home, isn't often a truism today. But in reality, love is what converts a house into a home. As I was growing up, there was little love and affection in my home.

My parents were there physically, but not so much emotionally. They were into alcohol, smoking, parties, and other things not too nurturing in a home. Tim and I had more of a house to live in than we had a home.

Our parents were good people for the most part, and they provided for us and cared for us I know. They were just out-of-touch in many ways. They tried to be good, lenient, liberal parents, and even to the extent of my dad offering Tim and I beer, alcohol, cigarettes, drugs and porn at an early age.

We didn't have a Bible on our coffee table, just Playboy and Penthouse magazines. Our dad, Tom, was so proud of them he wanted to display them for anyone who came to visit could enjoy.

We boys were fully allowed, and even encouraged to read them. But he was very firm in saying we could not bend the covers.

The most attention I usually got from my dad is when he got mad at me, and this was often when he was drunk, which was most often. He had little tolerance when he had been drinking, so I just stayed away many nights.



We Live In a Hard, Changing Society

There is more and more to cope with today to keep us all occupied more than people used to be. Sociology says we have more changes today than ever before — 10 times more in a year than granddad did his whole life. That's a lot of change we experience.

This imposes changes on us that we don't like, and they take time to cope with. Coping is often the biggest factor in life that there is — just keeping up

with the changes we experience. Terrorism, and other things in the news impact our hearts more than any of us care to admit. It's an ever-changing world, and sometimes it just takes coping to get by.

Changing Circumstances vs. Changing People

There used to be a philosophy, back in the 50s and 60s, that if you changed the circumstances, the person would change. This was proven to be wrong over the years.

Instead, what evolved form this was that if you changed the person, the circumstances would change.

As responsible people, we must be willing to change ourselves, so that we create better circumstances for those close to us to live in and experience. We don't have the right to refuse to make at least small changes so that the lives of those in our home — not just a house — have better lives.

A Spiritual Chat with "The Gospel Life Coach"

"What the world needs now is love." These were lines to a song my dad used to sing. By the way, he was a very accomplished guitarist, and better than I am today. As good as he was, he couldn't teach me to play. I'm the same way today. I can play but I can't teach guitar.

We are told in scripture that we love because we are first loved by God. This is the way things should be in our homes. Love starts at the top, with parents who truly show their affection for their kids, thus creating a secure

home.

Love begins with God, but even if parents don't know the love of God, they're meant to show love to their kids. There is a magical power in love that can't be understood by our human intellects. When we truly know God's unconditional love, everything else in life flows much more smoothly. This is one of the 10 gospel aspects we discussed.

I've appreciate the words of Napoleon Bonaparte, the great French dictator.

"I know men, and I tell you that Jesus Christ was no mere man.
Between him and every other person in the world
there is no possible term of comparison.
Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne and I have founded on empires.
But on what did we rest the creations of our genius?
Upon force! Jesus Christ founded his empire upon love,
and at this hour millions of people would die for him."

What the world needs more of today is love.


WHAT THE
WORLD NEEDS
NOW
IS
LOVE

Many Plans for Great Tomorrows

We're experts at avoiding reality. It's sometimes called procrastination. There is a statement: "Don't do today what you can put off until tomorrow." We often want to squeeze everything out of life we possibly can, but when we don't deal with present reality, we often shoot ourselves in the foot.

We should have many plans for great tomorrows. There's a song I sing that has a great line in it, "I've got a dream for 10,000 better days." But too often we kill time today hoping tomorrow will be more fruitful and better. In a word, there must be balance between motivation and contentment.

Contentment Doesn't Imply Welfare

Reports show that far too many people are just content to lay around on welfare and be supported. This is not the way the world is meant to work. Even in the Bible, Paul says, "If you don't work, you shouldn't eat."

Contentment is meant to be more of a frame of mind than a lifestyle.

No matter how good we are at anything, we will always find someone else who is better than we are. I can't think of one thing in my life that I'm better at than everyone else I know. Trying to always be better, and to be #1, creates a discontentment in us that is unhealthy. Again, Paul says we are stupid if we compare ourselves to others. He says that we are 'without understanding,' instead of stupid to be polite, but the meaning's the same.



It's easier to win running your own race than it is running someone else's race. We need plans for great tomorrows. This is called having purpose, and making goals. But we cannot live in them constantly. Again, the Bible says, "Without a vision people perish." Another translation says, "Without plans people are unrestrained."

There's lots of room in life for great plans. The Bible also tells us, "Plans that happen are sweet to the soul, but unfulfilled expectancies make us sick." Also, "When dreams come true there is joy in life.

Life Is a Journey, Not a Destination

We're shouldn't live life as trying to arrive at some destination or goal. We are meant to live life as a journey, and 'stop and smell the roses along the way.' Motivation is an important element to life, but it must be balanced with contentment.

Emotional Motivation vs. Motive Motivation

We hear a lot of 'emotional motivation,' from preachers and politicians, but this isn't true motivation that drives us. It sounds good at the moment, and we marvel at the confidence and enthusiasm with which they speak. But our goal should be inner motivation — what drives us from our hearts. This might be called 'motive motivation,' or better yet — 'motive action.'

Psychology has coined a term: motivation inertia. It's a disease we all suffer from to some degree, but it varies from person to person.

The dictionary says that inertia is 'the tendency of a matter to remain at rest.' Too many people stay at rest too much of the time and never get up off the couch. But others do not take time to sit and rest and think enough: 'stop, look and listen.'

Have you ever tried to push a car? It's much harder to get it going than it is to keep it going. We should keep going with our plans, purposes and direction, but we shouldn't do so at the expense of today, that we'll talk more about in the next section.

A Spiritual Chat with "The Gospel Life Coach"

There is a verse in the Bible I love. God says, "For I know the plans I have for you: thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."

Yes, there is a time for rest and peace. Again, we are told to 'labor' to enter into the 'rest' of God. But God also has an expected end for us: a plan to prosper us and keep us in health, which is stated later in the Bible. This is

what the gospel does for us when we live it: it prospers us, blesses us, and keeps us in health. This is true today, as we will see, but also as we journey toward tomorrow.

While Today Remains A Mystery

Today is all we have. Yesterday is gone, except for memories. Tomorrow may not be ours to claim. Our heart may stop before we ever see the sunrise. Today remains a mystery to many people because they don't know how to treat it. It just 'exists,' and we wonder why sometimes.

We compare values today with values yesterday and get discouraged. As we have talked about, things change almost overnight. We often live so much in our yesterdays, and in our tomorrows that today remains a mystery. As the Gospel Coach, I'll sometimes ask people what God is doing in their life right now today, and they don't know. They talk about what he's done, and what they want him to do. But today often remains a mystery.

What Is It that Makes Today Really Click?

Today clicks when we have faith, motivation and enthusiasm in the now. To do this, we have to be living with our purposes in mind, and with our priorities clear. Purposes + Priorities = Practices.

If we are living in our purposes and priorities, then practices are second nature. If we don't have our purposes and priorities well-defined, today remains a mystery. We don't know what to do.

When we have these things in line, faith just seems to re-produce itself. This is where enthusiasm clicks in. If we are living in God, he empowers enthusiasm because this word comes from two Greek words: 'en' and 'theos.'

Together they mean 'in God.' This is how long-term enthusiasm is born.

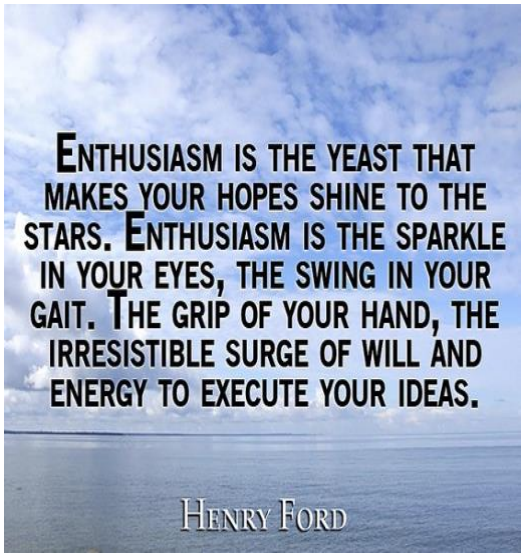
We can't just rely on emotional enthusiasm as we talked about. This can be good for the moment, for instance if you are in a intensive meeting with lots of stimulation. But usually, by the time you reach the parking lot it's half gone. This is an 'outside' type of enthusiasm that doesn't do anything for keeping enthusiasm going.

Keeping it going requires an action of the heart from inside.

Again, true faith and enthusiasm is: Purposes + Priorities = Practices.

Life Without Enthusiasm

In fact, if you view the way most people live and act, react and respond, there is usually very little enthusiasm in them. When you meet someone who is energized and enthusiastic, you know it. It is very recognizable. In fact they can't hide it. It just oozes out of them.



You see, life doesn't require enthusiasm. It is not a necessary key to getting things done. But it does require enthusiasm if we are to experience life in the best possible way.

It's like the newly-hired clerk I mentioned who never even came back from lunch, this is how too many people approach life. They don't even do what they should do, let alone do it with enthusiasm.

We Are Made Strong Today By Things Inside Us

When we have motive-in-action, then things come together better. If we just rely on emotional, at the moment type of things, they seldom hold water very long. But when we live from our hearts, with purposes and priorities, then life takes on a glow that can't easily be extinguished. Here are a few lines from a song I wrote that describe this.

We spend so many empty years wishing upon stars
It sometimes takes eternity to see things as they are
Not only as we wish they'd be and not just from afar
When we face reality we discover who we are.

Many Smiles but Shallow Greetings

Most people we know are only at the acquaintance level of relationship. Most of our inter-personal contacts are not in depth. Most are superficial. We live in a very surface-level world for the most part. Most are even told from their earliest years that they shouldn't talk to strangers (and in many cases, sadly this is good advice).



We cover up areas of our lives because we don't want to be rejected or even criticized. Thus we hear a lot about wearing masks. Of course this doesn't mean literally, but figuratively: we don't want most people to really know us. So we put on a fake smile, and don't really greet people warmly, so we can remain a little distant. We reason that if we are unapproachable, we can't be used, abused or misused.

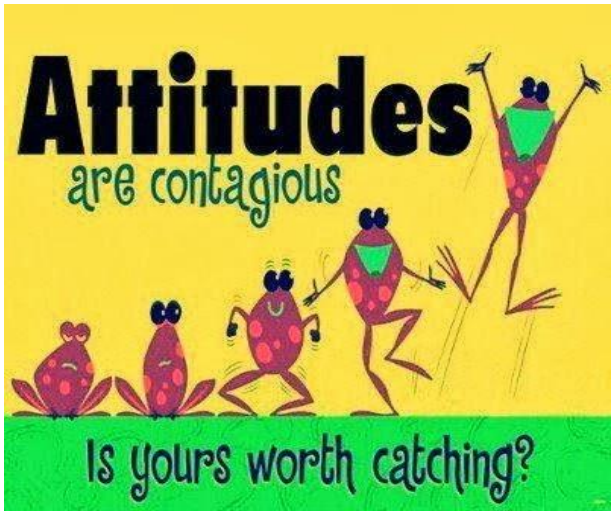
I always greet everyone I possible can with a smile and eye contact. But their responses most often are not really warm. Some won't make eye contact and just nod, or raise their hand about six inches in a type of wave. Some just

totally ignore me. At times, if I get an enthusiastic response, it startles me.

Colorado, where I live, is much less responsive than other areas. I was in Oklahoma a few years ago on business, walking around the block for some exercise. A young, very attractive woman got out of her car and smiled and said 'HI!' — very enthusiastically. I looked around to see who she might be talking to. No one else was anywhere near. She laughed at me.

Smiles At Times Can Open Doors to the Heart

I'm not going to give up on the way I greet people. I'm really not afraid of being rejected. We lawyers are not easily intimidated. Cheerfulness can be contagious. In fact there is a saying I like and often reflect on: "Attitudes are contagious! Are yours worth catching?"



Let me share another brief experience. I was in a large southern city where friendliness is common, and I passed a woman and simply smiled and said, "Hi! Have a good one!" She faintly smiled back, proceeding. Then she actually stopped and said, "Wait! Thanks! I needed that!"

You never know in what condition you are going to find people in, and we can't judge. I had no idea what was going on in her life, but something was, and for a very brief moment I must have impacted her day. I prayed for her as I walked away. Smiles and greetings may be superficial in our fast-paced world. But there is place for them.

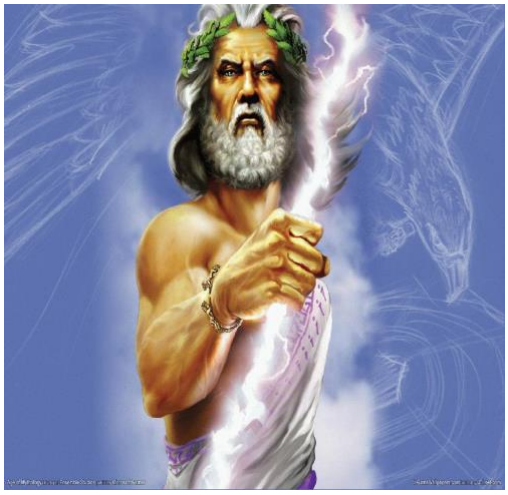
It doesn't cost us much, and who knows? It just might start an epidemic.



Religious People with No True God

We have so much religion. I'm not religious, but I have great faith in God, and in what he is doing in me in the power of his gospel. Paul calls the gospel, "THE power of God." The gospel is how God's power and presence is released, and it is through us. Books, movies and songs show us what God is like, but fail miserably.

A song from the 60's I'll never forget: "God's Gonna Get You For That." It was like God was up on a cloud with a lightning bolt ready to strike us dead.



I recall John Denver's movie, "Oh God!" George Burns played God. The movie was somewhat cute, but it didn't do much to reveal God.

Believe the Gospel, Not Human Beings

This is why I'm so committed to the gospel. It presents God as he actually

is. Religion and theology are man's ideas about God, and they are most often faulty. The gospel is God's truth. Jesus says repent of all other beliefs and believe it. Paul refers to the gospel as 'the testimony of God.'

A Spiritual Chat with "The Gospel Life Coach"

As the Gospel Life Coach, it never fails to amaze me where some people get some of the things they think and believe. It sure isn't from the Bible — and definitely not from the gospel of the New Testament.

But most people believe what man says about God more than what God says about God because God's thoughts are high above ours. People are easier to understand. They speak our language.

In fact, I realize the gospel is really too good to be true, at least in the eyes and minds of many people. In fact, I had people say those exact words to me: "Oh, that's just too good to be true. I can't believe that."

You see, most of us like what man says, because people think and speak the way we think and speak. They are easy for us to understand, even if they are dead-wrong, and bury us under piles of 'religious do-do.'



What I've come to see is the gospel is so good it can only be true. Only the mind and heart of God could invent the gospel. Most people can't even believe the gospel, let alone invent it.

There's a world of difference between Christianity and Churchianity. In fact, I've written a song, "Churchianity Talkin' Blues," that speaks to this if you'd like to listen to it. It's a humorous satire, and the only song like this I've ever composed. It comes from a style of music out of the 1960s to 1970s called 'talking blues.' Today it has been replaced by rap.

GospelPowerOfGod.com/Churchianity/

Many Christians Without Christ

If people are just religious and do not understand or grasp the gospel, I get that. But when people are professing Bible lovers, and Jesus lovers, and they do not have any handle on the gospel at all, I don't get that.

They are essentially without Christ in their daily life, because the gospel is the way we make contact with God and his Son. Jesus says we must believe it. God the Father says we are required to believe it.

The book of Acts and Paul both say we'll be judged for not believing it and living it. Yet they just go about their merry way, under their breath saying, "Whatever I believe is right for me."

Technically, there is no such thing
as a Christian without Christ.

Jesus is either Lord or he is not. Remember the words of C. S. Lewis I quoted earlier, "(Jesus) is either a liar, a lunatic, or he's Lord." There is really no middle-ground when you truly know what Jesus said. He's not just a smart teacher or a good prophet, or a very moral man. He didn't leave that choice open to us.

The problem is that many professing Christians have created the illusion of being committed to Jesus when they really aren't. You see, you can't really believe IN Jesus, if you don't believe Jesus and what he says. Trust goes a lot

deeper than just raising your hand to vote that you like Jesus.

It requires a new type of lifestyle. It's not a difficult lifestyle, and there is no law in it. It's a spirit-led life. Jesus even says that his way is EASY. But it does require trust and belief. And I'll repeat what I said before, simply because I wrote it, I like it, and I believe it's so true:

Good behavior will never produce correct belief,
but correct belief will eventually produce good or better behavior.

But sadly, we've created a new type of person: a person who claims to be Christian, but who doesn't believe what Jesus says, as supported by Paul in the rest of the New Testament. Plus, they don't live in Jesus, but just live their own lives on their own. We lawyers call this 'a lark of our own.'

I'm at times asked if these people are saved and born again. I don't know. I can't judge.

I do believe the grace of God goes further than we think it does. Our human minds are not formed to think on the level of God's type of grace.

But I'm also sure that God's grace has its limits. I do know we must believe in Jesus, and that this is believing the words he says, not just anything we concoct.

"Many Christians Without Christ."To use a slang expression, there ain't no such animal. Without relationship with Christ, any professing Christian life is questionable. Paul talks about us 'worshipping the creature (us), and not the Creator.' I wouldn't want to be caught in that type of trap where Paul says,

"Christ is of no effect to us," and also "Christ profits us nothing."

He says we have 'fallen from grace' if we don't live the gospel that both God and Jesus showed him we should live. And in Galatians he even says we should be 'cursed' if we preach or minister anything else.

Searching For Reality

Some folks spend their lives trying to find God. They'll look everywhere, and even confront a guru on a mountain top.



Except for the cross of Jesus, the gospel is the greatest gift planet earth has ever seen. The gospel is God revelation of himself, and his revealed reality. It's also a revelation of who we believers are in Christ because of what he came and did. We don't need a guru on a mountain top to find this.

Most people struggle with the gospel truth and reality of God because they heard — or heard so much about Moses and the Ten Commandments. But the gospel is clear: Moses is no competition to Jesus. I call the news about Moses 'Sunday School 101.' The Old Testament is a great resource for many things, but we today are not called to live it.

Paul calls it 'the ministry of condemnation.' The ministry of Jesus is called 'the ministry of reconciliation and righteousness.'

Reality Is the Life of God In Us

When we live in the reality of God's gospel in us, it produces light, love and life. We are given God's revelation of truth, which is light. We are given his unconditional, eternal love, and we are given Christ's abundant love. The New Testament calls this 'the new and living way.'

As I've said before, the gospel plants God's good gospel seed down deep in our hearts, if we will accept it and believe it, and then it goes to work inside of us producing good things.

That's why it's the power of God. Paul tells us that 'it is the gospel that produces good fruit from us.' It's not us ourselves. The Bible calls that a work of the flesh, or of the carnal man. He calls that 'dead works.'

When we live in faith, we simply live trusting the Spirit of God to lead us and do his work in us. We can't figure out how he does it. He just does. When we live in the power of the gospel, we live as rulers in life. Paul says 'we reign in life with Christ.' We are either a ruler, or we are ruled. When we are ruled it's called, 'The world, the flesh and the devil.'

When we search for reality, and find it, we discover that all God asks of us is to trust him enough to believe him. If we do this, then he takes over. Paul says that God begins the good work in us, and he continues to perform it in us. He does so by means of his Spirit. Thus Jesus says his way is easy.

The hardest thing for us humans is believing it enough
to be able to receive from God.

Pay It Forward

Then, all we do, as the modern phrase says is, “Pay it forward.” Jesus says, “As you have freely received, so freely give.”

I always think in the terms of:
(1) receiving,
(2) relegating, and
(3) releasing.

You see this in the human needs we discussed earlier. We must receive something before we can put it to use and appreciate it (relegate it). Then we simply give it away to others. Paul talks of ‘increasing’ and then ‘abounding’ over to others. It’s like having leaky margins in all we do in life.



A Closing Personal Testimony about Spiritual Reality

Sometimes, we don't realize the depth and expanse of God's Kingdom on earth. Sometimes it takes a lifetime to discover even part of it. Sometimes we die never discovering much about it. Hopefully it will be revealed in heaven, and we won't cry about things we missed.

I Attended 'A New Age Fair'

Twenty years ago I attended a 'new age fair' in Denver, Colorado USA. I'd been involved in the gospel truth of God for 4-5 years at this time after my time in the law I shared earlier. I had a good knowledge of it, but I was far from having a lot of in-depth experience in it. I wasn't walking in a lot of wisdom.

I don't usually go to things like this, but I'd seen it advertised, and it drew my interest. I wanted to see what it was all about.

I Was Immediately Asked to Leave

I hadn't been inside the building for more than five minutes, and I hadn't even begun to walk around yet. I was just in the entry way, looking at some of the literature, and getting a perspective.

A big man walked up to me who was a lot larger than I was. He was a type of guard, I guess, although he wasn't wearing a uniform, didn't have gun, or anything of the sort. He was just confrontational.

He said, "You do not belong here. You should leave."

It took me by surprise of course. That should have been a real clue, but it really wasn't. We lawyers are not too easily intimidated, and so I just asked him why he said that. He wouldn't explain and just repeated what he'd said:

"You do not belong here. You should leave."

I told him thank you for the advice, but I just disregarded it, and I headed for the main room where all the booths, tables, displays, and other things were set up. And the place was full. The Merchandise Mart is a large building used for big events, and I quickly saw there were about 7-8 aisles set up with people along both sides displaying their wares and merchandise.

I guessed there were close to 1,000 people there. I also guessed it would take me a good couple of hours to get around and see everything.

I Walk Around For About 30 Minutes to An Hour

I walked around looking at everything, and there was all types of stuff there, and people doing their thing. There was merchandise, and books, and cards, and rocks, and scarves, and make-up, and ointments. I can't begin to describe all the stuff that was there. It was actually fascinating. I observed several inter-actions between people, trying to listen to some of the conversations without being too obvious.

I covered three to four aisles during the time.

I also had an eye out for the guy who had confronted me. I thought maybe he'd follow me and have one or two other guys with him. I didn't know. But I never saw him again.

I Started To Go Down the Next Aisle

As I started down the next aisle, I couldn't help but notice a very striking woman about half-way down the aisle. She was about my age, maybe five years older. She was talking — I guess they call it 'ministering' — to another woman, and she was really involved in what she was saying.

She was very intense, animated, and an authority in what she was doing.

The woman she was talking to was seemingly captivated by her and what she was saying. I couldn't hear what was said, except for muffled tones mixed in with a lot of other talking and noise in the place.

I slowly walked down the aisle, looking at booths and banners and other things as I did. It perhaps took me a couple minutes to get to them, and they were still going strong when I approached them.

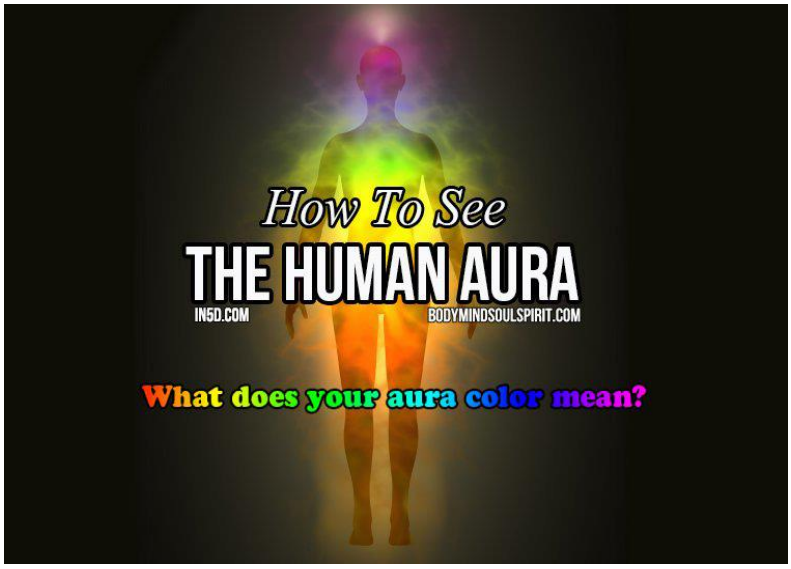
The Woman Suddenly Startled Me

I had no idea she'd even noticed me, being so intensely involved with the other woman. But as I passed adjacent to them, she suddenly reached out and grabbed hold of my arm!!!

Naturally she got my attention!!! Our eyes locked looking at each other.

She didn't release hold on my arm. She simply said, "I've been watching you walk toward us. You have the most magnificent 'AURA' I have seen in recent years. And I've been doing this a long time. Your aura is truly remarkable. I wish I had time to get to know you better."

I had no idea what she meant, but I knew what she said was a compliment.



I smiled, and thanked her, and went on my way.

I of Course Asked God about This

I stayed for another hour and then left. Naturally, the episode with that woman and with the man earlier were on my mind. And I asked God about it.

Now, I don't hear voices, but I do get impressions in my spirit, and I hear with a type of 'inner ear.' But over the next week, what I heard was that God had purposely set me up for this, and had actually led me to the new age fair. And also, the woman was definitely in his plans.

What I heard him say was that his Spirit was very real in us, and what he did was to give me wisdom that it really was real. She had called it an 'aura,' which I now understand to be their word for the same type of thing. It is something that is like a shroud that envelops some people. It's not a physical thing, but it is very real in their minds and in their eyes. God said:

"Some people, like the woman,
can even somewhat see my Spirit."

I Have Not Had Any Type of Similar Experience

Nothing like this has happened to me since. But then, something like this doesn't have to happen twice. It was like the time about the mid 80s when I was on the highway in Montana, and I asked God to let me see an angel. I definitely believed in angels, and had heard some angel testimonies.

But I asked God to show me they were real.

Being the big man of faith I was at the time, I didn't really expect him to let me see one, and I certainly didn't expect it to happen immediately. But in a few seconds, there was a huge man standing a foot above the road in front of me. I couldn't even really see him clearly, but I could tell it was man. I even swerved, and hit the brakes to avoid him. And within seconds he vanished.

You don't need a second experience for things like this.

But, to get off the rabbit trail, the experience at the New Age Fair, and the angel, has given me a reality of God's Kingdom, and his Holy Spirit, like nothing else could do. I just thought this testimony might fit our subject of **"Searching For Reality."**

The reality of God and his Kingdom on earth is very real. And his Holy Spirit in us is very real in us, as Jesus says it would be. We can't see it, or maybe not even understand it, but we can believe it because the gospel says so.

I have God's Spirit, and you have God's Spirit also, if you are a believer and linked to Jesus. We're just meant to believe it, and this episode sure helped me to believe it was true. I guess this is why we are called 'believers,' and not 'understanders.'