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Many years ago, I learned that a young woman I knew was about to have an abortion. I sped to the facility and found that she had already been given the pre-op medication. But with God's help, she changed her mind about abortion and decided to keep the baby.

Two years later, I was at a picnic and saw a cute little toddler crawling in the grass. It was this young woman's daughter. It then dawned on me that I had been used in a small way in the saving of a precious human life.

May such be the case as you read this book.

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The Parallel

Did you know that over 50 million people were killed in the Second World War? Think of it—50 million people—in one war! It was started by the leader of Germany, Adolf Hitler. For some reason, Hitler hated Jewish people, and when he rose to high political power he made it legal to kill them. He then systematically had six million Jews—men, women, and children—murdered in the cruelest of ways.

There is a reason that I would like you to know what happened to the Jewish people. I want you to see that there is a parallel between what happened in Germany during those years and what is happening now.

The following are common pro-abortion arguments (in italics) taken directly from pro-choice websites:

Pro-choice (abortions) refer to the political and ethical view that a woman should have complete right over her fertility and that she should have the freedom to decide whether she wants to continue or terminate her pregnancy. The pro-choice movement entails to guarantee a woman her reproductive rights.

Hitler's rise to power came about because he seemed to care about the German people. The nation was in economic chaos after the First World War, and he promised to restore its glory and bring in full employment. When he rose to a place of supreme political power and instigated laws so that he could kill Jewish people, he did it saying that it was for the good of Germany. Consequently, Hitler gave the German people the freedom to decide whether to continue or to terminate the life of a Jew. That right was guaranteed.

Control over her body and the freedom to decide the course of her life is critical to a woman's civil rights. When a woman is pregnant it is her body that goes through all the stress of pregnancy. If she decides not to have a pregnancy she should be able to do so. Denying her the right to her body is violating her most basic freedom.

The law that allowed the killing of Jews was critical to the benefit and happiness of all Germans. Hitler painted Jews as the scum of the earth, blaming them for the economic plight of the German people. The existence of Jews violated German civil rights and caused economic stress. Denying the German people the right to enjoy life violated their most basic freedom.

One of the most pertinent questions regarding abortion is when does life begin? A fetus may be alive but so are sperms and eggs. It's true that life in every form should be respected. However, should the right of a fetus be greater than that of a woman who in a majority of the cases would bear the responsibility of the unplanned child?

One of the most basic pertinent questions regarding the killing of Jews was their humanity. *Were they human beings or were they something else?* Hitler said that they weren't human. In a speech in 1923, he declared, "The Jews are undoubtedly a race, but not human. They cannot be human in the sense of being an image of God, the Eternal. The Jews are the image of the Devil." Jews were a life form, but so were dogs and cats. Every form of life should be respected; however, should the right of a Jew be greater than that of a German, who, in the majority of

cases, had to bear the responsibility of those who weren't human?

One of the important abortion facts is that most of the abortions take place in the first trimester when the fetus cannot live independent of the mother. It depends on the mother through the placenta and the umbilical cord for nutrition and health and hence should not be considered a separate entity.

The way Hitler began the killing of millions of Jews was to isolate them. They were put into “ghettos” and starved of food. They were completely dependent on the German people for survival and thus became an economic drain. So, killing them off became the final and most sensible solution.

A lot of care and precautions are taken while carrying out an abortion. Most of the abortions are done during the first trimester when abortions are most safe.

As a result, abortions pose only 0.5% risk for the woman to develop serious complications. This certainly does not affect women's health gravely or their ability to conceive in future.

A lot of care and precaution were taken when killing Jews. They were systematically and very

efficiently herded into box cars that were normally used to transport animals. When they were removed from the trains, the killing-machine ran with precision and safety. Older people, weaker men, women, and children were separated from those who could work. They were quickly stripped of clothing, their hair was removed, and they were told that they needed to be showered. They were then quickly herded into “showers” and gassed to death. Gold was removed from their teeth and the bodies were burned. No Germans were put at risk during this procedure, nor did the killing of Jews affect their health.

Unwanted teenage pregnancy can have serious complications if the pregnancy is continued. An adolescent is neither mentally nor physically ready to continue a pregnancy. Besides health related complications, a minor mother isn't psychologically ready to handle the responsibilities of a child. With a life to support, many such girls drop out of school and start working in order to fend for the child. This certainly spells a bleak future for such girls.

Allowing Jews to live could have had serious complications for the German people. It meant that millions would have to be educated and then they would compete for jobs. Allowing

them to live would affect the quality of German education. This certainly spelled a bleak future for Germans.

While some believe that life begins at conception, there are others that do not believe in this. There are different theories regarding when life begins. Unless every one can be made to agree to the one point when life begins, laws prohibiting abortion would be forcing one theory on all.

While some believed that Jews were human, others didn't. Unless everyone could be made to agree to the one point about whether they were human, there shouldn't be laws prohibiting the killing of Jews.

Making abortion illegal does not stop unwanted pregnancies from taking place. In case abortion is made illegal, many women may get it done from unauthorized entities. This would pose a greater threat to their life and health.

Germans would have killed Jews anyway—if it wasn't legal for them to kill them. If they went ahead and murdered them themselves, it could have posed a threat to their life and health. It was far better to legalize their killing and have it done properly.



What God's Word Says About Abortion

(Reprinted from *The Evidence Bible*)

God speaks very clearly in the Bible on the value of unborn children.

God's Word says that He personally made each one of us, and has a plan for each life: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart" (Jeremiah 1:5). "Even before I was born, God had chosen me to be His" (Galatians 1:15). "For You created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb... Your eyes saw my unformed body. All the days ordained for me were written in Your book before one of them came to be" (Psalm 139:13,16). "Your hands shaped me and made me... Did You not clothe me with skin and flesh and knit me together with bones and

sinews? You gave me life” (Job 10:8–12). “This is what the Lord says—He who made you, who formed you in the womb” (Isaiah 44:2). “Did not He who made me in the womb make them? Did not the same One form us both within our mothers?” (Job 31:15).

Because man is made in God’s own image (Genesis 1:27), each life is of great value to God: “Children are a gift from God” (Psalm 127:3). He even calls our children His own: “You took your sons and daughters whom you bore to Me and sacrificed them . . . You slaughtered My children” (Ezekiel 16:20,21).

The Bible says of our Creator, “In His hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being” (Job 12:10). God, the giver of life, commands us not to take the life of an innocent person: “Do not shed innocent blood” (Jeremiah 7:6); “Cursed is the man who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person” (Deuteronomy 27:25). “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13).

Taking the life of the unborn is clearly murder—“He didn’t kill me in the womb, with my mother as my grave” (Jeremiah 20:17)—and God vowed to punish those who “ripped open the women with child” (Amos 1:13). The unborn child was granted equal protection in the law; if he lost his life, the one who caused his death

must lose his own life: “If men who are fighting hit a pregnant woman and she gives birth prematurely but there is no serious injury, the offender must be fined . . . But if there is serious injury, you are to take life for life” (Exodus 21:22,23).

Life is a gift created by God, and is not to be taken away by abortion. God is “pro-choice,” but He tells us clearly the only acceptable choice to make:

*“I have set before you life and death,
blessings and curses. Now choose life,
so that you and your children may live.”
(Deuteronomy 30:19)*



*A baby's heart is beating at only 3 weeks after
conception; brainwaves can be measured at
6 weeks after conception;
a baby can move and respond to touch at 6 weeks
and can suck her thumb at 8 weeks.*

Sarah's Story: A Twin Who Survived Abortion



“Twenty-nine years ago, my mother decided to have a D&C abortion. At the time, she was pregnant with twins, but nobody knew this, not even her doctor. My tiny brother and I were both there growing in her womb, until that dreadful day. Before the abortion, we were both alive. Moments later, I was alone.

“Several weeks later, my mother was shocked to feel me kicking in her womb. She went back to the doctor and told him she was still pregnant . . . that she had made a big mistake and that she wanted to keep this baby. To this day, my mother deeply regrets that abortion.

“I was born with bilateral, congenital dislocated hips and many other physical handicaps... I'll need surgeries about every five years. Today, I thank God I survived the abortion, but the pain continues for everyone in my family. Please share our story with others so the tragedy of abortion stops hurting babies and families. Everyone needs to know the truth about abortion. Thank you.”

On April 24, 1996, Sarah Smith gave the following speech at an international pro-life conference:

Thirty-two million babies are killed in the United States alone. Yet every one had a face, a life, a Creator who loved them and created them in His image. Who will speak for them? The words of Christ are clear: “What you have done to the least of these you have done unto me.” You and I are called and commissioned to care for these little ones just as we would care for Jesus Himself. To walk away and say this is not my problem is to walk away from Jesus Himself.

Many people upon finding out about the abortion ask me how I felt, or what can I compare this to. The only thing I can compare my life to is that of *an innocent Jew being made to walk down the streets of*

Germany naked in front of many people and into a room he knows he will never come out of. In my case, unfortunately, the people leading me into that room are my mother and father. Yet the people looking on at the sidelines are people like you. And I ask you today, will you speak up or will you silently look away as another person who needs your help is led to their death?

Many women who demand the right to an abortion say, “It’s my body, it’s my choice.” Let me make one thing very clear —*my mother’s choice was my death sentence.* It is not only a woman’s body we are discussing in an abortion. It is the entire flesh and blood of someone just like me.

Then we have the issue of medical personnel stating it is just tissue. For anyone who has ever studied biology, you know better. Before any woman even knows she is pregnant her child already has a beating heart at 20 days. Show me one piece of tissue or cancer you believe must be cut out with a beating heart. Show me a liver or kidney that has its own blood type. That child is perfect from its first day. All it needs is time, oxygen, and nutrition.

Another startling fact is that medical journals state the fetus is capable of feeling pain at 8 weeks of gestation. In America,

the vast majority of abortions are performed between 10 to 12 weeks, well after the child can feel the entire procedure. So don't tell me abortion is a simple procedure that expels a piece of tissue and doesn't hurt anybody. I was there. I was less than an inch away from my innocent twin brother when his body was ripped apart, and he felt the entire thing. We were 14 to 16 weeks along in the second trimester. That was how my life was meant to end.

Yet I was spared to tell you on behalf of those who have no voice that if you remain silent, a person just like you and me will die every 20 seconds of every day. We have been commissioned by Jesus to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves.

You and I as a church represent life, and together we will extend life to a hurting, dying world. We will give them the truth of life and shall never be silent.

For more on Sarah Smith, who is studying medicine and speaks on behalf of the unborn, see www.prolife.com/Sarah2.html.

When Does Life Begin?

The American Medical Association (AMA) declared as far back as 1857 (referenced in the *Roe. v. Wade* opinion) that “the independent and actual existence of the child before birth, as a living being” is a matter of objective science.

“By all the criteria of modern molecular biology, life is present from the moment of conception.”

—*Dr. Hymie Gordon, Chairman of the
Dept. of Genetics, Mayo Clinic*

“Biologically speaking, human development begins at fertilization.”

—*“The Biology of Prenatal Development,”
National Geographic, 2006*

“The two cells gradually and gracefully become one. This is the moment of conception, when an individual’s unique set of DNA is created, a human signature that never existed before and will never be repeated.”

—*“In the Womb,” National Geographic, 2005*

“I submit that human life is present throughout this entire sequence from conception to adulthood and any interruption at any point constitutes a termination of a human life.”

—*Dr. Jerome LeJeune, Genetics Professor
at the Univ. of Descartes, Paris*

Rebecca's Story: Conceived in Rape



I was adopted nearly from birth. At 18, I learned I was conceived out of a brutal rape at knife-point by a serial rapist. Like most people, I'd never considered that abortion applied to my life, but suddenly I realized that it has to do with my very existence. It was as if I could hear the echoes of all those people who, with sympathetic tones, say, "Well, except in cases of rape..." or who fervently exclaim in disgust, "Especially in cases of rape!!!" These people don't even know me, but are standing in judgment of my life, so quick to dismiss it just because of how I was conceived. I felt like I was now going to have to

justify my own existence, to prove to the world that I shouldn't have been aborted and that I was worthy of living. I also remember feeling like garbage because of people who would say that my life was like garbage—that I was disposable.

Please understand that when you identify yourself as “pro-choice,” or make that exception for rape, that translates into you being able to stand before me, look me in the eye, and say, “I think your mother should have been able to abort you.” That’s a pretty powerful statement. I would say never to someone, “If I had my way, you’d be dead right now.” For most people, it’s just a concept—a quick cliché, and they sweep it under the rug and forget about it. I do hope that, as a child of rape, I can help to put a face, a voice, and a story to this issue.

I’m alive today due to choices made by our society, by people who fought to ensure abortion was illegal at the time—even in cases of rape, who argued to protect my life, and who voted pro-life. I wasn’t “lucky.” I was protected.

Although my birthmother was thrilled to meet me, she actually went to two back-alley abortionists and I was almost aborted. She was to meet someone at night. Someone would approach her, say her name, blindfold her, put her in the backseat of a car, take her and then abort me, then blindfold her again and drop her back off. And do you know what I think is so pathetic? An awful lot of people would hear me

describe those conditions and would shake their head in disgust: “It’s just so awful that your birthmother would have had to go through that in order to be able to abort you!” I realize they think they are being compassionate, but that’s pretty coldhearted from where I stand. That is my life they are so callously talking about and there is nothing compassionate about that position. My birthmother is okay—her life went on and in fact, she’s doing great, but I would have been killed, my life would have ended. I may not look the same as I did when I was four years old or four days old yet unborn in my mother’s womb, but that was still undeniably me and I would have been killed through a brutal abortion.

According to Dr. David Reardon, most women who become pregnant out of sexual assault do not want an abortion and are in fact worse off after an abortion. (See www.afterabortion.org.) So most people’s position on abortion in cases of rape is based on faulty premises: 1) the rape victim would want an abortion, 2) she’d be better off with an abortion, and 3) that child’s life isn’t worth putting her through the pregnancy. I hope my story will help dispel that last myth.

I’m so thankful my life was spared, but a lot of well-meaning Christians say things like, “Well, you see, God really meant for you to be here!” But I know that God intends for *every* unborn child to be given the same opportunity to be born.

One of the greatest things I've learned is that the rapist is *not* my creator. My value and identity are not established as a "product of rape," but as a child of God. Psalm 68:5,6 declares: "A father to the fatherless... is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families." And Psalm 27:10 tells us, "Though my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will receive me." I know there is no stigma in being adopted. The New Testament tells us that it is in the spirit of adoption that we are called to be God's children through Christ our Lord. So He must have thought pretty highly of adoption to use that as a picture of His love for us!

Most importantly, your value is not based on the circumstances of your conception, your parents, your mate, your house, your clothes, your looks, your grades, your occupation, your successes or failures, or your abilities or disabilities—these are lies perpetuated in our society. The truth is that you don't have to prove your worth to anyone, and if you really want to know what your value is, all you have to do is look to the Cross—because that's the price that was paid for your life! That's the infinite value God placed on your life! He thinks you are pretty valuable, and so do I. Won't you join me in affirming others' value as well, in word and in action?

Learn more about Rebecca Kiessling, a family law attorney, pro-life speaker, and homeschool mother of five, at www.rebeccakiessling.com.

Gianna's Story: A Saline Abortion Survivor



Gianna Jessen's biological mother was 17 when she had a saline abortion in her third trimester. Many Americans don't realize it is legal to have an abortion throughout all nine months of pregnancy. After being burned alive for 18 hours in the womb from the saline solution, Gianna was delivered alive in an abortion clinic. As a result, she has cerebral palsy.

Gianna weighed a mere 2 lbs. at birth and doctors said she would never be able to hold up her head, sit up, crawl, or walk. She began to walk by age three with the help of leg braces and a walker. Gianna doesn't believe her cerebral

palsy takes away her life, but, rather, enriches it. She walks with a slight limp today and even runs marathons.

Gianna was placed into the foster care system early in life, eventually being taken into a loving home. She is a Christian who believes her life was given to her by the grace of God. She shouldn't be walking, but more miraculous still, she should not even be alive.

On April 22, 1996, Gianna testified before the Constitution Subcommittee of the House Judiciary Committee:

My name is Gianna Jessen. I am 19 years of age. I am adopted. I have cerebral palsy. My biological mother was 17 years old and seven-and-a-half months pregnant when she made the decision to have a saline abortion. I am the person she aborted. I lived instead of died.

Fortunately for me the abortionist was not in the clinic when I arrived alive, instead of dead, at 6:00 a.m. on April 6, 1977. I was early—my death was not expected until about 9 a.m., when he would probably be arriving for his office hours. I am sure I would not be here today if the abortionist would have been in the clinic, as his job is to take life, not sustain it. Some have said I am a “botched abortion,” a result of a job not well done.

I am happy to be alive. I almost died. Every day I thank God for life. I do not consider myself a byproduct of conception, a clump of tissue, or any other of the titles given to a child in the womb. I do not consider any person conceived to be any of those things. I have met other survivors of abortion. They are all thankful for life.

Today, a baby is a baby when convenient. It is tissue or otherwise when the time is not right. A baby is a baby when miscarriage takes place at two, three, four months. A baby is called a tissue or clumps of cells when an abortion takes place at two, three, four months. Why is that? I see no difference. What are you seeing? Many close their eyes.

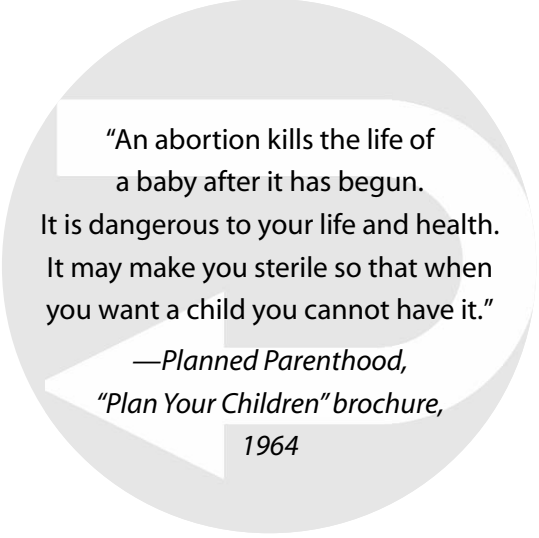
The best thing I can show you to defend life is my life. It has been a great gift. Killing is not the answer to any question or situation. Show me how it is the answer. There is a quote etched into the high ceilings of one of our state's capitol buildings. The quote says, "Whatever is morally wrong, is not politically correct." Abortion is morally wrong. Our country is shedding the blood of the innocent. America is killing its future.

All life is valuable. All life is a gift from our Creator. We must receive and cherish

the gifts we are given. We must honor the right to life.

An advocate for the unborn, Gianna stated in an interview, “It’s more comfortable for people to think of abortion as a political decision, or a right. But I am not a right. I am a human being. I am the reality. If abortion is about women’s rights, then where were mine? There was no radical feminist screaming for my rights on that day.”

Learn more about Gianna at www.giannajessen.com.



“An abortion kills the life of
a baby after it has begun.
It is dangerous to your life and health.
It may make you sterile so that when
you want a child you cannot have it.”

—*Planned Parenthood,*
“Plan Your Children” brochure,
1964



Why Christianity?

I have spoken to thousands of people about the subject of the afterlife, and I have found that most people are more than willing to talk about it. This is because we all have our own thoughts about what happens when we die. Some believe that God doesn't exist and that there's nothing after death. They think that creation created itself, and that there's no ultimate justice. In other words, Hitler got away with murder. Others believe that there's a Heaven and Hell, and they think that they will get to Heaven because they are good people. Some think that it's more than just being good—you have to do things to earn eternal life—such as believe in God, pray, fast, etc.

At the age of 20 years, I had one big question about life. Why was I part of the ultimate

statistic? Ten out of ten die. The fact that everything I held dear to me was going to be ripped from my hands by this thing called “death” made no sense to me. If you have had similar thoughts, you are going to appreciate the following information. It will help you to cut through the confusion and see why things are the way they are.

The Choice

Imagine I offered you a choice of four gifts:

- The original Mona Lisa
- The keys to a brand new Lamborghini
- A million dollars in cash
- A parachute

You can pick only one. Which would you choose? Before you decide, here’s some information that will help you to make the wisest choice: *You have to jump 10,000 feet out of an airplane.*

Does that help you to connect the dots? It should, because you *need* the parachute. It’s the only one of the four gifts that will help with your dilemma. The others may have some value, but they are useless when it comes to facing the law of gravity in a 10,000-foot fall. The knowledge that you will have to jump should produce a healthy fear in you—and that kind of fear is

good because it can save your life. Remember that.

Now think of the four major religions:

- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Islam
- Christianity

Which one should you choose? Before you decide, here's some information that will help you determine which one is the *wisest* choice: All of humanity stands on the edge of eternity. We are all going to die. We will *all* have to pass through the door of death. It could happen to us in twenty years, or in six months, . . . or today. For most of humanity, death is a huge and terrifying plummet into the unknown. So what should we do?

Do you remember how it was your knowledge of the jump that produced that healthy fear, and that fear helped you to make the right choice? You know what the law of gravity can do to you. In the same way, we are going to look at another law, and hopefully your knowledge of what it can do to you will help you make the right choice, about life's greatest issue. So, stay with me—and remember to let fear work for you.

The Leap

After we die we have to face what is called “the law of sin and death.”¹ We know that Law as “The Ten Commandments.”

So let’s look at that Law and see how you will do when you face it on Judgment Day. Have you loved God above all else? Is He first in your life? He should be. He’s given you your life and everything that is dear to you. Do you love Him with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength? That’s the requirement of the First Commandment. Or have you broken the Second Commandment by making a god in your mind that you’re comfortable with—where you say, “My god is a loving and merciful god who would never send anyone to Hell”? That god does not exist; he’s a figment of the imagination. To create a god in your mind (your own image of God) is something the Bible calls “idolatry.” Idolaters will not enter Heaven.

Have you ever used God’s name in vain, as a cuss word to express disgust? That’s called “blasphemy,” and it’s very serious in God’s sight. This is breaking the Third Commandment, and the Bible says God will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

Have you always honored your parents implicitly, and kept the Sabbath holy? If not, you have broken the Fourth and Fifth Commandments. Have you ever hated someone? The

Bible says, “Whosoever hates his brother is a murderer.”²

The Seventh is “You shall not commit adultery,” but Jesus said, “Whoever looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart”³ (the Seventh Commandment includes sex before marriage). Have you ever looked with lust or had sex outside of marriage? If you have, you have violated that Commandment.

Have you ever lied? Ever stolen anything, regardless of value? If you have, then you’re a lying thief. The Bible tells us, “Lying lips are abomination to the Lord,”⁴ because He is a God of truth and holiness. Have you coveted (jealously desired) other people’s things? This is a violation of the Tenth Commandment.

Little Jessica

So that is God’s moral Law that we each will face. We will be without excuse when we stand before God because He gave us our conscience to know right from wrong. Each time we lie, steal, commit adultery, murder, and so on, we know that it’s wrong. So here is the crucial question. On Judgment Day, when God judges you, will you be found innocent or guilty of breaking this Law? *Think before you answer.* Will you go to Heaven or Hell? The Bible warns that all murderers, idolaters, liars, thieves, fornicators,

and adulterers will end up in Hell.⁵ So where does that leave you?

Perhaps the thought of going to Hell doesn't scare you, because you don't believe in it. That's like standing in the open door of a plane 10,000 feet off the ground and saying, "I don't believe there will be any consequences if I jump without a parachute."

To say that there will be no consequences for breaking God's Law is to say that God is unjust, that He is evil. This is why.

On February 24, 2005, a nine-year-old girl was reported missing from her home in Homosassa, Florida. Three weeks later, police discovered that she had been kidnapped, brutally raped, and then buried alive. Little Jessica Lunsford was found tied up, in a kneeling position, clutching a stuffed toy.

How Do You React?

How do you feel toward the man who murdered that helpless little girl in such an unspeakably cruel way? Are you angered? I hope so. I hope you are *outraged*. If you were completely indifferent to her fate, it would reveal something horrible about your character.

Do you think that God is indifferent to such acts of evil? You can bet your precious soul He is not. He is *outraged* by them.

The fury of Almighty God against evil is *evidence* of His goodness. If He wasn't angered, He wouldn't be good. We cannot separate God's goodness from His anger. Again, if God is good by nature, He *must* be unspeakably angry at wickedness.

But His goodness is so great that His anger isn't confined to the evils of rape and murder. Nothing is hidden from His pure and holy eyes. He is outraged by torture, terrorism, abortion, theft, lying, adultery, fornication, pedophilia, homosexuality, and blasphemy. He also sees our *thought-life*, and He will judge us for the *hidden* sins of the heart: for lust, hatred, rebellion, greed, unclean imaginations, ingratitude, selfishness, jealousy, pride, envy, deceit, etc. Jesus warned, "But I say to you, that *every idle word* that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment"⁶ (emphasis added).

The Bible says that God's wrath "abides" on each of us,⁷ and that every time we sin, we're "storing up wrath"⁸ that will be revealed on Judgment Day. We are even told that we are "*by nature* the children of wrath"⁹ (emphasis added). Sinning against God comes naturally to us—and we naturally earn His anger by our sins.

Instant Death

Many people believe that because God is good, He will forgive everyone, and let all sinners into

Heaven. But they misunderstand His goodness. When Moses once asked to see God's glory, God told him that he couldn't see Him and live. Moses would instantly die if he looked upon God. Consider this:

[God] said, *I will make all my goodness pass before you . . . And it shall come to pass, while my glory passes by, that I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and will cover you with my hand while I pass by.*¹⁰

Notice that all of God's glory was displayed in His "goodness." The *goodness* of God would have killed Moses instantly *because of his personal sinfulness*. The fire of God's goodness would have consumed him, like a cup of water dropped onto the surface of the sun. The only way any of us can stand in the presence of God is to be pure in heart. Jesus said, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."¹¹ But as we've seen by looking at the Law, not a single one of us is "pure in heart."

These are extremely fearful thoughts, because the God we are speaking about is nothing like the commonly accepted image. He is not a benevolent Father-figure, who is happily smiling upon sinful humanity.

In the midst of these frightening thoughts, remember to let fear work for you. The fear of

God is the healthiest fear you can have. The Bible calls it “the beginning of wisdom.”¹²

Again, your knowledge of God’s Law should help you to see that you have a life-threatening dilemma: a huge problem of God’s wrath (His justifiable anger) against your personal sins. The just penalty for sin—breaking even one Law—is death, and eternity in Hell. But you haven’t broken just one Law. Like the rest of us, you’ve no doubt broken all these laws, countless times each. What kind of anger do you think a judge is justified in having toward a criminal guilty of breaking the law *thousands of times*?

Let’s See

Let’s now look at those four major religions to see if they can help you with your predicament.

Hinduism

The religion of Hinduism says that if you’ve been bad, you may come back as a rat or some other animal.¹³ If you’ve been good, you might come back as a prince. But that’s like someone saying, “When you jump out of the plane, you’ll get sucked back in as another passenger. If you’ve been bad, you go down to the Economy Class; if you’ve been good, you go up to First Class.” It’s an interesting concept, but it doesn’t deal with your real problem of having sinned against God and the reality of Hell.

Buddhism

Amazingly, the religion of Buddhism denies that God even exists. It teaches that life and death are sort of an illusion.¹⁴ That's like standing at the door of the plane and saying, "I'm not really here, and there's no such thing as the law of gravity, and no ground that I'm going to hit." That may temporarily help you deal with your fears, but it doesn't square with reality. And it doesn't deal with your real problem of having sinned against God and the reality of Hell.

Islam

Interestingly, Islam acknowledges the reality of sin and Hell, and the justice of God, but the hope it offers is that sinners can escape God's justice if they do religious works. God will see these, *and because of them*, hopefully He will show mercy—but they won't know for sure.¹⁵ Each person's works will be weighed on the Day of Judgment and it will then be decided who is saved and who is not—based on whether they followed Islam, were sincere in repentance, and performed enough righteous deeds to outweigh their bad ones.

So Islam believes you can *earn* God's mercy by your own efforts. That's like jumping out of the plane, and believing that flapping your arms is going to counter the law of gravity and save you from a 10,000-foot drop.

And there's something else to consider. The Law of God shows us that the best of us is nothing but a wicked criminal, standing guilty and condemned before the throne of a perfect and holy Judge. When that is understood, then our "righteous deeds" are actually seen as an attempt to bribe the Judge of the Universe. The Bible says that *because of our guilt*, anything we offer God for our justification (our acquittal from His courtroom) is an abomination to Him,¹⁶ and only adds to our crimes.

Islam, like the other religions, doesn't solve your problem of having sinned against God and the reality of Hell.

Christianity

So why is Christianity different? Aren't all religions the same? Let's see. In Christianity, God Himself provided a "parachute" for us, and His Word says regarding the Savior, "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ."¹⁷ Just as a parachute solved your dilemma with the law of gravity and its consequences, so the Savior perfectly solves your dilemma with the Law of God and its consequences! It is the missing puzzle-piece that you need.

How did God solve our dilemma? He satisfied His wrath by becoming a human being and taking our punishment upon Himself. The Scriptures tell us that God was in Christ, reconciling

the world to Himself. Christianity provides the only parachute to save us from the consequences of the Law we have transgressed.

Back to the Plane

To illustrate this more clearly, let's go back to that plane for a moment. You are standing on the edge of a 10,000-foot drop. You *have* to jump. Your heart is thumping in your chest. Why? Because of fear. You know that the law of gravity will kill you when you jump.

Someone offers you the original Mona Lisa. You push it aside.

Another person passes you the keys to a brand new Lamborghini. You let them drop to the floor.

Someone else tries to put a million dollars into your hands. You push the person's hand away, and stand there in horror at your impending fate.

Suddenly, you hear a voice say, "Here's a parachute!"

Which one of those four people is going to hold the most credibility in your eyes? It's the one who held up the parachute! Again, it is your fear of the jump that turns you toward the good news of the parachute.

In the same way, knowledge of what God's Law will do to you produces a fear that makes the news of a Savior unspeakably good news! It

solves your predicament of God's wrath. God loves you so much that He became a sinless human being in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. The Savior died an excruciating death on the cross, taking your punishment (the death penalty) upon Himself. The demands of eternal justice were satisfied the moment He cried, "It is finished!"

The lightning of God's wrath was stopped and the thunder of His indignation was silenced at Calvary's bloodied cross: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."¹⁸ We broke the Law, but He became a man to pay our penalty in His life's blood.

Then He rose from the dead, defeating death. That means that God can now forgive every sin you have ever committed and commute your death sentence. If you repent and place your trust in Jesus, you can say with the apostle Paul:

For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.¹⁹

So you no longer need to be tormented by the fear of death, and you don't need to look any further for ways to deal with the dilemma of sin and God's wrath.²⁰ The Savior is God's gift to you. *The gospel is unspeakably good news for the entire, sinful human race!*

God Himself can “justify” you. He can cleanse you, and give you the “righteousness” of Christ. He can make you pure in heart by washing away your sins. He can shelter you from His fierce wrath, in the Rock of Ages that He has cleft for you.²¹

Only Jesus can save you from death and Hell, something that you could never earn or deserve.²²

Do It Today

To receive the gift of eternal life, you must repent of your sins (turn from them), and put on the Lord Jesus Christ as you would put on a parachute—trusting in Him alone for your salvation. That means you forsake your own good works as a means of trying to please God (trying to bribe Him), and trust only in what Jesus has done for you. Simply throw yourself on the mercy of the Judge. The Bible says that He’s rich in mercy to all who call upon Him,²³ so *call* upon Him right now. He *will* hear you if you approach Him with a humble and sorrowful heart.

Do it right now because you don’t know when you will take that leap through the door of death. Confess your sins to God, put your trust in Jesus to save you, and you will pass from death to life. You have God’s promise on it.²⁴

Pray something like this:

“Dear God, today I turn away from all of my sins [name them] and I put my trust in Jesus Christ alone as my Lord and Savior. Please forgive me, change my heart, and grant me Your gift of everlasting life. In Jesus’ name I pray. Amen.”

Now have faith in God. He is absolutely trustworthy. Never doubt His promises. He is not a man that He should lie.

The sincerity of your prayer will be evidenced by your obedience to God’s will, so read His Word (the Bible) daily and obey what you read.²⁵

Notes

1. See Romans 8:2.
2. 1 John 3:15.
3. Matthew 5:27,28.
4. Proverbs 12:22.
5. See Revelation 21:8; 1 Corinthians 6:9,10.
6. Matthew 12:36.
7. See John 3:36.
8. See Romans 2:5.
9. See Ephesians 2:3.
10. Exodus 33:18,22 (emphasis added).
11. Matthew 5:8.
12. Psalm 111:10.
13. “Is it possible for a man to be reborn as a lower animal?” Maharshi: “Yes. It is possible, as illustrated by Jada Bharata—the scriptural anecdote of a royal sage having been reborn as a deer.”
<www.hinduism.co.za/reincarn.htm>.
14. “When you transcend your thinking mind in the realization of your own pure, timeless, ever-present

awareness, then the illusion of time completely collapses, and you become utterly free of the samsaric cycle of time, change, impermanence, and suffering.” www.buddhistinformation.com.

15. “Then those whose balance (of good deeds) is heavy, they will be successful. But those whose balance is light, will be those who have lost their souls; in hell will they abide” (Surah 23:102,103).
16. See Proverbs 15:8.
17. See Romans 13:14.
18. Galatians 3:13.
19. Romans 8:2.
20. Beware of cults such as Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormons. They masquerade as “Christian,” but they are rooted in self-righteousness (trying to do good works to earn salvation).
21. See 1 Corinthians 10:4.
22. “For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8,9).
23. “For the scripture says, Whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich to all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:12,13).
24. “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life” (John 5:24).
25. “He that has my commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves me: and he that loves me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:21).



Save Yourself Some Pain

It is my sincere hope that you have made peace with God through trusting in Jesus Christ. Becoming a Christian is the most incredible event that will ever take place in your life. If you have obeyed the gospel, by turning from your sins and placing your trust in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation, *you have found everlasting life!* (See John 3:16; Romans 6:23; 10:9–13; 1 John 5:11–13.) Be assured, God will never leave you nor forsake you. He has brought you this far and He will complete the wonderful work He has begun in you. He knows your every thought, your every care, and your deepest concerns.

Let's look at some of those possible concerns. First, and of primary concern, do you have “assurance” of your salvation? The Bible says to “make every effort to confirm your calling

and election” (2 Peter 1:10), so let’s go through a short “checklist” to make sure that you are truly saved:

Are you aware that God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 3:16), and that He died for the sins of the world?

Did you come to the Savior because you knew that you had sinned against God?

Are you convinced that Jesus suffered and died on the cross for your sins, and that He rose again on the third day?

Did you truly “repent” (turn from your sin) and put your faith (trust) in Jesus?

God acquits us from the Courtroom of Eternal Justice on the grounds that Jesus Christ paid our fine. We are “justified” (made right with God) by His suffering death. The resurrection of Jesus Christ was God’s seal of approval signifying that His precious blood was sufficient to pay the fine. If we turn from sin and place our trust in Jesus—the only grounds for forgiveness—God will grant us mercy. However, if you’re not sure of your salvation, read Psalm 51 and make it your own prayer.

Following are several important principles that can save you a great deal of pain.

1. Feeding on the Word—Daily Nutrition

A healthy baby has a healthy appetite. If you have truly been “born” of the Spirit of God, you

will have a healthy appetite. The Bible says, “Like newborn infants, desire the unadulterated spiritual milk, so that you may grow by it in [your] salvation” (1 Peter 2:2). So feed yourself daily without fail. The more you eat, the quicker you will grow, and the less bruising you will have. Speed up the process and save yourself some pain—vow to read God’s Word every day, without fail. Job said, “I have treasured the words of His mouth more than my daily food” (Job 23:12). Be like Job, and put your Bible *before* your belly. Say to yourself, “No Bible, no breakfast. No read, no feed.” If you do that, God promises that you will be like a fruitful, strong, and healthy tree (see Psalm 1).

Each day, find somewhere quiet and thoroughly soak your soul in the Word of God. There may be times when you read through its pages with great enthusiasm, and other times when it seems dry and even boring. But food profits your body whether you enjoy it or not. As a child, you no doubt ate desserts with great enthusiasm. Perhaps vegetables weren’t so exciting. If you were a normal child, you probably had to be encouraged to eat them at first. Then, as you matured in life, you learned to discipline yourself to eat vegetables. This is because they nourish and strengthen you, even though they may not bring pleasure to your taste buds.

2. Faith—Elevators Can Let You Down

When a young man once said to me, “Ray, I find it hard to believe some of the things in the Bible,” I smiled and asked, “What’s your name?” When he said, “Paul,” I casually answered, “I don’t believe you.” He looked at me questioningly. I repeated, “What’s your name?” Again he said, “Paul,” and again I answered, “I don’t believe you.” Then I asked, “Where do you live?” When he told me, I said, “I don’t believe that either.” His reaction, understandably, was anger. I said, “You look a little upset. Do you know why? You’re upset because I didn’t believe what you told me. If you tell me that your name is Paul, and I say, ‘I don’t believe you,’ it means that I think you are a liar. You are trying to deceive me by telling me your name is Paul, when it’s not.”

Then I told him that if he, a mere man, felt insulted by my lack of faith in his word, how much more does he insult Almighty God by refusing to believe His Word. In doing so, he was saying that God isn’t worth trusting—that He is a liar and a deceiver. The Bible says, “The one who does not believe God has made Him a liar” (1 John 5:10). It also says, “Watch out, brothers, so that there won’t be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart...” (Hebrews 3:12). Martin Luther said, “What greater insult... can there be to God, than not to believe His promises.”

I have heard people say, “But I find it hard

to have faith in God,” not realizing the implications of their words. These are the same people who often accept the daily weather forecast, believe the newspapers, and trust their lives to a pilot they have never seen whenever they board a plane. We exercise faith every day. We rely on our car’s brakes. We trust history books, medical books, and elevators. Yet planes can crash. History books can be wrong. Elevators can let us down. How much more then should we trust the sure and true promises of Almighty God. He will never let us down . . . if we trust Him.

Cynics often argue, “You can’t trust the Bible—it’s full of mistakes.” It is. The first mistake was when man rejected God, and the Scriptures show men and women making the same tragic mistake again and again. It’s also full of what *seem* to be contradictions. For example, the Scriptures tell us that “nothing will be impossible with God” (Luke 1:37); there is nothing Almighty God cannot do. Yet we are also told that it is “impossible for God to lie” (Hebrews 6:18). So there *is* something God cannot do! Isn’t that an obvious “mistake” in the Bible? The answer to this dilemma is found in the lowly worm.

Do you know that it would be impossible for me to eat worms? I once saw a man on TV butter his toast, then pour on a can of live, fat, wriggling, blood-filled worms. He carefully took a knife and fork, cut into his moving meal, and

ate it. It made me feel sick. It was disgusting. The thought of chewing cold, live worms is so repulsive, so distasteful, I can candidly say that it would be *impossible* for me to eat them, even though I have seen it done. It is so abhorrent, I draw on the strength of the word “impossible” to substantiate my claim.

Lying, deception, bearing false witness, etc., is so repulsive to God, so disgusting to Him, so against His holy character, that the Scriptures draw on the strength of the word “impossible” to substantiate the claim. He cannot, could not, and would not lie.

That means in a world where we are continually let down, we can totally rely on, trust in, and count on His promises. They are sure, certain, indisputable, true, trustworthy, reliable, faithful, unyielding, dependable, steadfast, and an anchor for the soul. In other words, you can truly believe them, and because of that, you can throw yourself blindfolded and without reserve into His mighty hands. He will never, *ever* let you down. Do you believe that?

3. Evangelism—Our Most Sobering Task

Late in December 1996, a large family gathered in Los Angeles for a joyous Christmas. There were so many gathered that night, five of the children slept in the converted garage, kept warm during the night by an electric heater placed near the door.

During the early hours of the morning, the heater suddenly burst into flames, blocking the doorway. In seconds the room became a blazing inferno. A frantic 911 call revealed the unspeakable terror as one of the children could be heard screaming, “*I’m on fire!*” The distraught father vainly rushed into the flames to try to save his beloved children, receiving burns to 50 percent of his body. Tragically, all five children burned to death. They died because steel bars on the windows had thwarted their escape. There was only one door, and it was blocked by the flames.

Imagine you are back in time, just before the heater burst into flames. You peer through the darkness at the peaceful sight of five sleeping youngsters, knowing that at any moment the room will erupt into an inferno and burn the flesh of horrified children. *Can you in good conscience walk away?* No! You must awaken them, and warn them to run from that death trap!

The world sleeps peacefully in the darkness of ignorance. There is only one Door by which they may escape death. The steel bars of sin prevent their salvation, and at the same time call for the flames of eternal justice. What a fearful thing Judgment Day will be! The fires of the wrath of Almighty God will burn for eternity. The Church has been entrusted with the task of awakening the lost before it’s too late. We cannot turn our backs and walk away in compla-

cency. Think of how the father *ran* into the flames. His love knew no bounds. Our devotion to the sober task God has given us will be in direct proportion to our love for the lost. There are only a few laborers who run headlong into the flames to warn them to flee (Luke 10:2). *Please* be one of them. We really have no choice. The apostle Paul said, “Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel!” (1 Corinthians 9:16).

If you and I ignore a drowning child and let him die when we had the ability to save him, we are guilty of the crime of “depraved indifference.” God forbid that any Christian should be guilty of that crime when it comes to those around us who are perishing. We have an obligation to reach out to them. The “Prince of Preachers,” Charles Spurgeon, said, “Have you no wish for others to be saved? Then you are not saved yourself. Be sure of that.”

A Christian *cannot* be apathetic about the salvation of the world. The love of God in him will motivate him to seek and save that which is lost.

You probably have a limited amount of time after your conversion to impact your unsaved friends and family with the gospel. After the initial shock of your conversion, they will put you in a neat little ribbon-tied box and keep you at arm’s length. So it’s important that you take advantage of the short time you have while you still have their ears.

Here's some advice that may save you a great deal of grief. As a new Christian, I did almost irreparable damage by acting like a wild bull in a crystal showroom. I bullied my mom, my dad, and many of my friends into making a "decision for Christ." I was sincere, zealous, loving, kind, and stupid. I didn't understand that salvation doesn't come through making a "decision," but through *repentance*, and that repentance is God-given (2 Timothy 2:25). The Bible teaches that no one can come to the Son unless the Father "draws" him (John 6:44). If you are able to get a "decision" but the person has no conviction of sin, you will almost certainly end up with a stillborn on your hands.

In my "zeal without knowledge" I actually inoculated the very ones I was so desperately trying to reach. There is nothing more important to you than the salvation of your loved ones, and you don't want to blow it. If you do, you may find that you don't have a second chance. Fervently pray for them, asking God for their salvation. Let them see your faith. Let them feel your kindness, your genuine love, and your gentleness. Buy gifts for no reason. Do chores when you are not asked to. Go the extra mile. Put yourself in their position. You know that you have found everlasting life—death has lost its sting! Your joy is unspeakable. But as far as they are concerned, you've been brainwashed

and have become part of a weird sect. So your loving actions will speak more loudly than ten thousand eloquent sermons.

For this reason you should avoid verbal confrontation until you have knowledge that will guide your zeal. Pray for wisdom and for sensitivity to God's timing. You may have only one shot, so make it count. Keep your cool. If you don't, you may end up with a lifetime of regret. Believe me. It is better to hear a loved one or a close friend say, "Tell me about your faith in Jesus Christ," rather than you saying, "Sit down. I want to talk to you." Continue to persevere in prayer for them, that God would open their eyes to the truth.

Remember also that you have the sobering responsibility of speaking to other people's loved ones. Perhaps another Christian has prayed earnestly that God would use a faithful witness to speak to his beloved mom or dad, and you are that answer to prayer. You are the true and faithful witness God wants to use. We should share our faith with others whenever we can. The Bible says that we should proclaim the message and "persist in it whether convenient or not" (2 Timothy 4:2).

Never lose sight of the world and all its pains. Keep the fate of the ungodly before your eyes. Too many of us settle down on a padded pew and become introverted. Our world be-

comes a monastery without walls. Our friends are confined solely to those within the Church, when Jesus was the “friend of sinners.” So take the time to deliberately befriend the lost for the sake of their salvation. Remember that each and every person who dies in his sins has an appointment with the Judge of the Universe. Hell opens wide its terrible jaws. There is no more sobering task than to be entrusted with the gospel of salvation—working with God for the eternal well-being of dying humanity. Have the same attitude as the apostle Paul, who pleaded for prayer for his own personal witness. He said, “Pray also for me, that the message may be given to me when I open my mouth to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel. For this I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I might be bold enough in Him to speak as I should” (Ephesians 6:19,20).

4. Prayer—“Wait for a Minute”

God always answers prayer. Sometimes He says yes; sometimes He says no; and sometimes He says, “Wait for a minute.” And since God is outside the dimension of time, to Him a thousand years is no different than a day (see 2 Peter 3:8)—which could mean a ten-year wait for us. So ask in faith, but rest in peace-filled patience.

Surveys show that over 90 percent of Americans pray daily. No doubt they pray for health,

wealth, happiness, etc. They also pray when Grandma gets sick, so when Grandma doesn't get better (or dies), many end up disillusioned or bitter. This is because they don't understand what the Bible says about prayer. It teaches, among other things, that our sin will keep God from even hearing our prayers (Psalm 66:18), and that if we pray with doubt, we will not get an answer (James 1:6,7). Here's how to be heard:

- Pray with faith (Hebrews 11:6).
- Pray with clean hands and a pure heart (Psalm 24:3,4).
- Pray genuine heartfelt prayers, rather than vain repetitions (Matthew 6:7).

Make sure you are praying to the God revealed in the Holy Scriptures (Exodus 20:3–6).

How do you “pray with faith”?

Someone once said to me, “Ray, you're a man of great faith in God,” thinking that they were paying me a compliment. But they weren't—the compliment was to God. For example, if I said, “I'm a man of great faith in my doctor,” it's actually the doctor I'm complimenting. If I have great faith in him, it means that I see him as being a man of integrity, a man of great ability—that he is trustworthy. I give “glory” to the man through my faith in him. The Bible says that Abraham “did not waver in unbelief at God's

promise, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, because he was fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform” (Romans 4:20,21). Abraham was a man of great faith in God. Remember, that is not a compliment to Abraham. He merely caught a glimpse of God’s incredible ability, His impeccable integrity, and His wonderful faithfulness to keep every promise He makes. Abraham’s faith gave “glory” to a faithful God.

As far as God is concerned, if you belong to Jesus, you are a VIP. You can boldly come before the throne of grace (Hebrews 4:16). You have access to the King because *you are the son or daughter of the King*. When you were a child, did you have to grovel to get your needs met by your mom or dad? I hope not.

So, don’t pray, “Oh, God, I *hope* you will supply my needs.” Instead say something like, “Father, thank You that You keep every promise You make. Your Word says that you will supply all my needs according to Your riches in glory in Christ Jesus [Philippians 4:19]. Therefore, I thank You that You will do this thing for my family. I ask this in the wonderful name of Jesus. Amen.” See how Jesus prayed in John 11:42.

The great missionary Hudson Taylor said, “The prayer power has never been tried to its full capacity. If we want to see Divine power wrought in the place of weakness, failure, and disappointment, let us answer God’s standing

challenge, ‘Call unto me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things of which you know not of’” (Jeremiah 33:3).

How do you get “clean hands and a pure heart”?

Simply by confessing your sins to God, through Jesus Christ, whose blood cleanses us from all our sin (see 1 John 1:7–9). God will not only forgive your every sin, He promises to *forget* them (Hebrews 8:12). He will count it as though you had never sinned in the first place. He will make you pure in His sight—sinless. He will even “purge” your conscience, so that you will no longer have a sense of guilt that you sinned. That’s why you need to soak yourself in Holy Scripture; read the letters to the churches and see the wonderful things God has done for us through the cross of Calvary. If you don’t bother to read the “will,” you won’t have any idea what has been given to you.

How do you pray “genuine heartfelt prayers”?

Simply by keeping yourself in the love of God. If the love of God is in you, you will never pray hypocritical or selfish prayers. In fact, you won’t have to pray selfish prayers if you have a heart of love, because when your prayer-life is pleasing to God, He will reward you openly (see Matthew 6:6). Just talk to your heavenly Father as candidly and intimately as a young child, nestled on Daddy’s lap, would talk to his earthly

father. How would you feel if every day your child pulled out a pre-written statement to dryly recite to you, rather than pouring out the events and emotions of that day? God wants to hear from your heart.

How do you know you're praying to "the God revealed in Scripture"?

Study the Bible. Don't accept the image of God portrayed by the world, even though it appeals to the natural mind. A gentle, kind, Santa Claus figure, dispensing good things with no sense of justice or truth, appeals to guilty sinners. Look to the thunderings and lightnings of Mount Sinai. Gaze at Jesus on the cross of Calvary—hanging in unspeakable agony because of the justice of a holy God. Such thoughts tend to banish idolatry.

5. Warfare—Praise the Lord and Pass the Ammunition

When you became a Christian, you stepped right into the heat of an age-old battle. You now have a threefold enemy: the world, the flesh, and the devil. Let's look at these three resistant enemies.

Our first enemy is the world, which refers to the sinful, rebellious, world system. The world loves the darkness and hates the light (John 3:20), and is governed by the "prince of the power of the air" (Ephesians 2:2). The Bible says that the Christian has escaped the corruption that is in

the world through lust. “Lust” is unlawful desire, and is the life’s blood of the world—whether it be lust for sexual sin, for power, for money, for material things. Lust is a monster that will never be gratified, so don’t feed it. It will grow bigger and bigger until it weighs heavy upon your back, and will be the death of you (James 1:15).

There is nothing wrong with sex, power, money, or material things, but when desire for these becomes predominant, it becomes idolatry (Colossians 3:5). We are told, “Do not love the world or the things that belong to the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in him,” and, “Whoever wants to be the world’s friend becomes God’s enemy” (1 John 2:15; James 4:4).

The second enemy is the devil, who is the “god of this age” (2 Corinthians 4:4). He was your spiritual father before you joined the family of God (John 8:44; Ephesians 2:2). Jesus called the devil a thief who came to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). The way to overcome him and his demons is to make sure you are outfitted with the spiritual armor of God listed in Ephesians 6:10–18. Become intimately familiar with it. Sleep in it. Never take it off. Bind the sword to your hand so you never lose its grip. The reason for this brings us to the third enemy.

The third enemy is what the Bible calls the “flesh.” This is your sinful nature. The domain for the battle is your mind. If you have a mind

to, you will be attracted to the world and all its sin. The mind is the control panel for the eyes and the ears, the center of your appetites. All sin begins in the “heart” (Proverbs 4:23; Matthew 15:19). We think of sin before we commit it. James 1:15 warns that lust brings forth sin, and sin when it’s conceived brings forth death. Every day of life, we have a choice. To sin or not to sin—that is the question. The answer is to have the fear of God. If you don’t fear God, you will sin to your sinful heart’s delight.

Did you know that God kills people? He killed a man for what he did sexually (Genesis 38:9,10), killed another man for being greedy (Luke 12:15–21), and killed a husband and wife for telling one lie (Acts 5:1–10). Knowledge of God’s goodness—His righteous judgments against evil—should put the fear of God in us and help us not to indulge in sin.

If we know that the eye of the Lord is in every place beholding the evil and the good, and that He will bring every work to judgment, we will live accordingly. Such weighty thoughts are valuable, for “one turns from evil by the fear of the LORD” (Proverbs 16:6). Jesus said, “And I say to you, My friends, don’t fear those who kill the body, and after that can do nothing more. But I will show you the One to fear: Fear Him who has authority to throw [people] into hell after death. Yes, I say to you, this is the One to fear!” (Luke 12:4,5).

6. Fellowship—Flutter By Butterfly

Pray about where you should fellowship. Make sure the church home you select calls sin what it is—sin. Do they believe the promises of God? Are they loving? Does the pastor treat his wife with respect? Is he a man of the Word? Does he have a humble heart and a gentle spirit? Listen closely to his teaching. It should glorify God, magnify Jesus, and edify the believer.

One evidence that you have been truly saved is that you will have a love for other Christians (1 John 3:14). You will want to fellowship with them. The old saying that “birds of a feather flock together” is true of Christians. You gather together for the breaking of bread (communion), for teaching from the Word, and for fellowship. You share the same inspirations, illuminations, inclinations, temptations, aspirations, motivations, and perspirations—you are working together for the same thing: the furtherance of the kingdom of God on earth. This is why you attend church—not because you have to, but because you want to.

Don’t become a “spiritual butterfly.” If you are flitting from church to church, how will your pastor know what type of food you are digesting? The Bible says that your shepherd is accountable to God for you (Hebrews 13:17), so make yourself known to your pastor. Pray for him regularly. Pray also for his wife, his family, and the church leaders. Being a pastor is no easy task.

Most people don't realize how long it takes to prepare a fresh sermon each week. They don't appreciate the time spent in prayer and in the study of the Word. If the pastor repeats a joke or a story, remember, he's human. So give him a great deal of grace and double honor. Never murmur about him. If you don't like something he has said, pray about it, then leave the issue with God. If that doesn't satisfy you, leave the church, rather than divide it through murmuring and complaining. God hates those who cause division among believers (Proverbs 6:16–19).

7. Thanksgiving—Do the Right Thing

For the Christian, every day should be Thanksgiving Day. We should be thankful even in the midst of problems. The apostle Paul said, "I am overcome with joy in all our afflictions" (2 Corinthians 7:4). He knew that God was working all things together for his good, even his trials (Romans 8:28).

Problems *will* come your way. God will see to it personally that you grow as a Christian. He will allow storms in your life, in order to send your roots deep into the soil of His Word. We also pray more in the midst of problems. It's been well said that you will see more from your knees than on your tiptoes.

A man once watched a butterfly struggling to get out of its cocoon. In an effort to help it, he took a razor blade and carefully slit the edge

of the cocoon. The butterfly escaped from its problem . . . but immediately died. It is God's way to have the butterfly struggle. It is the struggle that causes its tiny heart to beat fast, sending the life's blood into its wings.

Trials have their purpose. They are a cocoon in which we often find ourselves. They make us struggle—they bring us to our knees. It is there that the life's blood of faith in God helps us spread our wings.

Faith and thanksgiving are close friends. If you have faith in God, you will be thankful because you know His loving hand is upon you, even though you are in a lion's den. That will give you a deep sense of joy, which is the barometer of the depth of faith you have in God. Let me give you an example. Imagine if I said I'd give you one million dollars if you sent me an email. Of course, you don't believe I would do that. But imagine if you did, and that you knew 1,000 people who had sent me an email, and every one received their million dollars—no strings attached. More than that, you actually called me, and I assured you personally that I would keep my word. If you believed me, wouldn't you have joy? If you didn't believe me—no joy. The amount of joy you have would be a barometer of how much you believed my promise.

We have so much for which to be thankful. God has given us “exceedingly great and precious promises” that are “more to be desired than

gold.” Do yourself a big favor: believe those promises, thank God continually for them, and “let your joy be full.”

8. Water Baptism—Sprinkle or Immerse?

The Bible says, “Repent . . . and be baptized, each of you, in the name of Jesus the Messiah for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:38). There is no question about whether you should be baptized. The questions are, how, when, and by whom?

It would seem clear from Scripture that those who were baptized were fully immersed in water. Here’s one reason why: “John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was plenty of water there” (John 3:23). If John were merely sprinkling believers, he would have needed only a cupful of water. Baptism by immersion pictures our death to sin, our burial, and our resurrection to new life in Christ (see Romans 6:4, Colossians 2:12).

The Philippian jailer and his family were baptized at midnight, the same hour they believed (Acts 16:30–33). The Ethiopian eunuch was baptized as soon as he believed (Acts 8:35–37), as was Paul (Acts 9:17,18). Baptism is a step of obedience, and God blesses our obedience. So what are you waiting for?

Who should baptize you? It is clear from Scripture that other believers had the privilege, but check with your pastor; he may want the honor himself.

9. Tithing—The Final Frontier

It has been said that the wallet is the “final frontier.” It is the final area to be conquered—the last thing that we surrender to God. Jesus spoke much about money. He said that we cannot serve both God and mammon (Matthew 6:24). The word used for “money” was the common Aramaic word for riches, which is related to a Hebrew word signifying “that which is to be trusted.” In other words, we cannot trust God and money. Either money is our source of joy, our great love, our sense of security, the supplier of our needs—or God is.

When you open your purse or wallet, give generously and regularly to your local church. A guide to how much you should give can be found in the “tithing” of the Old Testament: 10 percent of your income. Whatever amount you give, make sure you give *something* to the work of God (see Malachi 3:8–11). Give because you want to, not because you have to. God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:6,7), so learn to hold your money with a loose hand.

10. Troubleshooting: Cults, Atheists, Skeptics

If you know the Lord, nothing will shake your faith. It is true that the man with an experience is not at the mercy of a man with an argument. If you are converted, and the Holy Spirit “testifies” that you are a child of God (Romans 8:16), you will never be shaken by a skeptic.

When cults tell you that to be saved you must call God by a certain name, you must worship on a certain day, or that you must be baptized by an elder of their church, don't panic. Merely go back to the Instruction Manual. The Bible has all the answers, and searching them out will make you grow. If you feel intimidated by atheists, thinking they are "intellectuals," read my book *God Doesn't Believe in Atheists*. It will reveal that they are the opposite. It will also show you how to prove God's existence, and also prove that the "atheist" doesn't exist. (See also *How to Know God Exists: Scientific Proof of God.*)

Finally, the way to prevent sporting injury and pain is to keep yourself fit. Exercise as the apostle Paul did. He said, "Herein do I exercise myself, to always have a conscience void of offense toward God, and toward men" (Acts 24:16). Do the same. Listen to the voice of your conscience. It's your friend, not your enemy. Remember the words of Solomon: "Fear God and keep His commands, because this [is for] all humanity. For God will bring every act to judgment, including every hidden thing, whether good or evil" (Ecclesiastes 12:13,14).

Keep the Day of Judgment before your eyes. On that Day, you will be glad that you cultivated a tender conscience. I hope these principles have been helpful and that they will some day save you some pain.

Feel free to check out www.livingwaters.com for helpful books (*God Has a Wonderful Plan for Your Life* is our most important publication), DVDs, unique gospel tracts, free audio and video messages (make sure you listen to “Hell’s Best Kept Secret” and then “True and False Conversion”), an online Bible School with over 12,000 students, an exciting Academy, details of our award-winning television program “The Way of the Master,” archives from “The Way of the Master Radio,” information on our “Transformed” and “Deeper” conferences, and many other materials to help you grow in your faith.

**For help, please visit
www.heartchanger.com**