

HAVE AN EXIT STRATEGY

BY TERRY GEORGE

A young photographer was flown into the desolate area of Alaska to photograph the wild beauty of the tundra and mountains. He had armed himself with a number of cameras, 500 rolls of film, several firearms and ammunition, nearly 700 kilograms of food and supplies, tents and other provisions.

The first few months of his diary were fascinating as the photographer recorded the amazing wild beauty of the regions he was passing through. However, as the months rolled on, the recordings started to take on a more concerned aspect that finally turned into panic and desperation.

The photographer died in a lonely valley near a small lake, on his own, 125 miles from any major township.

It was a tragedy because although the photographer had made careful preparations for his trip and tried to plan every aspect, he had made no provision or plan of how to get out afterwards.

How could anyone be so foolish?

It is very hard to imagine that in all the excitement of preparing for the trip, the photographer had overlooked the most important thing of all – how to get home.

Whilst many of us would think how foolish that was, what is more concerning is – how many of us are taking the time to ensure our safe passage from this life to the life to come?

Yes, although our body is mortal

and will eventually die, our spirit (or soul) is immortal and can never be destroyed. It will exist for eternity and that is the dilemma facing us.

The question is, “Where will our spirit reside for eternity?”

As we celebrate Easter year after year, we are given a constant reminder of this question. Christians remember that God, our Creator and Father, has given us a pathway back to Him through the amazing sacrifice and gift that only He could have made.

Whilst He is a God of justice, righteousness and holiness, He demands all who cannot live to His standards (every one of us) be judged by Him and then face the consequences.

The Good News however is that God is also the source of all love, compassion, forgiveness and care and as such, has put into place a plan that will allow us to find our way home to Him.

Over 2000 years ago, in a small stable a baby was born in the humblest of circumstances. This baby grew up to change the world forever. This baby was God’s Son Jesus.

Despite all the attacks and false allegations He had to face, Jesus never once betrayed His Heavenly Father and as such, was not guilty

Just where on earth is all this headed?!



This Easter you may be feeling less new beginnings and more bedraggled bunny costume, wondering what the world is coming to and how this is all going to end. Take heart, the Good News of the story of Jesus offers you some very practical hope.

of any sin. This made Jesus the perfect sacrifice to satisfy God’s justice, righteousness and holiness that He demands from all of us when we face death.

None other than Jesus has lived to God’s standards. In fact God

stated in the Bible “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). So under our own standards we are just as foolish as the photographer.

We pass through life as we know it, pursuing all the pleasures and

good times without giving much thought to where we are going to end up. We spend most of our time chasing a safe and comfortable living instead of focusing on how to live. Easter reminds us that when Jesus went to the cross, although He was blameless, He carried all of our imperfections and brokenness with Him.

Good Friday is the day we remember this and acknowledge Jesus’ amazing sacrifice on our behalf. Many say that they didn’t ask Him to do anything for them and that is true. However Jesus still made the sacrifice so that if these people ever wanted to accept God’s gift they still can.

Sunday is the day we rejoice with Jesus in that God raised Jesus from death and all who believed and will believe in Him in the future can be forgiven and enter into God’s presence in a place the Bible calls Heaven. That is the amazing sacrifice and gift we have been given.

The exchange of Easter eggs combined with symbols of chickens and rabbits indicate New Life – exactly what we receive when we ask Jesus into our lives.

Obviously we are not talking about physical new life but a spiritual one as we are now a new person inside. Accepting Jesus doesn’t necessarily mean we still won’t make mistakes, go our own way on occasion, feel sad and depressed etc., however it does mean we have a power inside of us to call on when we are facing tough times.

We are not perfect but we are now given access to a loving Father God who understands us and has promised to always be there so we can find our way home to Him and His forgiveness.

That is the gift we remember at Easter. That is the gift Jesus Christ won for us on the cross.

Marriage crisis was no joke

Actor Terry Crews, well known for his role as Sergeant Terry Jeffords in the comedy series Brooklyn Nine-Nine, and his wife, Rebecca’s marriage nearly didn’t make it.

“I went to a car dealership because I was gonna buy myself a new car; get a new apartment,” Rebecca told Page Six. “I was ready to start over.”

“The car salesman recognized me and he said ‘Mrs. Crews, you got a good man there’ and I’m rolling my eyes like, ‘You don’t even know!’” she said.

Even though he didn’t know anything about her marriage the salesman told her all about his own failed union.

“This man sat me down for probably an hour and told me all about how he ended his first marriage of 20 years; how he regretted it, how it affected his children,” she said. “He regrets to this day that he did not make it work with his wife and told me ‘If you have a man willing to fix it, then you should try.’”

Rebecca and Terry nearly split in 2010 after Terry confessed to a string of infidelities, and told her that he’d been struggling with an addiction to porn.

Terry told Relevant Magazine: “The fact that we are still here..., five beautiful kids, one grandbaby – I know a lot of people in Hollywood that wish they could be close to something like that. And I think that’s my proudest production.

Because let me tell you, it was a horror movie for a while.”

Funny man Terry began his working life as an NFL football player, but decided to move to Los Angeles to pursue an acting career in 1997. He has also worked as a security guard, a courtroom sketch artist and voiced animated movies, as well as being a bodybuilder and social activist.

Terry grew up in a strict Christian home and was raised mainly by his mother, as his father was an abusive alcoholic.

“We grew up Christian, but we were really on the far-right,” he says.



Terry Crews hamming it up in the hit TV series Brooklyn 99

“We weren’t allowed to listen to music. We weren’t allowed to go to dances. We weren’t allowed to go to the movies. We were in church a lot. I have to say probably in a seven-day week, we were in church four out of those seven days and then we went twice on Sunday.”

While still in college in 1989 he married Rebecca King.

Unfortunately, once Terry started mixing with the rich and famous, he began to lose touch with his strict, moral upbringing and live the fast, wild life.

• Turn to page 2

Fun for Kids

Pages 5,6,7



BACK PAGE



Crew's marriage crisis was no joke

• From page 1

"I actually went to a massage parlor, and I cheated on my wife," Crews says. "I vowed I would never tell. And eight years went by, and my wife was always questioning me, and I would just deny it."

"There are times when you think you hit rock bottom and what you've done is you actually hit a ledge," Crews says. "You haven't fallen all the way yet. The thing about religion is that it can become a mask that you wear so long that you become it. Here I was: a Christian, a churchgoer, but I had a double life."

"I was also addicted to pornography at the same time," he says. "It was like my dirty secret. It was the thing that I couldn't beat. And what I figured is everybody is just like that."

"But I knew I wasn't telling the truth, and one day—we call it D-Day around our house—my wife just confronted me. I was actually in New York, she was in L.A., and she said, 'Terry, what is it I don't know about you?'"

Crews says at that moment, God told him: "If you don't tell her the truth, I'm done with you. You can go ahead, but you'll be doing everything without Me."

With that, eight years' worth of lies crumbled.

"I told her," he says. "And I remember just everything falling apart. She was like, 'I'm done with you. You've got to go. I'm through. Don't come home. It's a wrap.'"



Actor Terry Crews, wife Rebecca King-Crews and their children attend the premiere of "The Star" in 2017 in Westwood, California. (Photo by Jason LaVeris/FilmMagic)

His world ripping at the seams, his family splintering, Terry turned to his pastor who, he says, gave him "the best advice ever."

"He said, 'Terry, you can't do anything to get your wife back, but you have to get better for you.' And I

realized he was totally right. And I went to rehab."

Eventually, after the incident with the car salesman, Rebecca agreed to give the marriage a chance. Terry says, "it was a lot of tears, a lot of heartbreak."

But after several years and a lot of honesty and therapy, now "our relationship is better than it's ever been," he says.

In 2014, Crews released his autobiography *Manhood: How to Be a Better Man or Just Live with One*.

Then in March last year the family faced another challenge. Rebecca was diagnosed with breast cancer and "our world came crumbling down," Terry said. She underwent a double mastectomy and reconstructive surgery.

Rebecca has also had to deal with a compromised immune system and risky follow-up appointments, made more complicated by the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 lockdowns.

Terry said, "When you're going through something you're always like, 'God are you here?' And He's like, 'I'm here.' You can find meaning in suffering! You don't learn it before you go through it. God speaks to everyone and tells them what the right move is."

"It's just real things that happen to a family. And we're a Christian family. We go to church. We do our thing. But these things happen, and you have to deal with them. It made me more thankful for what we have."

Stronger in his faith than ever before, Terry continues to share his story with anyone who will listen and shine the Light of God through his work in Hollywood.

He tweeted: "Happy to be saved, sanctified, and filled with the Holy Ghost [invisible presence of God]!"

"God is good and has always been! Thanks to Him for EVERYTHING!"



What's Easter all about?

EASTER isn't just another holiday for doing DIY or taking an early break to somewhere sunny.

It's the most important festival in the Christian calendar – more important than Christmas. In fact, the whole of Christianity stands or falls on the truth of Easter...

What Happened?

On the first Easter Sunday, almost 2,000 years ago, Jesus came back to life (was resurrected) after being brutally killed on a cross.

What was the Point of It?

The resurrection was the final proof that Jesus was who He claimed to be – God Himself in human flesh, with the power to defeat death.

That's why Easter is a celebration! Death isn't the end. For those who believe in Jesus, an eternity of life full of joy and free from evil, suffering and pain awaits.

Why is Good Friday Called 'Good'?

That's a good question! It's the day Jesus was tortured, crucified and died, so it was a horrific day for Him, but it was good for us. Why? Because Jesus died to get us off the hook for all our

bad thoughts, words and actions – our 'sins'. There is a punishment in the next life for all we've done wrong in this one, but God doesn't want us to suffer that. So what did He do?

He came to this world as Jesus to take one big punishment for all our sins. Jesus was innocent, but was our substitute. He died so that we escape our punishment AND get eternal life after we die. We can ensure that is true for us by...

1. **Believing** – simply believing that Jesus is God, that He died for us and that He is alive today.

2. **Accepting** that we have 'sinned' and asking God to forgive us for all our bad stuff.

3. **Inviting** God into our lives to help us live how He wants us to live in the future.

See For Yourself

You can read about Jesus' death on the cross (crucifixion), His burial and resurrection (rising from the dead) for yourself in the Bible. See Matthew 27:27 to 28:8; Mark 15:16 to 16:19; Luke 23:26 to 24:35; and John 20:30 to 21:25.



The Good Mews



Last year's Easter edition of Challenge attracted all sorts of different readers! Here is Kylo studying it with interest.

Coffee Break

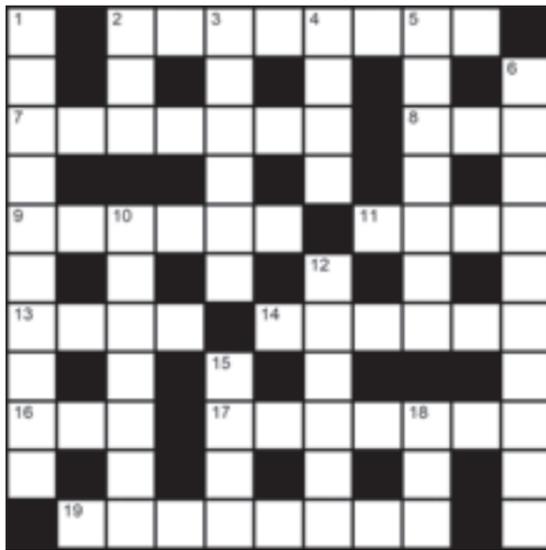
CROSSWORD & SUDOKU

ACROSS

- 2 Energetic type
- 7 Failure, fiasco
- 8 Take to the slopes
- 9 Chicago gangster
- 11 President after Reagan
- 13 A wild mountain goat
- 14 Flower patch
- 16 Signifying maiden name
- 17 Ocean direction
- 19 Five-armed sea creature

DOWN

- 1 Habit formers
- 2 Scientist's work place
- 3 Not lived in
- 4 Gardener's annoyance
- 5 Redeemed, saved



- 6 Stranded, helpless (4,3,3)
- 10 Stop happening
- 12 A kind of sausage
- 15 One that uses
- 18 Volcanic fallout

SOLUTIONS PAGE 11



"But I promised the guys I wouldn't shave!"

				5	3			
	8				4			
7	5			2		1		3
2				8			9	
	1	5				4	2	
	9			1				8
9		7		4			6	5
				5			8	
				6	3			

Good Shepherd

(John 10:11-18)
Good Shepherd, find me,
Lost and lonely,
And far, far away.
I'm a prodigal son,
I'm on the run,
Messed up and astray.

Good Shepherd, free me,
Sad and sickly,
Entangled by sin.
Rescue and save,
For I only crave,
Your mercy within.

Good Shepherd, feed me,
Guide and lead me,
To your still stream.
Let me be fed
By the one who bled
And died to redeem.

Good Shepherd, fill me,
Tend and thrill me
With your love and care.
Restore my soul
And make me whole;
Lord, this is my prayer.

— Craig Siggins

The piccolo's performance

SIR Michael Costa was conducting a rehearsal in which the orchestra was joined by a great chorus. About halfway through the session, with trumpets blaring, drums rolling, and violins singing their rich melody, the piccolo player muttered to himself, "What good am I doing? I might just as well not be playing. Nobody can hear me anyway." So he kept the instrument to his mouth, but he made no sound.

Within moments, the conductor cried, "Stop! Stop! Where's the ear of the most important person of all."

It's much the same way with the use of our gifts and abilities. Whatever our part in life is, great or small, it matters. The performance isn't complete until we do our best with what we have, and God the Great Conductor is listening for our contribution.

— Richard De Haan

EASTER EGGS

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



www.joyfultoons.com © 2015 Michael D. Waters

But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

— JOHN 20:31 NIV



STORIES OF THE BRAVE AND BOLD

Mom of 7 attacked on Easter Sunday

A mother of seven children in eastern Uganda suffered serious wounds and is cut off from her family after her husband and other Muslim relatives attacked her on Easter Sunday last year for putting her faith in Christ, sources said.

Salimati Naibira, 37, of Bukoba B village, lost consciousness after her husband cut her with a dagger known as a Somali sword in the thigh and back on April 4, 2021 as she attended a worship service for the first time in the area, she said. She had converted from Islam to Christianity three days prior to Easter.

Salimati said she was on her way to the church service when she met her brother-in-law, who asked her where she was going. He likely became suspicious after she told him she was going to visit a friend, she said.

One hour into the worship service, she saw through a window that her husband and other relatives were approaching.

"I saw my husband, brother-in-law, and some family members enter the church gate shouting 'Allah Akbar' ['God is greater']," Salimati told *Morning Star News*. "The church members took off from church worship to save their lives."

The Muslim relatives entered the church building with sticks and the Somali sword. The pastor and some church elders tried to protect her but were overpowered, and the assailants forced her into a van and drove her to a nearby forest.

"They started beating me with sticks, then my husband cut me with the Somali sword at the thigh and the back," she said. "I regained consciousness only after several hours."

A passing herdsman found her lying in a pool of blood at about 3pm and he and others took the still unconscious Salimati to a clinic in nearby Kityerera town.

On April 5, hospital staff members managed to make contact with a Christian friend of Salimati, and on April 8 she picked her up from the hospital.

A week earlier, she had been visiting the friend's workplace in Kaluuba town, telling her how doctors had not been able to give Salimati any relief from heavy menstrual bleeding for four years, she said. A Christian evangelist arrived, told her about Christ and asked if he could pray for them, Salimati said.

"I shared with him the fear which had



Salimati Naibira after the attack by her husband.

tormented me of the flow of blood that had troubled me for four years," she said. "He said that Jesus is a healer, and that with Him all things are possible. As he prayed for me, I felt something like an electric power touched my body."

Hearing that God's love was revealed in Christ's sacrifice for sins, Salimati received Him as Lord and Savior, she said. The evangelist told her to visit any nearby church for fellowship and to celebrate the resurrection of Christ on Easter Sunday, April 4.

"Before leaving my friend, I was full of joy," Salimati said. "At night I got a dream of watching a film of Jesus crucified on the cross."

She awoke with a feeling of excitement and the issue

of blood stopped! Jesus healed her!

Salimati said she does not see how she can gain custody of her children, who range in age from 4 to 17 years old. She said she cannot return home.

"I hope my children are safe," she said.

The assault was the latest of many instances of persecution of Christians in Uganda that *Morning Star News* has documented.

Uganda's constitution and other laws provide for religious freedom, including the right to propagate one's faith and convert from one faith to another. Muslims make up no more than 12 percent of Uganda's population, with high concentrations in eastern areas of the country.

— Morning Star News via godreports.com and used with kind permission.



Ronnie and Melissa Faisst

Miserable model's major makeover

As a model appearing on magazine covers and posters, Melissa Faisst was living the glitz and glamour lifestyle. But no one could see the turmoil inside her.

In a video shared on her YouTube channel, Melissa says she remembered feeling like she needed to be something else or live up to something in order to be loved.

"I didn't really feel like I could be myself, I didn't really feel like I was good enough," Melissa remembers. "So my entire childhood I was trying to be somebody else."

Melissa tried to be a good student and excel in school activities and sports in an aim to feel loved but she still didn't feel accepted for who she was.

In high school she met a boy and thought she had finally found the love she had been longing for. They moved to California together but he became abusive.

"It kind of just reaffirmed that lie that I'd been living under my whole life - 'you're just not good enough, it's your fault, you need to be something different'," Melissa explains.

When Melissa discovered her boyfriend had been cheating on her, she was devastated. She vowed she'd never love again and instead she would aim to become the most beautiful and the most famous woman ever so that nobody could ever hurt her again.

"So that became my drug and I ran after it wholeheartedly," Melissa says.

She developed an intense eating disorder and threw up about 20 times a day.

"I was an alcoholic, I was drinking myself to sleep every single night," she remembers. "I had self-hatred. I had depression. I hated my life, but as long as I was beautiful and as long as I was successful, that to me was all that mattered."

Still searching for acceptance, Melissa turned to the modeling industry, where she achieved almost instant success.

But although she looked good on the outside, on the inside she was in a prison.

Then she was approached by *Playboy Magazine* and the offer was appealing.

"It's a lot of money, it's a lot of exposure, and it's like instant fame," she says.

However she also wondered what her future husband would think if she went through with it.

As she was wrestling with the decision, she started thinking about where her life had ended up. She used to be a great student at school and now she was considering signing up for *Playboy*.

"I tried to remember the last time I was happy," she says. "And I actually remembered that it was when I was a kid and I went to church, and when I thought God still loved me. At this point I had sinned so much, like I was just in a life of sin, and so I thought, surely God is done with me. But something within me was saying

that was the last time I was happy."

Melissa found a church to visit and it happened that they were having a young adult retreat that weekend.

"I just felt like I was supposed to go," she recalls. "So I went and on the second day of the retreat they were having this thing called 'God

time' where you get out a journal and you get out a Bible and you would talk to God and then you would hear what He had to say."

Melissa opened up a Bible and turned to the book of Hosea.

"Hosea is a prophet and God tells him to go and marry this prostitute," Melissa explains. "So he marries this prostitute and he loves her but she keeps cheating on him over and over again. And Hosea goes back to God and says, 'God my heart is breaking!

My wife is cheating on me!' And the Lord says, 'Hosea, I want you to go and keep loving your wife, because that's how I love My people who keep running away from Me. Though they don't love Me back in this moment, I keep loving them.'

"And I remember it just struck me like, 'Lord, I am that prostitute! I have turned my back on You and I have just gone after every other lover,

everything to bring me comfort, bring me satisfaction, bring me happiness. I'm looking in all of these other things and I have forgotten You God!'"

Melissa said later that night, people were invited to come to the front if they wanted prayer and something within her told her to go. A lady prayed for her and told her:

"Everything you've ever been told in your life is a lie! You are beautiful, you are wanted, you are precious to the Lord just the way that you are."

Melissa realised all the times she didn't feel good enough, God loved her exactly as she was. She started sobbing as years of pain were broken off her.

"Literally in a moment, I could feel my eating disorder getting broken off of me, self-hatred, depression, alcoholism, in a moment I got delivered of all of those things," Melissa says.

The next morning she felt completely different and experienced joy and freedom for the first time.

"I felt as if finally I had found me and I had found my purpose, and my purpose was just being His and knowing who I was in Him," Melissa says.

After leaving the modeling industry, Melissa became a missionary.

She is married to former freestyle motocross athlete Ronnie Faisst. The couple runs an online Christian ministry and Melissa has a podcast called *Mornings with Mel*.

I COULD FEEL MY EATING DISORDER GETTING BROKEN OFF OF ME



New Miss USA has done it tough

BY MICHAEL ASHCRAFT

Not everything was beautiful in the new Miss USA's early life.

When Asya Branch was 10, her father was arrested at home for involvement with an armed robbery. Little Asya watched terrified from the car as her dad was hauled away.

"That day our lives changed forever," Asya told the *New York Daily News*. "We had a beautiful home and a great life. When they found out that my father was in prison, people looked at us differently. That was a critical stage in my life and it ended up changing me. I felt this overwhelming shame."

Three things followed this event. Asya and her family lost their farm home as the bank foreclosed. She felt alone and abandoned. And she grew closer to Jesus.

"My father's incarceration played an enormous role in my life and helped me develop characteristics I never imagined. It taught me responsibility at a young age and to count my blessings," Asya said on Mississippi Pageant. "But most of all, it strengthened my personal relationship with Jesus Christ."

Asya was born the sixth of eight siblings to her parents, living in Boonville, Mississippi at the time. Before stepping into a wayward life, her dad was a retired military veteran. Her mom was a teacher's assistant. She was a gregarious kid who spent her days entertaining family members. If no one was around, she would bury herself in a book.

Asked what one book she would take to a deserted island, she answered unequivocally: "My Bible, not only for the quality reading but for inspiration and guidance in the circumstances in which I would find myself."

A self-described "daddy's girl," Asya said there was no one to help her through the trying times of losing her dad to the prison system. Her father, she says, had tried to help a drifter by taking him in.

But that young man had committed an armed robbery, and for trying to help a needy soul, her daddy paid a high price.

"There were no resources nor advocates available for me," she says. "People don't recognize the hardships I have faced in my life because I have learned to be strong through

Miss USA Asya Branch at Runway Of Dreams Foundation NYFW 2021 on September 9, 2021 in New York City. (Photo by Monica Schipper/Getty Images for Runway Of Dreams)



my circumstance, keep a smile on my face and lean upon the Lord." (Asya is advocating for prison reform and even spoke to President Trump about it.)

"Initially, I struggled with my self-worth and closed myself off, praying for answers about why this happened," she wrote in Guideposts. Realising eventually that "maybe God is teaching me to be independent and grateful."

In desperation and loneliness one night, she cried out to Jesus and renewed her relationship.

"It was seen by me in one of my nightly devotions," she says.

"I had become overwhelmed, discouraged and had begun to give up when I had a personal, spiritual encounter with God where He spoke to me and let me know He was still working on me and had incredible plans for my life and I could not give up."

After taking summer classes at Harvard University, the now-22-year-old graduated from Ole Miss with a degree in broadcast journalism. She has launched a line of beauty products called Branch Beauty and was crowned Miss USA on 9 November, 2020 in a Covid-delayed pageant.

"Having the backbone and financial base of our family stripped away through incarceration and arrest left me hurt, confused, scared, bullied, and withdrawn," Asya said.

"Now, I am boldly working to help other children who find themselves in unfortunate circumstances to fulfil their greatest potential and realise they have an uninhibited future." •

Question caught eco warrior by surprise

BY HARRIET COOMBE

Nine years ago Chris Kearney was a backpacker travelling around New Zealand on what he called 'an Irish man's voyage of discovery'.

He was a dreadlocked hippie travelling in a campervan, using drugs and exploring spirituality when, one day, a conversation stopped him in his tracks.

"I'd got a bit disillusioned with life in Ireland and wanted to explore life and essentially find myself," Chris remembers.

"I bought an around the world ticket and I was going to stop somewhere once I found a place to be, find a wife, settle down and have a surf yoga café."

His first stop was New Zealand but he quickly ran out of money and found a job with Greenpeace.

"They put me in a campervan and I got to travel around the whole North Island to a different town every day campaigning against fishing techniques and things like deep-sea oil drilling," he explains.

One day he saw an older woman coming out of the bank and ran alongside her as he gave her his pitch. The woman, whose name was Jeannie, signed up for a \$20 a month donation.

"We ended up having this amazing conversation but most of it was me just passionately going on about the risks of deep sea oil drilling because I'd fallen in love with New Zealand and I felt this is was the place I wanted to settle down."

"I was vigorously pouring all my energy into saying how dangerous this was and she suddenly pulled me up and said, 'Chris, I donated in the first few minutes."

"You have this amazing passion and energy but you're going to burn yourself out if you keep going at this level of intensity."

Jeannie said Chris reminded her of herself when she was younger. She too used to live life at a hectic pace and then burn out and be in a really bad headspace. She said she had to manage her energy levels and learn to relax. Her words hit home for Chris as for the past 10 years he would have months where he felt like he was on a high but it would be followed by a big crash a month later.

"I'd get to the place where I actually had suicidal depression," Chris admits. "I'd have horrible thoughts going through my head."

He said that although he was confident, outgoing and had many friends, he didn't know how to communicate what was going on in his life. Jeannie then asked him what he believed in spiritually.

The question caught him off guard. He shared that he had grown up with a strict religious upbringing but no longer believed – he just tried to be a good person and live life to the full. Jeannie gave Chris her contact details and encouraged him to get in touch with her if he was back in the area, as she had had backpackers stay with her before.

The next day as they were driving on to the next town Chris told his friend what had happened. His friend shared that he was into the New Age.

"Growing up in a conservative family in Ireland I'd never come across this sort of individual," Chris shares. "I wanted to know more about spirituality and what's out there."

Over the next 10 weeks as they were traveling around New Zealand, his friend shared more about the New Age, meditation, tai chi and yoga. Chris started meditating and experimenting with manifestation.

"I was grabbing hold of all of this power and felt like I was being enlightened to a whole new way of life," he



Chris with his wife Nikita and son Issachar.

says. Chris stayed in touch with Jeannie and wrote to her about the experiences he had been having. She encouraged him to be careful and said he could be opening doors to an element of darkness he was not aware of.

"When she said that I felt something in my gut and I thought it was probably a good idea to meet up with this lady again considering this journey began with her," he says.

So Chris went to see Jeannie. She took him to a beautiful waterfall in Taranaki National Park and he shared his recent experiences with her.

Jeannie encouraged Chris to go off by himself to the waterfall and ask for the truth. He walked away and did as she said.

"Immediately I heard this voice in my head so clearly saying 'God is the truth, Jesus is the truth' and with that this powerful rush of energy flooded over my body," he says.

"I felt this amazing sense of freedom and burst out laughing. I was so excited yet a bit weirded out and confused as I walked back to Jeannie and I said, 'Did you know Jesus was the truth?' She said, 'Of course, I'm a Holy Spirit-filled born-again Christian.'"

Jeannie then shared the Gospel with Chris – that God loved him so much that He sent His only Son, Jesus, to die for him.

"I experienced Jesus' love and I made that decision in that moment to give my life to Jesus and said, 'I am following You for the rest of my life'," Chris says.

The next day Jeannie baptised Chris in a river.

"Since then I've been living a life that is following Jesus," he says. "He's healed me completely of depression and suicidal thoughts into a place where the joy of the Lord is my strength and he continues to faithfully minister to me each day."

Now Chris lives and works in Perth, Australia. He is married to Nikita and they have a son.

"If I look at where I was, to where I am now, there is a sense of identity, calling and purpose," he says.

"I'm not continually searching and confused."

"When hard times come, I know how to deal with them, and I know where my strength and my security come from." •

I KNOW WHERE MY STRENGTH AND MY SECURITY COME FROM



Chris in his dreadlocked hippie days.

Contact Challenge!

Do you have a story to tell, a tricky question to ask or want to let us know how Challenge has impacted you? Email harriet@challengenews.org

YOUTH TRUTH



Dakota Rhodes experimented with New Age practices such as tarot cards but had a life-changing experience after scrolling through TikTok one day.

Encounter ends songwriter's New Age addiction

Singer/songwriter Dakota Rhodes has had a passion for singing since she was a child and now has a successful YouTube channel with more than 350,000 subscribers and almost 15,000,000 views.

Now 24, Dakota recently posted a video talking about an encounter she says changed her life forever.

Growing up, Dakota's family didn't attend church regularly but they did believe in God and when she started experiencing anxiety attacks, she prayed. But she says her prayers were very focused on herself and she prayed for things to happen according to what she wanted in life, not what God's will was for her life.

"I think that's where I ended up hitting a lot of roadblocks in my life because I was trying to make pieces fit where they never fit," she says.

As she grew older Dakota started experimenting with New Age practices such as tarot cards.

"I wasted a lot of time on tarot card videos because I was looking for answers that I could get immediately... it almost became like an addiction in a way," she admits.

But everything changed in 2020 when the coronavirus pandemic started. One day Dakota was scrolling on TikTok and a lot of videos that popped up were Christian-based. She started worrying about

whether she was a Christian.

So she began to pray to God and express genuine sorrow for her sins [admitting wrong-doing and renouncing it].

"As I was repenting (turning from my sin) I just let everything just kind of wash out of me," Dakota explains.

"All of a sudden I felt this presence... I had my eyes closed and in my mind's eye I saw Jesus standing to the right of me. Then it felt like He wrapped his arms around me and gave me a hug from behind. I started crying because it was so overwhelming. He took the breath out of my lungs and filled it with His Spirit."

She also heard Jesus speak to her and she felt so overwhelmed she nearly fell to her knees.

"I cried for like 24 hours because it was just so much to take in," she recalls. "I didn't sleep at all, I just I cried the whole night. I got up super early in the morning to tell my mom and I couldn't make it through one sentence without breaking down because it was just so much."

Dakota says the experience has changed her forever.

"Now I take all of my problems and questions and everything in life directly to Him," she says.

She also reads her Bible every day and has seen many answers to prayer in regards to her singing career.

"I've seen God move more mountains in my life in these few months than I have in all of my years," she says with a smile.

She hopes her encounter with Jesus encourages others to seek and find Him.

"Even if it's just starting out with a prayer, even if you read one Bible verse a day – that's what I started with... The amount of love that I have for Jesus is unexplainable," she says.

Dakota says God is always reaching out to us and she encourages others to meet Him halfway and grab His hand.

Skillet has sizzling message

John Cooper of Skillet performs in concert as part of the Tailgate Series at H-E-B Center at Cedar Park on October 10, 2020 in Cedar Park, Texas. (Photo by Gary Miller/Getty Images)



When John Cooper was a child, he wasn't allowed to listen to rock music. The "no rock and roll, no drums, no black clothing" environment he was raised in is a far cry from the world he's in now as the lead vocalist and bassist for rock band Skillet.

During his concerts, John shares the story of his past and the challenges he has faced. In a YouTube video from one of these concerts, he talks about his biggest challenge — finding out his mother had cancer when he was in sixth grade.

He says she fought for three years, undergoing chemotherapy, surgery and radiation, before she died. John was 14. After this his father remarried, and John says his home was like World War III had started.

"Things got hard in my family, there was a lot of fighting," John recalls. "My dad and I did a lot of hateful things to each other for a long, long time. I was angry, I was mad, I wanted to hurt somebody, make somebody feel as bad as I felt. I felt misunderstood, was told I was a loser, an embarrassment to my family, an embarrassment as a son."

John was raised in a Christian home and he always believed God was there. But he doubted that God actually cared about what happened in his life and that he was hurting.

Alone in his room when he was 15, John cried out to God.

"I basically said, 'God I've never questioned whether You are real, I've always believed it, but I am not sure that You are listening to me tonight. Every day is worse than the last one. And I need to know You tonight, not just as a God who made stuff, I need to know you tonight like a daddy and like a friend.'"

He says that night he found out "Jesus is not just something that

we talk about, He's not just somebody we read about in an old book. Jesus is not just somebody who was really good and died on a cross, I found out that Jesus was alive...

In Jesus I found a friend Who would never betray me, Who would never leave me, Who would never forsake me. I found a Savior Who didn't just make my life better, He made my life new. In Jesus I found a God, a Father, Who would never be ashamed of me."

John formed Skillet in 1996 and, in his early days touring with the band, he was told by an industry insider that Skillet could become the biggest band in the world but they would need to stop talking about Jesus.

John says he couldn't sell out his faith for rock and roll.

Despite spurning that advice, Skillet has become one of the best-selling rock bands of the 21st century. Of the band's 10 albums, two have received Grammy nomina-

tions. Two have gone Platinum and Double Platinum respectively and two have gone Gold.

Five of their songs are certified Platinum and four are certified Gold.

At a youth concert in 2018, John shared his sorrow over many of his rock and roll heroes taking their own lives.

"These are people in Hollywood who've had fame and money and power. People me and my friends always wanted to be. The richest people on the planet, the most beautiful people on the planet, they have everything they could ever want and there's an emptiness in their life that is just so deep and so dreadful... There's only one hope for the universe — that is Jesus Christ."

In an interview with Jesus Calling podcast, he encourages people to cry out to God during bad times.

"Then we need to turn and begin to see truth in the Bible; we are more than conquerors (Romans 8:37). We are not slaves to sin any longer, and that we do have a new nature and we were crucified with Christ.

"We no longer live, but Christ lives in us. Therefore, live in victory."

John's wife Korey is also a member of Skillet. They have toured together throughout their 23 years of marriage.

They live in Wisconsin with their two children.

John regularly shares his thoughts on his podcast Cooper Stuff and has recently released a book called *Awake and Alive to Truth*.

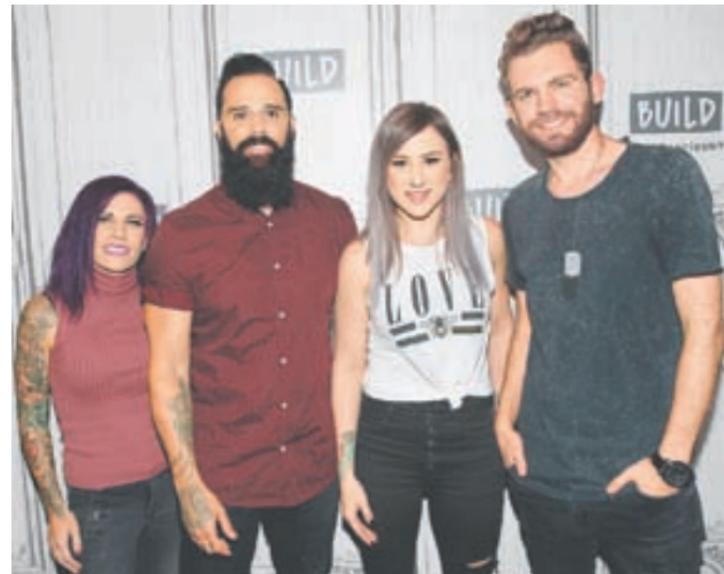
THE RICHEST PEOPLE ON THE PLANET ... SOME SO EMPTY



Reflections

YOU have searched me, Lord, and You know me.
You know when I sit and when I rise;
You perceive my thoughts from afar.
You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue You, Lord, know it completely.
You hem me in behind and before, and You lay Your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me, too lofty for me to attain.

Psalm 139:1-6



From left: Korey Cooper, John Cooper, Jen Ledger and Seth Morrison of Skillet. (Photo by Dominik Bindl/Getty Images)

YOUTH TRUTH

Ask Y: Peter Meadows answers questions about God

QUESTION: WHAT IF I FEEL I'M NOT GOOD ENOUGH TO GO TO CHURCH?



Strange isn't it that from some sincere people you hear: 'The church is full of hypocrites so I'm not going'. And from those equally sincere you hear, 'I'm not good enough to go to church' – and they don't mean they are not good enough at being a hypocrite!

To be honest, I have a lot of sympathy with the 'I don't feel good enough' feeling. I experienced something similar years ago when visiting a friend in America who invited me to his health club. I feared not matching up. My flab and breathlessness would surely be fit for ridicule among all the other fine specimens of health and fitness.

However, the first thing I saw was an amazingly obese man on a weighing machine, trying to gather his rolls of fat in his hands so he could get a reading.

And, believe it or not, churches are not much different. Just as a health club would never advertise 'Only fit people welcome' neither does the church want to give out the same kind of message. And I'm sorry if that's how it comes over. Because, far from a church being a club for the good, it is more like a hospital for those in recovery.

You can get the idea from the first people Jesus called to follow him. One was a conspirator with the occupying forces at the time. Two argued with pride about who should have the best seat in heaven.

Another used bad language to deny he had ever known Jesus – and attacked those coming to arrest Jesus with a sword.

And a man who had stood and watched someone stoned to death became one of Jesus' greatest followers who wrote great chunks of the New Testament.

In fact, it is those who say the church is full of hypocrites who are closer to the truth. To 'hypocrites' add those who are selfish, dishonest, self-centered, proud – and worse. Because that's what it's like to be human. But what better place for them to be than in the company of others like them who are experiencing forgiveness and the strength to live right?

Which is why I believe, if you put your fears behind you and went to church, you'd find yourself in the company of those who don't regard themselves as any better than anyone else. Far from it. Rather Christians – including me – just see themselves as enjoying and celebrating God's forgiveness. And not because they have earned it. But because, through His death on the cross, Jesus made forgiveness available as a free gift, which they have grabbed with both hands.

Why being good just isn't good enough

BY GREG LAURIE

THIS may come as a surprise to some, but there will be people in hell whom others would define as good people.

On the other hand, there will be people in heaven who lived bad lives, but they repented of their sin. You can be a good person, relatively speaking, but you're not good enough. You may think you will get to heaven on your own good works, but of course you won't. That's how you might end up in hell. Being good doesn't get you to heaven.

The Bible tells us, "For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard" (Romans 3:23 NLT). But it also says, "There is one God and one Mediator who can reconcile God and humanity — the man Christ Jesus. He gave his life to purchase freedom for everyone" (1 Timothy 2:5-6 NLT).

Jesus Himself said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me" (John 14:6 NLT).

There's only one way to heaven, and that is being forgiven by God. Heaven is not for good people; it's for forgiven people.

So, the real question is this: Are you forgiven?

Have you said to God, "I know I'm a sinner. I know I don't deserve to go to heaven, but you've offered me this wonderful promise that I can go there some day. I want to. So, I want to believe in You"?

That's really what it comes down to. You have to admit your sin and believe that Jesus died on the cross for your sin. Turn from that sin. Ask God to forgive you of that sin and begin to follow Christ.

When you do, you can know with certainty that you'll go to heaven. Have you done this? He is just a prayer away.



AM I REALLY A GOOD PERSON?



Do you think you are a good person? When he was 11 years old, Isaac Mogilevsky thought he knew the answer straight away – "Yes!"

He prided himself on getting his schoolwork done on time, helping his parents and staying out of trouble.

But he began to question: was his goodness good enough?

Now 22, Isaac shared his story on his popular YouTube channel, Daily Disciple. He grew up in Winnipeg Manitoba, Canada.

His parents home-schooled him and his seven brothers and sisters.

Isaac was raised in a Christian family and faith was a part of every aspect of his life.

"We'd have a daily routine of sitting around and reading the Bible and talking about it and praying, and that was incorporated right into our schooling," he recalls.

When he was about six or seven, Isaac listened to children's audio drama called *Patch the Pirate*.

"It was about this crew of kids and this mentor figure, Patch the Pirate, and they would go on adventures," he explains.

He remembers an episode in which one of the children wants to become a Christian and Patch the Pirate leads them in a prayer.

"I don't remember much from that prayer but I do remember him saying: 'God, I want You to reign in my heart, Jesus reign in my heart,' and as a six or seven-year-old kid I went to the back of one of our chairs in our living room because I thought that was a good place to pray.

"I said: 'God, can You reign in my heart' and that was it."

Then one night, when Isaac was about 11, his brother asked him that simple question: "Do you think you are a good person?"

Isaac said, "Yes." He considered his "goodness" to be one of his greatest qualities.

"I tried to do my schoolwork, I tried not to get in fights, I tried to do my chores, I tried to take initiative and do everything that needed to be done because I wanted to be a good guy," he explains.

"I wanted to be moral, I wanted to be obedient. I thought that's what God wanted for me – to be obedient, to be moral, and to do everything I was supposed to do so that God could love me – or at least that's what I thought."

Isaac's brother showed him a video from Living Waters Ministries' *The Way of the Master*.

In this program, host Ray Comfort asks strangers the same question

Isaac's brother asked him.

"In one of the episodes they talked about the 10 commandments (God's law) and highlighted the verse Romans 3:23: 'For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.' I'd heard this verse before many times but now I actually understood God's law... they explained that none of us can meet God's standard of perfection of goodness – all of us have lied, have coveted, have not loved God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.

"We've all fallen short – I've fallen short – because we all fall short of God's perfect standard.

"Because we've broken God's law, He has to be a good judge and punish us and that punishment is hell.

"But that's where Jesus comes in – He came to this earth fully God and fully man, without sin, and He

lived a perfect life – a life that we couldn't live, that I couldn't live.

"He died on the cross – a death that I deserved to die – but He didn't stay dead.

"He rose again and defeated death.

"He took our punishment on Himself and we are saved by grace through faith, not of works, not of being a good person, not of trying harder, not trying to do better – that's not what's going to save us because at the end of the day we can never make it up to that standard.

"It is Jesus alone who can save us."

Isaac now understood what it meant to repent – to turn from his sin [rebellion against God] and turn to God.

"It was during this period of life where I can look back and say that was when I truly came to repen-

Isaac Mogilevsky prided himself on his goodness, until he realised it wasn't enough. Photo: YouTube/DailyDisciple

tance and faith. Some might say I rededicated my life to Christ – all I know is God saved me. Exactly when that happened, I'll leave that to Him."

This was a turning point for Isaac and his life changed after this.

"From then on I wanted to truly know God – no more going through the motions, no more pretending, no more kind of putting on a good face to seem like a good person – no, this was about being real and passionate about following Jesus," he attests.

Isaac's obedience now stems from a place of love, rather than trying to earn God's approval and forgiveness.

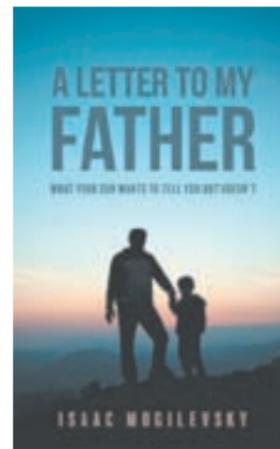
"I wanted to obey God because I was already loved by God – not to earn His love. I wanted to serve God because I was so thankful to Him for saving me and now I wanted to serve Him and I was eager to expand his kingdom.

"That's my passion to this day – to see His kingdom expanded, to be a witness for Him, to disciple, to continue to follow Him passionately."

Isaac is the director of Daily Disciple Ministry and dailydisciple.ca.

He has more than 60,000 subscribers on YouTube and 345,000 followers on TikTok, where he aims to help people become authentic, inspired, and passionate disciples of Jesus.

He has also written a book called *A Letter to My Father: What Your Son Wants to Tell You But Doesn't*.



Isaac Mogilevsky's book, *A Letter to My Father: What Your Son Wants to Tell You But Doesn't* was published in 2019.

"You cannot be too bad, too broken or too boring for God's unconditional love, only too proud to acknowledge how desperately you need it."

Pete Greig (from the book *How to Pray: A Simple Guide for Normal People*)

Contact Challenge!

Do you have a story to tell, a tricky question to ask or want to let us know how Challenge has impacted you? Email harriet@challengenews.org

Big bang has big problems

Scientist says theory of evolution is based more on worldview and speculation than reproducible science.

Physicist Christopher Ting has been fascinated by the natural world ever since he was a university student in Japan.

The Singaporean, now a professor at the School of Informatics and Data Science at Hiroshima University, told Creation Ministries International he became committed to finding out about how nature works.

He is also a Christian and is in an ideal position to comment on the creation versus evolution debate.

Christopher heard the gospel preached at a Billy Graham crusade when he was a teenager but didn't make a commitment immediately. "I felt it was a big decision and not to be made hastily," he explains.

"Nevertheless I began to read the Bible and attended church regularly. Through reading the Word of God, I was convicted of my sin and I repented [turned away from it]."

A verse that had a particular impact on Christopher during his A level exams at the time was Isaiah 41:10:

*"Fear not, for I am with you;
Be not dismayed, for I am your God.*

*I will strengthen you,
Yes, I will help you,
I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."*

In his line of work, Christopher inevitably encounters evolution — biological evolution (Darwin's theory of species evolution through natural selection), chemical evolution (the origin of life from non-life), and cosmological evolution (the Big Bang theory).

He rejects them all as contrary to Scripture. "I find no reason or need to 'harmonize' secular models of origins with what the Bible clearly says about God's creation when we read the 66 books plainly and straightforwardly.

"Also, the 66th book of the Bible [Revelation] tells us about the brand-new heaven and earth without the sun. I don't think it will take billions of years for the new creation to form through natural processes," he declares.

Christopher is also critical of 'progressive creationists' such as Dr Hugh Ross, who twist the Bible to fit the Big Bang.

"Choosing to interpret the Bible in a way that accommodates secular versions of origins is a form of scientism (an almost religious belief in naturalistic science).

"It disgraces the divine authority of the Bible."

The Bible not only presents a radically different time frame, but even a very different order of events. For example, the Bible says that God created the earth on Day 1, but the sun and stars on Day 4. The Big Bang claims that the sun and stars formed before the earth.

Many people are intimidated by claims that the Big Bang and evolu-



Physicist Dr Christopher Ting (extreme right) with his wife Reiko (middle) and their three children Eri, Ai and Yoshia.

tion are 'science'.

But Christopher explains the important contrast between two different types of research bundled under the term 'science'.

"Real science is based on repeatable, independently reproducible observations or experiments at the present time," he says.

"We need to make a distinction between science that can be verified or falsified today, versus 'science' that is historical in nature such as the Big Bang and macroevolution. They are worldview filters through which secular scientists interpret the observable data."

The claims of evolution and the Big Bang are based on a false history of the world — that matter is all there is. Christopher points out

that defending these views results in "using the unknown (e.g. dark matter) to explain the unknown",

while real science seeks to explain the unknown in terms of the known.

Take the question of the origin of our moon.

A major theory is the 'giant impact' theory, which states: "A Mars-sized body striking the Earth, making a debris ring that eventually collected into a single natural satellite, the moon."

But, asks Christopher: "Where did that Mars-sized body come from? This is one of many examples of using the unknown (a hypothetical Mars-sized body) to explain the known (the moon), through random disorderly events such as a giant impact."

"For the scattered debris to form our moon at the right size and in the stable orbit we see today is unbelievable."

"The stupendous giant impact would also knock the earth out of its current optimal orbit."

"Put the other way round, the giant impact was as if it was so precisely 'designed' as to knock the 'primordial' earth into the current 24-hour spinning planet in a tilted orbit for four seasons, at the optimal distance to the sun for life to thrive on it."

"What are the odds for this to happen by one catastrophic impact?"

Asked if his own research sur-

facted anything that challenged evolutionary theory, Christopher explained that his master's thesis examined how muscles work at the molecular level.

"It is a curiosity that muscle proteins in a live rabbit do not decay, but when they are contained in a test-tube, their molecular structure will easily get distorted."

"The decay of proteins outside of a living cell is the inevitable outcome of the laws of thermodynamics. Things naturally become disordered. To get a bunch of amino acids to turn into a functioning protein, as evolution would have it, goes against these laws."

"Anyone who has done experiments to synthesize proteins from raw materials in the laboratory will tell you how hard it is to yield the end products."

For 'nature' to produce proteins of sufficient yield out there in the open field by chance requires uncountable coincidences."

Rather than seeing the Bible and science as contradictory, Christopher believes that through science "we can truly appreciate that God is our awesome Creator, and the natural world He made speaks volumes of His infinite wisdom."

This article is based on one by Dr. Jonathan Sarfati that appeared in *Creation Magazine*. For the original article, which includes many other more technical arguments and details. Please see *Creation Magazine*, Volume 44, Issue 1, January 2022. Related web articles can also be found at creation.com.



The origins of the moon are a matter of evolutionary debate.

Dar and Winny

by Richard Gunther



Believe It
or Not

BY CREATION
MINISTRIES
INTERNATIONAL

Scorpion's stinging rebuke

THE oldest known species of scorpion, '*Parioscorpio venator*', was found among the Waukesha Biota from a rock layer in Wisconsin, USA.

Described as an "exceptionally well preserved fossil" it is claimed to be around 437 million years old.

The research team said: "Elements of the circulatory, respiratory and digestive systems are preserved, and they are essentially indistinguishable from those of present-day scorpions"—which exclusively breathe air.

This is not good news for evolutionists, who believe that scorpions were amongst the first animals to adapt to life from the sea to life on land.



"Prior to this, all of animal life is in the ocean," Andrew Wendruff, one of the paper's authors, said. "This is the beginning point of animals leaving the seas to utilise land!"

This was the point when they would have expected to see physiological changes associated with a marine-to-terrestrial transition.

There was no sign of this. Rather, it demonstrated evolutionary stasis (non-evolution) for an alleged 437 million years.

In all that (alleged) time there has been no change to the circulatory or respiratory systems.

Scorpions have always been scorpions, and these latest findings are another sting in the evolutionary tale.

Wendruff, A.J. and 4 others. *Science Reports*, 1014, 16 Jan 2020.
Pallano, N., inverse.com, 16 Jan 2020.

GET ANSWERS FOR YOUR FAMILY

Young people struggle to find purpose in life, believing that 'science' has made God irrelevant. CREATION MAGAZINE provides answers for your family.

- Affirms the complete reliability of the Bible
- Refutes evolution with real-world evidence
- Helps Christians share and defend their faith

Subscribe at CREATION.COM

ONLY \$30 A YEAR (4 issues a year)

CREATION MINISTRIES INTERNATIONAL

BUILDING BETTER RELATIONSHIPS

HOW TO EXPRESS ANGER APPROPRIATELY

BY ROB FURLONG

“THE anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God.”

So wrote James the Just, a prominent leader of the First Century church. It’s an astute observation. Think of the times you have expressed your anger inappropriately and it has led to damaging accusations, criticism, and silence.

Thankfully, James was a practical man and prior to making this statement, he provides three steps to encourage us to express our anger in an appropriate way.

Step One: Be quick to hear

Are you familiar with the old quip, “God gave us two ears and one mouth – which one do you think He wants you to use the most?”

When we feel threatened or under attack, our predisposition as human beings is to jump in quickly and defend ourselves, rather than listening to the other person. This inevitably leads us to making assumptions about what the person is saying or is going to say, resulting in frustration

for both parties: one is left feeling unfairly misunderstood and the other, personally criticised again.

All of this can be diffused quite easily by simply taking the time to *listen*, *really listen*, to what the other person is trying to communicate.

Step Two: Be slow to speak

This follows on naturally from the first piece of advice. There comes a time when you will need to speak, but even then, James says, “Don’t jump in too quickly!”

James is encouraging us to be *thoughtful and reflective* about our responses to what the other person is saying.

Have you ever said something which you later regretted?

I remember many years ago, early in our marriage when Karen and I were having an argument. At one point, Karen said something that really got under my skin – I cannot remember what it was – but I do remember it was quite close to her birthday and I blurted out angrily at her, “You don’t deserve a birthday!”

I regretted it instantly, especially when I saw the wounded look on her face. Chuck Swindoll once said, “I have never regretted a word I did not say, but there are many I regret having spoken!”

Learning to take time with your answers – being slow to speak – is a great discipline to cultivate and an excellent tool in helping you to keep

Learning to take time with your answers – being slow to speak – is ...an excellent tool in helping you to keep a lid on your anger.



Pausing to listen before speaking can help you avoid the old ‘foot in mouth’ disease.

a lid on your anger.

Step Three: Be slow to anger

I know you are most likely thinking that this is easier said than done, but honestly, if you begin to apply the first two principles consistently, the third follows quite naturally.

The book of Proverbs puts it this way: “A hot tempered man stirs up strife, but the slow to anger *pacifies contention.*”

Ever noticed how angry outbursts usually produce the same response in others?

You often see this at protest marches.

Two sides oppose each other, there is a lot of angry yelling back and forth, with no one listening to each other and all too often it descends into physical violence.

But when someone takes the time to restrain their anger, even in the face of extreme provocation, it is

like oil being poured over troubled waters. The situation begins to calm down and order is restored.

We see these three principles played out in the life of Jesus when He was betrayed and crucified.

When He is falsely accused by lying witnesses that He would destroy the Temple and rebuild it three days late, *He remains silent.*

When it does come time to answer His accusers, He replies wisely and thoughtfully: “*I have spoken openly to the world.*”

Finally, in the face of mocking abuse as He dies, He declares, “*Father, forgive them.*”

God’s righteousness – the gift of salvation for the whole world – is achieved while a world rages against Him.

Quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger *will* achieve right relationships – with God and others. •

Lesson from a sausage dog - part 22

BY JODY BENNETT

YOU have probably heard the expression “puppy dog eyes”. My sausage dog Carrie is an expert at that expression! It is a look that combines love and need in equal parts. My dachshund will sit and stare at me beseechingly while I am eating something or when she feels I have been at the computer too long.



She doesn’t have to make a sound or move, just those eyes staring at me adoringly are so hard to resist. She is, at once, peaceful and expectant. I know what she wants without her making a sound – dog eyebrows can be incredibly expressive!

And invariably I give in and share my food, or put aside my work and take her for a walk.

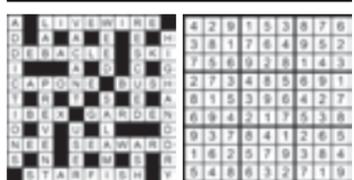
I thought of that today when I read Psalm 123:2: “*Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their masters, as the eyes of a maid to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, until He has mercy on us.*”

Just as my dog stares adoringly at me, knowing that every good thing she gets comes from my hand – like pats, food, treats, walks and scratches – so, when we invite God to be our Master and Savior, we realize everything good in life is from Him, and we can look to Him to meet our every need.

Keeping our gaze fixed on Him is not an act of nagging – although it very well may be in the case of Carrie! – but it is an act of trust and adoration.

You might ask, how do I keep my eyes fixed on an invisible God? Well, I’m talking about the eyes of our heart, so we do it spiritually – by reading the Bible, God’s Word, and praying (talking to Him). By constantly reminding ourselves that we are dependent on God, that He is our loving Dad and that He is the Giver of all good gifts. That helps us to remain content as we petition God to meet our needs, and yet hopeful and expectant of the answers.

Our Master knows what we want (and whether it is good for us) – much more so even than I am able to guess my dog’s needs – and the Bible promises that He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. (Hebrews 11:6) •



HOW DO I BECOME A CHRISTIAN?

What? Salvation is an eternal relationship with God – now on Earth, and after we die, in Heaven.

The Lord Jesus says: “I tell you the truth. Everyone who believes in me has eternal life.” John 6:47

In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. John 16:33

Who? Anyone can gain the eternal life offered through Jesus Christ, regardless of how you have previously lived or what you have previously believed.

God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16

Why? Because sin separates us from a holy God. Sin is all the wrong things we do, say and think, as well as our desire to be our own boss.

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Romans 3:23

How? The Bible says you become a Christian by confessing with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believing in your heart that God raised Him from the dead.

If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. Romans 10:8b-10

Ready to change your life forever? Here is a prayer you can pray, but you can also use your own words. The words are not as important as the heart attitude – which only God can see.

Almighty God, Creator of Heaven and Earth,
I acknowledge that I am a sinner. Please forgive me for all the ways I have disobeyed and defied You.
Thank you for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to earth to live the perfect life I couldn’t, and die on the cross for my sins. Thank you that His blood was sufficient to pay my debt to You, and His resurrection proves that there is life beyond death. I accept that His sacrifice is all I need to get right with You - I bring nothing I have done but I give you everything I am. Help me to live for You. Please be my Saviour and my Master. Amen.

What now?

1. Tell someone - either a Christian that you know or email us at usaoffice@challengenews.org
2. Use the resources in the green box on this page to find a Bible to read and more information regarding Christianity.
3. Keep praying. Talk to God anywhere, about anything. He is always listening and you don’t need a formula.
4. Find a Bible-teaching church to attend.

AS A NEXT STEP: Please send me: Bible Some ‘starting off’ literature Information on a helpful church

I have prayed this prayer.

* Please tick and write clearly *

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Age, occupation (it helps) _____

Send to: Challenge Literature Fellowship, 2634 Drake Road, Lebanon Ohio, 45036
usaoffice@challengenews.org

All overseas enquiries are referred onto someone in their own country

Want to explore more?

Here are some **free**, helpful, Christian online resources:

Online Bible - Olive Tree app (we recommend that you start with an easy-to-read version like the ESV)	
Audio Bible - Bible.is app , or Youversion Bible app	
Christian radio station - CBN radio app (different channels for all genres of music)	
Christian podcasts and sermons - Edifi app	
Christian movies - New Faith Network app (7-day free trial)	
Daily thoughts and inspiration - Our Daily Bread app	
Advice on specific issues, Bible reading plans and studies for new believers - Youversion Bible app .	
The Bible explained with visual aides - the Bible Project on YouTube .	
Alpha Film Series on Youtube - an online introduction to Christianity.	
For kids - Superbook Kids Bible, videos and games app	
Comic book Bible online- goodandevilbook.com	
More inspiring faith stories - back issues of Challenge News at challengenews.online	



GOOD GUY NOW GOD'S GUY

Bubba Watson plays his shot from the third tee during the first round of the QBE Shootout at Tiburon Golf Club on December 10, 2021 in Naples, Florida. (Photo by Cliff Hawkins/Getty Images)

Little Gerry Watson, whose Dad called him Bubba, dreamed of being a champion golfer while growing up, and the now 43-year-old has more than fulfilled that dream with 12 wins on the PGA Tour, including two Masters. The left-hander has also represented the US at the Ryder Cup, the Presidents Cup and the 2016 Rio Olympics.

Successful, happily married and raising two children; Bubba owns a mansion that once belonged to Tiger Woods and several local businesses.

However, life has been far from plain sailing for the well-known US player.

He and his wife were unable to have biological children and their first attempt at adoption fell through.

Eventually they adopted a son, Caleb, in 2012, and a daughter, Dakota, in 2014, having delayed due to various family issues, including the illness and death of Bubba's dad in 2010 from throat cancer.

Bubba grew up in Bagdad, Florida, as one of the good guys: "Didn't cuss, didn't cheat, didn't steal, didn't lie, didn't drink, didn't do drugs," he told *Baptist Press* in 2012.

"I was doing the right things but I didn't know what that meant."

In his senior year in high school, twin sisters, from the house directly

behind his, invited Bubba to their youth group.

He went, and found a place where he belonged.

"The girls asked me to go to church," he said. "And after a few times going I realized this is what I wanted to do. This is truth here. And I gave myself to the Lord."

But it wasn't until 2004 that Bubba became serious about his commitment to Christ at the University of Georgia.

He began dating Canadian Angie Ball (a basketball player) and the two began serving God as a couple.

"We wanted to be Christ followers," Bubba said. "We wanted to do the right thing. We started turning to the Lord for our decisions."

The couple married in September 2004 and were each baptized [immersed in water as a sign of dying to their old lives] the day after Christmas: "I would say 2004 was my true time of becoming

a Christian and shaping me into the man I am today," Bubba told *Baptist Press*.

Outspoken in his proclamation of faith on Twitter, Bubba received complaints about his 140-character witnessing tactics, but his response was simple: Feel free to unfollow, but the talk about God isn't going away.

Some 100 people quit following him and other Christian haters bombarded him with "bad stuff" but

Bubba responded with kindness.

Included in his Tweets are things like: "God made everything & saved us from our sins & gives us hope and gives us eternal life! #Godisgood"; Bible verses, and comments like "Most important things in my life – 1. God 2. Wife 3. Family 4. Helping others 5. Golf"

But the "years and years of buildup" of various stresses and seeing all those hurtful and negative comments about himself on social media slowly chipped away at Bubba's mental health and in 2017 he hit rock bottom, nearly giving up his career and losing hope for life.

"I was letting my job dictate how I feel.

"And I was losing weight. So I went to the doctor ... I was having stomach pains, all these ailments were going on. But the doctor said, 'There's nothing wrong with you,'" Bubba details.

The unexplained 30-pound weight loss was especially alarming. "When I looked in the mirror, when I saw 162 lbs. on the scale, I envisioned my dad and envisioned me dying like my dad," Bubba admits.

"I fell to my knees in 2017, and I said, 'Lord, take me,'" he recounts. "It wasn't that I wanted to end my life.

"It was that I didn't want my family to go through what my mom went through – what I went through – with my dad."

He remembers fearing he wasn't good enough and wasn't well liked. He described his feelings to CNN's Patrick Snell as being the "darkest of the dark at that moment".

Bubba says his faith and his wife helped him return to a better place psychologically. He realized that

instead of expressing his troubles he had been internalizing them, which was leading to the stomach pains and weight loss.

"Being able to speak to [Angie] and tell her my deepest, darkest secrets and let her know what I was going through and let her know that

I was scared ... that was a hard thing to do," Bubba remembers.

Since then, he has learned to prioritize communication. He battled the stigma that men shouldn't talk about their emotions

and feelings, learning that it was okay to speak to his family, friends and colleagues about the good and bad moments in life.

That, Bubba explains, ultimately led to his writing a book – *Up & Down: Victories and struggles in the course of life*. He'd been approached for years to write about his successes on the PGA Tour, but didn't feel like he could achieve anything in sharing his story. It was after that "dark time", that he realized he was ready to introduce his fans to "Bubba, the person".

"I know from experience that by

talking about it and discussing it, [the book] helps me, but hopefully in return, it helps other people," he told *PEOPLE* magazine.

Besides despair and fear, Bubba has also dealt with anger during his time in professional golf. He used to be so worried about his performance that it would become all consuming.

"I was so wrapped up in 'Why am I not winning?' It created frustrations in my head and in my life."

Things got so heated on the golf course at one point that caddie Ted Scott finally gave him an ultimatum. "You're going to have to change, or I'm going to quit," he told Bubba.

Now the golfer plays what has been called "Bubba Golf," which puts a heavy focus on just having fun on the course.

The lanky athlete credits his caddie, his trainer Adam Fisher ("Fish") and Angie, who are all strong Christians, as those who helped him most in changing his attitude.

"I want it to be defined as a good man that tried harder every day," he said. "Not just in golf, but off the golf course, [I want] to be a light for Jesus."

[I WAS IN] THE DARKEST OF THE DARK



DISTRIBUTED BY: