

ABC's from God's Word



The Word of God is a history book. It gives us the history of how we got here, why the world is the way it is, and how God, in time, preserved his promise to send a Savior.

The Word of God is a guidebook for life. It shows your purpose in life and serves as your sole authority, distinguishing right from wrong.

The Word of God is a solution book. It doesn't provide solutions to all of your questions. It does provide a solution to sin, which is your greatest problem. The solution is Jesus Christ. He is the center of Scripture.

I pray this booklet will help you better understand God's Word so it has a greater impact on your life.

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A

God is **A**lmighty.

Genesis 1:1 | *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.*

Job 9:10 | *He does great things that are beyond investigation. He does miracles that are too many to be counted.*

Luke 1:37 | *For nothing will be impossible for God.*

You have God's **A**ffection.

Romans 5:8 | *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

Psalms 103:11 | *For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him.*

You have God's **A**ttention.

Psalms 34:15 | *The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are attentive to their cry.*

Isaiah 57:15 | *For this is what the high and exalted One says, he who lives forever, whose name is holy: "I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite."*

What more could you **A**sk?

B

Because is an important word that helps us understand the essence of God's Word.

Because of sin, death invaded God's perfect creation.

Genesis 3:19 | *For you are dust, and to dust you shall return.*

Romans 8:22 | *We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time.*

Because of sin, our relationship with God was broken.

Genesis 3:8 | *Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden.*

Isaiah 59:2 | *But your iniquities have separated you from your God.*

Because of sin, we all deserve eternal death.

Romans 6:23 | *The wages of sin is death.*

Because God loves all people, he responded to this problem with grace and mercy.

John 3:16 | *For 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.*

Because Jesus rose from the dead, we are assured that death has been defeated, our relationship with God has been fixed, and we have the gift of eternal life.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22 | *For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.*

Keep reading your Bible *because* God has a lot more to tell you.

C

You are **C**herished and **C**hosen by the God of the universe. Let that sink in.

Ephesians 2:4-5 | But God, because he is rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in trespasses.

He loves you with his great love! Translation? You are cherished by God and you always will be. You can't do anything to make God cherish you less because the reason he cherishes you is in him, not in you. You also can't do anything to make God cherish you more.

Just enjoy being cherished and cherish him back.

Ephesians 1:3-4 | Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. He did this when he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world, so that we would be holy and blameless in his sight.

God chose you to be his child because of his grace in Christ. He chose you before Adam and Eve walked in the garden. Let that truth stand and cherish it.

D

We all have **D**oubts- dreadful, faith-damaging doubts about God's Word. The way to remove those doubts about God's Word is with God's Word.

Here are common doubts and why you can bury them.

- I doubt God exists.

Psalm 19:1 | The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.

The world God created gives silent testimony to his existence.

- I doubt God loves me.

Romans 5:8 | But God demonstrates his love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Take a good, long look at the cross. There is no doubt God loves you.

- I doubt God's wisdom.

Job 38:4-7 | "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundation? Tell me, if you understand. Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone- while the morning stars sang together and all the angels shouted for joy?"

God put Job in his place (which he did only to drive him to repentance) for doubting him. God's wisdom is far beyond our

ability to comprehend and therefore our doubts about his will are out of place.

Bury those doubts and cover them with God's Word.

E

God is **E**ver-present. What a beautifully comforting and astonishing truth.

Psalm 46:1 | *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.*

Joshua 1:9 | *Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.*"

Psalm 139:9-10 | *If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast.*

God is ever-present. This is beautifully captured in the Koine song, "Never Alone," written by Tracy Fedtke. Here is a portion of the song:

"My name is Jesus, I'll help to see you through. My name is Jesus, and I have promised, you will never, no never be alone. I'll be with you 'til I carry you home; in the darkness, in the sunlight, no matter where you go."

You are never alone. God is always at your side watching out for you, upholding you, caring for you, and surrounding you with his ever-present love.

It truly is an incredible thought that God is ever-present. He's not just available when you need him. Although that is true, it's better than that. He is always with you. 24/7/365. Everywhere. God is ever-present.

F

Whose sins are **F**orgiven? The Bible says the sins of every person who ever lived are forgiven by God because Jesus paid for every sin that ever was and ever will be committed. That includes yours!

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 | *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting people's sins against them.*

The reason God does not count your sins against you is because they have been forgiven; literally sent away. God sent them away from you because Jesus was punished for them.

Isaiah 53:6 | *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

Tell the people in your world their sins have been forgiven and pray the Holy Spirit gives them the faith to believe it, because not believing in forgiveness is not receiving forgiveness.

2 Corinthians 5:19 | *And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.*

Us is you!

G

Go. That can stand alone as a sentence. You may not be able to think of a shorter sentence, but don't let its length fool you. As a summary for one of the most important things Jesus ever said it is long on meaning.

Before Jesus ascended to heaven, he told his apostles and he told us to "go and make disciples of all nations." Disciples are people who follow Jesus. Jesus is telling us to go and make more followers.

Scripture teaches that the Holy Spirit is the one who does the part we can't do. The Holy Spirit puts faith in hearts. Our role is to tell people who Jesus is, what he did, and what it means. It goes like this: Jesus is the Son of God who lived a perfect life and was punished on the cross in your place. That means your sins are paid for and your broken relationship with God is repaired.

Making disciples gets messy when we talk about sin, but talking about what Jesus did invites sin into the conversation. That can be intimidating and uncomfortable. So remember what Jesus attached to this work order. He said, "I am with you always."

When you have identified someone you'd like to make a disciple of Jesus, try this plan: Pray. Build a relationship. Build a bridge. Let the Word loose. Pray.

Pray for an opportunity.

Build a relationship with the person so you can earn trust and have a chance to show you care about him/her.

Build a bridge to Jesus. You do this by looking for the open door to get the conversation directed toward what you believe about Jesus.

Let the Word loose. Share what you believe. Focus on Jesus and the difference he makes in your life.

Pray your conversation bears fruit.

Go, and remember that Jesus is right there with you.

Matthew 28:19-20 | Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

H

Is Hell real? That is a common question, even among Christians. In fact, because hell is described in Scripture as a place of conscious, never-ending torment, many people deny its existence. It is ironic that because of what Scripture says about hell, some people don't believe in it.

The Bible doesn't give a lot of details about hell, but it clearly says it is real.

Hell was created by God as a place of torment for Satan and the rest of the evil angels.

Matthew 25:41 | *"Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'"*

God had a plan to keep sinners out of hell. The plan was Jesus.

Mark 16:16 | *Whoever believes [in Jesus] and is baptized will be saved. Whoever does not believe will be condemned.*

Unbelievers end up in hell because unbelievers are still in their sins and sinners cannot enter into the presence of our holy God.

The suffering of hell will include eternal regret.

Luke 13:28 | *"There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out."*

The suffering of hell will include physical torment.

Mark 9:43 | *If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out.*

Our gracious Lord has rescued us from hell. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good!

1 Thessalonians 1:10 | *And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.*

God's Word is **I**nspired.

2 Timothy 3:16 | *All-Scripture is God-breathed...*

You may have heard a pastor say that God's Word is inspired by the Holy Spirit. Here is why. The Latin word *inspirare*, means to breathe or blow into.

2 Peter 1:21 | *For prophecy never had its origin in the human will, but prophets, though human, spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*

Every word in Scripture is the word God chose, but at the same time he worked through the word choices, writing style, and experiences of the men who wrote the Scriptures.

God's Word is **I**nerrant.

God is perfect. That means God is not only without sin, but he is also without error. Therefore the Bible he wrote is without error.

Deuteronomy 32:4 | *He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.*

This does not mean, however, that there cannot be errors in copying or translating. Those tasks are human. Take copying for example. The original manuscripts do not exist. What exists are copies of the originals. Although the surviving copies are 99.5% consistent with each other, there certainly are minor differences among them. The differences have been studied again and again by Bible historians who have assured us that the small percentage of differences affect no doctrine. Most are word order or spelling differences. Bibles give footnotes alerting the reading of the

variant copies that present something more significant than that. There is no shortage of research on this topic that you can find.

The bottom line is this: You can be absolutely confident that God has meticulously preserved his Word.

John 17:17 | [Jesus says to his Father,] *"Your word is truth."*

God's Word is **I**nfallible.

This is very similar to meaning inerrant. The slight difference is this. Inerrant means there are no errors. Infallible means there can be no errors.

Psalm 12:6 | *And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times.*

The Word of God is trustworthy, powerful, and a gracious gift. It's worth your time.

J

God is **J**ealous. That can be confusing. Being jealous is a sin that often leads to more sin. If God is without sin, how can he be jealous? Because his jealousy is different. Let's call it divine jealousy.

Exodus 20:5 | You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God.

There it is in context. God's jealousy is for what alone is his: recognition. God wants to be rightfully recognized as creator, provider, giver, and Savior. He alone is God; therefore, he alone is due all honor and praise.

Psalm 78:58 | They angered him with their high places; they aroused his jealousy with their idols.

Think of it this way. God is the only true God. Therefore he is the only God who loves you and that you belong to. He wants you to see it that way too. His jealousy comes from his incredible love for you.

Psalm 86:15 | But you, LORD, are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness.

K

Cain once flippantly asked God, “Am I my brother’s **K**eeper?” Although not stated as part of the conversation in Genesis 4, the answer from Scripture is “yes.” As one writer put it, “Others have a claim on us.”

When we look after our brothers and sisters in love, we stand out, and that makes Jesus stand out.

John 13:35 | *By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.*”

These verses tell us to help our sisters and brothers with the burden of temptation and sin, but certainly that help can be expanded to all burdens.

Galatians 6:1-2 | *Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.*

The law of Christ = love one another = be your brother’s and sister’s keeper.

Part of being a keeper is keeping people’s reputation intact.

James 1:26 | *Those who consider themselves religious and yet do not keep a tight rein on their tongues deceive themselves, and their religion is worthless.*

Hospitality in the Greek language means to “love strangers.” In other words, we have a lot of brothers and sisters.

Romans 12:13 | *Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*

Being a keeper can place us in the pit with a sister or brother. Don’t underestimate the power of being there, even if you don’t have the words.

Romans 12:15 | *Mourn with those who mourn.*

Being a keeper pleases God.

Hebrews 13:1 | *Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

Being your keeper also pleases God.

Psalm 91:1 | *For he will command his angels concerning you to keep you in all your ways.*

Hebrews 13:17 | *Have confidence in your (spiritual) leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.*

Psalm 121:8 | *The LORD will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life.*

L

Love is the essence of God.

1 John 4:16 | *God is love.*

God loves all people.

John 3:16 | *For 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.*

The love of God is most evident in the redeeming work of Jesus.

1 John 4:10 | *This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.*

God will never stop loving you.

Isaiah 54:10 | *Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you.*

Romans 8:38-39 | *For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

God's love for you cannot and need not be earned. He loves you because of what is in him, not because of what is in you.

Psalms 25:7 | *Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, LORD, are good.*

Ephesians 2:4-5 | *But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.*

Don't you love that God loves you?

M

My will be done. That is the root of sin and is the heart of unbelief.

No one wants to submit to the will of another. It goes against our nature. We want to do what we want to do. Submitting here is not about agreeing to go to the restaurant that someone else suggested (even that, however, can be difficult with a "my will be done" nature). It's about yielding to another's authority. We all have this me-first syndrome, even when it comes to God Almighty, the maker of heaven and earth. We reject the will of the almighty God, in favor of our own will, every time we sin.

Romans 8:7 | *For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot.*

Our Savior showed us how to submit to the will of the Father and the Father loved him for it.

Matthew 3:17 | *And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."*

Our Savior submitted to the will of the Father in our place.

Matthew 26:39 | *Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."*

Jesus did not go to the cross kicking and screaming. He went willingly. He went for you.

John 10:10, 18 | *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord.*

Thy will be done > My will be done

N

The command to love your **N**eighbor as yourself was described by Jesus as the second greatest command (the first being to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength). There are four points to make about this command.

First, it's a command, not a suggestion. That changes things, doesn't it? Loving your neighbor is not an option. You don't get to withhold your love if you determine your neighbor is unworthy of your love.

Matthew 5:48 | *Be perfect [in loving others], therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Second, the love that God is commanding is love in action. It is love that helps a person in their time of need.

Luke 10:34-35 | *[The Samaritan] went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. 'Look after him,' he said, 'and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.'*

Third, your neighbor is the person who is near you at any given time. It is not only the person who lives next door or across the street. Your neighbor is the person who cut you off in traffic. Your neighbor is the one who falsely accused you without the whole story. She is the incredibly rude clerk at the hotel. He is your trash-talking opponent on the soccer field and the nasty co-worker who shares an office with you.

Luke 10:33 | *But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.*

It is very important to know that the man whom the Samaritan helped was a Jew. In those days, Samaritans and Jews were bitter enemies.

Fourth, we are commanded to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. As if it wasn't impossible enough, now we are to love someone else as much as we love ourselves. We are to give the same attention, resources, and time to our neighbors as we do to ourselves. That sounds like an enormous sacrifice, one that goes way beyond our desire. We don't have that much love in us. But God does.

Mark 10:45 | For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Romans 8:32 | He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all.

Relying on God's love for you, love your neighbor as yourself.

Ephesians 5:2 | And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

O

Jesus is the **O**nly way to be saved.

John 14:6 | *Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."*

Acts 4:12 | *Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.*

That makes Jesus very important. It makes believing in Jesus very important. It makes sharing Jesus very important.

The most common alternative to Jesus that people turn to for salvation is themselves. Many people think they are responsible for gaining favor with God and eternal life in heaven. They think they are responsible and capable. We call this false teaching self-righteousness.

There are serious flaws with this. For one, God demands perfection. The most pious person you know cannot be perfect in thought, word, and deed for a day, let alone a lifetime.

Romans 3:10 | *There is no one righteous, not even one.*

Then there is the sinful nature we are all born with. This means that before we ever commit a sin, we are already an enemy of God because of who we are.

Romans 5:14 | *Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who is a pattern of the one to come.*

Romans 8:8 | *Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God.*

If (and that is a biblically large if) we could save ourselves, that would mean Jesus' perfect life and sacrificial death were not necessary. But they were necessary. God sent Jesus to save us.

John 1:29 | *The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"*

John 6:48-51 | *I am the bread of life. Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which anyone may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."*

1 John 3:8 | *The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.*

Jesus is our salvation from the wrath of God. Therefore we bring him glory now and forever.

Revelation 7:9-10 | *After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."*

There is great reason to be thankful salvation doesn't belong to us. That would be a problem without a solution. Jesus, however, is the solution to our great problem of sin, the *only* solution.

P

God's Word is **P**recious.

Psalm 19:10 | *They [the Words of God] are more precious than gold, than much pure gold.*

Psalm 19 was written by King David, who knew the value of gold. Like today, gold in his day was a very valuable commodity because of its beauty. Anything that has high value is precious. The Word has high value because it is the best source for mercy, peace, hope, strength, guidance, comfort, and more. Spend more time with it.

Your faith is precious.

2 Peter 1:1 | *To those who through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ have received a faith as precious as ours...*

Things that are precious often receive great care. For example, think of the nurture that parents give to their newborn baby. Is there any greater gift that God has given you than your faith? Your faith is worthy of great attention. Feed it. Protect it. Be thankful for it.

Jesus' blood is precious. It is precious because it is the blood of God. It is precious because in it you are washed clean.

1 Peter 1:18-19 | *You were redeemed...with the precious blood of Christ.*

You are precious. The God of the universe holds you close to his heart. In the Old Testament, God redeemed his people at the expense of Egypt. It pointed ahead to the cross where God redeemed you at the expense of the Son he holds precious.

Isaiah 43:4 | *Since you are precious and honored in my sight, and because I love you, I will give people in exchange for you, nations in exchange for your life.*

Christian singer Chris Tomlin has a song called "Precious Love."
You might enjoy it.
Here is the refrain from the song:

Oh, the precious love of Jesus
Oh, the fount of grace divine
Flowing as a mighty river
Washing sinners in its tide
There will never be another
In whose name we are redeemed
Oh, the precious love of Jesus
Pouring out for you and me

Q

Psalm 23 | The Lord is my shepherd... he leads me beside **Q**uiet waters.

Quiet waters are not a location. There is no place you can go to find these quiet waters. Wherever you go, there you are and your sin will be there too. Instead of thinking of where the quiet waters are, think of the quiet waters in Psalm 23 as a person. Think of the quiet waters as Jesus himself. That is where the Lord leads you. Through his Word he leads you to himself.

Jesus is like quiet waters. He is the peace that we all crave. By making peace between sinners and God Most Holy, Jesus brings peace to our souls.

Colossians 1:19-20 | *For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.*

Your life is in the hands of the Good Shepherd. He knows all of your hurts and all of your needs and will provide what he knows you need. He is aware of the danger in your life and will guide and protect you.

Your eternal life is also in the hands of the Good Shepherd. He knows your sins and he paid for them by laying down his life for you.

John 10:11 | *I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*

Provider? Check.
Protector? Check
Redeemer? Check.

Enjoy the quiet waters.

R

God is **R**ighteous.

The righteousness of God is very comforting. It means God always does the right thing. Letting you into heaven is an example of God doing the right thing. As one who puts your trust in Jesus for your salvation, you are forgiven of your sins and clothed in his righteousness. That means the right thing is for God to let you into heaven. It's been earned by Jesus and given to you through faith.

2 Timothy 4:8 | Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Jesus is righteous. We are not. That is at the heart of Scripture. It is why Jesus came into this world. It is why we all need Jesus. Anyone without Jesus at their side will be left alone to face the judgment of God. The right thing for the righteous judge is to condemn the unrighteous to everlasting death.

1 Corinthians 6:9 | Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?

Our righteous Savior gives us his righteousness. Therefore, our relationship with God has been restored.

2 Corinthians 5:21 | God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

1 Peter 3:18 | For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.

Righteous God, thank you for the righteousness of Jesus. We couldn't live without it.

S

Sacrifice was a way of life for God's people of the Old Testament. There were two basic reasons for offering a sacrifice. One was to acknowledge the relationship between the worshiper and God. The other was to repair the relationship with God, which was broken because of their sin. In both cases, blood was shed. That blood pointed ahead to Christ, whose blood was shed for the forgiveness of sins.

Hebrews 10:14 | *For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.*

Are sacrifices a thing of the past? Kind of. The blood sacrifices of the Old Testament pointed ahead to Jesus and when Jesus came there was no reason for them to continue. His sacrifice was the once and for all sacrifice.

Hebrews 9:26 | *But as it is, he [Christ] has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*

Therefore, sacrifices today take on a much different look.

- Sacrifices today consist of praising God for the gracious gift of his Son, whose sacrifice brought us redemption.

Hebrews 13:15-16 | *Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.*

- Sacrifices today consist of serving others out of gratitude to God, who served us through the gracious gift of his Son.

Hebrews 13:16 | *Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.*

- Sacrifices today acknowledge our sinfulness and turn us to God for his mercy.

Psalm 51:17 | *My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.*

- Sacrifices today consist in living a God-pleasing life and putting to death our sinful urges.

Romans 12:1 | *Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.*

T

Trust. Here's the thing about trust: The more you know someone, the more you know if you can trust them. There are some people we trust with our lives, and there are some people we don't trust as far as we can throw them. Those extremes only come as we get to know people.

What happens when we apply that principle to God? Isn't it true that the more we get to know God, the more we see he can be trusted. Trust God not just because, but trust God because of what you know about him.

2 Corinthians 1:20 | *For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ.*

Ephesians 3:17-19 | *And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge.*

John 10:10-11 | *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*

Keep learning about God and your trust in him will increase.

2 Peter 3:18 | *Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.*

U

Have you ever tried to **U**ndo something bad that you did? Not easy, is it? Life does not have an undo button. No doubt Adam and Eve would have reached for that button, if it existed. Their hiding from God showed their regret. But however much they might have wanted to undo their foolish act, they could not. Yet God had a plan to do just that.

Genesis 3:15 | And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.

Jesus came to undo.

2 Corinthians 5:18-19 | All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting people's sins against them.

Ephesians 2:4-5 | But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.

The essence of salvation is Jesus undoing what we did. Our sin undid our relationship with God. Through his perfect life and death on the cross, Jesus hit the undo button. All is well again between us and God. All because of Jesus. Now we don't have to try and undo what we can't undo. We are free in Jesus.

John 8:36 | So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

V

Victory is ours. Are you familiar with the great resurrection chapter of the Bible? It's 1 Corinthians 15. Are you familiar with the greatest verse in that chapter? OK, this is just one guy's opinion, but check out verse 57.

1 Corinthians 15:57 | Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

What victory is ours though Jesus? The victory over death. Apart from Jesus, we are powerless to defeat death.

Unlike us, the devil holds the power of death.

Hebrews 2:14 | Since the children have flesh and blood, he [Jesus] too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might break the power of him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil.

The devil brought sin into the world and sin brought death. In that way, the devil holds the power of death. However, the verse above brings good news of great joy. Jesus broke the power of death by crushing the devil's head and destroying his work.

Genesis 3:15 | And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he [Jesus] will crush your (devil's) head, and you will strike his heel.

1 John 3:8 | The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.

Death is our enemy, but Jesus defeated this great enemy through his resurrection. Through faith in Jesus, you have defeated death and taken away its victory and its sting. Sounds like you hold more power than the devil.

1 Corinthians 15:55-57 | Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is

the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Maybe now verse 57 is also your choice for the greatest verse in 1 Corinthians 15.

W

Do you take **W**arnings seriously? If you are like most people, it depends. Your heed of any warning might depend on the odds and immediacy of the danger. Many people have the “it won’t happen to me” mentality. Others take the approach that they’ll just deal with any repercussions when the time comes. However, there are those who take all warnings seriously and pay attention to what they say. Those people might be onto something.

While it is generally dangerous to ignore warnings, it is utterly foolish to ignore the warnings of God. The Bible is filled with them.

Genesis 2:16-17 | *The Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”*

Matthew 7:26 | *But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”*

Matthew 18:6 | *“If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.*

Galatians 5:19-21 | *The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.*

John 12:48 | *There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day.*

There are many, many more and all are terrifying, but those who are in Christ have no reason to be afraid.

Psalms 103:12 | *As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*

Ephesians 1:7-8 | *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us.*

1 John 1:1-2 | *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.*

We need and heed the warnings. However, we let the sweet promises of the gospel speak even louder than the dreadful warnings. Turn up the volume on those gospel promises!

Y

Jesus is the rest giver. He allows us to rest spiritually. That means we don't need to work to earn forgiveness or salvation. He did the work. He takes our yoke and offers us his. We are not burdened with the overwhelming and impossible task of saving ourselves.

Matthew 11:28-30 | *Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my Yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.*

The yoke of Jesus is light for you, but it was not light for him. He went through the full force of God's wrath in your place.

Isaiah 53:5 | *But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.*

We can do nothing to satisfy God's wrath. We need do nothing to satisfy God's wrath. Don't take up a burden where a burden does not belong.

Acts 15:10-11 | *Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are."*

Don't sleep on Jesus, your rest giver.

Z

Zeal can lead a person to accomplish great things. Pursuing something with intensity is what people with zeal do. Our Savior was filled with zeal in his intense pursuit of establishing his eternal kingdom.

Isaiah 9:7 | Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever. The zeal of the Lord Almighty will accomplish this.

Jesus was filled with zeal for his Father. He intensely pursued his Father's will and intensely pursued glory for his Father.

John 2:15-17 | So he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me."

Jesus, thank you for pursuing our salvation with your zealous love. Give us zeal to intensely pursue the Father's will and to intensely pursue those who do not yet know you. Amen.

To God be the glory.

Check out this St. Andrew podcast for a greater understanding of Scripture.



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