

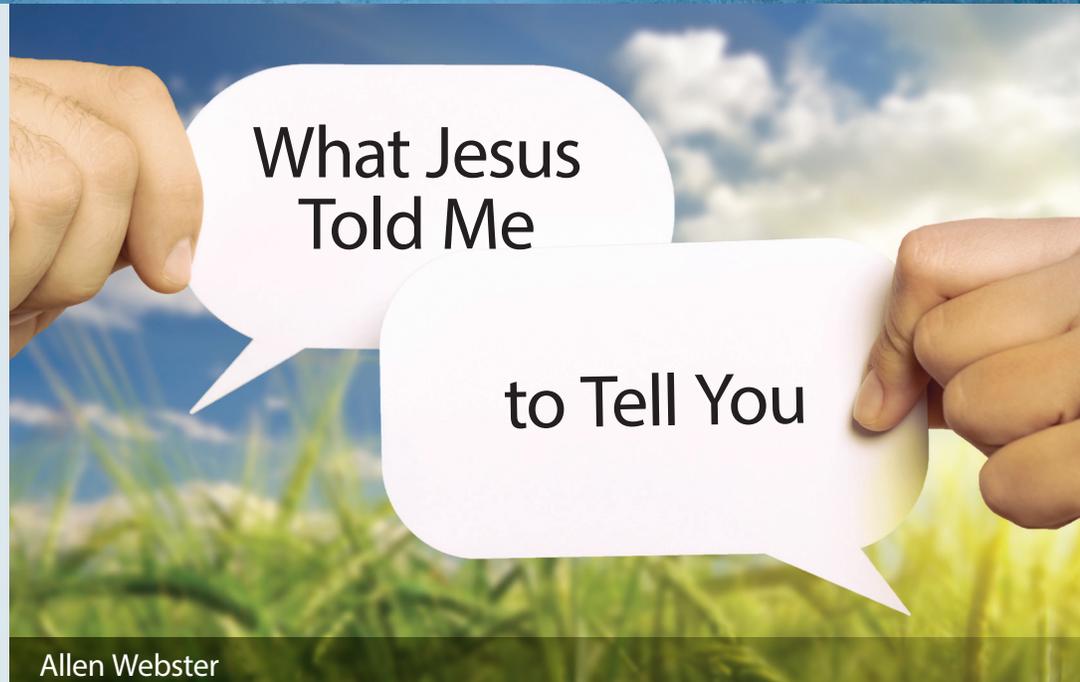


HOUSE to HOUSE
HEART to HEART

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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 22 NUMBER 4



Allen Webster

Just before returning to heaven, Jesus pointed a nail-scarred hand at a world for which He had just died and told His followers to “go.”

The message they were to take was the simple gospel. Gospel means “good news” and refers to sharing the fact that—because of His sacrifice on Calvary—all men can be saved and go to heaven.

The “go” command is for every generation. The early Christians took the gospel to their world (Romans 10:18; Colossians 1:23); we must take it to ours. This task now falls to me, among others. Through this commission, Jesus told us to tell you His message.

Will you give me that opportunity?
THE GOSPEL HAS THREE FACTS TO BELIEVE (1 CORINTHIANS 15:1-4)

Fact 1: Christ Died for Man’s Sin. While the gospel is good news, it has at the heart a tragedy: the death of Christ on a cross. God used this horrible event to pay the price for man’s sin (Isaiah 53:11; Romans 3:26).

Jesus’ death unfolded in a series of events:

- Betrayal and arrest (Matthew 26:47-56).
- Jewish trials (26:57-75). During these proceedings, Jesus was taunted, spit on, slapped, and struck (26:67-68; John 18:22). Eventually, though innocent, He was convicted of blasphemy, which was punishable by death under Jewish law.
- Roman trials before Pilate and Herod. Again, He was condemned, this time for rebellion (Matthew 27:1-25; Luke 23:7-11).
- Scourging (Matthew 27:26; John 19:1). This was a merciless beating with a whip.
- Abuse by Roman soldiers (Matthew 27:27-31). They stripped Him, clothed Him in a purple robe, put a crown of thorns on His head, hit Him on the head with a reed, spit on Him, and smote Him with their hands.
- Parade to the execution site carrying the cross (John 19:17).
- Crucifixion (Matthew 27:35-56). His hands and feet were nailed to a cross,

and He was suspended on it for six hours—from 9:00 A.M. to 3 P.M. (Mark 15:25–37).

Fact 2: Christ’s Burial. Isaiah foretold that the Lord would be associated with the rich in death and His grave would be with the wicked (Isaiah 53:9).

Jesus was crucified between two thieves; then “a rich man of Arimathaea, named Joseph” asked Pilate for permission to bury Jesus’ body (Matthew 27:57–58). With the help of Nicodemus, Joseph “wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre” (Matthew 27:57–60, John 19:39).

Fact 3: Christ’s Resurrection. The underlying proposition to the whole Bible is Acts 13:30: “God raised him from the dead.” If this is not true, then there is no gospel. We can throw the Bible away, for it contains no hope for humanity. But thanks be to God, it is true!

What evidence is there? Jesus promised it, and He never lied (Matthew 20:19; 27:63; 1 Peter 2:21–22). He kept

the scars from His crucifixion to verify it, which no one else could imitate (Luke 24:39; John 20:27). The Bible, the world’s most trustworthy source, records it (Matthew 28:1–6, 2 Timothy 3:16–17). Angels attested to it, and they are greater than any man who says otherwise (Luke 24:1–6).

There is much more evidence, but let’s focus on one sufficient, indisputable fact: “He shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days” (Acts 1:3). At least 515 eyewitnesses saw Him on twelve different occasions over a period of forty days:

- Apostles (Acts 1).
- Mary Magdalene (John 20:16–18).
- A group of women (Luke 24:22–24).
- Two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35).
- Disciples, without Thomas (John 20:19–20, 24).
- Disciples, with Thomas (John 20:26–28).
- Seven disciples at the Sea of Galilee (John 21:1–23).
- Eleven apostles (Matthew 28:16–17).

- More than five hundred persons at once (1 Corinthians 15:6).
- Simon Peter (Luke 24:34).
- James (1 Corinthians 15:7).
- Paul (Acts 9:3–6; 1 Corinthians 15:8).
- John on Patmos (Revelation 1:1–20).

The resurrection of Christ is a fact proved, like other facts, by credible witnesses. Tim LaHaye points out that if you hit a hole-in-one playing golf Saturday, how would you prove it to incredulous friends on Sunday? You would call over your golfing partner to confirm that he saw it (Jesus: Who Is He?). Paul appeals to witnesses to the resurrection, and then he shows that it was not possible that so many people were deceived (1 Corinthians 15:5–7). If five hundred reliable witnesses are insufficient to prove a fact, then no number would be enough. A thousand or ten thousand would not be any more convincing.

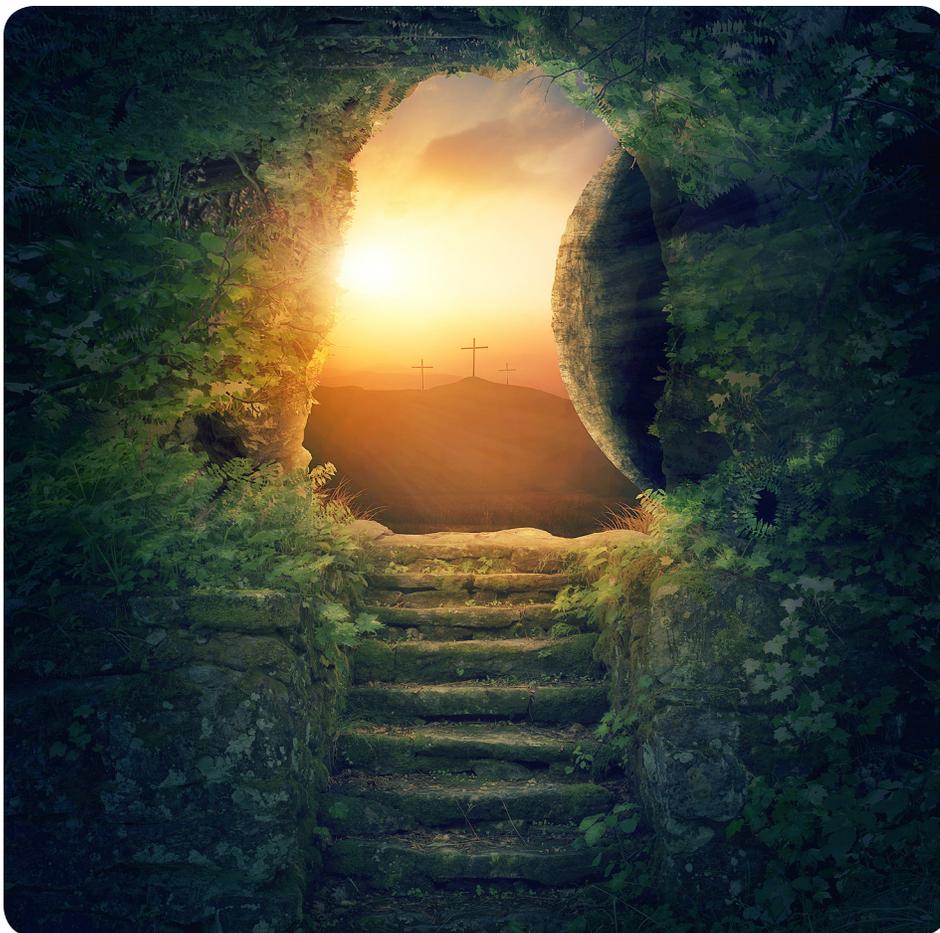
THE GOSPEL HAS THREE COMMANDS TO OBEY

The Bible speaks of obeying the gospel (Romans 10:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:8), which implies that the gospel contains commands (a fact or promise cannot be obeyed). What are the commands?

Unbelievers were told to believe. The jailer, a Roman with no knowledge of Jesus, was told to believe in Christ (Acts 16:30–31). Then Paul taught him “the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house” (16:32), for faith comes by hearing (Romans 10:17; cf. Acts 2:36–37). This resulted in repentance (he washed their stripes) and baptism (the same hour, 16:33). Then he rejoiced as a saved man (16:34; Mark 16:15–16; Hebrews 5:9).

Believers were told to repent. Peter told those on Pentecost who were convinced that Jesus was God’s Son to repent of their sins, and be baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:37–38).

Penitent believers were told to be baptized. Upon confession, Philip baptized the first Ethiopian convert to Christ (Acts 8:37). Saul of Tarsus believed in and confessed Christ on the Damascus road (Acts 9:6; cf. Romans 10:9–10). He was sorry for his sins (penitent), as shown by his fasting and praying. Thus he was simply told to “arise,





and be baptized, and wash away” his sins (Acts 22:16; cf. 1 Peter 3:21).

Since God is impartial (Acts 10:34–35), He requires the same things for all to be saved. If you obey the simple gospel, you, too, will be saved.

THE GOSPEL HAS THREE PROMISES TO ENJOY

The first promise of the gospel is salvation (Mark 16:16). It is referred to as “the gospel of your salvation” (Ephesians 1:13). Paul wrote: “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation” (Romans 1:16).

Salvation is always from something—one is saved from a burning building or saved from drowning. Our greatest leaders have saved us from great enemies—George Washington at Valley Forge; Abraham Lincoln in the Civil War; Eisenhower on D-Day.

Jesus is a great Savior because He saves us from the greatest villain and rescues us from the greatest danger. Satan is out to deceive us (John 8:44), hinder us (1 Thessalonians 2:18), ensnare us (2 Timothy 2:26), oppress us (Acts 10:38), condemn us (1 Timothy 3:6), devour us (1 Peter 5:8), and destroy us in hell (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

Jesus proved that He is more than a match for the devil (Matthew 4:1–11). He defeats him in our lives by enlightening us (John 8:32), helping us (Hebrews 13:5), freeing us (Romans 8:2), uplifting us (Luke 1:52), justifying us (Romans

8:30), forgiving us (Colossians 2:13), and saving us in heaven (Titus 3:5).

The second promise of the gospel is peace (Romans 10:15; cf. Ephesians 6:15). Peace is one of humanity’s greatest needs. H. G. Wells described a character “not so much a human being as a civil war” (The History of Mr. Polly). Many people are walking civil wars who enjoy no peace.

Men are without peace because they are without God, the source of peace. Isaiah recorded, “There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked” (Isaiah 48:22). The wicked are not only those who do bad things, but also those who do not acknowledge and follow God (Isaiah 59:8).

Men are without peace because they seek it in the wrong places. Alcohol, drugs, sex, cannabis, and nicotine provide diversion (and destruction, Proverbs 13:15; 20:1), but not lasting peace. Work and recreation keep one occupied, but in quiet moments inner turmoil returns. Paul wrote, “To be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:6).

Men are without peace because they believe it requires peaceful circumstances. The gospel promises peace in the midst of conflict (Matthew 5:1–12). Sometimes the gospel even puts us in conflict with others (2 Timothy 3:12).

Yet God’s peace can “rule” in our hearts regardless of external relationships (Colossians 3:15). Some of the

earth’s most violent weather occurs on the seas, but the deeper one goes, the more tranquil the water. Oceanographers report that the deep ocean floor is absolutely still. This is what Christ offers. The world rages all around, but the inner man has peace passing understanding (Philippians 4:7).

Peace with God is only possible on the terms of unconditional surrender. We cannot give God Sundays but keep the rest of the week for ourselves. We cannot give up most sins but keep one pet habit. We must deny ourselves to follow Him (Luke 9:23). James said, simply, “Submit yourselves therefore to God” (James 4:7).

The third promise of the gospel is hope (Colossians 1:23). Paul said, “Now abide faith, hope, charity, these three” (1 Corinthians 13:13).

- Faith looks back to the cross and finds Christ, a Savior.
- Love looks up and finds Christ, a Mediator and Friend.
- Hope looks forward and anticipates Christ returning, a triumphant King.

Of these three great virtues, hope may be the most distinctively Christian (Titus 1:2; cf. Ephesians 2:12).

One may ask, “If I become a Christian, what’s in it for me?” The gospel will rescue you from the consequences of your past sin, give you present peace of mind, and fill you with hope for the future.

Interested?



Vigilant Protectors

There has never been a smoke detector as efficient as the mother of a 14-year-old with his first cigarette.

—James Holt McGavran, *Ideas for Better Living*

“Do not forsake the law of your mother”

PROVERBS 1:8



Practice Home Safety

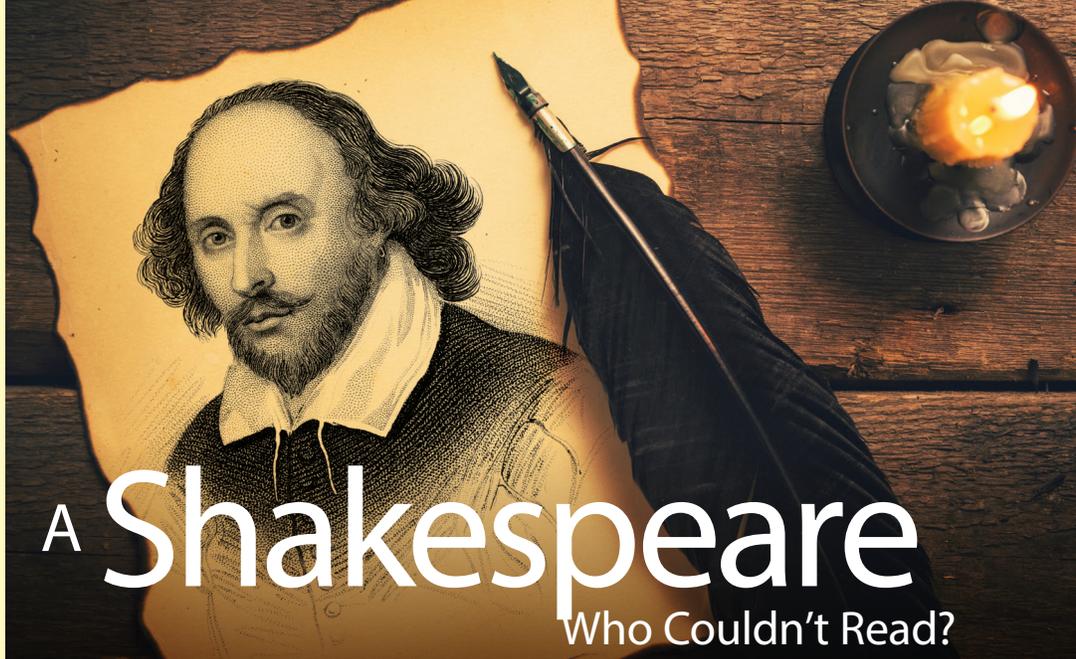
An exhaustive study of police records shows that no woman has ever shot her husband while he was doing the dishes.

—Earl Wilson, *Field Newspaper Syndicate*

“Love your wives”

COLOSSIANS 3:19

For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.



A Shakespeare

Who Couldn't Read?

William Shakespeare is regarded as the greatest writer in the English language.

Four hundred years after Shakespeare's death, every school student still studies his life and works.

However, when Shakespeare's daughter, Judith, married, she signed her license with a mark—the equivalence of an “X.” Scholars believe that neither she nor her sister, Susanna, could read or write. (Paleographer E. Maunde Thompson describes this “mark” as a “painfully formed signature, which was probably the most that she was capable of doing with the pen.”)

How is it possible that the greatest writer in the English language allowed his daughters to be illiterate? You would think that to such a man, reading would have meant everything, and he would have taken the time to teach his daughters to read. The stark reality is—he didn't.

As unimaginable as this is, how much more unimaginable is it that Christian parents would not pass on their knowledge of God to their children?

In the days of the judges, a generation of God's children grew up without knowing the Lord or the works He had done for them (Judges 2:10). I'm afraid many parents allow this to happen today.

What are we to think of parents who do not teach the Bible to their children at home? In many cases, not only do they fail to teach their own children, they also neglect to bring them to Bible class so others can teach them. It's puzzling!

We wonder why Shakespeare allowed his children to remain illiterate. A better question is: How can we allow our children to grow up biblically illiterate?

—Steven Higginbotham, Knoxville, Tennessee

“Teach them diligently”

DEUTERONOMY 6:7

Strong Faith, Young Hearts

In New Albany, Mississippi, a young man who starred on the baseball team had a conflict when a game was scheduled on Wednesday night during Bible class. He told his coach, who said, “Play or turn your suit in.”

He went to church and the next day took his uniform to turn it in.

The coach saw his true faith and kept him on the team.

A Christian student was selected homecoming queen, but she would not

go to be crowned because that Friday night the church had a gospel meeting going on. She went to support the gospel. Six friends went with her and obeyed the gospel. On Friday night, they were wearing a different crown (2 Timothy 4:8). —As told by an elder who knew both of the young people

“Let no one despise your youth, but be an example”

1 TIMOTHY 4:12

What Are You Looking For?



They were looking for a lion; He came as a Lamb, and they missed Him.
 They were looking for a warrior; He came as a Peacemaker, and they missed Him.
 They were looking for a king; He came as a Servant, and they missed Him.
 They were looking for liberation from Rome; He submitted to the Roman stake, and they missed Him.
 They were looking for a fit to their mold; He was the mold maker, and they missed Him.
 They were looking for their temporal needs to be met; He came to meet their eternal need, and they missed Him.

He came as a Lamb to be sacrificed for your sin. Will you miss Him?
 He came to make peace between God and man. Have you missed Him?
 He came to model servanthood for all mankind. Have you missed Him?
 He came that we might have true liberty. Have you missed Him?
 He came to give you eternal life. Have you missed Him?
 What are you looking for? Lion? Warrior? King? Liberator?
 When we submit to the Lamb, we will meet the Lion.
 When we join with the Peacemaker, we will meet the Warrior.

When we work with the Servant, we will meet the King.
 When we walk with the Submitted, we will meet the Liberator.
 When we concern ourselves with the Eternal, we will have the temporal.
 If Jesus is not fitting into the mold you have, then come to the mold maker and get a new one. Submit to His plan for your life, and you will see the eternal need met first; then all other needs will be met as well.

—Glenn Hitchcock, Warner Robins, Georgia

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.”

MATTHEW 7:7

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Bible Quiz

VOLUME 22:4

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark! We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "Understanding the Periods of Bible History" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).



Name: _____
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Questions taken from the King James Version

Answers to Last Issue

The Miracles of Jesus: 1. Turning water into wine (John 2:1–11); 2. Peter's (Matthew 8:14–17); 3. Sleeping (Matthew 8:23–27); 4. Jairus' (Mark 5:21–43); 5. Healed Malchus' ear (Luke 22:51; John 18:10); 6. 5 loaves, 2 fish (Matthew 14:13–21); 7. 12 (Matthew 14:20–21); 8. Wash in pool of Siloam (John 9:1–41); 9. Lazarus (John 11:1–44); 10. Blindness (Mark 10:46–52); 11. Sea of Galilee (John 6:1, 19); 12. Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:2); 13. Wedding (John 2:1–10); 14. Fig (Matthew 21:19); 15. Peter, James, John (Matthew 17:1–13); 16. Bethany (John 11:17–18); 17. 38 years (John 5:5–8); 18. Peter (Matthew 14:29).

Birds, Bees, and Bugs

Directions: Find your answers in Genesis 1:20–23; 8:7–8; Numbers 11:31; Deuteronomy 1:44; Judges 14:8; 2 Samuel 21:10–11; 1 Kings 17:4; 21:24; Job 39:13–15; Isaiah 40:31; Ezekiel 1:10; Daniel 4:33; Matthew 3:16; 8:20; 10:29; 23:24; Luke 2:22–24; John 2:14–16; James 3:7–8.

- On which day of the creation week were birds created? _____
- What was the first bird that Noah let out of the ark? _____
- What was the second bird he sent? _____
- What birds were given to Israel in the wilderness for food? _____
- Elijah said that birds would eat the bodies of what man's family? _____
- Jesus confronted people selling what birds in the temple? _____
- Jesus said the Jewish leaders "strain at a _____, and swallow a camel!"
- How many pigeons were sacrificed upon the birth of a firstborn son? _____
- What bird lays eggs on the ground and lets them warm in the sand, unmindful that a foot may crush them? _____
- When Israel rebelled in the wilderness, which nation chased them "as bees"? _____
- "Foxes have _____, and the birds of the air have _____; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head."
- Jesus said two of these birds were sold for a penny (farthing). _____
- Although all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and creatures can be tamed, what cannot be tamed by man? _____
- What birds brought food to Elijah? _____
- When Gibeonites killed seven of Saul's family, who protected their bodies from fowls? _____
- Samson's riddle was about _____ in a lion's carcass.
- Whose hair grew "like eagle's feathers"? _____
- Those that hope in the Lord will "mount up with wings as _____."
- One of Ezekiel's living creatures' four faces was of a bird. What bird? _____
- At Jesus' baptism, the Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a _____.

6 KEYS TO A GOOD MARRIAGE

WORSHIP AND PRAY TOGETHER (Matthew 6:33; 26:41)

A key component missing in many marriages is spirituality. When spouses share the common ground of true worship, they have a strong foundation (Psalm 127:1; John 4:24; 1 Peter 3:7).

COMMUNICATE (Proverbs 31:11-12; Ephesians 5:22-28; 1 Peter 3:7)

Hiding things undermines trust. Communicate on all major decisions. Addressing concerns ahead of time leads to better understanding for both parties.

LEAVE AND CLEAVE (Genesis 2:24)

Establishing your own home gives your marriage the space it needs to flourish. Do not ignore your parents, but recognize that your new family is a higher priority.

DATE YOUR SPOUSE (Romans 12:10)

You won each other's affection by dating, so it makes sense to continue to spend quality time together to keep affection strong. Set a regular time to share fun activities.

BUDGET (1 Corinthians 13:4-5)

Arguing about money is the number one indicator to predict divorce.¹ Set a budget together and help each other stick to it. Avoid debt (Proverbs 21:20). Encourage each other to save. Remember to put God first (Matthew 6:33).

COMPLIMENT (Proverbs 15:17)

Try to compliment something about your spouse every day (Romans 14:19). Gentleness can stop arguments before they start (Proverbs 15:1).

¹ Drew, Jeffrey; Britt, Sonya; Huston, Sandra. Examining the Relationship Between Financial Issues and Divorce. *Family Relations*. Vol. 61, Issue 4. 2012, School of Family Studies and Human Services, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506.

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Recommended Resource



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Sinners Don't Have a Prayer



Playing Hide-n-Seek with God



Overcoming the Fear of Death



The Five Sacrifices of Calvary



Hopeless Helpless Hapless

Don't see the topic you need? Visit www.housetohouse.com for more subjects.



SIGNS

The book of John focuses on seven of Jesus' miracles, and a careful study of each provides us with principles of encouragement.

Disappointments? Remember when Jesus addressed an embarrassing moment by turning water into wine? (John 2:1–11). He is still the one to turn to when life turns on us. “At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me . . . But the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me” (2 Timothy 4:16–17).

Doubts? Remember when Jesus—from a distance—healed a boy and told his father to return home, and the man went without question? (John 4:46–54). He is still the one in whom we place our faith and our dreams. After all, He is “Christ . . . the hope of glory” (Colossians 1:27).

Disabilities? Remember when Jesus healed a man that had been an invalid for thirty-eight years at the pool of Bethesda? (John 5:2–9). Because of His loving providence, we can still “be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might” (Ephesians 6:10), echoing the words of Paul, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13).

Desires? Remember when He fed 5,000 with a little boy's sack lunch? (John 6:1–14). He still fills the spiritual desires of men and women who cry, “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21).

Despair? Remember when the hand of Jesus reached out to Peter while he walked on water? (John 6:16–21; cf. Matthew 14:23–32). Aren't we thankful that His hand extends in our direction with the promise, “I will never leave you nor forsake you”? (Hebrews 13:5).

Darkness? Remember when He gave sight to a man blind from birth? (John 9:1–11). To man stumbling in the wretched darkness of Satan, He is still “the light of the world” (John 8:12).

Death? Remember when He stood outside the tomb of a friend and shouted amidst visible tears, “Lazarus, come forth!”? (John 11:1–44). Better yet, there will come a day “in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice, and come forth” (John 5:28–29).

As we reflect on the miracles Jesus performed, are we not led to praise Him as “King of Kings and Lord of Lords”? (Revelation 17:14; 19:16). As we reflect on the multitude of ways He touches our lives for the better, are we not driven to our knees with the words of Thomas, “My Lord and my God”? (John 20:28). —Dan Winkler

“My Lord and my God”

JOHN 20:28

He Has Not Left That Open to Us

A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. —C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (no endorsement implied of all Lewis wrote.)

“Believe that I am He”

JOHN 8:24



Pulling on Both Oars

An old Scotsman operated a small rowboat for transporting passengers.

One day a passenger noticed that the old man had carved on one oar the word *Faith*, and on the other oar the word *Works*. Curious, he asked the meaning.

The old man replied, "I'll show you." He dropped the "faith" oar and pulled the "works" oar. The boat went around in circles. Then he dropped that oar and pulled the "faith" oar. The little boat went around in circles in the opposite direction.

After this demonstration, the old man picked up *Faith* and *Works* and began plying both oars together. The boat sped swiftly over the water.

The old man explained, "You see, that is the way it is in the Christian life. Dead works without faith are useless, and faith without works is dead also, getting you nowhere. But faith and works pulling together make for safety, progress, and blessing." (Read James 2:14–26.) —Brett Petrillo, Denver, Colorado



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4/17



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