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HEART to HEART

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House to House Heart to Heart

VOLUME 29 NUMBER 2

Can God Really Forgive Me?

Allen Webster



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“God could never forgive me. I have done some awful things.” How many times has that thought passed through the synapses of human brains? Does it frequently lodge in your “gray matter”? When you are alone at night with just your thoughts, are they thoughts of despair, hopelessness, and frustration?

The private thoughts of a prodigal boy in a pigpen in the far country give us some hope (Luke 15:11–32). That boy was an invention of the Master Storyteller to share a message about forgiveness . . . about a Father’s all-encompassing, incomprehensible love . . . and about heaven’s sermon of hope when the devil preaches despair.

That hungry prodigal knew his rich father would not go to bed without supper that night. *But the son would.* Pondering this thought, he realized that nobody on his father’s farm would fall asleep with a growling stomach. But he would. Even his father’s servants had “bread enough and to spare” (Luke 15:17). But he did not.

Since the father in the parable represents the Father in the Bible, we can draw some interesting conclusions from the phrase “bread enough and to spare.” God

has never been stingy with His blessings. He “gives to all liberally and without reproach” (James 1:5; cf. 1:17).

Take bread, for instance. When Israel needed some in the wilderness, they had all the manna they wanted: “Let every man gather it according to each one’s need, one omer for each person” (Exodus 16:16). When a widow shared with Elijah what she thought was her last meal, God refilled her flour barrel, and no matter how much she dipped out, it stayed full until the famine ended (1 Kings 17:15–16). When Jesus fed four thousand men (besides women and children), the famished people ate all they wanted and still had seven baskets extra (Matthew 15:37).

When we think of man and see the magnitude of his sin, we can hardly understand how a single sinner can be saved; but when we think of God and see the magnitude of His love, we can hardly understand how a single one could be lost.

Have you heard that God loved sinners better than He loved His own Son? *How can you say that?* you ask. He “did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all” (Romans 8:32); He spares sin-



ners. He poured His wrath upon His Son, making Him (the innocent) the substitute for sinners, that He might lavish love upon us (the guilty) who deserved His anger.

Since God freely gives us “all things” (Romans 8:32) and withholds “no good thing . . . from those who walk uprightly” (Psalm 84:11), what can we count on when we make the journey back to our Father from the far county?

WITH GOD, THERE IS GRACE ENOUGH AND TO SPARE

No one has gotten up from God’s table still needing a snack of grace. Is your case a difficult one? Have your sins been shocking and frequent? Are your spiritual diseases strange and complex?

Consider that He who made the earth and stretched out the heavens like a tent must therefore have no limit to His might! In six thousand years, He has never failed at anything—will His first failure be saving you? Will you prove too strong for omnipotence, too clever for omniscience, or too unlovable for omni-benevolence? If He made you (Genesis 1:27), He can remake you (2 Corinthians 5:17). If He claims you (2 Corinthians 6:18), He can cleanse you (Acts 22:16). His “hand is not shortened, that it cannot save” (Isaiah 59:1).¹

It still stands. God offers “abundant grace” (2 Corinthians 4:15) and “abun-

dant mercy” (1 Peter 1:3; cf. Titus 3:5–6), yea, “exceedingly abundant” (1 Timothy 1:14). He is able “to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him” (Hebrews 7:25). Peter said, “An entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom” (2 Peter 1:11). Paul concluded, “Where sin abounded, grace abounded much more” (Romans 5:20).

Let us put this plenteous grace to the test in the real world of really bad sinners. Does God live up to His promises?

- **Those on whose hands God saw crimson stains** that matched His Son’s blood type were told, “Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins” (Acts 2:38). Three thousand of them washed their hands in the “fountain filled with blood drawn from Immanuel’s veins”² that very day (cf. 2:41; Zechariah 13:1), and many others took Him up on His offer in the coming weeks (Acts 2:47). It would be hard to imagine a case today that could equal the sinfulness of those at Pentecost.
- **What about moral delinquents?** Doubtless the immoral and swindlers and drunks are not welcome at the Father’s banquet. Right? Again, we find they are—provided they are penitent. Paul wrote of some who had been fornicators, idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals,

thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners (1 Corinthians 6:9–10). By God’s grace, they had been washed, sanctified, and justified (6:11).

NO ONE HAS GOTTEN UP FROM GOD’S TABLE STILL NEEDING A SNACK OF GRACE

- **Saul of Tarsus**, who was public enemy number one in the kingdom of heaven at the time, tested the grace-enough-and-to-spare-principle as perhaps no other individual has. He was a blasphemer of God and murderer of innocent Christians. It seems he organized and supervised the mob killing of Stephen, for instance, who likely left a wife and child behind³ when the fatal rock prematurely sent him into eternity (Acts 7).

Surely, Saul would find that grace could cover only so much—and that he had long ago crossed that line. No, he also found bread enough and to spare. Years later he wrote of himself (still calling himself the chief of sinners) as one who “was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy . . . and the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant” (1 Timothy 1:13–14). Is it any wonder that Paul wrote more about grace than any other New Testament writer? In fact, he wrote more about grace than all the others combined!

Can God forgive you? Yes! Will God forgive you? Yes! The real question is, “Do you really want to be forgiven?” Are you willing to take God on His terms? What are His terms? Learning of Christ (John 6:44–45); faith in Christ (Acts 16:31); repentance of sins (Luke 13:3); confession of Christ (Romans 10:10); baptism into Christ (1 Peter 3:21); and then faithful living for Christ (Revelation 2:10).

Take God at His Word. Trust in Him. Obey Him. Live with Him forever!

Endnotes

¹ Charles H. Spurgeon, *Miracles and Parables of Our Lord*. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1993, 2nd Edition.

² William Cowper, <https://hymnary.org/>.

³ Most commentators believe that the men selected in Acts 6 (among whom was Stephen) were deacons and thus would have met the qualifications outlined in 1 Timothy 3, including having a wife and child.

He Gave His Blood

In his book *Written in Blood*, Robert Coleman tells the story of a little boy whose sister needed a blood transfusion. The doctor explained that she had the same disease the boy had recovered from two years earlier. Her only chance for recovery was a transfusion from someone who had previously conquered the disease. Since the two children had the same rare blood type, the boy was the ideal donor.

“Would you give your blood to Mary?” The doctor asked. Johnny hesitated. His lower lip started to tremble.

Then he smiled and said, “Sure, for my sister.”

Soon the two children were wheeled into the hospital room—Mary, pale and thin; Johnny, robust and healthy. Neither spoke but when their eyes met, Johnny grinned.

As the nurse inserted the needle into his arm, Johnny’s smile faded. He watched the blood flow through the tube. With the ordeal almost over, his voice, slightly shaky, broke the silence. “Doctor, when will I die?”

Only then did the doctor realize why Johnny had hesitated, why his lip had trembled when he agreed to donate his blood. He had thought that giving his blood to his sister meant giving up his life. In the brief moment, he had made a great decision.

Johnny, fortunately, did not have to die to save his sister. Each of us, however, has a condition more serious than Mary’s, and it required Jesus to give not just His blood, but His life. —Craig Brian Larson, *Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching*, Baker Books, 1993.



Powerful Verse

An elderly woman had just returned to her home from an evening church service when she was startled by an intruder. She caught a man in the act of robbing her home of its valuables and yelled, “Stop! Acts 2:38!” The burglar stopped in his tracks. The woman calmly called the police and explained what she had done.

As the officer cuffed the man to take him in, he asked the burglar, “Why did you just stand there? All the old lady did was yell a Scripture to you.” “Scripture?” replied the burglar. “She said she had an ax and two 38s!”

“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

ACTS 2:38

Note: It is a powerful verse. It has the power, when obeyed, to remove all sins in a person’s life.

Take a Stand

When the Nazis came for the Communists,
I remained silent;
I was not a Communist.

When they locked up the Social Democrats,
I remained silent;
I was not a Social Democrat.

When they came for the trade unionists,
I did not speak out;
I was not a trade unionist.

When they came for the Jews,
I remained silent;
I was not a Jew.

When they came for me,
There was no one left to speak out.

—Martin Niemoller (1892–1984), Dachau Concentration Camp Survivor

“Stand fast in the faith.”

1 CORINTHIANS 16:13



God’s Plan for Saving Man

Divine Love: John 3:16

God’s Grace: Ephesians 2:8

Christ’s Blood: Romans 5:9

Holy Spirit’s Word: 1 Corinthians 2:12–13

Sinner’s Faith: Acts 16:31

Sinner’s Repentance: Luke 13:3

Sinner’s Confession: Romans 10:10

Sinner’s Baptism: Acts 22:16

Christian’s Love: Matthew 22:37

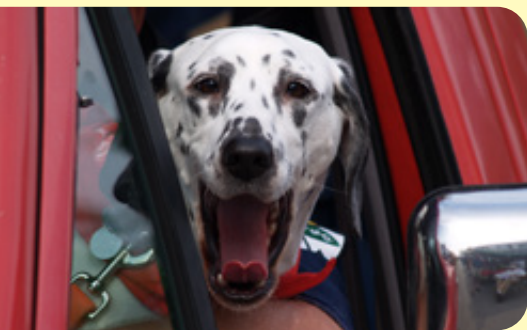
Christian’s Work: James 2:24

Christian’s Hope: Romans 8:24

Christian’s Endurance: Revelation 2:10

Watch
on youtube





Kids Know Dogs

A nursery schoolteacher was delivering a car full of children home one day when a fire truck zoomed past. Sitting in the front seat of the fire truck was a Dalmatian dog. The children started discussing the dog's duties.

"They use him to keep crowds back," said one youngster.

"No," said another, "he is just for good luck."

A third child brought the argument to a close. "They use the dogs," she said firmly, "to find the fire hydrant."

"A merry heart does good."

PROVERBS 17:22

Jesus, the Academic Marvel

In chemistry, He turned water into wine (John 2:1–10).

In biology, He was born without normal conception (Matthew 1:18–25).

In physics, He overcame the law of gravity by walking on water and ascending into heaven (Matthew 14:25; Acts 1:9–11).

In economics, He disproved the principle of supply and demand by feeding 5000 with two fish and five loaves (John 6:1–11).

In medicine, He cured the sick and the blind without administering a single dose of drugs (Matthew 8:1–34; 15:30).

In history, He is the Beginning and the End (Revelation 1:8).

In government, He is King of kings (1 Timothy 6:15).

In religion, no one comes to the Father except through Him (John 14:6).



To watch videos, read articles, answer Bible questions, and more go to house-to-house.com

How to Have a Great *Marriage*

Your marriage does not have to be just good; it can be great! What separates good marriages from great ones?

Give God His place in your marriage.

Remember that Solomon said, "A three-fold cord is not quickly broken" (Ecclesiastes 4:12). Couples who strive to build a relationship with Christ at its center enjoy an enormous advantage over those who do not (see Psalm 127:1).

Remember your vows.

Husbands, did you promise to love, cherish, and protect your spouse, forsaking all others? Wives, did you promise to love, honor, cherish, and obey your spouse, forsaking all others? Consider Matthew 19:9 and Hebrews 13:4.

Express love each day. "Show . . . the proof of your love" (2 Corinthians 8:24).

Appreciate one another. When you stop to count your blessings, do not forget to count your spouse! "He who finds a wife finds a good thing" (Proverbs 18:22). An attitude of ingratitude will eventually manifest itself in selfish and disrespectful behavior toward one another.

Treat one another as the most important person in the world.

Who on earth is more important to you than your spouse? In terms of your relationships with others, no other relationship is more important to maintain and cherish than the one you have with your spouse.

—Rod Halliburton

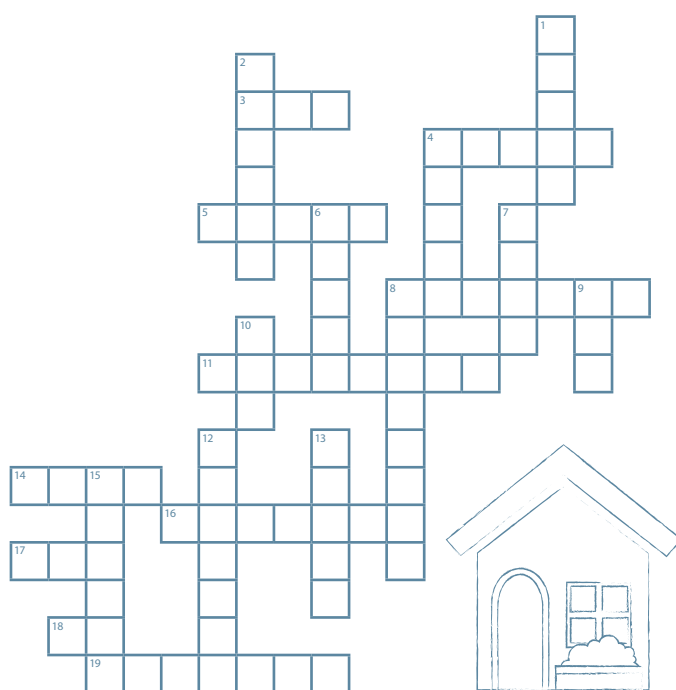


Just for Fun Crossword Puzzle

Use the words in blue to complete the puzzle.

"Let not your **heart** be **troubled**; you **believe** in **God**, believe also in **Me**. In My **Father's** house are many **mansions**; if it were **not** so, I would have told you. I go to **prepare** a place for you. And if I go and prepare a **place** for you, I will come again and **receive** you to **Myself**; that **where** I am, **there** you may be also. And where I go you **know**, and the way **you** know. . . . I am the **way**, the **truth**, and the **life**. No one **comes** to the Father except **through** Me."

— JOHN 14:1-4, 6



1. HEART; 2. MYSELF; 3. YOU; 4. THERE; 5. PLACE; 6. COMES; 7. KNOW; 8. (ACROSS) THROUGH; 8 (DOWN) TROUBLED; 9. GOD; 10. WAY; 11. MANSIONS; 12. PREPARE; 13. WHERE; 14. LIFE; 15. FATHER; 16. BELIEVE; 17. NOT; 18. ME; 19. RECEIVE

Why Should You Believe the Bible Is from God?

It is impossible to be correct about everything a person says or writes. Even though we may set high standards for ourselves and learn all that we can, and even though we may put as many safeguards in place as is humanly possible, we will make mistakes, and ignorance will be revealed. As the old adage goes, “To err is human.”

“With God,” however, “all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26).

Why should an honest truth-seeker conclude that the Bible is from the Creator of the universe? What proves that the Bible is of supernatural origin? In short, because while “to err is human,” the Bible

writers were correct in everything they wrote—about the past, the present, and even the future.

If an all-knowing, all-powerful God exists, then He could guide even uneducated men to write about events that occurred hundreds or thousands of years before their time with complete accuracy. He could move (2 Peter 1:20–21) ordinary people to write flawlessly about any number of contemporary people, places, and things. He could even supernaturally guide penmen to write about future events with perfect accuracy. The most fundamental reason that a person can come to the rational conclusion that the Bible

“given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16) is that the writers of the Bible were amazingly accurate about everything.

If anyone came to an honest truth-seeker claiming to possess a revelation from God, the first question should be, “Is it completely accurate?” The fallibility of the message would be the first indication that it was manmade and not heaven sent. On the other hand, complete factual accuracy would be the first thing to expect from any document claiming to be God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16). —Eric Lyons



housetohouse.com/evidence

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



Bible Quiz

VOLUME 29:2

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark. We will grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark “Jesus by the Numbers” as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City/State: _____
 Phone: _____

Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 28:12 Starts With the Letter “C”: 1. Caiaphas (Matthew 26:3); 2. Cain (Genesis 4:1, 8); 3. Caleb (Numbers 13:1–6); 4. Cana (John 2:1–10); 5. Canaan (Leviticus 25:38); 6. Candace (Acts 8:27); 7. Carpenter (Mark 6:3); 8. Chebar (Ezekiel 1:1); 9. Cedars (Psalm 92:12); 10. Cornelius (Acts 10:1–48); 11. Cephas (John 1:42); 12. Cease (Psalm 37:8); 13. Christians (Acts 11:26); 14. Commandments (Revelation 22:14); 15. Commit (1 Corinthians 10:8); 16. Cheerful (2 Corinthians 9:7); 17. Chastening (Hebrews 12:5); 18. Carry (1 Timothy 6:7); 19. Care (1 Peter 5:7); 20. Caesar (Luke 2:1); 21. Camel (Mark 10:25); 22. Cheer (John 16:33); 23. Child (Luke 18:17); 24. Christ (Matthew 16:16); 25. Churches (Romans 16:16).

V. 29:1 Who Is the Greatest?: 1. “Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” (Matthew 18:1); 2. A child (18:2–4); 3. Converted, children, kingdom (18:3); 4. Drowning (18:6); 5. Hand, foot, eye (18:8–9); 6. Being cast into everlasting fire (18:8–9); 7. Come, save, lost (18:11); 8. Seven (18:21); 9. Seventy times seven (18:22); 10. That he and his family be sold and that payment be made (18:25); 11. Released him and forgave the debt (18:27); 12. Compassion (18:27); 13. A hundred denarii (18:28); 14. Choked him, demanded payment, and threw him in prison (18:28); 15. Delivered the uncompassionate servant to the torturers (18:34); 16. We must forgive (18:35); 17. Humbles, child, greatest (18:4).

Starts with the Letter “I”

Find answers in Genesis 1:26; 6:5; 2 Kings 20:11; 1 Samuel 4:21–22; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 12:36; Luke 1:37; 2:7; Acts 7:8; 17:30; 1 Corinthians 3:6; Colossians 3:5; 2 Timothy 2:19; 3:16; 1 Peter 1:4 (not in order). Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

- Phinehas’ wife named her son this, for “the glory has departed from Israel.” _____
- “All scripture is given by _____ of God.”
- Men shall give account for every _____ word in the Judgment.
- Covetousness is one form of _____.
- “Truly, these times of _____ God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.”
- “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our _____, according to Our likeness.’”
- Just before the flood, “the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every _____ of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”
- The prophet said, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name _____.”
- “For with God nothing will be _____.”
- “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the _____.”
- Christians are promised an _____ which is “incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you.”
- “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from _____.”
- Jesus was laid in a manger because there was no room in the _____.
- Abraham’s son; Jacob’s father. _____
- Prophet who prayed and Hezekiah’s sundial went backward ten degrees. _____

READ THE INSTRUCTIONS

I can vividly remember my first two-wheeler bicycle that my dad bought me when I was a boy. It was a red Huffy “Cheater Slick” with a banana seat. Now, when he bought the bike, he had the choice of buying a display model that was already assembled, or he could buy the “bike in a box” that he would have to assemble himself. We bought the bike in a box because it was five dollars cheaper.

We took the bike home and spread all the parts out on the living room floor. To a little boy, it all looked so confusing. But I knew one thing—where the hand grips

went. So I popped them on the handlebar without reading the instructions. To my dismay, I later learned that I should not have been so hasty and should have read the instructions, for the handlebar had to be threaded through a joint prior to putting on the hand grips. Uh-oh. Too late. The grips were on and would not come off, so one of the grips had to be cut off. Consequently, my red Huffy bike always had just one hand grip.

That lesson learned many years ago reminds me that life comes so much easier when we read the instructions.

In fact, God left us an instruction book, the Bible. For instance, one of the things He tells us in the Bible is that it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35), yet how many people do you know who are pursuing happiness without practicing giving and unselfishness? Friends, do yourself a favor and read the instructions before you make a mistake. God made you, and He knows best how you are to function. For best results, consult the owner’s manual.

—Steve Higginbotham, Glasgow, Kentucky



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

Recommended Resource



The WVBS Online Bible School provides students with a free, comprehensive, in-depth Bible study. The lessons are non-denominational teaching based simply on the Bible. These classes are for anyone who wants a focused, organized, and thorough study of the Bible. school.wvbs.org

I want to learn more about the Bible!

If you knew for sure that the religious path you are on would not get you to heaven, would you change? If there was the possibility of a doubt, would you investigate? Why not request a personal Bible study today?

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Prayer requests or comments: _____

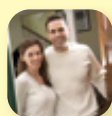
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A Bible Correspondence Course



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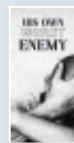
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- A New Look at the Old Rugged Cross
- Seven Things a Loving God Hates: A False Witness that Speakeeth Lies
- Did Jesus Make Intoxicating Wine?
- God’s Refining Shop



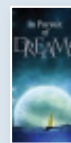
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His Own Worst Enemy



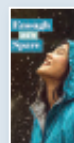
The Safe Channel



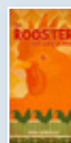
In Pursuit of Dreams



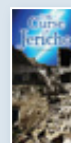
Victory Where There Was Once Defeat



Enough and to Spare



The Rooster That Woke Up Peter



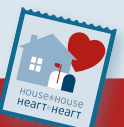
The Curse of Jericho



In Pursuit of Patience



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TYPES & ANTITYPES

MANNA as a type of CHRIST

God is amazing. No one else could put the shadow of future things into the past. Types and antitypes are examples of God prefiguring the future. Types are the shadow in the Old Testament of things that were to come (antitypes) in the New Testament.

The manna given by God to Israel in the Old Testament is often interpreted as a type of Christ, and there are many noteworthy similarities.



MANNA TYPE

Was bread given by the grace of God to Israel (**EXODUS 16:11-30; JOHN 6:31**).

Came from heaven (**PSALM 78:24**).

Sustained life (**NEHEMIAH 9:15**).

There was daily dependence, and the people had to go out each day and gather it (**EXODUS 16:4**).

Was a test of obedience and trust (**EXODUS 16:4**).

Rotted and spoiled when kept until the next day, except on the Sabbath (**EXODUS 16:20**).

Those who did not follow the command of God and saved the manna found that it went bad (**EXODUS 16:19-20**).

Ceased when Israel reached Canaan (**EXODUS 16:35; JOSHUA 5:12**).

JESUS THE CHRIST ANTITYPE

Was given by the grace of God for everyone (**HEBREWS 2:9**).

Is the bread of God that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world (**JOHN 6:33**).

Is the bread of life (**JOHN 6:35**).

We have daily dependence on the grace provided by Jesus (**LUKE 9:23; ROMANS 7:24-25**).

Commands us to trust Him and keep His commands (**JOHN 14:15**).

Will never spoil (**JOHN 6:27**).

Those who do not follow the command of God and reject Christ will suffer a more severe punishment (**HEBREWS 10:24-31**).

Will give eternal life to those who partake of Him (**JOHN 6:54; MATTHEW 25:46**).



Assaying Value

Imagine a bank that credits your account each morning with \$86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day. Every evening, it deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day. What would you do? Draw out all of it, of course!

Each of us has such a bank. Its name is *Time*. Each day you live, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night, it writes off as lost whatever you failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdrafts. Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness, and success! The clock is running. Make the most of today.

To realize the value of

- One year, ask a student who failed a grade.
- One month, ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby.
- One week, ask the editor of a weekly news report.
- One hour, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.
- One minute, ask a person who missed the train.
- One second, ask a person who just avoided an accident.
- One millisecond, ask the person who won an Olympic silver medal.

Value every moment you have and count it as a gift from God. Treasure it by sharing it with someone special—especially your spouse and children. Remember that time waits for no one.

“Teach us to number our days, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”

PSALM 90:12



Just the Bible?

Have you ever thought, “Are there any churches that use *just* the Bible?”

We are trying.

When you visit us, you will not find a creed book. You will not find a set of written rules or traditions that must be obeyed. We have no earthly headquarters, no earthly president, and no board of directors. Our goal is to be guided by the Bible, and the Bible alone.

While God once communicated to man through lots of people in lots of different ways, God “has in these last days spoken to us by His Son” (Hebrews 1:1–2). We will be set apart by the truth of God’s Word (John 17:17), and that truth will make us free (John 8:32).

We will be judged by the words of Jesus (John 12:48) and the words of the Bible writers He promised to inspire (John 14:26). Those writers were guided into all truth (John 16:13) and delivered the faith once and for all (Jude 1:3).

The Bible completely equips us (2 Timothy 3:16–17), and it contains “all things that pertain to life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3). If the Bible is all we need (and it is), then why would we use anything else?

God does not want us to add to His verses nor to take away from them (Deuteronomy 4:2; Galatians 1:6–9), so we try to preach “the whole counsel of God” (Acts 20:27).

“Are there any churches that use *just* the Bible?”

Come and see. —Matt Wallin



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the Bible?

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