

REBUILT

TO LIVE A GREAT STORY

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THE STORY

YOUR PLACE IN THE GRAND NARRATIVE

PAGE 12



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REBUILT

TO LIVE A GREAT STORY

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Rebuilt Magazine is written, laid out, and printed by young adult who love Jesus and want to write about God, life, and college. We hope this magazine is helpful, challenging, and thought-provoking while also encouraging you to pursue a strong relationship with Jesus.

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12 WAYS YOUR PHONE IS CHANGING YOU



Has your smartphone become a part of you? With today's technology, we are never offline. We have the ability to answer emails, Skype, and communicate virtually anytime, anywhere. When was the last time you had dinner with friends, read a book, watched a movie, or journaled without your smartphone nearby? Have you ever just looked around a restaurant while a friend excused himself from the table instead of scrolling through your Facebook feed until they come back? Smartphones can be both extremely useful and extremely distracting. While they may be considered a tool, they can also become our master and change us in ways we are unable to see right away. The apostle Paul said, "All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful. All things are lawful for me, but I will not be dominated by anything. All things are lawful, but not all things build up."¹

In *12 Ways Your Phone is Changing You*, Tony Reinke shares insight from published studies and his own research. Reinke is a senior writer for Desiring God, the author of two other books, and host of the "Ask Pastor John" podcast. He admits the book is written *to him* as much as it is written *by him*, allowing

readers to see him not only as a teacher but also a fellow struggler. Though he benefits from using a smartphone daily, he also battles with the question we all face of how to live a balanced life in the digital age.

There is no doubt that smartphones have changed us in ways that we are not immediately aware of. In his book, Reinke discusses how we desire approval from our social group by posting selfies on Facebook and Instagram. We constantly check our notifications, desperate for our followers to tell us we are beautiful and attractive. Reinke also explores how we turn into what we "like" when the words and images we *share* influence others; the truth is that the words and images we consume *transform* us. Another major way that smartphones have changed us is in the way they cause us to think that no one is watching what we do. This propels us to wrongly think we can indulge in certain behaviors without any consequences. We have moved from computers to smartphones, bringing dating apps and porn to our fingertips and making them easier to view in secret.

Is your smartphone a negative influence, cultural trinket, or a tool? Whether you see it or not, smartphones are changing us both individually and globally. So, if you want to own a smartphone without being owned by it, take some time to read through Reinke's thoughts and research. Download a sample of the book at www.desiringgod.org/books/12-ways-your-phone-is-changing-you or purchase it online.

¹ 1 Corinthians 10:23





NEW BEGINNINGS AT THE 2018 YFC YOUTH CAMP

Known for its three seasons, hot, hotter and hottest climates, Vizag surprised the delegates in the month of January with its chilling cold breeze. A YFC evangelistic youth camp was organized for three days from 11th to 14th January, 2018 on the theme, “New Beginnings.” The A. S. R. Public School, a residential school in Aruku Valley, welcomed the members to a box of cool surprises.

With the scenic beauty around, young and dynamic speakers, Nehemiah, Vineeth, and Kishore introduced 103 youngsters to the Savior, Jesus Christ.

ONE OF THE YOUTH, NANI, FROM GUNTUR SHARED, “I WAS FALLING INTO SEVERAL ADDICTIONS BECAUSE OF THE INFLUENCE OF MY FRIENDS. BUT NOW I KNOW THAT JESUS IS MY ROLE MODEL. I HAVE DECIDED TO FOLLOW HIM.”

Rashmi, from Vizag testified, “I had no idea why God had brought me to this Camp. I have learned so much from the Scripture. I have accepted the Lord. My sins are forgiven. I am a new creation.” Avnesh, from Paderu, boldly confessed, “I brought my sins before Christ and I believe that He has forgiven my sins.”

Although the temperatures were close to single digits and the water felt icy cold, the delegates were warmed at the message of the Gospel. Small groups worked effectively as they pondered on the message for their own struggles.

One of the youth, Nani, from Guntur shared, “I was falling into several addictions because of the influence of my friends. But now I know that Jesus is my role model. I have decided to follow Him.” Subjects like holiness, identity and witness were key to the talks and discussions.

Now that the camp has come to an end, we clearly see the work of the Spirit who kindled the young hearts to Christ. Right from receiving the delegates in the wee hours at 2 AM on the 11th to the last day, arranging games and serving food, the volunteers were tested back and forth. If not for Christ, the camp would not have been so warm and pleasant. It is our prayer that God would give us more opportunities to share His love around the world.

ONE GIRL'S TRUE STORY

DANIELLE

Hi, my name is Danielle. I became a Christian in 2011. I grew up in a big family, fourth of eight kids, which meant a lot of friendly competition happened in our household. My family attended a church in the USA for most of my life. Growing up, I knew that God existed, but I didn't really understand the concept of me having my own personal relationship with Him or what that looked like. For the most part, I thought that because we went to church and I was a "good person" that it was enough for God. In high school, I spent most of my time playing sports, getting good grades, and was always willing to attend church and youth group. I was also given the opportunity to have a Christian mentor as part of our church youth group. The woman I was paired with taught me a lot about God and how He cares about every detail of our lives. During high school, I thought I was saved and knew God, but now I

know I had never made a personal commitment to Him.

Fast forward to my college years, I was

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attending church on a Sunday and heard my pastor talk about how God calls each one of us individually to have a relationship with Him. He said that this relationship is not based on your parent's relationship with Him or your upbringing, but solely on your true belief IN Him, not merely OF Him. My mind started churning at this moment, questioning if I had made that commitment to God. Now, understand that at this point in my life I had been going to a good, biblical church for 15 years that spoke the truth and yet it still took me that long to see God's ultimate plan for me. I was also attending a campus ministry at the time and found myself talking to the leader's wife that Monday after the service that really hit home for me. I told her that I didn't think I was a Christian, but knew that God was showing me that at this point because He

wanted to have all of me, heart, soul, and mind, not just my words and actions. He wanted ME. Over the next week, I remember I asked a lot of questions and really wanted to know Him. The next Sunday, I gave my life to Christ. God makes salvation an amazing gift. Our job is to embrace it. At that moment, I knew that God was now going to call all of the shots in my life.

Over the six years since I have been saved, I have experienced God in many ways. God shows us our sin gradually and then forgives us any time we are willing to give our sin up. This is not an easy task, but He wants us to call on Him to help us move away from our sins and towards Him. God also has constantly pursued me during our relationship, even when I don't see it. He has given me the ability to go to on mission trips to the Philippines and domestic trips as well. I also get to be involved in a great church and campus ministry. Most recently, God has shown me how I had made the idea of being married an idol in my life. He was showing me this for many months, before he moved in a drastic way to end what would have been a train wreck in the end. My fiancé of over a year broke up with me and moved. At times this feels overwhelming, but there is always the presence of God and I know He has a bigger plan for me than what I could ever put together on my own. I am learning through this situation that there is no better husband, or person, in my life than God. He is the most faithful, trustworthy person that we get to share our lives with. And He is always willing to be there, with arms wide open when we are ready to be with Him. I look forward to seeing what God will do with my life going forward.





"Society tells us who we should be as men and women, but its message keeps changing. However, the Bible teaches us exactly who we are - men and women created equally but uniquely." This is a quote from Matt Chandler, a pastor from The Village Church in Texas. Over a 9-part sermon series called "A Beautiful Design," Chandler discusses what the Bible has to say about manhood and womanhood, and also spends time laying out God's design for marriage. Note that marriage is not in the books for everyone, but if that is where you are led, God has a beautiful design for it. Biblical manhood is described throughout the series with one word in particular, which Chandler openly admits has archaic connotations: headship. God has given men the responsibility to lead their wives and families further into a relationship with God. Ephesians 5:25 says this is done by the husband loving his wife "as Christ loves the church in that he gave himself up for her."

Later into the series, Chandler shares how women, as God designed them, are given the

role of "helper" to their husband. Chandler offers up many times in Scripture where God Himself is described as a helper. Hebrews 13:6, Isaiah 41:10, Psalm 54:4, Psalm 40:17, John 16:7... Chandler puts it this way: "God being called helper throughout the Scriptures brings honor to the position of helper. Since God has been called the helper, a helper cannot be inherently inferior. So, if woman has been made a helper fit for him, a woman as helper to her husband cannot mean the woman is inferior in any way." The series also addresses sins that men typically fall into, which are selfish aggression and selfish passivity, and the tendency of women to struggle with comparison and perfectionism.

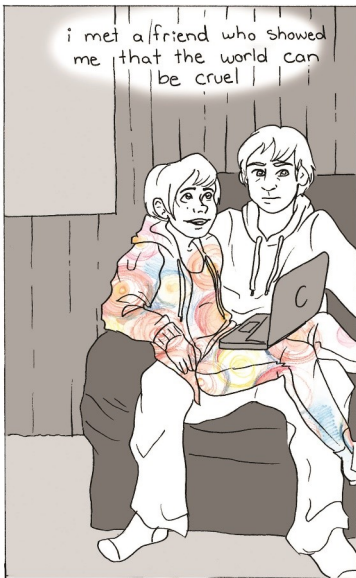
The intent of these messages is to explain the ways in which God's design for manhood and womanhood propels humans forward into a society that is vibrant and flourishing. If you're interested to know more, you can find these messages online at www.tvresources.net/resource-library/sermons/by-series/a-beautiful-design.

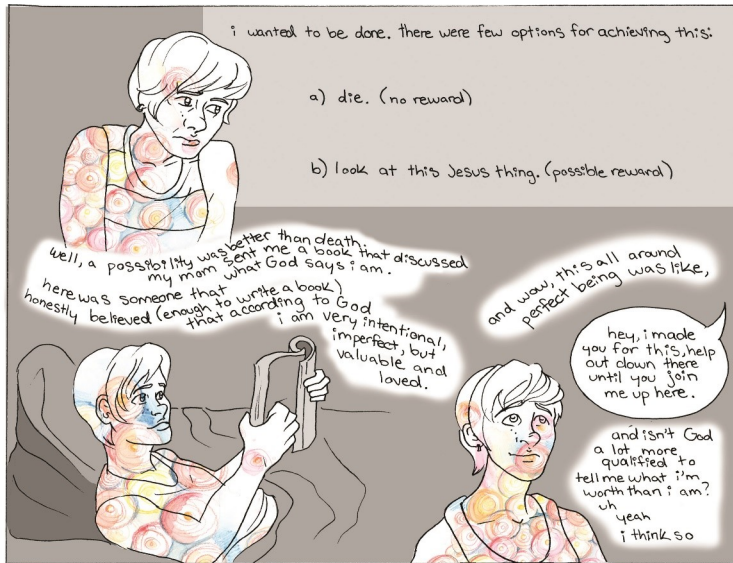
Study Guide

1. What is your current view of "manhood" and "womanhood?" What people or experiences in your life have shaped your opinion of gender?
2. In light of the material in this series, do you struggle with accepting God's design for the world?
3. What aspects do you bristle at? What areas seem to make sense to you after hearing them?
4. How does the view of gender in our culture differ from the view of gender in the Bible?
5. In what ways could you start to explore for yourself why you can trust in God's good design for your life?

How I Didn't Die

HOPE FOR TOMORROW









THE LIFE OF

HELEN ROSEVEARE

COUNTING IT
ALL
AS PRIVILEGE

“From the moment I fell in love with Him, everything else was secondary to one thing – becoming a missionary.”²

Helen applied to the World Evangelization Crusade (WEC) for service in Africa, after graduating from Cambridge as a medical doctor.³ She was first assigned at the Ibambi, Congo (later called Zaire) station, becoming the only doctor to two and a half million people. In Helen’s first two years in Africa, she founded a training school for women to serve as nurse-evangelists, who would later go on to run clinics in other regions.²

Just like any other pioneer missionary, Helen was not exempt from frustrations and challenges. She had difficulty learning the Swahili language. She had misunderstandings and conflicts with fellow missionaries. Helen had a hard time treating some diseases, and she also had frustrations within herself, but the Lord continued to change her, making her realize that her attitude was essentially rebellion against God and His purpose for her life. He brought her to repentance and forgiveness.

When she returned to the Congo after two years of furlough, it was with renewed commitment and added confidence towards God. But three weeks after returning, civil war broke out and violence against whites began. Helen was put under house arrest by rebel forces and later imprisoned.² Helen was severely beaten and was raped. However, on that dark and dreadful night, she sensed the Lord saying to her, “You asked Me, when you were first converted, for the privilege of being a missionary. This is it. Don’t you want it? . . . These are not your sufferings. They’re Mine. All I ask of you is the loan of your body.”⁴ Hearing these words, she received an overwhelming sense of privilege that the Almighty God would deem her worthy to participate with Him in His sufferings (Philippians 3:10).

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After returning to Africa in 1966, she soon left Nebobongo to establish a new medical center in Nyankunde, producing a 250-bed hospital, maternity ward, training college for doctors, a center for leprosy, and other endeavors. In 1973, Helen returned to the UK for health reasons, settling in Northern Ireland. She traveled, wrote several books, and served as a missionary advocate. She went to be with her Lord, from whom she counted it a privilege to suffer, on December 7, 2016, at the age of 91. In her Urbana '76 address, she said: “In the weeks of imprisonment that followed and in the subsequent years of continued service, looking back, one has tried to ‘count the cost,’ but I find it all swallowed up in privilege. The cost suddenly seems very small and transient in the greatness and permanence of the privilege.”

Those of us who have committed our lives to Christ have the same question to ask of ourselves as Helen: Was it all worthwhile? May we also, with her, answer in the affirmative ‘Aye!’ counting all of it as privilege to live with and in Christ.

Was it all worthwhile? The question had to be answered. As we look back to her missionary life in Africa, Helen did answer that question in the affirmative because she counted it all as privilege.

“I want people to be passionately in love with Jesus, so that nothing else counts.”¹ Helen Roseveare lived this philosophy ever since she came to personally know Christ as her Savior and Lord when she was a college freshman. Raised in a high Anglican church, Helen’s Sunday school teacher once told their class about India, and Helen resolved to one day be a missionary. Despite the Christian heritage of her family, and faithful attendance at church, Helen sensed a void in her life and distance from God. It was during the last night of her first Christmas break at college when she met God personally through reading Scripture. And that same night, she asked Him for the privilege of being a missionary for Him.

¹Lin Johnson, “Dr. Helen Roseveare: Passionate Missionary Doctor”

²urbana.org/blog/helen-roseveare

³blogs.thegospelcoalition.org/justintaylor/2016/12/07/a-woman-of-whom-the-world-was-not-worthy-helen-roseveare-1925-2016/

⁴Helen Roseveare, *He Gave Us A Valley*



THE STORY

Your Place in the Grand Narrative


When you do not understand why something is the way that it is, it is because you do not know its source. For example, when you experience a sore throat and stuffed up sinuses, it could indicate a whole slew of different causes. Is it the common cold? Is it allergies? Is it the start of the flu? Or is it something even worse? In the meantime, you attack it with throat lozenges, hot liquids, getting some extra sleep and maybe even taking some cold medicine. Sometimes it clears up and you never find out the cause. But other times, it requires a trip to the doctor and missing school or work to get to the bottom of it. It's common knowledge that treating the symptoms of something without a diagnosis isn't satisfactory in the long run. It prevents proper treatment, drags out the course of the illness, and produces consequences like doctor bills and loss of income. In order to understand why something is happening and how to address it best, you have to know its cause, right?

That's how it is with the whole of life, too. Why do bad things happen? Why can't we all just get along? Why is it so hard to be kind all the time? Honestly, why does everything have to be so hard, period? It's because we're missing the cause, the source, and we're failing to see the whole story.

Your life, your family's life, and the life of the community you live in is all a microcosm of the greater picture. You have probably all felt or seen glimpses of this. Why do all

humans universally know how to smile and have the capacity to appreciate beauty? Why is marriage a global concept? Why do we all seek, strive, and struggle our whole lives to create some semblance of "home?" Is it because we're all just wired that way, that it's in our genes? Is it merely learned behavior through mimicry or a tradition that's been passed down from generation to generation? Or, is there something larger at work...

"In the beginning, God..." (Genesis 1:1). These words were first written down thousands of years ago by a man whose life was literally the antithesis of what it could have been. He grew up as Egyptian royalty in an extravagant palace with every pleasure at his fingertips. His real parents, however, were Hebrew slaves who were oppressed by the royal Egyptian government, and when Moses sought justice by his own means, he ended up killing an Egyptian slave driver. Wanted for murder, he was driven into the desert and became a nomadic shepherd, but his story did not end there. God spoke to him and empowered him to go back and demand freedom for the Hebrew slaves – an impossible task! But God prevailed, and Moses soon became the leader for this huge group of people who wanted to be anywhere but wandering in a desert without the amenities of a home or a land to call their own, even if they had their freedom now. Moses didn't write those words, "In the beginning, God..." because he thought them up, nor did he lead a group of wayward people because he wanted to. Moses could have spent the rest of his life quietly eking out an existence as a shepherd, but God cut into Moses' timeline with a master plan that far



surpassed anything anyone could have ever thought possible. God was the cause and the source of the life Moses led. And He was the cause of Moses writing those time-defying words the Bible opens up with because He inspired Moses to record the truth of the origin of everything. And He's the reason you're here, right now, reading this.

We were planned and created to be a part of this same story before time existed because God is the Grand Master, the Author, of what is referred to as "life on earth." It's beautiful and terrible to step back and finally say, "...wait a minute...that's why?" Because when you stop deciding that everything is just a coincidence, or some belief, and that people are "just like that," and start to recognize the Author at work, you'll begin to see the world as He intended you to see it, as His creation. And that brings on a whole new set of consequences for your life's actions. Remember in the Matrix, when Neo takes the red pill instead of the blue one? That's what believing that God is the Master Planner behind life as you know it, is all about.

No one has to convince you that God exists. Romans 1:20 (NLT) says, "For since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature. So, they have no excuse for not knowing God." But it is true that someone or something has to tell you the story behind that nagging suspicion. That's what the Word of God, the Bible, was written for. And people who share scripture with others are passing it on so they, too, can grab hold of the true intent of life. The grand secret is that we were not made for ourselves. We were made for the Author – God. That's why Moses chose to live a life that makes no sense to the outside observer. He had everything! Why in the world would he have left it all behind? It's because He had a life-changing moment where God grabbed hold of him and forever changed the course of his entire life, and ours, too. Maybe you've heard the story where God spoke to Moses from a burning bush telling him to go back to Egypt where he was wanted for murder and defy a king who held millions of people hostage in slavery (Exodus 3,4). Again, this was not Moses' idea. It was God's, and it was part of the grand narrative He has been weaving since before the beginning of time.

Fast forward thousands of years, and it's difficult to connect how an ancient man relates to you today. However, the Bible wasn't written to be a collection of facts irrelevant to modern

life, but rather it's the revelation of why things are the way they are and what your role is. If you decide that that isn't true, that God isn't the Author of everything, then you've chosen the blue pill and you'll never know what you were created to play in the grand narrative. When I was 20, I almost chose the blue pill. I had just moved to my college town. I was at this crucial crossroads in my life where I was hovering between deciding to

not care anymore and to "let loose," or to turn to something I knew nothing about and I frankly didn't want anything to do with: God. Again, no one had to tell me He existed. I knew He did. But I was mad at Him. Life was not fun and I wasn't pleased with where it had all gone so far. Someone had recently told me to turn to Him and it made me bristle, intensely, out of anger. But, when I found myself alone in a basement bedroom in a strange town with no one to turn to, I tuned into some Christian podcasts I had found and it destroyed me. God was speaking, and I decided to finally listen in return. I took the red pill. That night forever changed me, and I never looked back. It's not been easy, but it's been infinitely better than I could have ever imagined because I'm tuned in now to the story of God and His creation. I'm not a rogue radio wave anymore trying to make sense of what's going on around me by diagnosing the symptoms of what I'm experiencing. I get it now. Not completely, of course. There's still some days where I feel like Cypher, that guy from the Matrix who said "Ignorance is bliss," and took the blue

pill. But those days don't come as often as they used to. Honestly, knowing God and reading His Words and pursuing His plan for my life, instead of trying to make it on my own, has been incredible.

This article cannot possibly be wrapped up in a neat, little package for you. I can write things like, "Go find a Bible and read it," "Talk to God and He'll answer," and "Have faith that your life is part of the story," but it doesn't cut it. You have to decide that you want to know the Source, and never look back.

"THE GRAND SECRET IS THAT WE WERE NOT MADE FOR OURSELVES. WE WERE MADE FOR THE AUTHOR – GOD."

LIFT *your* EYES

*Finding Hope
in a
Worsening World*

Can I be honest with you?

When I watch the news or scroll through my social media feed, I get really emotional. Anger rages in me from the injustice of discrimination. Deep depression settles in when considering the effects of each passing natural disaster, and tears well up with every (what seems like daily) senseless murder.

Can you relate? Am I the only one that feels this way?

It seems like this world is deteriorating faster and faster, and the instantaneousness of social media expedites the devastation that is occurring around the corner and around the world. Furthermore, the Bible warns us that the world really is only getting worse. Our sin brings destruction and death, so we are not the solution, but the source of the problem. From simple mistakes to decades of genocide, the collective consequences of every person's sin makes us all groan for a sliver of hope.

"OUR SIN BRINGS DESTRUCTION AND DEATH, SO WE ARE NOT THE SOLUTION, BUT THE SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM."

Let me be even more honest. I've looked for hope in all the wrong places.

I've sought hope in education, in relationships, in a career, in a motivational coffee cup, in getting new things, in trying harder, and in giving up altogether. I know that last one seems like an oxymoron, but I've thought things might be better if I just didn't care at all. Can you relate, or is it just me? The list goes on and on and on with the things we look to for hope. Maybe for you it's finding a new start, living up to parental expectations, living the American Dream, being unique, standing up for personal rights—you fill in the blank. Whatever we pick, we try it for a while, and for a while it seems to work. But temporary hope is no hope at all. Eventually, anything we find hope in except for Jesus will crash and burn. Just give it enough time.

Hear me out. God has given us authentic hope in the form of His son Jesus who has been present since the beginning of the world. It was God's plan since the Garden of Eden that Jesus would die for the sins of the world on the cross and then come back to life three days later to break the power of sin and death. That means His death wasn't a Plan B God had to come up with to quickly salvage the outcome of the human race.

He had control all along. Therefore, our hope in Jesus stands on solid ground because it's a hope that has spanned beyond the length of time itself. Jesus says of Himself, "...take

Before I was a Christian, I thought all of that trust-in-Jesus-as-your-savior stuff sounded nice but I didn't get how it practically played out here and now. If your hope is in Jesus, what do you do with the

"OUR BIGGEST MISTAKE IS THINKING HOPE CAN BE FOUND SOMEWHERE HERE ON EARTH. TRUST ME, IT'S NOT. HOPE ALONE IS FOUND IN JESUS CHRIST. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS LIFT YOUR EYES."

heart, for I have overcome the world."¹

Jesus cannot be your hope by default. He cannot be your hope if you are distracted by all of those other things that compete for your attention. You have to consciously acknowledge that without Him, you are trapped in your own wickedness with no way out. The world is full of its fair share of devastation, but going one more day without His presence is the true tragedy. An Old Testament writer knew this all too well when he wrote, "But you, o Lord, are a shield around me. You are my glory, the one who holds my head high. I cried out to the Lord, and he answered me from his holy mountain."² You see, this is the greatest hope—that despite God's infinite greatness as the creator of the world, He still hears our cries and responds to our troubles as the perfect Father.

practical, day-to-day struggles you go through while waiting to see Him face-to-face? The first step is sharing our daily successes and failures with other faithful Christians. You simply won't make it on our own, and there is tangible hope and strength in going to war with an army beside you. The second step is realizing that hope is an action. As a Christian, you can redeem your time left on earth and use it to spread the hope of Jesus to others. He has given us the mission of being His ambassadors, and when we're busy serving Him, loving Him, and leading others to Him, our problems have a way of shrinking in comparison.

In the end, our biggest mistake is thinking hope can be found somewhere here on earth. Trust me, it's not. Hope alone is found in Jesus Christ. All you have to do is lift your eyes.

¹John 16:33

²Psalms 3:2-6

the PAIR IN THE NIGHT

Rapping on the wet wooden door, the Doctor and his Assistant gripped their cloaks tightly and awaited an answer from within. The metal slat flew back and two, ice blue eyes pierced into their own. A deep voice demanded their intent. The Doctor responded that they were looking for lodging. After a long, calculated pause, the slat shut. It was followed by a series of thuds and clanks. They were being let inside the fort.

Once inside, the pair made their way towards the only light visible in the bleak cluster of buildings. There were no civilians out on the streets, only the rain and the occasional uniformed Watchman. They slipped into the tavern and chose a booth near the back. A weary woman offered them two mugs of something hot. They accepted with no intention of consumption.

Her skin was gray in the dim light, with hollow cheeks and an exasperated mop of hair hastily pulled back from her grim face. The Doctor called out to her. However, as she turned, he

noticed one of her most defining features, or lack thereof I suppose you could say. She had only half a nose left. The Doctor's heart sank when he saw, but he didn't let it show.

As he inquired about a room, he did his best to look into her eyes, one nearly opaque with a milky film, the other a familiar ice blue. As he spoke, he could see that she was studying the curious pair, comparing their health to her infirmity. She muttered something about having little vacancies, but before she could completely deny him, the Assistant produced a large wad of bills. She hesitated a moment, looking at his hand, noting that it was devoid of any sores or blemishes. Then she nodded, accepted the money, and scurried away.

By this point, the two had attracted some attention, as they always seemed to.

A few men who had been lingering around the bar moved to their table. They shared a similar set of symptoms with the woman: gray complexion, ice blue eyes, and patches of festering wounds scattered about their features.



"THE DOCTOR'S EYES GLITTERED AS HE GLANCED UP AND PRODUCED A GLORIOUSLY SIMPLE ANSWER: THE CURE WAS COMPLETELY FREE. "

They asked about their business, and the two had no reason to withhold from them at this point.

The Doctor asked the men why they supposed there was such a difference in appearance between he and they. They obviously had been wondering the same, but had no answer for him. He then told them that he had some bad news. They listened intently as the Doctor told them that they were sick. Very sick. Overwhelmingly ill and nearing the grave. It seemed as if this pronouncement had struck them heavily. They didn't move or breathe, but it was apparent that they understood. The Doctor told them that this wasn't all. He was a physician, and he had a cure.

A cynical scoff broke out among them to cover the vulnerability they felt. One asked how much this 'miracle cure' was going to cost. The Doctor's eyes glittered as he glanced up and produced a gloriously simple answer: the cure was completely free.

The men could hardly contain themselves as they began to believe. Speaking over each other excitedly, the questions poured out as they motioned to various wounds and sores on their bodies. The Assistant finally quieted them, but just as he was about to ask them if they truly wanted the Doctor's cure, the front door of the tavern swung open. A parade of Watchmen flooded into the room

and surrounded them. They asked what the pair's business was. One of the sick men spoke out excitedly, unable to contain himself. The Watchman addressed the man, silently but severely. The Doctor's credibility was called into question. The men were verbally berated for believing such flowery nonsense. They weren't sick, the Watchman spat at them, the Doctor was trying to take advantage of them. Sorrow welled up in the Doctor's chest as he watched the hope drain from their faces once more. The pair was roughly escorted outside the city gate, and the wet, wooden door shut behind them with a violent thud.

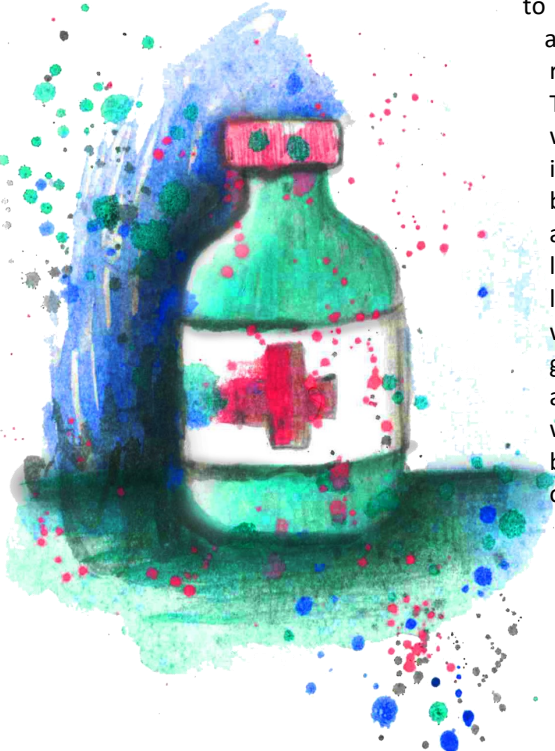
Denying themselves any detour into discouragement, the two turned from the gate and

continued out into the night. It had been so long since they had seen someone cured of the Sickness. On especially cold and wet nights, the only thing that kept them moving was remembering that they too had once been sick. Perhaps, in the next town, the people would listen.

However, before they were a stone's throw from the large, battle-worn gate, they heard a series of thuds and clacks, followed by a wet splash. Looking behind them, they saw one of the men from the tavern, lying on his belly in the mud. His soiled cloak was pulled around his sickly frame and he was scrambling to get up.

"Wait!" he sputtered as he managed to get on his feet again and hobble over to the pair. "Please...I've spent my whole life knowing that there was something wrong with me. I cannot be well in my own power. Please give me the cure so that I can be well. If you do, I cannot help but to devote my entire life to you both."

The Doctor and his Assistant tried to hold back their enthusiasm as they explained the ramifications of his decisions. The cure was a process; he would still need to fight the illness. He would never again be able to live undetected among the sick. There were long roads of darkness that lay ahead. However, the man would not be swayed. With great joy, the cure was finally administered. The man was well at last, and the two became three as they moved out once again into the night.



The Meh Mentality

How not caring
will kill you.

A casual browse through Twitter for #meh produces the following results:

"An alarm just went off and I have no clue what it's for."

"So much energy, so little motivation."

"I kinda want to get a job at a vegan restaurant and eat beef jerky in front of the customers."

"It's not every day that your fridge door falls off..."

"There's nothing like starting a paper that's due in 8 hours!"

With this much context, the word "meh" is easily defined as not caring, feeling apathetic, or the onset of boredom. It can be used in a wide variety of settings to describe moods, flavors, friendships, jobs, expectations, and more. "Meh" can be traced back as an expressive Yiddish word but it didn't gain cultural popularity until used on the television series *The Simpson's*.¹ Since then, it has slowly crept into everyday

vernacular. Used casually, "meh" is pretty harmless in and of itself. However, its familiarity has transformed it from a simple expression to a generational mentality. When apathy invades the ways we think, feel, and act, it can be easy to assume we're taking a neutral position by not caring one way or another. But, this is not true. The "meh" mentality will kill us, and there is no neutrality in death.

A Lethal Weapon

Imagine floating in a lake or the ocean, just a few yards offshore. Arms and legs are stretched wide; eyes are closed, embracing the warm sun above. The gentle rocking of the waves soothes and makes the distance from shore a fleeting thought. Before long, your trance is broken by an obnoxious seagull and you realize you are much farther offshore than when you started. Your feet can no longer touch the bottom and you hope your swimming skills are stronger than the current below. Without realizing it, you've drifted a great distance away.

Indifference is just like floating—it moves you farther and farther away from shore, one wave

“IF THE ‘MEH’ MENTALITY STARTS IN OUR HEARTS, INVADES OUR MINDS, AND EFFECTS HOW WE LIVE, THE ONLY REMEDY IS THE ONE WHO HAS PROMISED TO EXCHANGE OUR DECEITFUL, HARD, AND SINFUL HEARTS WITH A BRAND NEW ONE. JESUS—NOT THE LATEST SELF-HELP BOOK, A GOOD CAREER, OR TRYING HARDER—IS THE ONLY ESCAPE FROM APATHY.”

at a time. It is a daily decision and its effects may seem inconsequential but they accumulate quickly. For example, if you don’t care about going to class one day, you’ll probably get away with it. However, if that decision is made many weeks in a row, chances are that you’ll fail the class. Gone completely unchecked, our apathy will lead to places that are humiliating, embarrassing, shocking, regretful, lonely, and more. In Hebrews, the author warns us to be careful: “So we must listen very carefully to the truth we have heard, or we may drift away from it.”² Those are our two options in life: we either obey the truth with intentionality or we drift. Unfortunately, the more you drift, the easier it is to do. When your body is warmed from the sun, and you’re rocked gently by the waves, don’t you just want to stay there forever?

In addition to killing us gradually, the “meh” mentality kills deeply to our very core. It is not only a condition of our mind, but of our hearts because “out of the heart the mouth speaks.”³ Who we truly are and what is living deep in our hearts is manifested by what comes out of our mouth. Therefore, if we repeatedly use “meh” language like “I don’t care” or “Whatever,” it reveals that our apathy sinks deeper than we may have known. There is no use in pretending that it doesn’t. Jesus calls us out on denying our apathy when He says, “Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.”⁴ God can see through our

motivations and our deeds, and He knows when apathy strikes.

Furthermore, God pays close attention to our apathy because He hates the idea of not caring. In Revelation, He implores us to be either hot or cold because trying to walk the middle ground of not caring makes Him want to vomit.⁵ Don’t be fooled—it’s not only the people who outright reject Christ that are God’s enemy. It’s also the people who refuse to pick a side, who stand with their feet planted in indecision, who are the targets of His wrath.

Finally, the “meh” mentality kills permanently. God has some harsh words for those who treat Him and His Word nonchalantly. In the book of Hebrews, the writer states, “It is impossible to bring back to repentance those who were once enlightened—those who have experienced the good things of heaven and shared in the Holy Spirit...by rejecting the Son of God they themselves are nailing him to the cross once again.” And a few chapters later, he continues, “Just think how much worse the punishment will be for those who have trampled on the son of God and have treated the blood of the covenant which made us holy as if it were common and unholy [they] have insulted and disdained the Holy Spirit who brings God’s mercy to us.”

Denying God’s mercy and treating it as common is the worst thing the “meh” mentality could possibly do. When you say “meh” to your refrigerator door coming off, that is pretty inconsequential. But if we let the apathy spread to our ideas about God, the condition of our souls is at stake. The Bible is clear that if we treat God with contempt and do not honor the sacrifice of Jesus’ actions on our behalf, then there is nothing left to save us and we are hell bound. Eternity is not something to ponder in your college philosophy class. It is real. Our lives don’t end just because our physical bodies deteriorate and die. There is life after this one, and God is gracious enough to give us 80 years to make up our minds about Him. If we love Him and serve Him now, we get to do a lot more of that in the life to come. However, if we want nothing to do with Him in this life, spending eternity in hell is only getting what we asked for: a life apart from God.



The Only Antidote

If the "meh" mentality starts in our hearts, invades our minds, and effects how we live, the only remedy is the One who has promised to exchange our deceitful, hard, and sinful hearts with a brand new one. Jesus—not the latest self-help book, a good career, or trying harder—is the only escape from apathy. If we realize our need for him, Jesus promises to restore us. Ezekiel, an Old Testament prophet, wrote in reference to Jesus, "I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart."

Our hearts are in desperate need of this transformation because on our own we are incredibly wicked people. We lie, kill, destroy, and manipulate to advance the self-centered desires within us. If we do accomplish any "good" on the outside, it is often tarnished by the defiled motivations under the surface. We are sinners not only because of what we do, but because it's who we are. Thankfully, coming to Christ and having Him give us a new heart doesn't cost us anything. We can freely approach Christ broken, naked, and without anything to give. However, it did cost Jesus a great deal. His death on the cross wasn't just some kind gesture. It was a brutal payment meant for all of us that we no longer need to face if we trust Him.

We can trust Jesus not only because He died, but also because He still lives. After three days in the grave, He broke the power of death with His resurrection. Because He still lives, we can have an active, loving, and powerful relationship with Him. Christians don't just know a lot about God like facts and statistics, trying to do our best to follow some ancient rules. We follow a living God step by step who is intricately involved in who we are, and He provides the power to turn away from the sin that so enslaved us.

A New Way of Thinking

If the "meh" mentality we once had was like a blank, neutral canvas, when Jesus enters our life, He paints it with the brightest and most beautiful colors that we never knew we were missing. For the first time, we're filled with incredible desire that *wants* to be close to Him. Before, we couldn't care either way, but now there should be an intense passion for what God has done and what He is going to do. "Spirituality for the follower of Christ is a matter of a different world with a different reality, different energies, different possibilities, and different prospects."⁶

"JESUS CAME TO GIVE US THE FULLEST AND MOST ABUNDANT LIFE POSSIBLE, AND THAT IS WHY HE HATES THE "MEH" MENTALITY SO MUCH. IT SEEKS TO REPLACE VIBRANCY WITH MEDIOCRITY. IT SEEKS TO REPLACE LOVE WITH APATHY. IT SEEKS TO KILL PASSION WITH NEUTRALITY."



Such passion first shows up in our mind. Our minds used to run away with evil thoughts, imaginary conversations, secrets, and ultimately hatred against God. Now, Christ gives us the power to fight the battle in our heads. Knowing what the Bible says is like taking up a sword that enables us to "take our thoughts captive."⁷ We are no longer a victim to our own minds but can now destroy the thoughts that intended to destroy us.

In addition, the new heart God gives us enables us to love other people with a greater intensity than we knew before. We are no longer apathetic to the friends or strangers around us, but can now "love because He first loved us."⁸ We can put others first without feeling slighted, we can be glad for others' accomplishments without feeling jealous, and we can forgive and be forgiven all because we're awakened to new life. Jesus came to give us the fullest and most abundant life possible,⁹ and that is why He hates the "meh" mentality so much. It seeks to replace vibrancy with mediocrity. It seeks to replace love with apathy. It seeks to kill passion with neutrality.

In the end, we can let our cultural "meh" mentality leave us pacified with a boring blank canvas of a life. Or, we can fight apathy by adding color and by accepting the vibrant, passionate life Jesus died to give us. One choice means life, and the other death. Which do you choose? Remember, there is no neutrality in death.

¹ www.slate.com/blogs/lexicon_valley.html

² Hebrews 2:1

³ Matthew 12:34

⁴ Matthew 23:28

⁵ Revelation 3:15

⁶ "The Call" Os Guinness

⁷ 2 Corinthians 10:5

⁸ 1 John 4:19

⁹ John 10:10

Unexpected Return

CANADIAN PASTOR IMPRISONED IN
NORTH KOREA RECENTLY RELEASED

Imagine crossing oceans to visit those you love 110 times over 20 years, and then you're arrested and charged with a crime you didn't commit. This was the heartbreaking reality for Hyeon Soo Lim, Lead Pastor of Light Korean Presbyterian Church in Toronto, Canada. For over 20 years, Lim led a ministry that showed love and compassion to the people of North Korea by assisting with programs to feed the hungry, creating orphanages, homes for senior citizens, noodle and tofu factories, as well as establishing farming and educational programs. Lim was unaware why he was suddenly arrested and charged with "defaming" Kim Jong-un, which he says he did not do. It was clear the ministry work was needed and well-received by the people. The congregation was shocked when Lim was thrown behind bars.

Not many people know what really goes on in a foreign labor camp, but it's definitely not a sought-after place. Lim spoke of being in complete isolation. He

was assigned to dig holes in the dirt one meter long, one meter wide, and one meter deep, which in the winter was like trying to bust concrete with a shovel. He also spent time breaking up coal. But even in the pain and trial, Lim turned his sorrow and heartache into courage, joy, and thanksgiving, and later stated that he never experienced even one day of gloom. Despite the grueling work, Lim was allowed to have Sundays as a day of rest. He recalls spending those 130 Sundays during his imprisonment worshipping God. He was surprisingly allowed to retain a Bible his congregation sent him nearly a year into his confinement. Lim was not allowed to write anything down, but he compensated by growing his memorization skills.

Through the help of Swedish diplomats, Lim's release was negotiated and approved in August 2017. After being in jail for two years and six months, Lim was surprised and ecstatic to be

released on "sick bail," which he found out only 15 minutes before his release. Lim expressed great gratitude to the Canadian government and the Swedish diplomats, but ultimately believes God granted him release from prison. Lim is convinced prayer from different churches and concerned Christians around the globe made all the difference. Lim returned to Canada and had a reception at his church on August 12, 2017, where he celebrated with his friends and family. Lim even sang a few hymns he wrote during his confinement.

In our increasingly anti-Christian culture, we must remember that persecutions are here and will be more common. Matthew 5:11 encourages us, "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account."



⁴<https://www.opendoorsusa.org/christian-persecution/stories/freed-north-korea-pastor-lim-shares-story-joyful-church/>

Getting Alone with

GOD



8 WAYS TO CONNECT WITH GOD

(THAT DON'T INCLUDE YOUR SMARTPHONE)

Did you know that roughly 68% of Americans have smartphones?¹ Dr. Paul Booth, an assistant professor at DePaul University in Chicago, shared observations from his studies on how our face-to-face relationships are affected by social media. He found that when we converse online, our social connections are not as strong as they are when we get together in person. Booth also pointed out that the latest edition of the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) lists 'Internet addiction' as a mental illness, "marked by emotional shutdown, lack of concentration, and withdrawal symptoms."¹ Needless to say, the temptation for distraction has never been greater.

Some of us already admit that we see how our phones are changing our relationships. We feel it, right? It's that weird tension of feeling more "connected" yet more alone, and we don't know why. Are we really more connected or are we just distracted?

If our technology use is not put in its proper place, we can guarantee that we will not hear from God. God's voice, in His patience and care for us, is quiet. The way of the world is very loud. God, as a loving Father, wants to be alone with us. So, how can we get alone with God in a digital age?

1 GET ALONE – It's not too obvious because, clearly, we aren't doing it. Get away from work and away from people (no matter how much you like them – no offense to your friends). Get outside to a quiet place where you'll see beautiful things and be reminded that you are very small and your God is very, very big. Jesus was completely sinless, *perfect*, and he got alone with God. How much more should we go to God to face the things life throws at us? Psalm 46:10 shares with us the secret to getting alone with our Creator: "Be still and know that I am God."

2 TURN OFF THE DEVICES – Makes sense, right? Technology allows us to be socially plugged in even when we are physically alone. Don't allow yourself

¹www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/29/technology-device-ownership-2015/

"Get outside to a quiet place where you'll see beautiful things and be reminded that you are very small and your God is very, very big."

the temptation of a buzz to pull you away from a big God who wants to hear from and speak to you.

3 PRAY – The thing with prayer is that, if you don't do it all the time, it can feel like you're speaking to nothing. The good news is that 2 Chronicles 7:14 tells us, "If my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land." God also promises us in Jeremiah 29:13, "If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me." Tell God how you feel, what you're thinking about, and what you're worried about. Tell him what you're excited about! Allow yourself space to be completely honest with yourself and with God. In Hebrews 4:16, we are encouraged to, "Come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most."

4 OPEN THE BIBLE – God's voice is not the voice in your head. God's voice is the voice of the truth of Scripture. The Bible is our source of truth for the conduct of our lives. It also tells the grand story about God in His grace rescuing sinners for His glory. It explains the details of the life of Jesus and other individuals throughout history who spread the good news of the Gospel after His resurrection. Because the Bible was written by men but was and is guided by the Holy Spirit, we can find application in it for our lives today. In Hebrews 4:12 it says, "For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires." The Bible is one of the strongest ways God communicates with His believers.

5 SING – You know that feeling you get when you pop in your headphones and feel like you're able to escape everything around you? There's a reason for that feeling. Our ultimate purpose, as human beings, is to be worshippers of God. And while there are more ways to worship God than through song, music does have a powerful way of turning our hearts towards Him. Next time you're in the car or just sitting down trying to seek God, look up a song like "Margins" by Great Awakening or some Hillsong United, if that's your thing. Let the words of the song cut deep. Give the song your full attention, the way you want your friends to do when

you show them a new song you just found. Watch how God can pull you in close as you align your heart and mind towards Him.

6 CHANGE UP YOUR ROUTINE – We don't actively demonstrate love for things that we take for granted. Changing up your routine will help keep things fresh and not expected. Love needs spontaneity. Take a new route while walking to class or drive a different way to work. Changes in routine naturally give us a new perspective, hopefully one in which we let God catch our attention.

7 QUIT WHAT YOU NEED TO – Getting alone with God is going to be the thing we desire most if we deeply feel the love God has for us and realize what He did to be near to us. The pull of the world is bent towards self-sufficiency, but for the Christian, this is not so. We are weak bodies, dependent on a Lord for salvation and a heart change. If you desire this but feel like it is impossible to have time for God, start by setting your priorities in line. Knowing God is a priority, and we should do whatever we have to in order to craft a regular time with God in our lives. Wake up early, skip a meal, lay out your clothes the night before so you have less to do in the morning. Learn to say no. Do whatever you need to do to put time with God above everything else.

8 JOURNAL – Writing can help you see how God has been active in your life over time and how He answered prayers. You'll see how you've grown, how situations have played out in your life, and you can remind yourself of verses and how they spoke to you. What we see on paper can help verify for us what we believe.



NOTE – Following these eight steps will not automatically make you close with God. They are, however, ways that can help us clearly tune in to what God is saying. They are practical tips for drawing near to God. But a ninth tip is just as important: stop planning and just go to Him. We may be too busy, have too much to do, and need more sleep. However, changes in our behavior should be the result of us simply going to God, not where we place our energy. It's not about trying to form new habits; it's about building a relationship with God. Pray and ask God to give you focus to be close to Him.



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THE BOOK OF JOHN

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