

REBUILT

TO LIVE A GREAT STORY

masters of
masquerade

PAGE 8
Esther Ahn Kim

PAGE 16
7 Reasons
to Work Well

PAGE 18
Life on
Mission

PAGE 12

SUMMER 2018

REBUILTMAGAZINE.COM

ISSUE TWO

REBUILT

TO LIVE A GREAT STORY

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We're a global magazine with versions published in the USA, Southeast Asia, Amsterdam, and the Philippines.

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.

CONTRIBUTING LOCATIONS:



India



Philippines



Netherlands



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A close-up image of a fountain pen nib, showing the fine tip and the surrounding metal body.

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CONTENTS

FEATURED



12 MASTERS OF MASQUERADE
FACING OUR FEAR OF BEING
FOUND OUT

04

DON'T FOLLOW YOUR HEART
A BOOK BY USA AUTHOR

05

A.W. TOZER
PRACTICING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

06

ONE GUY'S TRUE STORY
COMING TO FAITH IN A POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD

07

ONE GIRL'S TRUE STORY
COMING TO FAITH IN THE PHILIPPINES

08

ESTHER AHN KIM
A SOLDIER FOR CHRIST IN KOREA

09

DEAR LAURA
WHY DID GOD MAKE YEARS, MONTHS, AND DAYS?

10

QUARTERLY MUSIC BEAT
A PLAYLIST FROM OUR FRIENDS

11

THEOLOGY DEFINED
HEAR THE STORIES COME TO LIFE

15

TO: PAST ME, FROM: CURRENT ME
A CREATIVE SUBMISSION FROM A READER

16

7 REASONS TO WORK WELL
HOW OUR JOBS MAKE US MORE LIKE JESUS

18

LIFE ON MISSION
7 TIPS FOR SHARING YOUR FAITH IN COLLEGE

20

ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE IN AN UPSIDEDOWN WORLD
EVERLASTING LIFE IS A PRESENT-TENSE POSSESSION

23

TRANSFORMED BY THE WORD OF GOD
YFC MAY 2018 DISCIPLESHIP CAMP

“Don’t Follow Your Heart”

a book by USA author Jon Bloom

BOOK REVIEW

*“Your heart will not save you.
You need to be saved from
your heart.”*



It's not hard to guess what the book "Don't Follow Your Heart" sets out to deliver. Its author, Jon Bloom, offers a microscopic view into your heart's condition in the midst of a world that chants the "follow your heart" mantra. The book is organized into 31 sections that break down the various myths you've been led to believe about yourself by using the Bible to illuminate the One you were made to follow. It's not a "how-to" manual, but rather a "collection of helps for common heart problems."

With chapter titles like, "The Insanity of Leaning on Our Own Understanding" and "Where Satan Will Attack You Today," you cannot read this book with a neutral attitude. While digesting each section, you are left reeling from the bad news of how wayward you truly are, but led to drink in the good news that dying to yourself to follow the Savior is the most sane, rational thing you could ever do.

For example, read the following excerpt from page 103: *We often do not know what we are really building when we embark on our achievements. We often aren't aware of how deep, pervasive, and motivating our pride is. We often are blind to how much we cherish the glory of our name. But God knows. And in mercy he confounds us, impedes us, and humbles us. And it is all mercy. 'God opposes the proud*

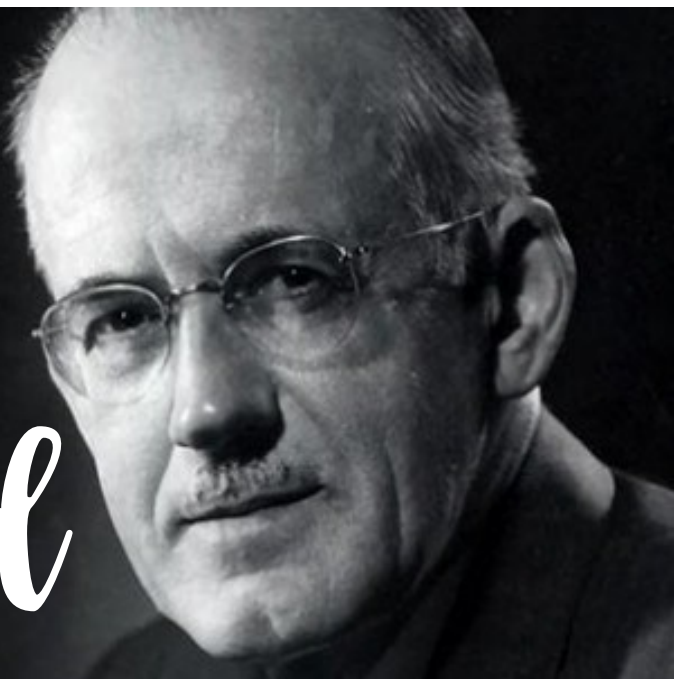
but gives grace to the humble' (1 Pet. 5:5). When it comes to his children, God gives us grace in the act of opposing our pride, because it makes us humble. For he knows that the more humble we are, the happier we are. The proud will be destroyed (Prov. 16:18), but the humble will dwell with God (Isa. 57:15).

It doesn't matter where you are currently at with God. Whether you are a curious voyager, a seasoned Christian, or hurting from the overload of this world, reading this book allows you to take a brutally honest look into the reason things are the way they are and offers fresh hope in the path forward.

Purchase a digital copy for \$5.99 or grab a paper copy for \$9.99. A free PDF download is also available online. Share it with friends. It's definitely a must-read for everyone.

A.W. TOZER

Practicing THE Presence OF God



In the year 1897, William McKinley became president, Bram Stoker's *Dracula* was published, Thomas Edison patented the first machine that produced moving images, John McDermott won the first ever Boston Marathon, and arguably one of the greatest theologians of the modern time was born: A.W. Tozer.

Everyone has an interesting story to tell about their first high school job and Tozer isn't an exception. His family moved to Ohio, USA from a farm in Pennsylvania, USA, and shortly after he got a job at the Goodyear factory cutting up chunks of rubber by hand. Streaming music wasn't available then, so he often memorized poetry to occupy his time. One evening, on the way home from a shift at the factory, Tozer passed by a street preacher who pleaded with all who would listen, "If you don't know how to be saved, just call on God, saying 'God, be merciful to me—a sinner,' and God will hear you." Those words were a catalyst for a teenage Tozer, and his life was suddenly filled with purpose: to passionately pursue God and worship Him always.

Tozer's ministry grew steadily, decade by decade. He spent 30 years as the pastor of Southside Alliance Church in Chicago, USA, edited a Christian publication called *Alliance Weekly* for 13 years, and wrote numerous books, all while raising seven children with his wife, Ada. He viewed all of these accomplishments simply as the results of faithfulness that any Christian ought to exhibit. Therefore, his tombstone simply reads "A.W. Tozer—a man of God."

In 1945, Tozer's most iconic book, *The Pursuit of God*, was published. In a time where authors like George Orwell and Aldous Huxley were describing fictional utopias, Tozer was pointing his readers to the truth about Jesus Christ and how our posture ought to be towards Him. Little did he know that over a million copies of this work would be in print 70 years later.

A pervasive theme throughout Tozer's work was to set aside the distractions of the culture and instead pursue the calling of God on a daily basis. In one of his editorial writings, he explained, "It will cost something to walk slowly in the parade of the ages, while excited

"It will cost something to walk slowly in the parade of the ages, while excited men of time rush about confusing motion with progress. But it will pay in the long run, and the true Christian is not much interested in anything short of that."

men of time rush about confusing motion with progress. But it will pay in the long run, and the true Christian is not much interested in anything short of that." Tozer's wisdom can be summed up in this—he encourages all of us to invest today in what will ultimately be our eternity long after we're dead. Getting distracted and following what everyone else is doing isn't inconsequential—it comes with a price much larger than we realize. We have the option to follow Christ or to follow the rules and regulations of this world, but we cannot do both.

One Guy's True Story



I grew up not going to church at all except on Easter and Christmas. I had known about Jesus, and my parents had talked about Him occasionally, but that was it. No one in our household really had a relationship with God. When I would go to church, I didn't feel anything and it was like I was just going through the motions.

When I was in middle school and early high school, my life showed no acknowledgment of God. I was into things like swearing and pornography and I wasn't honoring God with anything in my life. When I was a sophomore in high school, my wood shop teacher, David Heisel, invited my brother and our family to his local church. It was there that I had first heard the gospel message of God coming down as a man, living a perfect God-honoring life, and dying on the cross, bearing the sins of the world so that we can be legally right in God's eyes, those who trust in Jesus. When I had heard this, I felt very convicted of my lifestyle and this was when I got saved and the Holy Spirit had opened my spiritually dead eyes and my heart of stone to see the wondrous work of God Almighty. But my first two years of college, I never got plugged into a body of believers to help grow and strengthen my faith.

The summer after my freshman year of college, my brother, Mitch, had really been pressing on me to sign up for this camp for Christian athletes through an organization called Athletes in Action. I really did not want to go but my brother kept trying and eventually I signed up. The camp was called "The Ultimate Training Camp" and was directed around how to glorify God through our sports and how to really play/run for Him. At this camp, I met so many other Christian athletes from around the country and it was so comforting knowing that others went through the same struggles I do. It was at this camp where I realized what my sins were doing to me and, more importantly, how God viewed my sins. Being in a Christian community at that camp really made me long for something like that in my life permanently.

Since that camp, my life has not been the same. I have directed my path to reading Scripture daily, having a richer prayer life, and following the path directed for me by the Holy Spirit. Being in constant communication with and meditating on Jesus gives me so much joy knowing I am in the hands of the Creator of the world, and that He can certainly handle ANYTHING that deeply troubles me!

"The Holy Spirit had opened my spiritually dead eyes and my heart of stone to see the wondrous work of God Almighty."

- Mike



This past summer I was feeling very convicted to get connected to a local church because I had not done that my first two years of college. I came across a local church and have been greatly blessed by everyone there. It is amazing how God has lead me to this group of people and how far He has brought me in my walk with Him. Since then, God has still been pursuing me and showing me many areas in my life that are not fully surrendered to Him. It has been an uncomfortable process, but just trusting Him is the most important thing. After graduation, I would like to stay in the area and keep serving God.

One Girl's True Story



I grew up thinking that I have to be good to have satisfaction in life. Most of my family served in the church and one uncle was a priest. I believed that religion was the only way to Heaven. Ever since high school, I've read the Bible every day, prayed, memorized verses, and attended church regularly. But doing all these things eventually stopped making sense to me. I began to daily ask God to come into my life, save me, and write my name in the Book of Life.

Despite striving hard to be spiritually good, I was at war with my attitude. I was self-centered, impatient, bad-tempered and a spoiled brat. I was an introvert and hated mingling with people. I was almost friendless.

My college life in Cebu City was confined to my dorm and school. Getting and maintaining good grades drove me to frustration because my scholarship depended on it. It pushed me physically and emotionally, and this struggle lasted for months on end. There was a time where I cried for two straight weeks. I even entertained the idea of harming myself because the emotional pain was too much.

In April 2017, I decided that I had had enough sadness, tears, and meaninglessness. I asked for help from a friend who I knew was a Christian. She suggested that I read this book by a Christian author, and after two months of reading it, I applied my heart to what the book was saying. Sadness went away temporarily. The emptiness, however, reared its ugly head again.

A friend of mine connected me to Ate Maimai Tendero, a Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC) missionary. She invited me to go to church with her that Sunday, and that was the beginning of our regular discipleship. After weeks of Bible study, I found myself hungry for God's Word for the first

**"DESPITE STRIVING HARD TO
BE SPIRITUALLY GOOD, I WAS
AT WAR WITH MY ATTITUDE."**

time. The Bible made sense now. God's promises were now an encouragement. I saw the need and purpose of being in a Christian community so I committed myself to join Movement Life and the 5am prayer time put on by CCC.

Being involved with a ministry group and worshipping in a Christian church gave me a bigger picture of what Christianity was all about. It's a relationship with Jesus Christ that's realized in a community. Religion, after all, isn't the way to Heaven like I used to think. Not only was I shaped spiritually, but I also saw how my character was being changed. I started to come out of my shell and began to have the courage to talk and mingle with people. Today, I am able to share personal stories with other students. I also learned how to share Jesus and the gospel with others.

None of these changes happened overnight; in fact, I didn't even notice them in me until others told me! Everything has all been because of God's grace. Every time I sit and wonder how God changed my heart, His words in Jeremiah 29:11-13 remind me that, *"He knows the plans He has for me, plans to prosper me and not to harm me, plans to give me hope and a future. When I call on Him and come and pray to Him, He will listen to me when I seek Him with my heart."*

- Blessie



Esther Ahn Kim

A SOLDIER FOR CHRIST IN KOREA

While the Germans were invading Europe during WWII, Christians were being persecuted in East Asia. Among them, Esther Ahn Kim was being criticized for being too weak in a country where boys were preferable. Little did she know God would use her in big ways.

Esther grew up with her fiery-spirited mother who became passionate about the Lord. With a missionary's testament of truth from the Bible, Esther prepped for future suffering in a broken country.¹ As the Japanese took control over Korea in the 1930's, Korean lifestyles were being destroyed. Idol shrines were being built across the entire country. Government offices, schools, and even personal homes were required to house shrines. Laws were changed and a requirement to all Korean citizens was passed to bow to a shrine of the Japanese emperor alongside a shrine of the Japanese sun goddess, Amaterasu Omikami.²

During this time, Esther came to know Jesus and was a teacher at an all-girls Christian school where they were surrounded by idol shrines.¹ There, Esther wrestled with the idea of bowing to an idol other than her Lord Jesus. But as a teacher, Esther was looked upon as a leader and expected to be the example. Police came to enforce the policy and would arrest anyone who refused. Yet, she had made her decision to follow Christ. Her school lined up and her heart was racing. She understood

the risk. The officials called to bow. As her entire school around her slowly bent at the waist, Esther stood perfectly still.

The entire school began to rise back up; all officials had their eyes on Esther. Esther's thoughts consumed her: "I have

"POLICE CAME TO ENFORCE THE POLICY AND WOULD ARREST ANYONE WHO REFUSED. YET, SHE HAD MADE HER DECISION TO FOLLOW CHRIST."

done what I should have done. Now, I commit the rest to You. I died today on that mountain - now it is only You who lives through me. I leave everything in Your hands."²

Esther and her mother fled from the officials. By God's sleight of hand, they found an isolated house deep in the mountains. It was there that Esther prepared for the suffering that was ahead. She diligently memorized hymns and hundreds of scriptures. She forced herself into a state of poverty and lived

without all the comforts she had grown up with. She began to sleep without a quilt, fasted, and ate spoiled food scraps to prepare for potential prison time.³

Christ was transforming Esther from that frail, faltering woman, to a bold and confident ambassador for Him. God then called for Esther to go into the heart of Tokyo, Japan, to share His message.

While in Japan in 1939, Esther was captured and imprisoned. Esther drew strength from the many scriptures she had memorized. She shared the love of Christ with her fellow inmates and prayed for them. She shone with supernatural love toward her persecutors and fellow prisoners. It was while she was with them that she realized they all needed Jesus equally. Throughout torture and imprisonment, Esther refused to deny the name of Christ.³

On August 15, 1945, Japan signed an unconditional surrender and Korea was set free. Esther had become one out of a dozen from an original thirty-four prisoners to survive. She would go on to write about her adventures with Christ and marry a God-fearing man. Her story became a national best seller in East Asia and she was provided an opportunity to travel and plant a church in the United States.² Esther finished her days traveling to share in speaking of God's faithfulness and power.

¹ asucru.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/upside-down-faith-esther-ahn-kim.pdf

² *If I Perish* by Esther Ahn Kim

³ document.desiringgod.org/faithful-women-and-their-extraordinary-god-en.pdf?ts=1474489712

Dear Laura



Laura don't lie like that other science guy.

WHY DID GOD MAKE YEARS, MONTHS, AND DAYS?

DEAR LAURA DON'T LIE:

Every January 1, I wonder what is so special about a new year. It is just another year, right? Why did God make years, months, and days?

--Puzzled in Cebu, Philippines

DEAR CONFUSED:

As summer vacation starts, let me give you a couple things to think about this summer.

As we start summer vacation, take another look at the plans you have made. Have you taken time to thank God for His gift of time and seasons?

Have you wondered why God made days, weeks, and years in the first place?

Time and seasons give rhythm to our lives. God does not need to divide time to know what is going on, but we do! He gives us times of work and times of rest. The changes in seasons provide changes in temperature and scenery. It is important to remember God was aware of our needs from the beginning! Genesis 1:14-15 is a perfect example. God said,

"Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years."¹ As part of the rhythms, He also gave us a seven-day week with a rest day on the seventh day as told in Genesis 2:2-3.

Each morning when the sun rises, we are reminded of God's faithfulness. "People in ancient times were keenly aware of their dependence on the regular patterns of sun, moon, and stars. If the sun didn't rise every day, crops would fail and life on earth would collapse!"¹ It is important to remember God set a course for the sun, moon, and the stars. One last thought here...if you hate the cold winter months or the blistering hot summer months, remember that God created them and they are part of His promise.

Each new day is a testament to His grace that gives us what we do not deserve! We are also reminded each new day is an opportunity to put the past behind us! "This I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to

an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness."² Are you thankful when you wake up to the sun shining through the trees or do you take all that God has made for granted?

--Laura

If you have a nature, science, or philosophical question for Laura Don't Lie, send them our way at rebuiltmagazine@gmail.com.

LAURA DON'T LIE. REAL ANSWERS FOR REAL QUESTIONS!

Laura Don't Lie has been studying and preparing Science Creation Lessons for students in Cebu City, Philippines. She recently started to take her lessons on the road and is sharing them with students around Cebu.

¹Lutz, Erik. Why did God Make Years, Months, and Days? Answers In Genesis. January 1, 2018. answersingenesis.org/holidays/why-did-god-make-years-months-days/

²Lamentations 3:21-23



QUARTERLY MUSIC BEAT

A PLAYLIST FROM OUR FRIENDS AT A USA COLLEGE RADIO STATION

We have all asked the question. You have definitely asked it: "What music should I listen to?" We know the struggle, even as radio DJs. We are really good at making music suggestions, though. So, here are three albums to help you jam, worship, and focus this summer. Enjoy, and stay cool.



TELL ALL MY FRIENDS

This is the type of album that requires you to drive out into the country on a warm summer night, blast from your car stereo, and listen to it while you stargaze to get the most out of it. Nearly every song has an army of chorus singers that give not only the songs depth and tear-inducing worship, but that feeling of being completely surrounded by God and His choirs. It's an incredible gift they have been given as musicians to be able to play and sing in such a clear reflection of God's creativity and beauty. Need help talking to God? These songs are basically prayers sung straight into

your brain. Songs like 'Not in a Hurry' are all about hearing God's voice while we currently live in a world that needs information right away, all the time. God doesn't work that way, so if you feel like you're rushing God into making things happen for you or in you, have a listen and get your heart back on track. This album will seriously know how you feel 99% of the time. Listen to 'Feeling Low' if you're feeling low. Listen to 'Lay It All Down' if you're having trouble surrendering everything to God. You get the picture.



NF: PERCEPTIONS

This is NF's third full-length album, and it's nothing short of a banger. He has a reputation of having some of the rawest, most honest, and most transparent lyrics in the Christian music circle. Listen to one song, and you listen to them all, in terms of intentional transparency and epic scores. You can always count on NF to serve you what's on his mind in terms of his walk with God and the struggles he, and all of us, experience. The first song, 'Intro III,' is literally a conversation between NF and his own fear. He is refreshing as ever in a world

that is passive and apathetic toward Christianity. Listening to him reminds me that God promised hardship and that living for Jesus is not a hobby, but a life-long learning journey. Tommee Profitt did the instrumental programming for the album. Profitt is a Christian who has composed music for UFC 2, The Hunger Games, NCIS, The Seal Team, and lots more, so you know NF's music will be epic. They've worked together in the past as well, but that's another review.

sleeping at last

ATLAS: SPACE

Whether you are trying to write a novel, work on summer class assignments, or conjure up inspiration for your next work of art, this album is probably exactly what you're looking for. 'Saturn' is my favorite song off the album because it's a dreamy and emotional score full of violins, piano, and lots of lovely reverb. If I am ever feeling anxious, this song brings me back to earth gently. The lyrics are about losing a friend and how to resolve that grief. Honestly, this album is best

listened to at night, lying in bed, eyes closed, and turned up generously in some headphones. It is an album that will swallow you and surround you for as long as you let it. All of Ryan O'Neal's songs are unforgettable, incredibly well-crafted, overwhelmingly beautiful, and utterly unique. Another perk is that this version has instrumentals of all the songs, so if you need to hunker down and focus on something, this deluxe version has you covered.



HEAR THE STORIES COME TO LIFE

Learning about history is fun. Especially when you're listening to someone who has studied much more than you and knows what they are talking about. It takes a certain ability to take the mundane and breathe life into it, and Ryan Reeves has it. Ryan Reeves is Associate Professor of Historical Theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Ryan's work is found on his own YouTube channel, Ryan Reeves. There you will also find more information and links to his articles and blogs. He obtained his PhD in Historical Theology from Cambridge University.

Reeves produces a vast array of different videos highlighting different topics about the Christian church. He's got titles like, "The Importance of the

Reformation," "World War I and the Church," "Lewis and Tolkien," "The Crusades," and many others. In his lesson on "The Vikings," you find out that the story *Beowulf* is written by a Christian who writes with a mixture of pride and regret, and expresses pride in Scandinavian heritage. Did you know in the Norse Religion, there are no priests or temples?

His videos align well with his goals for them. In his own words, Reeves wants to provide free, quality explorations of the life of the church and the history of doctrine. Learn to take the subjects seriously and don't be afraid of debate and discussion!



RYAN REEVES
YOUTUBER



masters of masquerade

facing our fear of being found out

Remember when you were a kid and you'd hide under the table playing hide-and-seek? The legs of the chairs were a fortress not even your parents could see through. You were thoroughly impressed with your sneakiness as you watched your dad's feet step closer and closer to the table. You'd stifle your laughter with your sleeve and shuffle farther away from whatever side he was approaching. "Ah-ha!" he would say as he peered underneath and you'd both laugh and laugh.

As adults, it's obvious how "un-sneaky" the child is in the game, right? The fortress of chair legs is simply the foundation for the seats, and not the stone walls you saw them as when you were little. Just like the child playing hide-and-seek, we tend to live in an illusion of our own making as well. We're exceptional at hiding who we really are and how we're really doing by putting on a public show of "life is good." We've learned our whole lives to push away the things we don't like about ourselves in order to patch together who we would rather be. This default mode, however, is a never-ending comparison trap because the only way to ignore this fact is to keep at it - to keep tweaking your life to look a little bit more put together than the next person, but that illusion never lasts! Instagram and Snapchat are ripe with the manifest of this. When you live behind a mask, you may convince the world around you that you're doing okay, but why, what's the point? If you're not doing well, and yet everyone thinks you are, it's time to realize that the mask you're wearing to fix the problem is actually the problem that's killing you.

I was talking to a friend the other day when she told me about her old mask. I sat on the ladder of my loft as she told me about her "pop punk days." She said that music scene was a community of sad, lonely, and potentially suicidal people that believed it would all be okay if they could be these things together. They'd share in their misery with no sign of hope, but with a mask like "cool pop punk kid," maybe things would be okay. She went on years later to write in a poetic letter to herself, "You think you're in control by not telling anyone what's going on in your head and heart. You think that will make you seem confident in your depression. You think it will give you control." As we talked in my room, she said something that summed it up well: "It's like you think you're in control of your mask, but you're not. There's still something behind it."

Pretense is defined as, "an attempt to make something that is not the case appear true."¹ Ever pretended to be okay just because it was easier than being honest with someone? It's definitely the most painless option, especially if people have broken your trust a time or ten before, but ask yourself, how's that going? I'm no stranger to pretending to be someone I'm not. For a long time, I lived unaware that I was wearing a mask of paper



make perfection. I disguised the secret me that was often jealous, bitter, and self-righteous, and traded her in for a morally upright honor roll student. If enough people liked me, I was safe. I was accepted. I believed in the lie that to be well-liked was to live most fully.

why we wear masks

If you're willing to examine yourself, you might find that you too have been trying to live up to a standard you've created, or that the world has convinced you to strive for. For example, why are you wearing the clothes you're wearing? Who or what influenced you? I'm not advocating for you to go wear the wackiest clothing you can find simply to reject current fashion, but this question illustrates the subtlety of the chokehold the world has on us. Do you realize that the allure of the "good life" drives most of what we do? We go to college to get the career to get the spouse to get the house to get the kids...to train them to wear a mask as well? The world is constantly telling you that you have to have it all together to be liked and to be successful. If you don't believe that, consider your first opinion of someone who is struggling financially or seems unstable in areas of their life. Your response will more than likely be that they need to get their stuff together, and yet, isn't that what you've been trying to do as well? Maybe someone who doesn't have it all put together in a pretty little package is actually closer to living an authentic life than you are.

Simply put, wearing a mask allows us to put forth an image we create for ourselves, a version of ourselves that is more interesting, more intelligent, more beautiful... We wear masks because when we can control what people see in us, somehow it feels like there is less judgment towards who we really are. We wear masks because we don't want people to think poorly of us, or maybe because we're ashamed of something we've done or continue to do. We might be coping with things that don't make sense to us, or wear masks to delay facing things that we don't want to be true. Maybe we're avoiding conflict with someone, so we pretend we have a different opinion than we really do.

The danger of a mask is that eventually it becomes a part of us, so much so that we might not realize we're wearing one anymore. It's like that Jim Carrey movie, *The Mask*, where he literally became consumed by the mask at the expense of everything he held dear. (Apologies if you were born after 1994 when this movie came out – but seriously, you should go watch it to see this allegory played out.) The truth is, when we wear masks, we're lying to others and to ourselves. How it can all change is when you understand that Jesus sees the real you and loves you anyways. He's calling you to a life beyond your mask, and He's the only one that can offer that kind of a promise.

We all have a side – more specifically, a heart – that is evil. We have reason to feel shameful for our innermost beings because they aren't healthy. The Bible says in Jeremiah 17:9

[pre-tens]

pretense

(noun)

An attempt to
make something
that is not the
case appear true.

that the heart of man is desperately wicked. We've all seen it demonstrated on a large scale through school shootings, deception, broken families, war... but it also plays out in each one of us when we cheat on a test, laugh about someone because we think they're dumb, engage in a lustful daydream about another, resort to "me time" like it's a right, exaggerate a truth to get ahead, etc. It's all the result of a life lived on a planet with other humans, other sinners. It's a natural thing to want to hide part of yourself from the world, but it's not the answer, and it's not where your story has to end.

beyond the mask

In John 8, Jesus lovingly spells out how the truth will set us free. In verse 34, Jesus explains what we need to be freed from: "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin." It's not just that we do "bad things" because we're human; we need to be rescued from our inability to do good even when we try to. When we wear masks, this is what we're covering up: our bondage to sin. We need to be freed from our desperately evil hearts that are only capable of thinking of ourselves. This freedom is readily available. There's no need for a mask because there is a Savior, Jesus Christ, who died for your sin, your shame, and everything you're embarrassed about in yourself. Jesus is the perfect, blameless Son of God. He came to Earth 2,000 years ago, and he did anything but "blend in." He stood out in a radical way in a world choking on deception, was murdered, and then rose again in an overwhelming display of the power of God the Father who loves *you* for *you*, not this frail-mask-you. There's no need to pretend anymore!

In John 10:10, Jesus says, "The thief [Satan] comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." In His presence, we don't need to hide our true selves. Taking off your mask is your admission of your need for God and His salvation. Through Him, you can live the life you were made for - free of facades and full of grace and truth. It's a life where you can be yourself, under

"IN HIS PRESENCE, WE DON'T NEED TO HIDE OUR TRUE SELVES. TAKING OFF YOUR MASK IS YOUR ADMISSION OF YOUR NEED FOR GOD AND HIS SALVATION."

refinement by your King, so He can steer you on a course with eyes wide open to His way. If you continue to insist on wearing your mask, you're like a horse with blinders, oblivious to what is around you, plodding forward to nowhere great. So, are you ready to see beyond your mask? In other words, are you ready to stop indulging your fantasy of who you wish you were, in exchange for following the One who made you who you are?

Step one is relearning our real identity by allowing Him to remove the one we built ourselves and exchanging it for the one God has given to us. 2 Corinthians 3:17-18 says, "For the Lord is the Spirit, and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image." A few pages later in chapter 6, God promises us, "I will be your Father, and you will be my sons and daughters."

Along with this identity, you have gifts He's given to you to use in His Kingdom *in this life*. He has a life direction and calling designed for you specifically. He wants to lead you in these pursuits, using your gifts and your personality in a radical way to influence the world around you. My pop punk friend from earlier? When God helped her take her mask off, she was able to experience what it's like to live openly and honestly in a community of people who love her. She became convinced of God's love for her, and He's allowing her to use her love of music by DJ'ing for a local radio station through her church. Living the life you were designed for gives you no need for a mask. Instead of hiding yourself and your flaws, you'll see how God is using them as opportunities to make you more like Christ. It takes effort to choose to be Christ-like, but through His Spirit you will be transformed. Colossians 3:10 tells us to, "Put on your new nature and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him."

Living mask-free means a life of outreach to other people still wearing their masks. Once you have the freedom to live authentically, your eyes will be opened to the people around you who are still trapped in their need to live under a façade. People who are honest about who they are will be like a cool drink of water to people who are tired of pretending to be someone they're not. As Christians, we were created to be a peculiar people like 1 Peter 2:9 talks about: "But you are not

like that, for you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light." Think on these verses in Matthew 5:13-16: "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

When you've taken your mask off, you'll have a desire to be around other people who have also been profoundly changed by God. You'll feel joy in finding a community of believers to belong to – this is His church. A biblical church is a safe place for sinners, not a condemning place. It is a place where people gather together to worship the God who has forgiven them of their wicked hearts. "The church" is a people who are continually confessing that they don't want to live by their hearts' dictates anymore and they trust that Jesus' death and resurrection has made them perfect in God's eyes. Thankfully, the church is full of other people who have also taken off their mask. You're not alone as you face your true self, and consequently, your need for God. When you see that Jesus is better than the life you can create for yourself, you will gladly commit your life to His mission alongside His church. Even once you've taken off your mask, you're going to need to keep taking them off because assuredly you will unearth more than one. As long as we're on this Earth, we will default to trying to get it under control ourselves, so we must continually choose to bring our shortcomings to Christ and ask for forgiveness. Through Christ and His power, we are now able to choose to repent, to turn from our sin and walk away, not being held captive to its power over us anymore. Once you have surrendered your old ways to Him, you can now ask for God's Spirit to give you the strength to leave it behind and move into the life He designed for you.

If you're tired of wearing your mask, I promise you that there is a God who has been waiting a long time for you to feel that way. Once you realize the mask is there, taking it off is actually quite easy. It doesn't require grand gestures or a recited prayer in a church somewhere. It's just a raw conversation between you and God. It's the act of admitting before God that you've been pretending to be someone that you're not. What a freeing thing to know that there will be no room for pretenses in Heaven. All will be found in the light, just as it is. In Hebrews 4:16, the author encourages us by saying, "So let us 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."

A young woman with star-shaped face paint is lying on a white sheet covered with star-shaped confetti. She is holding a small handful of the confetti in her right hand. The background is a soft, out-of-focus white with scattered stars.

To: Past Me From: Current Me

Hello, self.

You look sad. You look like you've had a rough night, but I know you can give me an excuse for it. That you didn't deserve it. I'm the queen of excuses, and so are you. I know it's hard for you to see, as your eyesight is a lot less keen than it is now; how much the air in front of your lips is worth. You didn't pay for it, but someone did. I know it's easy to take for granted, but you'll get it, eventually. You'll understand that our parents are not superheroes, but just people following in the footsteps of creation and the fall. They can't fix you.

They can't save you. Superheroes belong in comic books. They don't exist in the flesh, and even though that's what we hope for, what we expect when we're in distress, and what we look forward to in a spouse, or a friend, you need to remember that you cannot be saved by the souls sitting at your dining room table or sitting across from you at a coffee shop. You may build an addition on the house of your heart for someone you think is the north star of your world, but they will never find the key to unlock it. Every time you hand it off, it'll slip right through their fingers. And I get why you've stopped trying to give yourself away. Your selfish pursuits of relationships will never work. If you would just unclench your fists and notice the raised key sewn under the skin of your palm. You've sewn it neatly under your skin for safety. You think you're in control by not telling anyone what's going on in your head and heart. You think that will make you seem confident in your depression. You think it will give you control. I know it's hard to understand. Someday, you will. Fire from heaven will rain down on you and refine you. It will burn up all of your demons. It will turn your chains into dust, and it will set you free from your lust.

I know you feel lonely. It will pass. People will always disappoint us, and even now, people still disappoint us. We have accepted it. I realize that you are ungrateful for every sunrise because it reminds you that you're still alive. I know you feel like you're just an accidental scribble that should be erased because it's a bother. You're not a bother. You are a gemstone, kept safely in the owner's chest pocket, close to the warmth of a beating heart. You may think that you're walking on quicksand, and any day now, you may take a step in the wrong direction or lean a certain way, and the earth will swallow you like a pill. It won't.

You can laugh as loud as you want and be as secretive as you want, but you must understand you are a walking paradox. You believe you can have meaningful relationships, but you refuse to share your whole self. There will come a time when you will break like a glass vase. Shattering is part of the process. We will be put back together again. Our cracks will be filled with gold. Keep going, self. We're not done.

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven; a time to be born, and a time to die."
Ecc. 3:1-2

"I know you feel like you're just an accidental scribble that should be erased because it's a bother. You're not a bother. You are a gemstone, kept safely in the owner's chest pocket, close to the warmth of a beating heart."



47 years. 563 months. 2,450 weeks. That's roughly the amount of time you'll spend working a full-time job if you plan on retiring at age 65. That's a very large chunk of your life spent on work, making a livelihood, and exerting yourself for the sake of the boss and company. Susan Adams of Forbes Magazine reports that, "63% of Americans dislike and are unhappy with their job, 87% of workers worldwide dislike or hate theirs, while only 13% feel engaged at work."¹ Most people don't feel a sense of passion for, nor a deep connection to, their work. Many feel as if work is just a burdensome obstacle separating them from their "me time." How are we supposed to change our attitudes and thoughts towards the daily grind and start working well? The answer lies in knowing who we're working for, and it should be God.

You can't get five words into the Bible without God revealing Himself as One who works: "In the beginning God created..."² God starts with creating the universe and everything in it, and then gets to creating human beings. Immediately humans are given the task of "working" what God has created: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work

it and keep it."³ What this means is that God gives us (humans) work to do and tasks to carry out. Work was created before sin ever entered the picture, which means work has always been intended to be a good thing! He sets us up with stuff to do because it's good for us and it brings Him glory: "Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us / establish the work of our hands..."⁴ He's given everyone something to do, so we all get to play a part in this.

Why is work so hard for us today? Sin entered the picture and fractured the good things God created: "cursed is the ground / thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you / by the sweat of your face you shall eat bread / till you return to the ground."⁵

"WE GET TO VIEW THE WORK WE DO WITH A DIFFERENT MENTALITY BECAUSE IT'S NOT SOMETHING WE HAVE TO DO ON ACCIDENT. IT'S BEEN DESIGNED, PLANNED, PLACED..."

These thorns and thistles mean we still have to work, and it's going to be a much more grueling task to carry out (hence, our negative attitude towards it). However, don't let that freak you too much: "In all toil there is profit."⁶ Though work is cursed, it won't be forever. It's not always going to be pleasant or smooth regardless of what you do or where you work. Keep God in mind while you're working; you're not just working to invest in and stay alive for what's here on Earth, but for God and for the life to come.

For most, work is a means to gain for self. That means that there is no other motivating factor that would drive a person to really do more than just get money. Most individuals would like to get the maximum pay they can for the bare minimum work required of them. For the Christian, it's not just about getting paid; it's supposed to be different. Work is a way to serve others in a way that pleases God. Work is used to build your character, and to make you more like Jesus through the difficulties that it often brings.

Besides earning money and building character, work can also bring you joy. Knowing that your seemingly insignificant tasks have a purpose and that they can be pleasing to the Creator of the universe can be pretty mind-blowing when you start to think of your life on a larger, more eternal scale instead of just the here and now: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."⁷

"TO HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE ABOUT THE WORK YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN TO DO IS TO REMEMBER WHO IT IS YOU ARE WORKING FOR."

We get to view the work we do with a different mentality because it's not something we have to do on accident. It's been designed, planned, placed, and intended to be carried out with a right heart - not a heart that complains about the number of tasks or the difficulties of the tasks. The boss is tempering you to be a better you! S/he's skimming off all the ugly that naturally wells up within you. The right attitude about this is to be thankful, glad, and even happy: "Count it all as joy when you fall into various trials."⁸

Work doesn't have to be drudgery for the Christian and here are seven reasons why:

- 1 IT'S PLEASING TO GOD WHEN WE WORK HARD AND WITH INTEGRITY.
- 2 IT FORCES US TO DEPEND ON GOD AND RELY ON HIM FOR THE STRENGTH AND KNOWLEDGE TO CARRY OUT THE TASKS HE'S APPOINTED US TO DO.
- 3 IT'S MAKING US MORE LIKE JESUS.
- 4 THERE IS GREAT REWARD FOR OUR WORK FROM GOD.
- 5 IT'S A WAY FOR US TO SHOW LOVE FOR OTHERS, BLESS THEM, AND HELP THEM GROW.
- 6 OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD DEEPENS IN THANKFULNESS AND GRATITUDE, AND WE GET TO DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH CO-WORKERS WHO WE CAN SHARE JESUS WITH.
- 7 ON A SMALLER SCALE, IT ALLOWS US MONEY IN WHICH WE CAN PURCHASE NECESSITIES LIKE RENT, GAS AND CLOTHES. (OH, AND PIZZA TOO).

Remember that we have the most loving, compassionate, caring, and faithful 'boss' ever, the first and ultimate Creator. To have the right attitude about the work you've been given to do is to remember who it is you are working for - it's God! Knowing all Jesus has done for you, if He were to show up at work as your physical boss, how would you really treat Him every day? Would you cut corners? Would you steal time? Would you complain about the workload and your co-workers? Would you bring Him coffee and show a smile? God wants our attitudes and our hearts to be ones that don't complain but are glad and grateful that we even get to participate in any of this. Work is a good gift that He lets us take part in. We can know Him more by working well on the things He's set up for us to do: "So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God."⁹

¹forbes.com/sites/susanadams/2013/10/10/unhappy-employees-outnumber-happy-ones-by-two-to-one-worldwide/#71971c13362a

²Genesis 1:1 NLT
³Genesis 2:15 ESV
⁴Psalms 90:17 ESV
⁵Genesis 3:17-19 ESV

⁶Proverbs 14:23 ESV
⁷Colossians 3:23 NIV
⁸James 1:2 NKJV
⁹1 Corinthians 10:31 NIV

LIFE on Mission

7
tips

for sharing
your faith
in college



It was just before my sophomore year of college that I first came to believe that Jesus was the only thing that could make me stand perfect before a Holy God. I remember wanting to bring up Jesus in every conversation. It didn't even really take that much effort. The good news that I had made a new best friend (One that was never going to leave my side) filled up most of the space in my heart and mind. It was readily on the tip of my tongue.

Four and a half years later, I admittedly find myself waiting for "the right time" to openly share about my faith with my coworkers, family, and definitely with people I've just met. I sometimes feel awkward knowing how to bring up God into everyday conversations even though I understand with my head what the Bible talks about in 2 Corinthians 5:10 when it says, "For we must all stand before Christ to be judged. We will each receive whatever we deserve for the good or evil we have done in this earthly body." If we, as Christians, truly believe in the power Jesus has to save us from sin and give us eternal life with Him, why do we shy away from speaking openly about this Good News worth sharing? Just as desperately as I do, the people around me need to know the salvation of Christ. I have experienced the joy and inexpressible peace that come from an intimate relationship with a relational God. If I want that for others, I will speak, and I'm guessing if you're reading this, you feel the same way. Below are seven approaches I've pulled together from my own experiences as a disciple of Jesus during and after college. I hope they encourage you as you share your faith with those God has specifically placed in your life.

1 INVEST IN YOUR OWN RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

An empty cup has nothing to pour out. Our own fellowship with God should be the first thing we assess. Go to God and repent of any sin you currently recognize in your life. Spend time with other Christians. Develop habits in yourself of daily Bible reading and prayer. You'll develop a knowledge of Scripture you can use to encourage others. It's easy for us to talk about the latest movie or T.V. show we've been into. Sharing the Bible can, and should, be just as natural. The times when I'm meditating on the Word of God more frequently, I naturally talk about it more often because it's on the surface of my mind. When you're in love with God, you'll talk about Him. You won't be able to help it. The joy that comes from a deep love for God isn't something that can be faked, and it definitely will catch the world's eye to see someone have hope in something bigger than ourselves.

2 EXPLORE WHAT'S HOLDING YOU BACK

If you notice yourself holding back from talking openly about your faith, ask yourself why. Ask God why. Maybe it's a self-centeredness issue and you're just too busy with your own day-to-day happenings. Maybe you're concerned about ruining a reputation you think you have. It could be a fear of rejection or fear of someone thinking you're ignorant for believing in God. Maybe it's straight up apathy in which case

"The joy that comes from a deep love for God isn't something that can be faked, and it definitely will catch the world's eye to see someone have hope in something bigger than ourselves."

you're lacking the sense of urgency we can gather from numerous places throughout Scripture.¹

3 BE HOSPITABLE

If you are a born-again believer, chances are there were certain individuals, other Christians in your life, that spent time with you and got to know you. Over time, you built a relationship with them and you trusted them enough to talk about real life. How can you share the Gospel if you have no one to tell it to? Being hospitable is one way those relationships can start. Some simple ways to start are to ask if a classmate wants to go to dinner, invite people over no matter how small your dorm room is (it'll make good memories anyway), or keep your dorm door open when you're there (it invites people walking by to peek their heads in).

4 BE AVAILABLE

Don't always wear headphones when walking to class. See who you run into. Sit by someone new in class and introduce yourself. They might be surprised — good! It'll make them wonder. Study in a lounge on your floor or in other open spaces when you're not crunched for a deadline. Yes, your homework is important, but our first priority as Christians is our relationship with God and others. Think about your ultimate purpose here on Earth. Is it to get your degree and live a good life? No? Then do something different with your time: Live your life openly for other people to enter into it and see what this Jesus thing is really all about.

5 ASK QUESTIONS AND SHOW AN INTEREST IN OTHERS

When I first started visiting a campus ministry, people would ask me all the time about what I believed. "Did you grow up going to a church?" "Why do you think God allowed situation XYZ to happen in your life?" "Do you believe that God is always good?" I could tell these people cared about me and wanted to hear what I thought, so I answered honestly. They listened to my ideas instead of waiting to say what they wanted to. They were eager to hear what my life was like and what my dreams were for the future. Not only that, but their questions inevitably made me think more deeply about what I believed to be true. It prompted those "lying awake at night" kind of moments... You know the feel.

6 LISTEN FOR HURT AND HEARTACHE

Any amount of hurt that someone is willing to share with you is an opportunity to share the story of a Creator God who made the world and doesn't want to see it suffer. Listen to what's bothering that person. Realize how much they must trust you by them opening up to you. Be sensitive for an opportunity to tell of the God who loves them without wavering and is active in our world today, whether it feels like He is or not. Consider being honest about a time you were distant from God and what you (or He) did about it.

7 BE WILLING TO TAKE A RISK

Boldly sharing your faith requires a willingness to be embarrassed or feel

a little awkward at times. It requires a certain level of courage and the leading of the Holy Spirit. Sharing your faith does not require advanced faith, the perfect words, or the right feeling or timing. If you wait on those factors, it may never happen. Ultimately, God does the saving. You can't talk anyone into salvation so don't put that heavy weight on yourself. There's a verse in Romans 2 that tells us that it's God's kindness that leads us to repentance.² Your job is to be obedient to God, share what you know, and trust Him for how that person will respond. God used many people with less than ideal abilities all throughout the Bible, and luckily for us, His strength is made perfect in weakness.³ Do you trust God? Do you have a neighborly love for the person sitting next to you? Then forget what it might cost you to tell them about the Man who died for them.

If you really believe the truth of the Gospel, that a perfect God man would come to earth just to be murdered for your sake and for your sin, you're going to want to tell other people about this, aren't you? You won't care about the opinions other people might come up with in their minds about you because you know that their opinions don't affect your eternity. You still will have assurance that you get to be with your Father one day, face-to-face. Ask God for the Holy Spirit and pray for opportunities to talk openly about what it means to live as a Christian — then be on alert for them. You just might be surprised at how quickly God answers that prayer.

¹Matthew 3:2, Romans 13:11, Revelation 22:20, Mark 1:15, to name a few

²Romans 2:4

³2 Corinthians 12: 8-10

ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE IN AN UPSIDE DOWN WORLD

There is something very, very wrong with this world. Don't you feel it? Yet somehow, there are vast segments of beauty within it that echo something larger than our present dilemma. It's a perplexing situation to navigate as human beings. On one hand, we are confined to eke out our daily food, shelter, and clothing. On the other hand, we are driven by an insatiable need for belonging, purpose, and community. The famed theologian, C.S. Lewis, says it well in his book *Mere Christianity*: "If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world."

In the Netflix series, *Stranger Things*, the characters experience another world called the Upside Down. It was portrayed as a present, sinister reality that no one could see except for those cursed enough to fall into it. It lurked just beneath the surface and it had the power to destroy the living. This analogy is not as far removed from reality as you might think. Lewis described our world as "upside down." He likened it to a "valley of tears, cursed with labour, hemmed round with necessities, tripped up with frustrations, doomed to perpetual plannings, puzzlings, and anxieties."¹

When I was in college and in my early twenties, I often wondered what the future held in store for me. I tried to find a sense of fulfillment for my life, but I completely failed to do so as I struggled through classes and spent days on end feeling incredibly empty. I always thought there must be something more to this

life, but it remained unattainable until Jesus destroyed my false belief that I could somehow fashion my own reality. Until I traded in my limited worldview, I was blind to the awesome truth that eternity is not a theory; it's a reality, and God has made us eternal creatures.

ETERNAL REALITY

A standard dictionary defines "eternity" as *infinite or unending time*. Ecclesiastes 3:11 states, "He [God] has planted eternity in the human heart, but even so, people cannot see the whole scope of God's work from beginning to end." God is not on our timeline. Imagine you are standing in a crowd of people watching a parade. You can see each float pass by one at a time but you can never predict which float will come next. God, however, is like an aircraft in the sky. He sees the entire parade at once and knows the exact order of the parade, all of the spectators, and how it's all going to end. That analogy helps us understand the difference between our perspective of time versus God's, doesn't it?

We don't remember being born and we cannot predict how we're going to die, but God knows that information in exact detail. This also means that God knows how the world is going to end because He's the one that set it all in motion at the start. With this in mind, take heed to the warning He has given us. In the book of 2 Peter, it states, "*But you must not forget this one thing, dear friends: A day*



"Here's what the Bible teaches about eternity and your stance in it: everlasting life is a present-tense possession."

is like a thousand years to the Lord, and a thousand years is like a day. The Lord isn't really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent. But the day of the Lord will come as unexpectedly as a thief. Then the heavens will pass away with a terrible noise, and the very elements themselves will disappear in fire, and the earth and everything on it will be found to deserve judgment."

What are your thoughts right now after reading that? Is it just crazy nonsense and/or old-fashioned hysteria? Or, is it reality? It has to be one of those; there is no in between! Many people explain away Jesus as a crutch that was developed through the centuries to deal with the painful reality of death, and they attribute eternal damnation to the same ludicrous category. It's up to you to decide what you're going to believe, but if Jesus is true, then your eternity hinges on what you believe about Him.

REDIRECTING FOCUS

Here's what the Bible teaches about eternity and your stance in it: everlasting life is a present-tense possession. It is not something that begins if you get to heaven. Eternity is real and we *will* experience it after this lifetime. Think on this: Will you be conscious in 1,000 years? The Bible says yes. Everyone will. If all you do is ask Jesus to forgive your sins in fear so you don't perish in hell, you're still missing out on eternal life. John 3:16 says,

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." Jesus defined this eternal life for us in John 17:3 where He says, "And this is the way to have eternal life – to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth." So, in a nutshell, eternal life is knowing God.

Are you disappointed with that definition? If you are, the problem is that you only think you know God, which means of course you aren't satisfied with this succinct little answer. There has to be something more, right? Well, what does it mean to know someone? In this passage, the Bible was speaking about so much more than just an intellectual ascent. For example, just because you "know of" Jennifer Lawrence and Chris Pratt, doesn't mean you "know" them. You only really "know" the people that you are closest to, like your family and friends. In the same way, when Jesus said eternal life is knowing God, He was speaking of that type of knowing. God, the Creator of the Universe, desires an intimate, close, off-the-charts love story type-of-knowing relationship. That is the key to eternal life, and why Christians walk around so often with a stupid grin on their face. We're not just looking forward to our future home in Heaven with Jesus; we're actually experiencing it right now, at least as much as this lifetime allows us to comprehend of it.

INTERFERENCES

Without God, the Bible counts you as blind person. As a spiritually blind person, you have the full authority to interpret the upside down world around you in any way you want. Without the responsibility of an eternal perspective, your goal is likely to obtain all that you can see and touch in this life. When you have a lot of things, life is good. When you are deprived and desolate, life stinks. When someone else has what you want, you go after it. Since you see that a successful career, relationships, status, money and high-end possessions are what everyone is forming their lives around, you do too. You only have today, right?

In reality, every day you have here is another gracious opportunity given by God for you to





know Him (remember, eternal life?). He has given you time here to choose Him or not, to believe Him or not, to accept the reality of eternity or not. Up until now, it's been too easy to miss out on the grandness of this life God designed you for because you haven't understood, or wanted to understand, the full weight of the reality of eternity. As human spectators of the parade passing before us, we tend to forget about tomorrow, let alone eternity. Each day is filled with the urgent demands of everyday living.

FOREVER TODAY

But once you believe that your spirit will endure forever, things change. Once you, like a blind person, ask for sight, Jesus works through His spirit to give you eternal perspective, and in the same breath, He gives you the realization of your utter dependence on Him to walk through this world in the meantime. You thought you were in control, but it was only because in your blindness you thought you understood the world. You didn't think you were actually in the Upside Down because it was all you had ever known. Being a Christian is a transformation, but you have to take that first step to actually receive what Jesus is offering: an eternal perspective based on knowing the Eternal One. Accepting the truth that this present world is not all there is, ushers in a sharpened perspective of the purpose for our lives while we're here. If your eyes are open, you no longer have to operate like the rest of the world, drifting along, caught up by the passing swells. You get to have your sight set on what actually matters in the long run. When life "goes bad," you can remember that Jesus is making sure you realize true reality is knowing Him, not groping about in the dark on your own terms.

There are many passages in the Bible that describe the future God has planned for those who believe in Him and know Him. 1 Corinthians says, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined...God has prepared for those who love Him." Not only can we not imagine it, but we cannot measure it. Ephesians 2:7 says, "In the coming ages He [will] show the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus." The thing is, while we can never know it fully until we pass away into His Kingdom,

"Accepting the truth that this present world is not all there is, ushers in a sharpened perspective of the purpose for our lives while we're here."

in His mercy and grace and kindness, He has already given us glimpses and moments of this eternal glory. You've experienced it since you were a kid, in those elated moments of carefree activity, in the awesome beauty of the summer sky lit up with a thousand stars, and in the timeless treasure of enjoying a holiday with family. You understand without a doubt that you were made for something so much larger. Just like you could never imagine fitting the ocean into a cup, you cannot fully comprehend the reality of eternity, but you know it's there. Eternal perspective means having your eyes wide open to the source of Who created this earth. That is why Jesus commands us to seek His Kingdom and not the short term, fading glory of this world. In regards to this quest, He promised us, "My God will supply every need of yours according to His riches in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

We humans have a real obsession with knowing what our purpose is. God says that you were made for eternity. Since having an eternal perspective means knowing God, you cannot separate the two. Each one of us was made to enjoy the riches of the glory of God, which can only be lived out by knowing Him. An eternal perspective means that going to work is no longer about how much pleasure you can squeeze out of it, but because your true treasure is in Jesus, you go to work with the perspective that you're there for others. It's amazing how the anxieties we have about figuring-it-all-out so you can be as comfortable as possible are eliminated when you stop living for the here and now, and start living for the Eternal God. He will change everything. Life cannot possibly be all about getting the career, the spouse and the house, so why are you living that way? God has offered the impossible. He is poised to put eternity in your heart (Ecclesiastes 3:11). But, do you want Him to, or is this just nonsense?



TRANSFORMED BY THE WORD OF GOD

YFC MAY 2018 DISCIPLESHIP CAMP

322 GIRLS AND 254 BOYS TOOK PART IN A DISCIPLESHIP CAMP TO LEARN AND GROW FROM THE WORD OF GOD.

TRANSFORMATION.

A change in the physical, emotional, spiritual reality of life. A new life birthed from the decaying past. Like an unkempt farm to a vegetable garden or like a wild horse to a trained stallion. YFC Camp at Nakkamettu witnessed the transformation through Jesus Christ in the community living there.

On 21st May, YFC Vizag drove to the hills of Chintapalli to conduct a discipleship camp for four days. After the maze through the villages, we finally arrived to see beautiful girls decorated in *kanakambaram* (Crossandra) flowers and red roses on their hair. There were 322 pairs of eyes and ears eagerly waiting for the word of God.

We aimed for a change in their “identity”, change through the knowledge of the character of God and through the Character study. Quiz competition, songs, and games showed their strengths. They longed to read and understand the Bible by themselves, “Akka, how do I make sense of this passage?” Another, “What should I note down from this Psalm?” Still another, “How can I find the cross references for these verses?” They were longing to know more of God.

After the girls had left, 254 boys arrived for their camp. They looked smart with unique hairstyles and updated fashion. But they were not beauty with no brains. They often

asked, “Anna, we’d like to have longer Bible Study sessions.” They were hungry for a transformation from God.

During their Bible study, Rev. Zephaniah Peter, led them to speak up from their respective groups. They hunched and hesitantly walked to the front. But once they held the microphone, they preached so fiercely to our utter astonishment. We were speechless. We could see budding Moodys and Billy Grahams among them.

Jayshree and Tapan led an interesting topic on “Love”, to which all of them gave their full attention.

Towards the end of the camp, we could sense a transformation among the team members and among the delegates. They showed Christ-like love to us through their unconditional hospitality and service. The whole village worked as one family for the camp. Shanti said, “After we accepted the Lord, our lives have been changed. We’ve changed from our bad habits.” After a pause, she continued, “It is God who brings the change in us.”

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away, behold, the new has come.”
2 Corinthians 5, 17.



EXPLORE

THE BOOK OF JOHN

A BIBLE STUDY

7PM

EVERY
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OFFICE

45-50-3, Abid Nagar Akkayyapalem
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