

REBUILT

TO LIVE A GREAT STORY



our
GREATEST
FEAR
should not be of
FAILURE **BUT** OF
SUCCEEDING
at something
that DOESN'T Really
MATTER
-D.L. Moody

THE SUCCESS STORY

PAGE 12

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.

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THE SUCCESS STORY

WHY SUCCESS ISN'T ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE

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HELLO, MY NAME IS

BUSY

(are we really as busy as we think we are?)

You may have heard the story of a woman from another country who came to the United States and began to introduce herself as “Busy.” It was the first thing she would hear any American say, therefore she concluded it was a part of our traditional greeting. So, she told everyone she met that that’s who she was. Unfortunately, you could probably come to the same conclusion on nearly every college campus across the nation. But are we really that busy? What is making us so busy?

PERCENTAGE OF TIME SPENT PER DAY

BY AN AVERAGE FULL-TIME COLLEGE STUDENT



18.3%
Recreation & Socializing



11.6%
Education & Homework



<0.5%
Religious & Spiritual

HOW AVERAGE FULL-TIME COLLEGE STUDENTS SPEND THEIR DAYS

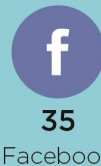
TIME SPENT PER DAY ON ACTIVITY IN HOURS



AVERAGE DAILY TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA IN MINUTES



40
YouTube



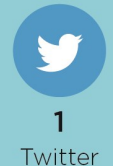
35
Facebook



25
Snapchat



15
Instagram



1
Twitter

TIME SPENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA IN A LIFETIME 5 YEARS & 4 MONTHS

WHAT YOU COULD DO IN 5 YEARS & 4 MONTHS

Walk the Great Wall of China
3.5 times

Climb Mt. Everest
32 times

Read the entire Bible
657 times

“Busyness is moral laziness [because it is often a statement of our self-importance and our excuse to be inattentive to people]. . . God has given us just enough time to do what we need to do moment by moment to respond to him. And his grace is there; it is eternally present. Every moment is a sacrament where time touches eternity and there is exactly enough time to do what God has called us to do.” - Prof. Bruce Hindmarsh

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HIS CHOICE BEFORE MINE



TESTIMONY
BY KARISHMA

What is the difference between godliness and goodness? If I am good, is that enough to be a Christian? If I live a spotless moral life, wouldn't God call me his beloved one?

Having been born in a church going Christian family I valued the gospel preciously. In my early years, I learnt that Jesus is my saviour and I am a sinner. No one can save me from my sin but Jesus Christ alone. So, I needed to repent of my sins and ask Him to enter into my life. During those primary school years, I was fully convinced that I was a born again Christian until I entered into my teens.

When I was a teenager, I wanted the Spirit to work miracles in my life. I wanted to receive at least some of the supernatural gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12. I prayed with tears, I read books devoted to spiritual gifts, but I ended up just being angry with God that I couldn't speak in tongues or have the gift of prophecy. I had a Sunday school mate who fell flat when she was prayed upon so my prayers became more earnest for some gift that would prove that I was a child of God.

After a period of unanswered prayers, I sought after morality. I wanted to stand out from the rest in conduct. Our Sunday school teacher was teaching us 1 Corinthians 13. I found solace in, "If you have the gift of tongues but have not love you are only a sounding gong..." So I presented my best behaviour in school, church, and I tried my best at home too. I was preaching to myself that goodness was equal to godliness.

It was naturally reinforcing to receive pats and praises for my decent nature, kind spirit and generous heart. Some parents would even reprimand their children in front of me, "Look at your friend, can't you study and behave like her?" At such moments, I felt sorry for my friend but I was delighted to be known as the measuring rod for goodness.

Even better was the next phase in my life—when I chose to study theology. My friends, church and family respected me for my noble decision. I reached the peak of my good works when I received an award that recognised me for academic excellence and best conduct. It was a rare moment in the history of that institution to confirm a person with both those awards. I knew that I had found favour with God and man too.

Soon after graduation, I decided to become a missionary teacher in one of the remote villages, Lamtaput, Odisha. A year later, God met me.

God revealed to me, with the help of my mentors that I had forgotten what it was to be dependent upon God because I had become independent in my actions. I would state my agenda to God without waiting for a reply because I was cock-sure I had his approval.

God is merciful. He opened my eyes to the scriptures (Romans) that no Jew nor gentile can reach out to God by their deeds (works of the law). For He alone began a good work in me. He chose me before I loved Him.

**I WAS SINKING IN UNSEEN PRIDE—
THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION AND MISSION
WORK; HE COULD HAVE LET ME GO BUT HE
DIDN'T GIVE UP ON ME. HE WATCHED ME
TURN AWAY AND WAITED FOR ME, AND AT
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MIRACLE IN MY LIFE. HE MADE ME REALISE
THAT I AM A SINNER AND HE IS THE
SOVEREIGN ONE.**

He showed me that no human is good but God alone. He showed me His holiness and my depraved nature. His spotless character and my selfish desires. His awesome nature and my wretched soul. I was sinking in unseen pride—theological education and mission work; He could have let me go but He didn't give up on me. He watched me turn away and waited for me, and at the opportune time, He again worked a miracle in my life. He made me realise that I am a sinner and He is the sovereign one.

So do I stop pursuing good deeds? Not at all! James in His epistle writes that faith without deeds is dead (2:17). But if I harbour bitter envy and selfish ambition (3:14), I'd be returning to my former sinful ways. Therefore, the gospel produces in me good life and deeds done in humility (3:13) that will reveal Jesus Christ, for He is the gospel.

Soon I will be moving to pursue higher studies in theology. The tendency to fall back on "good works" is lurking around, but God is faithful. I trust the Holy Spirit will keep me from the snares of the evil one.

God is good all the time. It is futile to impress God with my mortal efforts. Only God can save people through His Son whom He sent to die in my place as the perfect sacrifice. Jesus is my gospel. In Christ alone do I find righteousness. No extraordinary sacrifice I make or the awards I gather can make me "good" because it is only the completed work of Christ on the cross that makes me righteous.



RESIST BEGINNINGS

The Unlikely Rise and Inevitable Fall of King Solomon

By Sunny Joseph

Publius Ovid Naso a Roman Poet of 16 BC writes in his poem, *Remedia Amoris* (Remedies for Love):

“Resist beginnings: it’s too late for the doctor to be called, when the illness has grown stronger through delay... who’s not ready today, will be less so tomorrow:”

Deuteronomy 17:18-20 commands all kings to write their own Torah scroll [scriptures] and to read every day and fear God. Given the fact that Solomon knew the scriptures from his early days of his rein and having read daily [presumably] why did Solomon marry so many wives?

**SOLOMON PROGRESSED
PROFESSIONALLY, BUT
EVENTUALLY LOST THE
PURPOSE OF HIS LIFE.
LITTLE DID SOLOMON
REALISE THAT HIS NAME
AND FAME WERE OF THE
LORD AND NOT OF HIS
OWN.**

SOLOMON: Begins at Zero

Solomon began as an underdog. He was not the original eligible to David's throne. His stepbrothers from David's other wives stood a greater chance. Amnon, Absalom, though dead, Adonijah [brother of Absalom] was the heir-apparent and aspirant to king David's throne. Matthew 1:6 records that Solomon's dad was David but his mother was Uriah's wife whose death David plots. Imagine this stigmatic testament that he grew up with among his cousins, chums and community that his mother was not his father's wife but Uriah's.

When Solomon was a kid, Adonijah was a charismatic showman and a commanding leader among his siblings, friends and followers [I Kings 1:5,9]. By human standards, he was more eligible to the throne in age and ability than Solomon was.

In addition to all of that, Adonijah was also handsome [I Kings 1:6], but no mention was ever made of Solomon's physical attributes in the Bible. Although Solomon's unnamed elder brother was born outside his parents' marriage, he was the peace child between God and his dad. David thus named him Solomon, meaning 'Shalom or peace'. In spite of Solomon's inadequacies, inferiorities and inabilities, God bestowed on him a kingdom that was vast, great and powerful.

SOLOMON: Turns 100% Hero

"And Solomon loved the Lord..." [I Kings 3:3].

When Solomon came to the throne, he was still very young, and he was full of love for God. God lavished on him the wisdom that no mortal had had until then and no mortal has had since. He wrote over 3,000 proverbs and 1500 songs, and people from all over the world came to listen to him and his wisdom. His guest audience included the most enigmatic and legendary Queen of Sheba among many other international dignitaries. He led the nation of Israel into a golden era of peace and prosperity, which was alien to the nation of Israel since its beginning.

Solomon progressed professionally, but eventually lost the purpose of his life. Little did Solomon realise that his name and fame were of the Lord and not of his own.

Solomon, at the peak of his reign touched the zenith of every field known. He was the personification of wisdom, spinner of wealth, wooer of women and lover of pleasure. He was known for the grandiose architecture when he built the Lord's Temple and his palace in addition to many other building projects. Today, the soil of Jerusalem is a sacred sight to the three major world religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam because of the Temple he built for God.

SOLOMON: Declines to 50%

"But King Solomon loved many strange women..." [I Kings 11:1].

Solomon's love for many strange women was a time bomb that silently awaited an explosion.

How could a nation that witnessed such a dramatic rise in the then known world, whose leader's wisdom was sought after in many countries and by famous figures like the Queen of Sheba, end up failing? How could one man rise to such glorious height in a few decades and collapse so low soon after his death? After only a few years into his reign, he began to give into lusts and desires and began to woo, wink and win to make wives of many forbidden women. What happened between chapters 3 and 11 of I Kings was a deliberate drift from resisting the early beginnings of desire. And when he grew old, he was too deep into his sin to try and resist at all. It may have begun as a "taste," but it soon crept into a lifetime apart from God's will.

LEARN FROM THE LIFE OF SOLOMON AND LEAN ON GOD INSTEAD OF YOUR PERSONAL DESIRES, NO MATTER HOW INNOCENT THEY MAY BEGIN.

He thought in the beginning that he could control all his women, but he was instead controlled by them in the end. To cleave to something, one must leave something. Solomon chose to cling to his wives [I Kings 11:2], and so he inevitably strayed from God.

SOLOMON: HERO TURNS ZERO.

The wisest man lost his way. Solomon in his middle age lost the zest for life. He wrote about many of his pursuits of life in fewer than three categories viz. pleasure, prosperity and power. These ultimately dissatisfied him and proved to be life's dead end. No wonder he said, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity," (Eccl. 1:2).

We read in I Kings 11:9 that Solomon's heart was turned from the Lord. This led the wisest and the richest king of his time down to a degraded place. The last we see of Solomon is in I Kings 11: 40 where it's recorded that his final mission in life was to kill Jeroboam. What a note to finish a life on a deathly and bloody note when his name itself means, "Peace."

God confronted both David and Solomon on account of their sins. David repented (2 Samuel 12:7) but Solomon did not. Both David and Solomon ruled with skill, but David ruled with the integrity of his heart (Psalm 78:72), and Solomon did not. On account of that, David's throne and kingdom were established, but Solomon's throne and kingdom were divided.

Confidence is good but self-confidence and over-confidence without faith in God is detrimental. While facing Goliath, David had faith in God's ability, not his own. Solomon had abundant self-confidence, but lacked faith in God. The pleasure that God ordains must be from only one spouse, but Solomon conquered it from a

thousand. Eventually, he was conquered by what he conquered; Solomon's many women turned him away from God by the end of his life.

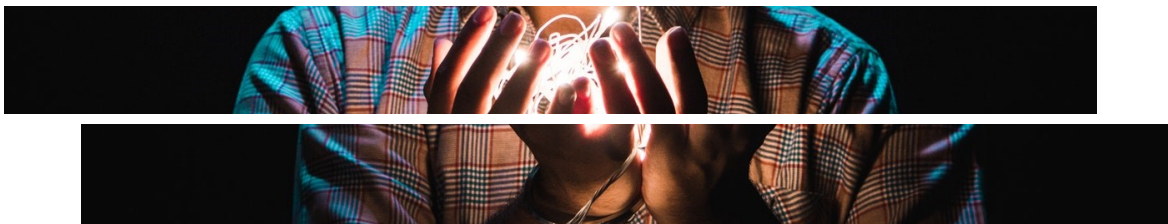
Life is about purpose, not just a profession, which is just one aspect of our purpose. Life is not just our beliefs, but how it informs our actions. Solomon preached against vanity, but lived deep in it. During his youth he romanced in the *Song of Solomon*, in middle-age, he wrote *Proverbs* warning youth to stay away from strange women, and in old age he exhorts in *Ecclesiastes* for the young to remember God.

Learn from the life of Solomon and lean on God instead of your personal desires, no matter how innocent they may begin. All temptations begin as desires, which soon give birth to sin leading to an ungodly life. Determine to conform your relationships, habits, and even your social media and gadget use into what God has in mind for them. His Holy Spirit gives you self-control to steer clear from unholy relationships, unholy habits and unholy lifestyle. By pursuing Him, and loving Him, you will taste the goodness He has for you, and not the hollowness that life without Him will dump on you.

Solomon loved God; he also loved women, Solomon built The Temple; he also built many temples, Solomon rode in two opposing directions, gallantly; God and world.

Solomon left God for the world he loved, God left Solomon to the world he chose, and Solomon's throne God cleft into two.

It is not our belief alone, but how we live our life that counts. Solomon's sermons did not match his life, and we're reading about that hypocrisy thousands of years later. He lived in what he preached against, vanity.



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Will my excessive coffee consumption add value to my life, or should I listen to my mother and cut back on the two pots of coffee I drink each day? (I don't drink it all at one time ... usually!)

- Caffeinated, Cebu Philippines

Dear Laura



Laura don't lie like that other science guy.

Dear Caffeinated,

I am sure there have been times (or there will be) when you needed to stay up all night studying for exams or finishing up that project you should have started last week, but rest assured, you are not the first college student wondering how much coffee is too much.

This may surprise you, but coffee isn't really as bad as you think it is! I will not bore you with the details except to say when hot water runs through coffee grounds while brewing, the grounds mix with the water and become part of the drink. "Coffee, believe it or not, happens to be the biggest source of antioxidants, outranking both fruits and vegetables. When you're treating yourself to a cup of coffee, you're not only

getting caffeine but a whole bunch of other beneficial compounds, including powerful antioxidants."¹ So for those reasons alone, it seems you should be drinking more coffee, not less.

Though drinking four or five eight-ounce cups of coffee a day may seem like a lot, it is healthy for you. But, remember to take into consideration what happens when you add things like cream and sugar. On a side note: if you want to curb the sweet tooth while drinking your coffee, try some dark chocolate instead; it is also loaded with lots of antioxidants. —Laura

If you have a scientific or philosophical question for Dear Laura, send them our way at rebuiltmagazine@gmail.com.

¹healthline.com/nutrition/how-coffee-makes-you-live-longer

THE SUCCESS STORY

WHY SUCCESS ISN'T ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE



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GREATEST
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at something
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Today, archaeologists piece together history based on what is left behind, which might only be just a few terracotta shards and a tooth. Cold case detectives try to solve decades-old mysteries by linking together fragments of information and attempting to locate witnesses who might still be alive. Historians debate the accuracy of accounts by comparing physical records in an attempt to find out what actually took place. The goal with all of these professions is to find the truth, but in all these situations there are missing links and major gaps in knowledge to overcome. There is always going to be guesswork involved because the passing of time inevitably leaves behind only hazy, fuzzy remnants, *if anything remains behind at all*. It seems that, one way or another, time refines what is truly enduring.

Some time ago, I worked at a second-hand store. It always broke my heart when we got in a donation of what was clearly on behalf of someone who had died. There were photos, journals, award ribbons, and a thousand other sentimental objects all mashed together in boxes, and it was my job to either trash it, recycle it, or put a few of these “treasures” out on the sales floor to be sold for merely a couple of dollars. Such was the culmination of their lives.

Certainly, most of us want to make an impact on the world we live in because we want our lives to matter. We want to be successful and live our lives well. A few months ago I was able to hear Stanford Graduate School of Business Professor Jennifer Aaker speak. In her presentation, she said it well: *“People want to be valued members of a winning team on an inspired mission.”* Sounds accurate! Yet it sounds near impossible at times, too. For the problem lies in the fact that we’re just not “big picture people,” and by “big,” I mean “forever minded.” We may be goal-oriented and have a five-year plan in place, and have daydreams about growing old with someone, but *forever*? The reality is, humanity

generally pursues things that don’t last beyond our lifetimes, or, at best, even the lifetimes of those who knew us.

It is imperative to understand that indeed you **do** matter, but not in the way you think. For the amount of possessions and achievements you accumulate on this earth fail to ultimately impact because they are all so very temporary. The number of diplomas, awards and accolades you gather will be forgotten, and even if you **do** manage to achieve fame and fortune, you at best just eventually become a Wikipedia entry. That job you do so well at and gain promotion after promotion will certainly give you money and comfort for a while, but the moment you’re gone they will simply find someone else to fill your desk. Your name will come off the door and be replaced by “Bob-from-sales” next door. We live our lives this way because we are driven by an intense “fear of missing out,” or at least not being included, which is why we fill our lives with the trappings of “success,” (i.e. diplomas, money, social reputation, et cetera), blindly forgetting that none of it will last. It may be hard to hear, but the truth is, *time will erase you*. The problem is always the “end game.”

Think about it. When you reflect on your past, what sticks out to you? I remember faces and places. I remember experiences I had. What I don’t remember, or simply don’t care about any longer, is how well I did on that test, how high a wage I received at that job, or the level of applause I had at my piano recital. Then if you ask me what I remember about a friend or a relative, the amount of memory dwindles exponentially. I remember the time we went to the amusement park together and shared a treat, but that’s about it. Is a “successful life” the accumulation of tangible indicators like money, awards, athletic prowess and social reputation, or is there something more? What should be our goal? Is the answer to be remembered by as many people as possible as having done something noteworthy?

**“IT MAY BE HARD TO HEAR,
BUT THE TRUTH IS, *TIME
WILL ERASE YOU.*”**

“HOW FOOLISH WE CAN BE IN OUR ATTEMPT TO CLING WHITE-KNUCKLED TO THAT WHICH DOES NOT ENDURE.”

No doubt you have heard of this guy Jesus. You know, from the Bible? How is it that this homeless man from Nazareth, who died over 2,000 years ago with only a scattered, poor, and rag tag band of followers, is not only **seriously** remembered today but He literally changed the course of history and is even yet today revered and worshipped? How did that happen? What did He do that was so remarkable? How was He so successful? How did He so “move the world?” So much memory and knowledge is lost to the vastness of time, yet not this man Jesus.

Stanford professor Chip Heath recorded that people tend to recall stories after listening to a speech 63% of the time versus hearing statistics, which were remembered only 5% of the time. It seems that stories make a bigger impact than mere accolades and data. We are definitely “story people,” and there is a reason for that. The fact is, we live in a giant “world purpose narrative,” and we are either on one side of the story with Jesus, or the other without Him, but we’re never excluded from it. So often we fail to realize that Jesus is our “missing piece”...the “one whom we are looking for.” It’s not “what” we are missing, but *who* we are missing! We seek to imitate the value, the purpose and the drive that Christ offers with a hope in and for a life of worldly success. But it all ultimately rings hollow and we are left “holding the bag.”

The struggle that so many of us have who *do* believe, is that we tend to think that joining Jesus will produce a version of success that will look a lot like the world’s version of success, or at least our own understanding of it. But as a **follower** of Christ, it’s *His* story we’re in now, not our own! However, we must also resist the temptation to swing wildly to the other side and embrace a thinking that says that by being a believer in Christ my life will therefore look *nothing* like what I planned. That my dreams and goals are therein erased! Such is rarely the case yet it will certainly look *different*. Specifically, it won’t be recorded in statistics (the number of gold stars I earned or the stuff I own), but rather it will be marked by the number of stories and even “micro stories” I was a part of and how they played out in the paradigm of God’s will. One of my favorite stories in the Bible is the story of a woman whom Jesus inexplicably praised while others declared her action a waste:

“And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, ‘Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been

sold for much and given to the poor.’ But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, ‘Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.’” (Matthew 26:6-13, NKJV)

This woman, merely a footnote in **secular** history, possessed something that the world held as valuable. She could have used its worth for her own benefit, or like the disciples suggested, sold it and given the profits to a social cause. Either way she would be a worldly “winner.” For personal wealth, pleasure, and contributing towards charity, are indicators of success in our social culture and values. However, according to Jesus’ definition of success, giving up something of such value to invest in Him was what actually made her profoundly “successful.” For true success is the sheer blissful union of your life with the life and narrative of the One who set this whole earth in motion and set you and I on it. That woman wasn’t thinking about the loss of the perfume, or the men in the room shaking their heads in disgust at her. She was thinking of Jesus and how much He meant to her. She wanted to show Him her love and she did it in a big way. So big it seems that we’re still talking about her and this act even yet today.

In this age we live in the shadow of Jesus’ life. We don’t know every detail of His walk through this world, yet we do have many of His recorded words and in such something intensely profound:

“If you love Me, keep My commandments,’ Jesus said, ‘I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever – the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.’” (John 14:15-17, NKJV)

Jesus does not expect you to somehow find this spiritual road of success on your own or achieve a sudden and profound 180-degree directional life change independently. For He gives to us of Himself in the form of the Holy Spirit to help us walk the walk He is leading us towards. Rejecting the world’s version of success for His version is not something that we suddenly and inexplicably wake up and decide to do one day. Rather it is His prompting in you and your daily desire to actually follow Him.

And the fact is, that honestly takes a lifetime to unfold. Or just maybe, in order to see that unfold, *He gives you a lifetime...*

The missionary legend Jim Elliot lost his life on the mission field in Ecuador in 1956 at the age of 28. He left behind a journal entry that profoundly and prophetically recorded these words: *"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."* After his "untimely" death, his wife, Elizabeth Elliot, went to the very same people in Ecuador who had murdered her husband to bring to them the truth and love of Jesus. Many of them eventually believed and repented and turned their lives to God, forsaking the traditions that had led them through a personal and corporate history of endless sin. Jim Elliot died, but not as a forgotten failure. For according to Jesus, he had achieved true and profound success in life because although he lost his physical life, he had gained all by giving all - his life and even his death - thereby gaining real and meaningful life with Jesus. And ironically, to top it all off, his legacy lives on to this very day!

Jesus once said that *"...unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain"* (John 12:24, NKJV). After all, what is the purpose of a plant growing a seed? It is of course to produce new life after the original plant is dead and gone. Jesus' definition of success does not naturally look like success to us because it involves death. We therefore reject His plan in lieu of our own because death is something we are naturally compelled to avoid at all costs. If our goal and purpose in this life is to have a nice family, career and house - if that is our definition of success - what happens then when those things are gone? Further, what happens then when we die, and WE are gone? How foolish we can be in our attempts to cling white-knuckled to that which does not endure. To try to hold on to, as Jim Elliot said, *"that which we cannot keep."* Jesus is a Master storyteller, and the Master story-writer. He's got a part for you to play. In embracing that role we come to know and understand what real success is. A legacy and inheritance *"that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading...[one that is] kept in heaven for you..."* (1 Peter 1:4) A "success" that lasts forever.

"Our greatest fear should not be of failure, but of succeeding at something that doesn't really matter." - D.L. Moody



Can We Really Trust the Bible?

What we can know for sure about the most read book in the world



I remember trying to read the Bible on my own a couple times as a kid. Growing up in church, reading “the good book” just seemed like it was something we were supposed to do. I usually started in Genesis and by chapter four (when the first baby ever born grows up to kill his own brother) I decided this book was just too weird to be spending any more time in. If you’ve ever tried to read the Bible and you’re not quite sure what to think about it, this article is for you. I wanted to just touch on what we can know for sure about the Bible, which happens to be the most read book in the entire world.¹

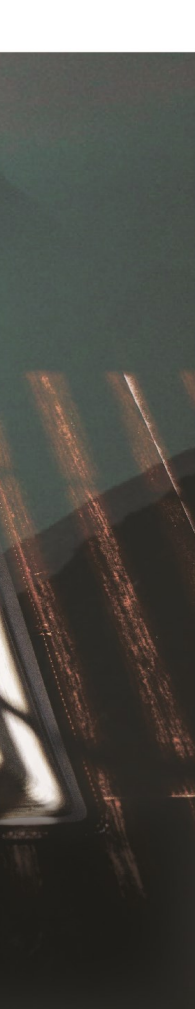
The Bible claims to be divinely inspired. 2 Timothy 3:16 tells us, “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.” This means that the Bible is claiming to be a book written by humans who were inspired by God Himself. The Bible holds God’s thoughts, His commands, and His desires for the lives of the people He created: us. If you’re a person desiring to know God, I would encourage you to read His word and discover for yourself how it has the power to speak to you personally (Hebrews 4:12). Alternatively, if you’re a person who believes the Bible is an archaic text with little connection to or involvement in our lives in 2018, I

challenge you to read on. While no words written here can convince a human heart to believe in the God of the Bible, I hope the words below at least pique your interest and motivate you to do more digging.

We can trust the Bible by the impressive unity of its historical records, archaeological finds, and accurate accounts of prophecy.

When I was doing my research, I learned that the Bible was written by around 40 different authors in three languages, and on three continents, all spanning a period of approximately 2,000 years.²

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“THE MORE TIME YOU SPEND IN THE WORD OF GOD, THE MORE YOU WILL UNDERSTAND, AND I DARE SAY THE MORE YOU WILL *LOVE*, HIS TRUE CHARACTER.”

Despite all of this, its message remains the same: the people God created rebelled against their Maker, yet God extends His grace towards them in the person of Jesus. The Bible contains numerous accounts of fulfilled prophecy, such as Isaiah’s prediction of Cyrus becoming the king of Persia roughly 200 years before his birth. Or how about the prophet Micah foretelling Christ’s birth in the town of Bethlehem, which is quite the distance from Nazareth where Jesus’s parents lived (two hours by car, if you’re wondering).³ Because the Bible includes accurate prophecies like this, it points to there being a God outside of time who gave the writers insight into future events. All this despite the fact that the many locations and differences in personality of the authors didn’t change the meaning of the corporate text in its entirety. These accounts give proof that the Bible is reliable.

We can trust the Bible because it has not changed substantially over time, as many people think it has.

Have you studied how well-preserved the Bible is compared to other ancient literature? In 1890, Andrew Archibald Macdonald, a merchant and politician from Prince Edward Island, was quoted saying the following: “None of the original manuscripts of the Bible have been preserved. Shall we therefore reject this book? As well might we throw away the works of Homer, who flourished from eight to nine hundred years before Christ, but of whose writings we have no complete copy older than the thirteenth century, and no fragments even older than the sixth century—fifteen centuries after the blind poet died.”⁴ In 1947, when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, we learned just how similar the Bible we can read today matches the text from Jesus’ time and even before then.⁵

We can trust the Bible because of the way it describes the human condition.

The Bible isn’t afraid to admit the good, the bad, and the ugly. The Bible includes account after account of humans turning away from God or lacking in their obedience to Him. It tells story after story of men and women who didn’t keep the promises they made to God. In the Bible, Peter is described as one of Jesus’s closest friends, yet three times he denied he knew and followed Jesus.⁶ Jeremiah 17:9 says, “the human heart is the most deceitful of all things, and desperately wicked. Who really knows how bad it is?” We see that’s true in our tendency as humans to be jealous, easily irritated, to lie, to slander, to fight, to murder... If the Bible were written by a human writer seeking to impersonate God, why would they talk about human faults to the extent the Bible does? Wouldn’t they want to focus on all the good things humans do?

My own relationship with God became real when I began noticing I wasn’t the good person I thought I was. I slowly became willing to look in the mirror and I saw more faults than I knew what to do with. God promises us in Jeremiah 29:13, “You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.” I started reading the Bible and found it incredible in how deeply it spoke to my inner life. If your heart desires to know who God is in even one small way, open a Bible and have faith that God will show up. For Christians, it’s a joy to study the Bible and be in the presence of God, but this doesn’t usually happen overnight. Just like building a friendship, the more time you spend in the word of God, the more you will understand, and I dare say the more you will *love*, His true character.

¹ businessinsider.com/the-top-10-most-read-books-in-the-world-infographic-2012-12

² answersingenesis.org/the-word-of-god/3-unity-of-the-bible/

³ answersingenesis.org/is-the-bible-true/4-fulfilled-prophecy/; Isaiah 44:28; Micah 5:2

⁴ christiancourier.com/articles/1441-new-testament-compared-to-classical-literature-the

⁵ answersingenesis.org/the-word-of-god/the-preservation-of-the-bible/

⁶ Matthew 26:70-74

COUCH WOES

HOW TO ESCAPE THE EMBRACE OF THAT COZY RETREAT



OH couch, you know how to treat me! You're always there for me. When I'm tired, when I'm depressed, when I need my "me" time, you're there. When I sink into you and scroll to Netflix, I'm home. You make me forget about the world like no one else can. If I were to peel off the cushions and investigate, I would find layers of our past good times together: popcorn, candy, coins, and oh, that's where that book went! Sometimes I put your 14 pillows back in order and fold up that blanket, but most of the time I just leave you in your natural state: pillows everywhere, blanket tangled on top, and a snack and beverage safely stashed nearby. You're the worst to try and leave. You make me feel so guilty when I finally manage to extract myself from your embrace. Sometimes I don't think about you at all, but most of the time when I'm at school or work, I'm daydreaming about you. I just want you back, always and forever. You know how to lure me in!

Ok, ok, perhaps all that is a bit ridiculous. But you know the feeling... With winter here and the humdrum of life taking its toll, the allure of a quiet night on the couch with Netflix at the ready feels like the best decision you've made all day. Stress just melts away when you turn on your favorite show and sink into the couch. But I bet you know the flip side too, right? It's now 1:30 a.m. and you're supposed to somehow now finish that essay for a 10 a.m. English class, followed by two more classes and a 5-hour shift at work. Now the guilt really begins and you're really hating your 9 p.m. decision-making self. Maybe this happens to you from time to time. Maybe this happens a little more often than you care to admit. Maybe this is your life, literally and metaphorically.

I want to propose that this familiar scenario isn't merely about laziness. It's about examining your motivation for the decisions you make, especially when it's at the expense of what is more worthwhile in the long term. Because it's been ingrained in you since you were a child, you know that doing well in school is likely the ticket to a stable, decent life. You know that getting a good night's sleep is just smart, health-wise and mood-wise. You know that ultimately not spending so much time in the "down" position means more life experiences and better relationships. With all that said, keep in mind that this is not an article saying a Friday night couch time session with Netflix is bad. It's only negative when it's literally or metaphorically become your default position in life.

Teddy Roosevelt once said, "Get action! Do things; be sane. Don't fritter away your time! Create, act, take a place wherever you are and be somebody; get action." Sounds great, and smart to say, right? But...oh, that couch and its appeal after a long day! Let's take a step back and talk about what might be driving you right now

"YOU WERE CREATED BY SOMEONE FAR GREATER THAN YOU AND WHO IS FAR MORE SATISFYING AND COMFORTING THAN A LIFE OF EVENINGS SPENT ON THE COUCH."

"ONLY ONE LIFE, TWILL SOON BE PAST, ONLY WHAT'S DONE FOR CHRIST WILL LAST."

- C.T. STUDD

in life itself. Can you relate to my story? Taking it easy and ignoring responsibilities, for as long as possible, was a skill I mastered because I could balance it with hard work when I absolutely had to. I wanted people to like me, so I made the logical decisions I needed to in order to get that approval. I didn't want too much difficulty, so I didn't rock the boat or take many risks. Instead, I played it safe and stuck to the middle of the road. I just wanted to be happy, so I did whatever was necessary to ensure that I was, no matter the cost and often at the expense of other people. If you boil these motivations down, they start sounding pretty shallow. Lots of "I, me, mine, and self." My life was one giant "couch," and I relied on comfort, security, and taking as few chances as possible to pursue the easiest life I could manage.

But, maybe you're the rare type of person who actually focuses all of your time and energy on other people and their needs. That's probably exhausting though, just saying, and you may occasionally experience "burn out" and visit the proverbial couch when no one's looking. So, whether or not you always default to the "couch," cycle into it when life gets frustrating, or you fall somewhere in the middle, we all lose steam. We get distracted, make wrong decisions, get overly emotional, fail, and mess up because we're human. All of that comes naturally to us. We're not going to be able to live perfectly or have pure motives and goals all the time. On our own, we all fall short.

Here's the deal. This life is often exhausting, and love is the only answer. Not love for stuff or self or noble causes, but love for Him who created you. God's calling you to love Him and treasure Him above all else because He loved you first. By getting to know Jesus and the Bible, you will learn that you are not your own and He created you for something far more satisfying than a life of evenings spent on the couch, or whatever your particular escape is. Furthermore, you will discover that you do not own anything, and everything in this life is a gift (even the air you breathe right now).

You will still get distracted with entertainment, what other people think and chasing comfort. However, God's love will surprise you because you'll start to be motivated to get up

off the couch and go live life with Him and for Him. Being self-absorbed will start to lose its appeal! It will definitely involve loving other people, but doing so from His power and not your own limited reserves. Being kind to them and helping them will have a safety net built in when you don't do it perfectly.

This life we have is a lot shorter than we think, and we're going to wake up one day and realize most of it has already passed us by. So, what do you want to leave behind when you're gone? What do you want to be remembered for? As C.T. Studd said, "Only one life, twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last." The couch can wait.





Success

Another Road to Failure?

by Cyril Nehemiah - YFC Staff

Success – that’s the God of the modern man. It is the invisible idol he bows down to worship. It’s his tower of Babel, that he’s ever-building but never completing. He is possessed, obsessed and even oppressed by it. In a time where foundational truths are at the mercy of man’s temporal, finite and erroneous judgments, it’s no wonder that man has succumbed to this age-old mammon – success, hoping to keep himself ahead of the game called life, but unsure of all the odds that await him.

**“ALL THAT WE CALL
HUMAN HISTORY - MONEY,
POVERTY, AMBITION, WAR,
PROSTITUTION, CLASSES,
EMPIRES, SLAVERY- [IS]
THE LONG TERRIBLE STORY
OF MAN TRYING TO FIND
SOMETHING OTHER THAN
GOD WHICH WILL MAKE
HIM HAPPY.” - C.S. LEWIS**

Funny, that the definition of success is achieving a greater degree of everything, that is lesser than man himself, namely money, position, possessions, name, fame or any other human endeavor. Man as an individual and as a race has been punching the clock hard to arrive at a destination that he was never designed to arrive at. Yet, success by all means is the pride of any emerging superpower in the world, the emblem of happiness and the identity of the fallen man.

The equation is simple when people don't know God, they run after the success that is founded on time but destroyed by eternity because outside of God life has no joy and yet we are creatures made to pursue joy. Joy is inextricable from human existence; it's as inseparable as the body is from the soul. It's the essence of life. And man's pursuit of success is nothing but an attempt to find joy there. However, ever since sin invaded the human kind, there's no way man can find joy. For the root, the fountain and the summary of all Joy is God Himself – that is why the Bible says, “In Your (God's) Presence there is fullness of Joy” (Psalm 16:11). In fact, the Bible tells us that man is created to pursue joy and everything inside of him longs for it and everything around him invites him to pursue that joy. It is so,

since God the Creator fashioned it to be that way, so that the longing inside may meet the beauty of creation outside that the perfect fusion of joy may burst forth, erupting worship in the human soul to God. That's why the stamp of approval God placed on all creation when He looked at His finished work of creation in Genesis 1:31 was, “*It was very good*”.

The sad reality is that man has lost it all. Sin destroyed it all. The Bible describes sin as falling short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). The meaning of the verse is this, that God created us to enjoy His glory through creation which reveals to us the glory of God, but man rebelled against fallen short of this glorious privilege, the Bible describes this in one word in Ephesians 4:18 “... ***alienated from the life of God***”. Man is alive but doesn't have the life of God in Him, in other words, he is spiritually dead and hence has no connection with His Creator.

But the good news is this, that to restore this relationship, God sent His Son, Jesus Christ. Since sin came and alienated man from the life of God, there's only one way to restore it, by redeeming man by meeting the holy, just and righteous standards of God: that is to pay the penalty of sin which is eternal death. Jesus' death on the cross achieved that for us. Hence God approved of it and raised Jesus back to life from the dead (Acts 2:24). And all those who come to Jesus in repentance of their sins and by faith receive this offer of forgiveness in Jesus Christ will not only be forgiven and reconciled to God, but have the greatest gift of all 'eternal life'. Because “***the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord***”. (Romans 6:23)

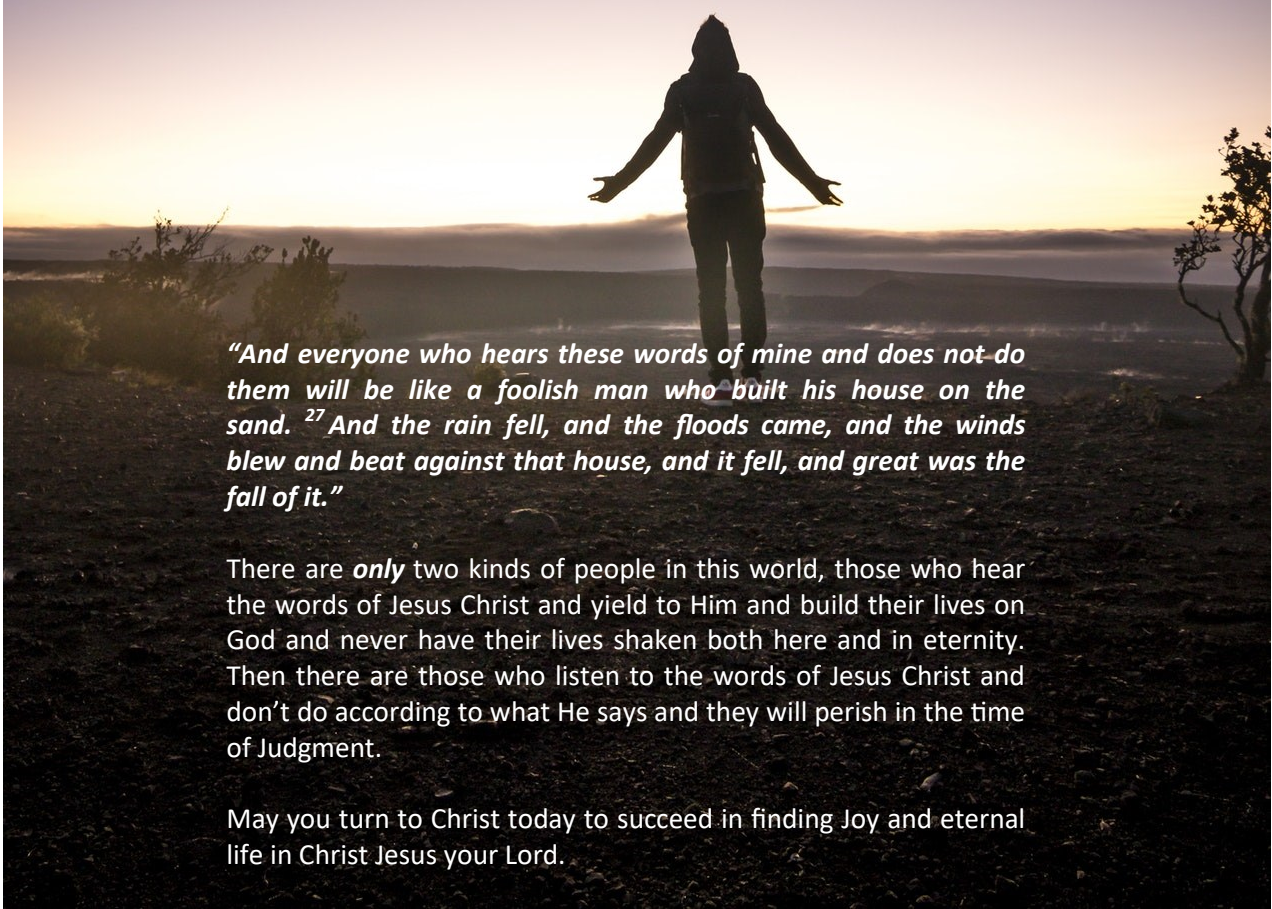
There's no way around to human redemption for joy, satisfaction, and ultimate delight of his worship. Man is made for God (Romans 11:36) and nothing shall satisfy His need, he's incurably God-centered. Sin corrupted our desire for God, but not the design, and hence man in his fallen state will continue to satisfy his longing for God in anything and everything, only to be repeatedly denied the satisfaction. Only those who turn to Christ can find this and forever be satisfied.

How well did C.S. Lewis put this in his book, Mere Christianity, *“All that we call human history--money, poverty, ambition, war, prostitution, classes, empires, slavery--[is] the long terrible story of man trying to find something other than God which will make him happy.”*

All men work towards joy, and success is sometimes the indicator of the level of joy we obtain. However those who know God through His Son Jesus Christ alone can truly and assuredly enjoy life here and forever, but those who don't know Him, suffer forever. For hell and heaven are real places and eternal places. That is why the Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 16:26, ***“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul?***

Who is a successful man or woman? He/she who profits his own soul. And how does that happen? By surrendering your life to Him who alone owns your soul.

Success in itself is meaningless unless it is built on pillars of immovable, unshakable, eternal truths. And that, only God can give. Jesus our Lord told us this is an emphatic pictorial form when He said in Matthew 7:26-27 –



“And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

There are **only** two kinds of people in this world, those who hear the words of Jesus Christ and yield to Him and build their lives on God and never have their lives shaken both here and in eternity. Then there are those who listen to the words of Jesus Christ and don't do according to what He says and they will perish in the time of Judgment.

May you turn to Christ today to succeed in finding Joy and eternal life in Christ Jesus your Lord.

the real Christian?

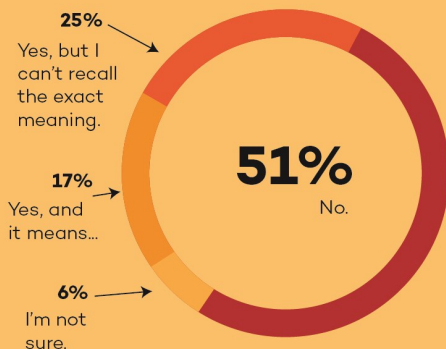


THROUGHOUT THE 20TH CENTURY,

4,300 PEOPLE

WERE **LEAVING** THE CHURCH EVERY DAY
IN **EUROPE** AND **NORTH AMERICA**.

CHURCHGOERS WHO HAVE:
HEARD OF THE GREAT COMMISSION



BELIEVE IN THE
GOD OF THE BIBLE



BELIEVE GOD DETERMINES
WHAT HAPPENS



BELIEVE IN THE SUPERNATURAL
BUT NOT THE GOD OF THE BIBLE



27 ONLY IN 100 PEOPLE OWN A FULL BIBLE

[THAT DOESN'T INCLUDE EVEN READING IT]

86%

OF BUDDHISTS,
HINDUS AND MUSLIMS

.....DON'T KNOW A.....
CHRISTIAN
.....PERSONALLY.....



SOURCES: globalchristianity.org and relevantmagazine.com

POEM

UNTITLED

Weak at the knees I am beggin ya
please I am not just mean you see I
was born into this family not by choice
not by decision trust me it is more
painful than an incision and the only
drug I have is my own pain sometimes
I walk in the rain because no one can
understand what it is to live in no
man's land where those around you
wage war and you have nothing to
hope for and your friends are a million
miles away and you only got today
maybe you'll die and there you lay, is
that all that will become of me, all that
will come from me, to change the
world, in and down and out in a whirl I
think someone is screaming and I
think it is me into the wind, how can
you all pretend that it is just me, I
don't know how to leave, I don't know
how to stay, too weak to run, too
strong to kneel and pray and the skies
are looking gray and though the stars
are falling sleep is calling and I will find
myself trapped in another long day
inside of a short week canned and
pickled inside of a life that just may be
short and fickle.



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