



Should a Christian Be Perfect?

PART 2



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A woman with long dark hair is holding a baby in a purple sweater. The baby is looking towards the camera. The background is a soft-focus nursery with a crib and a lamp.

Hide God's Word in Your Heart

Memorize:

“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 1:24).

Have you ever observed a newborn lying in its crib? All they can really do is wiggle and react to their environment with calmness—or crying. Every Christian also starts their walk with Christ as a newborn. Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

Peter advises us, “As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word, that you may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2). Mother’s milk, packed with just the right nutrients, is what infants need to grow into healthy toddlers. At this stage, they start bouncing and then learn to crawl. Baby teeth appear as their bodies prepare to receive solid food. Likewise, Christians go through phases of growth and development.

We need more than an elementary knowledge of the gospel in order to keep growing. “For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe” (Hebrews 5:13). Naturally,

infants grow into toddlers who eat solid food. They can follow simple instructions, speak (sometimes intelligibly), walk, and even climb. As we grow spiritually, we will gain greater spiritual discernment and practical experience in prayer, study, and ministering to others. “Solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Hebrews 5:14).

As children grow, they make mistakes; maturing Christians do too. The important thing is that we learn from these stumbles and get back up. “For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity” (Proverbs 24:16). Jesus wants you to reach the point at which “when you walk, your steps will not be hindered, and when you run, you will not stumble” (4:12).


With this in mind, in this issue’s feature, “Should a Christian Be Perfect? Part 2,” Pastor Doug explains how the seemingly impossible goal of perfection is actually attainable for every Christian. 

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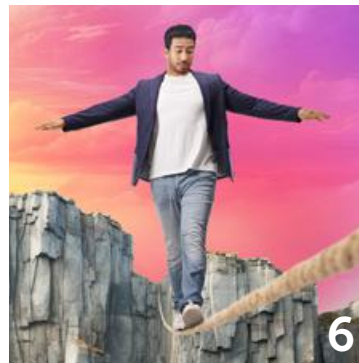
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From the Mail Bag



Deepest Gratitude

Thank you for bringing me back, at times resistantly, to the Lord. Slowly, you brought me back to hear the Lord's message. I was lost. I did not see. I just wanted you to know it is true that the Lord will use whoever He can to save you. You just have to be a little willing, and He builds on that and opens your eyes and ears. You don't even realize that, all of a sudden, a light comes on and you begin to have these moments of clarity and recognize the error of your ways. The Lord is using you to reach people. I just want to say thank you, and may God continue to bless you. *Andrew*

Radio Evangelism Works

That I found the real truth of the Word of God is a miracle. While I was stationed in South Carolina, my family was attending a Sunday church. We were happy, but I started to ask for wisdom from the Lord in my life. I found myself questioning what the pastor was preaching—it just didn't line up with the Bible. Some questions I had were: What really happens when you die? What is the true Sabbath day? This started to cause problems at home, but the truth was important to me. ... One day, on my way to work, I stumbled upon the *Bible Answers Live* radio broadcast, which provided answers to my questions. Today, my family serves the Lord on His Sabbath. I was so blessed to have God touch me. Out of this whole big universe, God spoke to us, a speck of dust on a tiny blue marble. *Darin*



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Should a Christian Be Perfect?

PART 2

By Pastor Doug Batchelor



An Amazing Fact: Water striders are incredible insects that walk on water. They are found in ponds, lakes, streams, and even oceans across the Northern Hemisphere. The ends of their feet contain thousands of microscopic hairs that trap air, giving them buoyancy on the water. Water striders are so buoyant that they can support 15 times their weight!



Like a water strider, the disciple Peter once walked on water. Responding to the Savior's invitation, "When Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus" (Matthew 14:29). This is a radical picture of what God can do in our spiritual life, enabling us to rise above sin instead of allowing it to pull us under.

However, it's a sad reality that Christians are prone to repeat the same mistakes and fall into the same sin more than once, but that does not mean God has forsaken us. Many scholars believe that Mary Magdalene had the same struggle:

And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven demons (Luke 8:2 KJV).

This does not necessarily mean that Jesus cast out seven demons at one time; it could also be understood



that seven times Mary slipped back into the old patterns of sin and He forgave her each time.

"For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again" (Proverbs 24:16). "He shall deliver you in six troubles, yes, in seven no evil shall touch you" (Job 5:19).

Do not become discouraged if, like Mary, you find yourself repenting over the same failures multiple times.

After all, we know that Jesus said, "Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him" (Luke 17:3, 4).

Notice that the number seven is often associated with God's long-suffering mercy:

Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21, 22).

If God commands us to forgive each other seven times in one day or seventy times seven, would He turn around and do less for us? No, He will forgive us every time we sincerely repent!

However, there is a danger that we can come to the place where we presume upon His grace and, through abusing His forgiveness, harden our hearts and lose our conviction for sin.

- "If we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins" (Hebrews 10:26).
- "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Romans 6:1, 2).

There is real effort involved in denying self and living the Christian life. The Bible says we war, wrestle, run, fight, and strive. This is called the good fight of faith. We must strive to trust God's plan and will for us rather than our

own desires and plans. We must fight to stay close to Jesus. Mary was safe from sin when she was with Jesus. "Whoever abides in Him does not sin" (1 John 3:6).

Christians Follow Christ

The bottom line is that Jesus came to this planet for three primary reasons.

First, to show us the Father (John 14:9, 10). **Second**, to die as our substitute for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 John 4:10). **Third**, to give us an example of how to be victorious.

Notice the ways we are invited to mirror Jesus.

- "As the Father has sent Me, I also send you" (John 20:21).
- "Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps" (1 Peter 2:21).
- "I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you" (John 13:15).
- "Bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do" (Colossians 3:13).
- "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34).

We are sent as Jesus was sent, commanded to walk as He walked, do as He did, forgive as He forgave, and love as He loved! In light of these principles, why would a professed Christian resist the truth that we are called to be holy, loving, and perfect as He is holy?

Once again, I certainly do not claim to be perfect, and we will never be exactly like Jesus because He lived a sinless life while we are all scarred by sin. But every Christian should be striving to be like our perfect Savior. Jesus left us with His perfect example. And just as soon as we say that God cannot keep us from sin, we are giving glory to the enemy by default. In essence, we are saying, "Satan is powerful enough to tempt me to sin, but Jesus is not powerful enough to keep me from sin." But the Bible tells us that "He





who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

He who attempts to justify his sin also negates his justification. The central issue of Jesus' mission was to save us from sin's penalty and power.

He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil (1 John 3:8).

The undisputed work of the devil is to tempt us to sin, but Jesus came to shatter those shackles that bind us and set the captives free (Isaiah 61:1).

Consistent Obedience

When you think about it, you realize that everybody obeys God sometimes—at least while sleeping. But the Lord is looking for a people who will obey Him consistently. That's why He told Moses,

Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep all My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever (Deuteronomy 5:29).

Notice that the Lord asks us to *always* keep *all* of His commandments, not to make us miserable, but for the ultimate happiness of us and our children!

King Darius said to Daniel, who had just been thrust into the lions' den, "Your God, whom you serve continually, He will deliver you" (Daniel 6:16). Keep in mind that the ones who obey God consistently are often the last ones to be aware of it. In fact, I would be extremely wary of anyone who claims perfection. When Daniel had a vision of God, he said, "My comeliness was turned in me into corruption" (10:8 KJV). While he lived a life of consistent obedience, Daniel also acknowledged that he was a sinner: "Now while I was speaking, praying, and confessing my sin and the sin of my people Israel" (9:20). This is because the closer we

come to the light of God, the more aware we become of our imperfections.

In the book *Steps to Christ*, we read,

One ray of the glory of God, one gleam of the purity of Christ, penetrating the soul, makes every spot of defilement painfully distinct, and lays bare the deformity and defects of the human character. ... He loathes himself as he views the pure, spotless character of Christ (p. 29).



Promises of Power to Obey

The Bible is overflowing with "exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (2 Peter 1:4 KJV). Here are just a few:

- "Mark the blameless man, and observe the upright; for the future of that man is peace" (Psalm 37:37).
- "We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37).
- "Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place" (2 Corinthians 2:14).
- "He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him" (Hebrews 7:25).



- "Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 1:24).
- "The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age" (Titus 2:11, 12).

Those who refuse to believe that we can live victorious lives are essentially accusing God of a cruel injustice in asking us to do the impossible—and then punishing us for not doing it! That would be something like a father asking his young toddler to touch the ceiling, and, as the little child is straining to reach up seven feet on tiptoes, the father smacks the child to the ground and yells, "I told you to touch the ceiling, and you disobeyed me!"

An ugly picture—I know.

But suppose that I ask my toddler to touch the ceiling and, as he is straining and stretching to do the impossible, I gently reach down and lift him up to his goal. This is how the Bible pictures God! Within every command of God, there is the inherent power to obey it. For example, God says,

- "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy" (Leviticus 19:2).
- "As He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct" (1 Peter 1:15).

Notice the word "be" in the two passages above. When the Lord created the world, He said, "Let there be light"; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3). When Jesus cleansed the leper, He said, "Be cleansed"—and he became clean! (Matthew 8:3).

Likewise, when Jesus said, "You shall be perfect" (Matthew 5:48, emphasis added), the enabling power itself was in the divinely spoken word "be." I know that when God asks us to live a holy life, it can seem unattainable, but remember, when God asks us to cross an ocean without a boat, He will either part the sea or enable us to walk on water.



Remember that Jesus said, "Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5), and Paul added, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

Perfect Love

So, what is the true essence of Christian perfection?

Looking at Matthew 5:43–47, we see Jesus speaking of loving our enemies. When we reach verse 48, and Jesus says, "Therefore you shall be perfect, just as your Father in heaven is perfect," it becomes clear that He is talking about perfect love.

Further proof for this concept is borne out in Luke 6:36, where Jesus words it differently: "Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful." So, what is Christian perfection?

It is perfect love *and* perfect mercy. Perfect love is demonstrated in a willingness to obey. "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). For example,

(Continued on page 16.)

PROPHECY WATCH

"Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many" (Matthew 24:11).

"False prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect" (v. 24).

"Even the elect" can be deceived by false prophets, which is why many Christians believed that the solar eclipse of April 8, 2024, was a harbinger of judgment for the United States. On that day, a total solar eclipse passed over parts of 13 U.S. states from Texas to Maine.¹ Although such a celestial event occurs with scientific precision every 18 months or so in a different part of the world,² end-time prognosticators found a way to turn April's eclipse into a warning from God.

"This time it's very prophetic," said a pastor being interviewed on CBN. "The fact that it goes over seven cities called Nineveh and one called Jonah makes you wonder, *Is this our [America's] Nineveh moment?*"³ One congressperson thought so, posting on X (formerly Twitter) that "God is sending America strong signs to tell us to repent. ... I pray that our country listens."⁴ But on April 8, 2024, a *total* solar eclipse did not, in fact, cross seven U.S. cities named Nineveh, for only two of them—Nineveh, Indiana, and Nineveh, Ohio—were in the path of totality. The rest experienced only a *partial* solar eclipse like every other place in the contiguous United States.⁵

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light" (Matthew 24:29).

It is obvious that Jesus said the sun would be darkened, but this would happen "immediately after the tribulation" of the Dark Ages. (It should be noted, however, that some evangelicals who don't see any prophetic significance in the recent eclipse believe that the tribulation mentioned in this text refers to a future seven-year period.⁶) As the papacy was nearing the end of its 1,260-year reign (AD 538 to 1798), the sun indeed was darkened, but not by a solar eclipse. May 19, 1780, is well documented as New England's great "Dark Day." From Maine to New Jersey,⁷ the darkness was felt for most of the day, and that night, the nearly full moon refused to shine.⁸ Since then, we have been living in the last days and should always be prepared for Jesus' imminent return (Matthew 24:30; Revelation 22:12).

Yes, there are more prophetic signs ahead, but we should be wary of ignoring or distorting the facts of any natural phenomenon to make it fit our dogmatic interpretation of Jesus' words. When we do so, we not only practice deception, but we give unbelievers a reason to make a mockery of our faith. If anything, cries for America to repent based on outlandish claims will only harden people's hearts to the real signs of Jesus' coming.

1 "2024 Total Eclipse Cities," *National Eclipse*, https://nationaleclipse.com/cities_total.html.

2 Jay Sullivan & Lisa Hendry, "Solar eclipse guide: what they are and how to watch safely," *Natural History Museum*, <https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/solar-eclipse-guide.html>.

3 Gary Lane, "Signs in the Sun, Moon, and Stars: Does The Upcoming Solar Eclipse Point to the End Times?" CBN, April 5, 2024, <https://www2.cbn.com/news/us/signs-sun-moon-and-stars-does-upcoming-solar-eclipse-point-end-times>.

4 Hayes Brown, "Eclipses aren't usually political. Enter: Marjorie Taylor Greene," MSNBC, April 8, 2024, <https://www.msnbc.com/opinion/msnbc-opinion/2024-solar-eclipse-totality-new-york-earthquake-rcna146613>.

5 Joedy McCreary, "2 places named Nineveh, not 7, in path of totality for April 8 eclipse | Fact check," *USA TODAY*, April 5, 2024, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/factcheck/2024/04/05/april-8-eclipse-totality-path-nineveh/73215252007/>.

6 Greg Laurie, "Is the Solar Eclipse a Sign of End Times?" *Harvest*, April 8, 2024, <https://harvest.org/resources/gregs-blog/post/is-the-solar-eclipse-a-sign-of-end-times/>.

7 "New England's Dark Day," *Wikipedia*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_England's_Dark_Day.

8 Thomas J. Campanella, "Mark Well the Gloom: Shedding Light on the Great Dark Day of 1780," *Environmental History* 12 (January 2007): 35–58, https://web.mit.edu/~tomcamp/Public/articles/CAMPANELLA_Dark%20Day.pdf.

Bible Answers

with Pastor Doug Batchelor



What does it mean that Christ preached to “spirits” in prison?


This question comes from a passage in 1 Peter, which says, “Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, by whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison, who formerly were disobedient, when once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved through water” (3:18–20).

This text can certainly be confusing to Christians who believe that the soul “sleeps” in death. Some say it means Christ literally descended into the depths of the earth and preached to lost souls living in limbo. But this is far from the text’s real message and gives a dangerous, faulty impression that a person can somehow still be saved after having died lost.

First, it should be noted that Peter refers here to Genesis 6:3: “The LORD said, ‘My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.’”

Second, notice how Christ preached to those spirits. He did it “by the Spirit,” referring to the Holy Spirit. So whatever Christ did in preaching at this time, He did it through the Holy Spirit. When was the preaching done? “When once the Divine longsuffering waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared.” Thus, the preaching was actually done while the ark was being built—when Noah warned the world before the flood.

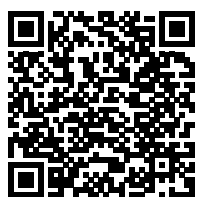
Finally, to whom was the preaching done? “To the spirits in prison.” Throughout the Bible, this terminology is used to describe those bound in the prison house of sin. David prayed, “Bring my soul out of prison” (Psalm 142:7). The mission of Jesus was “to proclaim liberty to the captives” (Isaiah 61:1). Peter here is simply telling us that it was the Spirit of Christ that preached through Noah in the days before the flood. Jesus was there, through the Holy Spirit, to speak conviction to hearts and appeal to the lost to come into the ark.

The question for you, friend, is this: “Are you a captive in Satan’s prison of sin?” Jesus, through the call of the Holy Spirit to your heart, is inviting you to receive salvation so that you can be set free. 

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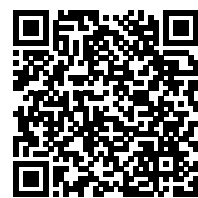
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Should the story of the rich man and Lazarus be taken literally?

Is there any way to break the chains of addiction in my life?



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CHARGE!	8:00 AM ET/PT 7:00 AM CT 6:00 AM MT						
DAYSTAR TELEVISION NETWORK		3:30 PM ET		6:00 PM ET (Español)			
fetv		5:30 AM ET	5:30 AM ET	5:30 AM ET	5:30 AM ET	5:30 AM ET	
H HISTORY		6:00 AM ET/PT 5:00 AM CT 4:00 AM MT	6:00 AM ET/PT 5:00 AM CT 4:00 AM MT	6:00 AM ET/PT 5:00 AM CT 4:00 AM MT	6:00 AM ET/PT 5:00 AM CT 4:00 AM MT	6:00 AM ET/PT 5:00 AM CT 4:00 AM MT	
Hope CHANNEL	10:00 AM PT 7:00 PM PT				6:00 AM PT	12:30 PM PT	
TBN <i>inspire</i>	11:30 AM PT 8:30 PM PT	8:30 PM PT	8:30 PM PT	8:30 PM PT	8:30 PM PT	8:30 PM PT	8:30 PM PT








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 lifetime	8:00 AM (All Time Zones)						
 PTL	10:30 AM ET						
TBN					10:00 PM PT		
 Three Angels Broadcasting Network			10:00 PM CT	9:00 PM CT	1:30 PM CT		
 WLNY CHANNEL 55 NEW YORK	11:00 AM ET						
 WORLD HARVEST TELEVISION		9:00 AM ET	9:00 AM ET	9:00 AM ET	9:00 AM ET	9:00 AM ET	

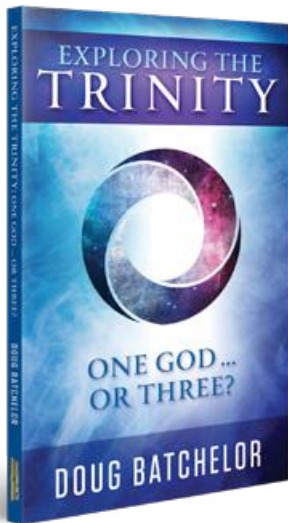


Bible Answers Live airs weekly on Sunday at 7:00 PM PT. It is a live call-in radio program during which you can ask Pastor Doug a Bible question and get a biblical answer. Call 1-800-GOD-SAYS during program hours to participate. You can also watch live on AFTV!



	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
 AFTV	7:00 PM PT LIVE			2:00 PM PT	2:00 AM PT 11:00 AM PT	6:00 AM PT	
 Three Angels Broadcasting Network					7:00 PM CT		
Sirius Family Talk Channel 131	7:00 PM ET						8:00 PM ET

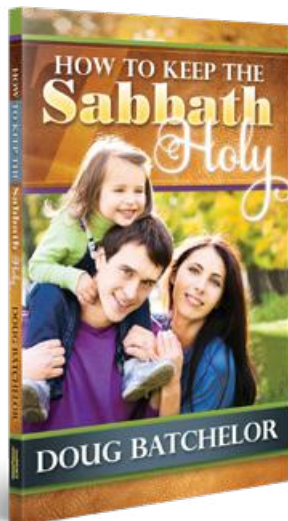
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How to Keep the Sabbath Holy

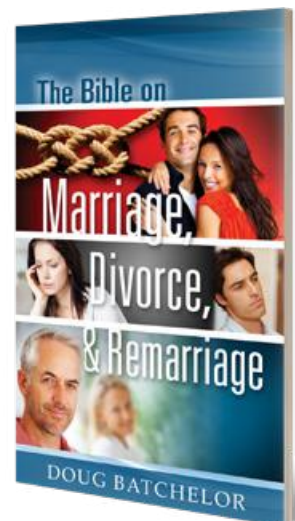
This inspiring and practical Bible journey will help you learn how to capture all the blessings God has packaged into the fourth commandment. Learn the time-tested biblical principles that will help you experience relief from everyday stress, healing for your whole body, and true rest in Christ for your soul.

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Pastor Doug tackles sensitive issues with tact and biblical clarity in an effort to help broken marriages mend, keep strong marriages together, and enable those dealing with divorce and remarriage to live in a biblical framework.

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Amazing Facts Sharing Bookmarks

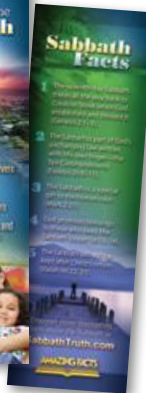
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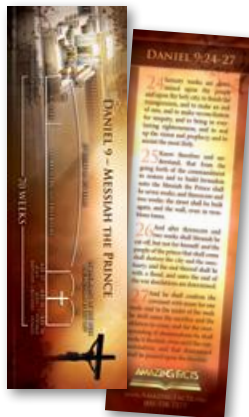
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(Continued from page 9.)

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego loved God more than their own lives and were willing to go into the fiery furnace rather than dishonor Him. And Daniel was willing to go to the lions' den rather than be ashamed of his God. Though this type of love is rare, it is real and attainable for all who believe! It is the born-again heart that loves God supremely—a Spirit-filled life.

Faith in the Victory

Sin is more than a single offense; it is a lifestyle. Before Jesus saves us, we are slaves to sin. After Jesus saves us, we may still slip, but "sin shall not have dominion over you" (Romans 6:14). For the Christian, where sin once sat enthroned and unchallenged, Jesus now sits as Lord on the throne of our heart.

"Do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts" (Romans 6:12). This does not mean genuine Christians will not make mistakes. There are too many examples in the Bible in which they do. This is why John said, "My little children, these things I write to you, so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1).

However, the mistakes should be the exception, not the rule. "The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 57).

During World War II, General Jonathan Wainwright was captured by the Japanese and held prisoner in a concentration camp. Cruelly treated, he outwardly appeared "a broken, crushed, hopeless, starving man." Finally, the Japanese surrendered, and the war ended. A U.S. Army colonel




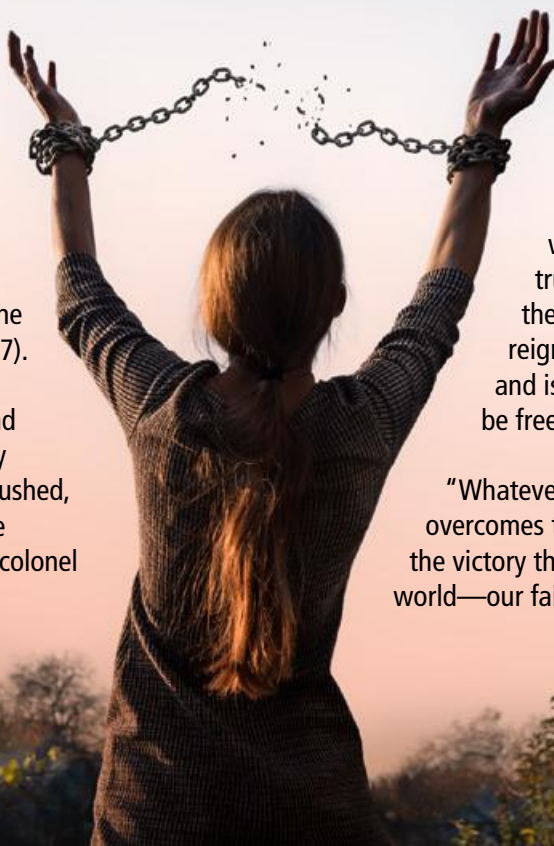
came to the prison camp and announced personally to the general that Japan had been defeated and that he was free and in command.

After Wainwright heard the news, he returned to his quarters, where he was confronted by some Japanese guards who began to mistreat him as they had done in the past. Wainwright, however, with the news of the allied victory still fresh in his mind, straightened his body to its full six

feet two inches, and declared with authority, "My supreme commander has defeated your commander. Now I am

in command here! These are my orders." From that moment on, General Wainwright was in control of the camp.

General Wainwright had received word from a higher power, and he acted in faith on that word such that it became real. He would no longer acknowledge the authority of his tormentors. Likewise, when we accept the truth that Jesus defeated the devil on the cross, now reigns, has "all authority," and is with us always, we can be free indeed! 



"Whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith" (1 John 5:4).

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News to Note

Where in the World Is Pastor Doug?

These are tumultuous times, which is why Pastor Doug is committed to sharing the Word of God around the world for such a time as this. Check out his schedule and let your friends know!

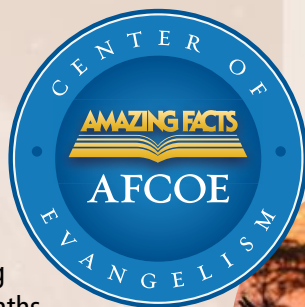


June 21, 22: Lillooet, British Columbia, Fountainview Graduation
July 31–August 8: Orlando ASI
September 20–October 5: Prophecy Odyssey, NYC

See more Amazing Facts speakers by visiting prophecyseminars.com!

New AFCOE Training Session Begins August 16

Are you ready to become a powerful witness for Christ in these last days? If so, then prayerfully consider signing up now for our fall 2024 Amazing Facts Center of Evangelism program beginning in August. AFCOE is three months of empowering outreach training that will equip you to become a better soul-winner! And AFCOE 2024 includes a mission trip to New York City, where you'll have the opportunity to put your new skills into practice and support *Prophecy Odyssey*, a live, evangelistic series in Manhattan! To learn more, visit afcoe.org!



Get Ready for Prophecy Odyssey

Join Pastor Doug for a mind-blowing, 16-part study and get clear, trustworthy, logical answers to the world's most pressing questions about prophecy and the Bible. Begins September 20. Visit prophecyodyssey.com to learn more.

You can also host a *Prophecy Odyssey* screening event for your friends, family, and community! Turn your church, home, or office into a watch party. We're making it easier by supplying a guide for hosts—along with posters, flyers, and invitations! Go to prophecyodyssey.com/be-a-host to learn more.



AFCOE Africa

How far would you walk to hear God's truth? During one Amazing Facts prophecy seminar in Uganda, six souls walked 12 miles roundtrip each day in search of the Word! This group from a Pentecostal church, including pastors, walked two hours one way, beginning their journey by 3:00 to be on time for the start of the meeting at 5:30. Afterward, they walked back in the darkness to their village, their hearts aglow with the messages of truth and hope they had heard. When asked what motivated them to endure the wearisome journey each evening, they responded that they had never heard such teachings before. "We were thirsty for this truth, and neither distance nor darkness could keep us away."

Thus far, 40 souls have sealed their decisions for Christ by joining the remnant church through baptism. Together with their pastors, they have even formed a new church plant. We praise God for His marvelous work in Uganda. Did you know that in 2023, Amazing Facts in Africa baptized 2,414 souls? We deeply appreciate the sacrifices of our donors in bringing thirsty souls to Christ!



Volunteer Spotlight

Bible School Volunteers Relish the Chance to Serve

By Shenalyn Page

Craig and Lowana Brauer didn't expect their house to sell quickly. Homes in their neighborhood had been on the market for over a year. But the couple knew it was time to move. They had been visiting their daughter and her family near the W.O.R.D. Center for years and had grown to love the church family. They also enjoyed watching Amazing Facts programs.

Lowana, a retired speech pathologist, shares, "We've supported Amazing Facts for years, but we wanted to be a part of the evangelistic movement we saw happening here." So the couple prayerfully put their house on the market despite the poor prospects. Within a day, they had a cash offer. Plus, the buyers wanted to buy any furniture that the Brauers didn't want to take with them.

It seemed too good to be true, but within 30 days, the sale closed. "It was remarkable," says Craig, a retired school teacher. "The Lord was really behind it all."

Lowana also believes that God had something in mind for them. "He knew we wanted to be near Amazing Facts and the Granite Bay Hilltop Church so we could participate in the ministry."

After settling into their new home, it didn't take long for the Brauers to connect with their new church family. They also began volunteering at the Amazing Facts Bible School, soon taking 60 sets of Bible studies home to grade each week. Says Cathy Bauer, Bible School director, "They also work on whatever else is asked of them, such as taking out staples in the materials we send to

prisons. They proactively seek out more ways to support the department and alleviate our workload." (Craig also volunteers in the shipping department!)

Craig and Lowana spend up to 20 hours a week carefully reviewing lessons for the Bible School, but they do more than that—they earnestly pray for every student.


The Brauers have a special place in their hearts for the many students in prison. "For years, we visited inmates on Sabbath," says Craig. "We took them cookies, visited them, and prayed with them."

Lowana explains, "Many of the inmates are so grateful and want more to study. Our hearts hurt for them and what they are going through. I know what it is like to be a convert. I empathize with those who are considering new thoughts."

Craig adds, "We believe in what God can do through

Amazing Facts' Bible lessons. We have used them to give studies to many people. Our neighbors are even church members now."

Are you considering volunteering at Amazing Facts International? Craig and Lowana think it's a great idea. "We encourage anyone who can to volunteer at Amazing Facts," Lowana says with conviction. "You'll be more richly blessed than what you're giving. It is wonderful to help people meet Jesus and learn His truths."

If you live near Sacramento, California, and would like to volunteer, please call 916-209-7201 to get started! 



Craig & Lowana Brauer

China Report

The Everlasting Gospel Is Worldwide

Amazing Facts' gospel work in China continues to go forward powerfully in these perilous last days. For instance, your support recently led 5,212 seeking hearts to visit our website to ask deeply felt Bible questions—and they received trustworthy answers that set them on the path of eternal life.

Even better, tens of thousands are visiting our Chinese-language websites, and they are engaging for longer periods of time. For example, of the 1,140,179 visits in the fourth quarter of 2023, 60 percent sought the truth for an average of 15 minutes, meaning the majority of visitors are serious about learning biblical principles. There were 2.75 million total page views!

Our team in China also enrolled nearly 3,400 people in our Bible School, with 980 graduating. You also recently led 19 people to begin keeping the Sabbath and 21 people to a local Sabbath-keeping church. (These numbers are just what we can confirm with certainty; we believe thousands more are being baptized and prepared for the Second Coming!)

Lives Changed in China


Sister Zhang wrote to us, "I am 30 years old. When I grew up, I occasionally went to church, but it was just a formality. My life was like that of unbelievers. Then I saw Pastor Doug's videos on your website. I was moved and decided to follow the Lord. I joined a youth fellowship and studied the Bible. I soon realized that living together out of wedlock was a sin, so I chose to live apart from my boyfriend. I was also rebaptized. Afterward, I went abroad to study. While I was away, my boyfriend went to church,



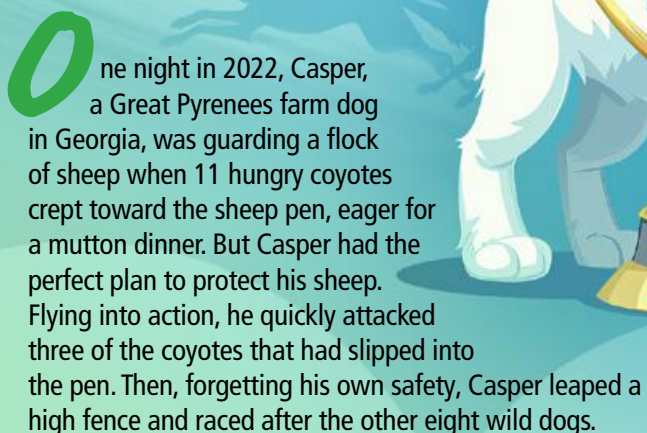
and he has since been baptized. When I came back, we were married. Thank God for His grace!"

And Sister Tang writes, "When I was in middle school, a classmate told me that she believed in Jesus, but I didn't even know who He was. Many years passed. Then, in the summer of 2018, I went to a friend's house where some people happened to be preaching the gospel. They told me that God created the universe and that tigers did not bite back then. From that time, I believed in the Lord. I started attending their meetings, and they gave me a Bible, which I treasured but hardly read.

"One day, someone posted a video of Pastor Doug's sermon in our chat group. The first time I heard Pastor Doug preach, I was hooked. I saw the truth and that he was gracious. Eventually, after searching, the Holy Spirit led me to your website. I listen to a lot of pastors, but the one I listen to the most is Pastor Doug. I feel we are like family.

"When I visit your website, I understand more and more truth. I used to go to a Sunday-keeping church, but I don't fit in anymore. After COVID, I never went back. When the pastors found out that I now keep the Sabbath, they tried to persuade me to return to the old church, but I knew I was on the right path. My heart is steadfast. God has brought all truth and light to me. Hallelujah!" 

BY LAURIE LYON



Afterward, his owner didn't see Casper for two days, and when the faithful canine finally dragged himself home, he was so torn up that it looked like the brave protector wouldn't survive. But after several surgeries and lots of loving care, Casper recovered—and even won an award for his heroic actions!

Just as Casper protected his flock with his life, Jesus protects His flock (Christians)—and He gave His life to save us! That’s how much He loves you, and that’s why He wants to protect you from the one thing that can come between you and Him—SIN (wrongdoing).

In Jesus' perfect plan, when we stay close to Him by reading our Bible, talking to Him, and trusting Him to guide us every day, He will gradually change us to be more like Him. He will give us power to battle against any sin in our lives—and *win!*

This doesn't happen all at once but throughout our lives, so don't get discouraged if you make the same mistakes sometimes. Whenever we're truly sorry and ask God to forgive us, He will do it. But we should always remember the high price Jesus paid to save us from our sins and not take His forgiveness for granted. God wants us to keep all His commandments so we can be happy and live with Him forever.

God also wants us to “be perfect” in the way we love others (Matthew 5:48). He even asks us to love our enemies—people who do bad things to us and say bad things about us. That’s really, really hard to do! In fact, it’s

impossible unless you have Jesus helping you. He wants us to forgive people who have done wrong to us. He wants us to have a strong love for others and learn to be merciful, just as He is full of mercy for us.

Did you know that God has given us promises to help us defeat sin in our lives? And there's awesome power in His promises! Unscramble each word below and write them in the spaces to read one of God's amazing promises (Clue: the numbers are not scrambled).

"oFr uYo hvae mraed em tiwh
gternsth orf het tabtel" (lamPs 18:39).

" _____

 _____"
 (_____ 18:39).

The next time you're tempted to do something wrong, remember that Jesus is always with you and will help you win the battle and do what's right! 📖

TAMING THE Sweet Tooth

BY LAURIE LYON



Have you ever wondered why it can be so difficult to turn down a sweet dessert? Some researchers think the answer lies in how sugar triggers the brain's pleasure center, which is closely linked to addictive behavior, and releases the neurotransmitter dopamine, which makes you feel wonderful. Indeed, the brain reacts so strongly to sugar that some experts believe it rivals the addictive power of cocaine!¹

While our bodies need sugar in the form of glucose to survive, many of us eat far too much of the sweet stuff—on average, two to three times the amount recommended by the World Health Organization. But the fact is, we don't need *any* added sugar in our diet; all the glucose needed for optimal health is provided naturally in unprocessed fruits, nuts, seeds, grains, and vegetables.


But is added sugar really all that bad? Truth is, the average human body can handle an *occasional* treat; it's when sugary foods are consumed regularly that health can be endangered. As the Bible puts it, "It is not good to eat too much honey" (Proverbs 25:27).

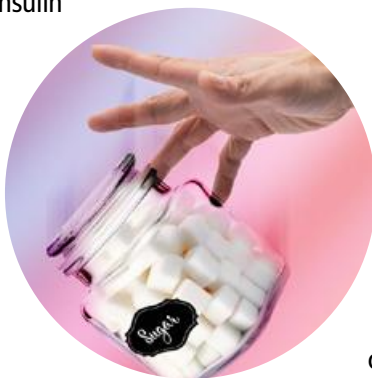
We know that excess sugar causes inflammation and insulin resistance—a perfect setup for a host of chronic diseases and conditions we all want to avoid, including heart disease, diabetes, and cognitive decline, to name a few.^{2,3}

Eat more sweets, and you'll crave more—and so begins a potentially

destructive cycle. If you've been caught in this cycle, take heart! Here are a few tips for breaking sugar's grip:

1. Guard against hidden sugar in processed foods. Familiarize yourself with the various aliases for sugar, then read labels carefully.
2. Replace sweets with healthier options. Whole fruits make a great dessert for most people; consumed in moderation, the fruit's fiber slows metabolism of the sugar, preventing blood-sugar spikes. Make popsicles from whole blended fruit without added sweeteners, or create an ice cream substitute with whole frozen fruit blended or processed using an appliance made for the purpose, such as a Yonanas machine.
3. When baking for special occasions, use sweeteners with a low glycemic index, such as stevia or monk fruit.
4. Try substituting non-sweet, savory desserts.
5. Drink plenty of water to curb cravings between meals.
6. Exercise more; a brisk walk, for instance, releases endorphins that can weaken cravings for sugary foods.

If you've been sugar-bingeing for years, don't expect your cravings to disappear overnight; it can take several weeks to retrain your appetite. Be persistent—and ask God to strengthen you. He wants His children to be healthy and has promised He "will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able" (1 Corinthians 10:13). With His help, you can kick the sugar habit for good! 



1 Is Sugar an Addictive Drug? www.healthline.com/health/food-nutrition/experts-is-sugar-addictive-drug#What-is-an-addiction?

2 The Sweet Danger of Sugar. <https://www.health.harvard.edu/heart-health/the-sweet-danger-of-sugar>.

3 Dietary Sugar Intake Associated with a Higher Risk of Dementia in Community-Dwelling Older Adults – PMC. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10921393>



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—Pastor Doug Batchelor

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