



How to Be Obedient WITHOUT BEING

Legalistic



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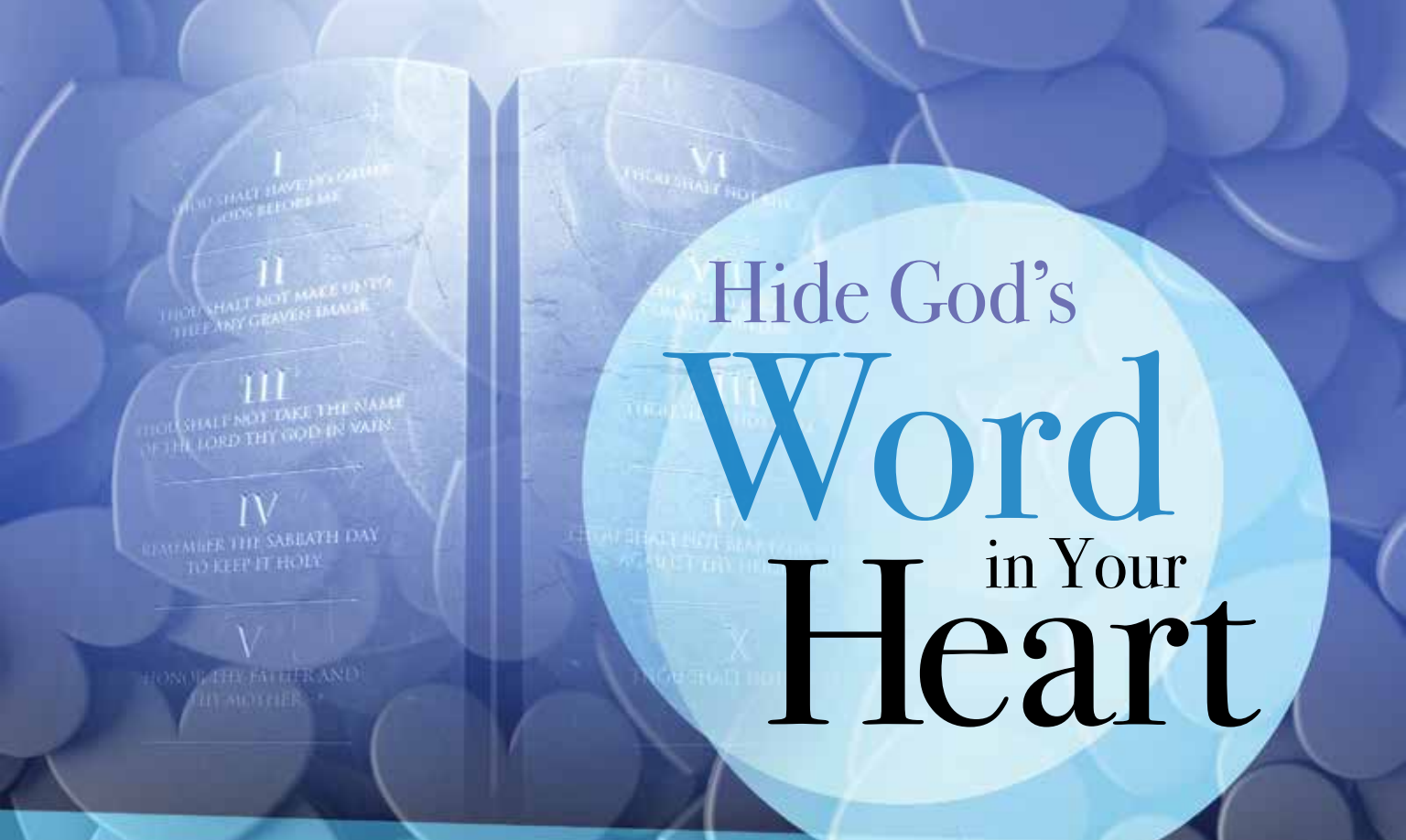


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Hide God's Word in Your Heart

Memorize:

Not everyone who says to Me, “Lord, Lord,” shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven (Matthew 7:21).

Consider this interesting observation by entertainer and author Stephen Fry: “Mankind can live free in a society hemmed in by laws, but we have yet to find a historical example of mankind living free in lawless anarchy.”

It’s a truth that humanity has learned the hard way: True freedom is actually the result of obedience to laws—good laws, that is. And a law is only as good as its lawmaker. What kinds of laws do you think God, the one and only source of goodness (Matthew 19:17), has enacted?

Perhaps we don’t often see Him as such, but “the LORD is our Lawgiver ... our King” (Isaiah 33:22) who governs the greatest of societies, the kingdom of heaven. God’s law is also known as God’s “will” in the Bible; and God’s will is “good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2). As Psalm 19:7 corroborates, “The law of the LORD is perfect.” There does not exist a superior piece of legislation anywhere else in the universe.

This quarter’s memory verse furthermore states that God’s will, His law, is the criteria that identify whether

or not you are a citizen of God’s heavenly kingdom. Law-keepers are admitted; lawbreakers are not. Now according to this text, there are those who want to live in God’s country and even profess allegiance to Him. “Lord, Lord,” they address Him. It seems as though they are law-keepers, but, in actuality, they are criminals—lawbreakers. They don’t get to “enter the kingdom of heaven.”

Breaking the law of God is no minor traffic violation. It is a matter of the most serious deliberation, a matter of life and death. To “enter the kingdom of heaven” is “to enter into life” (Matthew 19:17). What’s basically being defined here is salvation—our salvation. This verse, hence, is of paramount importance to us.


So now that we know the criteria of salvation, the question is: How do we do God’s will? How do we, weak, inadequate sinners, obey this perfect law of the land? That’s what this quarter’s main feature, “How to Be Obedient Without Being Legalistic,” is about. Learn how you can be given the passport to the greatest freedom of all time. 

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Connect with Amazing Facts

From the Mail Bag



Cosmic Conflict Still Making an Impact

I am a believer but haven't always been. I just love the way you present the facts from the Bible. I can see the stories in my head. Thank you for your early Wednesday morning presentation on television. I watched and listened to your *Cosmic Conflict* teaching on how evil came to be, starting my day off with a great feeling of understanding. *Renee*

Messages that Change Lives

I was flipping through channels on TV a couple of weeks ago and stopped at Pastor Doug's explanation of clean eating according to the Bible. I then went to the Amazing Facts website and read the Bible study. I found this so informative and saw there were many more Bible study lessons. Since then, I have been reading one every day. I love being able to finally understand so many things about God's Word. I am 57 and have attended Baptist churches off and on since I was a little girl. I was baptized when I was 11. But although I have been exposed to the Bible, it was like I never could get it. With Amazing Facts, I am truly engaged because I can understand. I found myself sad that I was out of Bible lessons—until I clicked on the Free Book Library and found countless more. I was so happy. Thank you so much for sharing God's amazing facts! *Patricia*



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Obedience—not legalism—is an essential element in the plan of salvation.

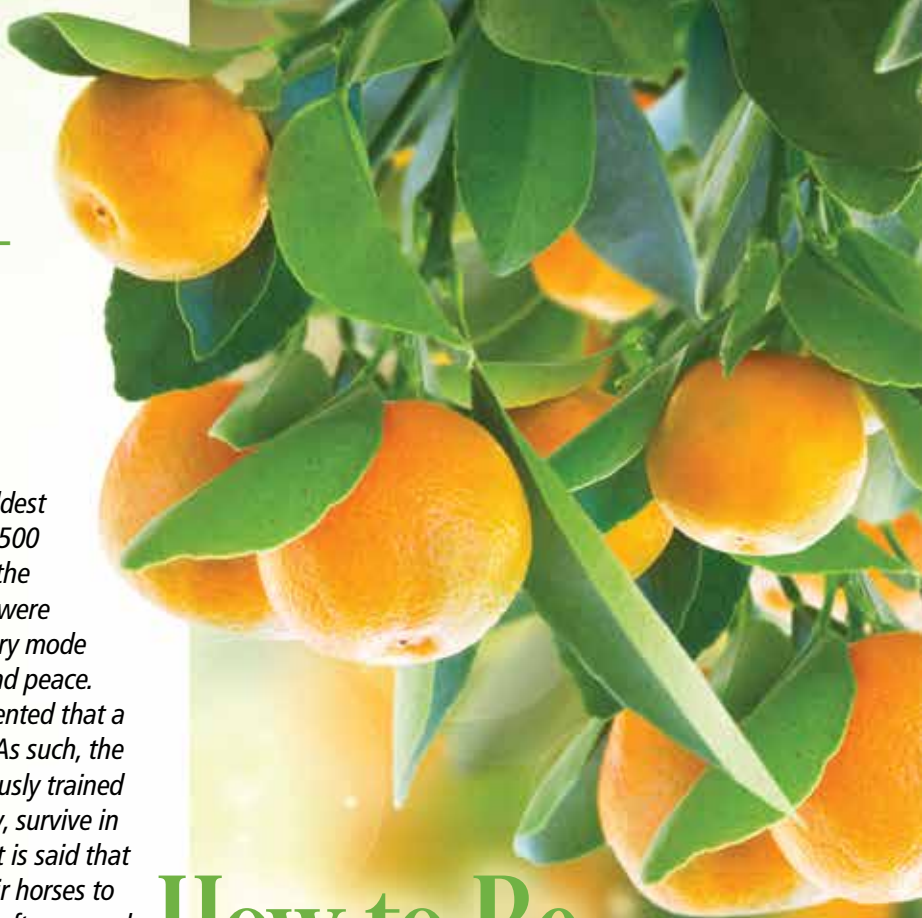
An Amazing Fact: *The Arabian is the oldest known breed of horse, dating as far back as 2500 BC. Bred by the Bedouins, nomads who made the vast, bleak desert their home, Arabian horses were highly valued as the primary mode of transportation in war and peace. One Bedouin even commented that a man's horse was his life. As such, the horses had to be meticulously trained to endure and, ultimately, survive in the harsh environment. It is said that Bedouins disciplined their horses to such a degree that even after several days without water, their Arabians could be led to a river's edge and still refrain from drinking until their master had signaled permission.*



To the Bedouins and their horses, obedience was a determining factor as to whether they lived or died. To this day, the Arabian horse is lauded for its devoted affection to its master and its intelligence in heeding him.

Interestingly enough, it seems quite the opposite within the Christian faith. The mere mention of obedience drums up accusations of legalism in opposition to grace, the cross, and love. You've heard it before: "We're under grace, not the law"; "the Ten Commandments were nailed to the cross"; "God doesn't care on which day we go to church."

So let's study this out. Does obedience have any role at all in the plan of salvation? Is teaching about obedience to God and keeping His commandments unnecessary—or worse, a denial of the faith?



How to Be Obedient

WITHOUT BEING



Legalistic

By Doug Batchelor

The Basics

We'll start with some basics. The fact of the matter is that we, the human race, need to be rescued. We're slated to die the worst kind of death, eternal death, the penalty for sin—and we've "all sinned" (Romans 5:12). According to the Bible, "sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4). In other words, sin is breaking the law.

Which law? Read James 2:8–11. "You commit sin" (v. 9) when you break the Ten Commandments (v. 11). The Ten Commandments are God's special "covenant" (Deuteronomy 4:13), or, according to one biblical lexicon, God's "divine constitution." So sin is disobeying the constitution, or law, of God. The whole reason we're "waiting on death row" is because of our disobedience to God. That's interesting. So since disobedience brings eternal death, does obedience bring eternal life? Disobedience is the problem, so does that make obedience the solution? Let's find out.

Amazingly, God did not leave us to our ill fate. He provided a rescue mission in the form of the plan of salvation: "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Timothy 1:15). So Christ's purpose on this earth was to save us from eternal death and to give us eternal life instead (John 5:24; 10:28; 11:25, 26). Christ is our Savior: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8, 9). The Bible cannot be plainer: We are saved by God's grace, not because we follow a set of rules. We are saved because of what Jesus Christ does, not because of anything we do. This is salvation by grace versus salvation by works.

Counterfeit Obedience

Have you ever accidentally bitten into a piece of artificial fruit? Nowadays, stores are selling wax fruit and silk flowers that look so real—except when you get up close and personal. They may look good, but they aren't good.

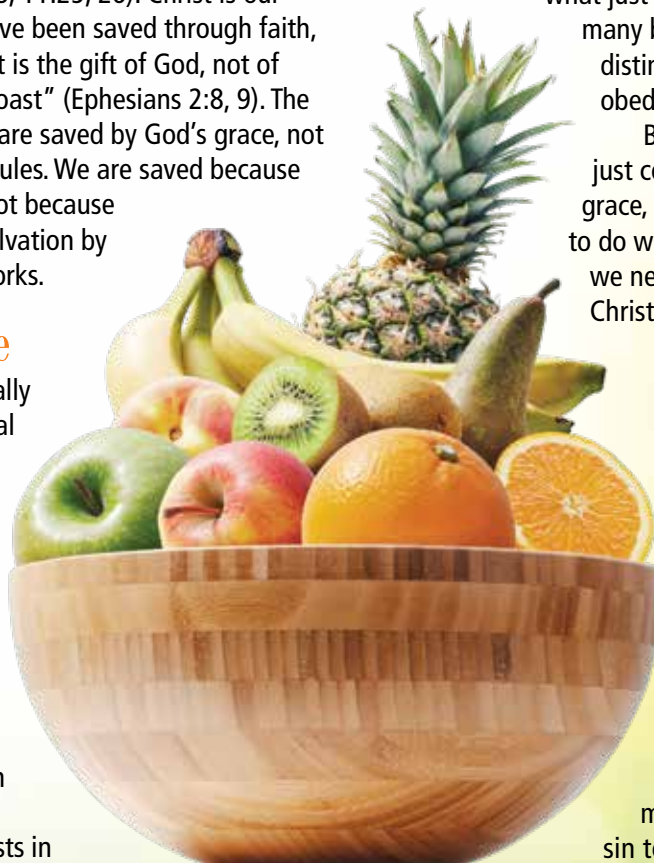
That's salvation by works. That's legalism. A legalist believes that his own works earn him eternal life. There are examples of legalists in

the Bible, whom Jesus simply called "hypocrites" (Matthew 23:13–15, 23, 25, 27, 29). He went on to explain: "For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. . . . You also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (vv. 27, 28). In other words, legalists appear as though they are obeying God, but they are not; they are like wax fruit. They're a counterfeit of true obedience. Thus, they are lawbreakers; and as we know, those who break the law receive eternal death. Jesus said,

Not everyone who says to Me, "Lord, Lord," shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?" And then I will declare to them, "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (7:21–23).

Notice, however, that Christ also tells us who will be saved: Those who are obedient to God will be saved. See what just happened? Contrary to what many believe, the Bible makes a clear distinction between legalism and obedience.

But wait a minute. Did the Bible just contradict itself? We're saved by grace, so what does obedience have to do with it? In order to understand, we need to look further into what Christ does to save us.



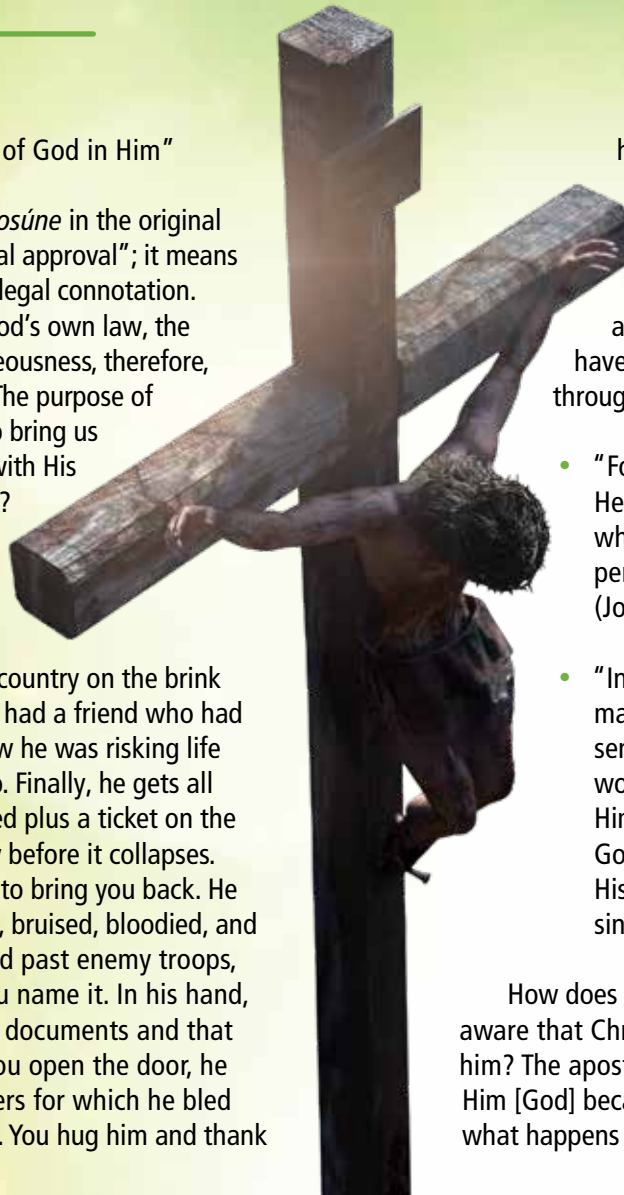
The Love of God

First, we know that Christ paid the penalty for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:3). This is not, however, all Christ did for us: Christ "Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness" (1 Peter 2:24). "He [God the Father] made Him [Jesus] who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might

become the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians 5:21).

“Righteousness,” *dikaíosúne* in the original Greek, means “God’s judicial approval”; it means what God deems right in a legal connotation. Obviously, that would be God’s own law, the Ten Commandments. Righteousness, therefore, is obedience to God’s law. The purpose of God’s plan of salvation is to bring us into complete compliance with His law. How does God do that? How do we “become the righteousness of God in Him”?

Imagine you lived in an impoverished, war-torn country on the brink of self-destruction. But you had a friend who had immigrated to America; now he was risking life and limb to get you out too. Finally, he gets all the documentation you need plus a ticket on the last boat out of the country before it collapses. He’s traveled there himself to bring you back. He shows up on your doorstep, bruised, bloodied, and broken, having maneuvered past enemy troops, landmines, bombings—you name it. In his hand, he clutches those precious documents and that golden ticket. And when you open the door, he presents to you those papers for which he bled and suffered and sacrificed. You hug him and thank



him—but then you turn him out and go back to watching your favorite television program.

Would that make any sense? Have you escaped certain annihilation at that point? How have you treated your friend who went through so much to save you?

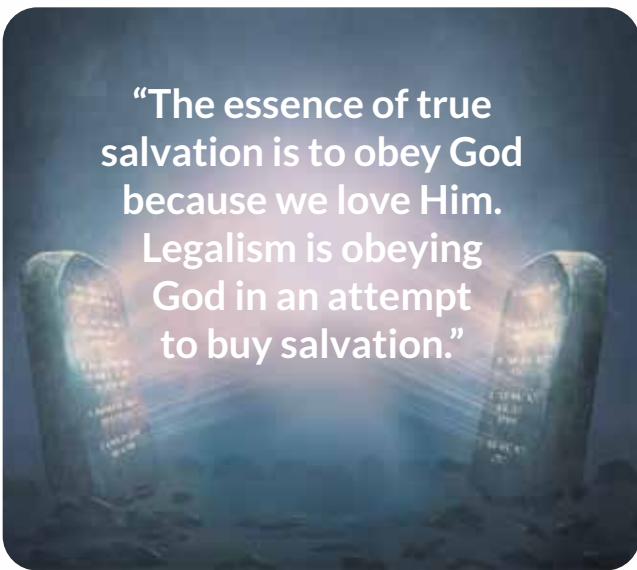
- “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (John 3:16).
- “In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:9, 10).

How does a person respond once he is made aware that Christ saved him because He loves him? The apostle John puts it simply: “We love Him [God] because He first loved us” (v. 19). And what happens when you love God?



- “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word” (John 14:23).
- “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments” (1 John 5:3).
- “This is love, that we walk according to His commandments” (2 John 1:6).

Put simply, the essence of true salvation is to obey God because we love Him. Legalism is obeying God in an attempt to earn salvation.



The Sequence of Salvation

The story of the Exodus gives us valuable insights into this relationship between love and obedience. The children of Israel were not saved from Egypt because they kept the Ten Commandments. Their journey to freedom began with the Passover sacrifice. Then, after God delivered them from Egypt, they did not go immediately north to the Promised Land; instead, they went to Mount Sinai—where He delivered to them His law. God intended that they should obey Him from love, because He had first shown His love for them when He saved them from slavery.

In the same way, Jesus invites us to come to Him just the way we are, with our weakness and sin, trusting in His sacrifice. Then we want to obey Him because we love Him. We love Him because He first loved us. “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). This principle can be seen in the prelude to the Ten Commandments, in which God reminds the children of

Israel that He had saved them from the bondage of Egypt: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage” (Exodus 20:2). The implication is that God is saying, “I have shown you My love in saving you; if you love Me, keep My commandments.” While they were not saved because they kept the law, they could not enter the Promised Land without obeying it. In the wilderness, they needed to learn to love, trust, and obey the Lord.

The Image of God

The fact of the matter is that even if we love God with all our heart and mind, we will never be able to keep God’s commandments in our own power. As David pled, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Psalm 51:10). To any sinner who does the same, our Savior responds: “I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts” (Hebrews 8:10).

We’re talking about a change of character. You are “transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (Romans 12:2). “Beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, [you] are

being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18). “You put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:24), “the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him” (Colossians 3:10). The Holy Spirit recreates you in “the image of,” in the character of, Jesus.

And Jesus never sinned (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15)—that is, *He never broke the law*. The Bible says that “God is love” (1 John 4:8). Christ summed up the Ten Commandments in two statements: “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37), and “you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (v. 39). The law of God is simply the character of God in written form. In fact, Christ is literally referred to as the Word of God (John 1:1), God’s law



(Continued on page 16.)

Prophecy WATCH

- “You will hear of wars and rumors of wars” (Matthew 24:6). On February 27, Russian President Vladimir Putin “ordered his nuclear forces into ‘special combat readiness’”¹ days after invading Ukraine. Since then, as the war has continued to drag on, he has made several more nuclear threats. On October 6, U.S. President Joe Biden neglected to dispel those “rumors of wars” when he stated that “the world could face ‘Armageddon’ if ... Putin makes good on [those] threats,” emphasizing that the Russian dictator was “not joking.”²

Also jumping into the action, North Korea, so far, has conducted “more than 40 missile launches this year—its most ever,” including “a recent two-week barrage ... meant, according to North Korean media, to simulate the use of its tactical battlefield nuclear weapons to ‘hit and wipe out’ potential South Korean and U.S. targets.”³

And on October 15, Prince Saud al-Shaalan of Saudi Arabia tweeted a video response to a threat from a displeased Biden after negotiations on oil export failed: “To the West: Anybody who challenges the existence of this [Saudi] Kingdom, we are all projects of Jihad and martyrdom ...!! Do you still wonder where terrorism comes from?!”⁴

Does it seem as though the nations are gearing up for war?



- “There will be famines ... in various places” (Matthew 24:7). Back in May, *Reuters* published an article stating that “the war in Ukraine is [fueling] a global food crisis” already pushed to the brink by “post-pandemic global demand, extreme weather, tightening food stocks, high energy prices, supply chain bottlenecks[,] and export restrictions and taxes.”⁵

On World Food Day, October 16, the non-governmental organization Human Rights Watch published an article highlighting certain dire statistics, such as “nearly 19 million people” in Afghanistan “experiencing high levels of food insecurity, with more than 34,000 children admitted to hospitals with severe malnutrition”⁶ this year.



And The World Bank website informed readers that “88.9% of low-income countries, 91.1% of lower-middle-income countries, and 96% of upper-middle-income countries have seen inflation levels above 5%, with many experiencing double-digit inflation.”⁷ Additionally, “average wheat, maize, and rice prices in October 2022 are 18%, 27%, and 10% higher, respectively, than in October 2021.”

What would the world population be willing to do in order to mitigate a global food shortage?

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5 Dea Bankova, Prasanta Kumar Dutta, and Michael Ovaska, May 30, 2022, <https://graphics.reuters.com/UKRAINE-CRISIS/FOOD/zjvqkgomjvx/>.

6 Jack Spehn, “World Food Day Amid a Global Food Crisis,” <https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/10/16/world-food-day-amid-global-food-crisis>.

7 “Food Security Update,” October 18, 2022, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/agriculture/brief/food-security-update#>.

Amazing Facts News to Note

Surprising Ministry Watch Report

Ministry Watch, “an independent evangelical Christian organization whose purpose is to review Protestant ministries for financial accountability and transparency,” recently released its report on “The 50 Largest Media Ministries in the Country.” Amazing Facts was listed at #16 on that list! Says



Pastor Doug, “I marvel at the support of God’s people, which makes this all possible. But more than anything, our goal is not to be #1 in size—but rather in faithfulness to the mission of proclaiming and living out the Word of God.” Pastor Doug also shares that the more successful Amazing Facts is in reaching people with the gospel, the bigger target we are for the devil. He requests, “Please keep the ministry, the Batchelor family, and all the staff in your prayers.”

Amazing Facts Now on the Pando App

Pando is a fast-growing evangelism app designed to minister to those behind bars, and Amazing Facts recently began offering Christian resources on it. Since the launch of our first video in August, the impact of your gifts has grown exponentially. In just five weeks, our videos have received

163,222 views, more than 5,000 inmates have subscribed to our channel—and 1,045 have indicated they have embraced Christ! Linda, who is in prison in Missouri, writes, “I have wonderful news. We have an app now called Pando that has Amazing Facts on it. I have gotten

everyone watching your videos. I have a lot of ladies that want to do the Bible studies. ... We watched *Cosmic Conflict* together, and at the end, we were all crying our eyes out. This is truly a remarkable tool for prison. Be sure and thank Pastor Doug for us. These ladies were non-believers, and you have truly opened their eyes. Thank you! Jesus is coming back very soon. God bless all that you are doing to save people.”



Earth’s Final Warning Shared at Motorcycle Rally

In September 2022, twelve motorcyclists from the Sabbath Keepers Motorcycle Ministry (SKMM) distributed truth-filled, gospel-centered literature at the Oyster Run in Anacortes, Washington—the Northwest’s largest one-day motorcycle rally. Bill Lusk and his fellow bikers set up



three booths at the event. One booth offered free five-minute massages, and the other two offered free blood-pressure checks and literature, including *Earth’s Final Warning*, Amazing Facts’ magazine on God’s last call to humanity.

“I’ll have to read this,” one biker said as he picked up the magazine. “I want to know what is going to happen in the future.” Every copy of *Earth’s Final Warning* was gone by the middle of the day. A banner on the SKMM booth read, “Spreading God’s fruit one seed at a time.” Says Lusk, “That’s our goal. We want to get the truth out to bikers any way we can. We don’t argue with people. But if we can get a book, magazine, or Bible tract in their hands, that’s a divine appointment.”

Christians in Ghana Celebrate Amazing Facts Resources

Leaders from Prince Emmanuel Church in Accra, Ghana, have expressed their deep appreciation to Amazing Facts for sending literature to help with their evangelism efforts. They



recently received 120 sets of *Landmarks of Prophecy* Bible lessons; 200 sharing DVDs of *Revelation: The Bride, the Beast & Babylon*; three packs of sharing tracts; 500 copies of “Angel Messages from Space” *Amazing Facts Study Guide*; and more! FitzRoy Brown,

personal ministries director, says, “We are truly grateful and ask the Lord to continue to bless the ministry of Amazing Facts.”

TV & RADIO Broadcast SCHEDULE

Amazing Facts with Doug Batchelor (Times marked in black)
Bible Answers Live (Times marked in orange)



	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	10:30 AM PT 7:00 PM PT LIVE 10:30 PM PT	3:30 PM PT	8:00 AM PT 8:00 PM PT	2:00 PM PT	2:00 AM PT 11:00 AM PT 10:00 AM PT 10:00 PM PT	6:00 AM PT 2:00 PM PT 6:00 PM PT	8:00 AM PT 8:00 PM PT
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		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	
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	12:30 PM PT						
	8:00 AM (All Time Zones)						
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	8:30 AM ET						
		9:00 AM ET	9:00 AM ET	9:00 AM ET	9:00 AM ET	9:00 AM ET	

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RADIO

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Bible Answers

with Pastor Doug Batchelor



Does the Bible say it is wrong to gamble?

You won't find a specific command regarding gambling in the Bible; indeed, the word "gambling" is not found in Scripture. But let's take a closer look at the topic.

The closest link to gambling I have found would probably be the practice of casting lots. While casting lots might be used to choose between two good options (Acts 1:26), much like flipping a coin today, it was also done as a form of gambling. Soldiers would sometimes cast lots to win a common purse, such as what happened at the cross: *"They crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: 'They divided My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots'"* (Matthew 27:35). As with gambling today, casting lots was often associated with drinking and prostitution. *"They have cast lots for My people, have given a boy as payment for a harlot, and sold a girl for wine, that they may drink"* (Joel 3:3).

Gambling used to be restricted to a couple of "sin cities," such as Atlantic City and Las Vegas. Now it's becoming ubiquitous. Along with gambling in casinos, we can buy lottery tickets in gas stations and supermarkets. Online gambling has become a global epidemic; anyone with a smartphone can gamble on football games every Sunday. Computer and mobile games now offer "loot boxes," a form of gambling to which thousands of young children are now addicted.


Tune in to **Bible Answers Live**, Amazing Facts' live, nationwide call-in radio program, and listen to Pastor Doug give biblical, straightforward answers to difficult Bible questions. To get times and stations in your area or to listen to answers online, visit amazingfacts.org.

To be clear, there's nothing inherently wrong with taking risks; we take risks every day. But our question here deals with making an irresponsible bet—putting something of value at great risk in the remote hope of winning money at the expense of others. Gambling establishments exist because their owners know they will ultimately profit; "the house always wins." And the money they use to pay out a lucky winner is taken from the masses of unlucky losers.

The hyper lights, sights, and sounds in a casino are carefully designed to encourage people to set aside rational thinking and surrender their hard-earned money for the tempting fantasy that they might win. It is a well-known fact that when a gambling establishment is opened in a community, there is a corresponding increase in crime, illicit drug use, alcoholism, and suicide.

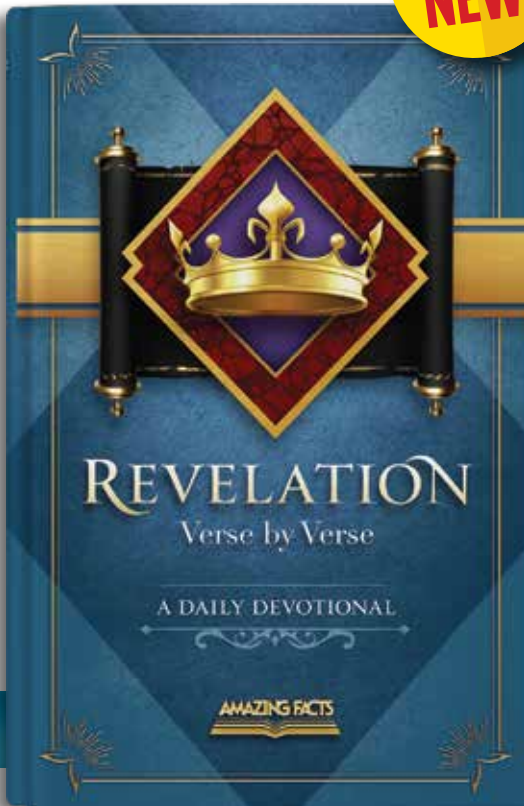
When taking Bible principles into account, it's easy to determine that gambling is out of harmony with the life of a Christian: *"He who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished"* (v. 20). Gambling is generally fueled by a get-rich-quick mentality, fostering greed and covetousness in violation of the

tenth commandment. *"A man with an evil eye hastens after riches, and does not consider that poverty will come upon him"* (Proverbs 28:22). Remember, a love of silver helped nail Jesus to the cross.

Instead, the Bible encourages you to work (10:4), save your money (6:6–8), and wisely invest it (Matthew 25:14–30). Christians should avoid any practice that could become addictive and destroy a person's life. Trusting and obeying God is the only safe bet in this world; the odds are in His favor that He will win in the end. 

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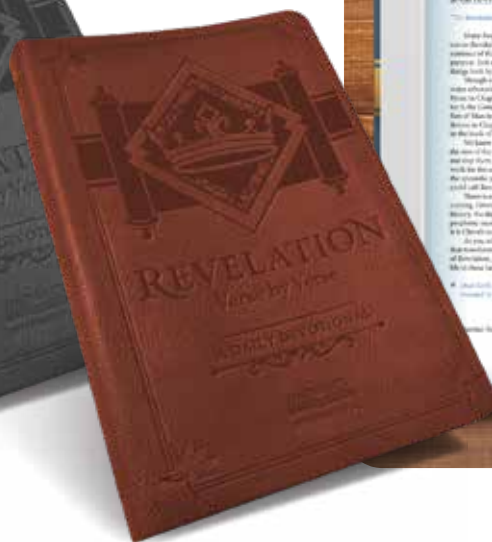
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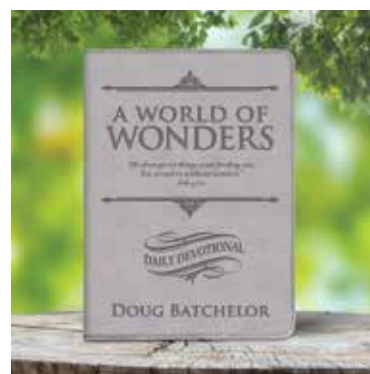
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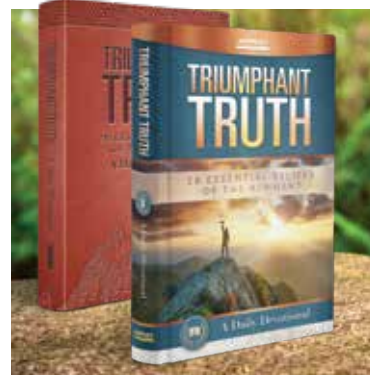
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(Continued from page 9.)

manifested in the “flesh” (v. 14). Don’t miss this: God’s law is love; obedience to God is love.

The Savior’s life is set forth as perfect proof that we—through Him—are also able to completely obey God: “For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ‘Who committed no sin’” (1 Peter 2:21, 22). By this “we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him” (1 John 3:2). “God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness” (Romans 6:17, 18).

The End-Time Focus

The book of Revelation gives us an extraordinary window into the last days before Christ’s return. Students of Bible prophecy will notice its several series of seven—seven churches, seven seals, seven trumpets. Careful study further reveals that these sevens correspond to chronological time periods of Earth’s history, with the seventh and last in the series representing our day and age.

Now, look at the passage describing the seventh trumpet. It points to the crucial focus of these last days. The final verse states:

Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple (Revelation 11:19).

The ark of the covenant contained the Ten Commandments (Exodus 31:18; 40:20).

Further on, in Revelation’s next chapter, a time prophecy known as the 1,260-year prophecy again places us squarely in the end times. The Bible prophesies that in this time, “the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony

of Jesus Christ” (Revelation 12:17). “The dragon” is a symbol for the devil (v. 9). In these last days, the devil is targeting those who are obedient to God’s law.

Revelation then sounds the alarm against the mark of the beast, which will be established in these last days in opposition to the seal of God. A study of these symbols reveals an explosive final battle between the devil’s spurious mandate and one particular commandment in God’s law. And finally, the three angels’ messages, God’s last warning against the beast’s mark, exhort all believers: “Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus”

(14:12). Further, Revelation closes with this promise: “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14). (If you haven’t studied these final events, our newest sharing magazine *Earth’s Final Warning: The Three Angels of Revelation* is a good place to start.)

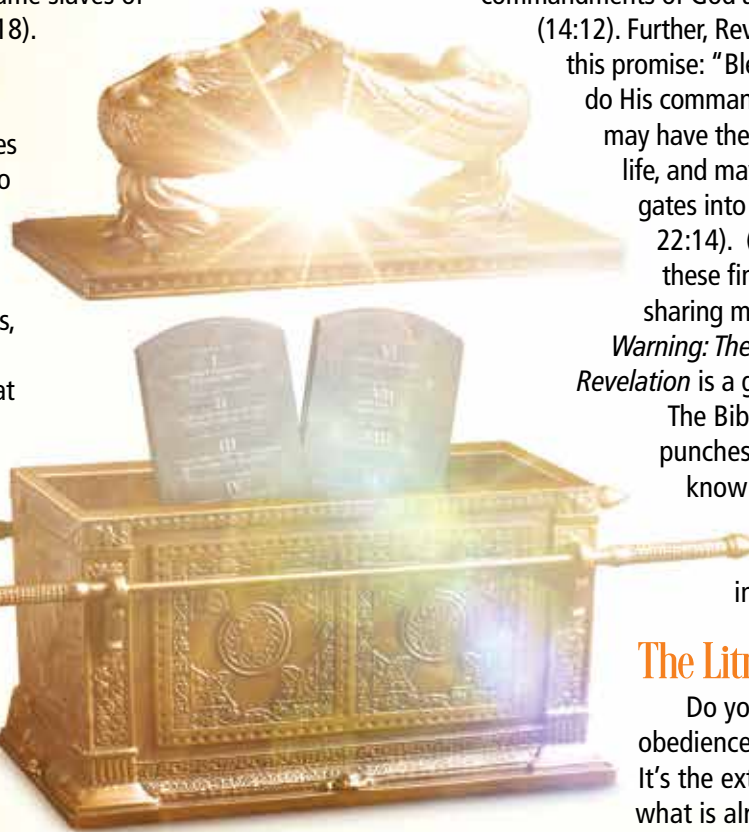
The Bible is pulling no punches. God wants you to know unmistakably that obedience to His law is center stage in these last days.

The Litmus Test

Do you know what true obedience to God is? It’s love. It’s the external outpouring of what is already in your heart. True obedience matches the

inside to the outside. When God gives you a new heart and puts a new spirit in you, He causes you to walk in His statutes; you will keep His judgments (Ezekiel 36:26, 27). This is how you become the righteousness of God “in” Christ. As the Bible states:

- “If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:17).
- “If a wicked man turns from all his sins which he has committed, keeps all My statutes, and does what is lawful and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die” (Ezekiel 18:21).



- “He [Jesus] became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him” (Hebrews 5:9).

Obedience to God isn’t the means of our salvation; it is the litmus test of our salvation. It distinguishes the saved from the lost. We are not saved because we obey God; we obey God *because* we are saved.

This is the full and inseparable plan of salvation, “for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified” (Romans 2:13). You cannot pick and choose which parts you like best. You are saved through not only Christ’s death but also His life, by what God did on the cross *and* what He does in your heart. Obedience to God’s law is not legalism; it’s the indispensable step that so many are missing in their understanding of God’s grace.

It’s like a drug-addicted teenager whose parents find her overdosing on the bathroom floor. The parents rush the kid to the emergency room, where, after several agonizing days, she miraculously awakens from her coma. The teen is so grateful for this second lease on life and so horrified by what she has become. She goes to her parents to plead forgiveness, to beg for help to get clean and sober—and in response they say, “Oh, don’t worry about it, honey. You just keep on using and abusing. The next time you overdose, we’ll just run you to the hospital again.”

Is that a solution to the problem? Of course not. The solution is for the child to never use drugs again. There needs to be a permanent change, an actual, tangible transformation of behavior that stems from a sincere and ardent desire within the child. That’s what the plan of salvation is for us. God is our heavenly Father who wants to completely cut out the sin that has brought us to the brink of certain death. That’s why Christ died, so “that we *might* become” righteous (emphasis added). That word “might” denotes choice. The cross of Christ gave you a choice to be saved. Your response—either obedience or disobedience—is your decision.




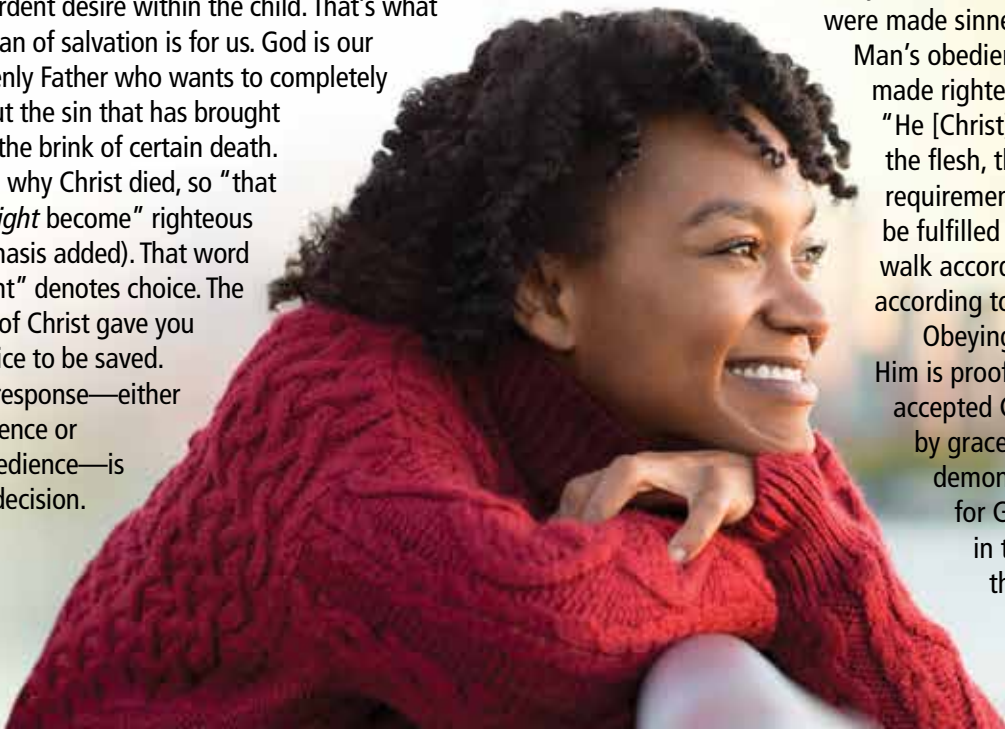
A Battle to Obey

Of course, obedience typically is not an easy thing. It involves a battle against self. Even in Gethsemane, Jesus struggled with self to the point of perspiring blood—ultimately praying, “Not My will, but Yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). The Bible describes the battle between self and sin as a war, a fight, a wrestling match, and a race (Ephesians 6:12; 1 Corinthians 9:7; 1 Timothy 6:12; Hebrews 12:1). The secret is that God’s power will come to assist our human effort to do His will.

The Bible is clear: “For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive” (1 Corinthians 15:22); “for as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man’s obedience many will be made righteous” (Romans 5:19).

“He [Christ] condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (8:3, 4).

Obedying God out of love for Him is proof positive that you’ve accepted God’s gift of salvation by grace. It is the highest demonstration of your love for God. And it matters in these last days more than ever. 



God Was Waiting

By Kelly Mowrer



One Saturday morning, Kristi went for a walk with her six-year-old son through her town in Estonia. She soon noticed that they were passing a Sabbath-keeping church. She was intrigued as, not long before, she'd learned about a co-worker who worshiped on Saturdays. It seemed to Kristi as though God was calling her to go inside.

Kristi had grown up knowing almost nothing about Christianity. She sometimes glanced through a children's Bible she'd received as a gift, but as she grew older, her interest turned to the New Age.

She also smoked, drank, and partied—even after giving birth to her son. But no matter how much she partied, her sense of hopelessness grew. Her life felt meaningless; it seemed that nothing could fill the emptiness in her heart.

A Stirring of Hope

As Kristi stood outside the church, she felt afraid—yet she couldn't ignore the faint stirring of hope in her heart, the thought that she might find something real and meaningful inside those doors, if she just had the courage to take a step forward.

"I felt like God was waiting to meet me there," she says today. At last, Kristi decided to answer the gentle invitation and went inside.

The message she heard that day was like cool water to her thirsty spirit. She felt like she'd come home. Suddenly, her mind was filled with questions about God and the Bible. Eager to learn more, she searched online and was thrilled to discover sermons by a pastor named Doug Batchelor.

"Every time I had a question, I would find an Amazing Facts video about it," she shares. "I was so happy knowing that a powerful God loves a sinner like me. Pastor Doug has

helped me a lot, and I love listening to Amazing Facts on YouTube and on the mobile app."


God revealed His love to Kristi—and He used your faithful gifts to lead her to a life-changing decision to join His family. "I was baptized," she reveals, "and began to let go of all that displeases God. He has been cleansing my whole life."

Walking with God

Kristi has made many lifestyle changes based on God's messages she heard through Amazing Facts. She shares, "God has made me a better mom and helped me quit smoking and drinking. I even went back to school and am a better student than I was in my younger days!"

One sermon in particular made a huge impact on her. "What really lifted me up was the sermon 'Worrying About Stuff.' I've always been a master worrier, but after that sermon, I realized that my worrying is me not trusting God. I apologized to God for not trusting Him in all things. After that, my life became better."

Today, Kristi is more thankful than ever for the variety of Amazing Facts online resources that fit around her busy schedule. "I listen to Pastor Doug's sermons when I do my household work or drive somewhere. I use the audio archives on the Amazing Facts app and listen to *Bible Answers Live*."

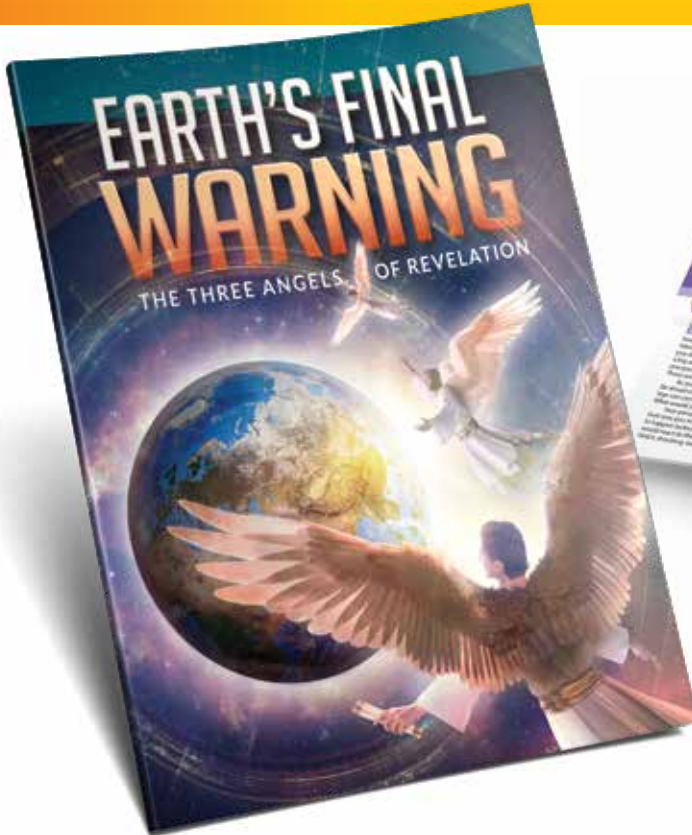
Kristi once hesitated to walk through the door of a church, but because of your sacrificial gifts, God opened before her a brand-new life. Thank you for giving! 





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Generations of Giving

By Shenalyn Page

What do you do when God has blessed you with sizable assets—and you want to make sure those funds are not a stumbling block to your children after you are gone?

That was the question Henry and Diana Stillman* faced when they were ready to set up their estate plan. “We know families who have been torn apart by the undirected funds their parents left behind,” says Diana. “We didn’t want our assets to be a similar temptation to our children. With some of our children walking with the Lord and some not, we wrestled with how best to honor God through our estate plan.”

“Money is so temporary,” she adds. “Unless we purposefully invest it in God’s eternal work, there may be nothing to show for it. We didn’t want to leave it to chance. When we actively direct it into God’s work, we can know it will mean eternity in heaven for those who respond.”

As the Stillmans prayed about how to begin setting up their estate plan, one thing stood out to them: Diana’s parents had worked joyfully with Amazing Facts to set up their own estate plan, leaving all their money to support last-day evangelism. Says Diana, “Their example of generosity inspired us!”

And as the executor of her parents’ estate after they passed away, Diana had also worked closely with the Amazing Facts Office of Estate and Gift Planning. It was such a positive experience that it was only natural for her and Henry to turn to the same team for guidance in creating an estate plan that would help them leave their


own powerful legacy of faith—and provide a lasting example of generosity to their children, just as Diana’s parents had given her.

“We’ve always loved Amazing Facts’ ministry,” says Henry. “Amazing Facts has such a strong focus on evangelism with its publishing, video production, and internet presence. It has such a broad reach. It’s encouraging to see all the people who are touched by its creative soul-winning efforts.”

With the help of Amazing Facts, the Stillmans were able to design an estate plan that will secure a Christian education for their grandchildren while giving the bulk of their estate to Amazing Facts to be used for worldwide evangelism, ensuring that they are laying up treasure in heaven (Matthew 6:19–21).

Their generous bequest also makes them part of Amazing Facts’ **Heroes of Faith Legacy Circle**. Diana adds, “Our hope is that our estate will be all used up before Jesus comes! By working with Amazing Facts, we can be certain that we are serving God’s eternal kingdom long after we are gone.”

Won’t you join the Stillmans as part of Amazing Facts’ Legacy Circle and make a significant contribution toward finishing God’s work? Our estate and gift planning team will guide you through the process and prayerfully help you to set up a plan that supports your evangelism-focused giving goals—and ensures that your assets will be a blessing that lasts into eternity!

Call us today at 800-436-2695. 

*Names have been changed to ensure privacy.



Volunteer Spotlight


By Brandon Tygret,
Director of Publishing

Here at Amazing Facts International, we are blessed with so many wonderful volunteers. Without their steadfast commitment, dependability, and love for serving in the Lord's vineyard, our ministry wouldn't get nearly as much accomplished for God's eternal kingdom.

Newell and Pat Hubbard are perfect examples of such faithfulness in action. Newell, an 83-year-old retired search-and-rescue worker, has volunteered at Amazing Facts for 17 years. Every Tuesday, he helps to distribute free offers that inform and bless thousands of people in North America every day.

His wife, Pat, volunteers in the Bible School, helping to distribute *Amazing Facts Study Guides* to precious souls wanting to know more about the Bible. Together, they are

an amazing example of a godly couple that, even in their well-earned retirement years, continue to dedicate their time to serving God. We deeply appreciate having them on our team!

Perhaps you would like to volunteer at Amazing Facts. If you live locally and feel the Holy Spirit touching your heart, call 916-209-7201 to discover which volunteering positions are available. For those who are unable to volunteer their time, we solicit your prayers. Faithful prayers and dedicated workers will help spread the gospel faster and wider—for "the night is coming when no one can work" (John 9:4). Let us be found faithfully doing the work God has set before us! 





All Things Possible: Reaching Every Nation

CHINA

While China remains a difficult nation to reach for God's kingdom due to political tensions, strict COVID protocols, and a crackdown on literature evangelism, the Holy Spirit is still reaching hearts through Amazing Facts' outreach efforts.

Even though it isn't safe to print religious materials, our Chinese-language website and social media evangelism are impacting hearts all around the world. So far this year, the website has received more than 1,950,000 visits, with nearly 75 percent of those coming from new visitors. We've also helped 9,595 seekers get personalized answers to their Bible questions.

And praise God that 1,807 people enrolled in our Bible School, with 131 graduating so far this year. We personally know of 15 people who started keeping the Sabbath during this time as a result of our websites, which we update with new content every quarter, and helped 15 more souls find a Sabbath-keeping group with which to worship.

Brother Zhao says, "Since the pandemic began, we have not had regular church services, so we started searching the internet for Bible information. Thanks be to God, after watching Pastor Doug's sermons, we understand the truths of Scripture. We have never heard such pure gospel in our 30 years as Christians. Since listening to the truths preached by Amazing Facts, four church members and I are keeping the Sabbath. The five of us have also decided not to eat pork anymore." We're also thrilled to report that two Sunday-keeping pastors switched to worshipping on the Sabbath!

While we are unable to name our workers in China, will you please pray for them—that God will protect them and bless their outreach abundantly? May the Holy Spirit

continue to show our team on the ground favor and give them the wisdom to continue in this vital work despite the obstacles. Thank you for your gifts that make this lifesaving, hope-giving work possible!


The Philippines

Recently, Amazing Facts Philippines launched seven large-scale Revelation seminars across the Philippines as part of our Amazing Facts Center of Evangelism in the Philippines (PAFCOE) program. PAFCOE students first received in-depth evangelism training focused on conducting Bible studies; they then went door to door in many communities to give studies to anyone who wanted them. Now the students are in the middle of their one-month reaping campaign—presenting seminars in Bukidnon, Davao del Norte, and

Negros Occidental. We are thrilled at what the Lord is doing through our students and the support of God's remnant people—like you!

Pastor Doug is also planning to go to the Philippines in early 2024 for a large outreach event for the church's year of evangelism. Nelson Ernst, the event supervisor, says, "We are working with the three unions in the Philippines to distribute 50 million tracts that not

only teach biblical truth but also invite people to those meetings." Furthermore, Hope Channel Philippines is airing Amazing Facts programs, including *Bible Answers Live* and prophecy seminars, two hours a day to generate interest.

Please pray that God will prepare hearts in the Philippines, through our PAFCOE team and students, to receive Christ—and that millions will be ready to receive the everlasting gospel when Pastor Doug preaches there in 2024. 





BE OF GOOD CHEER!

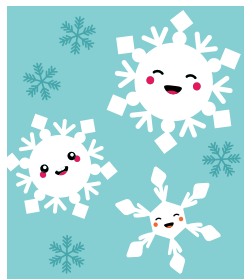
By Laurie Lyon



For many people, the holidays come with a heightened level of happiness. Reuniting with friends and family and remembering the blessings of the year, they experience a deeper sense of joy and gratitude.

Yet for Christians, joy should be a constant element that transcends circumstances and endures apart from yearly celebrations. After all, joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit. (See Galatians 5:22.) Scripture proclaims, “Happy are the people whose God is the LORD!” (Psalm 144:15). The Bible is clear: God wants His children to be happy.

Of course, happiness has an impact that extends beyond mere emotions; it can provide a boost to our bodies that may be measured even at a genetic level. We’ve all read, “A merry heart does good, like medicine” (Proverbs 17:22)—but it seems there are conditions to this promise. The most beneficial effect is realized if happiness is obtained in unselfish ways.



In one study, for instance, joy gained through self-gratification increased inflammation in research participants, while happiness achieved by a giving attitude and generous actions lowered

inflammation levels and even enhanced the type of gene expression that battles invading microbes.¹

Regardless of the many challenges of life, we can take practical steps to maximize the joy in our lives. Here are a few ways you can experience increased happiness right now:


1 PRACTICE GRATITUDE. All of us, regardless of circumstances, have things to be thankful for. Write down your grateful thoughts on a regular basis, and you’ll gradually become more aware of the blessings in your life.

2 SMILE MORE. You may not always feel like it, but even a forced smile dupes your brain into thinking you’re happy. It complies by ramping up the immune system and triggering chemicals that relieve stress and make you feel better—among other benefits.²

3 TRY EXERCISE. Perhaps you cringe at the “E” word. But don’t panic; you don’t need to run a marathon to benefit. Engaging in simple aerobic activities, such as walking or gardening, for just 20 to 30 minutes can dramatically improve your mindset.

4 HARNESS MUSIC! Listening to, performing, or even humming hymns or upbeat classical music has tremendous cheering power that can rapidly transform your mood. Even if you already feel cheerful, bring yourself higher with music; let your praise to God bubble over in song. This advice comes from Scripture: “Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms” (James 5:13).

5 FOLLOW JESUS’ EXAMPLE. Although our Savior was “a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” (Isaiah 53:3)—as we often are—He didn’t remain in a state of sadness; He always looked to His Father for positive guidance and turned His attention to those in need. Following His example of assisting, praying for, and encouraging others is sure to gladden our own hearts.

“Be of good cheer” was one of Jesus’ hallmark phrases (Matthew 9:2, 22; 14:27; John 16:33). Ask Him today to help you find more joy in your world—and you may well reap greater physical, emotional, and spiritual health throughout the holidays and beyond! 

¹ <https://www.cnn.com/2013/07/30/health/happy-genes>

² <https://www.nbcnews.com/better/health/smiling-can-trick-your-brain-happiness-boost-your-health-ncna822591>



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