

2020 Devotional Articles by Rev. Mike Jones

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January 1, 2020 ONE THING

What is the “One Thing” you want to make happen in your life this year? The Apostle Paul knew finding your “One Thing” and focusing on your future instead of being crippled by your past was vital (“This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before” Philippians 3:13).

Is it a “desire of your heart”: *Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.* Over and over Jesus would ask people, “What do you want me to do for you? (What is your goal?)” If you do not know where you are going it is hard to get there!

Does it “burn in your bones”: *Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay* (Jeremiah 20:9). Your “One Thing” must motivate you through dark days and occasional defeats. Set small goals toward your big goal that will add fuel to your fire to prevent circumstances and criticism from “throwing water on your wood”.

When your “One Thing” is your main thing will you be happy with what is happening? If the “desire of your heart” is a bad thing then you need to make your first “One Thing” a new heart from God.

You cannot do everything but you can do something and, with God’s help, do that one thing well.

January 8, 2020 RECIPROCAL RETURN

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Three times Jesus tells us that if we do something then it will be “measured back to us”. This Reciprocal Return is a very important life principle.

When you JUDGE others you can expect to be judged- *“For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again”* (Matthew 7:2). The standards you use on others are the standards they will use on you! Better be right before you point out other people’s wrong.

When you TALK about others you can expect them to talk about you- *“He said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete out what you have heard, it shall be measured to you”* (Mark 4:24). What you hear determines what you believe and what you believe determines what you say; and what you say determines what other people think about, and say about, You!

When you GIVE as you should you can expect to receive in return- *“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again”* (Luke 6:38). What you sow helps determine what you reap. You do not give to get but a life time of experience has taught me that generous giving returns great blessings (Often in unusual and unexpected ways).

Fill your “measuring cup” with respect, good words, and generous giving and marvel at the good things that will come back your way.

January 15, 2020 THE GOOD LIFE

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What is the Good Life? Many people say the ingredients for a good life are a good family, good friends, great fortune, and fabulous fame. Sadly, marriage problems and family problems are common for many. Friends have become electronic “Facebook friends” instead of face to face friends. Fortune

has become “the more I make the more it takes”. And their “fifteen minutes of fame” seemed to pass much quicker than they expected! They have found that walking into a bakery does not make you a good cook!

Let me tell you how I attained the Good Life that has become a Great Life. I found a Great Family (I am born again into the family of God). I became companion to a Great Friend (Jesus is a friend who sticks closer than a brother). I found the key to a Great Fortune (I know God will supply all my needs). And I even gained eternally Great Fame (God said I was one of His “Jewels” to show off in eternity!).

All this happened because of my relationship with God through Jesus Christ. This relationship is an abundant life, a purposeful life, and an eternal life. I am justified by the blood of Christ, purified by the power of the Spirit, edified by the teachings of God’s Word, dignified by constantly growing Christian character, unified with fellow believers in worship and work, satisfied with the presence and peace of Christ, and one day I will be forever glorified with God.

My God life has given me the Good Life filled with the joy and peace I craved- Glory!

January 22, 2020 BETTER LIFE GUIDELINES

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During my devotion time recently I asked the Lord to give me several guidelines that would help me become a better person and that I could share with others to help make their life better. Almost immediately the following three principles seemed to “pop” into my brain. I know they will help me and I pray they will help you also.

1) **DO NOT WORSHIP YOUR WORK.** Many people get all their self-worth from their work. If you are physically able, you should work, and you should enjoy your work. Just do not turn your work into the only driving force in your life. Appreciate your work but remember even God took a day off!

2) **DO NOT OVERLOOK FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.** Wise King Solomon grieved, “My mother's children were angry with me; they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept”. God recognized early, and stated often, the importance of family relationships. Yet, many people treat their family badly while treating the people around them (whom they hardly know) with respect and dignity. Find ways this week to let your family know they are important to you and that you value them in your life.

3) **DO NOT NEGLECT TIME WITH GOD.** The constant availability of streaming entertainment and social media interaction causes many people to put their relationship with God on the “back burner”. More and more they find less and less time for Bible reading, prayer, and church activities. God has promised that if we spend time with Him He will renew our strength and energize our souls; which makes checking God’s “friend page” something you should do every day!

January 29, 2020 SENTENCE SERMONS

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Sometimes less does more. [Let not thy mouth be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few Eccl 5:2]. Here are some “sentence sermons” I use to make a point quickly.

Goals are good but only if you go for the goal: You will never succeed if you are satisfied being satisfied. You cannot get to where you need to be by remaining where you are [“Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone” James 2:17].

Choices that you choose often choose the choices that you must choose: Consequences of choices increase the consequences of choices [This can be Bad or Good: “God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting” Galatians 6:7-8].

Do what you can, where you are, with what you have [If the little boy with 2 fish and 5 loaves had not spoken up and then been willing to let his little do a lot 5000 people would have missed a miracle meal].

A few to think about: Getting into trouble will get you into trouble. / You do not know what you do not know. / Leadership that will not lead will eventually end up being led. / It is not good to be bad.

Finally, More is never enough: Do not make gold your goal [“He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase” Ecclesiastes 5:10]. Full banks do not fill empty hearts. If God is not first then your joy will not last.

February 5, 2020 A GOOD THING

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(Prov 18:22) Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.

February 6th is the 50th Wedding Anniversary of the lovely Princess Paula and I. We were married on a cold Friday night and I began a Revival on Sunday. From the beginning, my “good thing” and I thought it was a good thing to put serving God at the heart of our marriage.

This wonderful woman listened to the same sermons (When her Pastor changed churches she changed churches also!), heard the same jokes, tolerated (with a smile) constantly being used in illustrations, and testified regularly that a marriage built with God at the center is a good thing. She has endured not having a home to call her own (Lived in parsonages). She has moved from state to state as God's plan unfolded in my ministry. And she has always been expected to be a little better; and do a little more, because she was the Preacher's wife.

I “found” her by listening to God for the helpmate He wanted me to have. I cherish her as a precious person whose Christian character and lady like conduct are the same in private as they are in public. She is a diamond among jewels and a Princess among ladies.

Marriage changed her last name but it changed my life! This favor from the Lord is indeed a good thing; and it would be a good thing to let your “good thing” know you think she is a good thing also.

February 12, 2020 BELOVED OF THE LORD

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God used the title “Beloved” for Daniel and John; and to both of these men He confided His future plans! Daniel was the only person called “Greatly Beloved of the Lord”. What would cause God to give a person such a name and then share special secrets with him? Here are two characteristics that may have caused God to grant him this great title.

Daniel always chose God- From his refusal to eat the king's meat as a youth until his visit to the Lion's den rather than stop praying in his later years he always made a “God Decision”. Where did this Character come from? Daniel's early years were spent in the palace of good king Josiah under the influence of the prophet Jeremiah. The teachings and actions of these Godly mentors were used of God to build strength of character which withstood the assault of the evil Babylonian culture. This is why it is important that your children regularly attend a Bible teaching Church.

Daniel had a servant's heart that gave him kingly positions- Even when the government would change, in spite of his background as a captive; like cream, he always rose to the top. Someone has said that the meaning of life is to discover your God given gift and the purpose of life is to use that gift to help others. That is exactly what Daniel tried to do.

"Beloved of the Lord"; what a title! Does your character and conduct cause God to write that on your "valentine"?

February 21, 2020 PROBLEMS JESUS FACED

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It is good to know that "we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). I know it is hard to conceive that Jesus faced the same problems you face but here are some problems He encountered.

Pharisees who were so strict until you could never please them. Sadducees who believed nothing they wanted to do was wrong (Think today's PC Culture). And Herodian who believed only their political party was right (Sounds like today's news reports).

His friends came to rescue Him from His work because they thought He was "beside Himself". His disciples argued among themselves about who was the greatest. He was constantly surrounded by curious crowds, hungry crowds, and needy crowds and "there were so many coming and going until he had no leisure so much as to eat" (Does that sound like your busy life?).

In spite of this Jesus knew He must always be about "His Father's business". This priority kept Him from being overwhelmed by His problems and enabled Him to do what needed to be done. Remember that, make God's plan your priority and your problems will settle into their proper perspective.

February 28, 2020 LISTEN TO GOD

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One of the most intriguing passages of scripture to me is Jeremiah chapters forty two and forty three. Israel had been destroyed by the Babylonian army. The few people left in the land are faced with a tremendous choice; stay in the land and trust in God's protection or run away to the comforts and ease of Egypt.

The decision is made to ask Jeremiah the Prophet for advice. Jeremiah is hesitant because he does not believe the people will listen to God but the people assure him that they will abide by God's word. After a time of prayer and seeking God's direction, Jeremiah tells the people that God wants them to remain in Jerusalem and trust Him.

Immediately the leaders of the people rebel and tell everyone that Jeremiah has been hired by their enemies in order to destroy them. Everyone packs up and heads for the good life in Egypt (Where they are killed in the very battle they sought to avoid).

The lesson is simple. God does not always tell you what you want to hear.

Earlier in his ministry, Jeremiah had delivered this message from God, "Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you" (Jeremiah 7:23).

A simple to understand statement, "I am God and I know better than you!"; yet, I am amazed at how many times, even today, people disregard God's word because it does not say what they want it to say. Like these people, however, you will find this is a fatal mistake.

February 28, 2020 PREPARED

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Four times the Bible declares that God "prepared" something for Jonah in order to teach him valuable lessons about questioning God's plan for his life.

First, God prepared a great fish (whale) to swallow Jonah. Jonah was running from God's will and God wanted to show him how dangerous that could be. When Jonah arrived in this fish he said he was crying to God from the belly of hell! Maybe that's where you feel you are today because of your disobedience. Just remember this; God arranged it so the whale would vomit Jonah up on dry land when he repented!

Second, God prepared a gourd to grow up and shade Jonah. Jonah was pouting because life didn't go the way he wanted but he was happy enough to accept this shade from God. Do you pout when God does not allow you to run the universe but take God's blessings for granted?

Third, God prepared a worm to eat the gourd and kill it. Finally, God prepared a vehement east wind to blow upon Jonah. Without the shade of the gourd Jonah had sunstroke and almost died. Jonah cried out in anger to God about the loss of the gourd and God asked him a simple question "Is it right for you to be more interested in a gourd that provided you shade than you were in the salvation of a city of six hundred thousand people?"

What has God prepared to cause you to re-examine your purpose and priorities in life? Hope it is not the "belly of hell" or the blast of a near death sunstroke!

March 6, 2020 UPSIDE DOWN SPOONS

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I did not have any sisters so my three brothers and I had to take turns washing dishes. I do not like washing dishes.

When I married a wife I gave up washing dishes except in an emergency or sickness. My wife does not try to preach for me and I do not try to wash dishes for her!

After we were married for a few years, I decided to "butter" her up by washing the dishes for her while she was doing some other things. Instead of telling me how nice I was, however, the first thing she did was tell me the spoons were lying in the drain the wrong way. So much for butter!

I hated to admit it but she was right. I had rinsed the spoons off and put them in the drain face up. That caused the rinse water to collect in the bottom of the spoon. I should have turned them upside down so all the water would drain from them.

That's also a problem people sometimes have. They come to God for cleansing but they don't turn over after they're clean and sin collects in their life again. They need to learn that God expects us to turn our back on sin when we turn our face toward Him.

If sin is continually defeating you, maybe you're facing the wrong way. Do not just "clean the spoon"; turn away from sin so God can help you drain the sin out of your life.

March 13, 2020 SNEAKY SIN

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The Penalty for Sin was paid by the death of Christ on the Cross. The Power of Sin was destroyed by the Resurrection of Christ from the Tomb (See Romans 6). And the Presence of Sin will no longer be a problem in the Heavenly World (Revelation 22:3).

Presently, however, Christians still battle the pull and pleasures of sin. When these Christians give in to the lusts of the flesh instead of following the leadership of the Spirit it results in loss of fellowship, fruit, testimony, blessings, and rewards. It also deteriorates bodies, dirties minds, disillusions dreams, deepens debts, disgraces families, disperses to companions, and damages the soul. The ripples from giving in to sin “rock a lot of boats” and damage a lot of lives.

This is why it is important for Christians to remember that temptation always has an “escape hatch” (There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it 1 Corinthians 10:13). And they should never forget that God’s power in a Christian is greater than temptation’s pull outside a Christian (Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world 1 John 4:4).

Christians should recognize that Sin is a “sneaky snake” to be avoided but they should also rejoice because Christ is a serpent slayer- Glory!

March 20, 2020 PROMISES

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Promises given by God for specific problems and specific situations should not be appropriated for present problems and present situations. Blood over the door kept the death angel away from the homes of the children of Israel during the Egyptian plagues but blood over your door today will not keep death away from your home and will only cause your door to stink and become a breeding ground for disease!

Many people in the world do not believe in God’s power or honor God’s person because Christians have “made God promise something that God did not promise” and when the promise fails people do not believe God can be trusted. God cannot lie and when He makes a Promise it is eternally dependable and it will always do what God says it will do. You simply have to learn the difference between what you want God to say and what God actually says.

Some Promises are conditional. God said, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5) but He also said, “The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you” (2 Chronicles 15:2).

Some Promises are universal: “For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved” (Romans 10:12-13).

I am, however, “fully persuaded that, what God promised, he is able also to perform” (Romans 4:21). I just want to use His promises correctly and show a wondering world a wonderful God.

March 27, 2020 PILATE’S QUESTION

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Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified (Matthew 27:22).

What do you do when you must decide the fate of God? How do you respond when clambering crowds urge you to do something that every fiber in your being screams for you not to do? How do you answer the most important question ever asked?

In Pilate's case it was a Puzzling question ("What" shall I do?), a Personal question (What shall "I" do?), a Participation question (What shall I "Do"?), and a Person question (What shall I do with "Jesus which is called Christ"?). It was also a life changing, world shaking, eternity altering question made under the Pressure of a mob and against the advice of a concerned wife ("When he was set down on the judgment seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him" Matthew 27:19).

Pilate tried to "pass the buck" on this question by sending Jesus to Herod (Let someone else decide), giving the mob a choice between Barabbas and Christ (Let popular opinion choose), and washing his hands of the whole thing (I refuse to take responsibility for my choice). But he soon found out that letting Jesus die did not solve his dilemma because Jesus would not stay dead!

Every person must face Pilate's question. So I ask you today, "What shall YOU do with Jesus?"

April 3, 2020 OUT OF BODY

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The Church is going through an "out of body experience"! A deadly sickness has invaded our world and Pastors have had to replace "come to church" with "stay at home". What are we going to do when we cannot do what we have always been taught to do?

For many years one of my life phrases has been, "do what you can, where you are, with what you have". Let's apply this to our present situation? How can the Body be the Body when the Body cannot be where the Body normally expresses itself as a Body?

A preacher friend sends me text messages of encouragement and assurance of his prayers several times a week. A nurse in a local hospital took time out of her very busy and stressful schedule to stop by and make sure my wife and I had everything we need. And everyone knows many Pastors have become "televangelists" reaching many people with their messages that would have never heard them under different circumstances.

Here are some ways YOU can be the Body while out of the Body. Write a note of encouragement to five people this week. Write (and mail) your tithes check so your church can continue to minister to those in need. Call and pray for sick people. Contact a Home School mom and see if you can research and email her materials to help lighten her load.

Paul had an "out of body experience" (2Cor 12) that changed his life. May we allow God to do the same for us during this difficult time.

April 10, 2020 DIFFERENT EASTER

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What a difference a few weeks can make. March Madness parties quickly converted to disease distancing while counting the days until spring break turned into a dreaded daily counting of worldwide deaths. Life is suddenly held hostage to a virus we cannot see and a despair we do not want to acknowledge.

Jesus and the Disciples went through a time like this. During the great victory celebration of Palm Sunday the Disciples basked in the adulation and adoration of the multitudes. Little did they know that the coming week would find them struggling in the darkness of life's changing circumstances as the crowd's cries changed into, "Crucify him, crucify him" and they watched their hoped for Messiah die on a cross.

In a week Jesus went from being sought by the sick and needy to being betrayed by a coworker (Judas); abandoned by men He had mentored for three years (Disciples); and denied by one of His closest associates (Peter). He was then scorned by his nation (Give us Barabbas and crucify this man); mocked, slapped, and spit on by his jailers; and “forsaken” by his Father as He shouldered sin’s death debt.

But never forget that Easter was coming when death no longer mattered and a risen Savior appeared to His Disciples to tell them, “Do not sweat this, I have everything under control”.

Easter will be celebrated differently this year but it is still a victory time stronger than any virus. Do not despair, God is still on the throne and the tomb is still empty.

April 12, 2020 **CROSS ROAD CHRIST**

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Suppose I come to an intersection where the road I am traveling branches off in two different directions. I have been warned that following one of these roads will allow me to reach my desired destination of joy and happiness but following the other road will lead to troubles and trials and finally end up in a bog of despair from which there is no escape.

Both roads look the same so I have no clue as to which one to take. Suddenly I see two men sitting on a bench under a tree so I approach them to see if they can give me directions. As I get closer I notice that one of the men is alive and well but the other is simply a corpse sitting on a bench!

Which one of these men do you think I should consult about directions in this important life decision? Obviously, the answer is the man who is alive and can actually help me.

Many religious leaders have come into this world. Some of them have been extremely smart and have left great teachings about how to deal with life and its problems. But this fork in the road is not just about living in this life; it is about eternity and what lies beyond.

Only one religious leader has journeyed through the valley of death and come back alive to give me directions. His name is Jesus and He is the one I plan to listen to about which road I need to take. I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live (Deut 30:19)

April 13, 2020 **PLANT DISCIPLE**

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I really wish I could be an “increase disciple” who reaps the fruit and enjoys the glory of the harvest. But, alas, I have been called to be a “plant disciple” who works to prepare the soil, plant the seed, and then trust God to produce the fruit [I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase 1Cor 3:6].

My lot in life is to prepare “seed sermons and devotions” so better preachers and teachers with a more pleasing personality can be used of God to turn the puny little seed into a great sermon or lesson which can (hopefully) change people or problems. My part is vital (no seeds planted, no increase harvested) but I recognize that you pay and praise the person who delivers the harvest fruit while you tell the person digging in the dirt, so seed can be planted, that he needs to take a bath!

This is not a pity party or a cry for recognition; it is meant as an encouragement to others who do the “behind the scenes work”. There is great peace and joy when you do what God has called you to do

and stop trying to do what others are supposed to do. And never forget that God is aware of all you do and “every man shall receive HIS OWN REWARD according to his own labour” (1 Corinthians 3:8).

[The Lord kept pushing me to publish this. Whoever needs this encouragement realize also that I prayed for you before I published this].

April 17, 2020 CAKE CARE

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This is a true story shared by Rev. Murrell Young 20 years ago. The memory of his faithful service lives on.

Slowly the coins clinked upon the bare table as the man emptied his pockets. Next his wife emptied her pocket book. Then they looked under the couch cushions and anywhere else they could think but the stack was still a mole hill of coins for the mountain of their problem. The husband counted the coins and looked bleakly at his wife as he announced, “Four dollars and eighty five cents.”

No words were spoken but each knew the heart of the other. For years they had committed themselves to serving the Lord and confidently told others that God would supply their needs. Now this beggar’s pile of coins was all they could muster to buy their groceries for a week. Heart broken, they left the coins on the table and went their separate ways.

The Husband sat on the porch, staring into the distance, wondering why he could no longer support his family. Suddenly his wife appeared with a glow in her eyes and determination in her voice. She said during her prayers God had shown her how to multiply their money in order to meet their needs. Her husband was to go into town and use the money to buy supplies necessary to make a cake. When he returned she immediately baked a cake. As soon as it was done she told her husband to go to town and sell the cake. The Husband then used that money to buy the ingredients necessary to make several more cakes. On his last trip to town that day he sold enough cakes to buy groceries for a week; and they never faced another shortage like that!

(Psa 37:25) “I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.” No matter how bleak things may look, God has provisions available for His children. Sometimes obtaining that provision is just as easy as baking a cake!

April 24, 2020 HEALING PRAYER

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Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16). You can sit on your hands in despair or you can fold your hands in victorious prayer

Our present world has been invaded by illness and isolation. Thankfully, Christians know how we “may be healed” - Acknowledging the wrong we have done and praying for others. In order for this to happen, however, we must move from passive hermits hiding in our homes to active prayer warriors who believe our prayers reach God’s ear and make a difference in the affairs of men.

Pray for God’s Provision for those in need (Be specific- and, when possible, be a conduit of God’s care). Pray for God’s Physical and Spiritual Protection for those who daily face death and disease in order to help the sick and suffering. Pray for God to help suddenly stay at home families to show and share love and care for one another.

Pray for God to work in the lives of people so they will use their time to become better instead of simply binge watch mindless movies. Pray people will begin seeking opportunities to use their energy and intellect to practice their trade and produce products necessary for our nation to grow and prosper. And let these people know you are praying “fervently” and regularly for them.

Finally, Pray for God to help your prayers “avail much” because you are a “righteous man” due to your publically proclaimed faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of His Son. Remember, prayer works if we work at prayer.

May 1, 2020 HOPE

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When hope dies the soul withers. We need help and health but, above all, we need Hope. Everyone seems to “know the truth” about what is going on while it is increasingly obvious that almost no one “knows the truth”. In the midst of this storm battering our lives we need to anchor our souls on a “hope rock”.

Hope does not eliminate hurt. Even Jesus wept at the tomb of a loved one even though He knew he would be raised from the dead shortly.

Hope does not eliminate circumstances or situations which seem hopeless: “Abraham against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations” (Romans 4:18).

Hope does not eliminate our participation in bringing about hope: “He that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope” (1 Corinthians 9:10).

Hope is not “wishful thinking” built on your desires or society’s thoughts: “So are the paths of all that forget God; and the hypocrite’s hope shall perish: Whose hope shall be cut off, and whose trust shall be like a spider’s web” (Job 8:13-14).

Hope abounds when we anchor our soul in God and allow the Holy Spirit to fill our life with God’s truth: “Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost” (Romans 15:13).

I hope your life will be filled with Hope today.

May 12, 2020 PROSTITUTE PRAYER

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“Ye ask, and receive not, BECAUSE YE ASK AMISS” (James 4:3). If a Prostitute contacted me and asked me to pray that she could get work it would be important to know WHAT I was praying for. Does the Prostitute want me to pray for more work for her as a Prostitute or does she desire work in order to escape being a prostitute? (One would enlist my prayers; the other would not).

Jesus had no problem helping a prostitute caught in the very act of adultery but He called for reformation as well as repentance- “Jesus say unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more” (John 8:11). Remember this when praying about YOUR situation. Are you simply praying for help for the situation that got you into your present circumstances or are you seeking a way to work with God in order to avoid these situations in the future?

Several Prostitutes in the Bible received help from God. I believe God loves you just as much as He loved them. He just needs to know WHAT you will do with the answer to your prayer. Your prayers will not “miss” if your aim is true.

May 15, 2020 TIME

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Politicians and Scientist want to control our world. Christians should want to change our world.

Many people are occupied with “time” right now as they look at the best time to open up, get out, and get on with life. With that in mind, let me share three things that it is time for.

It is time to WAKE UP- (Rom 13:11) “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” Too many in the church are asleep on duty (Remember the disciples who were supposed to pray with Jesus). As a result, the devil is destroying families, churches, and individuals. The lazy and the lukewarm need to be stirred out of their slumber and isolation and go gather up lost and strayed sheep.

It is time to SHAPE UP- (1 Pet 4:17) “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?” It is not enough to believe we can be better; it is time we become different so we can make a difference by abandoning social gossip and starting gospel living (Refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness 1 Timothy 4:7).

Finally, it is time to PRAY UP- “Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you” (Hosea 10:12). America needs God’s Help, God’s Hope, and the anticipation of God’s Heaven. Christians need to pray for God’s power on their lives so they can bring desperately needed Revival. It’s Time.

May 22, 2020 MEMORIAL LIFE

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“And the Angel said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God” (Acts 10:4). What an honor, that God would memorialize your life because of your piety. If you desire to have such a “Memorial Life” then let me suggest Five Life Principles.

DO THE RIGHT THING. Nothing brings joy and meaning to life like positive actions so do what God wants you to do so your “prayers and alms will come up for a memorial before God”.

BE IN THE RIGHT PLACE. God has a place and a position that only YOU can fill. Be remembered as a person who did unique things in a unique place for a Great God.

HAVE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE. Recall the times you were really happy. It was not when you thought only of yourself and your needs. Joy came when you helped someone else. Keep in mind that “he that is greatest among you shall be your servant” (Matthew 23:11).

MULTIPLY YOUR MINISTRY. Do not just do it; teach someone else to do it. And try to get them to do it better than you could do it. Make your life’s work a legacy.

ACCOMPLISH THE EXTRAORDINARY. Do not be satisfied being satisfied. Hook up with God’s power, get in God’s plan, and do something that only God could do. Feed 5000 with your lunch, kill a giant with a stone, get out of the boat and walk on the waves... You and God can do it.

You can waste your life watching someone else’s exploits on TV or you can build a life that is a “memorial before God”. Your choice.

May 29, 2020 WHEN GOD GOES HOME

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“I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early” (Hosea 5:15).

Hosea is a strange book of the Bible! It is built around God telling a preacher to marry a prostitute. Can you imagine the pastor of the big Baptist church in your town standing in the pulpit this Sunday and telling everyone that God told him to marry a local prostitute? Can you picture her reception the first Sunday she came to church as the Pastor’s wife? Such was the “pickle” Hosea was put into by the command of God.

Then, to add fuel to the fire, Hosea was told to preach a message that ended by stating that God was going home and leaving the nation to fend for itself. Boy, talk about popular preachers!

Can you envision what would happen if God “went home” and left America? No more divine protection or divine provision. Like multitudes of empires before us we would see how quickly and completely our glory and power would vanish if God left us to our own resources.

God does not want to “go home and leave us”. All He asks is that we “acknowledge our offence and once again seek His face”. And, wonder of wonders, if we will do that, He will come back and take us home with Him when He goes!

June 5, 2020 WHAT KIND OF RELIGION?

You are Lost if you do not know the Way [Menu](#)

What kind of religion do you have? Everyone has a religion; even if it is the religion of “non-religion”. As I have traveled around the world one thing has become evident to me about people’s religion. No matter what label they put on their religion (Christian, Muslim, Hindu, etc) it normally breaks down into one of three categories.

Some people have Personal Religion; a private guidance within their inner being that determines their moral values and guides their life choices. They may not know how to define this “godward” part of their life, and they seldom talk of it, but it is the “power” directing the inward compass guiding their actions and attitudes. Sadly, this “moral compass” changes with the changing viewpoint of the person [Think “sin” today compared to “sin” 50 years ago].

Some people have Preacher Religion. Someone outside the person defines the standards and guidelines the person lives by in order to be “righteous”. This leader may be very wise, very charismatic, and very persuasive but it is always their thoughts and opinions which define the way you see and react to your “god”.

Finally, some people have Proper Religion. They listen to the word of God and then, by faith, trust in the way of God in order to become a child of God. They are not perfect people but they are “born again” by the Spirit of God and now they daily grow into the new person God wants them to become. Their religion is a relationship with the God they walk with now and plan to live with for eternity.

What about you? What kind of Religion do you have?

June 12, 2020 BECAUSE I CAN, SHOULD I?

[Menu](#). Who you are is shown by what you do with who you are.

Because I can do something, should I? Or, said another way, “Because I have the freedom to do something, does that give me the right to do it?” What are the limits to a person’s freedom?

I believe that Freedom (Because I can) must be governed by at least 3 guidelines:

1) What are the Consequences of my Freedom? I have the freedom to jump off a bridge if I so desire but the sudden stop is a killer!! Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Freedom without awareness of consequences is dangerous.

2) What Responsibilities come with my Freedom? I have the freedom to swing my arm any way I want; but my right to do so ends at your nose! Freedom without responsibility becomes anarchy and chaos. The purpose of Laws and Government is to ensure that men take responsibility for their Freedom.

3) What Considerations accompany my Freedom? I have the Freedom to go a week without bathing but it would be very inconsiderate of those around me. When “every man does that which is right in his own sight” then no one really gets to enjoy the true blessings of Freedom. That is why the golden rule is still, “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”.

It is important to remember that the strings on a fiddle only find the music within when they give up their Freedom in order to be confined to the purpose of their life. Jesus taught that if we came to Him we would be “free indeed”. It sounds like bondage but, in reality, it is the freedom your heart has craved all along.

June 19, 2020 **VALUE FATHERS**

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Sometimes Fathers must feel like the man who said, “I would ask my boss to pay me what I am worth but I could not live on that small of a salary!” Mothers are showered with love and adoration on Mother’s Day while Dads on Father’s Day are told to work harder, be better, and pay for lunch!

I want to change that trend. Godly Dads who give their effort and energy to providing for and leading their family need to know they are valued, special, and greatly appreciated.

We celebrate the work Godly Fathers put into building a family. A dog can produce puppies that turn over trash cans, bark at everything they see, and senselessly die on the highway chasing cars. Godly Fathers are not “dog trainers”; they realize they are Dads entrusted with raising a child that could change the world (Before I formed this child in the belly I knew him; and before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified him, and I ordained him a prophet unto the nations Jeremiah 1:5). They are not perfect but they try to be the best parent they can be.

We honor them for their example of Godly living and for making God a priority in their life. It is simple to talk to them about God because we see them walking and talking with God each day. It is easy to trust God with our life because we see how they trust God with their life.

We are proud of the Godly leadership of Godly Fathers and we want them to know we love and value them more than words can say.

Value Godly Men before they vanish: “Help, LORD; for the godly man ceaseth; for the faithful fail from among the children of men” (Psalms 12:1).

June 26, 2020 **YOUR GOD IS TOO SMALL**

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The story is told about the Greek king Tantalus who, as punishment for the crime of stealing ambrosia from the gods, was condemned to an eternal torment of hunger and thirst. Water receded as he stooped to drink and trees lifted their branches as he reached up to pluck their fruit. From this myth, we get the word “tantalyzing”.

In my early Christian life I read a book entitled "Your God is too Small". I do not remember the content of the book but I've never forgotten the title. Today I believe there are multitudes of people who are "tantalized" about the Power and Ability of God. Their God is only experienced as words within the walls of a church while the power and wonder of God remains an elusive object preached about but never experienced.

I am not talking about turning God into some "magic" power we use at our whim to turn us into "mini-gods". I am saying we need a living Faith in the God of the Bible who can open the Red Sea to preserve His people, who can use birds to feed His prophets, and who turns the defeat of death into the victory of resurrection.

Our world is tired of being tantalized by a God who is too small. It longs to see a God who is big and holy and frightening as well as gentle and tender; a God whose love draws us into His strong and caring arms where we find power to change ourselves as well as change the world.

God is not dead; He is not even sick! Stop limiting Him by keeping Him in the small little mold of your mind. Let Him be God and learn what it means to see a Big God do big things!

Can you trust God with your future if you cannot depend on God in your present?

July 3, 2020 HOPE FOR A NATION

[Menu](#) America needs Christians to stand firm in their faith now more than ever.

I am really glad God asked Ezekiel and not me. God put Ezekiel in the middle of a graveyard representing the nation of Israel and then asked this question, "Can these bones live?" If I would have been Ezekiel, and the graveyard would have been present day America, then I would have had to be diplomatic like Ezekiel and say, "Lord, only you know whether or not these dry bones can live!"

America is being "eaten alive" by division, destruction, and dissension over color, culture, and common sense (If ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another Galatians 5:15). And Covid has closed churches and businesses while at the same time destroying our economy and causing a strong vibrant nation to cower in isolation and fear. Not a good situation to try to get "dry bones" to come to life!

Thank God for another graveyard and an empty tomb. Things looked bad then also as disciples hid in locked rooms, the mob cried for God to be crucified, and even nature itself turned black and bleak (On crucifixion day there was darkness over the land from noon until three).

But the grave could not hold Jesus and His empowered disciples would "turn the world upside down" with His message and their lives. That is why I have hope that if Christians will "Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the LORD" (Ezekiel 37:4) that even the "dry bones of America" can return to God and glory. It happened for Ezekiel and God is still God.

July 10, 2020 LIFE CHANGING MOMENT

[Menu](#) You momentous moment impacts more than that moment

When you reach that life changing moment will your answer change your life? Like Elisha, you have followed your mentor, Elijah, despite numerous attempts to distract, dissuade, and discourage you. Now you come to that life altering moment when you are asked, "What is your goal? If I give you the ability to do anything you want to do, what will that be?" [It came to pass, when they were gone over the Jordan, that Elijah said unto Elisha, Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away from thee. And Elisha said, I pray thee, let a double portion of thy spirit be upon me (2 Kings 2:9)].

Elisha changed his world; and the world of numerous other people, because he sought something bigger and better; a double portion of Elijah's Prophet Power. With this power he cured the deadly waters of Jericho, provided supernatural water for a parched army, multiplied the oil for the widow so she could pay her debt, raised up the Shunamite's dead son, cured the poison pot of pottage for the Prophet Disciples, multiplied bread for the multitude, and told Naaman how to be cured of Leprosy by dipping in the Jordan River.

When life brings you to your "Elisha Question Moment" you need to know the life changing answer God has put in YOUR heart. Jesus could have cured many and helped multitudes but if He would have died in a bed instead of on a cross the results would have been catastrophic for the world. A Good plan for your life is never the same as God's plan for your life.

July 17, 2020 **ESSENTIAL CHURCH**

[Menu](#) Church is not just "nice"; it is necessary.

Covid Chaos, Racial Polarization, and the constant drumbeat from the "news" media that there is no hope for your health or happiness all show how essential the Church is. Now, more than ever, people need a Rock of stability far beyond a Facebook quip or a catchy sounding song that assures them of God's power and love and brings real peace to their heart.

If the Church is to make a meaningful difference in the world it must remember its threefold purpose. Church is a place to Worship God with songs, sermons, and the study of God's word. It is also to function as the Body (representatives) of Christ so people can see God at work in real life. And it is to carry the Good News of God's message to the entire World.

Paul illustrated this by saying Christians were soldiers in the army of God. Church is the place these soldiers come together [Even if it is sometimes electronically] to enlist new recruits, sharpen swords of the Spirit, polish shields of Faith, partake of spiritual nourishment, review the battle plan, receive new assignments, and join with other soldiers in song and sermon to be encouraged and empowered by our Great Commander.

Satan is out to cripple mankind with doubt, doom, and despair. The people of God need to loudly and proudly proclaim our confidence in God's care and our faith in Jesus Christ's victory over Death, Hell, and the Grave. It is Essential that we do so.

July 24, 2020 **SPREADING CHRISTIANITY**

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Many times when entering buildings you are asked several questions to determine if you are spreading Covid. I want to ask several questions to determine if you are "spreading" Christianity.

1) Are there Tears in your Testimony? People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care. If there is no passion in your plea and no tears (personal concern) in your testimony then you will probably see no converts to your faith. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalms 126:5-6).

2) Are your eyes open to the need? Jesus told you to, "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35). Are you concerned about the hopeless hurting multitudes all around you?

3) Is your sword bloody from actively engaging in the battle? “Cursed be he that doeth the work of the LORD deceitfully, and cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood” (Jeremiah 48:10). When your sword is inspected at the end of life will it show you as a spectator or as an active participant in the battle for people’s souls?

4) Does your life cause people to want what you have? No one seeks clean water from a dirty glass.

You can spread gossip or you can spread the gospel. You can spread fear or you can spread faith. Spread Christianity and make a life changing, eternity shaping difference for someone this week.

July 31, 2020 IMPORTANT INFO

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Are you ready to account for the information you give people? (I say unto you, Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment Matthew 12:36).

In the midst of a recent uptick in virus cases, serious riots in major cities, and international intrigue by foreign countries the media decided one of their major stories would be about some tweets by an actor who sometimes acts as if he is “three dimes short of a nickel”. It is amazing what the media considers important!

When I talk with Young People I try to move them past the frivolous into several life lessons that can impact who they are, what they do, and where they end up in the end. Here are a few.

You will never make enough money: He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase (Ecclesiastes 5:10) for riches certainly make themselves wings; they fly away as an eagle (Proverbs 23:5). Never let gold be your “god”.

Love must go beyond lust: Beauty fades, bodies deteriorate, but real love in the heart connects with the person inside the body. Seek a life companion; not a “swipe date”.

Life is about leaving: You leave school. You should leave your parents’ home. You will leave friends or they will leave you. Most people will leave where they are and end up somewhere else. And one day, by “time” kept on an unseen but ever ticking “clock”; you will leave life and face God. Life is your time to get ready for that meeting.

You will never know real peace until you are at peace with God. NOTHING will satisfactorily fill the void in your heart until you connect to God through faith in Jesus Christ. And that requires a definite decision on your part.

August 7, 2020 SERMON IN A SENTENCE

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Sometimes a sentence can make a pretty good sermon. Here are some I hope will bless and inspire you.

Two people cannot hate each other if they love God (If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar (1 John 4:20).

Happiness is when things happen to happen happily but real Joy realizes companionship with Christ overcomes circumstances (“These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” John 16:33).

If we believe as we should; we will not live as we shouldn’t. One who believes he cannot is just about always right (“For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he” Proverbs 23:7) but the person who believes

great beliefs can see amazing results (“If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth” Mark 9:23).

Never quit doing right. The old may live another year, the young may die today; so pause in your busy schedule to praise God for your busy schedule, and then keep on keeping on for God.

Sinners may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, and despise our person; but they cannot isolate themselves from the convicting power of our prayers.

Where death finds you is where eternity keeps you (“If the tree fall toward the south, or toward the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be” Ecclesiastes 11:3). And Choice, not Chance, determines your eternal destiny (“As for me, I will call upon God; and the LORD shall save me” Psalms 55:16).

August 14, 2020 PERFECT PARENTS

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I tell people that my wife and I are “perfect parents” raising our children absolutely correctly; since we are childless! Everyone else, including God, has problems with their children (What do you think keeps Preachers in “business”?). Here are some examples.

First man, Adam had two sons; the oldest killed the younger. The man after God’s own heart (David) had one son (Amnon) who raped his sister and then another son (Absalom) who killed Amnon and led a rebellion to take the throne from his father David. And the cycle of good kings of Israel who had bad sons recorded in the Bible book of Kings makes you dizzy. Do not beat yourself up because your children are not perfect.

And it case you are wondering, God in the flesh (Jesus) stayed behind at the temple at age twelve and caused Mary and Joseph to “seek him sorrowing” (Luke 2:48). But then (I love this) they developed a plan to be the best parents they could be- “Jesus went with them to Nazareth and was subject unto them (Guidelines were given and expected to be obeyed). And Jesus increased in wisdom (Mentally) and stature (Physically), and in favor with God (Spiritually) and man (Socially)” (Luke 2:51-52).

Mary and Joseph thought “God’s Parents” should guide their child correctly and instill values to help in every area of His life; and then let him become the person He chose to be [Even if it broke Mary’s heart when it led Him to be nailed TO a cross instead of simply building a cross]. Parenting hurts, but it is a lot better than being a “perfect parent”.

Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward (Psalms 127:3).

September 4, 2020 HOW LOSERS CAN WIN

Change your world and see it change the world around you!

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Are you losing at life? Are you more familiar with stumbling than with success? Have you tried and failed so many times until you are tempted to quit trying? Here are some strategies that will help you “score touchdowns instead of fumble life’s ball”.

1. **GUARD YOUR GOING-** (Prov 4:14-15) *Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away.* If you walk by the Devil’s house you will be invited in so change your “habit highways”.

2. **TRANSFORM YOUR THINKING-** (Rom 12:2) *Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.* Garbage in; Garbage out. More time in God’s Book and less time in Facebook will change the thoughts that keep tripping you up.

3. **EXERCISE SELF CONTROL-** (1 Cor 9:27) *But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.* Ever notice how easy it is to overcome temptation when others are watching? Remember that! You CAN if you really want to.
4. **RELY ON GOD'S HELP-** (1 Cor 10:13) *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* God wants you to win and God will provide a way for you to win. So stop being a whiner and start being a winner!

September 11, 2020 **FAITH OVER FEAR**

The word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward (Genesis 15:1). [Menu](#)

If “getting to Heaven” is the only reason you attend Church then it is fairly doubtful that you are “getting to Heaven”! If your salvation is only about a “get out of Hell free card” then you need to re-examine what it means to be a Born Again child of God.

Before the Covid Pandemic I noticed that many Christians were becoming “cozy comfort church” attenders. Their world was good, prosperity was abounding, and they were willing to take a couple of hours each week to enjoy some good Praise and Worship music and then listen to a speaker tell them they would never be “good enough” for God so just trust God’s Grace and go on living an “acceptable life style”.

When the Pandemic closed the country (and churches) it brought many people face to face with the fact that they were scared to death of dying. They found their relationship with God was more a mental acknowledgement than a growing loving relationship with a God who could be trusted with their fears as well as their faith.

God does not save us BY works but He does save us FOR works. He did not save us from death so we can simply wait to die. He made us the temple of the Holy Spirit to conform us into the image of His Son, Jesus Christ, in order for us to grow in His Grace, in the knowledge of His plan and purpose, in Christian Character, and in a constantly increasing love relationship. And that is a God you can trust with your fear as well as your faith.

September 18, 2020 **THE REAL NEED**

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If you do not know where you are going it is difficult to arrive at your destination.

I am amazed at the number of times Jesus would ask a question or question an action in order to get a person to expose their real motive or need. The Master was a master at doing this!

People come to Pastors or counselors for help but often the problem they express is not the real problem; and it is only when you get to real problem that you can get to the needed answer. Here are some questions counselors often use to determine the Real Need.

- 1) What is the most annoying thing your Husband /Wife; Son/Daughter does? (Reveals your character, your ability to have relationships with others, and the state of your family life).
- 2) What do you do to get to your “Happy Place”? (Reveals your stability and your “escape plan”).
- 3) Who is the first boy/girl you kissed on a date? (Reveals when Intimacy began and often reveals roadblocks in relationships).

- 4) What is your favorite book of the Bible? (Reveals your spiritual maturity as we talk about why this book is your favorite).
- 5) What do you like the MOST about yourself? (Getting to the heart of your problem)
- 6) What do you like the LEAST about yourself? (Root of your problem that is producing the fruit that you have come to talk about!)
- 7) What are you doing to CHANGE? (Finally, we can begin to move forward as we get you to see that only God has the power to produce permanent change in your personality). *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new* (2 Corinthians 5:17).

These are additional questions that made the article too long but I thought you might enjoy reading.

Is today the day you change the way you face your day?

Couple Question: When was the last time you shared a first time together? New food, new place to see, new experience together (axe throwing, roller coaster ride, rodeo...)

Christian Question: When was the last time you had a “boiling breakthrough” in your Christian life? A biblical discovery, an amazing answered prayer, a new revelation in your relationship with God that constrained you to shout, or sing, or share. Remember, God wants Boiling; not boring, believers: *I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth* Revelation 3:15-16).

Critical Question: Everyone dies leaving some things undone. Knowing you can die any day, what is the ONE THING you need to say or do that you would really want done or said if you died at 3:47pm today?

September 25, 2020 GOD’S WEIRD WAYS

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God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise

Jesus was marvelous at giving people something different than expected. Four men wrecked a roof to bring a man to Jesus for healing but the first thing Jesus did was forgive his sins! The Disciples wanted to send the people home to get their own food; Jesus wanted to feed them with a little boy's lunch! And Religious leaders thought they could get rid of Jesus by killing Him so He just came out of the grave never to die again!

God does not think or act the way that fits inside “your box” (For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD Isaiah 55:8). You see your world; God sees a universe in which your world is just a small part.

You want God to change your problems but God want to change YOU. You want to be first; God says the way to accomplish this is to put others first (*And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all* Mark 10:44). You see an obstacle; God sees an opportunity (I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel Philippians 1:12). Remember it is the File, and not the feather, that sharpens the axe.

You can do it your way; or you can let God’s “weird ways” develop you into the person He is growing you to be. The product will be worth the process.

October 2, 2020 THREE BAD GODS

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The Power that controls what you do controls what you do.

Thus saith the LORD, the God of Israel, Behold, I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon descendants because they have forsaken me, and have worshipped Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians, Chemosh the god of the Moabites, and Milcom the god of the children of Ammon, and have not walked in my ways, to do that which is right in mine eyes, and to keep my statutes and my judgments (1 Kings 11:31-33).

It is interesting to see the gods that God used to show the reason for Solomon descendant's demise. They have different names but you see similarities today.

Ashtoreth the goddess of the Zidonians was the "nature god" often called the "tree god" or "moon god" whose worship included sexual immorality, prostitution, divination, and fortune telling. Can you see that today in people who worship "Mother Nature" and seek only their own fleshly pleasures?

Chemosh the god of the Moabites was the "destroyer" god who required that people and policies be "subdued" to his doctrine. His followers believed that destroying property and demanding that everyone adhere to their point of view was right because they had the power to make it that way.

Milcom the god of the children of Ammon was the "demon god" who required the sacrifice of children. Need I say anything about abortion and America's corrupted education system?

God said we were to have no gods before Him and Paul said, "If our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). Do not let bad "gods" keep you from the only good God.

October 9, 2020 **WHY PRAY?**

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Why Pray? It is the conviction of all who have proved the faithfulness of God that nothing lies beyond the reach of prayer except that which lies outside the will of God. The needs of the world are so many, and so complex, until our only answer is seeking the face and power of God. Apart from consistent and earnest prayer there is little hope for us to achieve what God wants us to achieve.

Prayer is one of the mightiest weapons in the Christian's arsenal and has been greatly used by men of God. Abraham interceded for wicked Sodom. Moses pleaded for wayward and complaining Israel. Samuel prayed for a nation changing its form of government. Elijah's prayers ended a national drought, provided a starving woman food, and raised a widow's son from the dead. Paul prayed for the churches he founded and Jesus for the disciples He called.

Prayer is one of the highest privileges of a follower of Jesus and a privilege no human power can deny them. The door has never been built; the dungeon has never been constructed; an adversary has never been so mighty until they can exclude God from hearing the prayers of His people. The law and the lion's den could not keep Daniel from praying. Beatings and bondage could not keep Paul and Silas from praying at midnight (And beginning a church with the salvation of their jailor!). And John, in exile on the isle of Patmos, still prayed and saw a world changing vision of a glorified Lord!

Make prayer your pastime. Make prayer your passion. Make prayer your practice. The unspoken prayer is unanswered. The unrequested prayer is not granted. No wonder Jesus said, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint".

October 16, 2020 **ETERNAL ADDRESS**

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Five minutes after you die your eternal address will be your most important information! In order for your new address to be Heaven there are 5 things that must happen.

1) God must seek you: (John 6:44) "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day". God must seek you before you will seek Him.

2) Jesus must save you: (Acts 4:12) "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved". God accepts no sacrifice as payment for your Sin except the Shed Blood of Jesus Christ.

3) The Holy Spirit must draw you: It is the Holy Spirit which Convicts, Converts, and Enables us to live as New Creatures. Being "Born Again" is a supernatural experience in your soul; not an intellectual decision in your mind.

4) Christians must tell you: (Rom 10:14) "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" God expects His family to invite others into His family.

5) YOU must accept it: God invites, He does not force. It is not God's will that any be lost. People seal their own fate by choosing to accept or reject God's offer of eternal life.

Everyone will have an eternal address. Do you want to be where you are going to be if you died today?

October 23, 2020 ISLAND OF THE INNOCENT

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God calls us to lift up the cast down. "When men are cast down, then thou shalt say, There is a lifting up; and he shall save the humble person. He shall deliver the island of the innocent: and it is delivered by the pureness of thine hands" (Job 22:29-30).

Did you know the word "depressed" is not in the Bible? The phrase "cast down" is normally used in situations where we would say a person is depressed. It is an interesting phrase because it insinuates that a person had something and discarded it.

Isn't that what depression is all about? You had hope and confidence but you "cast them down". Now the happiness and joyfulness that once exemplified your life has been discarded and you sadly sigh, "Nobody loves me, everybody hates me; I think I will eat worms!"

Note the phrase "he will deliver the island of the innocent". The Hebrew word for "Island" here literally means "isolated from by a question". It is a graphic way of describing how doubt in the life of God's people isolated them from hope and "cast them down" into an island of depression from which they need deliverance [Ever notice how depressed people seek to avoid life by "isolating themselves on an island" of separation and solitude?].

The Good News is that this person can be delivered from this "Isolation Island" by picking up the "pureness" of belief and hope and holding them again in their hand. So I ask with the Psalmist, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God" (Psalms 42:5).