Is God Alive?

7 Steps to Happiness

TORORIOS SERVICES



How one man's decision prevented global Armageddon

Why So Little Happiness?

here is a cause for every effect" is a simple axiom, yet how many truly consider it, much less understand it? How many realize that personally applying such practical wisdom can transform their lives?

I was about 20 years old when this idea was introduced to me. How profound! How simple! Yet today's university students are instead taught the axiom of victimization: You are not successful, you are not happy—and you can't be, because you are oppressed by Jews, Christians, conservatives, "white European males," males in general, or some other perceived privileged class.

But understanding that there is a cause for every effect goes beyond "victim" ideology. In all walks of life, people are living empty lives. It may not be polite to put it this way, but many feel that their lives are in the proverbial toilet. Their relationships are not working. They are depressed, unhappy, and unfulfilled. But they don't know why. Does any of this describe how you feel? I hope not, but I know that many would say "yes." For many of these individuals, all outward signs say they are successful. Their bank accounts are full. Yes, they have fun and lots of laughs. But after the laughter stops, after the joyride ends, there is emptiness. People believe they have done all the things they were told would make them happy, but they are not happy. Maybe it is time to question that sort of advice.

Most people think that if they had more money they would be happy. On this subject, the dramatic rise in Chinese prosperity could teach us something. Note this report from Canada's *Maclean's* magazine:

It's been more than 30 years since Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping opened the country and the Communist party embraced the mantra "to get rich is glorious." In the decades since, hundreds of millions have been lifted out of poverty.... The Chinese today are four times richer than they were 20 years ago, and people... have opportunities and creature comforts unheard of a generation ago. But despite China's economic miracle,

recent studies suggest Chinese aren't any happier than they were in the early 1990s....

Rather than increasing happiness, wealth has had the opposite effect, according to this same article: "Chinese people's life satisfaction actually declined between 1990 and the mid-2000s, a period when gross domestic product and average consumption increased fourfold" ("Why are the Chinese so sad?," *Maclean's*, February 4, 2013).

What is the secret to happiness and success? Some turn to alcohol or drugs for the answer, but those taking this path find that it does not satisfy in the end. So, what is the way to a better life?



A great king once recorded wise proverbs to teach his son how to live. One of those proverbs tells us, "Like a flitting sparrow, like a flying swallow, so a curse without cause shall not alight" (Proverbs 26:2). In other words, there is a cause for every effect. There is a cause for happiness, just as there

are causes for depression, emptiness, and loneliness. Some causes of depression may be genetic or clinical, but these do not explain why so many find life unsatisfying. There is a cause for success, and blaming others for your personal failure does nothing to solve the problem. In fact, it perpetuates the problem.

Addressing the Real Cause

The answer has been here all along, but most refuse to accept it. In a way, we are all at least mildly narcis-

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sistic-we are self-centered. We find it difficult to admit that the choices we make might be the problem. It is so much easier to play our personal "victim card" than to admit that our choices might be the cause for the effect we find ourselves experiencing. From an early age, we think we know what will make us happy, when we really do not. More money, more things, more fun-all of this fails us.

The prophet Isaiah was inspired to write, "Ho! Everyone who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." The context shows that he is not speaking of literal food and drink. He is addressing those who hunger and thirst for fulfillment in life but are coming up empty. He then asks, "Why do you spend money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, and let your soul delight itself in abundance" (Isaiah 55:1-2).

Yes, why do we put our efforts and energy into pursuits that never bring lasting happiness? Look around you. What do you see? You see a lot of unhappy people who are seeking happiness in all the wrong ways and in all the wrong places. You see people on a roller coaster ride of highs and lows, going from thrills and excitement to boredom and depression. You see people striving for more and more of what they already have, thinking that if they only had a little more, they would be content and full. But if fame, fortune, and fun truly bring happiness, why do we have such high-profile suicides among the rich and famous who appear to have it all?

A Different Way of Life

We were created to have a relationship with our Creator and to live the way of outgoing concern for our fellow human beings. We naturally want to get for ourselves, but God tells us that the way to a fulfilling life is to do the opposite: We must learn and practice the way of give, the way of outgoing concern for others. This is the way to true happiness. The Apostle Paul instructs us, "And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).

It is not clear exactly when Jesus said this during His ministry. Perhaps it was a popular teaching of His that was known generally but not recorded elsewhere in Scripture, or perhaps it was a summation of this statement: "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you" (Luke 6:38). This is a hard sell to our physical minds, because it sounds so counterintuitive. This is certainly not the way a child thinks while he is standing in a candy store with a rack full of sugary sweets before his eyes. And are we much different when we see that shiny new car or gorgeous new dress?

Yet, as we should all know from experience, that new item quickly becomes old, and what we thought would make us happy only does so for a short time before leaving us empty again.

God counsels us to come to Him and fill the empty soul with that which lasts, that which comes without money and without price. "Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live.... Seek the LORD while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon. 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the LORD" (Isaiah 55:3, 6-8).

We are not mere victims in this life, constantly unable to change our future. Our article "Seven Steps to Happiness," on page 12 of this issue, lists several actions-large and small-each of us can take to improve our sense of satisfaction with our lives. Each of those actions is only a small part of a much larger approach to living our lives.

If you have not read our publication What Is a *True Christian?*, I encourage you to do so. It explains a different way of life, the right cause for the effect you desire, and it can be yours free of charge. Read it online at *TomorrowsWorld.org* or order it from the Regional Office nearest you, listed on page 4 of this magazine. The Bible teaches a way of life that brings happiness. Few know that way, but you can!

July Wester

5 One Decision Away from Armageddon

Most have no idea just how close the world came to nuclear devastation during the Cold War. Declassified documents reveal the startling truth!

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Happiness seems hopelessly elusive, especially in today's world. But there are real, concrete actions you can take to make a difference.

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While many continue to claim that science has done away with God, they couldn't be further from the truth. The evidence reveals He exists—and wants to know you!

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Sometimes, the "simplest" animals turn out to be remarkably complex! The lowly sea sponge is just such a creature.

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To request free literature or correspond with the editors, contact the Regional Office nearest you or write to

Letters@TomorrowsWorld.org.

United States

PO Box 3810 Charlotte, NC 28227-8010 Phone: +1 (704) 844-1970

Australasia

GPO Box 772

Canberra City, ACT 2601, Australia Phone: +61 8 8383 6266

Canada

PO Box 409 Mississauga, ON L5M 0P6 Phone: +1 (905) 814-1094

New Zealand

PO Box 2767 Shortland Street Auckland 1140 Phone: +64 9-268 8985

Philippines

PO Box 492 Araneta Center Post Office 1135 Quezon City, Metro Manila Phone: +63 2 8573-7594

South Africa

Private Bag X3016 Harrismith, FS, 9880 Phone: +27 58 622 1424

United Kingdom

Box 111 43 Berkeley Square London, W1J 5FJ Phone/Fax: +44 844 800 9322

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By Gerald E. Weston

he Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 nearly brought the world to the unthinkable: a nuclear exchange between the United States and the Soviet Union—in popular parlance, "Armageddon." Although it was understood to be a close call during those 13 tense days in October, few would learn just *how* close it was until decades later—and most people still do not know. After all, October 1962 was nearly 60 years ago. That is ancient history to younger generations, and details have faded for those of us who actually lived through that time. And even *we* did not know the whole story.

We might also add that public schools in the West have de-emphasized the study of history in recent decades, replacing it with "social studies." This subtle change seemed innocuous enough when I was in school in the late 1950s and early 1960s, but it has continued to evolve. It was a clever sleight of hand. Words have meaning, and social studies is not the same as history! Students in junior high, high school, and university are being pumped full of propaganda

involving "male privilege" (especially white male privilege), women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, illegal immigrant rights, socialism, and anything else social engineers may conjure up to destroy long-held morals and values.

How can we prevent ourselves from repeating our mistakes if we don't pass on the lessons of the past? And how can we blame younger generations for a lack of understanding of events about which they were never taught—and for which they have no context? If they do learn anything about the Cuban Missile Crisis, they might be taught that the Soviet Union and Cuba were victims of American imperialism! Of course, not all schools are alike, and not all students are in the dark. Many bright young people study on their own and are well-informed, and some schools offer strong courses in both ancient and modern history. Sadly, though, that is far from the norm.

Two Weeks in October

In the years after World War II, newsreels often preceded feature films in American theaters. I still remember how these newsreels often praised Fidel Castro and his Cuban revolutionaries, before—to the dismay of the U.S. government—Castro declared his allegiance to communism and the Soviet Union. An anxious U.S. government, fearing a potential enemy just 90 miles away, authorized support for the infamous Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba in 1961, which ended disastrously. Yet, the problem was real—as was demonstrated all too clearly when Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev secretly moved more than 41,000 troops into Cuba between July and October 1962.

Even more troubling to U.S. officials was the discovery that Khrushchev had begun deploying nuclear missiles in Cuba—some medium-range, able to reach New York and Chicago, and others intermediate-range, bringing all of the lower 48 states and even Canada into reach. That was a bridge too far for the United States and a direct challenge to its young leader, President John F. Kennedy. Kennedy consulted with top military brass and advisors and chose what history shows was a wise response—to *quarantine* Cuba. Diplomats chose that term to avoid the word *blockade*, which would have amounted to a declaration of war.

Most of this was known to anyone paying attention at the time, but there was far more going on *under the surface* that would only become known decades later, following the release of formerly Top Secret documents.

Underwater and Alone

Here is something that most people still do not know: The Soviet Union sent four submarines to Cuba, and U.S. Navy ships intercepted submarine B-59 on October 27, 1961, dropping low-powered depth charges (used for naval training, no more powerful than a hand grenade). These were designed to give warning and coax the sub to the surface, not to destroy it. What the U.S. did not know at the time was that submarine B-59 carried a nuclear-tipped torpedo with about two-thirds the explosive power of the atomic bomb that had been used on Hiroshima—enough to destroy much of the nearby U.S. naval fleet.

The men on that submarine, however, had been underwater and out of communication with Moscow for several days, and they did not know that the depth charge explosions occurring around them were only meant as warnings. Temperatures aboard the diesel-powered submarine were near 100 degrees, and carbon dioxide build-up contributed to foggy thinking. Officers aboard B-59 wondered if war between the superpowers had already begun—after all, the missile crisis had made this a real possibility. What happened next is bone-chilling in retrospect.

Vadim Orlov, an intelligence officer aboard the submarine, recalled how the American



ships "surrounded us and started to tighten the circle, practicing attacks and dropping depth charges. They exploded right next to the hull. It felt like you were sitting in a metal barrel, which somebody is constantly blasting with a sledgehammer."... Orlov

remembered Captain Valentin Savitsky shouting, "We're going to blast them now! We will die, but

HAD THEY LAUNCHED, YOU AND I MIGHT NOT BE HERE TO READ THIS

we will sink them all—we will not disgrace our Navy!" Political officer Ivan Semonovich Maslennikov agreed that they should launch the torpedo ("Nuclear Close Calls: The Cuban Missile Crisis," *AtomicHeritage.org*, June 15, 2018).

Had they launched, you and I might not be here to read this. The aftermath would have touched us all, and our world would be vastly different than it is today. What is generally unknown, and only revealed with the release of documents decades later, is the response America already had planned for such an attack.

"A Smoking, Radioactive Ruin"

President Kennedy's predecessor, Dwight Eisenhower, understood war only too well and tried during his presidency to hold the line on the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, the U.S. nuclear arsenal grew massively during his eight years as the leader of the free world. Yet Americans were deliberately kept in the dark about their overwhelming superiority in nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them. "According to physicist Pavel Podvig, Soviet bombers at the time 'could deliver about 270 nuclear weapons to U.S. territory.' By contrast, the United States had thousands of warheads that it could deliver via 1,576 Strategic Air Command bombers as well as 183 Atlas and Titan intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), 144 Polaris missiles via nine nuclear submarines, and ten newly built Minuteman ICBMs" (AtomicHeritage.org). Each of those Atlas, Titan, Polaris, and Minuteman missiles carried multiple nuclear devices that could each attack independent targets.

Eisenhower believed that there would never be a limited nuclear exchange—once one bomb went off, it would quickly escalate. Therefore, Eisenhower commissioned his generals to put together a "Single Integrated Operational Plan" (SIOP). This would ultimately reflect the mission of the Air Force's Strategic

Air Command (SAC), as created under the leadership of General Curtis LeMay and his successor, General Thomas Powell. Journalist Evan Thomas

reports that General Curtis LeMay, who had overseen the destruction of Japanese cities during World War II by means of massive firebombing, "had one war plan, as a naval officer described it in 1954: to leave the Soviet Union 'a smoking, radioactive ruin in two hours'" (*Ike's Bluff*, p. 397).

How many Americans and other inhabitants of our planet knew anything about the response a Soviet nuclear attack, no matter how limited, would have elicited from the United States? Thomas explains that SIOP represented an overwhelming retaliation, designed to "destroy the Soviet Union, Red China and the Soviet satellite states [Eastern Europe] in a single cataclysmic blow if the United States were attacked."

Under the SIOP, the United States would shoot the works, firing off its entire strategic arsenal of 3,500 weapons. The plan was an exercise in "overkill," said [George] Kistiakowsky. It would, the science adviser said, "kill four or five times over somebody who is already dead." Coming back from the briefing for his noon nap, Eisenhower told his naval aide, Captain Pete Aurand, that the SIOP "frightens the devil out of me" (Thomas, p. 394).

Newly elected President Kennedy was briefed on SIOP in December 1960, but he may not have fully comprehended it immediately. Sometime later, after another SIOP briefing, the young president-elect would remark to his Secretary of State Dean Rusk, with a mixture of wonder and disgust, "And they call us human beings." Yet neither Kennedy nor the presidents who followed him for the next 40 years

trimmed back the SIOP. In fact, it grew more complex and fantastically apocalyptic (Thomas, p. 399).

A Top Secret report declassified in 2011 reveals SIOP as it existed in 1962. Those who would be killed by such a massive response were estimated at more than 200 million in the USSR and China, with an additional four million in Poland and other Eastern European countries who were under the rule of the USSR ("U.S. War Plans Would Kill an Estimated 108 Million Soviets, 104 Million Chinese, and 2.6 Million Poles: More Evidence on SIOP-62 and the Origins of Overkill," *Unredacted.com*, November 8, 2011).

Radioactivity would no doubt take multiple millions of lives in the aftermath, perhaps the reason one report estimated a figure as high as 600,000,000 deaths. This does *not* include millions of casualties inflicted on the free world, and although the USSR's response to SIOP would perhaps have been less overwhelming, anyone who thinks the Soviet planners were any more civilized is naïve. If mankind can *think* in these terms, actually *carrying out* such mass destruction is not out of the question.

These casualty figures are even more shocking

considering that world population in the early 1960s was just over 3 billion, significantly less than the 7.8 billion alive

THE UNITED STATES ADMITS TO HAVING 32 BROKEN ARROW INCIDENTS. SIX OF THESE INVOLVED WEAPONS THAT WERE NEVER FOUND OR WERE DELIBERATELY LEFT UNDISTURBED.

in 2019. In 1960s terms, when considering losses on both sides and among all their allies, including deaths from resulting radiation poisoning, it would not be unreasonable to believe that such nuclear exchange would have killed one-fourth to one-third of mankind!

One Lone Voice

So, what was it that prevented a nuclear Armageddon in 1962? As we have already seen, Soviet submarine B-59 was in the dark about the state of the world above the waves. U.S. forces were trying to force it to surface, but Soviet Captain Savitsky and political officer Maslennikov, thinking they were under attack and that war may have already begun between the super-

powers, agreed to launch a nuclear-tipped torpedo. Why didn't they do it? What stopped them?

The Soviet Union was as worried as the United States about an accidental nuclear war. Therefore, their protocol required *three* assenting voices.

The last remaining officer, Second Captain Vasili Alexandrovich Arkhipov, dissented. They did not know for sure that the ship was under attack, he argued. Why not surface and then await orders from Moscow? In the end, Arkhipov's view prevailed. The B-59 surfaced near the American warships and the submarine set off north to return to the Soviet Union without incident" (AtomicHeritage.org).

That is how close we came to Armageddon!

Broken Arrows

We live in a far more dangerous world than most realize. Other classified documents released in recent years fill in details of other *near catastrophes*. "Broken Arrow" is a military code phrase used for an accidental

event that involves a nuclear weapon or components thereof. An April 6, 2019 report revealed that the United States admits

to having 32 Broken Arrow incidents. Six of these involved weapons that were never found or were deliberately left undisturbed. You would probably find one or more of interest depending on where you live, as these incidents took place in British Columbia, Quebec, England, Spain, North and South Carolina, California, Arkansas, Florida, Maryland, Louisiana, and Indiana, to name a few. It is likely that the total number of Broken Arrow incidents is far greater—the Soviet Union is much more secretive, so their own mishaps are not publicly known.

Two American incidents stand out. One was at an air base in England that occurred a year before my family was transferred there.



On July 27, 1956, a U.S. B-47 bomber was on a training exercise when it crashed into a nuclear weapons storage facility at the Lakenheath Air Base in Suffolk, England. The entire crew of the aircraft was killed. Known as an "igloo," the storage facility contained three Mark 6 nuclear bombs, one of whose detonators had been sheared off in the accident. Investigators concluded that it was a miracle that the bomb hadn't exploded ("Broken Arrows'—The World's Lost Nuclear Weapons," *InterestingEngineering.com*).

But that wasn't the only miracle. Here is another incident where "luck" was on our side:

On January 24, 1961, a B-52 carrying two three- or four-megaton nuclear bombs was over Goldsboro, North Carolina when it suffered the structural failure of its right wing. The aircraft broke apart and the two nuclear weapons were released. On one bomb, three of its four arming mechanisms had activated.

In 2013, a freedom of information request confirmed that only a single switch out of four had prevented the bomb's detonation. One of the recovery team recalled,

"Until my death I will never forget hearing my sergeant say, 'Lieutenant, we found the arm/safe switch.' And I said, 'Great.' He said, 'Not great. It's on arm'" (ibid.).

Since the end of World War II, mankind has flirted with Armageddon. What if one of the Broken Arrows—or whatever they may be called by the Russians, Chinese, North Koreans, Indians, Pakistanis, or any other states or rogue nations possessing nuclear weapons—detonates by accident near or in enemy territory? What if some state actually foolishly concludes that detonating such a weapon against a foe is in its best interest? Will it start a chain reaction that could imperil hu-

man life? According to the Bible—specifically, according to Jesus Christ—that is exactly where our world is headed apart from His intervention (Matthew 24:21–22), though He *will* intervene to prevent self-inflicted, human annihilation!

We also know that future wars will be fought with weapons unknown to the public at this time. While new weapons are often kept secret for years before the public becomes aware of them, there may yet be weapons of even more destructive power in our future, so advanced that even scientists in our most secret laboratories have not yet dared to imagine them. Who knows what the mind of man may conceive when it comes to killing on a mass scale?

Revelation describes some kind of weapon that will not kill, but for a period of five months will "torment... like the torment of a scorpion when it strikes a man. In those days men will seek death and will not find it; they will desire to die, and death will flee from them" (Revelation 9:5–6).

Will "Armageddon" involve nuclear weapons? Possibly. But at some point mankind's high-tech weapons may be rendered useless or insufficient. How else can we understand the need for an army of "two hundred million" (Revelation 9:13–18)? While God's word associates this prophesied army with

ONE DECISION AWAY CONTINUES ON PAGE 27



Baby Bust: The Death of a Culture



In April 2019, Global News reporter Jules
Knox filed an article revealing that senior
health care is now the fastest-growing sector
of British Columbia's economy. Despite significantly improved wages, many job vacancies in
eldercare remain unfilled, leaving some seniors
with inadequate support and attention ("'This is a silent
crisis': Advocates voice concerns over care worker short-

Across the nation of Canada, fewer workers are available to fill jobs of many descriptions. Why is this happening? Is this an economic "canary in a coal mine"?

age in the Okanagan," Global News, April 16, 2019).

Financial Post columnist Joe Chidley recently warned that the economic stagnation fueling concerns in the Western world may long be with us. Its root causes have little to do with global economic competition, as many mistakenly presume, but rather stem from internal issues within Western nations. Chidley explains that in Western Europe and Canada, despite some positive indicators, we are actually seeing a steady decline in the growth rate of the economy—a decline that will likely continue ("Why the best solution to sluggish economic growth may be to get used to it," Financial Post, August 22, 2019).

During the United States' 2016 presidential election, the winning candidate promised an annual economic growth rate of 4 to 5 percent. In fact, the U.S. economy grew by just about 2 percent in 2019 ("United States GDP Growth Rate," *Trading Economics*, 2020). Even so, this is much better than the growth rate in most Western economies. Gross Domestic Product in Germany and the United Kingdom grew by just 0.5 percent last year, and in France by 0.3 percent, next to which Canada looked very good at 1.6 percent.

Chidley points out that, in the 1960s, annual growth in the West was in excess of 5 percent. Throughout the 1970s it hovered at about 4 percent. But by 2019, nations struggled to reach 2 percent or less. Why?

Unexpected Causes

Many demographers and economists foresaw this stagnation as the inevitable result of a major cultural change in Western nations. For a population to replace itself, there must generally be an average birthrate of at least 2.1 babies per woman, yet many nations no longer reach this benchmark. Joel Kotkin, writing for *Forbes* in February 2017, noted that only one nation in 1995 had more people over age 65 than under age 15. In 2020, there will be 35 countries in that situation ("Death Spiral Demographics: The Countries Shrinking the Fastest," *Forbes*, February 1, 2017).

When the number of seniors is greater than the number of youths, nations must revise economic and social policy. As the aging workforce retires, fewer young people are available to fill jobs, pay taxes, and support pensions. Economic vigor declines and growth slows as consumer demand weakens. In France, measures taken to adjust for this have already led to considerable civil unrest and the rise of the "Yellow Vest" protest movement.

In Canada, the number of births per woman fell to 1.54 by 2016 ("Fertility: Overview, 2012 to 2016," *Statistics Canada*, June 5, 2018). In 2016, Germany came in at 1.5 and Italy at 1.35. To illustrate this in another way, Kotkin explains that in 1990 there were 4.7 working-age Germans for every German over age 65. At the present rate, the ratio in 2050 will be 1.7 working people for every retired German. The same issue exists

in Canada and the U.S., though immigration has somewhat reduced the scope of the problem. Still, Canada faces a shrinking workforce.

Chidley and others stress the connection between declining and aging populations and decline in GDP growth. It follows that an aging population will buy fewer goods—reducing consumption and thus causing a drop in production. Production, of course, is the real driver of economic growth.

What occurred over the last century to bring us to this situation?

Women in the Workforce

During the two World Wars of the twentieth century, women in Allied countries made a huge contribution to their nations' war efforts by taking factory jobs, freeing men for military service. Following World War II, a cultural shift began as many women remained or wanted to remain in the workforce.

Diane Watts, researcher for pro-family advocacy group REAL Women of Canada, explains in an interview with *Tomorrow's World* Viewpoint ("The History of Feminism and Its Impact on Men," August 7, 2019) that modern feminism demands that women see themselves as victims, needing "freedom" to work and do what they want, liberated from the "burden" of husbands and children. This worldview sees child-rearing as an obstacle to a woman's path to success.

Of course, when more and more married women began to work outside the home, family incomes rose, but as families had more expendable income, the market adjusted: everything became more expensive. This has brought us to the point where, today, many married women feel they *must* work to meet family needs. Additionally, many parents feel they cannot afford to have more than one child. If both parents are working, for instance, there are day-care costs to consider. And some parents, succumbing to advertisement-driven social pressure, calculate that additional children will make it harder for them to travel widely and obtain luxury items they associate with "enjoying life."

The War Against the Family

Contemporary social values undermine and weaken the traditional family unit. Moral relativism and political correctness are sabotaging the acceptance of a family unit composed of a breadwinning father and a devoted mother who provides for the needs of the home—with both parents teaching their children the moral absolutes of right and wrong.

Nowhere is this war being waged more brutally than in abortion facilities. Hailed as the means of "liberating"

Nowhere is this war being waged more brutally than in abortion facilities. Hailed as the means of "liberating" women, legalized abortion has been a powerful factor in falling birthrates.

women from the shackles of child-rearing, legalized abortion has been a powerful factor in falling birthrates. The Guttmacher Institute reported that, between 2010 and 2014, a full 25 percent of all human pregnancies on earth were terminated with a deliberate abortion ("Induced Abortion Worldwide," Guttmacher Institute, March 2018). This translates to 56 million deaths of unborn children annually. Canada alone, from 2011 through 2016, saw an annual average of more than 100,000 abortions. The economic impact of the loss of those 600,000

lives will be felt by Canadians for many years to come.

In the West, growing rejection of biblical values has removed absolute moral standards that long sustained the place of the traditional family. This deterioration threatens the continuance of the nation's social and economic order and the individual fulfillment and happiness of its citizens. Best-selling author William Gairdner wrote, "I am persuaded that the health of our entire civilization depends not on the autonomous individual... but on the family... and the importance and privileged status of the family... is being eroded before our very eyes" (*The War Against the Family*, p. xiii).

Describing some end-time descendants of the biblical patriarch Joseph, the prophet Hosea states, "Aliens have devoured his strength, but he does not know it; yes, gray hairs are here and there on him, yet he does not know it" (Hosea 7:9). The "gray hairs" are a remarkable prediction of the aging state of the English-speaking world today. People have been deluded into believing that children are a burden. As a reader of this magazine, we hope you will instead take to heart God's clear declaration: "Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb is a reward" (Psalm 127:3).

—Stuart Wachowicz



By Wallace G. Smith

ife today can be incredibly stressful.
Refuge, rest, and relief seem to elude us
wherever we look for them. All of us long to
achieve a happy, contented state of mind,
but so many of us find it perpetually out of reach. Are
there any real steps we can take to find happiness in
an increasingly *un*happy era?

When we look at the world around us, it is clear that something is wrong. Consider the United States. If the citizens of such an affluent nation cannot be happy, who could be? In many ways, the U.S. is the envy of the world, financially prosperous with wealth that many other nations can only dream of—even its poorest are among the wealthier people on our planet. As for its

security, it is protected by two broad oceans, not to mention the world's most powerful military. Ninetynine percent of its people are literate, food is plentiful, and employment is at near-record highs. Yet the U.S. is currently suffering a *suicide* epidemic.

The American Psychological Association notes, "The suicide rate increased 33 percent from 1999 through 2017, from 10.5 to 14 suicides per 100,000 people.... Rates have increased more sharply since 2006. Suicide ranks as the fourth leading cause of death for people ages 35 to 54, and the second for 10- to 34-year-olds. It remains the 10th leading cause of death overall" ("Worrying trends in U.S. suicide rates," *Monitor on Psychology*, March 2019).

This decades-long trend cannot be blamed on a single political party or presidential administration.

It cannot be blamed on any single event or circumstance. It points to something deeper. And the young seem most strongly affected. As reported by *U.S. News and World Report*, "Adolescent depression is on the rise. The National Institute of Mental Health reports that about 3.2 million 12- to 17-year-olds have had at least one major depressive episode within the past 12 months. [Teens] who are depressed often struggle with anxiety and substance abuse as well, which is why early detection of the mood disorder can be tricky." A study published in the *Journal of Abnormal Psychology* notes that "over the past decade the number of youth with mental health disorders has more than doubled" ("What's Driving the Rise in Teen Depression?," *U.S. News and World Report*, April 22, 2019).

It's Not About the Money

How can a nation blessed with such abundance and promise be filled with such depression and hopelessness? How can so many affluent and comfortable people fail to find happiness? Clearly, the U.S. is living proof that happiness is not found in collecting an abundance of physical things.

But this is good news! Why? Because it suggests that happiness is far more our own decision—far more under our own control—than most people realize. Whether we are rich or poor, healthy or ill, young or old, extrovert or introvert, we can take steps to achieve the contentment, peace, and happiness we desire.

In the rest of this article, we'll discuss seven steps we can take to find more happiness in life. Some may seem almost too simple to be true. Others may be steps you already know you *should* take but have been putting off. Others may surprise you and even seem hard to believe at first. But all of them involve actions we can begin taking *today*. Let's consider the following steps we can take to bring more lasting happiness into our lives.

Step One: Head for the Park

Perhaps you are not an "outside" person. Honestly, I'm not—I enjoy my air conditioning and my reclining chair! But there is something rejuvenating about regularly taking the time to experience some of God's creation. **So, spend time enjoying nature.**

King David of Israel often associated nature with positive emotions. Meditating on the ways in which the Messiah's coming reign will transform the world,

he was moved to reflect poetically on nature's response: "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and all its fullness; let the field be joyful, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the woods will rejoice before the LORD" (Psalm 96:11–13).

In our world of steel-and-concrete buildings, artificial light, plastic tools and utensils, and constant distractions, it may be challenging to pause from time to time and seek access to the natural world, to connect with nature and its God. Studies, however, show that such effort is well worth our time. Harvard University researchers have recognized the connection between happiness and natural surroundings: "It's not clear exactly why outdoor excursions have such a positive mental effect. Yet, in a 2015 study, researchers compared the brain activity of healthy people after they walked for 90 minutes in either a natural setting or an urban one. They found that those who did a nature walk had lower activity in the prefrontal cortex, a brain region that is active during rumination—defined as repetitive thoughts that focus on negative emotions" ("Sour mood getting you down? Get back to nature," Harvard Men's Health Watch, July 2018).

God has given us a wonderful natural world that demonstrates His presence—though we've worked hard to cover much of it with concrete and asphalt! If we want to take a step toward increasing happiness in our lives, we should regularly seek to spend time enjoying nature.

Step Two: Minimize Your Social Media Time

Accomplishing our first step will get us away from our laptops and smartphones more often, which is related to a second step toward finding more happiness: **Disconnect from social media.**

How many of us are addicted to Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Snapchat? If you don't think you are, try going without them for a week—you might be surprised! Ironically, while social media is touted as a way to bring us all closer together, studies have shown that it often increases people's loneliness and unhappiness.

In 2018, Dr. Melissa Hunt at the University of Pennsylvania published the results of her research into the effects of social media. Specifically, she examined the effect of *decreasing* one's use of Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat. She noted that "Using less social media than you normally would leads to significant decreases in both depression and loneliness. These effects are particularly pronounced for folks who were more depressed when they came into the study" ("Social media use increases depression and loneliness, study finds," *ScienceDaily.com*, November 8, 2018).

Aware that her results would surprise many, Dr. Hunt commented: "It is a little ironic that reducing your use of social media actually makes you feel less lonely.... Some of the existing literature on social media suggests there's an enormous amount of social comparison that happens. When you look at other people's lives, partic-

STUDIES UNDENIABLY SHOW THAT REDUCING OUR TIME ON SOCIAL MEDIA INCREASES OUR HAPPINESS

ularly on Instagram, it's easy to conclude that everyone else's life is cooler or better than yours" (ibid.).

Neither Dr. Hunt nor we at *Tomorrow's World* suggest that we must abandon *all* social media.

Nevertheless, studies undeniably show that *reducing* our time with it often does increase our happiness.

Gerald Weston, this magazine's Editor in Chief, discusses this topic in great detail in his March-April 2018 *Tomorrow's World* article "Tame the Social Media Monster!," which you can find at *TomorrowsWorld.org*.

Step Three: Treat Your Body Well

To take a third step toward increased happiness, **tend to your health.** We live in a time when science and medicine have given us amazing knowledge about the human body and how to help it perform at its best, yet we paradoxically live in a time when few people care for their health as they should!

Consider the blessing of a good night's sleep! Ancient King David spoke of sleep as a God-given blessing (Psalm 127:2). Yet all around us we see people sacrificing their sleep to jobs, to passing pleasures even to smartphones. Irregular sleep harms both our health and our happiness.

In June 2017, *ScienceDaily* reported on a study suggesting that there is a direct connection between *regular sleep habits* and happiness—even when the *amount* of sleep is deficient. "Results show that higher sleep reg-

ularity was significantly related to higher morning and evening happiness, healthiness and calmness during the week. Transitioning from an irregular weekly sleep pattern to a regular pattern also was associated with improved well-being, both during the week of regular sleep and on the day following it" ("Sleep regularity is important for the happiness and well-being of college students," *ScienceDaily.com*, June 5, 2017).

Researchers found that, even when sleep could not be increased, going to bed and getting up at roughly the same times every day enhanced people's feelings of

happiness, healthiness, and peacefulness. We are physical beings, and tending to our physical needs will increase our opportunities to find happiness!

Poor health is a source of stress and unhappiness like no other, and of course, many of us suffer health conditions beyond our control. Still, if we seek to do whatever we *can*, we will see benefits in our state of mind. If we treat our bodies

well, we can find much more happiness than some might expect, even in the middle of otherwise difficult health challenges.

Our next step may surprise you, but it is vital—especially for those who are suffering and who are tempted to give in to feelings of despair and defeat.

Step Four: Be Relentlessly Thankful

We may sometimes be tempted to dwell on the problems in our lives. Nobody's life is perfect, and it is easy to become depressed by comparing our lives to the lives of others. We noted earlier that this is one of the dangers of excessive social media use. As hard as it may seem to some, especially when they are in difficult circumstances, there is a vital step we all can take to increase our satisfaction with life and our happiness: **Practice active gratitude at all times.**

It is easy enough to be thankful when we are happy and successful. What I am talking about, however, is the step of actively practicing and growing in a mindset in which we are grateful at *all* times—even *during* our trials—and using gratitude as a tool to grow our happiness!

The Apostle Paul was moved to encourage the Christians living in Thessalonica, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, *in everything give thanks*; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you"

SEVEN STEPS TO HAPPINESS CONTINUES ON PAGE 30

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Bunnies, eggs, and... Jesus Christ's resurrection?

Question: How do colorful eggs and bunny rabbits relate to Christ's death and resurrection?

Answer: Anyone familiar with biology can quickly recognize that rabbits do not lay eggs. What do those symbols have in common? Rabbits are noted for their proclivity to reproduce quickly, and eggs are considered a symbol of fertility.

So, what does fertility have to do with Easter? Many who celebrate the holiday do not recognize that Easter is not a biblical holiday at all—it is derived from pre-Christian celebrations of springtime fertility, devoted to pagan goddesses with names such as Ishtar, Astarte, and Ostara, from whom the name "Easter" is derived. Also, those who make a pun on "Son rise" and "sunrise" may not be aware that their Easter morning "sunrise" service—facing the direction of the rising sun during their worship—is directly condemned in Scripture. In Ezekiel 8:14–16, we find the Israelites "weeping for Tammuz" in a sunrise worship service, a practice God states that He abhors.

Making the Bad Good?

"Well, we're just 'baptizing' a pagan custom and making it Christian," some will say. But what does God say about that approach? The prophet Jeremiah recorded God's very plain and straightforward command: "Do not learn the way of the Gentiles" (Jeremiah 10:2). He makes it just as plain in Deuteronomy 12:29–32, stating that He does not want to be worshipped in the manner that pagans worship their own gods.

So, does God want Christians to worship Him on Easter Sunday? You may be surprised to learn that there is no biblical record of Easter Sunday worship, and no command for us to practice such worship today! As regular readers of this magazine know, Christ died and was put in the tomb shortly before sunset on a Wednesday, just before the start of the annual Holy Day known as the First Day of Unleavened Bread (see Leviticus 23:6). We know from Scripture that Jesus was in the grave for three days and three nights—72 hours—which means that He rose right before sunset on Saturday! By the time the women came to the tomb on Sunday morning, He had already risen (Matthew 28:1–8)!

When the Scribes and Pharisees demanded to see a sign of Christ's Messiahship, He said He would give them "the sign of the prophet Jonah" (Matthew 12:39; John 2:19). Indeed, He said that it would be the only sign He would give. Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, and Christ would be in

You may be surprised to learn that there is no biblical record of Easter Sunday worship, and no command for us to conduct such worship today!

the grave for that same length of time. Note that this also exposes the later "Good Friday" custom as an unbiblical fiction, since a Friday burial would require Christ to have been in the grave until Monday evening, though Scripture clearly shows the grave was already empty when the women arrived on Sunday morning. (You can study this topic in much more depth with our free booklet *Easter: The Untold Story*. It is available from

any of our Regional Offices, listed on page 4, or can be ordered online at *TomorrowsWorld.org*.)

How Christians Remember

So, if Easter Sunday is a false custom, and Christians are not to imitate the ways of the pagan cultures around them, how should Christians memorialize Christ's sacrifice? Again, Scripture reveals the answer. The Apostle Paul told Christians in Corinth, "For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7). During His final Passover meal with His disciples, Christ instituted new symbols of bread and wine, symbolizing His body and His blood (Matthew 26:26–28). Later, the Apostle Paul reminded the Christians in Corinth that this annual Passover observance was the means by which we should memorialize Christ's sacrifice (1 Corinthians 11:23–26).

Christ's body was broken for our healing (Isaiah 53:5), and His blood was shed for the remission of our sins (Matthew 26:28). So, Christians should not be celebrating a non-Christian holiday using bunnies and eggs and other symbols of fertility taken from pagan rites. They should be observing the Passover, as commanded by Christ and the Apostles, as the true memorial of His sacrifice.

ELondon CALLING

The Declaration of Arbroath and Brexit



ver since the Acts of Union in 1707 brought the kingdoms of Scotland and England together as Great Britain, Scotland has borne a somewhat strained relationship with her more powerful neighbour to the south. In 2007, when the Scottish National Party (SNP) came to power in the Parliament of Scotland, voices increased their calls for independence from the rest of the United Kingdom. The recent general election in December 2019, when the SNP won 48 out of the 59 Scottish seats in the UK Parliament, has emboldened those pressing to leave. Scots rejected independence by a 55 to 45 percent margin in a 2014 referendum, but one August 2019 opinion poll suggests that a slight majority may now favor independence ("Scots favor independence from United Kingdom, Ashcroft poll shows," Reuters, August 5, 2019).

Perhaps surprisingly, a 700-year-old letter, written to the pope by Scottish nobles and called the *Declaration of Arbroath*, can provide us with significant insight and understanding of this powerful vein of Scottish thinking. It takes us back to the ancient origins of the Scottish people and currently unrecognized familial bonds to the nations around them.

When the Scottish monarch Alexander III of the House of Dunkeld died in 1286, the Scottish barons invited Edward I of England to mediate between opposing contenders to the throne. Instead, Edward violently coerced the Scots to swear allegiance to him. Robert I, known as Robert the Bruce, subsequently fought against the English led by Edward II, winning a decisive battle for Scotland at Bannockburn in 1314.

Diplomatic Letters

Through repeated letters, the pope sought to end hostilities between the two Catholic countries. He refused, however, to acknowledge Robert the Bruce as Scotland's legitimate king, so a letter known as the Declaration of Arbroath—dated 6 April 1320 and bearing the signatures and personal seals of 39 Scottish nobles—was written to Pope John XXII in Avignon, France, explaining the Scottish position on the conflict with England.

Writing to the pope was nothing new to Scottish barons. In 1237, King Alexander II and the barons of his day sent Pope Gregory IX a peace treaty negotiated with England in the presence of a papal legate and told the pope of their plans to abide by it. So, writing to inform the pope of their perception of injustice in 1320 would have been viewed as a potentially fruitful diplomatic approach. The Declaration described no sudden swelling of nationalist feeling, but rather a desire for respect and autonomy within the existing relationship with England. It was a diplomatic letter and a piece of what might be called intelligent propaganda. A 1320 copy of the original resides at the National Archives of Scotland in Edinburgh.

The Declaration of Arbroath laid out the Scots' historic national credentials and essentially asked the pope to compel the English to leave them alone. However, there is no evidence that the letter had any significant impact at the time. It disappeared from history and was virtually forgotten even in Scotland until an English translation of the original Latin appeared in 1689.

For Freedom Alone

The most famous quote from the letter, sometimes used by Scottish nationalists, reads, "As long as a hundred of us remain alive, never will we on any conditions be subjected to the lordship of the English. It is in truth not for glory, nor riches, nor honours that we are fighting, but for freedom alone, which no honest man gives up but with life itself."

The SNP had sought to avoid Brexit and wants another Independence Referendum in Scotland (referred to as "IndyRef2"), seeking to separate Scotland from the other UK countries of England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. If the Declaration of Arbroath were a declaration of Scottish independence, you could see why the SNP might use it. The party has, however, shied away from referencing the Declaration or even drawing attention to the phrase about freedom, as such references have proved problematic in their earlier campaigns.

Despite the encouraging results for the SNP cause in Scotland, reflected in the recent general election, a constitutional standoff may not be on the cards. Prime Minister Boris Johnson has already declared that he will not support an IndyRef2, as the first one in 2014 was supposed to settle the issue for at least a generation.

Who Are the Scots?

What additional background to these modern events can the Declaration of Arbroath reveal to us? The preamble makes a clear statement about the Scots' knowledge of their Israelite origins, their ancient migrations, their victories in battle, and their long history of self-governance as a nation.

...we know and from the chronicles and books of the ancients we find that among other famous nations our own, the Scots, has been graced with widespread renown. It journeyed



from Greater Scythia by way of the Tyrrhenian [Mediterranean] Sea and the Pillars of Hercules [Straits of Gibraltar], and dwelt for a long course of time in Spain among the most savage peoples.... Thence it came, twelve hundred years after the people of Israel crossed the Red Sea, to its home in the west where it still lives today. The Britons it first drove out, the Picts it utterly destroyed, and, even though very often assailed by the Norwegians, the Danes and the English, it took possession of that home with many victories and untold efforts; and, as the histories of old time bear witness, they have held it free of all servitude ever since. In their kingdom there have reigned one hundred and thirteen kings of their own royal stock, the line unbroken by a single foreigner.

So why the eagerness amongst some to break the 1707 Treaty of Union between England, Wales, and Scotland? Our booklet *The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy,* available free of charge in print and online, describes biblically prophesied situations like this potential disintegration of long-established, powerful alliances.

Leviticus 26 records God's warning to the Israelites against disobeying Him, a state we see plainly in our society today. He declares specifically in verse 19 that He will break the pride of our power in response to our national rejection of Him. Additionally, Jeremiah 30:7 describes the time of national catastrophe ahead as "the time of Jacob's trouble." We know Jacob's name was changed to Israel (Genesis 32:28), which—as demonstrated in our booklet—refers to the nations of northwestern Europe today, including the Scots, English, Welsh, and Northern Irish.

So, what does the future hold for the UK? It seems that the general election vote in Scotland was not necessarily for Scottish independence but rather was against Brexit. However, with Brexit now a fact of history, it remains to be seen how the dynamics will change. After nearly 50 years, the UK intends to control once again its own national destiny, which may be to the advantage of Scotland as well. But will that renewed control lead to a national repentance and striving to truly obey God? For the sake of our fate as a nation, let us hope so!

—Simon R. D. Roberts



God Is Alive!

In a secular world full of skeptics, is God relevant anymore? Is He an obsolete idea, or a living Creator with whom you can have a real relationship? The good news is that God is not just real, He is alive, and He is waiting for you to make contact with Him!

By Richard F. Ames

any of us who are older may fondly remember growing up in English-speaking countries that took for granted their existence as "Christian nations." We knew that our moral values and legal systems owed much to the Bible, and the language of faith was all around us in public and in private. In recent decades, however, this has changed.

The Gallup organization recently reported that, depending on how pollsters frame the question, as few as 64 percent of Americans are confident that God exists ("How Many Americans Believe in God?," *Gallup.com*, November 8, 2019). At the same time, we are seeing an increase in the number of people who profess no religious affiliation at all. Not long ago, a respected polling organization found that, in the United States, "the religiously unaffiliated share of the population, consisting of people who describe their religious identity as atheist, agnostic or 'nothing in particular,' now stands at 26%, up from 17% in 2009" ("In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace," *PewForum.org*, October 17, 2019).

What does this mean for society? Where the mainline Protestant denominations once set the tone for the U.S., the rise of the non-religious has changed that. In fact,

the percentage of Americans who don't affiliate with any specific religious tradition is now roughly the same as those who identify as evangelical or Catholic.... Americans claiming "no religion"—sometimes referred to as "nones" because of how they answer the question "what is your religious tradition?"—now represent about 23.1 percent of the population, up from 21.6 percent in 2016. People claiming evangelicalism, by contrast, now represent 22.5 percent of Americans.... That makes the two groups statistically tied with Catholics (23 percent) ("Nones' now as big as evangelicals, Catholics in the US," *Religion News Service*, March 21, 2019).

Amazing! "No faith" is now one of the largest faith groups in America!

Dead or Alive?

When *Time* magazine published its famous April 1966 cover asking "Is God Dead?," it was hardly the first to raise the question or to propose an answer. German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche had boldly asserted more than 80 years earlier, "God is dead; but given the way of men, there may still be caves for thousands of years in which his shadow will be shown. And we—we still have to vanquish his shadow, too" (*The Gay Science*, New York: Random House, 1974, p. 167).

Now, Nietzsche is dead, but his philosophy lives on in the minds of millions who not only disbelieve in God, but who hate the very idea that God exists! In the twentieth century, millions of human beings lived and died under the control of totalitarian states that officially proclaimed atheism and worked hard to keep citizens from believing in a Supreme Being. Even in our Western world, atheism became increasingly fashionable in the twentieth century, as people came to believe that science, not God, would provide their real salvation.

In recent decades, however, science itself has made amazing new strides in understanding our world—and many of the new understandings support, or even demand, the existence of an intelligent designer, and a human spirit as something more than a product of biological and chemical processes.

Creation Without God?

For a hundred years after biologist Charles Darwin published his *On the Origin of Species* in 1859, the scientific community became increasingly influenced

IF WE SAW PEOPLE MAKING THINGS BUT DENIED THE INTELLIGENT WORK OF THE PEOPLE AND STUDIED ONLY THE THINGS, OTHERS WOULD THINK US FOOLISH

by his theory of natural selection. Darwin himself acknowledged that his theory did not account for some natural phenomena that seemed too complex to arise through the incremental mutations and selections his theory required, but he was confident that these complexities would eventually be explained. Since then, scientists seeking to affirm Darwin's theory have indeed proposed evolutionary explanations for many complex structures. Their explanations, however, like so much of evolutionary theory, are stuck in the realm of theory, neither reproducible nor falsifiable, and thus are more akin to philosophy than real science.

How many today realize that, even in Darwin's day, there were other ways to interpret the data he uncovered? How many scientists today even remember the name of Alfred Russel Wallace, a contemporary of Darwin who was at one time widely acknowledged as a "co-discoverer" of evolution? Where Darwin is famous for his trip to the Galapagos Islands, Wallace spent eight years in what we now call Indonesia, observing

flora and fauna. In 1855, he formulated his own theory of natural selection, and sent to Darwin a short paper on the topic. "Darwin had reached the same conclusion years earlier, and Wallace's letter spurred him to act. The two men published a joint paper in 1858, arguing the theory of evolution and natural selection" ("He Helped Discover Evolution, and Then Became Extinct," *NPR.org*, April 30, 2013).

Wallace, however, looking at the same biological questions Darwin considered, came to a different conclusion. He declared that in studying the world of nature, "to afford any rational explanation of its phenomena, we require to postulate the continuous action and guidance of higher intelligences; and further, that these have probably been working towards a single end, the development of intellectual, moral, and spiritual beings" (*The World of Life*, 1916, pp. 340–341).

To illustrate his perspective, Wallace asked us to imagine a super-intelligent being looking at the construction of a mansion, bridge, or railway, but seeing only the movement of materials and not the builders. He imagines such an observer saying, "We know the physical and chemical forces at work in this curious world, and if we study it long enough we shall find that known forces will explain it

all" (Wallace, p. 320).

If we saw people making things but denied the intelligent work of the people and studied only the things, others would think us foolish. Yet this is essentially the perspective Darwin and much of modern science took for more than a hundred years—until researchers began to make advances in understanding life at the molecular level. Biochemist Michael Behe has observed that

the science of Darwin's day had no understanding of the molecular foundation of life. Only now, only within the past twenty years has science advanced sufficiently to examine life in the molecular detail necessary to rigorously test Darwin's ideas, particularly... the presumptions that complete randomness underlies life and that repeated rounds of random mutation and natural selection can build coherent biological systems (*Darwin Devolves*, 2019, p. 256).

And what does the molecular detail show us? The late astronomer Fred Hoyle is famous for one illustration of the improbability of natural selection without intelligent design. He observed that a yeast cell and a jumbo jet have approximately the same number of parts. Yet no one would seriously propose that a jumbo jet could spontaneously evolve from its parts. Hoyle wrote that the probability of 2,000 proteins arising, each with 200 amino acids, is about the same as the probability of a tornado sweeping through a junkyard and assembling a Boeing 747 (The Intelligent Universe, 1983, p. 17).

Anything to Avoid God?

Is it a coincidence that just as science is coming to terms with so much evidence supporting intelligent design, human creativity is struggling to find ways to keep God out of the picture? Some propose a "multiverse," in which our universe exists alongside countless other universes, most of which do not support life as ours does. In this theory, the odds of a life-supporting universe may be one-in-many-trillions, but our universe just happens to be that one!

Another creative approach gained attention when philosopher Nick Bostrom published his 2003 article "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?" (Philosophical Quarterly, vol. 53, No. 211, pp. 243– 255). Most viewed it as a fringe idea, perhaps an interesting intellectual exercise, but certainly not a serious alternative worldview. Put briefly, Bostrom proposed that unless most human-level civilizations become extinct before they are advanced enough to create computer simulations of persons, or they become advanced but have no interest in running such simulations, the vast majority of those experiencing personhood are doing so as part of a computer simulation.

Do you see what Bostrom has done? By his logic, the vast majority of persons must be the result of intelligent design—yet Bostrom does not confront the idea of a divine Creator! Neither does he eliminate the need for such a Creator; he merely pushes it away by a step. How did his simulators come to exist? Eventually, when Bostrom runs out of simulators who are themselves simulated, the question remains: how did his supposed simulators come to exist as intelligent beings capable of running the simulations? Bostrom's argument only highlights the need for a Creator who exists beyond His creation!

Life Comes from Life!

Simulations aside, the principle of biogenesis—validated by all experiments and experience throughout the history of mankind-states that life can only come from life. Scientists have indeed tried to create life from non-life—and have utterly failed! When even the simplest of cells is astonishingly complex, is it reasonable to believe that life can arise from non-life?

And can law arise from lawlessness and random chance? Scientists know there are intricate mathematical laws that determine the motion and expansion of the universe. What accounts for those laws, and for their expression in our universe? Scientist Patrick Glynn writes that everything had to be "just right' from the very start—everything from the values of fundamental forces like electromagnetism and gravity, to the relative masses of the various subatomic particles, to things like the number of neutrino types at time 1 second, which the universe has to 'know' already at 10⁻⁴³ second. The slightest tinkering with a single one of scores of basic values and relationships in nature would have resulted in a universe very different from the one we inhabit say, one with no stars like our sun, or no stars, period" (Patrick Glynn, God: The Evidence, 1999, pp. 7–8).

Yes, the laws of physics existed from the very beginning of the universe. Scientists admit that this had to be so. And those laws are finely tuned to allow our universe to exist the way it does today—with us in it! Mathematically, it is far beyond improbable that such a universe would randomly come into existence with just the right properties to allow human existence.

Many scientists, trapped by the philosophy of materialism and determined to come up with explanations that exclude divine creation, have invented fanciful theories to explain the complexity around us. Yet many of these theories require huge leaps of "logic" or assumptions that a mathematically improbable event "just happened." By contrast, intelligent-design theorists point to the "irreducible complexity" of many living structures and processes as evidence that they could not have come about by random mutation and natural selection.

Evolutionists have offered rebuttals to claims of irreducible complexity in nature, but even the most creative biologist cannot avoid the reality of mathematics. Many scientists' arguments against intelligent design rely on extraordinarily improbable chains of events, proposing, in some cases, mutations that would take

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trillions of years to occur—in a universe they estimate to be only 14 billion years old!

Evolutionists sometimes accuse creationists of offering a "God of the gaps" explanation—attributing to an omnipotent God any phenomena that are not yet understood by science. Yet even the National Geographic Society, a prestigious, mainstream organization, could not avoid a startling admission in a comprehensive discussion of evolutionary theory, admitting that "the fossil record is like a film of evolution from which 999 of every 1,000 frames have been lost on the cutting room floor" ("Was Darwin Wrong?," *National Geographic*, November 2004, p. 25). Yes, evolution—not intelligent design—is the theory that *relies* on gaps in the evidence!

The Mystery of Consciousness

Materialist evolutionists, faced with the phenomenon of human consciousness, find many of their assumptions challenged. Author and philosopher John Searle has noted the persistent mystery surrounding human self-awareness: "We don't know how to explain it. Compare consciousness to physics. We're doing pretty well in physics, even though we have some puzzling areas, like quantum mechanics. But we don't have an adequate theory of how the brain causes conscious states, and we don't have an adequate theory of how consciousness fits into the universe" (Robert L. Kuhn, *Closer to Truth: Challenging Current Belief*, 2000, p. 5).

Philosophers have asked the question, "How can we prove that anything exists other than my own mind?" The philosophy called *solipsism* proposes that the only reality is in your mind, and that nothing else truly exists. How can we be sure that there is intelligence outside of our own mind? One way, as scientists like Wallace and Behe have proposed, is to look for signs that another mind has acted. But how can we look at physical things around us and conclude that another mind has acted? It's not the things around us that convince us of others' intelligence, but the purposeful arrangement of things. Noise, purposefully arranged, may be speech that communicates ideas. Stone and metal and wood, purposefully arranged, may be a building. If you recognize evidence of purposeful arrangement that you do not fully understand, your mind cannot be the only one in the universe, as you have detected an intelligence higher than your own!

The idea that the world around us provides evidence of intelligent design did not originate with sci-



entists like Wallace and Behe. Nearly 2,000 years ago, the Apostle Paul told Christians in Rome, "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). Yes, by recognizing the purposeful arrangement of the world around us, we can infer intelligence—and, ultimately, the divine intelligence of our Creator!

Unknown Dimensions?

Materialist scientists may think that their minds are illusions, mere byproducts of the "meat" of which their bodies are made. They deny entirely the existence of a dimension of mind, or of spirit. This is an old problem, and the Bible gives it much attention. The Apostle Paul discusses the relationship of spirit to humans, asking, "For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of the man which is in him?" (1 Corinthians 2:11). Paul is not discussing an immortal soul, but the human spirit. The human spirit enables humans to know "the things of a man." Animals cannot know "the things of a man." Though animal instinct is an amazing mechanism that lets animals do many incredible things, they cannot think on the human level. The qualitative difference between human mind and animal brain is enormous. Animal instinct is often remarkable, but only human beings can conceive of multiple physical dimensions beyond the visible. And if scientists can theorize ten (or more) invisible physical dimensions, how hard should it be for an objective observer to consider the spiritual dimension?

Physicists use massive instruments such as the Large Hadron Collider to understand physical dimensions beyond our view. What do we need to understand the spiritual dimension? We need the Spirit of God! Only then can we truly and deeply understand "the

things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:11). So, how do we receive the Spirit of God? On the day of Pentecost at the beginning of the New Testament Church, the Apostle Peter preached to thousands, proclaiming to his audience, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

Evolution cannot explain, and often even denies, the existence of spirit—even though the greatest reality is not material existence, but the existence of spirit. We read, "For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:18). The Apostle John also proclaims this truth: "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). Scientists make many wonderful discoveries, but their tools can take them only so far. If God has not opened their minds to understand the things of the Spirit, they cannot spiritually discern the full reality of what He is doing here on the earth. "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

God's Spiritual Creation

Many who puzzle over the physical creation of the universe are missing out on the most astounding aspect of God's creation. Not only has God created the physical universe, He is creating in human beings the spiritual masterpiece of His creation: His very own holy and righteous character, which becomes the character of humble, yielded, genuine Christians. Not only has God created finely tuned physical law to form the universe, He has given spiritual law to form the character of Christians. Jesus gave the two "great commandments" in Matthew 22:36–39, which magnify the Ten Commandments given in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. These spiritual laws are just as real as the physical laws that govern the universe.

Philosophers have claimed that God is dead. But many of those philosophers themselves are dead, and God is alive. Psalm 14:1 gives us a clear perspective on that reality: "The fool has said in his heart, "There is no God."

Can you prove that God exists? Yes, you can! Not only can you know God exists, but you can "know that you know" that He is alive! How can you have this certainty? Yes, it is good to understand the logical and philosophical points we have considered briefly in this article-properly used, reason and logic are not the enemies of faith. Yet we have seen that much modern "science" hardly deserves that name, as it does not offer us reproducible experiments that can prove or disprove theories such as evolution and intelligent design. However, you can perform one vital experiment on your own and examine the results personally. That experiment is found in your Bible: "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments" (1 John 2:3). You can prove God's existence by living the way of life He has revealed through the Bible and through the Son of God, Jesus Christ. If you do this, you can know for yourself that God is alive and that He rules supreme-not only over the vastness of the universe, but also over the tiniest concerns of our lives (Matthew 10:29-31).

However, you cannot do it halfheartedly and expect to determine the truth of the matter: "But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you seek Him with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 4:29). Seek the living God with all your heart and with all your soul, and you will find Him!

So, is there a living, caring God who was involved in the creation of the universe and the life within it—and who intervenes in human lives and world events today? Can you refute the critics who say, "God is dead"? Can you prove that God is alive? **Yes, you can!**

That living God wants us to think like He thinks. He wants us to become like Him in nature and character. And so, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to give us an example of godly life and character, and to save us from our sinful nature. God wants us to be conformed to the loving image and nature of Christ (Romans 8:29).

Darwin's greatest mistake was his banishment of purpose from life. The truth, however, is that you and I were created for a great purpose. Our Creator is not just alive—He wants us to have a relationship with Him for eternity, as part of His very Family! Will you respond to Him? [Tw]

MAY WE SUGGEST? **The Real God: Proofs and Promises** Though many believe science has "done away" with God, the facts say otherwise! Request this **free** printed booklet from the Regional Office nearest you, or order at **TomorrowsWorld.org**. PDF. ePub. and Kindle are also available.

THE REAL DOD



The Brainless Genius of the Sponge

ost of us think of sponges as everyday household items. Their softness and absorbency make them versatile tools for cleaning our bodies, floors, and dishes, and for applying paint to our walls. Although the sponges we use today are likely to be made of synthetic materials, for most of human history we harvested our sponges from the oceans—the dried bodies of aquatic invertebrates.

Sponges can be found in marine environments throughout the world, from lakes and rivers to vast oceans, and from warm tropical climates to icy polar regions. They come in various shapes and sizes, with astoundingly vivid colors and intricate structural architecture. The underwater equivalent of flowers, their beauty is truly breathtaking. But although they may look like plants, sponges are members of the animal phylum Porifera ("pore-bearing"). Because sponges are among the simplest of multicellular animals, evolution-based science relegates them to the lowest branch of the animal "family tree." Yet these simple animals are not so simple. Sponges are a remarkable example of God's creative brilliance.

Remarkable Structure

Unlike most animals, sponges have no external or internal organs or muscles. They lack circulatory, nervous, and digestive systems. Sponges rely on cellular specialization to perform the functions necessary for life.

Some sponges are soft and fibrous. Others have a more rigid, yet highly flexible, skeletal frame that can withstand powerful ocean currents. Cells called *sclerocytes* secrete calcite or silica strands of varying lengths to form these deceptively delicate

architectural wonders. Researchers are studying sponges' construction techniques to find ways to help human engineers erect "taller, stronger, and more flexible buildings" ("Secrets of Our Ocean Planet: Sponges as Civil Engineers and Pharmacists," blog.NationalGeographic.org, April 24, 2018).

The body of a sponge is a hollow, open chamber, with a jelly-like substance called *mesohyl* between inner and outer layers of cells. A thin skin of plate-like cells, *pinacocytes*, forms the outer layer. Cells known as *choanocytes* form the inner layer. Choanocytes have a funnel-like collar covered with sticky hairs, surrounding a central flagellum.

A sponge's outer layer contains many tiny pores, which connect to the inner layer to form a complex network of channels through the *mesohyl*. Choanocytes line the walls of these channels. The flagella of the choanocytes move back and forth in unison, directing the flow of water through the network of canals. The sticky hairs of the choanocytes capture particles of organic matter carried in the water, and mobile *amebocyte* cells engulf and transport these captured bits to other cells within the sponge.

Incredible Cleaning Power

The filter feeding of sponges has a positive impact on the water quality of marine ecosystems. As they feed, sponges clean the water by removing harmful bacteria, pesticides, and in some cases, even heavy metals such as tin and lead.

They do this extremely efficiently and effectively. Sea sponges are known to remove more than 90 percent of the bacteria and organic matter found in the water

they process ("Denizens of the Deep: How Sponges Create Important Habitats," Marine Conservation Institute, January 22, 2019). As reported in *Horizon: The EU Research & Innovation Magazine*, "Every day, a sea sponge can filter between two and 20 cubic metres of water per kilogram of body weight, and researchers are studying the possibility of using them on an industrial scale in a process known as *bioremediation*—where organisms are used to remove pollutants" ("The cleaning power of sea sponges," January 6, 2016).

The sponge stores within itself anything removed from the water that is not consumable as food. The jelly-like mesohyl of a sponge is home to a host of live bacteria, viruses, and toxins, making the animal of enormous interest to medical researchers for its pharmacological potential.

Miraculous Regeneration

Laboratories around the world have engaged in a fascinating experiment involving sponges: When they separate the individual cells of a live sponge, they find that the cells will *reassemble* to form one or more smaller sponges. The disassociated cells of a sponge can aggregate and reconstruct its entire body. Sponge cells do not require an assembly order, so a sponge can rapidly regenerate if forcibly separated. If two different species of sponge are put through a sieve together, the separated cells will *sort themselves* and combine only with other cells of the same species.

Given a food-rich environment, individual sponge cells could survive simply by reverting to an amoeba-like



state. However, that is not what they do. They *rebuild*. As they reconstruct the original animal, the cells of these simple animals display knowledge, intent, and the ability to identify other cells as part of the original larger sponge. Amazingly, sponges do this without an apparent means of communication, and despite having neither a brain nor a central nervous system. And scientists do not fully understand the mechanism by which sponges accomplish all of this. Carried somehow within each cell of this "simple" creature are the necessary blueprints and instructions—including knowledge of all the specialized cells and cellular functions required for life—to work with other cells and build *another* complete sponge.

Astounding as this is, there is even more to the sponge's amazing ability to regenerate. Sponge cells—sclerocytes, pinacocytes, choanocytes, amebocytes, and other cells of a sponge—are all totipotent. That is, each sponge cell is similar to a stem cell, able to become a different kind of cell. Therefore, sponges can change the function of every cell in their body when necessary ("Secrets of Our Ocean Planet: The Not-So-Simple Sea Sponge," blog.NationalGeographic.org, April 23, 2018). When strong currents damage it, or a hungry fish bites it, or a part of it is harvested for a bath scrub, the sponge can heal itself—because any cell near the damaged area can take on the cellular specialization of the injured or missing cells.

Made Perfect

Although they are scientifically classified as simple multicellular animals, we can appreciate that sponges are *not so simple!* Their form and structure, their ability to clean their ecosystem, and their miraculous ability to regenerate attest to a complexity far beyond human understanding. These fantastic creatures are ideally suited to their environment and their role. The ingenious perfection on display in the sea sponge cannot be the result of mere chance. It is evidence of a Creator who has planned, designed, and built everything needed to sustain life on this planet.

No wonder King David was inspired to write, "O LORD, how manifold are Your works! In wisdom You have made them all. The earth is full of Your possessions—this great and wide sea, in which are innumerable teeming things, living things both small and great" (Psalm 104:24–25).

—Gary Molnar

FUN AND FULFILLMENT

We all need play. But we all need more than play, too.

cousin of mine has been very successful in several business ventures. He has worked hard over many years and has accumulated wealth and property. He has the accoutrements of luxury that one might expect, in the form of homes, cars, boats, an airplane, and a farm in the country. This cousin has traveled extensively in pursuit of his interests and passions. Along the way, his family has fallen apart and he has experienced a lot of heartache and pain. His "success" has not brought him the peace of mind and satisfaction that he thought it would.

When I see this relative, now infrequently, he always asks me the same question. After our initial greeting, he says, "Hey, what are you doing for fun?" You see, after a lifetime of toil, he doesn't find much pleasure or joy in his pursuits. He is still looking for that elusive *something* to fill the void in his life—and he is not alone.

The movie industry is burgeoning with more film releases every year, which generates huge profits for the producers as people fill the theaters to be entertained and to lose themselves for a little while in a make-believe world.

Finding Balance

It is certainly not wrong to enjoy playing a game or watching a good movie, as long as we do so in balance and do not become distracted from the basic things

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that bring a happy life. King Solomon of Israel, who was given a gift of great wisdom by God, wrote, "To every-

thing there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven... a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance" (Ecclesiastes 3:1–4).

As human beings, we should find time to play, to enjoy something that brings us delight and pleasure—but always in moderation and never at the expense of others. If some item or activity breaks one of the Ten Commandments or ridicules godly principles, it simply is neither fun nor funny. If an activity is healthy, such as physical exercise, or if it challenges you in-

tellectually, increasing your knowledge of something worthwhile, then it is uplifting and beneficial. There is a gnawing emptiness within all human beings that cannot be filled with physical things or pastimes, though many people try to assuage the feeling with work, "stuff," or leisure activities.

No Substitute

For the young and the old alike, play is important in developing the balanced life our Creator would want us to have. So, whether they are board games or video

As human beings, we should find time to play, to enjoy something that brings us delight and pleasure—but always in moderation and never at the expense of others.

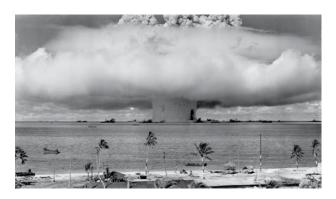
games, stage productions or novels, symphony concerts or movies, athletic games or walks in the park, such activities help us maintain a wholesome balance in our lives. But make no mistake-these activities satisfy only temporarily and are no substitute for a close relationship with God, a relationship that can only be developed over time as we seek His Kingdom first, as Jesus the Christ said in Matthew 6:33: "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you."

As our article on page 12 of this issue explains, there are many things that we can do that will contribute to our sense of happiness and satisfaction. But, as the same article notes, one of the best ways to find happiness is to stop pursuing it and to embrace a larger purpose for our lives.

I hope my cousin will someday find what is missing in his life, and his work and his play will finally bring him what he truly wants: "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7).

What are you doing for fun? It's a great question. If you want to grow in living a balanced life as a Christian and in your love for God, request our free booklet *The Ten Commandments*.

-J. Davy Crockett III



the death of one-third of the earth's population, this is still not the biblical Armageddon described in Revelation 16:13–16. What we see in Scripture is that all-out, no-holds-barred war *will occur* in our not-too-distant future.

My generation and those on either side of it lived under the shadow of a mushroom cloud—some of us more than others. As children of military families, growing up on U.S. Strategic Air Command bases, my friends and I understood that we were at ground zero if war should break out. We had our personal nightmares, but rarely shared them. However, while we cannot deny that there *will be* difficult days ahead, the Bible warns us all that most of us have far greater concerns than nuclear Armageddon.

Comfort and Peace

It might surprise you that Bible prophecy was actually a *comfort* for me and for many others in those dangerous times. During the Cuban Missile Crisis, I understood there was nothing to worry about, andthough I did not then know about Soviet submarine B-59—my assessment was correct. Yes, it was a tense time of crisis, when one mistake could have blown the world apart. But the Bible told me-and others blessed to be able to understand-that it wasn't God's time or place for such a catastrophe. That knowledge gave me peace of mind. Today, too, despite some awful prophesied events on the horizon, those who zealously look to God can have peace and comfort. There is a way to escape Armageddon. Even more importantly, although we will all die eventually, there is an eternal life after death, made available to all who will pursue it. As Jesus promised, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25–26). After He had spoken these words, Jesus asked a question that applies to all of us: "Do you believe this?"

Your Bible reveals much about the end-time, and we at *Tomorrow's World* offer many free resources that can help you understand what the Bible reveals. We will encounter twists and turns as history unfolds, but we really *can* know the overall picture.

Most importantly, we need to know why we were born in the first place—what God's plan is for us. Life is precious and precarious. We human beings are far more resilient than we sometimes think, but far more fragile in the overall picture. We are temporary, and life is short. However, there is a God, and He gives us the opportunity to live forever. He is evaluating the decisions we make—whether we love Him with all our heart, mind, and being, or whether we follow the crowd and fear man more than God. How amazing it is that so few spend any time searching to prove whether God is real, that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, and what His purpose is for us. It seems that most are more interested in what is on television tonight, or whether "their team" will win the game this weekend.

If you want to understand more of what is prophesied for the last days, call, write, or go to our website to order our free booklets *Armageddon and Beyond, The Beast of Revelation: Myth, Metaphor or Soon-Coming Reality?*, and *Revelation: The Mystery Unveiled!* Everything we have to offer is, of course, sent free of charge.

And, if understanding the purpose of life is important to you, request our resource *Your Ultimate Destiny*, as well. If you would like to become more involved with and learn more about the Living Church of God, the sponsor of *Tomorrow's World*—such as what we believe and how you may fellowship with us in one of our many congregations around the world—let us know. Just contact the Regional Office nearest you, using the information on page 4 of this magazine.

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REVELATION



Clean Up Your Mess!

et's be honest with ourselves: We've all heard it from our parents in one form or another.

How many times did your mother tell you,

"Clean up your mess"?

Remember the time when your mother was unhappy about the pile of dirty clothes in the corner of your bedroom? Though you might have been able to ignore the locker-room odor wafting from the heap, your mother's highly sensitive sense of smell vectored in on the offending collection of sweaty socks and t-shirts. Or maybe you recall when you had a group of friends over to watch a movie and thought nothing of leaving the living room strewn with empty cups and remnants of popcorn and potato chips, assuming someone else would take care of it.

How many times have we, as parents, repeated the well-worn imperative, "Clean up your mess," to our children? "Pick up your toys," "Wash your dirty dishes," "Put your socks in the clothes hamper"—these are the constant refrains of many parents. A worn-down, frustrated parent can begin to feel like a mindless recording, repeating the same words again and again to a child. And the child can seem not to care or understand why it matters that the toys, dishes, or dirty socks are picked up, washed, or put away.

But, parents, we must prevail! Don't become weary in well doing! The lessons children learn when we continue to insist and expect that they "clean up their mess" will find application in many other areas of their lives.

A Sense of Responsibility

For example, teaching children to "clean up their mess" fosters a sense of responsibility.

From a very young age, children begin to make a personal connection to food, toys, and clothing, laying claim to what they believe is theirs. But the Bible teaches us that there is another aspect to ownership. Owning something also requires us to care for it. We take responsibility for it. We see this in the very first pages of our Bible. In Genesis, God introduced Adam and Eve to their home in the garden of Eden. "Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth" (Genesis 1:28). So, after settling our first parents in the home He created for them, God introduced Adam to responsibility in the garden of Eden, commanding him to "tend and keep it" (Genesis 2:15). Care for it. Take responsibility for it.

But responsibility is not only a matter of taking care of what is ours. It also means ensuring that what is ours doesn't make life worse for people around us. We first teach our little girl to care gently for her baby doll. But we also teach her not to leave her doll in the middle of the hallway where people walk, where they might trip over it and fall. We teach her that it is she who must put her doll away when she's done playing with it.

This is a very grown-up principle, too. In Deuteronomy 22:8, we read, "When you build a new house, then you shall make a parapet for your roof, that you may not bring guilt of bloodshed on your household if anyone falls from it." Israelite houses at that time were commonly built with a rooftop area to enjoy the coolness of the evening. So, to ensure that no one could accidentally fall off the roof, the owner was required to build a parapet, or low wall, to protect those

who were up there. Our belongings—whether house, or car, or anything else—are a blessing to us, but we have a responsibility to ensure that our possessions don't cause harm to other people.

Here's another passage that speaks to this principle in very pointed terms: "Also you shall have a place outside the camp, where you may go out; and you shall have an implement among your equipment, and when



you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and turn and cover your refuse. For the LORD your God walks in the midst

of your camp, to deliver you and give your enemies over to you; therefore your camp shall be holy, that He may see no unclean thing among you, and turn away from you" (Deuteronomy 23:12-14).

God is not embarrassed to speak of our natural bodily functions. God told the Israelites to take responsibility for keeping the camp clean and sanitary by burying their excrement. This not only honored Him, but also prevented the spread of disease and showed courtesy and respect toward one's neighbors. God taught the Israelites to take responsibility and clean up after themselves.

An Understanding of Cause and Effect

Another lesson that is learned when we teach our children to clean up after themselves is the lesson of consequences, or cause and effect. What we have and



what we do are not merely our own, personal concerns: Our "mess" can affect other people.

In Exodus 22:6, we read, "If fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacked grain, standing

Children need to learn that what they do or don't do matters to those around them. Though these examples may seem trivial, they teach a lesson that will become invaluable as they go through life.

grain, or the field is consumed, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution." The principle is simple. If you kindle a fire, you must take responsibility for it. If the fire you started flares out of control, it could potentially destroy the crop that your neighbor has harvested and stored. If you don't take care of your "mess," you could harm someone else. The previous verse applies the same principle: "If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed, and lets loose his animal, and it feeds in another man's field, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best

of his own vineyard" (Exodus 22:5). Your decision to graze animals on your own property could cause damage to a neighbor's field if your animals escape the confines of your property.

When we ask our children to wash the dishes they have dirtied, we have a reason. If they don't, who will? Someone else will have to step in and do the work. When we neglect work, we create work for someone else. If our children leave schoolbooks strewn across the kitchen table, someone else must tidy the table before the next meal. Children need to learn that what they do or don't do matters to those around them. Though these examples may seem trivial, they teach a lesson that will become invaluable as they go through life.

Helping children learn to "clean up their mess" is a powerful way to set them on a track to becoming mature adults, teaching them to be accountable for the things that are theirs. This is a stepping-stone to understanding that their actions and even their words are *their* responsibility. As helpless infants, everything is done for us. But as we grow up, it's time to learn to "clean up our mess." If we don't, who will?

—Jonathan McNair

(1 Thessalonians 5:16–18). Studies have shown that obeying this command and giving thanks in **everything** is a powerful way to promote happiness and well-being!

In his book *Thanks! How Practicing Gratitude Can Help Make You Happier*, psychologist Robert Emmons writes about the benefit of purposefully and consciously cultivating gratitude. Emmons notes that "while the emotion seemed simplistic even to me as I began my research, I soon discovered that gratitude is a deeper, more complex phenomenon that plays a critical role in human happiness. Gratitude is literally one of the few things that can measurably change people's lives" (p. 2).

Dr. Emmons and his colleague Michael McCullough of the University of Miami "discovered scientific proof

LASTING, SIGNIFICANT, AND PROFOUND HAPPINESS IS A BYPRODUCT OF WHAT WE DO, NOT AN END UNTO ITSELF!

that when people regularly engage in the systemic cultivation of gratitude, they experience a variety of measurable benefits: psychological, physical, and interpersonal.... [In] some cases, people have reported that gratitude led to transformative life changes" (p. 3). Emmons found that these life changes were not just illusory, but were confirmed by the testimonies of these individuals' spouses, friends, and families.

In his research, Emmons defined gratitude as acknowledging goodness in our lives and acknowledging the source of that goodness to be outside ourselves—that is, gratitude must be directed toward someone else. And he found it all the more important that we practice gratitude for our blessings in times of trial and difficulty, when those blessings may seem hardest to find. As Dr. Emmons writes, "Searching for and being thankful for what is positive in every situation digs the tunnel and breaks the stranglehold of despair" (p. 184).

Yes, when the Apostle Paul said to give thanks in *everything*, he knew what he was talking about!

Step Five: Let God Know

None of us can pretend that we do not go through hard times. We do. Life can be difficult, and reasons to worry or feel anxious often seem to come at us one after another in a continuous parade of concerns. We can be grateful that God's word gives us a fifth step to take in achieving a happier, more peaceful state of mind: **Pray about your worries.**

In chapter 4 of Philippians, one of the most encouraging books of the Bible, we read, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (vv. 6–7).

This involves the thanksgiving of our previous step, but also more than that. God tells us to let our thanksgiving and our requests "be made known to

God." One of our greatest sources of happiness and encouragement is the knowledge that our Savior loves us and can be trusted with every one of our concerns! The Apostle Peter encourages us, "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon

Him, for He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:6-7).

Of course, we must **trust** God's response to our worries, believing that He has the wisdom to see what we do not and the power to act however He must. Notice that our prayer is not merely "venting" to God. As we thank Him, praise Him for who He is, and cast our cares upon Him, we are to humble ourselves as He gives us His peace, as we remain confident that He will deliver us in His way, in His time. What greater happiness can there be than to know that we have a Savior who is sovereign in our lives, whose decisions and love for us we can trust?

Step Six: Believe the Promises of Scripture

In our previous step, we saw that we are to pray with "supplication." We are to ask God to meet our needs. How do we know that He will do so? The Bible is full of *wonderful* promises for those who seek the Creator God and His Son, our Savior, and whose priority in life is His coming Kingdom. Our next step is to **believe those promises and claim them!**

God's promises can transform every area of our lives. They concern health and security for us and

our loved ones, yes, but so much more besides. They offer true peace of mind and a future beyond what we can even imagine! In fact, the Bible contains so many promises that we could scarcely scratch the surface of them in the short space of this article. You may want to read Richard F. Ames' inspiring article "Surviving—and Thriving—in Times of Stress" from our September-October 2019 issue, available at *TomorrowsWorld.org*.

We know how comforting it feels to have confidence in a parent or spouse who makes and keeps wonderful promises. How much more we should feel grateful that the God of the universe, who has no human failings that may disappoint us, has made promises that He can ensure will come to pass. As we believe God's promises and see them fulfilled in our lives, we will tap into an astonishing source of happiness, peace, and contentment!

The seventh step we can take toward increasing lasting happiness in our lives may be the most powerful of all, yet it is also the most counterintuitive—because it involves *not* seeking happiness at all!

Step Seven: Embrace a Purpose Greater than Yourself

In their pursuit of happiness, many never discover the vital truth that happiness cannot be, in and of itself, our goal. Indeed, the more fervently we chase after real and lasting happiness, the more fully it eludes us! Cheap and temporary happiness can be ours easily, but the more we directly seek *deep* happiness, the more we cannot find it.

Why? Because lasting, significant, and profound happiness is a *byproduct* of what we do, not an end unto itself! And the byproduct that is contentment, peace, and happiness is best found by *abandoning* the search for happiness and instead taking our seventh step: **Being a part of something bigger than yourself.**

Playwright George Bernard Shaw famously wrote of this principle: "This is the true joy in life... being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one... being a force of Nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy" (*Man and Superman*, pp. xxxi-xxxii).

Wise King Solomon wrote that God has placed eternity in our hearts (Ecclesiastes 3:11). Something deep within us wants to know that we are connected to something larger than ourselves. There is a happiness in that connection that isn't available to us any other way.

Of course, there is no greater effort than to contribute to Jesus Christ's own effort to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God to the world. That effort gave the Apostle Paul a sense of satisfaction and purpose that carried him through terrible times of suffering and uncertainty.

Even when imprisoned and in danger of losing his life, Paul possessed such a steadfast peace and a passionate joy that, on trial before King Agrippa, in chains and surrounded by accusers, he chose not to defend himself but instead to preach the Gospel. Affected by Paul's words, the king said that Paul had almost convinced him to be a Christian, and Paul responded boldly: "I would to God that not only you, but also all who hear me today, might become both almost and altogether such as I am, except for these chains" (Acts 26:29).

Yes, even imprisoned and in chains, Paul wished he could share with Agrippa—and all men and women—the joy, confidence, and happiness he had found in knowing His purpose and contributing to God's Work in the world, sharing the glorious truth of God's coming Kingdom.

We find meaning, and through meaning we find happiness, when we are part of something that is truly larger than ourselves—our families, our loved ones, our communities, and ultimately our God, His Work, and His ultimate purpose for our lives: being a part of His family in His Kingdom forever. When we devote ourselves to service in pursuit of those larger goals, happiness comes naturally, and far more deeply than when we seek it directly as an end unto itself.

Will you put all seven of these steps into action in your life? If you do, you will be on the way to happiness as you have never known it before—for now and for eternity.

MAY WE SUGGEST? **Twelve Keys to Answered Prayer** You can experience the joy of answered prayer! This free booklet will show you how. Request this **free** printed booklet from the Regional Office nearest you, or order at **TomorrowsWorld.org**. PDF. ePub. and Kindle are also available.

Corruption and Violence Shake Northern Mexico

Last October, 13 state police officers in Mexico's western state of Michoacán were ambushed and massacred by a fast-growing local drug cartel (*The Guardian*, November 5.

not bullets," while the people of the nation wait for justice. This same sad story of widespread corruption and violence is becoming commonplace in many countries around the world.

The Bible clearly warns that corruption, violence, brutal-



2019). The police were outnumbered, outgunned, and wore subpar protective gear. The police radioed for help but it took an hour to arrive, "by which time the gunmen and their armoured vehicles had left the scene." Police in Mexico report being critically under-equipped and feeling as if they do not stand a chance against the better-armed and better-financed drug cartels.

Police officers in Mexico are also notorious for making direct alliances with drug cartels. "Corruption among the ranks is also encouraged by dismal salaries from which officers are not only expected to buy their own bullets, but often their own uniforms as well." Many criticize Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador's new law enforcement policy of "hugs"

ity, and greed will become rampant in society as we approach the end of the age (2 Timothy 3:1–4; cf. Matthew 24:37–38 and Genesis 6:11–13). The prophet Isaiah warned of such a time: "Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth is fallen in the street" (Isaiah 59:14). Increasingly, shifting international norms are reflected in these prophecies—and the situation in Mexico calls such prophecies to mind.

Young People in U.S. Abandoning Religion

According to interview data recently released by the Pew Research Center, the percentage of Americans labeling themselves "Christian" has fallen significantly in the last ten years (October 17, 2019). In addition, significantly fewer

attend church services regularly. At the same time, more Americans label themselves as spiritual but not religious, and the percentage of the "religiously unaffiliated" has significantly increased. The correlation between self-identification and age is also clear: the older the person, the more likely he or she is to identify as Christian. The opposite is also true: the younger the person, the less likely.

Bible prophecy warns that "in the last days" an increasing number of people will be "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" and that they will have "a form of godliness" but will deny its power (2 Timothy 3:1-5). In fact, there will come a time when those who do hold to the true name and teachings of Jesus Christ will be hated because of His name (Luke 21:17). America's continuing religious decline especially among once-professing Christians—is real, and it fits well with end-time prophecies. W

World Trade Organization in Jeopardy?



The Economist recently reported on the December 10. 2019 retirement of two of the three remaining members of the appellate body of the World Trade Organization (WTO), "which hears appeals in trade disputes and authorises sanctions against rule-breakers" (November 28, 2019). Their retirement means that any decisions made by the WTO that are appealed will have only one of the required three judges to hear the appeal. The United



States is currently blocking the WTO from appointing new judges because it claims the organization practices "judicial overreach"—an opinion shared by 58 percent of those recently involved with WTO disputes. By blocking the replacement of the retiring judges, the U.S. has rendered the appellate body useless, after roughly 24 years of regulating global trade. Experts suggest that "global trade is about to become a lot less predictable and a lot more contentious. Without the appellate body to act as an honest broker, disputes between the biggest members may escalate." The Economist suggested that "of all Mr Trump's trade policies, it may prove the hardest to reverse and have the longest-lasting effects." NW

Life Expectancy Falling with U.S. Health Decline

Public health experts are concerned. "Despite spending more on health care than any other country, the United States has seen increasing mortality and falling life ex-



pectancy for people ages 25 to 64, who should be in the prime of their lives" (MSN.com, November 26, 2019). Factors driving the rising death rates in America include suicide. drug addiction and overdose (the opioid epidemic), obesity, alcohol-related liver disease, and numerous other causes. Even more sobering is that working-age women "are succumbing to diseases once far more common among men." According to Dr. Steven H. Woolf of Virginia Commonwealth University, these trends indicate that "there's something terribly wrong" in America and that "there's some root cause that's causing adverse health across many different dimensions for working-age adults."

Dr. Ellen Meara, a professor at the Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy and Clinical Practice, has observed, "There's something more fundamental about how people are feeling at some level—whether it's economic, whether it's stress, whether it's deterioration of family." Dr. Meara noted, "People are feeling worse about themselves and their futures, and that's leading them to do things that are self-destructive and not promoting health." The fact that America has one of the world's highest standards of living and also arguably one of the most advanced health care systems in the world also makes these trends very disturbing.

The Bible reveals that God makes health and healing

available to those who obey Him and live by His commandments (Exodus 15:26). As we watch the deterioration of the United States and many other Israelite-descended nations, it is important to remember that this moral, physical, economic, and military decline is proceeding hand-in-hand with the continued rejection of God and His laws.

Italians Wish for a Strong Leader

Reuters reports that a recent poll in Italy is causing some concern: "Almost half of Italians are in favor of having a 'strongman' in power who does not care about parliament and elections... casting doubts on the strength of democracy in a major European nation" (December 6, 2019). Italians are fed up with the lack of economic recovery following the 2008 global recession, as well as with ongoing governmental failures. Most of Italy's governments last just over a year, adding to the ongoing instability, and many are ready for a major change. According to Reuters,

the Censis research institute poll indicates that almost half of Italy's citizens believe the nation "should be led by a Messiah-like leader who does not have to worry about being accountable."

Far-right groups continue to gain ground in Italy as a growing percentage of the populace loses faith in the government. Among the poorer and less educated, over two-thirds are in favor of a powerful leader who can essentially operate above the law. Many just want the government to provide stability and certainty in their futures—and they seem not to care how it happens.

This extreme frustration with government enables dictators to rise to power with the support of their people. Bible prophecy reveals that a strong dictator will emerge in Europe at the end of this age and that ten "kings" or national leaders will give their power and authority to him (Revelation 17:12–13). Ultimately, this European "beast" or "king of the north" will be worshiped and will be very powerful (Revelation 13:1–10).



LETTERS TO TWO THINK

I just received from you yesterday the booklets *The Bible: Fact or Fiction, Marijuana: What They Aren't Telling You*, and *Evolution and Creation: What Both Sides Miss.* And I needed to tell you how surprised I was at your points of view, facts, and critiques. Excellent. I've glanced through some of your books before as they passed through my hands, but this is my first knuckles-down reading, and I like your authors, books, and church very much. Thanks for the free literature. God bless you richly in your ministries.

-Subscriber in Nevada

Thank you so very much for this ministry—it is awesome! I have been saved for 24 years and visited multiple denominations in person and online, and all I see is selfish lazy confusion. I am grateful to our God for leading me to you and very much look forward to visiting a feast service of the Lord one day, hopefully the fall feasts. God bless you all, and thank you again!

-Subscriber in New York

Editor's Note: Thank you for your kind words! And if you are interested in visiting one of our congregational services, you can contact one of the Regional Offices listed on page 4, or visit our interactive congregational map at TomorrowsWorld.org, which includes local contact information.

I would like to thank you for the booklets that I have received at my home. They are very objective and enlightening, and they are contributing to my personal growth in the word and understanding of scriptures. God bless *Tomorrow's World!* Thank you!

-Subscriber in Brazil

[Concerning "The Rise of Modern Paganism," from the November-December 2019 issue:] Dr. Winnail, thank

you for this thorough, well-developed and encapsulated explanation of the history and significance of the current reemergence of pagan thought and practice that threatens our world, biblical doctrine, and mortal souls. May those currently without eyes to see and ears to hear awaken with this important subject for thought and God's will or intervention. I shared your article on Facebook.

-Subscriber in Florida

Editor's Note: The times are certainly sobering. America has a future, but it is not the future many imagine! Anyone interested in the destiny of the U.S. should request our free booklet The United States and Great Britain in Prophecy, available from any of our Regional Offices listed on page 4 or from our website, TomorrowsWorld.org.

Hello, I'm 25 and have not always been close with God. I just want to thank you all for what you do and thank you for having everything you offer! I always wanted to gain a greater understanding and sometimes found it difficult to understand the Bible's language, but all of you have done and continue to do such a great job in explaining and simplifying the messages of Jesus Christ. I thank you for opening up my eyes and mind, it feels so great to finally have a clear understanding!

—Subscriber in Canada

I received the lessons I requested [the *Tomorrow's World* Bible Study Course]. I am very happy that I came in contact with you and began the study. My interest and faith are very much growing. I just want to let you know that I am very happy with your help, I wish you all the best and look forward to receiving the following lessons.

-Reader in the Netherlands

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TELEVISION LOG

AUSTRALIA Nationwide	
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Nationwide Networks (All times Eastern)



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Finger Lakes	SU 7:00 a.m.
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CAC	TU 12:00 p.m.
WBOH	SU 7:00 a.m.
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KQCW	SU 8:00 a.m.
KTVZ	SU 8:00 a.m.
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	Erie	WSEE	SU 8:00 a.m.
	Johnstown	Atl. Broadband	MO 10:00 p.m.
	Philadelphia	WPSG	SU 7:30 a.m.
SC	Charleston	WCBD	SU 8:00 a.m.
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Charleston Clarksburg	WQCW WVFX	SU 8:00 a.m. SU 7:00 a.m. SU 8:00 a.m.
WY Cheyenne	KGWN	SU 8:00 a.m.

SU 7:00 a.m.

WXOW

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FOLK TV	SU 9:00 a.m.	
NewsMax	SU 9:30 a.m.	
IMPACT	SU 11:00 p.m.	
WGN	SU 6:00 a.m.	
WORD Network	SU 7:30 p.m. WE 11:30 p.m. FR 7:00 p.m.	

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DISH Network [*]	* (All times Easter	n)
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DIRECTV* (All times Eastern)				
WORD	Ch. 373	SU 7:30 p.m. WE 11:30 p.m. FR 7:00 p.m.		

AK	Anchorage	GCI	SA 10:00 p.m.
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	Anchorage	KYUR	SU 6:00 a.m.
	Fairbanks	KATN	SU 6:00 a.m.
	Juneau	KJUD	SU 6:00 a.m.
AL	Dothan	WTVY	SU 7:00 a.m.
	Huntsville	WAMY	SU 9:30 a.m.
	Montgomery	WBMM	SU 7:00 a.m.
AR	Fort Smith	KHBS	SU 7:00 a.m.
	Little Rock	KASN	SU 10:30 a.m.
AZ	Prescott	Community	SU 12:30 p.m.
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	Tucson	KMSB	SU 8:30 a.m.
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UPCOMING TELECASTS

Peace in the Middle East?

What the world's great powers could not accomplish will become reality in God's Kingdom. March 12-18

The Biblical Holy Days, Part 3

The Fall Festivals found in your Bible reveal the truth about the coming reign of Christ! March 19-25

Seven Steps to Happiness

There are powerful actions you can take to increase your happiness. You need to know! March 26-April I

Understanding Bible Mysteries

To most people today, the word of God is a mystery—but it doesn't have to be! April 2-8

Did Jesus' Disciples Celebrate Easter?

It's not a hard question if you are truly willing to use the Bible as your guide. April 9-15

Ten Signs Leading to Armageddon

Soon, these apocalyptic events will change civilization forever! April 16-22

Schedule subject to change

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