

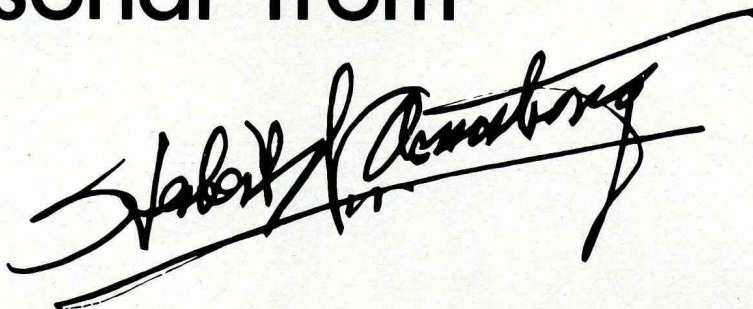
the
PLAIN TRUTH

a magazine of understanding



The Forgotten
American

Personal from



Abundant Living

WHY DO some religious people feel that their religious life must be one of giving up all the fun and enjoyment of living — that in order to please God, they must endure a life of morbid gloom?

For that matter why do some NON-religious people feel that to become a Christian would mean a life of living painful penance?

As a boy I was brought up in a respectable Protestant church of traditional Christianity. I never did know very much, as a boy, about what the church believed — but I did know that it regarded *sin* as violating *their* many DON'TS: — don't smoke, don't dance, don't play cards, don't go to the theater, don't drink a drop of wine, don't do this, don't do that!

A world-famous philosopher, editor, and lecturer whom I knew said he had no desire to live a life of Christian repression. "I desire," he said, "to be radiant, cheerful, friendly — to meet people with a smile." He was a highly educated man — but he was a Biblical illiterate!

Where do people get all these distorted ideas about the religion of Jesus Christ? Certainly NOT out of the Bible. Strangely, none of the people in the category I have described KNEW HOW TO LIVE!

As my son Garner Ted Armstrong has been asking on the air recently, "WHICH Jesus?" They know nothing of the Jesus of the Bible, who said, "I am come that they might have LIFE, and that they might have it more abundantly."

Somehow a lot of people have received a lot of weird and false ideas about Jesus Christ — I mean the Jesus of YOUR BIBLE. Actually, I think almost NO ONE knows what the Bible says about Him.

It seems most people think SIN is the thing that is BEST for us, but which a stern, wrathful God denies us. Some years ago a little book was selling big on Hollywood newsstands. It was titled: *How to Sin in Hollywood*.

Why don't people know that God our Creator has never forbidden us a single thing that is GOOD for us — never said "DON'T" about a single

thing except that which is going to HARM us to our own hurt. What God does command us NOT to do are the very things that bring on unhappiness, frustration, pain, suffering, and a life of morbid gloom.

Some people endure a solemn, stiff, formal church service. And some of the emotionally inclined go to the kind of church meeting where there is much shouting, and high emotional response by the congregation — merely to have what they call "a good time" during the meeting. Then the rest of the week, religion doesn't seem to have any part in their lives.

Others feel that if they are to become, as they call it, "saved," they must live a gloomy and depressing life of giving up everything that might be enjoyed. Apparently they believe their gloomy, unhappy lives will please God. But they don't KNOW God. That kind of religion is a SUPERSTITION!

Let's get this matter straight. The REAL Jesus Christ said He came to bring us HAPPINESS and JOY! Jesus
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said, "I am come that they might have *life*, and that they might have it more *abundantly!*" And He came that we might enjoy full, ABUNDANT life ETERNALLY. God Almighty intended the *real* Christian life to be HAPPY. Jesus said, "My *joy* I leave with you!"

There is a WAY of life that *causes* peace, happiness, and joy. God the great Creator set THAT WAY as an inexorable LAW — an invisible spiritual law — to PRODUCE peace, happiness, joy, abundance! There is a *cause* for every effect. In this unhappy confused world we have discontentment, unhappiness, wretchedness, suffering. The world is full of that. It SHOULD be full of peace, happiness, and joy. There's a CAUSE. People don't like that Law. That Law is the CAUSE of peace and everything desirable and good. People *want* everything that is good and desirable. They just don't want to OBEY that which would cause it! They want to BE right, but they don't want to DO right.

Christ came to call people to REPENT. Repent of WHAT? Repent of causing unhappiness, strife, war, pain, and suffering.

But what really is a Christian? What's the Bible definition of a Christian? You'll find it in your Bible in Romans 8:9. Paul said, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

And how does one receive the Holy Spirit? Right after Christ's crucifixion, death, resurrection, and ascension to God's throne in heaven, people asked the inspired apostle Peter that question: "Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in

the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:37-38).

No one can live a real Christian life unless the Holy Spirit of God is actually IN him — unless he is being LED BY that Spirit of God. And if he is, then "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption [sonship], whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8:14-16).

And then what about LIFE after DEATH? Verse 11 of this same chapter gives the answer: "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."

And that's a guarantee of HAPPY, JOYFUL, ABUNDANT life — FOREVER! But what about this life, here and now? IF you have the Spirit of God dwelling in you, IF you are being LED by God's Spirit, it's going to bring about something new and DIFFERENT in your life. It's going to CHANGE you. It's going to produce *results* — the Bible calls it producing FRUITS. What kind of results will the Spirit of God produce in you?

I'll tell you, first, what it WON'T produce. It won't produce the morbid, unhappy, painful, gloomy life that many think is the Christian life. Let the Bible tell you what "fruit" it will produce in you. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22-23).

Look at that more closely: "the fruit of the spirit" — this is the Spirit of GOD. This is the Holy Spirit that God imparts *only* to those who have *repented* — that is, turned FROM that which has *caused* unhappiness, morbid gloom, discouragement, frustra-

tion, emptiness. On the contrary, that fruit of the Spirit is first of all, *love*. And the second fruit is *joy!* Joy is happiness brimful and running over. That doesn't sound like an unhappy, empty, gloomy life, does it? And God's Spirit is not static — it FLOWS. It flows, spontaneously from God into and through YOU, and out from you making still OTHERS happy and joyful.

The very first result produced in your life by God's Spirit is *love*. Love is a righteous love of and for OTHERS. It will mean your face is beaming. It's an *outgoing* concern for the good and welfare of OTHERS. It will mean that you are really GIVING OUT — that you are radiant and HAPPY. And love *results in joy* — that's the second of these fruits. The third is *peace*. Instead of an attitude of hostility, instead of going around quarreling, being resentful and bitter, angry, and arguing, you'll be in an attitude of PEACE — peace in your mind and with your neighbor and with your GOD.

Next comes "*longsuffering*" — that means *patience*. How much has impatience made you unhappy? Probably impatience makes more people unhappy than almost anything else! If you can really come to have patience, you'll be acquiring one of the things that will allow you to be happy and make life worth living.

Then next is *gentleness* — that makes others happy and automatically adds to your happiness. And then *goodness* and *faith!* Faith is *confidence* — not SELF-confidence, but RELIANCE on the SUPREME POWER. It means that the SUPREME power of God is working for YOU. It means reassurance. It means assured HOPE instead of doubt, fear, discouragement.

If you could evaluate in dollars what all these tremendous benefits mean in your life, you'd have to put on them a value of millions and millions of dollars. But these are benefits you CAN'T BUY. God simply

wants to GIVE them to you. What they COST you is REPENTING of that which has been producing unhappiness, pain and suffering, discouragement and frustration. It's a tremendous BARGAIN! That is the fruit of God's Spirit that will spontaneously spring forth from you, RADIATE from you and cause you to be a JOY to others, as well as to yourself.

Now this is not to say that there are never troubles in the Christian life. Far from it. There will be PERSECUTIONS. Jesus Christ was persecuted. He said, "If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you." That comes from WITHOUT. But UNHAPPINESS is something that springs from WITHIN. Happiness is a STATE OF MIND — happiness is WITHIN. And the person who does have this inward peace — this joy, this patience and love, and absence of resentment and bitterness — isn't going to be anywhere near as disturbed and unhappy as when he didn't have them. You'll always face problems — but you'll have FAITH, and God's help in solving them. But problems and tests of faith are good for us — the very building blocks of perfect spiritual character.

I know that the Bible says: "Many are the afflictions of the righteous," but the same scripture adds, "but the Eternal delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:19).

It's true Jesus was "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." It's true He SUFFERED — He knew what suffering is. But His suffering and grief was not caused by pain others inflicted on Him — not from resentment, or being hurt by others — but by His love for others. He suffered because they were bringing so much suffering on themselves. But he also was a man of boundless JOY, and He said, "My JOY I leave with you."

Yes, He said, "I am come that they might have LIFE, and that they might have it more ABUNDANTLY" (John 10:10). □

What Our Readers Say

Way of Life

The PLAIN TRUTH has changed my whole life. I have found the happiness and contentment most people spend all of their lives looking for and can't find. You offer a real fountain of knowledge that I am enthused to delve into. Your efforts certainly are a turn in the opposite direction from the downward trends of mankind and the world.

A.S.B.,
Eddonchatram, India

Your literature is indeed the Bible of the 20th century, A.D. This intricate, delicate planet which we are so fortunate to be a part of, is gradually dying of poison. When will mankind adopt the antidote prescribed by you? Tragically, at this very moment, much of humanity is thoroughly convinced that this antidote must be bottled or packaged in purple plastic — obtained in exchange for metal discs. For me, it lies in the design of a grass blade and in the pounding of the salty surf. It lies in the design of limb and eye, which, hopefully, I will never cease to perceive with childlike wonder whilst I am part of it all.

Glenda V.,
South Africa

Aspirin

In the July issue of *The PLAIN TRUTH* appeared an article, very frightening, about the uncommon knowledge about the common aspirin. I am writing this to ease the minds of those troubled. I am 81 years of age, in good health, and very active. I have taken two aspirin tablets, four times a day for the past eleven years. I take two tablets (ten grains) after each meal, and at bed time. I always take a snack at bed time, before taking the aspirin. Never take aspirin on an empty stomach, and no one will have the symptoms described in the article printed in your magazine.

Cecilia M. W., R.N.,
Phoenix, Arizona

● *Correct. Food helps protect the stomach lining. But aspirin is not a harmless drug. Leading medical authorities such as Drs. Rene Menguy, Professor of Surgery at the University of Chicago, and Vernon M. Smith, Professor of Medicine at the University of Maryland, think aspirin should only be given by prescription.*

Aspirin has a corrosive effect on the mucous membranes of the stomach. Gastrointestinal hemorrhaging (bleeding of the stomach and intestine) is an unfortunately common occurrence with the use of aspirin. Research reveals that occult (hidden from sight) blood loss occurs in 70% of people who regularly ingest 1.5 to 3.0 grams of aspirin (approximately 5 to 10 aspirin tablets) per day. (The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics, edited by Goodman and Gilman, Fourth Edition, p. 320; and Hazards of Medication A Manual on Drug Inter-

actions, Incompatibilities, Contraindications, and Adverse Effects, Eric W. Martin Ph.D., 1971, p. 349.)

Aspirin can enhance the ulceration and bleeding in peptic ulcer patients. Its use can be dangerous in late pregnancy. Aspirin may interfere with the clotting of blood, lengthening bleeding time after a cut or other accident and can even cause asthma attacks in asthma patients. It is by far the leading cause of accidental poisoning cases of young children in the home (Consumer Bulletin Annual, 1972, pp. 175-176).

A number of medical authorities advise that harmful side effects from excessive aspirin ingestion occur whether or not a person's stomach is empty. How much aspirin an individual can ingest before that amount can be termed excessive depends on the individual. Some few persons are highly sensitive to aspirin. One or two tablets may be too much for them.

Four Horsemen of Apocalypse

Your article on "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse" by Paul Kroll in the January issue was intriguing. But may I call attention to an obvious oversight? An angel did not tear off the seals from the scroll mentioned in the book of Revelation. Christ did.

Jim L.,
El Dorado, Arkansas

● *You're right. Christ opened the seals that covered the scroll. The wording was corrected during printing for many of our readers.*

What You Can Do

Your article about shellfish interested me greatly as for many months I had decided never to eat them again and had refused them. I would love to know where in the Bible I could find the statements about the fish we should and should not eat, also it has frequently been a question in my mind whether we should not be vegetarians. Some people for religious reasons do not eat meat. I hope to find the references to these questions.

Lucille D.,
Long Beach, California

● *For those who want to know the answers to these questions, just write and ask for our free reprint article titled "Is All Animal Flesh Good Food?"*

Your articles on growing a garden tempted us just enough to try it. We have a very small area, but the yield has been fantastic. We have had fresh radishes, corn, beans, peas, onions, turnips and greens. But what you have done that no food store could do is make our children enjoy vegetables! Up until they helped plant these things, they never really cared for anything