

JANUARY 1985

# The Good News

OF THE WORLD TOMORROW



**Educating With  
LOVE**

**Is God  
REAL to You?  
Test Your  
Emotional Maturity**

**Confessions of a  
Busy Father**  
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PERSONAL FROM



# HOW and WHY We Know We Have the Truth

**H**ere's a sample of clever but faulty human reasoning! Where God or the truth is concerned, it seems natural to reason suspiciously, and with a skeptical or hostile approach.

Would you be deceived by this type of reasoning?

Some time ago a man, who knew little or nothing about the truth that the living God is proclaiming to the world through us, asked:

"How can you know that *you* are any nearer right than anybody else? You say the whole world is deceived. You say the churches are wrong on many points of doctrine, but that you have the TRUTH. You say they are human, and have been deceived. It's human to err.

"But are *you* not also human? Are you not also fallible? How can you be sure you are any nearer right than any of the others?"

I want to give our readers the clear, plain, understandable answer to those questions! I want to EXPLAIN, so plainly you can really comprehend it, HOW and WHY we know we have the TRUTH!

I want to make clear how YOU may know what is the TRUTH, while this whole world is deceived and in utter darkness. I want to tell you HOW *you may be SURE!*

First, are we not also human? Yes, indeed! We can make mistakes, too! We, too, could be in error on this, that or the other point. But *we do not need to be!*

A man may say: "Who does this

Herbert W. Armstrong think he is? Is he any smarter than all these great theologians — these noted preachers and heads of great religious denominations?"

The answer is NO — it is not a matter of intellectual capacity.

We are *all* human. We are *all* fallible. I have been wrong. I have made mistakes. The same is true of all those God is using in HIS WORK.

That is the very first thing that we *do* recognize. That is the *starting point* in the search for truth. That is one reason why we *do* have the truth, in the midst of a very deceived world. I wish every religious leader would adopt this approach.

God says, "PROVE all things." That means *you* are fallible. That means all the "great" men are fallible! ALL are human. ALL can be *wrong* — and nearly all are. The *whole world* is DECEIVED (Revelation 12:9). That means its religious leaders and churches are deceived!

The very recognition of that fact is the *beginning* of right knowledge. We *do* recognize it — and that we ourselves could be wrong. That is the *first step* toward coming out of the fog of error and deception, starting toward truth. It is not a matter of who has the greater intellect. A man may have the highest IQ in the world, and in his intellectual VANITY refuse to admit he could be wrong — reject all correction — and thus embrace error and deception.

The second step, if you would

know TRUTH, is to be *willing* to admit being deceived, or in error, and to reject it and accept truth. Ask yourself: "Am I really *willing* to confess error — to admit I'm wrong — *when proved* — and reject it? Am I *willing* to accept truth new to me — *when proved* — even though unpopular — even though it cuts me off from my family, friends, associates or club members — even though everything in my selfish and vain nature rebels against it? Am I willing to *act on it* — OBEY the truth — no matter what the cost?"

Ah, yes! Perhaps *now* you are beginning to see why "all these great theologians — these noted preachers and heads of great religious denominations" could be in error. Did you ever know a person of great intellectual powers who did not have the kind of VANITY that shrinks from confessing he has been WRONG — and has misled others? To find and live the TRUTH requires a HUMBLED mind.

These are the first TWO points in which one who has come to the TRUTH differs from those still steeped in deception and error.

Can you be SURE that we have the TRUTH, when we, too, as the critic argued, are fallible, with minds that are not perfect? Yes, *you can be SURE!*

The greatest, ablest intellect in the world is still HUMAN — still fallible — still imperfect. Those who are deceived and steeped in error have simply not stopped to

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# Why God Is Not Real to Most People

*Millions say they believe in God — but WHY does He seem so FAR OFF to them? Millions have heard ABOUT God, but do not KNOW God. This article tells you HOW you CAN!*

By Herbert W. Armstrong

**A**re you like the person who said to me, “Oh, I believe in God all right, but it seems like He is *so far off* — SO UNREAL”?

WHY do most people feel that way? WHY should God seem UNREAL — like an almost invisible filmy wisp — or a phantom — or something shapeless and ethereal?

## **Born without knowledge**

The instant you were born you knew nothing about God. You knew *nothing* — *period!* You were born with a mind capable of receiving, but as yet unfilled with, knowledge.

Whatever you may know — or *think* you know — about God has come into your mind since birth.

How did knowledge *begin* coming into your mind? There are only five channels through which knowledge may come, naturally, into the human mind — the channels of sight, sound, taste, smell, feel.

But also there are three dimensions of knowledge or consciousness: the *around*, the *within* and

the *ABOVE*. Yet the natural mind of a mortal human comprehends only the first two. Babies grow into childhood with awareness of only the *around* and the *within*.

But as a child, through the sense of hearing, you probably were *told* something about God. But understandable knowledge of God comes from the third dimension — the *ABOVE*. And the *ABOVE* is spiritual.

God is a spirit. Spiritual things cannot be *seen*, nor heard, nor felt, nor tasted, nor smelled. Understanding of spiritual things cannot enter the human mind through the five sensual channels. Therefore it is probable that the adults trying to tell you about God did not have true perception and understanding. And it is natural that whatever knowledge about God entered your mind — through the ear, or the eye — was vague, misty, UNREAL. You couldn't SEE God. Spirit is invisible to human eyes (except, as has happened, by some miraculous “materializing” or means of manifestation).

You couldn't *hear* God. You had no actual conscious *contact* with Him. You probably formed

some *imaginary* picture in your mind of what you *supposed* He must be like — based on what might have been told you, or what you may have read. But you didn't SEE or HEAR *Him* — you read or heard only something ABOUT Him! And the picture was unclear, clouded, out of focus, ethereal.

Is it any wonder He did not seem REAL — that He seemed so far off?

There are millions of professing Christians and Jews who *say* that they believe in God. Many profess to know more or less about Him. But knowing *about* Him is a far cry from knowing HIM!

## **The INVISIBLE “first cause”**

The very presence of the *around* seems to the normal mind to demand a “*first cause*” to have produced it. Yet — MYSTERY of MYSTERIES! The “*first cause*” is not seen, heard, smelled, tasted or felt. So many ideas, concepts and conjectures have been brought forth out of human imagination as to the nature of that “*first cause*.”

Yet the true God *does* reveal

Himself, to those who are willing to comprehend and to obey. And He says these people, conscious of the *around*, who formulate their own ideas as to the "*first cause*" are without excuse for denying the true God and putting in His place some fanciful conjecture of their own making through distorted human reasoning.

"Because what *may be KNOWN OF GOD* is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 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 1:19-20).

Or, as the Moffatt translation makes plain, "His invisible nature, his everlasting power and divine being, have been quite perceptible in what he has made."

That is, the material things He has created and made reflect plainly the nature, power and divine being of the invisible MAKER.

The verse preceding the above says the world's leaders have known the truth, but have *held it back from the people* — prevented them from receiving a clear understanding: "But God's anger is revealed from heaven against all the impiety and wickedness of those who hinder [hold back] the Truth by their wickedness" (Romans 1:18, Moffatt). So what is usually told to a growing child *about* God usually is a very distorted picture, indeed!

Still, hearing *about* a person is not really *knowing* the person!

### One man's experience

There was super-righteous Job, the greatest man in all the East. God even challenged Satan, the accuser of God's people, to find a single sinful or unrighteous flaw in his character. Even though allowed to put Job through the most painful and severe trials, Satan could find nothing against him.

Of course there *was* something very unrighteous about Job. All have sinned — including Job. His

great sin was his very SELF-righteousness. Satan could not recognize SELF-righteousness as a sin.

But after God whittled Job down to size, humbled him, made him see his own insignificance and vanity — his nothingness compared to the great God — Job said: "I have *heard of You* by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye *sees You*. Therefore I *ABHOR MYSELF*, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6).

Getting to *KNOW* God is quite different from *HEARING* about Him.

So, what do people, on the average, know about God? They started out, from youngest childhood, knowing whatever they had *heard* or been told by parents or others. And since those leaders who once *did know* God (Romans 1:21) *held back* the truth and, becoming fools (verse 22), gave a distorted and untrue teaching, most of what has been told growing children in our time has been a perversion of the truth.

Perhaps some children were told *NOTHING* about God at all as they were growing from babyhood toward adolescence and into early adulthood. But most probably they have been *told* more or less *about* God before they actually *read* anything about Him *IN THE BIBLE*. Also they very probably had read what others had written about Him before reading anything in the Bible for themselves.

So what did they know? They knew only what had been told or communicated to them by those *AROUND* them. They knew only what they had received from *other people* who did not themselves *KNOW* God. Those from whom they learned knew only what they, in turn, had gathered from still *other* misinformed and deceived *people*.

Not from the *ABOVE* — but from the *AROUND*! Not from God Himself, but from the *AROUND*. And your Bible says the *other people* constitute a deceived world!

And when such a person, approaching or reaching early adulthood, does read the Bible,

his concept of God has been so firmly implanted in his mind *by other people*, he continues picturing God in the same way.

He probably is just as I was for many, many years: I did read the Bible at times — but I then said, "I just can't understand the Bible."

*Well, NO WONDER*, then, that most people who profess to "believe in God" say God seems unreal to them!

They are like Job. Job's source of knowledge, before his personal confrontation with God, had been from the *around* — he had heard *about* God by the hearing of the ear, *from other people*. God never seemed real to him until he gained *PERSONAL CONTACT* — until he got to really *KNOW GOD*!

There is a way in which *YOU* can establish *actual, direct, personal contact* with God — if you have not done so already. Then He will become *REAL*!

Let me give you an illustration. Let's say you have heard *about* Raymond F. McNair. He is Deputy Chancellor of Ambassador College in Pasadena. You may have read one or two of his articles in *The Good News* or *The Plain Truth*.

But let us suppose you have never seen his picture — you have never seen him in person, you have never talked with him. Suppose someone has told you a few things *about* him, twisting the facts and giving you untrue information. You may know a few things *about* him — and some of those distorted — but you surely could not say that you know *him*. If you have not even seen his picture you don't know what he looks like. Many people, having heard me on the radio, said on seeing me in person, "Why, you don't look a bit like I pictured you in my mind."

In the same way, if you should come into personal contact with Mr. McNair, you'd probably be surprised to see that he wouldn't look at all like you pictured him. But, if you were suddenly thrown in his company almost constantly,

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# PERSONAL

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realize their own imperfections — their proneness to error. They assume, in their egotism, that whatever they believe is TRUE. And they are UNWILLING to humble themselves and confess their wrongs.

I can tell you how I started, 59 years ago, out of the darkness and into the light. And it is the basically sound and SURE way for you, or any other, to start.

First, I had to know whether there is a real BASIS for truth. Is there an INFALLIBLE AUTHORITY? In other words, does GOD exist? Is the all-wise, all-knowing, all-perfect GOD a *reality*? And if so, has He communicated basic TRUTH to mankind?

A world-famous Protestant leader writes (or has written for him and in his name) a syndicated newspaper column. It gives His answers to Bible questions.

A question published in this syndicated newspaper column asked whether the Bible gives any PROOF of the existence of God. The *man's* answer may be summed up in one word: NO. He answered that we must assume God's existence — and then have FAITH. That is, have faith in this human assumption!

But the Bible commands, "PROVE ALL THINGS." That includes the existence of God! In the Bible, God says, "PROVE me now, herewith." The Bible says the scoffers "are without excuse," because the PROOF of God's reality is clearly seen, even in nature. God Himself, in the Bible, offers the PROOF of fulfilled prophecies. He offers, though few experience this proof, the PROOF of answered prayer.

I found irrefutable PROOF of God's existence in the *facts* of science, the FACTS of matter, in reason and in the Bible.

And second, I sought PROOF of whether or not the Bible is the authoritative REVELATION from God to mankind — and I found it positively PROVED by many irrefutable proofs. So I had a firm

BASIS for faith. I had an infallible AUTHORITY!

Still, this was not alone sufficient. I had the SOURCE of truth. But, up to that time, I had never been able to UNDERSTAND the Bible. Neither do most scientists, educators or theologians understand it.

A great mind and a superior intellect, alone, are incapable of UNDERSTANDING this spiritual revelation from almighty God!

This is explained in the second chapter of I Corinthians. These truths of God are a MYSTERY — a hidden SECRET — that none of the leaders, rulers or great men of the world know (I Corinthians 2:7-8).

But God has *revealed* these spiritual truths to converted, Spirit-begotten Christians *by His Spirit* (verse 10). For what man can know the things of a man — that is, physical and material knowledge — but the *spirit* of man, which is *in* him (verse 11)?

Can you understand that? Pure physical BRAIN, composed of matter, cannot comprehend the things of this material universe known by scholars, scientists, educators. The dumb animals have physical BRAINS. But they do not comprehend HUMAN knowledge — the physical knowledge known to human MINDS.

But, as Job learned (Job 32:8), there is a spirit *IN* man. This spirit is not the MAN — man is DUST or matter (Genesis 3:19) — NOT spirit. But this human spirit, united with physical BRAIN, forms human MIND. Yet this human MIND is carnal. It can know the things of a MAN — that is, mortal or PHYSICAL things.

What man, then, could *know* or possess this material KNOWLEDGE, except by the *spirit* of MAN that is *IN* the man — united to and functioning with material BRAIN? The addition of this HUMAN spirit turns animal brain into human MIND.

Now go further in I Corinthians 2:11: "Even so no one knows the things of GOD EXCEPT THE *SPIRIT OF GOD*."

It is only by the receiving of

God's HOLY SPIRIT, to unite with the human mind, that a man may comprehend SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE. Only by the receiving and indwelling of the Holy Spirit are the real TRUTHS of the BIBLE comprehended by the human mind.

The great MINDS of this world cannot comprehend biblical and spiritual TRUTHS without God's Holy Spirit, any more than a dog, horse, ape or elephant can comprehend physical, scientific knowledge without the spirit that is *in* MAN — and is NOT in the dumb brutes!

That is precisely WHY, up until 59 years ago, I could not understand the Bible. That is why nearly all of the truly GREAT minds of world leaders cannot understand this TRUTH! It is not a matter of degree of intellect.

So, in order to really *perceive* the deceptions that have BLINDED this world, once we have *recognized* our own fallibility and proneness to error — once we have become WILLING to admit it when proved wrong, and to accept TRUTH — the next step is to receive God's gift of His Holy Spirit. And the CONDITIONS to this are: 1) REPENTANCE, and 2) FAITH in Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

Repentance is toward GOD. Sin is against GOD. We may harm or injure people — but we SIN against GOD. Sin is the transgression of GOD'S LAW. Sin is rebellion against GOD. It has cut us off from God.

To repent means to be so HUMBLED, so broken up about the *colossal* crime of rebelling against the HOLY GOD — so abhorrent of our own rebellious, deceitful, vain, selfish SELVES — that in real contrition we turn to God for mercy and CHANGE of mind and attitude, now desiring to CHANGE OUR WAYS — to be obedient to GOD'S LAW.

Very few know what repentance really is. Then, through FAITH in Jesus Christ as Savior, we may be reconciled to God, and His PROMISE is that we shall then receive HIS HOLY SPIRIT.

The SELF has to die! It means

unconditional surrender to God and HIS REVEALED WAY! I know that with me, it was a painful process. The SELF does not want to give up in surrender. I knew it meant ridicule and persecution from relatives, friends, former business associates. It meant a CHANGED LIFE. It meant a start toward a NEW AND DIFFERENT GOAL.

But God had humbled me. He brought me to repentance and faith. And He opened my mind to HIS TRUTH by the gift of His Holy Spirit.

But I had to be willing, continuously, to confess being wrong, and to embrace truths constantly NEW to me.

That process has been going on, now, for 59 years.

As I studied a portion of the Bible, I could now understand it. But I had to *walk in the "light"* as God opened my mind to see. Regardless of the cost in the esteem of men, or in countering opposition and persecution, I had

ridicule, PROCLAIMED THE TRUTH?

These lauded, lofty "greats" of this world *could* become undeceived and have their eyes opened to God's truth — *IF THEY WOULD BE HUMBLLED, REPENT AND SURRENDER UNCONDITIONALLY TO ALMIGHTY GOD AND HIS LAW!*

But if you would know what GOD says of these "great and eminent" religious leaders of the great denominations, read God's PROPHECIES, in the Bible, describing these very leaders of OUR OWN 20TH CENTURY, in Jeremiah 23; Ezekiel 34; Ezekiel 22, especially verses 23-31, referring to British and United States peoples and their religious leaders *NOW*, at the time leading directly to "God's WRATH" — the time of the last PLAGUES, just prior to, and at, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ!

Yes, we *CAN KNOW*, if willing to know, whether we are right or wrong. It is not a matter of

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Regardless of the cost, I had constantly to BE WILLING to follow GOD and not man. It is a matter of being LED by GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT into *His* ways that are so CONTRARY to those of this world, not of personal human powers.

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constantly to BE WILLING to follow GOD and not man.

It is a matter of WILLINGNESS — not of superior and lofty minds. It is a matter of being LED by GOD'S SPIRIT into *His* ways that are so CONTRARY to this world's established customs and beliefs, not of personal human powers.

WHAT CHURCH do you know that has ever publicly confessed that its teaching and practice has been WRONG, and has CORRECTED IT, to conform to the Bible? What great, lauded and mighty churchman or religious leader has ever made such a public confession, turned from his nonbiblical ways and, despite persecution and

superior intellect, but of SUBMISSION TO GOD.

But the conclusion of the whole question is this: I did not start this work of my own accord at all. It is the very last thing I would have wanted, in my days of carnality, to do.

IT IS GOD'S DOING!

By circumstances, God forced me to submission. The living JESUS CHRIST so manipulated events and the force of circumstance that He literally PLUNGED me into His work. It is not my work — it is THE VERY WORK OF GOD.

And *THIS* can be easily proved, to those willing to know the TRUTH! □

## God Not Real?

(Continued from page 3)

seeing him virtually every day, talking with him, seeing him in his office and in his home, *you'd get to know him!*

I know him well. I have known him ever since he came to the front door of my home in Pasadena nearly 37 years ago. Three days later he entered Ambassador College as a student. In four years he graduated. He continued his studies, doing graduate work, earning his master's degree. I see him fairly often. I spend a good deal of time talking with Mr. McNair about college problems, about student and manpower problems, about personal interests. I have gotten to *know him!*

But, if you have not even seen his picture, you *don't* know him!

You haven't seen God's picture either. But He gives you a certain description of what He looks like, in the Bible. Yet not as to His exact features.

### The person of God revealed

I can tell you that *I* know God — and that I also know the living Jesus Christ — for I represent Him as His servant. I read about Him — not as other people MIS-describe Him — but as He describes Himself in HIS BIBLE!

But, I said a while ago that 59 years ago I "just couldn't understand the Bible." NO ONE CAN, *really*, until they have gained contact with God (the Father) through Jesus Christ, and have received His Holy Spirit, begetting them as His begotten children. That requires the same kind of REPENTANCE Job was put through — a genuine abhorring of the self, an unconditional SURRENDER to OBEY Him and His law and a real faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior.

When I was brought to that kind of repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ, in early 1927, and was baptized, He gave me the most precious GIFT in all the universe — His Holy Spirit.

His Spirit *opened my mind to*

SPIRITUAL COMPREHENSION. I could UNDERSTAND THE BIBLE — a bit at a time, of course. In it, the living Jesus Christ began talking to me. I began to talk to Him — often, daily, in a sense constantly, in spirit. When I studied the Bible, it was like listening to the most wonderful Friend I had ever known! It was WONDERFUL! It was INTERESTING — INSPIRING — REVEALING! So I studied the Bible often *on my knees*.

You see, as I *read* the Bible, God was talking to *me*. But as I prayed, I was talking to HIM! And by studying His Word *on my knees*, I was able to carry on a two-way conversation with Him — mixing prayer with listening to Him through reading His words.

It was invigorating, rejuvenating beyond words to describe. He was TEACHING ME. I was gaining NEW KNOWLEDGE — spiritual knowledge — knowledge to LIVE BY — knowledge to put into action — instruction to be *acted on* — commands to OBEY by *doing!*

As He told me about Himself — as He talked to me, instructed me — and as I talked to Him — *I got to know Him!* He BECAME REAL!

He was no longer WAY OFF! He was very NEAR — in spirit, in the very same room. I have never seen God or Jesus Christ PHYSICALLY — with my physical eye — but I see them often, spiritually, in my mind. Not precise definite features, of course — but I see in my mind's eye eyes flashing out like a flame of fire — His face shining as brightly as the sun in full strength — His head and hair white as the cleanest, whitest snow. And all around where He is sitting is gleaming, glistening, beautiful SPLENDOR and brightness, with lightning flashing forth.

Perhaps I don't see this as distinctly as I expect to after I enter His Kingdom as an inheritor, BORN of His Spirit in SPIRIT COMPOSITION — no longer a mortal human composed of flesh and blood.

It is, of course, as the apostle Paul was inspired to say: We see

at best, now, as through a darkened glass, but then, in the resurrection, in His Kingdom, face to face (I Corinthians 13:12).

WHY is God “so far off — so unreal”? It is because people are so *far off* from HIM — so *close to* the physical, material things and interests of this evil world! Because their minds are on physical pursuits all the time. Because *they have no time for God!*

You get to KNOW those you are *close to* — in *constant contact with* — in conversation with!

But, with most, *their sins* have CUT THEM OFF from contact with God.

Is it, then, impossible for them to GAIN CONTACT?

Not at all! But *IT IS NOT EASY!*

*WHY?*

Because you have to REPENT — and that is NOT EASY. To just say the words “I abhor myself” does not mean you really *do*. To really CONFESS that you have been WRONG — that you are NOT

to GIVE THEM UP — for they probably will throw you over — IF you surrender to God, let Him turn your life right side up, live a totally *changed* life according to His teaching!

Are you too big a coward to do it? You have to be WILLING to GIVE UP — everything! — for HIM. Do you want HIM that much? Do you want the happiness of a REAL Christian LIFE that much? Do you want ETERNAL LIFE in His Kingdom that much? Few do! That's why God is not REAL to most.

Of course they are not really HAPPY. But they are unwilling to live THE WAY that *causes* happiness. They would rather keep on TRYING to gain it some other way. They NEVER WILL, however. All humanity has been trying that for 6,000 years! NONE ever yet succeeded. Do you think YOU can? You CAN'T!

God CAN be real to you — but are you willing?

There are the THREE DIMEN-

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There are TWO directions you can go in life. Most people go the direction of SELF — vanity! The other direction is the way of God's LOVE. That's the ONLY dimension that SATISFIES — that opens your mind to SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.

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good — that there is nothing good IN YOU — that you not only have DONE wrong and sinned but that you ARE wrong and sinful — that is not easy. The SELF has to DIE — and your human nature will fight that *to the death*.

To make an UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER to God and HIS LAW — His authority over you — His commandments — HIS teaching — HIS WAY of living that is so UTTERLY CONTRARY to the way your friends and associates are living — that is NOT EASY.

SELF within you will shout out: “But what would my friends — all my associates — those I have been close to — what would THEY think?” You'll have to be willing

to GIVE THEM UP — for they probably will throw you over — IF you surrender to God, let Him turn your life right side up, live a totally *changed* life according to His teaching!

Are you too big a coward to do it? You have to be WILLING to GIVE UP — everything! — for HIM. Do you want HIM that much? Do you want the happiness of a REAL Christian LIFE that much? Do you want ETERNAL LIFE in His Kingdom that much? Few do! That's why God is not REAL to most.

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There are the THREE DIMEN-

fills that inner void — that feeds that gnawing soul of HUNGER — that expands your horizons — that opens your MIND to the glories of SPIRITUAL COMPREHENSION — of understanding SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE — of really UNDERSTANDING the Bible, in a way that produces happiness brimful and running over!

It's WORTH the price YOU pay a million times over. Jesus Christ paid the REAL price — the BIG price. The price you pay, in GIVING UP in surrender to Him, is as nothing by comparison.

It's the GREATEST BARGAIN in the world — but the world does not offer it, or ANY bargain. GOD DOES!

There are TWO directions you can go in life. Most people go the direction of SELF — vanity! It's the way of self-centeredness. Everything is coming INWARD. Toward SELF. Getting! Taking! Acquiring! And you keep shrinking smaller and smaller.

The other direction is the way of God's LOVE. Love fulfills His law. LOVE is *outgoing concern!* It is, first of all, GOD-centeredness. It is LOVE to God, in worship, adoration, faith, obedience. It is, second, LOVE to fellowman — loving others AS yourself. That's a lot of love.

That is the WAY of the ABOVE. That way constantly EXPANDS your horizons. That way you GROW — and GROW — and GROW! You DEVELOP! You develop GOD'S CHARACTER! You GROW in love — in happiness — in abundant well-being! LIFE becomes abundant and JOYFUL!

Willing to pay the price? It's not giving up so much MONEY — it's giving up things you've had your heart set on that are BAD for you. It's coming to a new sense of VALUES — values that MAKE SENSE!

I know! I *have* known 59 years. Life has had its problems, persecutions, disappointments — but it's been RICH, FULL, REWARDING, ABUNDANT!

Everyone CAN have it — if they want it deeply enough.

Even YOU! God BECOMES REAL! □

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## Trusted?

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among the highest qualities of character God treasures.

Notice the description of the kind of person who will stand before God and be blessed: “Lord, who may abide in your tabernacle? Who may dwell in Your holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the truth in his heart; he who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbor, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change; he who does not put out his money at usury, nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved” (Psalm 15:1-5).

Are you striving to become this kind of person?

We all need to deeply examine our attitudes. Are we guilty of the very things we distrust in others? Is it possible that the suspicions we often insinuate stem in part from our own guilt feelings, or our own tendencies to participate in rumor spreading?

Let's search our own hearts. Do we put others down simply to minimize our own shortcomings and lift ourselves above them?

Of course, we should not ignore or condone wrongdoing. That is, we should not try to protect people who are guilty of illegal acts. Even more important, we should not conceal the actions of a brother who is sowing discord among God's people and trying to divide the flock.

In the case of a friend who is weak and sinning, the Bible instructs us to go to him privately, in a spirit of meekness, and try to help him (Matthew 18:15-17). We should not want to make him a public spectacle of ridicule so as to destroy his dignity.

### Be a faithful friend

True, faithful friends are priceless. The Bible commends the

brother who “loves at all times” and the “friend who sticks closer than a brother” (Proverbs 17:17, 18:24).

The Bible points to the friendship between David and Jonathan as a sterling example of unfailing loyalty, of what true friends should be like. II Samuel 1:26 states that the love that they had for each other was stronger than a man's love for a woman. The friendship was so unshakable that they would have given their lives for each other. Can you imagine either of them turning “Judas” on the other — betraying a secret or a confidence or spreading vicious gossip?

What can be said of us in the way we treat our friends? Can we also be trusted to carefully guard a confidence, to faithfully uphold someone's honor?

The greatest example of true friendship and devotion in the entire universe is God Himself. The Bible tells us that all our faults and secret sins are open to His view (Hebrews 4:13). He knows us through and through.

Yet God, who is love, plainly reveals that He does not talk about our sins when we repent (Ezekiel 18:22). He forgets them in His mercy (Hebrews 8:12) and casts them far from His presence: “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us” (Psalm 103:12).

In stark contrast, Satan, our great adversary, constantly gossips and accuses us before God day and night (Revelation 12:10). He is a renowned liar and depraved slanderer (John 8:44) whose primary aim is to destroy our character.

It behooves each of us to make sure we are emulating God and letting God create His faithful character in us (Ephesians 4:23-32). If we are not on guard, we'll find ourselves often serving Satan and doing immeasurable harm to other people.

As we serve God and draw close to Him, let us strive to honor our neighbors and develop friendships based on loyalty and trust! □