

2019

Valley Bible Church  
Men's Breakfast Presentations

| Date        | Title & Description   | References                                 | Page |
|-------------|---|--|------|
| January 3   | <b>Numbered!</b> (Part 1 of 3)<br>Your days are numbered, are you going to spend them or invest them? | Ps 139:16                                  | 1    |
| January 10  | <b>Numbered!</b> (Part 2 of 3)<br>Teach us to number our days wisely                                  | Ps 139:16,<br>Ps 90:12                     | 2    |
| January 17  | <b>Numbered!</b> (Part 3 of 3)<br>What if God revealed the number of days you will live?              | Ps 139:16,<br>2 Cor 6:2                    | 3    |
| January 24  | <b>Fool!</b><br>Don't be a fool!  | Ps 14:1,<br>Lk 12:20                       | 4    |
| January 31  | <b>Whatever</b> (Part 1 of 3)<br>Six things we should dwell on:<br>Whatever is true                   | Phil 4:8,<br>Ps 12:6,<br>119:151           | 5    |
| February 7  | <b>Whatever</b> (Part 2 of 3)<br>Six things we should dwell on:<br>Whatever is honorable, just, pure  | Phil 4:8                                   | 6    |
| February 14 | <b>Whatever</b> (Part 3 of 3)<br>Six things we should dwell on:<br>Whatever is lovely, commendable    | Phil 4:8                                   | 7    |
| February 28 | <b>Will It?</b> (Part 1 of 3)<br>Not violate God's Word, Be profitable for me, Bring glory to God     | 1 Cor 6:12,<br>10:31                       | 8    |
| March 7     | <b>Will It?</b> (Part 2 of 3)<br>Not violate my conscience, Edify others, Not be a stumbling block    | Ro 14:5-23,<br>Phil 3:17, 4:9              | 9    |
| March 14    | <b>Will It?</b> (Part 3 of 3)<br>Be a good witness, Not harm my body, Not enslave me                  | 1 Cor 10:31-33,<br>6:19-20, 6:12,<br>10:23 | 10   |

| Date     | Title & Description  | References  | Page |
|----------|--|---|------|
| March 21 | <b>One Life</b> (Part 1 of 3)<br>Only one life, 'Twill soon be past                            | Heb 9:27  | 11   |
| March 28 | <b>One Life</b> (Part 2 of 3)<br>'Twill soon be past, Only what's done<br>for Christ will last | Matt 6:19   | 12   |
| April 4  | <b>One Life</b> (Part 3 of 3)<br>Only what's done for Christ will last                         | Matt 25:21  | 13   |
| April 11 | <b>Wages and Gifts</b><br>What's the difference?   | Ro 6:23   | 14   |
| April 18 | <b>He Is Risen Indeed!</b><br>Importance of Christ's resurrection                              | Ro 1:4;<br>Heb 2:14;<br>1 Pet 1:3   | 15   |
| April 25 | <b>Children of God</b><br>Is everyone a child of God? Who is a<br>true child of God?           | John 1:12;<br>Gal 3:26  | 16   |
| May 2    | <b>Slave!</b> (Part 1 of 2)<br>Are you a slave? Are you sure?                                  | Ro 6:6, 6:20;<br>John 8:34;   | 17   |
| May 9    | <b>Slave!</b> (Part 2 of 2)<br>You are no longer a slave to sin                                | Col 1:13;<br>1 Cor 6:19b-20;<br>2 Cor 5:9-10  | 18   |
| May 16   | <b>The Greatest Gift</b><br>Eternal life is the greatest gift                                  | Titus 3:5;<br>1 Tim 2:6;<br>2 Pet 3:9;<br>1 Tim 2:4;<br>Lam 3:22;<br>Ro 11:29;<br>John 14:6 | 19   |
| May 23   | <b>Before</b> (Part 1 of 2)<br>What happened before time began?                                | 2 Tim 1:9;<br>Titus 1:2;<br>Eph 1:4;<br>Rev 13:8  | 20   |
| May 30   | <b>Before</b> (Part 2 of 2)<br>Christ the Creator is holding everything<br>together            | John 1:2-3;<br>Col 1:17;<br>Heb 4:3, 11:3   | 21   |
| June 13  | <b>Every!</b> (Part 1 of 2)<br>Every name, every knee, every tongue                            | Phil 2:9-11   | 22   |

| Date         | Title & Description  | References                            | Page |
|--------------|--|---------------------------------------|------|
| June 20      | <b>Every!</b> (Part 2 of 2)<br>Every name, every knee, every tongue  | Phil 2:9-11                           | 23   |
| June 27      | <b>Ultimate Worship</b> (Part 1 of 3)<br>Presenting your body is the ultimate act of worship   | Ro 12:1-2                             | 24   |
| July 11      | <b>Ultimate Worship</b> (Part 2 of 3)<br>Presenting your body is the ultimate act of trust   | Ro 12:1-2                             | 25   |
| July 18      | <b>Ultimate Worship</b> (Part 3 of 3)<br>Renewing your mind is the key to knowing God's will for your life   | Ro 12:1-2                             | 26   |
| July 25      | <b>Nothing</b><br>From nothing, nothing comes  |                                       | 27   |
| August 1     | <b>Lost</b> (Part 1 of 3)<br>The unsaved are lost to God's usefulness, in danger of eternal ruin, doomed to suffer eternal conscious punishment          | Matt 25:41, 46                        | 28   |
| August 8     | <b>Lost</b> (Part 2 of 3)<br>If God is so loving, why are some people lost?  | Ro 1:18-20                            | 29   |
| August 15    | <b>Lost</b> (Part 3 of 3)<br>The results of suppressing, ignoring, questioning God's truth   | Ro 1:18-32                            | 30   |
| August 29    | <b>Judge Not?</b> (Part 1 of 3)<br>It's acceptable to judge sin, but we must do it according to God's standards  | Matt 7:1-2,<br>Eph 5:11               | 31   |
| September 5  | <b>Judge Not?</b> (Part 2 of 3)<br>The speck of sin in your brother's eye, the log in yours  | Matt 7:3-5,<br>Gal 6:1                | 32   |
| September 12 | <b>Judge Not?</b> (Part 3 of 3)<br>Characteristics of a spiritual man: filled with the Spirit, walking in the Spirit, evidencing the fruit of the Spirit | Eph 5:18,<br>Gal 5:16, 22-23, Gal 6:1 | 33   |

| Date         | Title & Description   | References   | Page |
|--------------|---|--|------|
| September 19 | <b>You Are Gods</b><br>Does Psalm 82:6 indicate that we can become gods?                | Ps 82:6,<br>John 10:34   | 34   |
| September 26 | <b>God's Great Mercy</b><br>God's mercy, our hope, our inheritance                      | 1 Pet 1:3-5  | 35   |
| October 17   | <b>A New Creation!</b><br>Is God still creating?  | 2 Cor 5:17,<br>Eph 4:22-24   | 36   |
| October 24   | <b>Eternal</b><br>What lasts?   | Matt 24:35;<br>1 Cor 15:58;<br>Heb 9:27                            | 37   |
| October 31   | <b>Answers!</b><br>Who / what / why / when of salvation                                 | Eph 2:8-9  | 38   |
| November 7   | <b>The Pleasures of Sin</b> (Part 1 of 5)<br>But only for a season                      | Heb 11:25;<br>Num 32:23;<br>Heb 4:13;<br>Prov 28:13;<br>1 John 1:9 | 39   |
| November 14  | <b>The Pleasures of Sin</b> (Part 2 of 5)<br>Your sin is more like a bomb than a bullet | Ps 51:4  | 40   |
| November 21  | <b>The Pleasures of Sin</b> (Part 3 of 5)<br>Presumptuous sin                           | Ps 19:13   | 41   |
| December 5   | <b>The Pleasures of Sin</b> (Part 4 of 5)<br>Unpardonable (unforgiveable) sin           | Matt 12:32   | 42   |
| December 12  | <b>The Pleasures of Sin</b> (Part 5 of 5)<br>What is sin?                               | Ro 6:23  | 43   |
| December 19  | <b>None</b><br>There is none righteous  | Ro 3:10-12   | 44   |

## Numbered!

(Part 1)

Addressing God, King David wrote:

***Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in  
Your book and planned before a single one of them began.***

Psalm 139:16 (HCSB)

Even before you were born, in His book God recorded the number of days you will live on this earth. God knows everything about us, including exactly when, where, and how we will die. Fortunately, He doesn't tell us!

It's an act of His mercy that God doesn't show us the future. Do you really want to know what's going to happen later today, or tomorrow, or next week, or ... ?

If you knew the future, how would it affect your life today? Can you imagine what it would be like to know with certainty what will happen tomorrow, but with no ability to change (prevent, affect) the events of that day?

Those who have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin know they will spend eternity in God's presence. But what about your remaining time on earth? What are you going to do with that time?

You have at least two options for the remaining time: *Spend it* or *invest it*.

- You can *spend* your time only on yourself, pursuing (chasing) what you think will give meaning to life and make you happy. You will ultimately regret that decision because when life is over you will stand before God to give an account for how you used your time on earth.
- You can *invest* your remaining time on earth in God's service. That service can take many forms, depending on your health, resources, spiritual gifts (you've got at least one), skills, available time, and other factors.

Remember that every heartbeat, every breath, every day, is a gift from God.

We've all wasted portions of our lives, but we can dedicate our remaining days to serving God in some way. Present your life to Him (Romans 12:1-2) and ask Him what He wants you to do. The clock of your life is ticking and your days are ...

## Numbered!

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
January 3, 2019

## Numbered!

(Part 2)

*Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in  
Your book and planned before a single one of them began.*

Psalm 139:16 (HCSB)

In Part 1, we discovered that before we were born, God sovereignly determined and recorded in His book the number of days each of us would live. We also determined that most, perhaps all, of us don't want to know how long that will be! (We'll discuss this again in Part 3.)

We too are admonished to number – consider the brevity of – our days:

*Teach us to number our days carefully so that we may develop wisdom  
in our hearts.* Psalm 90:12 (HCSB)

**Teach us** – the Psalmist is asking that God help us to learn, that He give us the wisdom to understand, how short life is.

As we saw in Part 1, only God truly knows how many days we will be on earth, but we certainly know that compared to eternity – time without end – our earthly lives are very brief.

Observation and personal experience teach us that our lives are short, fragile, and unpredictable. They can change irreparably – or end – in an instant. Some of us know that firsthand. It's therefore important that we **develop wisdom in our hearts** to know how to live our lives with eternity's values in view, not putting our own desires and pleasures first.

How do we **develop wisdom**? By reading and studying God's Word, the Bible. His book reveals His mind – and that's the source of true wisdom!

Note that we are also admonished to **carefully** consider how short life is, to ask ourselves whether we are using our God-given time, talent, and treasure wisely.

Today – the first day of the rest of your life – is the father of tomorrow. Take time now to ask, "What do I want to see happen in my life, what do I want to do for God and His kingdom before He calls me home?" Then, with God's help, start doing what needs to be done because your days are ...

## Numbered!

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
January 10, 2019

## Numbered!

(Part 3)

*Your eyes saw me when I was formless; all my days were written in  
Your book and planned before a single one of them began.*

Psalm 139:16 (HCSB)

In Parts 1 and 2, we discovered that before we were born, God sovereignly determined and recorded in His book the number of days each of us would live; that we don't know that number; and that we should be studying God's Word to learn how to invest our lives wisely.

But suppose God *did* tell you how many more days you will live. How would that affect you? What, if anything, would you do differently?

If you've never trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin, that's the most urgent, most vital change you should make. Even if God revealed that you had many years to live, wouldn't you rather live them as a born-again Christian, in God's favor, rather than as His enemy? But realistically, you don't know the date of your demise and you have no promise of tomorrow. That's why the Bible says

*Indeed, the "right time" is now. Today is the day of salvation.*

2 Corinthians 6:2 (NLT)

Christian, what if God told you that you will die in 30 days? What then would be important to you? What then would no longer be important to you? What changes would you make in your life?

If you knew you were going to die in 30 days, what would you start doing? Is there something you know God wants you to do, but you've been resisting, perhaps for years? Start now. Or did you make a promise to God (a vow – "God if you'll do this, I'll do that") in the past and never kept that promise? Keep it now. Perhaps God is bidding you to spend more time with Him in Bible reading and prayer. Start now.

If you knew you were going to die in 30 days, what would you stop doing? Why? Would it be because you know that what you're doing displeases or dishonors God? Are you ignoring the conviction of the Holy Spirit? Stop now.

Based on the information in the preceding two paragraphs, do you need to initiate some serious discussions with God? Start them now.

Since you truly don't know how much longer you'll live – it could be 30 days, it could be more, it could be much less – shouldn't you start making the needed changes now? Remember, regardless of your age, your life's clock is ticking, and your days are ...

## Numbered!

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
January 17, 2019

## Fool!

*Only fools say in their hearts, "There is no God."*

Psalm 14:1 (NLT)

Despite brilliance in his chosen field, renowned theoretical physicist, Dr. Stephen Hawking, was a **fool!** That's not my verdict, it's God's. Dr. Hawking publicly stated that **there is no God**, thus earning the title, **fool**.

God's Word assures us that there was a time in his life when Stephen Hawking knew there was a God (Romans 1:19-21). But to his own peril, Hawking chose to reject or ignore that truth and thus became a **fool** (1:22).

On March 14, 2018, Stephen Hawking's soul/spirit departed his earthly body and took up temporary residence in *Hades*, a place of torment (Luke 16:19-31), awaiting the final judgment before the Lord Jesus Christ at the Great White Throne (Revelation 20:11-15).

Hawking now knows the truth: **There is a God!** But it's too late. He made the wrong decision when he was alive, and there's no second chance. He is doomed to spend eternity in conscious torment in the Lake of Fire – Hell – separated forever from the God he disclaimed.

Not all fools verbally deny the existence of God. Based on the use of the word in the Bible, here are some other characteristics that would indicate a person is a **fool**:

- Is morally deficient
- Hates God
- Doesn't realize (or admit) his need of God, is arrogant and self-sufficient
- Lives life as if there were no God

Do you remember the parable Jesus told about the rich farmer? He was blessed by God with abundant crops but was arrogant and self-sufficient, believing his prosperity was his own doing. And he wasn't willing to share his abundance with those less fortunate. God had some harsh words for this man:

***'You fool! You will die this very night. Then who will get everything you worked for?'*** Luke 12:20 (NLT)

Although Christians may not deny the existence of God with their lips as did Stephen Hawking, they can deny God with their lives and thus become fools. We need to examine ourselves, ask ourselves: What am I working for? More importantly, for whom am I working? How am I living my life? What am I doing with the resources (time, talent, treasure, spiritual gifts) God entrusted to me? Who am I trying to please? What's important – really important – to me? We need to take care lest we too become a ...

## Fool!

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
January 24, 2019

# Whatever

(Part 1)

***Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable – if there is any moral excellence and if there is any praise – dwell on these things.*** Philippians 4:8 (HCSB)

## ***Finally brothers***

This verse is a fitting successor to a passage (verses 6-7) we've previously discussed relative to how to experience personal peace.<sup>1</sup> The ***whatevers*** in today's verse delineate ***things*** we are to plant in our hearts, to ***dwell on***, focus on, meditate on, integrate into our lives. What we allow into our hearts and minds determines our thoughts, words, and actions, thus influencing our entire lives. Christ Jesus said, ***What you say flows from what is in your heart.*** (Luke 6:45)

## ***Whatever is true***

Today it's difficult to distinguish truth from falsehood. We have "fake news" parading as truth, and the internet is replete with misinformation. So what is true?

First, the Lord Jesus Christ described Himself as ***the way, the truth, and the life*** (John 14:6). Jesus didn't say He would show us the truth, He said He ***is*** the truth. Truth personified. He is the source of all truth, the embodiment of truth. The apostle John described Him as ***full of grace and truth*** (John 1:14).

Secondly, God's Word, the Bible, is true. It is inspired, infallible, inerrant. It is the pure Word of God.

***The words of the Lord are pure words, like silver refined in a furnace ... purified seven times*** (Psalm 12:6– ESV)

***O Lord ... all your commandments are true***  
(Psalm 119:151 – ESV)

The Bible is our final and only authority for doctrine and practice, the complete and unalterable special revelation of God, sufficient (adequate) ...

***... for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.*** 1 Timothy 3:16-17 (HCSB)

As followers of Christ, we are to walk in the truth (3 John 1:3), love the truth, believe the truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10-12), and speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:32). The best way to prepare for that is to ***dwell on*** truth: our Savior and the Bible.

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
January 31, 2019

<sup>1</sup> Refer to *Peace*, the breakfast presentations for November, 2018.

# Whatever

(Part 2)

***Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable – if there is any moral excellence and if there is any praise – dwell on these things.*** Philippians 4:8 (HCSB)

In Part 1, we determined that the **whatevers** in this verse delineate **things** we are to plant in our hearts, to **dwell on**, focus on, meditate on, integrate into our lives. What we allow into our hearts and minds determines our thoughts, words, and actions, thus influencing our entire lives. Let's continue with the next **whatever**.

## ***Whatever is honorable***

We are admonished to **dwell on** that which is honest, truthful, and worthy of respect. Much of what the world system provides is none of the above.

We are not only to **dwell on** that which is honorable, we're to **be** honorable people: honest, truthful, worthy of respect. If the people you associate with are not honorable; if what you read, listen to, and watch are not honorable, it will be difficult for you to live an honorable life, to be an honorable person.

## ***Whatever is just***

*Just* can be defined as *a state of being right* or *right conduct* or *fair*. There's a lot of *injustice* in this world. Perhaps you've been the victim of an injustice. The Bible promises a day when that will be done away with.

We're to **dwell on** justice, integrate it into our lives and let it influence us so that we conduct ourselves accordingly, doing what's right and fair. Our lives are to reflect justice.

## ***Whatever is pure***

The word *pure* means *free from – separate from – defilement and contamination*. It comes from the same Greek root as *body*. The emphasis in this verse is on mental and physical – sexual – purity.

In today's world we're immersed in – saturated with – impurity. This gives rise to impure thoughts that may eventuate in immoral deeds.<sup>1</sup> All sin starts in the mind, so we must examine what we're putting in our minds via reading material, TV, internet, movies, music, and conversations. Replace harmful input with wholesome material. Above all, **dwell on** God's Word, the Bible.

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
February 7, 2019

<sup>1</sup> For additional information, refer to *Temptation*, the breakfast presentations for May, 2018.

## Whatever

(Part 3)

*Finally brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable – if there is any moral excellence and if there is any praise – dwell on these things.* Philippians 4:8 (HCSB)

In Parts 1 and 2, we determined that the *whatevers* in this verse delineate *things* we are to plant in our hearts, to **dwell on**, focus on, meditate on, integrate into our lives. What we allow into our hearts and minds determines our thoughts, words, and actions, thus influencing our entire lives. Let's conclude now with the last two *whatevers*.

### *Whatever is lovely*

*Lovely* has been variously defined: *pleasing, agreeable, attractive, beautiful, kind, gracious*. Someone has said that lovely things are those that bring peace, soothing the soul. For our wellbeing – physical, emotional, mental – we should spend time **dwelling on** that which brings us pleasure: a beautiful landscape or sunset, a favorite piece of music, time with a special friend, meditating on a favorite Scripture passage, ...

We should so integrate beauty into our lives that we – yes, even guys – are attractive. Not necessarily because of our physical appearance, but as a result of our personality, our character, our demeanor (behavior toward others), who and what we are. These characteristics are greatly affected by how much time we spend in reading and studying the Bible, and in prayer.

### *Whatever is commendable*

The Greek word translated here as *commendable* relates to what is positive and constructive rather than what is negative and destructive. There is far more bad news than good news today, so we have to discipline ourselves to focus on the good reports.

Synonyms for *commendable* include *admirable, reputable, praiseworthy, highly regarded, of good report*. We should **dwell on** objects with those characteristics. That should also be the reputation of our character.

### *Synopsis*

We've discussed six things that the apostle Paul admonished us to **dwell on**: truth, honesty, justice, purity, beauty, repute. These are components of a wholesome thought life. As we saw in Part 1, if excellent and praiseworthy matters dominate our thinking, God promises His peace in our lives (Philippians 4:6-7).

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
February 14, 2019

# Will It?

(Part 1)

The Bible clearly admonishes us not to do certain things. Thus, a holy life, a life set apart for God's service, must exclude those things. The ten commandments (a.k.a. the *decalog*, literally "ten words") provide a starting point. We are not to worship other gods, take God's name in vain, covet, murder, commit adultery, etc. (Exodus 20:1-17). The Christian who gets involved in prohibited activities needs to confess those sins (1 John 1:9) and repent of them to restore fellowship with God.

There are other activities – sometimes referred to as “gray-area activities” – for which the Bible doesn't provide explicit guidance, but does provide basic principles for evaluation. Some of those principles are the basis for the **Will It** questions below. For a given activity, if the answer to any *italicized* question is “yes,” you should not be involved with that activity.

1. **Will it** not violate the clear teaching of God's Word?

*Will it violate the clear teaching of God's Word?*

This is always the first – and most important – question you should ask. If the Bible clearly, explicitly, forbids an activity, it's **not** a gray-area activity! Just don't do it.

Why does God forbid some things? Is it because He doesn't want you to enjoy life? Of course not! Just the opposite. It's because He wants you to have a good life and He knows that certain activities will be detrimental (or worse) to that.

Note that this first **will it?** assumes a certain level of biblical knowledge. The more you read and study the Bible, the better you'll understand how to live a life pleasing to God.

2. **Will it** be profitable for me – build me up, strengthen me – spiritually?  
(1 Corinthians 6:12)

*Will it be unprofitable for me – tear me down, weaken me – spiritually?*

While it is true that God forgives every sin the believer commits, the principle of sowing and reaping is operative in our spiritual lives as well as in agriculture. We reap what we sow, more than we sow, later than we sow. Sin always produces consequences. Sin is never beneficial – profitable – to the Christian.

3. **Will it** bring glory to God? (1 Corinthians 10:31)

*Will it dishonor to the One who redeemed me, He who bought me with His blood?*

As the scripture reference indicates, all we do is to be conducted to bring honor to God.

## Will It?

(Part 2)

In Part 1, we determined that the Bible clearly admonishes us not to do certain things. Thus, a holy life, a life set apart for God's service, must exclude those things. But there are other activities – commonly referred to as “gray-area activities” – for which the Bible doesn't provide explicit guidance, but does provide basic principles for evaluation. That's what we're discussing in this series. Remember that for a given activity, if the answer to any *italicized* question is “yes,” you should not be involved with that activity.

1. **Will it** not violate my God-given conscience? (Romans 14:5-23)

*Will it violate my conscience?*

Everyone, Christian and non-Christian, has a God-given conscience – an internal, instinctive sense of right and wrong – that produces guilt when we violate it. If we ignore that warning, we risk desensitizing and ultimately silencing our conscience. Don't do that!

Christians also have the indwelling Holy Spirit Who convicts us when we do wrong. Everyone has a conscience; only Christians have the indwelling Holy Spirit.

2. **Will it** edify other believers – build them up spiritually? (Philippians 3:17, 4:9; 1 Corinthians 4:16)

*Will it result in weakening the spiritual life of fellow believers?*

People need to see Christ in our lives. When other Christians observe your life, will they be encouraged and thank God for you? Will they be motivated to follow your example?

The apostle Paul encouraged his readers to be followers of him, even as he was of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:1). We need to live as Christ did, so that when people follow us, they also will be following Christ.

3. **Will it** not be a spiritual “stumbling block” to other believers? (Romans 14:13-15; 20-21, 1 Corinthians 8:9-13, 10:23-33)

*Will it cause other believers to “stumble” spiritually?*

A stumbling block is anything a believer does that causes another to fall into sin. Spiritually mature Christians may feel at liberty to do certain things that would cause a weaker brother to stumble. We are cautioned to avoid that.

The mature believer should not sit in judgment on the sincerely held beliefs of a less-mature believer regarding gray-area activities (Romans 14:1-10).

## Will It?

(Part 3)

In Part 1, we determined that the Bible clearly admonishes us not to do certain things. Thus, a holy life, a life set apart for God's service, must exclude those things. But there are other activities – commonly referred to as “gray-area activities” – for which the Bible doesn't provide explicit guidance, but does provide basic principles for evaluation. Remember that for a given activity, if the answer to any *italicized* question is “yes,” you should not be involved with that activity.

7. **Will it** be a good witness to the unsaved? (1 Corinthians 10:31-33)

*Will my actions and words cause unbelievers to think poorly of Christians and our Savior?*

Many believers tell of having come to faith in Christ as a result of observing the lives of Christians. They saw in them something (and Someone) they needed in their life. Are you a winsome Christian, one whose life attracts people to the Savior?

Unfortunately, some people have rejected Christianity because of what they observed in a professing believer's life. Don't be one of those!

8. **Will it** not be harmful to my physical body, the temple (sanctuary, dwelling place) of the Holy Spirit? (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)

*Will it harm my body, that which God owns because He bought it with Christ's blood?*

According to the reference verse, we are to glorify – honor – God with our bodies. What would prevent that? Misuse. Your body will sometimes allow you to pursue harmful habits for years, but you'll eventually have to live with the consequences. And they can be dire. Wouldn't it be better to avoid them?

9. **Will it** not enslave (master) me? (1 Corinthians 6:12, 10:23)

*Will it enslave me, become my master, become an addiction?*

The harmful habits alluded to in the eighth **Will It?** can become addictions that will enslave you. It's very easy to become addicted, but very difficult to overcome. It's better to never engage in those habits.

There are other activities that are highly addictive, affect the mind/brain, and are just as enslaving as physical habits. Pornography use is one of those, and it isn't a “gray-area activity,” it's sin.

The nine **Will It?** principles we've discussed in this series are certainly not exhaustive. There are many more principles that could be added, but the ones we've considered will provide a foundation, a basis, for your evaluation of gray-area activities.

# One Life

(Part 1)

**Only one life, 'Twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.**

Have you heard that saying before? It's the essence of the Christian life expressed in 14 words. It's part of a poem penned by C. T. Studd, a British missionary. Do you agree with what Mr. Studd wrote? If so, does it affect the way you live your life?

## Only one life

Some people express this as “*you only go around once*” or “*this life isn't a dress rehearsal*.” Unless you believe in the Hindu teaching of reincarnation – being physically reborn multiple times (which isn't biblical) – you probably agree with this “only **one life**” statement. Does the knowledge that you have been given only **one life** affect your perspective on living?

*... it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment*  
Hebrews 9:27 (ESV)

When this one life is over, you'll stand before the Lord Jesus Christ as judge. Does that knowledge make a difference in what you do, where you go, how you treat others, what you do with the money, time, and abilities God has provided?

If you've trusted Christ as your Savior, even though your sins have been forgiven and your eternal salvation is secure, you'll still have to give an account of how you spent or invested your life.

If you've never trusted Christ, when your life is over you'll meet Him as your judge. At that point, how you spent your life will be essentially immaterial because you'll be sentenced to eternity in the Lake of Fire – Hell.

Yes, you have only **one life**. Use it wisely. Eternity ahead!

## 'Twill soon be past

Look in a mirror, at a calendar, at those photos from yesteryear. The clock is ticking, ceaselessly advancing. Yes, you're aging. We all are.

Have you noticed that the rate (speed) at which you're aging seems to increase year by year? It's not going to slow down. God is getting you ready to meet Him.

Of necessity, we do so much to prepare for the stages of this earthly life, but what are you doing to prepare for eternity? Seventy or 80 years of life on this earth are nothing compared to eternity – time without end. Remember, you have only ...

# One Life

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
March 21, 2019

# One Life

(Part 2)

## Only one life, 'Twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last

In Part 1, we determined that we indeed have only **one life** to live and, in light of eternity, we need to invest our lives wisely. We also began a discussion of the second phrase, *'Twill soon be past*, noting that our lives – even 70, 80, or more years – are very short compared to the endless ages of eternity. Let's continue that discussion.

### 'Twill soon be past

If you're a Christian, you should be investing your life in serving Christ. How foolish it would be to squander the rapidly passing years with selfish pursuits. At the end of life, you'll regret doing so.

"Serving Christ" means furthering His work on earth by using the time, talent, treasure, and spiritual gifts God has given you.

Why should you serve Christ? Let's answer that question with another question: "What has He done for you?" Think about it!

### Only what's done for Christ will last

**Only?** Yes, **only!** If you're a born-again Christian, when you meet Christ in Heaven, **only** what you've "sent ahead" will be there. That includes your service for His kingdom.

The wealth and material goods you treasured during your lifetime on earth – those things that rusted, wore out, broke, deteriorated, gained or lost value – won't be in Heaven. Heed Christ's admonition:

***Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be.*** Matthew 6:19 (NLT)

Think about the last sentence in the verse above. If you're serving Christ in this life, Heaven will be your heart's desire because that's where your incorruptible, imperishable, eternal treasure is.

In Part 3 we'll conclude this series with some thoughts regarding your first face-to-face meeting with the Lord Jesus Christ.

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
March 28, 2019

## One Life

(Part 3)

### Only one life, 'Twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last

In Part 1, we determined that we indeed have only **one life** to live and, in light of eternity, we need to invest our lives wisely. Perhaps you've heard the expression, *This life isn't a dress rehearsal*. It's true! The life you're living now is the only life you'll have on earth. Make it count for God!

Part 2 focused on using our God-given time, talents, treasure, and spiritual gifts to further His work on earth because ...

### Only what's done for Christ will last

As necessary and important and sometimes enjoyable as they may seem to us today, most of life's activities have no eternal value. Only those things done for Christ will survive our demise. That's the import of the phrase *Only what's done for Christ will last*.

From the youngest to the oldest, we're all marching inexorably toward the day when this earthly life comes to an end.

The eulogy (literally, "good words") written in your obituary and / or spoken at your funeral or memorial service may include many glowing accounts of your life, but you won't hear them. What you *will* hear are Christ's words of greeting, welcoming you to your eternal home. When He evaluates your life, will the words below be what you'll hear? They can be. It's your choice!

***Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.*** Matthew 25:21 (NKJV)

Be ever mindful that the life you're living now isn't a dress rehearsal, you have only ...

## One Life

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
April 4, 2019

## Wages and Gifts

*For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Romans 6:23 (ESV)

Wages and gifts. What's the difference? Just this: Wages are earned, gifts are free, they cannot be earned.

In our text verse, wages are associated with death, gifts are associated with life.

We're all sinners by birth and by deed and, as the verse says, *the wages of sin is death*. Spiritual death is the paycheck for every man's slavery to sin.

The wages – the earnings – of sin are horrific: in this life and then conscious torment in the Lake of Fire forever.

### **But there's good news!**

The second part of the text verse indicates that eternal life – blissful life spent in God's presence forever – is a gift that God offers to undeserving sinners who accept Christ as Savior: *the free gift of God is eternal life*.

Why can God offer this greatest of all gifts? Because His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, died to pay the sin debt of all mankind. On the cross, Christ was your substitute. He died in your place, suffering God's punishment for your sins so that God could forgive you and cancel your sin debt.

Even though God offers you this gift of eternal life, it truly only becomes a gift when you personally accept it. The tragedy is that most people will never do that, and they'll spend eternity in Hell because of that decision.

Are you still pursuing the wages of sin or have you accepted God's gift of salvation through Christ? Those two choices lead to two very different eternal destinies. It's your choice.

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
April 11, 2019

## He Is Risen Indeed!

Next Sunday, we celebrate the physical resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why is the resurrection important? Dr. Henry Morris explains:

“The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the crowning proof of Christianity. If the resurrection did not take place, then Christianity is a false religion. If it did take place, then Christ is God and the Christian faith is absolute truth.”

The resurrection:

### **Proves that Christ is God**

*Jesus Christ our Lord ...was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead Romans 1:4*

### **Means that Christ can be trusted absolutely**

“Jesus promised His disciples that He would be crucified, would die, then rise again. His resurrection means, among other things, that His word can be trusted. If Jesus has spoken truthfully with respect to this – the greatest of all miracles – then we can be sure that all his other teachings are reliable.” Dr. Henry Morris

### **Means that our sins have been forgiven**

The resurrection means Christ’s sacrifice for sin has been accepted by God. The Lord Jesus Christ would still be in the tomb if that were not true. When Jesus rose the third day, His reappearance to His disciples proved that God had accepted His sacrifice for our sins.

### **Means that Satan has been defeated**

*Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil Hebrews 2:14*

### **Guarantees our resurrection to eternal life**

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead 1 Peter 1:3*

Because Christ lives, I shall live also! We should be eternally thankful that ...

## He Is Risen Indeed!

VBC Mens’ Breakfast  
April 18, 2019

## Children of God

You've probably heard people say that we're all children of God. Are we?

In 1968, David Berg founded a religious cult known as the *Children of God*. It was a cult that appealed to the lusts of the flesh. The teachings and practices were anything but godly. Sadly, that was probably true of most, if not all, the members of this cult.

While it is true that all people are God's creation, and that God loves the entire world, only those who are born again are children of God and referred to as such in the Bible.

In Scripture, the unregenerate are never referred to as children of God. Just the opposite. In a discourse with the Jewish Pharisees, Jesus told them they were children of Satan (John 8:44). Why? Because all of us are sinners by birth and by practice. That separates us from God and aligns us with Satan, God's enemy.

So how does a person become a true child of God? That's an eternally important question!

Speaking through the apostle John, the Holy Spirit told us

***... to all who believed him (Christ Jesus) and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.*** John 1:12 (NLT)

When you trust Christ as your Savior, He, Christ Himself, gives you the right – the legal authority, the privilege, the power – to become a child of God. Only Christ can do that.

The apostle Paul told the Christians in Galatia (and us by extension) that

***... in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith***  
Galatians 3:26 (NLT)

Did you notice the qualifiers in the two verses above?

***to all who believed him and accepted him ...***  
and  
***in Christ Jesus ... through faith***

No one is automatically, by birth, a child of God. It's only a result of personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. That's how we truly become ...

## Children of God

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
April 25, 2019

# Slave!

(Part 1)

Have you ever been a **slave**, totally owned by and under the absolute control and power of another person? No? Are you sure?

You may not have been a **slave** – a servant – to another person, but whether or not you realized it, you were a willing, full-time **slave** to sin! The Apostle Paul told the believers in Rome that prior to coming to Christ for salvation

*... you were slaves to sin ...*

Romans 6:20 (NLT)

(In some of Paul's epistles, as above, he personifies sin – writes about it as if it were a person.)

The Lord Jesus Christ reminded His hearers that

*... everyone who sins is a slave of sin.*

John 8:34 (NLT)

That includes you because we all sin. Before you were saved, sin was the sum and substance, the essence, of your character; it was your master, and you did its bidding.

What's the answer to this dilemma? The death of Christ! He was your Substitute, paying the price for your sin debt. Your old self – the person you were before you were saved – was crucified with Christ, with the result that the old sinful nature no longer has the power to **enslave** you:

*We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin.*

Romans 6:6 (NLT)

Although sin (the old sin nature) can still buffet and abuse you, it no longer owns you, and it cannot ultimately destroy you. Sin's authority and dominion are broken. Sin is no longer your master.

Does that mean you will never sin again? Hardly! That old nature is still active, and as a result you fall into old patterns of sinful thinking and behavior. But those things no longer define who you are. Sin is now an anomaly and an intruder, not who you are.

There's more good news! That's the subject of Part 2 of this series.

## Slave!

(Part 2)

In Part 1, we determined that before you accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior from sin you were a **slave** of sin. Sin was your master, you did its bidding, it was the essence of who you were, it defined you. But through the substitutionary death of Christ, your old self – who you were before salvation – was crucified, with the result that sin lost its power in your life. The good news is that now because of Christ you are no longer a **slave** to sin.

And there's more good news: When God saved you He ...

***delivered (you) from the domain of darkness and transferred (you) to the kingdom of his beloved Son.***

Colossians 1:13 (ESV)

When God brought (transferred) you into the kingdom of His Son, you became a **slave** of Christ, the Ruler of that kingdom. As a born-again Christian, you now have a new Master Who truly loves you unconditionally, always wants what's best for you, knows exactly what that is, and has the power to make it a reality. What a privilege to serve such a Master!

The apostle Paul reminded you that ...

***You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.***

1 Corinthians 6:19b-20 (ESV)

Christ's death in your place redeemed you, releasing you from bondage to sin, Satan, and death. Christ bought you with His blood – that was the price of your redemption – so you rightfully belong to Him, and you're admonished to glorify Him with your life.

As a **slave** was personally accountable to his master, so you are accountable to your Master, your Savior. You will ultimately be required to answer to Him for the way you spent or invested your earthly life:

***We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.***

2 Corinthians 5:9-10 (ESV)

**Bottom Line:** God has graciously saved you, given you eternal life, and allowed you to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. How are you serving Him with your life?

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
May 9, 2019

## The Greatest Gift

Eternal life, God's gift to us through personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ which results in salvation, is **the greatest gift**. Nothing could be greater than the gift of eternal life – blissful life without end, lived in the presence of God. All other gifts are incomparable. Here are some reasons why.

- Eternal life is the most costly gift ever given.  
God the Father had to sacrifice His only Son to provide this gift. God the Son had to pay the penalty for every sin we ever committed or will commit.
- It's a free gift to you; it can't be earned or purchased.  
***He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy....*** Titus 3:5 (NLT)
- This gift is available to all.  
***(Christ) gave Himself a ransom for all ...***1 Timothy 2:6 (ESV)  
***(God is) ...not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance...*** 2 Peter 3:9 (KJV)  
***(God) ...wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth*** 1 Timothy 2:4 (NLT)
- This gift is totally undeserved. If we got what we deserved, we would perish.  
***Because of the Lord's faithful love we do not perish, for His mercies never end.*** Lamentations 3:22 (HCSB)
- This is the only gift that will last forever. That's why it's called *eternal* life!
- This gift is not subject to entropy; it won't change, fail, or end.
- This gift cannot be stolen or transferred or rescinded.  
***The gifts and calling of God are irrevocable***  
Romans 11:29 (NASB)
- This is a gift of life.  
A transplanted donated organ is also a gift of life, but it's physical and temporary, not spiritual and eternal.
- This gift is available only from God through the Lord Jesus Christ.  
***I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through Me ...***John 14:6 (NLT)

To become a possession, a gift must be received. Tragically, some people refuse to receive this gift, to their eternal ruin. Have you personally received ...

## The Greatest Gift ?

# Before

(Part 1)

What happened **before** God created the cosmos (universe), **before** there was time as we know and experience it?

The eternally existing triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – were the only persons (yes, they are indeed persons) in existence **before**, so they alone know what transpired then. Fortunately, in His Word, God has given us glimpses of some things that occurred **before** creation, and some aspects of the creation of the cosmos.

Before we continue this discussion, we need to understand that by God’s design, while we are on earth we are time-constrained. We exist in time, we conduct our lives in time, and we can think only in terms of time. “**Before** time began,” “eternity past,” and similar descriptions are incomprehensible to finite minds. So we must by faith accept them as they are stated.

Consider these two verses:

*He (God) has saved us and called us ... in Christ Jesus before time began.*  
2 Timothy 1:9 (HCSB)

*...in the hope of eternal life that God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.* Titus 1:2 (HCSB)

These verses indicate that **before** the creation of the cosmos, there was no time as we understand it. That means there was a starting point for time, an initiation of time. That starting point was the first day of creation. Time began. The clock was started. Genesis chapters 1 and 2 describe the creation events in terms of time: days (solar days, 24-hour periods).

In the two verses above, note the wonderful news that God chose us, planned for our salvation in Christ, and promised our eternal life **before** time began! Here’s more:

*Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.* Ephesians 1:4 (NLT)

Why could God predetermine our salvation? Because in God’s eternal plan, the Lord Jesus Christ is

*... the Lamb who was slaughtered before the world was made*  
Revelation 13:8 (NLT)

Christ’s sacrifice for our sins is timeless. It only had to be expressed in time and space, as it was when He physically died for our sins on the cross.

In Part 2, we’ll discuss some aspects of the creation of the cosmos, and discover why things continue as they are today.

VBC Mens’ Breakfast, May 23, 2019

## Before

(Part 2)

In Part 1, we determined that **before** the Lord Jesus Christ created the world – **before** time began – God chose (elected) those of all time, from creation to consummation, who would be His spiritual children through faith in Christ, and promised – guaranteed – their eternal life. God could do that because, in His plan, Christ, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world (John 1:29), was slain **before** the world was made (Revelation 13:8).

Also in Part 1, the Trinity – the Godhead – was properly described as *the eternally existing triune God*. All members of the Trinity inhabit all time simultaneously. They have no beginning and no end. They are not constrained by time. Their timelessness is part of their perfection.

Time as we know it began when the cosmos was created. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Agent of creation, created the universe out of nothing (Latin *ex nihilo*). He spoke the cosmos into existence in six solar days.

***By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible.***

Hebrews 11:3 (ESV)

***He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.*** John 1:2-3 (NASB)

Since creation, Christ has been holding all things together, sustaining them, conserving them:

***He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.***

Colossians 1:17 (NLT)

Christ's sustaining power provides the binding energy that holds atoms – thus everything else – together. Christ's power is the basis, the reason, for the conservation of mass and energy as stated in the First Law of Thermodynamics. According to this law – the best-proved law of science, the most basic of all scientific principles – nothing is now being created or annihilated, only conserved. Nothing is now being created because Christ created all things in the past:

***His works have been finished since the foundation of the world***

Hebrews 4:3 (HCSB)

God is the uncaused Cause that caused everything to come into existence. He is the uncreated Creator Who created the universe and everything in it.

# Every!

(Part 1)

Every name. Every knee. Every tongue.

***Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.***

Philippians 2:9-11 (ESV)

The above verses immediately follow the passage describing Christ's *kenosis* (Greek for "emptying"), His self-emptying when He left Heaven, came to earth as a man – fully man and fully God – and died on a cross as our substitute, paying the penalty due for our sins. Note that the *kenosis* was not a loss of deity or divine attributes; God cannot become less than God. Rather, by becoming man, Christ temporarily laid aside – emptied Himself of – divine privileges for His sojourn on earth.

## Every Name

As a result of Christ's *kenosis* – note that our text verse begins with ***therefore*** – God the Father ***has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name***. The exaltation of Christ refers to His resurrection, ascension, and glorification at the Father's right hand (John 17:5) – including restoration of the divine privileges the Son had temporarily laid aside at the *kenosis*.

The new name the Father bestowed on His Son, ***the name that is above every name***, is "Lord." This new name describes His essential nature and places Him above and beyond all comparison. He is now the **Lord** Jesus Christ. His name is not merely a title, it refers to His person and to His position of dignity and honor. He is now the visible focus of the Godhead, a position graciously granted because of His self-humbling death.

Note that "Jesus" was the name given at his physical birth (Matthew 1:21), it is not His new name. "Jesus" is the equivalent of "Joshua," meaning "Savior" and "Deliverer."

The Lord Jesus Christ is indeed the Savior, the **only** Savior.

***Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."***

John 14:6 (ESV)

In Part 2 of this "Every!" series, we'll discover that **everyone** will ultimately acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, but for some it will be too late to prevent them being consigned to the Lake of Fire for eternity.

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
June 13, 2019

# Every!

(Part 2)

Every name. Every knee. Every tongue.

*Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Philippians 2:9-11 (ESV)

In Part 1, we determined that as a result of Christ's self-humbling death (*kenosis*, Philippians 2:1-8), God the Father gave Him a new ***name that is above every name***: Lord.

## Every Knee

Those who have trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior from sin have willingly submitted (bowed the knee) to Him as their sovereign Lord, their Master. But Christ's sovereignty, His authority, is not limited only to those who claim Him as Savior.

Christ is the sovereign Lord of the entire universe. Everyone and everything in the universe is subject to His authority. Government, culture, and society are under His ultimate control.

Unsaved people resist God's authority in their lives. In doing so, they assume control of their own destiny, and there are dire consequences for that, both now and eternally.

In the future, even the most recalcitrant person will recognize and submit (bow the knee) to the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Every Tongue

Referring to the final judgment, our text passage indicates that ***at the name of Jesus every knee (shall) bow ... and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord***. But for the unsaved, it will be too late. By refusing to accept Christ as Savior during their earthly life, they doomed themselves to eternal, conscious torment in Hell – the Lake of Fire.

**Bottom Line:** At some point, every person will bow the knee to Christ and confess that He is Lord. It's only a matter of when. And you determine the timing – it's your choice. Choose wisely, your decision has eternal consequences. How much better to trust Christ as Savior now, and be assured of spending eternity with Him in Heaven!

# Ultimate Worship

(Part 1)

*Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed and progressively changed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.* Romans 12:1-2 (AMP)

## Worship

Presenting your body – your life, your most precious possession – to God as a living sacrifice is the ultimate act of worship. How is this done? By daily telling God in prayer that you’re dedicating every aspect of your life to Him that day. Then put your promise into practice: Seek His direction in everything you do (Proverbs 3:5-6); seek, with the help of the Holy Spirit, to glorify God in every area of your life (1 Corinthians 10:31); serve God with the abilities and spiritual gifts He has graciously given you (1 Peter 4:10).

## Transformed, Not Conformed

In verse 2, we are admonished not to be conformed to this world – not to allow the world system to shape us, to force us into its mold. How can the world force us into its mold? One way is by getting us to think and behave the way unsaved people do, getting us to accept the ethical and moral standards of the world system.

Instead of being conformed, we are to be transformed. We are to be re-shaped, re-molded, changed to a different form (spiritually) than that which we used to be, that which we observe in the unsaved people of the world. Note that this transformation is an ongoing process, not a once-for-all-time event. You’ve got to continually work at it. The Christian life is not static!

We’re also told how to effect this spiritual transformation: By the renewing of our minds, changing our thought patterns and our will to make them more Christlike. This is accomplished by reading and studying God’s Word. How much time do you spend with your Bible, the only book God ever wrote?

## Practically Speaking

Do you live like the people of the world? Do you talk like them (profanity, obscenity, gossip, lies, etc.), watch the same filthy movies and TV shows, read the same smutty books and magazines, visit the same pornographic internet sites, spend your time and money as they do? Are you allowing the world to shape you? Your spiritual health is determined by what you feed your soul.

## Ultimate Worship

(Part 2)

*Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed and progressively changed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.* Romans 12:1-2 (AMP)

In Part 1, we determined that presenting (dedicating) your body to God as a living sacrifice is the ultimate act of worship because you're giving Him your most precious possession. Since everything we do is body-based, presenting your body is tantamount to presenting your entire life to God; it affects every aspect of life.

Presenting your life to God is not only the ultimate act of worship, it's also the ultimate act of trust. You're telling God you trust Him to do only what's best for you. If you're a born-again Christian you've already trusted Him for eternal life, so can't you also trust Him with every aspect of this brief, temporal, earthly life?

When something is sacrificed, the owner relinquishes all rights to that object. He no longer can control what happens to it. When you present your body to God as a living sacrifice, you're asking God – and giving Him permission – to do with your entire life (time, treasure, talent, relationships, health, etc.) whatever He wants in order to accomplish His purposes on earth, to bring Him glory. You're effectively telling God that you want what He wants. Yes, this is serious business and not to be taken lightly!

But wait! To Whom are you surrendering – committing – your life? To the eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, Creator God Who loves you beyond measure and *proved* it (Romans 5:8) by willingly sacrificing His only Son for you. He truly knows what it means to sacrifice. What you sacrifice to God won't ever equal what you'll receive!

We are to present our body as a living sacrifice out of gratitude for what God has done for us. Paul wrote that we are to do this *by* (because of) *the mercies of God*. If it weren't for God's mercies in Christ, we would be forever lost, destined to spend eternity in conscious torment in the Lake of Fire.

Our text verse indicates that our life, our living sacrifice, is to be *holy and well-pleasing to God*. Holiness is separation. We are to live separated lives, set apart from the ways of the wicked world system. How are you doing with that?

In Part 3, we'll discover the path to determining God's will for our lives.

## Ultimate Worship

(Part 3)

***Therefore I urge you, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and well-pleasing to God, which is your rational (logical, intelligent) act of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed and progressively changed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*** Romans 12:1-2 (AMP)

In Parts 1 and 2, we considered the apostle Paul's admonition to present (give, dedicate, commit) our bodies – our lives – to God as living sacrifices. Doing so is the ultimate act of worship and the ultimate act of trust. We also determined that this presenting of ourselves is serious business, but that the One to Whom we are submitting is our loving Father, the One Who desires only the best for us – and has the ability to make it happen!

Before we leave this very practical passage, let's look again at Paul's plea that you ...

***not be conformed to this world, but be transformed and progressively changed by the renewing of your mind***

The next two words, “so that,” introduce the reason for being ***transformed***:

***so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.***

How can you determine God's will? The answer is in this verse: ***be transformed and progressively changed by the renewing of your mind.*** How does that happen? How can you be ***transformed***? Once again, the answer is in this verse: ***by the renewing of your mind.*** And how is that done? By reading and studying the Bible, the only book God ever wrote.

Why will studying God's Word ***renew your mind*** – change the way you think? Because you'll get God's perspective on all of life. The Bible is God's communication, God's revelation, His very words to us. It's a reflection of His mind, His thoughts, His heart – and it's the most practical, useful book ever written. It contains the information our Creator knows we need in order to be successful in every avenue of life.

**Synopsis:** As your mind is renewed by the study of God's Word and your decisions are more Christlike, you will come to ***prove*** (approve, prove by testing) and desire God's will for your life. Only by being spiritually renewed can you determine, do, and enjoy the will of God.

VBC Men's Breakfast  
July 18, 2019

## Nothing

“From nothing, nothing comes.” “Every effect has a cause.” “Everything comes from something.”

Have you heard those expressions? Are they **always** true?

No, they are not! Relative to God, it is not true that every effect has a cause or that everything comes from something.

Christians correctly believe that God created the universe and everything in it. God is the Cause of everything that exists. “But,” some ask, “doesn’t God also need a cause?” “What caused God to come into existence?” “Who created God?”

Those questions are invalid because they rest on the faulty assumption that God is subject to the principles of the universe He created, some of which are stated in the first paragraph above. As the Creator, God is not bound by the laws of what He created.

If God as we know Him – as He is described in the Bible – was created, then someone more powerful existed before Him and our God cannot be the one true, sovereign, eternal, infinite, omnipotent God.

Consider the claim: “From nothing, nothing comes.” If that is true and there was ever a “time” when nothing existed, then nothing ever would have come into existence! So there had to be an eternal Uncaused Cause, an Uncaused Being, Who caused everything else to come into existence. That Uncaused Cause is God. He is the Uncreated Creator Who created the universe and everything in it.

In the physical universe, it is **now** true that every effect has a cause, and **now** something cannot come from nothing. But without God, the Uncaused Cause, nothing would exist. He is the One Who set everything into motion, including the logical and scientific fact that every effect has a cause. Can God still create *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) if He chooses to do so? Of course! He is not now and never will be bound by the physical laws of the universe He created.

**Bottom Line:** God is uncaused and uncreated. He simply exists. Always has. Always will. And in the future, every born-again Christian will live with God as long as He lives!

“God has no beginning, end, or succession of moments in his own being, and he sees all time equally vividly, yet God sees events in time and acts in time.”

Dr. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*

VBC Mens’ Breakfast  
July 25, 2019

# Lost

(Part 1)

Have you ever been **lost** – truly **lost**? No compass (or GPS), no map, no means of communication, concerned – or fearing – that heading the wrong direction would make matters more dire. As bad as that was, there’s something worse – infinitely, eternally worse than being physically **lost**: it’s being spiritually **lost**.

In a spiritual sense, “**lost**” means condemned, separated from God, under God’s wrath, perishing.

People who are **lost** in a spiritual sense are in great peril. They are ...

- **Lost** to God’s usefulness
- In danger of eternal ruin
- Doomed to suffer eternal conscious punishment

## **Lost** to God’s usefulness

The **lost** cannot fulfill God’s purpose for their lives. God made us for Himself, to worship Him, to glorify Him, to fellowship with Him. By rejecting or ignoring Christ, God’s only provision for our salvation, they will never experience any of that. The **lost** will never have the awareness of God’s indwelling presence, know His direction in their lives, have the privilege of serving Him, personally experience His love ...

## In Danger of Eternal Ruin

The **lost** are in a dire situation in which eternal, total loss of well-being is an absolute certainty unless they come to Christ for salvation.

## Doomed to Suffer Eternal Conscious Punishment

The eternal ruin described above is not annihilation, it is never-ending conscious punishment for sins, eternal torment in Hell – the Lake of Fire. The resurrected physical bodies of the **lost** will burn forever in conscious torment without being consumed (Mark 9:42-50).

At the final judgment, the Lord Jesus Christ will say to the **lost**, ...

***“Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.” ... And these will go away into eternal punishment ...*** Matthew 25:41, 46 (ESV)

Hell is a real place, prepared for Satan and the fallen angels. It’s also the eternal destiny of those who are **lost**.

In Part 2, we’ll ask and answer the question, “If God is truly loving and provided for our salvation, why are some people spiritually **lost**?” In preparation for that discussion, please read Romans 1:18-32.

VBC Mens’ Breakfast, August 1, 2019

## Lost (Part 2)

In Part 1, we determined that in a spiritual sense, “**lost**” means condemned, separated from God, under God’s wrath, perishing. Unless they come to Christ for salvation, the **lost** will never experience God’s indwelling presence, never fellowship with Him. When they die, the **lost** will be consigned to Hell – the Lake of Fire – to be consciously tormented eternally.

Why are people spiritually **lost**? Because they are sinners by birth and by practice. We willfully, knowingly sin. That sin condemns us to eternal death (Romans 6:23). But because of His love for us, God provided a remedy for our **lost** condition: He sent His one and only Son to earth to be our Savior, dying in our place, paying the penalty due for our sins. The death of the Lord Jesus Christ is God’s only provision for our salvation, and Christ is the only way to God (John 14:6).

Salvation is a personal choice; it’s volitional, an act of the will. To pass from spiritual death to spiritual life (John 5:24), an unsaved (**lost**) person must choose to accept Christ as their personal Savior from sin. But how can a person who has never heard the Gospel learn about God’s provision for their salvation? The Holy Spirit, communicating to us through the apostle Paul, provides an answer:

*... what can be known about God is plain to (the lost), because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.*

Romans 1:19-20 (ESV)

God’s *eternal power and divine nature* are revealed through the creation and are *clearly perceived* – understood – by man. What do the **lost** do with that knowledge? Some will gladly accept it and go on to seek more truth, which God will provide. Others will consciously, willfully, *suppress the truth* by rejecting or ignoring it, thus intentionally or unintentionally keeping it from having any influence on their lives. As a result, *they are without excuse* before God. And they remain **lost**, under God’s wrath. Here’s how Paul describes it:

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth.*

Romans 1:18 (ESV)

Had the **lost** not suppressed the truth they knew (vss 19, 20), God would have given them additional understandable spiritual truth over time, culminating in a knowledge of His provision for their salvation and the opportunity to be saved.

VBC Mens’ Breakfast  
August 8, 2019

## Lost (Part 3)

In Part 1, we determined that without a personal relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ, a person is spiritually **lost** – under God’s condemnation and doomed to perish, spend eternity in conscious torment in the Lake of Fire.

In Part 2, we saw that because of His mercy and His love for us, God sacrificed His only Son to pay our sin debt and make it possible for us to be reconciled to Himself. God has revealed Himself to all people through the witness of creation so that they are without excuse for their sin (Romans 1:19-20). To those who desire additional spiritual truth but have no access to the Gospel (the good news of salvation through Christ), God provides that truth in a manner they can understand and respond to.

How do **lost** people – those who reject God’s truth – respond to God’s revelation? As we determined in Part 2, rather than accepting the truth, some people suppress it, refusing to consider it (Romans 1:18). Some people question the truth, coming up with their own ideas of what God is like (vs 21). As a result, their minds become dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they are in reality utter fools (vs 22), worshipping and serving the things God created instead of the Creator Himself (vs 23). Ultimately, God gives these people up – abandons them – to follow their own passions (vss 26 -28) as described in verse 28:

***Since they thought it foolish to acknowledge God, he abandoned them to their foolish thinking and let them do things that should never be done.***

Here’s the sad result:

***Their lives became full of every kind of wickedness, sin, greed, hate, envy, murder, quarreling, deception, malicious behavior, and gossip. They are backstabbers, haters of God, insolent (arrogant), proud, and boastful. They invent new ways of sinning, and they disobey their parents. They refuse to understand, break their promises, are heartless, and have no mercy. They know God’s justice requires that those who do these things deserve to die, yet they do them anyway. Worse yet, they encourage others to do them, too.***

Romans 1:29-32 (NLT)

As indicated in Part 1, these people – including those who are our friends, neighbors, relatives, co-workers, ... – will never truly know God, never fulfill His purpose for their lives, and although they may be religious and may be “good” by the world’s standards, are destined to ultimately suffer conscious punishment forever. They are in the truest sense of the word ...

## Lost

VBC Mens’ Breakfast  
August 22, 2019

## Judge Not?

(Part 1)

### *Do not judge others, and you will not be judged*

Matthew 7:1 (NLT)

We frequently hear people quote this verse, usually to infer that we are wrong when we suggest that something someone has done is wrong. It seems that people use this verse as a means of shaming and reproofing us when we dare to call sin, “sin” and wrong, “wrong.” What does the verse really mean? Are we to refrain from ever denouncing wrongdoing? Certainly not!

The New Testament includes many examples of Christ and the apostles exercising judgment. And how about the prophets of the Old Testament – they certainly weren’t hesitant to denounce wrongdoing!

While we are expected to show moral and theological discernment, we must be careful to judge according to God’s standards, not ours. And we should be judging in a spirit of humility and mercy, not superiority and harshness. We’re all imperfect sinners.

We are not to judge others in a way we would not want to be judged. Our motivation should be redemption, helping people see the error of their way with the desire that they repent.

What the text verse is forbidding is unfair judgments, judgments that are severely critical, self-righteous, superficial, untrue, hypocritical.

If we judge others for doing what we do, we’re hypocrites, and we’re condemning ourselves and setting ourselves up for God’s judgment. Here’s the verse following our text verse in Matthew 7:

*For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you.* Matthew 7:2 (NASB)

**Bottom Line:** Opposing sin, calling it what it is, is not wrong. But we must do so according to God’s perfect standards, not ours. When the Bible declares something to be wrong, it’s wrong. Period. And it’s acceptable, even desirable when appropriate, to condemn – judge, expose, reprove – the wrongdoing and the perpetrator (Ephesians 5:11).

VBC Mens’ Breakfast  
August 29, 2019

## Judge Not?

(Part 2)

In Part 1, we determined that speaking out against evil is not wrong, but we should judge according to God's standards, not our own. We'll be measured with the same ruler we use to measure others! (Matthew 7:1-2)

Judging, condemning others for doing what we do, makes us hypocrites. This theme is continued and expanded in Matthew 7:3-5, the familiar *speck-and-log* passage:

***Why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye but don't notice the log in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' and look, there's a log in your eye? Hypocrite! First take the log out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.*** (HCSB)

The basic message in this passage is that before we judge another, we need to examine our own heart, get the log of sin out of our eye, then we can see clearly to help the other person get the speck of sin out of his eye.

Did you notice the comparison of *log* to *speck*? The implication is that our sin may be far greater than the other person's sin. It's amazing how blind we can be to the sin in our own lives (the effect of the log obscuring our vision), and how sensitive to the speck of sin in another person's life. We need to ask God to make us aware of the sin in our lives and to convict us of it.

When you approach a Christian brother who has fallen into sin, be humble and gentle, not arrogant or self-righteous. Remember that it could have been you who stumbled. You may have heard the expression, *There but for the grace of God go I*. It's true! We're all susceptible to the same temptations and failures:

***No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to humanity.***

1 Corinthians 10:13 (HCSB)

When confronting a sinning brother we must exercise caution lest Satan also tempt us to the same sin and we fall prey to it:

***Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so you also won't be tempted.*** Galatians 6:1 (HCSB)

What characterizes the spiritual man referenced in Galatians 6:1? We'll discuss that in Part 3.

## Judge Not?

(Part 3)

In Part 1, we determined that speaking out against evil is not wrong, but we should judge according to God's standards, not our own. We'll be measured with the same ruler we use to measure others! (Matthew 7:1-2)

In Part 2, we discussed Matthew 7:3-5, the familiar *speck-and-log* passage, and ended with a discussion of how to approach a sinning brother, as outlined in Galatians 6:1:

***Brothers, if someone is caught in any wrongdoing, you who are spiritual should restore such a person with a gentle spirit, watching out for yourselves so you also won't be tempted.*** (HCSB)

This verse indicates that it's a *spiritual* man who is qualified to restore a sinning brother. What are the qualifications of a spiritual man?

Commenting on Galatians 6:1, Dr. John MacArthur identifies a spiritual man as one who has trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior from sin, and is filled with the Holy Spirit, walking in the Spirit, and evidencing the fruit of the Spirit in his life.

At the moment of salvation, the person trusting Christ as Savior is permanently *indwelt* and *sealed* by God the Holy Spirit, the third person of the holy Trinity (Ephesians 1:13-14). Having been indwelt by the Holy Spirit, the new believer is eligible to be filled with the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, and to evidence the fruit of the Spirit.

### Filled with the Spirit

A Christian is *filled with the Spirit* – controlled by the Spirit – when he confesses known sin, asks the indwelling Holy Spirit to take control of his thoughts, words, and deeds, and obeys God (Ephesians 5:18).

### Walking in the Spirit

When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, living each moment in dependency on Him, sensitive to His voice, and obedient to Him, we are said to be *walking in the Spirit* (Galatians 5:16).

### Evidencing the Fruit of the Spirit

The fruit of the Holy Spirit is *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control* (Galatians 5:22-23). It is produced by the Holy Spirit in the life of a Christian who is walking in the Spirit.

**Bottom Line:** God's desire for each born-again man is that he be truly spiritual. To that end, God has given us a divine Helper, the indwelling Holy Spirit (John 14:16). Does your life evidence the fruit of the Spirit? It can!

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
September 12, 2019

## You Are Gods

*I say, 'You are gods; you are all children of the Most High'*

Psalm 82:6 (NLT)

Some religious traditions believe that there are many gods (polytheism); some religions claim that man can become a god. Neither is correct. These beliefs contradict the Bible's clear teaching that there is only one true God, Who is a trinity of three divine Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The teaching that man can become a god is a classic example of taking verses out of context. It is *eisegesis*, not *exegesis*. (These are hermeneutical principles, part of the art and science of interpreting a Bible passage, making it clear).

“Exegesis” literally means “to lead out.” Exegesis is approaching a passage with an open mind, asking God to show you the true meaning, the meaning He put into the passage. Exegesis is described in 2 Timothy 2:15 as *handling accurately the word of truth* (NASB) and *rightly dividing the word of truth* (KJV).

“Eisegesis” is the opposite of exegesis. It's reading a desired meaning into a passage, approaching a passage with a preconceived idea and trying to make the passage say what you want it to say. Someone has likened eisegesis to a would-be marksman shooting holes in a blank target then drawing a bulls-eye around the holes!

Psalm 82 is referring specifically to the OT rulers and judges (“gods” – Hebrew *elohim*) who in their exalted roles were God's human agents to judge His people. Unfortunately, these men were corrupt and misused their authority. God was urging them to act with impartiality and true justice (vss 2-5) because they too were mortal and would someday stand before Him, the ultimate Judge.

Note: Judges derive their authority ultimately from God and will give an account to Him for their verdicts. The integrity of the justice system in a nation provides a clear indication of the health of that society. What does that say about America?

Recorded in John 10:34, the Lord Jesus Christ quoted Psalm 82:6 when the Jews were threatening to stone Him for blasphemy – His claiming to be the Son of God. He reminded the Jews that in their Law (the OT), rulers and judges – corrupt, unjust, human beings – were called “gods” because they were agents of God's revelation and will, and that since He was under divine orders and on God's mission, as proved by his works, His claiming to be God's Son was not blasphemy (John 10:22-39).

**Bottom Line:** The “gods” in Psalm 82 were mortal men, not divine beings who were once men. Psalm 82:6 and John 10:34 cannot be used to prove that a man can become a god. Nor can any other passage.

## God's Great Mercy

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*

1 Peter 1:3-5 (ESV)

Here's the text passage in outline form: God's Mercy, Our Hope, Our Inheritance

### God's Mercy

According to **His great** (abundant, boundless) **mercy** (not giving us what we deserve), God has **caused us to be born again** (born anew).

### Our Hope

We are born again **to a living** (ever-living, real, certain) **hope** ...

**Through** (by means of) **the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead** (if Christ is not raised, we have no hope).

### Our Inheritance

We are born again **to an inheritance\* that is** ...

- **Imperishable** (incorruptible, beyond the reach of change or decay)
- **Undefiled** (unpolluted, unstained)
- **Unfading** (perpetual)
- **Kept** (reserved) **in Heaven for you** who are ...

**Guarded** (garrisoned, shielded) **by God's power** until ...

We fully inherit our **salvation** that is **ready to be revealed** when we are in God's presence.

- \* Our inheritance includes eternal life, righteousness, joy, peace, perfection, God's presence, Christ's glorious companionship, rewards, and all else God has planned for His children!

No wonder the apostle Peter starts our text passage with ...

***Blessed** (to be praised) **be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!***

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
September 26, 2019

## A New Creation!

Really? A **new creation**? Didn't God cease creating after the six days of creation described in the first two chapters of Genesis? No, He didn't!

While He is no longer creating physical objects – for example, the universe – God is today **creating** a new nature in those who trust Him as their Savior and are thus regenerated (saved, spiritually born again).

At the time of your salvation, God made you a **new creation**, a saint – literally, a holy one – and **created** in you a new, perfect nature.

Here's how the Apostle Paul described it:

***Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*** (2 Corinthians 5:17 – ESV)

“The miracle of regeneration is a true miracle of special creation. It is comparable in quality, though not in quantity, to the creation of the universe.

No natural process can accomplish or explain such a miracle.”

Note in *The New Defender's Study Bible*

Paul also told us that our new nature is ...

***... created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.***  
(Ephesians 4:24 – ESV)

Don't miss that wonderful truth! Our new nature is absolutely perfect; it is holy, truly righteous. Because it is holy, the new nature **cannot sin**. That's right, if you're a born-again Christian, you have a nature residing within you that cannot sin.

So why do we continue to sin once we have a perfect new nature inside? Because the corrupt, sinful old nature we were born with is still within us, influencing us – and we willingly yield to its promptings. But you don't have to!

When your sinful nature tempts you to sin, you now have the option of listening to and obeying your new nature instead. That's why the apostle Paul urged you to put off your old self and put on your new self (Ephesians 4:22-24). Why is that possible? Only because you are ...

## A New Creation!

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
October 17, 2019

## **Eternal**

Have you noticed? Nothing physical lasts. Everything people build or develop eventually crumbles, stops working, etc. Our physical bodies adhere to this same pattern, as does the universe. So what is eternal? Here are some things that outlast the ravages of time as we know it.

### **God's Word is eternal**

As Christians, we are privileged to have the eternal written Word of God. The Lord Jesus Christ told us that Heaven and Earth will pass away, but His words will not (Matthew 24:35). God's Word endures forever (Isaiah 40:8). Does that make the Bible more valuable, more important, more trustworthy, than all other writings? You know the answer. This book, and this book alone, can give you a godly, eternal perspective. Are you reading and studying it?

### **Men's souls are eternal**

God created us to live forever. Every person who has ever been conceived has an eternal soul that will continue forever. Somewhere.

### **Our works for God are eternal**

We are told that *our labor is not in vain in the Lord* (1 Corinthians 15:58). While good works are not required for salvation, they are an indicator of a genuine conversion. God expects us to work on His behalf while we're on Earth (Ephesians 2:10). We have only one life and a very short time until we stand before God to be evaluated for eternal rewards – or loss thereof. How are you using the time you have left?

### **The consequences of some actions are eternal**

For example, the decision to accept or reject the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior has eternal consequences. Another example: The beatitudes listed by Christ are a series of heart attitudes and eternal consequences (Matthew 5:3-12).

### **Heaven and Hell are eternal**

At the moment of death, your eternal destiny is sealed. The opportunity to accept Christ as Savior ends at death (Hebrews 9:27). The decision you make on this side of the grave irrevocably determines your final destiny. You will either live blissfully forever in God's presence or live forever in conscious torment (the ceaseless infliction of unbearable pain) in the Lake of Fire. It's your choice, and it's ....

## **Eternal**

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
October 24, 2019

## Answers!

*God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.* Ephesians 2:8-9 (NLT)

This is arguably one of the best-known passages relating to personal salvation. If you haven't already done so, memorize this important passage in your preferred Bible translation so you can share it with someone else.

The verses above provide **answers** to some of the questions regarding salvation.

**Who?** *God.*

God is the sole Operator in salvation. It is entirely and exclusively the work of the three members of the Trinity. Even the faith to trust Christ as Savior is a gift from God, and, as the verse indicates, *you can't take credit for this.*

**What?** *God saved you.*

God rescued you – *saved you* – from spending eternity in the Lake of Fire.

**How?** *God saved you by His grace.*

Salvation is only through, by means of, God's grace – His undeserved goodness and mercy – not because anyone merits it.

**When?** *God saved you by His grace when you believed.*

Before He created the world, God chose (elected – Ephesians 1:4) those He would save, and we must, by a deliberate act of our will, choose to accept the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior from sin (John 3:36).

**Cost?** Nothing. Salvation is free to us, *it is a gift from God.*

As the passage indicates, *Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done.* We cannot work our way to Heaven. We cannot earn our salvation, it is an unmerited gift. The cost to God? The sacrifice of His only Son; temporarily forsaking His Son on the cross.

**So?** *So none of us can boast about (our salvation).*

What isn't answered in the passage above is the all-important **why** question. **Why** did God provide salvation to mankind? **Why** should He even care about us? John 3:16 has the answer: Because He loves us.

*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.* (ESV)

Share this good news, the Gospel, with someone who desperately needs to know the Savior, because you now have the ...

## Answers!

VBC Mens' Breakfast  
October 31, 2019

## The Pleasures of Sin

(Part 1)

*(Moses) chose to share the oppression of God's people instead of enjoying the fleeting pleasures of sin.* Hebrews 11:25 (NLT)

If you've trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior, your sins – past, present, and future – have been forgiven and your eternal destiny is secure, but sin in your life will still produce consequences. That's what this five-part series explores.

Admittedly, sin – at least some sin – is pleasurable, it's something we may enjoy for a brief (fleeting) period of time.

Although some sin may initially be pleasurable, it will return results, sometimes bitter results. Those results may be immediate or they may be years in the future, but they will occur. All sin is an offense to God and He doesn't just wink at it.

We may be able to hide our sins from other people for a while, but the Bible warns us that we cannot hide them forever:

*you may be sure that your sin will find you out* Numbers 32:23 (NLT)

We certainly cannot hide our sins from God, for ...

*all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.*  
Hebrews 4:13 (NASB)

There are consequences to sins and to covering (hiding, not admitting) your sins:

*People who conceal their sins will not prosper ...* Proverbs 28:13a (NLT)

King David expressed both the physical and mental/emotional results that may accompany unconfessed sin:

*When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long*  
Psalm 32:3 (NLT)

But there is good news! Here's the second part of Proverbs 28:13:

*... but if they confess and turn from (their sins), they will receive mercy.*

And here's another wonderful promise:

*If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* 1 John 1:9 (NASB)

God promises to forgive our sins when we confess them to Him, but, for our benefit, He doesn't always cancel the consequences. Think about that when you're faced with the temptation to sin!

VBC Mens' breakfast  
November 7, 2019

## The Pleasures of Sin

(Part 2)

In Part 1, we determined that sin – at least some sin – is pleasurable, it’s something we may enjoy for a brief (fleeting) period of time, but sin always returns results. Sometimes bitter results. The fact that you may not immediately experience the results of sin doesn’t mean you will never experience those results.

All sin is ultimately against God. Israel’s King David, whose egregious sins are recorded in the Old Testament, wrote this:

*Against you (God), and you alone, have I sinned; I have done what is evil in your sight.*  
Psalm 51:4 (NLT)

The real tragedy of sin is that you’re sinning against the One who willingly left Heaven’s glory, became a man, died in your place, as your substitute, and rescued (saved) you from eternal conscious torment in the Lake of Fire. Do you really want to sin against the One who loves you that much?

Although our sin is against God, and we will personally experience the consequences, our sin also adversely affects other people. Like waves that flow outward from a rock thrown into a lake, the consequences of sin may extend far beyond the sinner.

In his book, *Christian Combat in Modern America*, Dan Maruyama writes

“Satan would have you believe that sin is like a bullet that pierces the life of the sinner, but the truth is that sin is a bomb that blows up the sinner and hurls fragments and death at everyone around him.”

Consider some of the devastating results of David’s secret sin of adultery with Bathsheba:

- Murder of Bathsheba’s husband, Uriah, a loyal soldier of David
- Death of the child born of the adulterous relationship
- Incest, rape, and murder within the family
- Insurrection of David’s throne by his own son, Absalom
- Immorality in public by Absalom
- King David’s forces battle the forces of Absalom
- Absalom is killed

When you’re tempted to sin, think about who would be affected by that sin. God is at the top of that list. You’re next, then ...

Is the **fleeting pleasure of sin** worth the enduring consequences?

VBC Mens’ breakfast  
November 14, 2019

# The Pleasures of Sin

(Part 3)

In Part 1, we determined that sin – at least some sin – is pleasurable, it’s something we may enjoy for a brief (fleeting) period of time, but sin always returns results. Sometimes bitter results. The fact that you may not immediately experience the results of sin doesn’t mean you will never experience those results.

In Part 2, we discovered that all sin is ultimately against God, but that its effects can extend far beyond the sinner.

Now, in Part 3, we’ll see that although all sin is offensive to God, there is one type of sin that is especially abhorrent to Him. It’s *presumptuous* sin. Dr. C. H. Spurgeon, British evangelist, called such sins, “the chief of all sins.” King David prayed that God would keep him from presumptuous sins (Psalm 19:13).

Under Old Testament Jewish Law, presumptuous sin was punishable by death (Numbers 15:30). It was the only sin for which there was not a prescribed offering in the OT Law. That’s how serious God considers it.

Here are some examples of presumptuous sins:

*I know it’s wrong to lie, but I’m going to do it anyway because if I don’t, I’ll have to (fill in the blank). Besides, I know God will forgive me.*

That’s true, God will forgive you, but consequences may follow. Be prepared.

*I can look at that magazine or read that book, I can watch that movie (or TV program), or view that internet site or visit that place, etc. I’m strong spiritually; it won’t hurt me.*

Not true. Beware! That’s Satan’s lie to trip you up spiritually.

Get the idea? Presumptuous sin is willful sin, premeditated sin, deliberate sin, sin purposely committed with the intention of sinning.

One meaning of *presume*, is *to dare*. When you sin presumptuously, you’re daring God to do something about it – and that’s a very dangerous, foolish thing to do! You’re putting yourself in great jeopardy – spiritually, possibly physically, financially, and/or in other ways.

Presumptuous sin won’t cause a born-again Christian, a true child of God, to lose his salvation, but it could – and probably will – result in God’s discipline in his life.

Sinning presumptuously is telling God that you want what you want more than what He wants. Think about it. Is that really the message you want to send Him?

VBC Mens’ breakfast  
November 21, 2019

## The Pleasures of Sin

(Part 4)

In Part 1, we determined that sin – at least some sin – is pleasurable, it's something we may enjoy for a brief (fleeting) period of time, but sin always returns results. Sometimes bitter results. Perhaps immediately, perhaps delayed. God doesn't ignore sin.

In Part 2, we discovered that all sin is ultimately against God, and that sin's effects can extend far beyond the sinner. Author Dan Maruyama (*Christian Combat in Modern America*) describes sin as more like a bomb than a bullet, blowing up the sinner and hurling fragments and death at everyone around him.

In Part 3, we discussed the danger of presumptuous sins, sins committed willfully, purposely, knowingly, daring God to do something about it. In His mercy, God will forgive us of even those sins.

The only sin that is described as unforgiveable (unpardonable) is outlined in the gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Here's one of those verses:

***Whoever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.***

Matthew 12:32b (NASB)

It is the Holy Spirit Who convicts us of sin, invites us to trust the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior, and even gives us the ability to exercise saving faith. The person who continues to reject the Holy Spirit's conviction and invitations, thus ***speak(ing) against the Holy Spirit***, will die in his sins because those sins haven't been forgiven. The result: he will spend eternity in conscious torment in the Lake of Fire.

**Bottom line:** The only unforgiveable sin is permanently rejecting the Holy Spirit's invitation to accept Christ as Savior. Every person who dies without Christ is guilty of this sin. A born-again Christian cannot commit the unforgiveable sin because he has accepted, not rejected, the Lord Jesus Christ.

VBC Mens' breakfast  
December 5, 2019

# The Pleasures of Sin

(Part 5)

In the first four parts of this series, we've determined that

- Although sin may be pleasurable for a brief time, it always results in undesirable consequences. Those consequences may be immediate or delayed. (Part 1)
- The effects of sin may extend far beyond the sinner. Sin is more like a bomb than a bullet. (Part 2)
- One type of sin – presumptuous sin, daring God to respond – is especially odious to God. (Part 3)
- The only people who commit the unpardonable sin are those who ultimately fail to trust the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior. (Part 4)

Although we've talked much about sin, we haven't yet defined it. So to complete this series, let's ask and answer the question, What is sin?

Here are several quotes from Dr. John MacArthur, excerpted from the January, 2007, issue of *Decision* magazine:

“Sin is any lack of conformity to the moral character of God or the law of God. We sin by thinking evil, speaking evil, acting evil, or omitting good.”

Dr. MacArthur's concise definition of sin indicates that there are “sins of commission” – doing what we know is wrong – and “sins of omission” – failing to do what we know we should do.

In the following three paragraphs, Dr. MacArthur describes the nature of sin:

“Sin is defilement. It is ugliness across the face of beauty. It is to the soul what scars are to a beautiful face; what a stain is to a white silk cloth.

“Sin is rebellion. The sinner tramples on God's law, tramples on God's character, willfully crosses God's will, affronts God, mocks God.

“Sin is ingratitude. Everything we have, everything we are, is from God. All the food the sinner eats, God gave him. All the air the sinner breathes, God gave him. All the joys the sinner experienced, God provided. The sinner eagerly embraces God's graces and mercy then betrays Him by being the friend of God's enemy, Satan.”

Although the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23), if you've received Christ as your Savior, sinning won't result in losing your salvation – because Christ died in your place to pay the debt of your sin – but sin's consequences can certainly ruin your life and that of many others.

**Bottom Line of this five-part series: God is serious about sin. Are you?**

VBC Mens' breakfast  
December 12, 2019

## None

*There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.*

Romans 3:10-12 (NKJV)

Did you notice the inclusivity of this passage? **None** appears four times; **no, not one**, twice; **all**, once; **together**, once. The initial condition of every person born into the human race is described in these verses; no one is excluded. Here's God's description of us:

- We do not have right standing with God (**righteousness**). In fact, just the opposite – we are under God's condemnation for our sin. All unregenerate men are naturally evil. We are sinners from birth and by practice.
- We do not **understand**. The unsaved man cannot comprehend God's truth and standard of righteousness.
- We don't **seek after God**. Man's natural tendency is to seek his own interests. No one seeks after God without the help of the Holy Spirit.
- We **turned aside** from God. Our natural inclination is to pursue our own way, the way of the world system.
- We are spiritually **unprofitable** – lost, doomed to spend eternity in the Lake of Fire with Satan and his evil angels.
- We are incapable of doing anything **good**, anything pleasing to God.

Dr. John MacArthur explains our unregenerate state in candid terms:

“Man is morally and spiritually bankrupt. Nothing he can do will ever produce righteousness or give him value. All efforts at establishing self-righteousness are doomed to fail because man on his own is incapable of doing good. Genuine meaning and purpose can only come out of a right relationship with the Creator.” From *Remember and Return: Rekindling Your Love for the Savior*

What's the remedy for our condition? How can we gain right standing with God? The only answer is receiving the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior from sin.

*But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God* John 1:12 (NKJV)

Without a personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, how much hope do you have of spending eternity with God in Heaven?

## None

VBC Mens' Breakfast, December 19, 2019