

House to House VOLUME 25 NUMBER 2 Heart to Hea www.housetohouse.com

Who Has the "Good Life?

Allen Webster

He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; —Isaiah 61:1

Author's note: Entering a foreign culture is cause for reflection and opportunity for comparison. Sitting on the plane returning from a mission trip to Tanzania, Africa, and then waiting for a delayed connecting flight in a busy DFW airport, my thoughts turned in this direction.

Though Americans and Tanzanians live on the same planet, they live in different worlds. In so many ways we are a hundred years ahead of them-medically, technologically, educationally, and materially. We would not even consider trading places with them. In areas like transportation, food preparation, hygiene, farming, and entertainment, their lifestyle does not even register on the same scale with the American way of life. For these reasons, we feel sympathy for them.

But in other ways, they still have what we left behind. They seem to enjoy life and laugh a lot more than most Americans (cf. Proverb 17:22). They still have time for Bible classes and preaching (1 Corinthians 1:18). They have large families with plenty of children playing all around (cf. Psalm 127:3-5). They still enjoy the simple pleasures we gave up long ago. They aren't rushed; they have time to "stop and smell the roses." For these reasons, we find ourselves a little envious.

SO, WHO HAS THE "GOOD LIFE?" YOU DECIDE

They worry about getting enough vitamins and protein in their diet; we worry about getting too much cholesterol and fat.

They wear their clothes out because they wash them on a rock; we throw ours out because they are last year's fashion (cf. Matthew 6:31-32).

They worry about chasing rats away; we worry about winning the rat race. "'Come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while.' For there were many coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat" (Mark 6:31).

They live in mud huts because they cannot afford better houses; we live in better houses that we cannot afford. "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Luke 12:15).

They are poor and humble; we are rich and proud. "Because you say, 'I am rich, have become wealthy, and have need of nothing'—and do not know that you are wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked'" (Revelation 3:17).

They die at forty with disease and poor medicine; we die at fifty with heart attacks and lung cancer. "Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit . . . therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit" (1 Corinthians 6:19–20).

Their women never wear pants in public (only dresses); ours wear hardly anything at all. "In like manner also, that the women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation" (1 Timothy 2:9a).

They bathe naked (nearly) in a river for lack of indoor plumbing; we have it and (sun) bathe naked (nearly) on a beach. "Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). Men and women should resolve "not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's [or sister's] way" (Romans 14:13).

They are glad to have any clothes without holes; we won't wear clothes unless they have the right name on them. We should not seek excess, as with "braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing" (! Timothy 2:9b).

Their children are poorly dressed but sit quietly through two hour services; ours are immaculately clothed but get a drink of water every ten minutes and won't behave. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1). We've wiped out malaria and typhoid; they are not bothered with hypertension and lung cancer.

They worry about malnutrition, undernourishment, and starvation; we worry about anorexia, obesity, and bulimia.

They are poor and satisfied; we are rich and discontented. "Now godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6).

They have little and want little; we have a lot and want more. "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (1 Timothy 6:7–8).

They ask for an extra preaching service each night; we complain if the preacher goes over five minutes. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6).

They know nothing of TVs and VCRs; then again, they know nothing of dirty movies and seven wasted hours a day. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). We should be "redeeming the time" (Ephesians 5:16).

Many don't have phones, but they don't have telemarketing either.

Their pace is slow, but they have time to talk after a worship service; ours is fast, but we have little time for each other. "Let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works" (Hebrew 10:24).

They have no cars so they walk everywhere; we drive everywhere and then walk in the park for exercise.

Their men marry seven wives at a

time; ours marry seven wives—one after another. "Whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9).

They live in misery and long for heaven; we live in luxury and doubt the afterlife. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus" (Revelation 22:20b); "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:46).

Their children play with homemade toys for hours; ours tire of electronic games ten minutes after opening them.

They are poor, and steal; we are rich, and covetous. "Let him who stole steal no longer (Ephesians 4:28); "Therefore put to death . . . covetousness, which is idola-try" (Colossians 3:5).

They believe in superstition and witchcraft; we have motels with no thirteenth floor and horoscopes that we read every morning. "Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are . . . idolatry, sorcery, hatred" (Galatians 5:19–20).

They live in mud huts with no doors, but are unafraid; we live in mansions with alarms and fear for our lives.

They have no Bibles but beg for them; we have several that we rarely open; "they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so" (Acts 17:10).

Which has the good life? Neither. Who does? Those who make it to the perfect land of eternal delights (Revelation 21)!



We can ask no more important question than "What must I do to be saved?" Each of us will one day stand before the judgment seat of Christ, and we are responsible for obeying the Lord. Salvation has two parts: God's part, and man's part. God, because of His great love for mankind, has done His part in sending Christ to die for the sins of men. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Paul calls this "grace" the gift of God. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Galatians 2:8). Paul reminds us that we cannot save ourselves and must rely on God "through faith." "Through faith" means that man must also do his part, because no one benefits from a gift until he receives it.

To find what man's part in the plan of salvation involves, one must go to the right place. The book of Acts explains God's plan of salvation through several examples of conversion. There are nine specific accounts of conversion in Acts: The conversion of the Jews at Pentecost, chapter 2; the Samaritans, chapter. 8; the Ethiopian eunuch, chapter 8; Saul of Tarsus, chapters 9 and 22; Cornelius, chapter 10; Lydia, chapter 16; the Philippian jailer, chapter 16; the Corinthians, chapter 18; the Ephesians, chapter 19. In each example, certain common actions, or steps of obedience, were taken by those who became Christians.

Upon hearing the pure Gospel message, each believed in Jesus as the Son of God. Though the text does not explicitly mention belief each time, it is implied. The Jews at Pentecost, having heard the message, "were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'" (Acts 2:37). Their question, "What shall we do?" showed that they believed, but they realized that they needed to do more than have simple belief to obtain salvation. James wrote, "You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only" (2:24).

Following their confession of faith in Christ, Peter told the Jews at Pentecost, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38). Thus we understand that repentance must accompany faith in Christ.

One must also confess faith in Christ, as the Ethiopian did (Acts 8), because Christ will not confess us unless we are willing to confess Him. "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 10:32–33).

Baptism is the only step toward salvation explicitly mentioned in every conversion account. Each of the accounts of conversion in Acts shows that baptism is necessary for obedience to Christ. Hearing the Gospel message, believing in Christ, repenting of past sins, confessing Christ, and being baptized into Christ makes one a Christian, and brings salvation. Then one must serve the Lord faithfully (Revelation 2:10). —Bob Prichard

It's What You Do—Not When You Do It

Ted Williams, at age 42, slammed a home run in this last official time at bat. Mickey Mantle, age 20, hit 23 home runs his first full year in the major leagues.

Golda Meir was 71 when she became Prime Minister of Israel. William Pitt the Younger was 24 when he became Prime Minister of Great Britain.

George Bernard Shaw was 94 when one of his plays was first produced. Mozart was just seven when his first composition was published.

Benjamin Franklin was a newspaper columnist at 16 and a framer of The United States Constitution when he was 81.

You're never too young or too old to serve God. Jesus just said, "Come, follow me" (Matthew 19:21).

"I have been young, and now am old" PSALM 37:25



God's Plan for Saving Man

Divine Love: John 3:16 God's Grace: Ephesians 2:8 Christ's Blood: Romans 5:9 Holy Spirit's Word: Romans 1:16 Sinner's Faith: Acts 16:31 Sinner's Repentance: Luke 13:3 Sinner's Confession: Romans 10:10 Sinner's Baptism: Acts 22:16 Christian's Love: Matthew 22:37 Christian's Work: James 2:24 Christian's Hope: Romans 8:24

Still Learning

Below is a compilation of actual student bloopers collected by teachers from eighth grade through college.

- Ancient Egypt was inhabited by mummies and they all wrote in hydraulics. They lived in the Sarah Dessert and traveled by Camelot. The climate of the Sarah is such that the inhabitants have to live elsewhere.
- The Bible is full of interesting caricatures. In the first book of the Bible, Guinessis, Adam and Eve were created from an apple tree. One of their children, Cain, asked, "Am I my brother's son?"
- Moses led the Hebrew slaves to the Red Sea, where they made unleavened bread which is bread made without any ingredients.
- Moses went up on Mount Cyanide to get the ten commandments. He died before he ever reached Canada.
- Solomon had three hundred wives and seven hundred porcupines.
- It was an age of great inventions and discoveries. Gutenberg invented removable type and the Bible. Another important invention was the circulation of blood. Sir Walter Raleigh is a historical figure because he invented cigarettes and started smoking.

"A merry heart does good" PROVERBS 17:22



For more material on the home and family, fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, grandparents, and family finances, go to www.housetohouse.com.

Serious About Those Vows

What are some "do's" and "don'ts" about avoiding sexual temptations?

- Do keep visual reminders of your marriage contract. Always wear your wedding ring when in public. Keep pictures of your spouse in your wallet, as a desktop screensaver, or in your workspace. Frame your marriage certificate and keep it on a prominent wall. Remember the contract you made with God, your parents, friends, church, and nation to be faithful to your partner. When you placed that ring on your mate's finger, you promised your heart, affections, loyalty, and faithfulness "until death do you part."
- Don't be overconfident (1 Corinthians 10:12). Recognize your weak points. One study showed that one is vulnerable after a major let-down or a major success. Those who are depressed or are having marital trouble can easily fall into illicit relationships.
- Do avoid flirty people. If a flirtatious woman is in the break room, go outside to drink your coffee. If a man tries to flirt with you at a ballgame, find another seat. A wise man sees evil coming and avoids it (Proverbs 22:3).
- Don't send mixed messages to those around you. Avoid prolonged stares, lingering niches, and any joking that might be construed as flirting.
- Do be on guard when out of your normal routine (1 Peter 5:8). Business trips, vacations, a new job, new membership at a gym or sports team, and similar changes are times of vulnerability. When away overnight, call home and talk to your spouse and children at least every night—and if you feel tempted, call home immediately. Take their pictures and put them in your motel room. Don't hang out in the lobby or bar. Block out the TV sex channels—or just leave it off

altogether (there are sexual images on most channels).

- Don't let friendships cross the line. Never do anything when your mate is absent that you would not do in his/her presence. Most affairs begin by "just being friends." One study shows that "friends" are those most likely to be adulterous companions (followed by "coworkers"). If things are heading toward adultery, it is important to put some emotional distance between you and this person ... right now! Whatever you do, don't express your feelings to him/her. It is also important to keep the right kind of friends. Those who tell you dirty stories or flirt with you are not really your friends. Avoid them! This is not because you are too good for them but because you are not good enough for them.
- Do be aware of the power immodest dress has on you and others. Don't pick up the magazine; don't click on the web link; sit with your back toward an indecently dressed female in a restaurant or at the office. Don't wear a garment that sends a message you don't want received.
- Don't let a person of the opposite sex confide in you about marriage problems.
- Do take drastic action if a line has been crossed: quit a hobby/sport, change jobs, break a friendship, change congregations, move to a new city (completely avoid the place you see this person).

When you reach your silver and then golden anniversaries, you'll be glad you kept your vows.

"Can a man take fire to his bosom, and his clothes not be burned?... Whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; he who does so destroys his own soul" PROVERBS 6:27, 32

The Paradox of the Cross

The Cross of Christ is the greatest of all paradoxes. It was the most tragic event in the history of the world, yet the most wonderful thing that ever happened. It was the saddest spectacle man ever beheld, yet it was the most stunning defeat Satan ever suffered and the most glorious victory Christ ever won. He won by losing. He conquered by surrendering.

The Cross was the greatest exhibition of divine justice in condemning sin, yet the most wonderful demonstration of divine mercy in pardoning sin. It was God's greatest manifestation of hatred for sin, yet His supreme proof of love for the sinner. The Cross was the means by which God's justice condemned sin, and His mercy forgave it.

The Cross was the darkest hour in history, yet it was the time of greatest light. Though the sun refused to shine, and God hid his face from Christ, the Cross was the means by which Christ really became "the light of the world" (John 8:12). In the Cross we see man's hatred for Christ, yet we see Christ's love for man. There we see human vengeance as they cry for His blood, yet we see divine forgiveness and Jesus prays, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34).

The Cross portrays man's sinfulness and God's holiness; human weakness and divine strength. It demonstrates man's inability to same himself, and God's ability and power to do this for him. The Cross, from the human standpoint, is foolishness; yet it is a revelation of the highest wisdom of God. —Eugene Britnell



"For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God"

1 CORINTHIANS 1:18

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Send us your answers to receive a free Bible bookmark! We'll grade and return your questions and enclose the bookmark "[Coming Soon]" as a way of saying thanks for spending time in the Word (quantities may be limited).

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Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

Answers to Previous Quizzes

V. 24:12 *Suffering Saints:* 1. live godly, Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 3:12) 2. Jesus (John 15:20) 3. ashamed (1 Peter 4:16) 4. adversary, devil (1 Peter 5:8) 5. Job (James 5:11) 6. various (1 Peter 1:6) 7. Trials that test our faith and produce patience (James 1:2–4) 8. Glorify God (1 Peter 4:16) 9. Gold (1 Peter 1:7) 10. A little while (1 Peter 1:6) 11. Patience (James 1:3) 12. eternal weight of glory (2 Corinthians 4:17) 13. God (2 Corinthians 1:3–5)

V. 25:1 *The Book of Joshua*: 1. Nun (Joshua 1:1) 2. The priests (3:13) 3. Set up 12 stones (4:9) 4. Harlot (6:25) 5. Under stalks of flax (2:6) 6. Hung a scarlet cord (2:21) 7. 3 (6:3-4) 8. Achor (7:24-26) 9. Passover (5:11-12) 10. They were strong and tall (11:21; Deuteronomy 9:2) 11. With large hailstones (10:11) 12. About a whole day (10:13) 13. Gibeonites (9:3-4) 14. 6 (20:7-9) 15. Be strong and courageous (1:9) 16. Shechem (24:32) 17. House, serve (24:15) 18. 40 (14:7) 19. Hebron (14:13) 20. 110 (24:29)

Six Things Missing in Heaven

Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

1. Those in heaven do not get	(Matthew 22:30).			
2. "Neither can they	any more" (Luke 20:36).			
3. "God shall wipe away all	from their eyes" (Revelation 7:17).			
4. "neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more				
for the former things are passed away" (Revelation	21:4).			
5. "And there shall be no more	"(Revelation 22:3).			

6. "And there shall be no ______ there..." (Revelation 22:5).

Bible Curses

Directions: Find answers in the following passages: Leviticus 19:14; Job 1:11; 2:5, 9; Ecclesiastes 10:20; Malachi 4:6; Acts 23:12; Galatians 1:8; 3:10, 13; James 3:10. Questions are taken from the New King James Version.

- 1. According to Galatians, what people remain under a curse?_
- 2. People who teach a false ______ would be cursed.
- 3. Who was made a curse for our sins? _____
- 4. What sort of handicapped people should we not curse?
- 5. Whose wife told him to curse God and die?

6. What prophet ended his book with God's threat to come and strike the land with a curse?

7. What book says that blessings and cursing should not come out of the same mouth?

8. Who had enemies that bound themselves under a curse because they were so determined to kill him? _____

9. Who told God that Job would curse him to his face?_

10. What book says that kings should not be cursed, for little birds will tell on the cursing person?

—J. Stephen Lang, The Complete Book of Bible Trivia

(Tyndale House Publishers, 1988).

By What Standard of AUTHORITY?

By what authority do you and I practice the things we do in religion? Let us observe the following questions:

Is the majority the correct standard of authority? Surely not. Through time the majority has been wrong. Where was the majority in the flood? What about Sodom and Gomorrah? Jesus said many travel the broad way that leads to destruction (Matthew 7:13-14).

Are kinsmen the correct standard of authority? Surely not. If they were, then every religion, even those that deny the divinity of Christ and reject the Bible as the infallible guide in matters of religion, would be all right if such was accepted by kinsmen.

Are the creeds of men the correct standard of authority? Surely not. They are contradictory to the inspired and infallible Word of God. They contain the doctrines and commandments of men, concerning which Jesus said, "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matthew 15:9).

Is "I think" the correct standard of authority? Surely not. Jeremiah wrote, "O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; it is not in man who walks to direct his own steps" (Jeremiah 10:23). Also observe: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death" (Proverbs 14:12).

Christ and His testament give us the correct standard of authority. All authority in heaven and in earth has been given to Christ (Matthew 28:18). His testament is complete, final, and all-sufficient (John 16:13; Jude 3). Religious practices are to be based on His Word. Peter wrote, "If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God" (1 Peter 4:11). In view of this, can you give book, chapter, and verse for what you practice in religion? -- Wendell Winkler

> "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?"

> > **MATTHEW 21:23**

Cut out this section and mail it to the address on the front.

Recommended Resource

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The Gospel Broadcasting Network is unique in the world of religious TV—commercial free, and they never ask for money! Sponsored by the churches of Christ, GBN is available on many cable systems, as well as through their smartphone apps, the Roku device, and at gbntv.org.

I want to learn more **about the Bible!**

If you knew for sure that the religious path you are on would not get you to heaven, would you change? If there was the possibility of a doubt, would you investigate? Why not request a personal Bible study today?

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Phone: Email:
Prayer requests or comments:

I would like:







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John's Seven Signs

The Book of John focuses on seven of Jesus' miracles, and a careful study of each can provide us with principles of encouragement.

Disappointments? Remember when Jesus addressed an embarrassing moment, turning the water into wine (John 2:1-11)? He is still the One we can turn to when life turns on us. With Paul we say, "The Lord stood with me and strengthened me" (2 Timothy. 4:16–17).

Doubts? Remember when He healed a boy and told his daddy to return home, only for the father to go without question (John 4:46–54)? He is still the One in whom we place our faith and our dreams, "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

Disabilities? Remember when He healed a thirty-eight-year-old invalid (John 5:2–9)? Via His loving providence, we can still "be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might" (Ephesians 6:10; cf. Philippians 4:13).

Desires? Remember when He fed five thousand with a sack lunch (John 6:1–14)? He still meets the desires of those who cry, "For me, to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21).

Despair? Remember when He reached out for Peter (John 6:16–21)? Aren't we thankful that His hand extends to us with the promise: "I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5–6)?

Darkness? Remember when He gave sight to a blind man (John 9:1–11)? But wait! To a man stumbling in the wretched darkness of Satan, He is still "the light of the world" (John 8:12).

Death? Remember when He stood outside the tomb of a friend, cried and said, "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11:1–44)? Better still, there will come a day "in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth" (John 5:28–29).

He is "Jesus" [literally, "he who saves"], a man of miracles. But, even more, as one who touches our own lives in so many marvelous ways, we are blessed to call Him, "My Lord and My God" (John 20:28). —Dan Winkler

> gettyimages SrdjanPav



Plenty of Proof

There were more than 300 predictive prophecies in the Old Testament Scriptures concerning Jesus that were recorded centuries before He was ever born. Each was accurately fulfilled. Unlike the Dixon-style predictions, NOT ONE of the predictions concerning Jesus missed the mark. Have you ever seriously analyzed the implications of those signs?

Peter Stoner, a renowned mathematician, calculated the odds of just EIGHT of the 300 predictive prophecies concerning Jesus having been fulfilled ACCIDEN-TALLY in the life of one man. The odds are one in ten to the seventeenth power (a one with seventeen zeros following it!).

I used my computer to do a few calculations in order to make that huge number sink in a little more sensibly. A dollar bill is six inches long. It would take 10,560 dollar bills laid end-to-end to extend one mile. The moon is about 239,000 miles from the earth. Thus, it would take 2,523,840,000 dollar bills laid end-to-end to extend from the earth to the moon. That's a little over two and a half BILLION. But as incredibly large a number as a billion may appear to be, the number that Peter Stoner calculated (ten to the seventeenth power) is simply mind boggling. If one possessed that many dollar bills, he could lay them endto-end and stretch them from the earth to the moon nearly forty million times (39,622,163). Looking at it a little differently, those bills could add up to about twenty million ROUND TRIPS to the moon! And that is only 8 of 300 predictive prophecies!

We have very little excuse to disbelieve the claims of the Word of God concerning Jesus Christ. —Garell Forehand

"All things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning me" —Jesus

LUKE 24:44





A Week of Good Thoughts

Suppose we start this very day

To live our lives in a different way; Suppose we vowed and constantly tried

- To help those in trouble on life's wayside.
- If we showed by our deeds a hint of His love, Wouldn't earth be a bit more like heaven above?
- *On Monday:* Look for a smile today, and return it with one of your own.
- Give someone faith and hope; it's such a beautiful loan.
- *On Tuesday:* Gather a thought that's kind, one that's sincere and deep.
- Be sure to pass it along, for such are too precious to keep.
- *On Wednesday*: Forget yesterday's sorrows, mistakes, sadness, and pain.
- Lift your heart with hope as flowers to sun and rain.
- *On Thursday:* Offer a word of comfort and prayer to help someone in need.
- A little thoughtful gift, some flowers, or a smile makes us all rich indeed.
- *On Friday:* You shall not pass this way again, so do any good you can do.
- Don't put it off till tomorrow, or the chance may be lost for you.
- *On Saturday:* Today will soon be a memory, so don't let it come to an end,
- Without a smile, a song, or just a word from a friend.
- *On Sunday:* Don't let worry and care depress you or brush your joy away,
- But arise and give thanks to God above for His love and another "blest day."

"Let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."



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