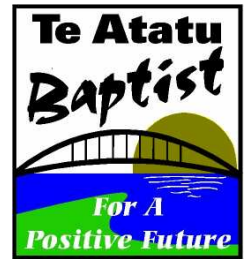


Inspirational Stories!



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| Title | Page | Description |
|------------------------------|------|---|
| Confused about God! | 2 | In a psychiatrist's waiting room two patients |
| The Church Gossip. | 2 | Mildred, the church gossip and self-appointed arbitrator |
| God and "57 Cents" | 2 | A sobbing little girl stood near a small church |
| Revelation 3:20 | 4 | A new pastor was visiting in the homes |
| God's Wings | 4 | A little something to put things in perspective... |
| Prospective Pastors | 5 | The following is a confidential report on several candidates |
| Real Treasures | 7 | The cheerful little girl was almost five |
| The Cross | 9 | A young man was at the end of his rope, |
| Malachi 3:3 | 10 | If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember |
| Drowning Men | 11 | Walking through the forest, a seasoned hiker |
| What if God Didn't Want You? | 12 | There are many reasons why God would not |
| Emergency Phone Numbers: | 13 | When in sorrow, call John 14 |
| What Is Love? | 14 | A group of professional people posted the question to |
| Explain God | 16 | One of God's main jobs is making people |
| A few things to think about! | 18 | 1. Anger is a condition in which the tongue, works faster |
| Who I Am In Christ: | 20 | 1. I am a minister of the Gospel of Christ |
| Philosophy Professor | 22 | A professor of philosophy who was a deeply committed atheist |
| Why go to church? | 23 | "I've gone for 30 years to church," he wrote, "and in that time |
| Poison | 23 | A long time ago in China, a girl named Li-Li got married |
| You Say | 25 | You say: "It's impossible." God says: All things are possible |
| God Lives Under the Bed | 26 | My brother Kevin thinks God lives under his bed |
| Presents | 28 | A young man was getting ready to graduate from college |

enjoy

Confused about God!

In a psychiatrist's waiting room two patients are having a conversation.

One says to the other, "Why are you here?"

The second answers, "I'm Napoleon, so the doctor told me to come here."

The first is curious and asks, "How do you know that you're Napoleon?"

The second responds, "God told me I was."

At this point, a patient on the other side of the room shouts, "NO I DIDN'T!"

The Church Gossip

Mildred, the church gossip and self-appointed arbitrator of the church's morals, kept sticking her nose into other people's business. Several members were unappreciative of her activities, but feared her enough to maintain their silence.

She made a mistake, however, when she accused George, a new member, of being an alcoholic after she saw his pickup truck parked in front of the town's only bar one afternoon.

She commented to George and others that everyone seeing it there would know what he was doing.

George, a man of few words, stared at her for a moment and just walked away. He didn't explain, defend, or deny, he said nothing.

Later that evening, George quietly parked his pickup in front of Mildred's house and left it there all night.

What God Can Do With "57 Cents"

A sobbing little girl stood near a small church from which she had been turned away because it was "too crowded."

"I can't go to Sunday School," she sobbed to the pastor as he walked by.

Seeing her shabby, unkempt appearance, the pastor guessed the reason and, taking her by the hand, took her inside and found a place for her in the Sunday

school class. The child was so happy that they found room for her, and she went to bed that night thinking of the children who have no place to worship Jesus.

Some two years later, this child lay dead in one of the poor tenement buildings. Her parents called for the kindhearted pastor who had befriended their daughter to handle the final arrangements. As her poor little body was being moved, a worn and crumpled red purse was found which seemed to have been rummaged from some trash dump. Inside was found 57 cents and a note, scribbled in childish handwriting, which read: "This is to help build the little church bigger so more children can go to Sunday School."

For two years she had saved for this offering of love.

When the pastor tearfully read that note, he knew instantly what he would do. Carrying this note and the cracked, red pocketbook to the pulpit, he told the story of her unselfish love and devotion.

He challenged his deacons to get busy and raise enough money for the larger building.

But the story does not end there...

A newspaper learned of the story and published it. It was read by a wealthy realtor who offered them a parcel of land worth many thousands.

When told that the church could not pay so much, he offered to sell it to the little church for 57 cents.

Church members made large donations. Checks came from far and wide.

Within five years the little girl's gift had increased to \$250,000.00--a huge sum for that time (near the turn of the century). Her unselfish love had paid large dividends.

When you are! in the city of Philadelphia, look up Temple Baptist Church, with a seating capacity of 3,300. And be sure to visit Temple University, where thousands of students are educated.

Have a look, too, at the Good Samaritan Hospital and at a Sunday School building which houses hundreds of beautiful children, built so that no child in the area will ever need to be left outside during Sunday School time.

In one of the rooms of this building may be seen the picture of the sweet face of the little girl whose 57 cents, so sacrificially saved, made such remarkable history. Alongside of it is a portrait of her kind pastor, Dr. Russel H. Conwell, author of the book, "Acres of Diamonds

Revelation 3:20

A new pastor was visiting in the homes of his parishioners. At one house it seemed obvious that someone was home, but no answer came to his repeated at the door. Therefore, he took out a card and wrote "Revelation 3:20" on the back of and stuck it in the door.

When the offering was processed the following Sunday, he found that his card had been returned. Added to it was this cryptic message, "Genesis 3:10." Reaching for his Bible to check out the verse, he broke up in gales of laughter.

Revelation 3:20 begins "Behold, I stand at the door and knock" Genesis 3:10 reads, "I heard your voice in the garden and I was afraid for I was naked."

God's Wings

A little something to put things in perspective...

An article in National Geographic several years ago provided an interesting picture of God's wings.

After a forest fire in Yellowstone National Park, forest rangers began their trek up a mountain to assess the inferno's damage. One ranger found a bird literally petrified in ashes, perched statuesquely on the ground at the base of a tree. Somewhat sickened by the eerie sight, he knocked over the bird with a stick.

When he gently struck it, three tiny chicks scurried from under their dead mother's wings. The loving mother, keenly aware of impending disaster, had carried her offspring to the base of the tree and had gathered them under her wings, instinctively knowing that the toxic smoke would rise.

She could have flown to safety but had refused to abandon her babies. Then the blaze had arrived and the heat had scorched her small body, the mother had remained steadfast. Because she had been willing to die, so those under the cover of her wings would live.

*He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge." (Psalm 91:4)*

Prospective Pastors

The following is a confidential report on several candidates being considered for a pastorate.

Adam: Good man but problems with his wife. Also one reference told of how his wife and he enjoy walking nude in the woods.

Noah: Former pastorate of 120 years with not even one convert. Prone to unrealistic building projects.

Joseph: A big thinker, but a braggart, believes in dream-interpreting, and has a prison record.

Moses: A modest and meek man, but poor communicator, even stuttering at times. Sometimes blows his stack and acts rashly. Some say he left an earlier church over a murder charge.

David: The most promising leader of all until we discovered the affair he had with his neighbor's wife.

Solomon: Great preacher but our parsonage would never hold all those wives.

Elijah: Prone to depression. Collapses under pressure.

Elisha: Reported to have lived with a single widow while at his former church.

Hosea: A tender and loving pastor but our people could never handle his wife's occupation.

Deborah: Strong leader and seems to be anointed, but she is female.

Jeremiah: Emotionally unstable, alarmist, negative, always lamenting things, reported to have taken a long trip to bury his underwear on the bank of a foreign river.

Isaiah: On the fringe? Claims to have seen angels in church. Has trouble with his language.

Jonah: Refused God's call into ministry until he was forced to obey by getting swallowed up by a great fish. He told us the fish later spit him out on the shore near here. We hung up.

Amos: Too backward and unpolished. With some seminary training he might have promise, but has a hang-up against wealthy people—might fit in better in a poor congregation.

Melchizedek: Great credentials at current work place, but where does this guy come from? No information on his resume about former work records. Every line about parents was left blank and he refused to supply a birth date.

John: Says he is a Baptist, but definitely doesn't dress like one. Has slept in the outdoors for months on end, has a weird diet, and provokes denominational leaders.

Peter: Too blue collar. Has a bad temper—even has been known to curse. Had a big run-in with Paul in Antioch. Aggressive, but a loose cannon.

Paul: Powerful CEO type leader and fascinating preacher. However, short on tact, unforgiving with younger ministers, harsh and has been known to preach all night.

James & John: Package deal preacher & associate seemed good at first, but found out they have an ego problem regarding other fellow workers and seating positions. Threatened an entire town after an insult. Also known to try to discourage workers who didn't follow along with them.

Timothy: Too young!

Methuselah: Too old . . . WAY too old!

Jesus: Has had popular times, but once his church grew to 5000 he managed to offend them all, and then this church dwindled down to twelve people. Seldom stays in one place very long. And, of course, he's single.

Judas: His references are solid. A steady plodder. Conservative. Good

connections. Knows how to handle money. We're inviting him to preach this Sunday. Possibilities here.

Real Treasures

The cheerful little girl was almost five. Waiting with her mother at the checkout stand, she saw them, a circle of glistening white pearls in a pink foil box.

“Oh please, mommy. Can I have them? Please, mommy please?” Quickly the mother checked the back of the little foil box and then looked back into the pleading little girl’s upturned face. “A dollar ninety-five. That’s almost \$2.00”

”If you really want them, I’ll think of some extra chores for you and in no time you can save enough money to buy them for yourself. Your birthday’s only a week away and you might get another crisp dollar from grandma.”

As soon as Jenny got home, she emptied her penny bank and counted out 17 pennies. After dinner, she did more than her share of chores and she went to the neighbor and asked Mrs. McJames if she could pick dandelions for ten cents.

On her birthday, grandma did give her another new dollar bill and at last she had enough money to buy the necklace.

Jenny loved her pearls. They made her feel dressed up and grown up. She wore them everywhere, Sunday school, Kindergarten, even to bed. The only time she took them off was when she went swimming or had a bubble bath. Mother said if they got wet, they might turn her neck green.

Jenny had a very loving daddy and every night when she was ready for bed, he would stop whatever he was doing and come upstairs to read her a story.

One night as he finished the story, he asked Jenny, “Do you love me?”

“Oh yes, daddy. You know that I love you.”

“Then give me your pearls.”

“Oh daddy, not my pearls. But you can have princess, the white horse from my collection, the one with the pink tail. Remember, daddy? The one you gave me. She’s my very favorite.”

“That’s okay, honey. Daddy loves you. Good night.” And he brushed her cheek with a kiss.

About a week later, after story time, Jenny’s daddy asked again, “Do you love me?”

“Daddy, you know I love you.”

“Then give me your pearls.”

“Oh daddy, not my pearls. But you can have my baby doll. The brand new one I got for my birthday. She is beautiful and you can have the yellow blanket that matches her sleeper.”

“That’s okay. Sleep well. God bless you, little one. Daddy loves you.” And as always, he brushed her cheek with a gentle kiss.’

A few nights later when her daddy came in, Jenny was sitting on her bed with her legs crossed Indian-style. As he came close, he noticed her chin was trembling and one silent tear rolled down her cheek.

“What is it Jenny, What’s the matter?”

Jenny didn’t say anything but lifted her little hand up to her daddy, and when she opened it, there was her little pearl necklace.

With a quiver she finally said, “Here, daddy. This is for you.”

With tears gathering in his own eyes, Jenny’s daddy reached out with one hand to take the dime-store necklace, and with the other hand reached into his pocket and pulled out a blue velvet case with a strand of genuine pearls and gave them to Jenny.

He had them all the time. He was just waiting for her to give up the dime-store stuff so he could give her the genuine treasure. So it is with our Heavenly

Father. He is waiting for us to give up the cheap things in our lives so that he can give us beautiful treasures.

Isn't God good? Are you holding onto things that God wants you to let go of? Are you holding on to harmful or unnecessary partners, relationships, habits and activities that you have come so attached to that it seems impossible to let go?

Sometimes it is so hard to see what is in the other hand but do believe this one thing... God will never take away something without giving you something better in its place.

The Cross

A young man was at the end of his rope, seeing no way out, dropped to his knees in prayer.

"Lord, I can't go on," he said. "I have too heavy of a cross to bear."

The Lord replied, "My son, if you can't bear its weight, just place your cross inside this room. Then, open that other door and pick out any cross you wish."

The man was filled with relief said, "Thank you, Lord," and he did as he was told.

Upon entering the other door, he saw many crosses, some so large the tops were not visible. Then, he spotted a tiny cross leaning against a far wall.

"I'd like that one, Lord," he whispered.

And the Lord replied, "My son, that is the cross you just brought in."

When life's problems seem overwhelming, it helps to look around and see what other people are coping with. You may consider yourself far more fortunate than you imagined.

YOUR CROSS

Whatever your cross, whatever your pain, There will always be sunshine after

the rain. Perhaps you may stumble, perhaps even fall, But God's always there to help you through it all.

Malachi 3:3

Malachi 3:3 says: "He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver."

This verse puzzled some women in a Bible study and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out the process of refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible Study.

That week, the woman called a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver.

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities.

The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot then she thought again about the verse that says: "He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver."

She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined. The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time it was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?"

He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy - when I see my image in it."

If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has His eye on you and will keep watching you until He sees His image in you.

Drowning Men

1 Cor 3:8 "The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor."

Walking through the forest, a seasoned hiker came upon a broad, slowly moving river. He stopped to gaze over the waters, appreciating the beauty, when suddenly he heard a faint cry coming from upstream.

Looking in the direction of the noise, he saw an obviously drowning man floundering in the river and drifting slowly toward him.

The hiker was stunned momentarily, but he sprang into action when he saw the man disappear beneath the waters. Throwing off all of his cumbersome gear, he dove into the river and swam like a madman toward the spot where the man went under.

Upon reaching the spot he plunged below the surface and frantically hauled up the helpless man. He then laboriously towed the victim to shore. Heaving the lifeless body up on the riverbank, the hiker attempted to revive the man, who eventually spit up water and began to breathe.

Relieved, the hiker paused to catch his breath. But no sooner had he done so than he heard another voice out on the water. Another drowning person!

Once again he swam out and pulled the person to shore, a little more slowly this time. As the hiker-turned lifeguard revived the second victim, he heard yet another cry for help.

All day long the hiker worked, rescuing one person after another as they came drifting down the river. There seemed to be no end of drowning victims, and the hiker didn't think he could keep it up.

Just when he was about to collapse from exhaustion, he spotted another man walking rapidly beside the river, headed upstream. "Hey mister!" he cried out. "Please help me! These poor people are drowning!" Amazingly, the man kept walking upstream. The astonished hiker called out again. Without even acknowledging the cry, the man kept going. Indignant and angry, the hiker leapt to his feet, ran toward the seemingly uncompassionate man, stood directly in his path, and in a loud voice demanded, "Sir! How can you possibly walk past all these drowning people? Have you no conscience? Must I force you to help me save these people?"

The stranger stopped, looked at him for the first time and said with a calm, focused voice, "Sir, please get out of my way. I am headed upstream to stop the guy who is pushing all these people in."

Each of us has a role to play in rescuing those who are drowning in sin. Some of us pull people from the water and resuscitate them with counseling, food and shelter, a rehabilitation program, a support group, or financial aid. Affirm those doing these important ministries. Others of us find our place of ministry upstream, opposing the one pushing people into the river. We do this by introducing those people to Jesus Christ. Knowing Christ sets a person free from sin and releases them from Satan's power over them. By itself, pulling people from the water isn't enough. We need to help people deal with the problem of sin at its source.

What if God Didn't Want You?

There are many reasons why God would not want you--but don't worry.

You're in good company.

Moses stuttered.

David's armor didn't fit.

John Mark was rejected by Paul.

Hosea's wife was a prostitute.

Amos' only training was in the school of fig-tree pruning.

Jacob was a liar.

David had an affair.

Solomon was too rich.

Abraham was too old.

David was too young.

Timothy had ulcers.

Peter was afraid of death.

Lazarus was dead.

John was self-righteous.

Jesus was too poor.

Naomi was a widow.

Paul was a murderer. So was Moses.

Jonah ran from God.

Miriam was a gossip.

Gideon and Thomas both doubted.

Jeremiah was depressed and suicidal.

Elijah was burned out.

John the Baptist was a loudmouth. Martha was a worrywart.
 Mary was lazy.
 Samson had long hair.
 Noah got drunk.

Did I mention that Moses had a short fuse? So did Peter, Paul--well, lots of folks did.

But God doesn't require a job interview. He doesn't hire and fire like most bosses, because He's more our dad than our boss. He doesn't look at financial gain or loss. He's not prejudiced nor partial, not judging, grudging, sassy, nor brassy, not deaf to our cry, not blind to our need. As much as we try, God's gifts are free.

We could do wonderful things for wonderful people and still not be... wonderful.

Satan says, "You're not worthy."

Jesus says, "So what? I AM."

Satan looks back and sees our mistakes. God looks back and sees the Cross. He doesn't calculate what you did in '98. It's not even on the record.

Sure. There are lots of reasons why God shouldn't want us. But if we are magically in love with Him, if we hunger for Him more than our next breath, He'll use us in spite of who we are, where we've been or what we look like. Step out of your limitations into the illimitable nature of who God is

Emergency Phone Numbers:

When in sorrow, call John 14.
 When men fail you, call Psalm 27.
 If you want to be fruitful, call John 15.
 When you have sinned, call Psalm 51.
 When you worry, call Mat.6:19-34.
 When you are in danger, call Psalm 91.
 When God seems far away, call Psalm 139.
 When your faith needs stirring,call Hebrews 11.
 When you are lonely and fearful, call Psalm 23.

When you grow bitter and critical, call I Cor.13.
 For Paul's secret to happiness, call Colos. 3:12-17
 For understanding of Christianity,call II Cor.5:15-19.
 When you feel down and out, call Romans 8:31.
 When you want peace and rest, call Mat.11:25-30.
 When the world seems bigger than God, call Psalm 90.
 When you want Christian assurance,.....call Romans 8:1-30.
 When you leave home for labor or travel, ... call Psalm 121.
 When your prayers grow narrow or selfish, .. call Psalm 67.
 For a great invention/opportunity, call Isaiah 55.
 When you want courage for a task, call Joshua 1.
 For how to get along with fellow men, call Romans 12.
 When you think of investments and returns,.. call Mark 10.
 If you are depressed, call Psalm 27.
 If your pocketbook is empty,call Psalm 37.
 If you are losing confidence in people, call I Cor.13.
 If people seem unkind, call John 15.
 If discouraged about your work, call Psalm 126.
 If you find the world growing small and yourself great...call Psalm 19.

Alternate numbers:

For dealing with fear, call Psalm 34:7.
 For security, call Psalm 121:3.
 For assurance, call Mark 8:35.
 For reassurance, call Psalm 145:18.

All lines to Heaven are open 24 hours a day!

What Is Love?

For those who misuse the word love, even kids have a better understanding than adults. A group of professional people posted this question to a group of 4 to 8 year olds: "What does love mean?" The answers they got were broader and deeper than anyone could have imagined.

1. When my grandma got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandpa does it for her now all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love.

Rebecca - age 8

2. When someone loves you, the way they say your name is different. You just know that your name is safe in their mouths.

Billy - age 4

3. Love is when a girl puts on perfume and a boy puts on shaving Cologne and they go out and smell each other.

Kari - age 5

4. Love is when you go out to eat and give somebody most of your French Fries without making them give you any of theirs.

Chrissy - age 6

5. Love is what makes you smile when you're tired.

Terri - age 4

6. Love is when my mommy makes coffee for my daddy and she takes a sip giving it to him, to make sure the taste is OK.

Danny - age 7

7. Love is when you kiss all the time. Then when you get tired of kissing, you still want to be together and you talk more. My mommy and daddy are like that. They look gross when they kiss.

Emily - age 8

8. Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas if you stop opening presents and listen.

Bobby - age 7

9. If you want to learn to love better, you should start with a friend who you hate.

Nikka - age 6

10. Love is when you tell a guy you like his shirt, then he wears it everyday.

Noelle - age 7

11. Love is like a little old woman and a little old man who are still friends, even after they know each other so well.

Tommy - age 6

12. My mommy loves me more than anybody. You don't see anyone else

kissing me to sleep at night.

Clare - age 6

13. Love is when mommy sees daddy smelly and sweaty and still says he is handsomer than Robert Redford.

Chris - age 7

14. Love is when your puppy licks your face even after you left him alone all day.

Mary Ann - age 4

15. When you love somebody, your eyelashes go up and down and little stars come out of you.

Karen - age 7

16. Love is when mommy sees daddy on the toilet and doesn't think it's gross.

Mark - age 6

17. You really shouldn't say "I LOVE YOU" unless you mean it. But if you mean it, you should say it a lot. People forget.

Jessica - age 8

And the winner was a 4 year old child whose next door neighbor was an elderly man who had just lost his wife. When the child saw the man cry, the little boy went over into the man's yard and climbed on top of the man's lap and just sat there.

When the boy's mother asked him what he'd said to the neighbor, the little boy said, "Nothing, I just helped him cry."

This was written by an 8-year-old, Danny Dutton of Chula Vista, CA, for his third-grade homework assignment. The assignment was to explain God.

Wonder if any of us could do as well?"

Explain God

One of God's main jobs is making people. He makes them to replace the ones that die, so there will be enough people to take care of things on earth.

He doesn't make grown-ups, just babies. I think because they are smaller and easier to make. That way He doesn't have to take up His valuable time teaching them to talk and walk. He can just leaves that to mothers and fathers.

God's second most important job is listening to prayers. An awful lot of this goes on, since some people, like preachers and things, pray at times beside bedtime. God doesn't have time to listen to the radio or TV because of this.

God sees everything and hears everything and is everywhere which keeps Him pretty busy. So you shouldn't go wasting His time by going over your Mom and Dad's head asking for something they said you couldn't have.

Atheists are people who don't believe in God. I don't think there are any in Chula Vista . At least there aren't any who come to our church. Jesus is God's Son. He used to do all the hard work like walking on water and performing miracles and people finally got tired of Him preaching to them and they crucified Him. But He was good and kind, like His Father and He told His Father that they didn't know what they were doing and to forgive them and God said "O. K."

His Dad (God) appreciated everything that He had done and all His hard work on earth so He told Him He didn't have to go out on the road anymore. He could stay in heaven. So He did. And now He helps His Dad out by listening to prayers and seeing things which are important for God to take care of and which ones He can take care of Himself without having to bother God.

Like a secretary, only more important. You can pray anytime you want and they are sure to help you because they got it worked out so one of them is on duty all the time.

You should always go to church on Sunday because it makes God happy, and if there's anybody you want to make happy, it's God. Don't skip church to do something you think will be more fun like going to the beach. This is wrong. And besides the sun doesn't come out at the beach until noon anyway.

If you don't believe in God, besides being an atheist, you will be very lonely, because your parents can't go everywhere with you, like to camp, but God can. It is good to know He's around you when you're scared in the dark or when you can't swim and you get thrown into real deep water by big kids.

But... you shouldn't just always think of what God can do for you. I figure God put me here and He can take me back anytime He pleases. And...that's why I believe in God.

A few things to think about!

1. Anger is a condition in which the tongue, works faster than the mind.
2. You can't change the past, but you can ruin the present by worrying over the future.
3. Love ... and you shall be loved.
4. God always gives His best to those who leave the choice with Him.
5. All people smile in the same language.
6. A hug is a great gift, one size fits all. It can be given for any occasion and it's easy to exchange.
7. Everyone needs to be loved, especially when they do not deserve it.
8. The real measure of a man's wealth is what he has invested in eternity.
9. Laughter is God's sunshine.
10. Everything has beauty but not everyone sees it.
11. It's important for parents to live the same things they teach.
12. Thank God for what you have, TRUST GOD for what you need.
13. If you fill your heart with regrets of yesterday and the worries of tomorrow, you have no today to be thankful for.
14. Happy memories never wear out... Relive them as often as you want.
15. Home is the place where we grumble the most, but are often treated the best.

16. Man looks at outward appearance but the Lord looks within.
17. The choice you make today will usually affect tomorrow.
18. Take time to laugh for it is the music of the soul.
19. If anyone speaks badly of you, live so none will believe it.
20. Patience is the ability to idle your motor, when you feel like stripping your gears.
21. Love is strengthened by working through conflicts together.
22. The best thing parents can do for their children, is to love each other.
23. Harsh words break no bones but they do break hearts.
24. To get out of a difficulty, one usually must go through it.
25. We take for granted the things that we should be giving thanks for.
26. Love is the only thing that can be divided, without being diminished.
27. Happiness is enhanced by others but does not depend upon others.
28. You are richer today if you have laughed, given or forgiven.
29. For every minute you are angry with someone, you lose 60 seconds of happiness that you can never get back.
30. Do what you can, for who you can, with what you have, and where you are.
31. The best gifts to give:
 - To your friend, loyalty;
 - To your enemy, forgiveness;
 - To your boss, service;
 - To a child, a good example;
 - To your parents, gratitude and devotion;
 - To your mate, love and faithfulness;

To all men and women, charity; and To God, your life.

Who I Am In Christ:

Author Unknown

When God spoke out of the burning bush in the desert to Moses, Moses asked who he should say had instructed and sent him .

And God said unto Moses, "I AM THAT I AM:" and he said, "Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel,

I AM hath sent me unto you." (Exodus 3:14)

When you are sharing God's love with another you must remember who you are. You may respond to the question, "Who are you?," as follows;

1. I am a minister of the Gospel of Christ (2 Cor 11:23, Romans 1:16)
2. I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16)
3. I am a witness (1 Thessalonians 2:10)
4. I am not my own (1 Corinthians 6:19)
5. I am not of this world (John 15:9)
6. I am not under the law (Galatians 5:18)
7. I am not a slave (Galatians 4:7)
8. I am not inferior (Job 13:2)
9. I am not alone (John 8:16, 16:32)
10. I am bold (2 Corinthians 11:21)
11. I am not ashamed of who I am (2 Tim 1:12)
12. I am an ambassador for Christ (1 Corinthians 5:20)
13. I am jealous for the saints with a godly jealousy. (2 Corinthians 11:2)
14. I am an intercessor who stands in the gap (Ezekiel 22:30)
15. I am Christ's (1 Corinthians 3:23)
16. I am the friend of God (John 15:15)
17. I am a servant of God (1 Corinthians 9:19)
18. I am a part of the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27)
19. I am one of the saints in Christ Jesus. (Romans 1:6, Galatians 3:28)
20. I am the Bride of Jesus Christ (Revelations 21:2-10)
21. I am a fellow citizen with all the saints in the Kingdom of God (Ephesians 2:19)

22. I am the temple of the Lord and the Holy Spirit dwells within me (1 Corinthians 3:16, 6:19, 2 Corinthians 6:16, John 14:7)
23. I am redeemed (Revelations 5:9)
24. I am bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:20)
25. I am Blood bought (1 Peter 1:19, Revelations 5:9)
26. I am valuable to God (Matthew 10:31)
27. I am one in which God has an inheritance (Ephesians 1:18)
28. I am reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:18)
29. I am made clean (John 13:10)
30. I am saved by the Gospel (1 Corinthians 15:2)
31. I am born again of incorruptible seed (1 Peter 1:23)
32. I am a new creation (2 Corinthians 5:17)
33. I am in Christ Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:30)
34. I am complete in Him (Colossians 2:10)
35. I am free from the control of man (1 Corinthians 9:19)
36. I am free from sin (Romans 6:18,22)
37. I am free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2)
38. I am free from the curse of the law (Galatians 3:13)
39. I am free indeed (John 8:32-36)
40. I am called according to His purpose (Romans 8:30)
41. I am called into the fellowship of His Son (1 Corinthians 1:9)
42. I am called to peace (1 Corinthians 7:15)
43. I am called to liberty (Galatians 5:13)
44. I am called to His eternal glory (1 Peter 5:10)
45. I am God's field (1 Corinthians 3:9)
46. I am God's building (1 Corinthians 3:9)
47. I am a branch connected into the Vine Jesus Christ and His life flows through me (John 15:5)
48. I am healed from my infirmities (1 Peter 2:24, Isaiah 53:5)
49. I am immune from every sickness and disease (Exodus 23:25, Deuteronomy 7:15)
50. I am an epistle of Christ, written not with ink but by the Spirit of the living God (2 Corinthians 3:3)
51. I am Abraham's seed (Galatians 3:29)
52. I am an heir according to the promises made to Abraham. (Galatians 3:29)
53. I am part of a chosen generation (1 Peter 2:9)
54. I am a member of a royal priesthood (1 Peter 2:9)
55. I am a citizen of a holy nation (1 Peter 2:9)
56. I am one of His own special people (1 Peter 2:9)
57. I am an heir of God a joint heir with Jesus Christ (Galatians 4:7)

58. I am member of the household of God (Ephesians 2:19)

Philosophy Professor

There was a professor of philosophy who was a deeply committed atheist. His primary goal for one required class was to spend the entire semester attempting to prove that God couldn't exist. His students were always afraid to argue with him because of his impeccable logic.

For twenty years, he had taught this class and no one ever had the courage to go against him. Sure, some had argued in class at times, but no one had ever really gone against him because of his reputation.

At the end of every semester on the last day, he would say to his class of 300 students, "If there is anyone here who still believes in Jesus, stand up!" In twenty years, no one had ever stood up. They knew what he was going to do next. He would say, "Because anyone who believes in God is a fool. If God existed, he could stop this piece of chalk from hitting the ground and breaking. Such a simple task to prove that He is God, and yet He can't do it." And every year, he would drop the chalk onto the tile floor of the classroom and it would shatter into a hundred pieces.

All of the students would do nothing but stop and stare. Most of the students thought that God couldn't exist. Certainly, a number of Christians had slipped through, but for 20 years, they had been too afraid to stand up.

Well, a few years ago there was a freshman who happened to enroll. He was a Christian, and had heard the stories about his professor. He was required to take the class for his major, and he was afraid. But for three months that semester, he prayed every morning that he would have the courage to stand up no matter what the professor said, or what the class thought. Nothing they said could ever shatter his faith...he hoped.

Finally, the day came. The professor said, "If there is anyone here who still believes in God, stand up!" The professor and the class of 300 people looked at him, shocked, as he stood up at the back of the classroom. The professor shouted, "You FOOL!!! If God existed, he would keep this piece of chalk from breaking, when it hit the ground!"

He proceeded to drop the chalk, but as he did, it slipped out of his fingers, off his shirt cuff, onto the pleat of his pants, down his leg, and off his shoe. As it hit the ground, it simply rolled away unbroken.

The professor's jaw dropped as he stared at the chalk. He looked up at the young man, and then ran out of the lecture hall.

The young man who had stood, proceeded to walk to the front of the room and shared his faith in Jesus for the next half hour. 300 students stayed and listened as he told of God's love for them and of His power through Jesus Christ Our Lord.

Why go to church?

A church goer wrote a letter to the editor of a newspaper and complained that it made no sense to go to church every Sunday.

"I've gone for 30 years now," he wrote, "and in that time I have heard something like 3,000 Sermons. But for the life of me, I can't remember a single one of them. So, I think I'm wasting my time and the pastors are wasting theirs by giving sermons at all."

This started a real controversy in the "Letters to the Editor" column, much to the delight of the editor. It went on for weeks until someone wrote this clincher: I've been married for 30 years now. In that time my wife has cooked some 32,000 meals. But for the life of me, I cannot recall the entire menu for a single one of those meals. But I do know this: They all nourished me and gave me the strength I needed to do my work. If my wife had not given me these meals, I would be physically dead today. Likewise, if I had not gone to church for nourishment, I would be spiritually dead today!"

Poison

A long time ago in China, a girl named Li-Li got married and went

To live with her husband and mother-in-law. In a very short time, Li-Li

Found that she couldn't get along with her mother-in-law at all. Their personalities were very different, and Li-Li was angered by many of her

mother-in-law's habits. In addition, she criticized Li-Li constantly. Days passed days, and weeks passed weeks. Li-Li and her mother-in-law never stopped

arguing and fighting. But what made the situation even worse was that, according to ancient Chinese tradition, Li-Li had to bow to her mother-in-law and obey her every wish. All the anger and unhappiness in the house was causing Li-Li's poor husband great distress. Finally, Li-Li could not stand her mother-in-law's bad temper and dictatorship any longer, and she decided to do something about it.

Li-Li went to see her father's good friend, Mr. Huang, who sold herbs.

She told him the situation and asked if he would give her some poison

So that she could solve the problem once and for all. Mr. Huang thought

For a while, and finally said, "Li-Li, I will help you solve your problem, but you must listen to me and obey what I tell you."

Li-Li said, "Yes, Mr. Huang, I will do whatever you tell me to do. "Mr. Huang went into the back room, and returned in a few minutes with a package of herbs. He told Li-Li, "You can't use a quick-acting poison to get rid of your mother-in-law, because that would cause people

to become suspicious. Therefore, I have given you a number of herbs that will slowly build up poison in her body. Every other day prepare some delicious meal and put a little of these herbs in her serving. Now, in order to make sure that nobody suspects you when she dies, you must be very careful to act very friendly towards her. Don't argue with her, obey her every wish, and treat her like a queen." Li-Li was so happy. She thanked Mr. Huang and hurried home to start her plot of murdering her mother-in-law.

Weeks went by, and months went by, and every other day, Li-Li served the specially treated food to her mother-in-law. She remembered what Mr. Huang had said about avoiding suspicion, so she controlled her temper, obeyed her mother-in-law, and treated her like her own mother. After six months had passed, the whole household had changed. Li-Li had practiced controlling her temper so much that she found that she almost never got mad or upset.

She hadn't had an argument with her mother-in-law in six months because

she now seemed much kinder and easier to get along with. The mother-in-law's attitude toward Li-Li changed, and she began to love Li-Li like

her own daughter. She kept telling friends and relatives that Li-Li was

the best daughter-in-law one could ever find. Li-Li and her mother-in-law were now treating each other like a real mother and daughter. Li-Li's husband was very happy to see what was happening.

One day, Li-Li came to see Mr. Huang and asked for his help again.

She said, "Dear Mr. Huang, please help me to keep the poison from killing my mother-in-law! She's changed into such a nice woman, and I love her like my own mother. I do not want her to die because of the poison I gave her."

Mr. Huang smiled and nodded his head. "Li-Li, there's nothing to

Worry about. I never gave you any poison. The herbs I gave you were vitamins to improve her health. The only poison was in your mind and your attitude toward her, but that has been all washed away by the love which you gave to her."

You Say

You say: "It's impossible." God says: All things are possible. (Luke 8:27)

You say: "I'm too tired." God says: I will give you rest. (Matthew 1:28-30)

You say: "Nobody really loves me." God says: I love you. (John 3:16 & John 13:34)

You say: "I can't go on." God says: My grace is sufficient. (II Corinthians 12:9 & Psalms 91:15)

You say: "I can't figure things out." God says: I will direct your steps. (Proverbs 3:5-6)

You say: "I can't do it." God says: You can do all things. (Philippians 4:13)

You say: "I'm not able." God says: I am able. (II Corinthians 9:8)

You say: "I'm not worth it." God says: It will be worth it. (Romans 8:28)

You say: "I can't forgive myself." God says: I FORGIVE YOU. (I John 1:9 & Romans 8:1)

You say: "I can't manage." God says: I will supply all your needs. (Philippians 4:19)

You say: "I'm afraid." God says: I have not given you a spirit of fear. (II Timothy 1:7)

You say: "I'm always worried and frustrated." God says: Cast all your cares on ME. (I Peter 5:7)

You say: "I don't have enough faith." God says: I've given everyone a measure of faith (Romans 12:3)

You say: "I'm not smart enough." God says: I give you wisdom. (I Corinthians 1:30)

You say: "I feel all alone." God says: I will never leave you or forsake you. (Hebrews 13:5)

God Lives Under the Bed

My brother Kevin thinks God lives under his bed. At least that's what I heard him say one night.

He was praying out loud in his dark bedroom, and I stopped outside his closed door to listen. "Are you there, God?" he said. "Where are you? Oh, I see. Under the bed." I giggled softly and tiptoed off to my own room.

Kevin's unique perspectives are often a source of amusement. But that night something else lingered long after the humor. I realized for the first time the very different world Kevin lives in.

He was born 30 years ago, mentally disabled as a result of difficulties during labor. Apart from his size (he's 6-foot-2), there are few ways in which he is an adult. He reasons and communicates with the capabilities of a 7-year-old, and he always will. He will probably always believe that God lives under his bed, that Santa Claus is the one who fills the space under our tree every Christmas, and that airplanes stay up in the sky because angels carry them.

I remember wondering if Kevin realizes he is different. Is he ever dissatisfied with his monotonous life? Up before dawn each day, off to work at a workshop for the disabled, home to walk our cocker spaniel, return to eat his favorite macaroni-and-cheese for dinner,

and later to bed.

The only variation in the entire scheme is laundry, when he hovers excitedly over our washing machine like a mother with her newborn child. He does not seem dissatisfied. He lopes out to the bus every morning at 7:05, eager for a day of simple work. He wrings his hands excitedly while the water boils on the stove before dinner, and he stays up late twice a week to gather our dirty laundry for his next day's laundry chores.

And Saturdays -- oh, the bliss of Saturdays! That's the day my Dad takes Kevin to the airport to have a soft drink, watch the planes land, and speculate loudly on the destination of each passenger inside. "That one's going' to Chi-car-go!" Kevin shouts as he claps his hands.

His anticipation is so great he can hardly sleep on Friday nights. And so goes his world of daily rituals and weekend field trips. He doesn't know what it means to be discontent.

His life is simple. He will never know the entanglements of wealth or power, and he does not care what brand of clothing he wears or what kind of food he eats.

His needs have always been met, and he never worries that one day they may not be.

His hands are diligent. Kevin is never so happy as when he is working. When he unloads the dishwasher or vacuums the carpet, his heart is completely in it. He does not shrink from a job when it is begun, and he does not leave a job until it is finished. But when his tasks are done, Kevin knows how to relax. He is not obsessed with his work or the work of others.

His heart is pure. He still believes everyone tells the truth, promises must be kept, and when you are wrong, you apologize instead of argue. Free from pride and unconcerned with appearances, Kevin is not afraid to cry when he is hurt, angry or sorry. He is always transparent, always sincere. And he trusts God.

Not confined by intellectual reasoning, when he comes to Christ, he

comes as a child. Kevin seems to know God -- to really be friends with Him in a way that is difficult for an "educated" person to grasp. God seems like his closest companion.

In my moments of doubt and frustrations with my Christianity, I envy the security Kevin has in his simple faith. It is then that I am most willing to admit that he has some divine knowledge that rises above my mortal questions. It is then I realize that perhaps he is not the one with the handicap -- I am.

My obligations, my fear, my pride, my circumstances -- they all become disabilities when I do not trust them to God's care.

Who knows if Kevin comprehends things I can never learn?

After all, he has spent his whole life in that kind of innocence, praying after dark and soaking up the goodness and love of God. And one day, when the mysteries of heaven are opened, and we are all amazed at how close God really is to our hearts, I'll realize that God heard the simple prayers of a boy who believed that God lived under his bed. Kevin won't be surprised at all!

Presents

A young man was getting ready to graduate from college. For many months he had admired a beautiful sports car in a dealer's showroom, and knowing his father could well afford it, he told him that was all he wanted.

As Graduation Day approached, the young man awaited signs that his father had purchased the car. Finally, on the morning of graduation, his father called him into his private study. His father told him how proud he was to have such a fine son and he told him how much he loved him. He handed his son a beautifully wrapped gift box. Curious, and somewhat disappointed, the young man opened the box and found a lovely leather bound Bible with the young man's name embossed in gold.

Angrily, he raised his voice to his father and said, "With all your money, all you give me is a Bible?" Then the boy stormed out of the house leaving the Bible there.

Many years passed and the young man was very successful in his business. He had a beautiful home and a wonderful family. But he realized that his father was very old and he thought perhaps he should go to make amends with him. He had not seen him since that Graduation Day. Before he could make the arrangements to go he received a telegram telling him that his father had passed away and that he had willed all of his possessions to his son. He needed to come immediately and take care of things. When he arrived at his father's house a sudden sadness and regret filled his heart.

He began to search through his father's important papers and there he saw it. The still new Bible, just as he had left it years ago. With tears he opened the Bible and turned the pages. His father had carefully underlined a verse. Matt. 7:11. "And if ye being evil know how to give good gifts to your children how much more shall your Heavenly Father give to those who ask Him?"

As he read those words, a car key dropped from the back of the Bible. It had a tag with the dealer's name on it. It was the same dealer who had the sports car he had wanted so many years ago. On the tag was the date of his graduation and the words PAID IN FULL.

How many times do we miss God's blessings because they are not in the package that we expect?