

Thought for the day

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1

If there is a God who made this whole huge universe, why would he take any notice of me?

Have you ever looked up at the stars and tried to count them?

Have you ever seen one of those photos of distant galaxies, taken from space?

Amongst all the millions and millions of stars, our planet Earth is just a tiny blue speck.

And on Earth there are millions and millions of people, and you are just one small person.

If God made all the millions and millions of stars, he must be a very big God and a very powerful God.

Why then, would he be interested in our planet?

And why would he be at all interested in little you?

How can what you are or what you do be of any consequence to him?

Why should he take more than a moment's interest in you?

And if all that is true, what's the point of your life?

What possible meaning can there be to your short time on this little blue planet?

Now imagine you walk into a room.

It's the most beautifully decorated room you've ever seen.

The walls are encrusted with jewels, the ceiling is ornately sculpted, the floor is made of gold and marble, the furniture is incredibly plush.

You are completely bowled over by the craftsmanship and luxury of it all.

And then you notice someone sitting in one of the chairs.

They're just an ordinary person, ordinarily dressed.

Now you're more interested in that person than all the beauty around.

All that is just decoration. It's dead.

The person is alive. Someone to talk to.

You go over. Say "Hello". Get to know them. Get friendly with them.

That's how God sees you.

Although you're one small person in a vast universe, you're alive.

He can talk to you and get to know you.

Your life matters to him.

After a while of getting to know him, you'll find out why.

It's because he actually made you.

You are a unique God-made person, and he thinks you're just the best thing ever.

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2

Has God already decided whether or not to choose me?

Imagine you're walking down a corridor.

There's a door to your left.

Looks interesting. Should you go in?

Hmmmmm.

Then you notice a CCTV camera monitoring the door.

You're being watched.

Hmmmmm.

You carry on down the corridor.

Your choice is recorded by the camera.

Now what if I had that recording, ahead of you walking down that corridor?

I would know that you weren't going to go in the door, even though I had no influence over whether you did or you didn't.

Because God knows ahead of time what you're going to do, it doesn't mean he's controlling your actions in any way.

In fact nothing is.

Not the stars, not anything.

You are in total control of what you do and who you are.

But what if God doesn't want you to be one of his people?

Don't worry.

All you need to do is choose God, and he will choose you.

It's like when you're at school in a games lesson.

The two most sporting people are usually made the captains.

The rest put their hands up and say "Choose me, choose me".

And the captains will pick which people they want to, the ones they think are the best players.

They probably won't pick those who don't want to be in the game though.

In the game of life there's just one captain; God.

The good news is that he picks everyone who wants to be in his team.

None are rejected.

He knows the good qualities that he has put into you, and he knows just how to make you excel in the game.

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3

What is it about me that makes me valuable to God?

What is it about you that makes you just as valuable to him as anyone else?

If God sees every person the same, there must be something about you that makes you just as 'good' as the most important and influential people in this world.

You're just as worthy as all of your heroes.

How can this be?

When it's Christmas time or someone's birthday, there might be a pile of presents waiting to be opened.

Which present is the best?

Is it the biggest one?

The heaviest?

The one that's wrapped with the prettiest paper?

The one with a big bow on?

The one that's just in a carrier bag?

The little one right at the bottom of the heap, almost out of sight?

Truth is, it could be any one of them. You just can't tell until you open them all and see what's inside.

When God looks at you, he sees straight through your 'wrapping'.

What you wear or own is not important to him.

Neither is the way you look, nor how able you are.

The bottom line is that God's X-ray vision sees through all that, and at, and into, your heart.

We all have a heart.

It is shown by the way we each behave.

By our motives, our priorities in life, our desires.

Our heart governs the way we live.

God is not wanting you to be on his team because you're an important person as far as the world is concerned.

He's not just looking for those that are at the top of their profession, or who are eloquent speech makers, or brilliant entertainers, or who have made it big.

God is after anyone who will have a heart for him.

For anyone who really wants to be on his team and who will operate as part of that team.

For anyone who is willing to commit to the tactics of the coach and who will play their best, as directed by him.

Everyone with such a heart is acceptable in God's eyes.

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4

What difference can I possibly make to the world?

So what difference is there if you join up to be a part of God's team?

What if you decide to listen to God's advice and to give his way a go and see which direction your life now goes in?

If you do that, won't your life just become a sad, pale, reflection of what it used to be, constrained by lots of boring "You can't do this any more" signs?

Well it could do, but that's not what God has in mind.

He wants for you to flourish and to become all that you've ever dreamed you could be.

And to take you beyond your dreams.

There's no end to what God can do for his team members.

The only limitation is how much each one is prepared to risk for him and how much control of their life they're prepared to trust him with.

God's resources are infinite and he knows exactly what each person needs in every situation.

And he's able and ready to help everyone.

Like a father, he's waiting for his team members to say "Daddy, can you help me here?"

Have you ever seen or read about some of the trench battles in the First World War, or the American Civil War?

One side would be ordered to come out of their trench and charge the enemy.

The difference being, the charging men were armed with sticks or revolvers, whilst the opposing force each had a fully-loaded machine gun.

The outcome in each case was a one hundred percent certainty; one force was completely outgunned and so destroyed.

Now imagine that just before the charge, the opposing force came up out of their trench and offered peace.

They said, "Let's not be enemies, let's work together".

"When we need help in a battle, you come to our aid with your sticks."

"And when you need help, we'll be there for you with our machine guns."

Sounds unlikely doesn't it?

But that's how God deals with us.

If you give your life to him, your heart and mind and strength, he gives you his power to help you to overcome your enemies and any obstacles in your life.

And that power can also launch you into success and prosperity.

This power transfer is called the blessing of God.

Have this in mind the next time someone says to you "God bless you".

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5

What's it like to be in God's team?

God's team is more than just a team, it's a family.

God wants you to be on his team, but he also wants you to be his child!

That's amazing isn't it?

The God who made the whole universe and all life wants to bring you into his family.

What if when you were young a really rich family adopted you, and they loved you and gave you the best food, and a huge bedroom, and all the latest toys, and drove you around in a posh car and took you on holidays to exotic countries?

Wouldn't that make you feel special?

Wouldn't you want it to carry on forever and wouldn't you do your best to be an integral part of that family?

God wants you to be, and to remain, in his household.

He wants you to live a blessed life, having at your disposal all the privileges that he can give you.

There are house rules of course.

Things have to be done a certain way.

That's not a bad thing.

The rules are there for your good.

Each family member has responsibilities and jobs to do.

The rules ensure that the whole family works together and learns to get along with each other.

These house rules apply to everyone.

There are no get-outs.

But they're not there on display and to be feared, as they look down on you like some kind of warrant for your arrest.

They're invisible, on the inside of you, in your heart and mind.

As you grow up in God's family, you will find your heart softening so that the rules become more a part of you.

You will find yourself doing things that you never thought you would, or that you never thought you would want to.

You will find that following the rules sets you free to be the real you that God made you to be, someone very special.

You will no longer feel the need to conform to other people's expectations of you, or to surrender to their agendas.

You will feel completely fulfilled and at peace with who you are; your daddy's child.

How much more is God a daddy to his family than even the best dad on Earth.

God is kind and patient, not rude or touchy, always ready to believe the best of you, always hopeful, never failing you, never absent or too tired to spend time with you.

This daddy inspires his family by his example of pure love.

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6

How will my life be better?

You will grow to be a big person.

You will have a sense of purpose.

You will become more influential.

As you wait upon God for strength you will accept challenges and experience victory.

You will bring change.

You will speak with maturity and with confidence.

You will take opportunities and not get comfortable in mediocrity.

You will have focus and know that you are going somewhere in life.

You will rid yourself of the baggage of bad habits.

You will become what God has designed you to be.

You will not feed your sinful nature nor let it destroy your relationships.

Everything you do in private could be put on display.

You will take risks that are uncomfortable.

You will have a go and not worry about failure.

You will let go of the past so that it will not live in your present nor affect your future.

You will forget past failures so that God can then reveal your future.

You will not blame, but just move on.

God will change you to fit into his plan for you.

You will place your feet where God says to, without questioning.

You will not tiptoe, nor be delicate or fragile or easily offended.

You will walk boldly when you need to be rough and rugged.

You will carry more, run further, and resist more.

Your passion for God will draw people.

You will show everyone that he matters to you.

You will do whatever you can, whatever it takes.

You will advance.

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7

Can I trust God?

The Bible talks about God's mercy and loving-kindness towards you.

If God were to describe his mercy, he would say to you;

I am unendingly loyal.

I am desperate to demonstrate my undying loyalty to you, to love you and to empower you to succeed, no matter what happens to try to destroy our relationship.

Nothing will take precedence over my devotion to you and my concern for your welfare.

You are forever constantly at the forefront of my mind, no matter what happens, no matter how little you give.

I will have love and mercy to you until it is too good to be true.

My blessings and empowerments for you to succeed will hotly pursue you and overtake you.

I am sold out for you.

I will do anything for you.

I will give you your heart's desire.

Just say the word and I will do it.

What can I do for you?

I am so ready to do good to you, it's done before you finish asking!

I have made a way to give you my love and my blessings.

I have taken all the responsibility of creating a relationship between us.

I have made myself one with you.

I have knit my soul and spirit with yours.

You are blessed because of Jesus' faithfulness.

His strong love maintains your peace with me.

All you have to do is receive me, through faith in Jesus, who I gave to you in my love for you.

Then you can love others with my love that I will pour out into your heart by the Holy Spirit, empowering you to love as I love.

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8

What does it mean to be friends with God?

Do you have many friends?

What would they do for you?

Lend you money? Give you a lift to the airport? Die for you?

Whoa there! Die for you?

If that's what friendship might mean, are you still in?

Just as blessing is a word that has lost its meaning and power over time, so too friend.

A friend was a blood brother; you mixed your blood with theirs as a sign that you would help them, wherever, whenever, even to the point of dying for them.

In this true sense of the word, God says that you are his friend.

That means you have to be prepared to give up your life for him.

And also that, in life, you'll be as committed to him as he is to you.

That sounds like God's asking a lot of you.

And he is.

Team and family membership will cost you everything.

The cost is indeed high, but everyone, absolutely everyone, can pay the price.

But what do you get for your ‘money’?

You get all the things that make you feel good and secure on the inside in this life, and the promise of a never ending great time with him, after your life on Earth has ended.

And how can you be sure that God will keep his end of the bargain?

That he really will always be there for you in this life and that he absolutely will take you to Heaven after you die?

Well he’s done all that he could do.

God came down to this blue planet, lived a God life here as the man Jesus, and then went through death.

He did this not because he had to, or needed to, but to show his love for you.

To show how strongly he wants to have a relationship with you.

And he also wants all the members of his family to be friends with each other.

There are to be no star players who can skip this part.

Everyone in the family mucks in and helps out all the others.

That’s the way it is.

Teamwork and friendship together.

Unstoppable.

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9

What's wrong with my life as it is?

Why, if there is a God and he loves you to pieces, do you need to change your life at all?

You've been going along just fine.

You don't need to take God that seriously.

You'll just believe he's there and trust that he'll take care of you when you die because he loves you.

That reasoning is a bit like a caterpillar not wanting to become a butterfly;

I'll just carry on crawling around, munching leaves.

That's the life for me!

That's what I call having a good time.

And don't try telling me otherwise.

Don't talk to me about flying in the sunshine and drinking nectar and being beautiful.

I'm not that bad looking.

I'm quite a trendy caterpillar.

I have all I need.

Why should I change?

But God has so much more for you than what you have now.

There's a whole new world to discover that you have very little understanding of.

Just because you don't understand it now, doesn't mean you must live the rest of your life not understanding it.

The life you live now is not the life that God wants you to live.

He has something much, much better for you.

But although he offers it to you, you have to take it from him.

It's a gift, but you must open it and not just leave it at the bottom of the Christmas tree.

Imagine you have breathing problems.

You go to the doctor.

He sits you down and says, "You've got to change your lifestyle. Exercise. Eat healthily. Stop smoking. Don't get stressed. Enjoy life more."

What then would you do?

Carry on and take no notice of the doctor's advice?

Watch TV programmes about healthy living from the safety of your sofa?

Or find ways of changing that you actually enjoy and that get you towards that healthy state, so that you can enjoy life more and not have to worry about having a heart attack?

The gain is definitely worth the pain of changing.

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10

How can I live the kind of life that God wants me to live?

You just need to rely on God.

His presence, ability, strength, and help means that, with him in your life, you are able to live a life pleasing to him.

You can empower others because your all-powerful God empowers you.

You can prosper others because the owner of this whole world prospers you.

You can forgive others because God forgives you for everything, big and small.

You can love others because your daddy loves you with all of his heart.

You can heal others because God heals you completely.

You can save others because God saves you daily and for ever.

You can receive others because God receives you without hesitation.

You can encourage others because God encourages you in everything.

You can console others because God is always there consoling you.

You can be patient with others because God's patience with you never ends.

You can be kind to others because Almighty God is kind to little you.

You can be good to others because God is only good to you.

You can be generous to others because God is generous without limit to you.

You can sacrifice for others because God sacrificed himself for you.

You can pray for others because Jesus continuously prays for you.

You can be gentle with others because your awesome God is gentle with you.

You can be faithful to others because God is always faithful to you.

You can believe in others because God believes in you absolutely.

You can be a friend to others because God is your friend.

You can give peace to others because God gives you his perfect peace.

You can give joy to others because God's joy is infectious.

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11

Isn't it a weak way of living to just trust in God?

You are not as strong as God.

That's obvious isn't it?

But you can have the strength of God within you, his strength strengthening you.

But the dynamics of the relationship have to be right for this partnership to work to its best.

If you treat God as ammo in your pocket, to be used when you need that extra help, nothing much will happen.

But if you put yourself into God's pocket, he can use you, and in his hand you become a fearsome weapon.

How can you be sure that if you make yourself weak, that God's strength will come through for you?

It's risky and scary to not be in control of things, especially when the going is rough.

You might get beaten up and spewed out if you don't defend yourself.

Imagine a big heavy steam roller trundling down the road.

In its path are two objects, a steel mask and a rubber mask.

The roller goes over both of them and continues on its way.

In the road, the steel mask has been flattened and is almost unidentifiable.

The rubber mask has bounced back to shape and is unharmed.

The strength of the steel was insufficient to withstand the weight of the roller.

But the elastic property of the rubber mask meant it survived being squashed flat.

As strong as you might be in yourself, there will come a time when it's not enough.

You need something more, something inside of you to withstand the onslaught.

That something is the presence of God in your life.

When you are weak and have no strength of your own, then you are truly strong, in God.

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12

How should I speak to God?

When it comes to your attitude and tone of voice, I think it best to think of this in terms of a child-parent relationship.

Think of how a child might speak before meal time;

1) Every ten minutes: “Dad, is my dinner ready yet?”

This gets pretty annoying quite quickly and shows that the child doesn’t really trust the dad. God always provides for your needs at just the right time. Do you trust him enough to wait patiently?

2) “Dad, is there gonna be any dinner today? I know you made me dinner yesterday and the day before. Just a sandwich will do if you’re busy.”

Here again a lack of trust, even when experience is taken into account, as well as believing that the parent thinks they’re not worth that much actually. God wants you to learn to expect his goodness each and every day and to trust that he’s never too busy to give you his full attention.

3) “Dad, please can I have the same for dinner today as I had yesterday. Actually, can I always have the same dinner?”

This child seems pretty unadventurous. God likes to take you to new places and through new experiences so that you discover more about yourself and about him. Have you got to a place of stagnant comfort?

4) *“Dad! I’m hungry! I need dinner! Can’t you see I’m hungry?!”*

Calm down! Calm down! God knows your needs better than you do and cares for you more than anything.

5) *“Dad, I need to know what’s for dinner every day for the next month. Please let me see what I’m getting for the next thirty days.”*

Are you able to live, dependant on God, for day-to-day direction?

6) *“Father, you said you would give me dinner every day. I claim my dinner. I claim caviar, chips and peas, now!”*

Not the attitude of a grateful loving child! And be careful when you ask for specific things from God. Better to trust his choice of gifts.

7) *“Hi dad, what’s for dinner?”*

Ahhh! A sweet, endearing, loved child, trusting that their dad will take care of them, and content with whatever they’re given. I guess that should be your attitude. Don’t you think?

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13

Do I have to change the way I talk?

When God speaks, things happen.

The universe is formed. Life is created.

God never goes back on his word.

If he says something, you can be sure it will happen.

Promises he made thousands of years ago are just as trustworthy today as when he first made them.

None of God's words fails. The power within them means this could never happen.

As one of his children, you inherit this family characteristic.

Your words now become powerful.

You too can speak things into being and into life.

Your words too can condemn and destroy.

So you have to be very careful how you speak.

God, your daddy, is waiting to empower your positive words, to bless you.

He won't act on your negative words to harm you, but that doesn't mean that they're powerless.

They influence your own mindset and ultimately your life.

If you talk negatively; "I'm no good at this", "I feel terrible today", "How long is this going to go on?", "I'll never amount to anything", what can God do with those words?

You have rendered him unable to help you by not saying anything positive that he can use to bless you with.

If you say, "I can do this", "I am well", "Thank you daddy that you are with me", "I can do anything with you", then your daddy smiles, gets to work on your behalf, and your life take a decisive upturn as he blesses you.

What do you want your life to be like?

Do you want to have heroic stories to tell when you're old and looking back over your life?

Do you want to change the world?

It will never happen if you say it can't.

God says to you "Go for your dreams. Speak about how great things will be, about the exciting adventure it will all be."

"Then see what I can do. I'll take you there. And beyond all that you imagined. Let's run together."

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14

Do angels exist?

I have experienced happenings which point to unseen supernatural help or protection.

I've asked for traffic lights to change and for motorway queues ahead to be cleared.

Green lights and no hold-ups.

I've asked for an exhausted baby seagull to be helped out of my high-walled garden, after its many attempts to escape over a period of nearly a day.

Next time I looked, it had gone.

I've asked for protection over my rented-out house, and later discovered that some burglars apparently gave up and left, even though no one was in the house, and after they had successfully broken the outer glazing of the back door.

I've asked for clouds to be blown away from in front of the sun, so that the estate agent would get better pictures of my house.

Immediately the clouds began to move away and everything became nice and bright.

My favourite example was at a children's party where I had taken my two young daughters, then aged four and five.

There was one of those amusement-arcade grabber machines.

My older daughter had a go, and got a bracelet.

She gave this to one of her friends.

Then she had another go, and she got a bag thing that she let another girl have. Actually the girl snatched it off her!

Then I thought I'd better let my younger daughter have a go.

We positioned the grabber over the soft toys and when it came up it had grabbed four soft toys.

I couldn't believe it as I was watching it happen.

I told my older daughter it was Jesus giving her two toys for the two she'd given away, plus two toys for her sister.

Amazing. But maybe you had to be there!

When I got home, I tried recreating this by trying to pick up the four toys from the table, with my hand.

I couldn't do it!

Twelve years later I recounted this story to my older daughter as we were passing a similar arcade grabber machine.

She was a bit down that day as someone had just stolen £20 from her pocket when she had left her coat at a party.

We left the bowling alley, crossed the road, went down towards the sea, and walked along the cliff path.

Suddenly she stopped, climbed over the fence, and retrieved a £20 note that she had seen fluttering in the grass.

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15

Is there a way I can get God to answer my prayers?

Do you want to know my top tip for getting a 'yes' from God when asking for something?

I actually learnt this from my step-daughter.

She would ask me for something and before I had a chance to answer she would say, "Thanks dad!".

How can you say 'no' to that?

As I thought about how I felt and responded to her, I thought, 'my dad must be the same way with me'.

I remember the first time I tried this;

I was driving my two little girls to school and we were running late.

Previously I would have said, "Dad, please help us to get to school on time", but then still feel stressed and not sure if we really would make it on time.

This time I said, "Thanks dad, for helping us to get to school on time".

And I relaxed.

And drove calmly.

And we got to school on time.

I think it's that added confidence and trust in God that's activated when we say thanks for something before we've actually got possession of it that brings success.

Jesus did say several times that if we believe we already have what we're asking for, then it's ours.

But this concept goes against our common sense.

We're so used to focusing on what we see and feel that it can be hard to believe in something we don't yet see.

But it's absolutely key.

Belief is everything when it comes to life with God and to his way of doing things.

God believes what he says will happen.

He believed when he said, "Light be".

Jesus believed that his life and death on Earth would save us.

Now, as God's child, you can use the same family way of believing for things and seeing them happen.

In fact he expects you to operate that way, and is maybe disappointed when you don't, because it means you haven't learned to trust him enough yet.

But he's always there to encourage you to grow your belief muscles.

To exercise them by believing for bigger and bigger things.

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16

Does God still heal people like in the Bible?

Yes.

I'd only been believing in God for a little while when I was taken to a church group meeting in Southampton.

Nobody there knew me. I knew none of them.

Towards the end of the meeting a lady stood up and said, "Somebody here has a blocked-up nose and God wants to heal them".

So we sat there and waited.

Suddenly there was a tingling, bubbly sensation in my nose and I could breathe freely.

I had been sat there completely bunged-up with hay fever.

And about three years later, six months after starting work, another amazing thing happened.

All through my life I'd suffered with nose bleeds.

My earliest childhood memory, from when I was about six, was waking up with a nose bleed. My nose bled all day, and when I went to sleep it was still bleeding onto my pillow.

And as I grew up, my nose would bleed so easily. I might just sniff and it would start. And once started, it would take about half an hour for the bleeding to stop.

Anyway, I was at work on a lovely summer's day and then I felt my nose begin to bleed.

I quickly went to the toilets and started squeezing damp tissues against my nose to try and stop the blood.

I suddenly felt scared and I just called out, “Father!”.

And the bleeding stopped. I could hardly believe it.

I waited and waited. No blood.

Since that day I’ve not had any of those nosebleeds.

That was thirty-five years ago now.

Some time later, about ten years ago, I prayed for a guy who had back pain. I prayed in English and in tongues (Holy Spirit language which comes from the heart, not the mind) and, though he didn’t say anything at the time, he later said he felt something like a small electric shock pass through him and the pain was gone.

A few years later an ex-gangland-enforcer, at the church group I met with, told me how he had terrible knife-like pain in his ears which he had suffered from for ten years, “and would suffer from for another ten years”.

I told him not to say that and offered to pray for him.

He said, “Go on then, get on with it”.

I put my fingers on his ears and prayed in English and in the Spirit.

I went into the hall for the music, which he always avoided due to the loudness of the guitars and drums.

I saw him come in a little later, despite the whistling feedback and distortion of the microphones.

After the service he came up behind me, put his hand on my shoulder, and told me that the pain had gone and that he was healed as I prayed for him. Thank you Jesus.

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17

Will God speak to me?

Yes.

In many different ways.

Through reading his word, the Bible.

Through a thought in your mind, put there by the Holy Spirit.

In dreams.

In prayer.

Through nature, his creation.

Through music.

Through other people.

One way he speaks to me is by giving me illustrations, hence this little book.

One vivid thought-picture that he gave me to help me not mess up by allowing a bad thought in my head to become so strong that it had to come out of me in words or action, but to rather reject the thought, was this;

I'm sitting, eating my dinner.

A fly buzzes into the room.

I watch it circle my dinner, then land on it.

I observe it carefully as it walks over my dinner, prodding it with its head, then vomiting onto my food.

Then it flies off.

I eat the part where the fly vomited.

NO!!

Of course not!

I swat the fly away as soon as it comes anywhere near my food.

But eating the infected meal, is what it's like when I entertain a bad thought pattern.

I allow it to become my focus of attention, until it ends up becoming a part of me.

So every time I notice my thoughts are off track, no excuse, I need to immediately bat them away.

And thanks to my brother Jesus and my live-in teacher the Holy Spirit, I can always do this, no matter how big and ugly the fly.

They always supply me with the strategy and ability to kick those thoughts out.

All I need to do is to want to reject the thought and to say 'no'.

Then Jesus and the Holy Spirit can help me.

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18

Will God make me prosperous?

God is your caretaker.

It's his role that he has chosen to do.

To take all your cares.

To sort them out for you, allowing you to just enjoy being his carefree child.

No one wants their children worrying about everything, going around constantly frowning and looking stressed.

It's the parents' role to take the strain of care and worry from their children.

So in your case, picture it like this;

You're a child, going on a picnic with dad.

You could try and carry, on your back, all the food and drink and plates and cutlery and the blanket, in a rucksack.

But it would weigh you down badly.

You'd be constantly stopping for rests, and trying to make the load more comfortable on your back and shoulders.

But your dad wants to carry everything for you.

He wants you to be running about, exploring the woods.

If you need a drink, you can just come to him and he'll sit down with you and let you rest and get refreshed.

Then you're off to play again.

Dad's got all the resources for the day.

You don't need to carry them.

You just come to him when you want them, knowing he's always only too happy to stop and take whatever it is you're after, out of the rucksack.

That's how I see true prosperity.

It's not you having stuff, owning lots of things.

It's knowing where to get anything you need, at any time.

Knowing that God's got everything, you don't need to have the stress of carrying it all.

You just need to remember, and remind yourself, that whatever you want or need, God's got it.

He is the source and supplier of everything good that you will ever need in every situation.

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19

How and when and what should I pray?

Rule number one: God is not trying to make this difficult for you.

Rule number two: Talk to God throughout the day.

Rule number three: You're not trying to get God's attention, he's already focused on you.

You're not trying to get God to do something new, everything's already taken care of.

You're bringing the good things that God has, from the spiritual world, into your life.

The answer you're looking for is somewhere in the Bible, so find it and ask him to make that promise true for you.

Rule number four: You need to believe that God is hearing you and has granted your request.

Remind yourself that your big brother Jesus is the reason you can talk to God.

Rule number five: You're asking because of who Jesus is and because of how much he means to you.

Remember to listen. God knows more about the situation than you do!

Be honest.

Any problem is never God's fault.

God can work in people's lives, in response to your asking.

Just ask once for something, then believe it's taken care of.

Rule number six: Thank God for his answers and solutions.

Unbelief and doubt will render your words completely powerless and ineffective.

Rule number seven: It doesn't matter how good a person you are, it matters that you believe God.

God loves to hear from you!

God is not far away. He's inside you!

If you've messed up, tell God about it.

Rule number eight: Speak with your mind. Also speak from your spirit.

Let go of any unforgiveness.

Thank God for anything and everything you can think of.

Be confident, God loves to hear from you!!

Focus on God. Tell him how amazing you think he is.

Get physical. Shout. Jump. Dance. Clap.

Don't focus on the problem, focus on what God's promised about sorting it out. Then use your faith to see it solved.

Rule number nine: The answer isn't dependent on your strength, but on God's strength.

Rule number ten: Expect change. Expect good.

You are God's child. He loves to hear from you!!!

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20

Will God be angry with me when I mess up?

Do you have somewhere in your mind the picture of an angry God?

He's just waiting for you to make a mistake and then 'Bam!,' he's gonna make you pay.

No way.

God is only good to all of us.

We all make mistakes and he knows that.

Even when you mess up and create a problem that you're unable to fix, he doesn't just sit back and observe your discomfort.

No, he gets involved in sorting out the problem.

You just need to admit your mistake and ask him for his help.

Think back to when you were a child.

You probably had a favourite toy.

Imagine that toy was a model aeroplane made of balsa wood, and that somehow in your playing with it disaster struck!

Now you're looking at a broken, and definitely unairworthy craft, all twisted and splintered.

It's way beyond your ability to mend.

So what did you do?

Well, as a child you might well have taken it to your dad to hopefully fix, and hopefully with no long and angry lecture about how you should have been more careful.

So now, as a child of God, your heavenly daddy is the one to take your problems and mistakes to.

What looks impossible to your human thinking and experience is not a problem to him.

When you take your 'toy' to dad, he looks at it with all-knowing all-wise eyes.

As he sees it, it's not impossible to fix, as you might have feared.

No, in God's presence, in his 'workshop', all things are fixable.

All things are possible with him.

And once he tells you the solution to the problem and what your part in solving it is, he won't punish you, as some people believe God does.

But he will use the situation to teach you.

Either what not to do in future, or how to better manage your behaviour.

His voice of correction is a loving and gentle one.

He is your dad and wants you to learn so that you can grow to be more like him.

* * * * *

21

Isn't it a risky way of living to just trust in God?

Some people believe that giving your life to God will mean that you will have no more problems in life.

Others believe that giving your life to God will result in no end of problems!

Which is it?

Whilst your problems will not end, you do now have someone who will be with you in them all, and who will help you to either overcome them, or to endure them with an attitude of hope and positivity.

And you will indeed encounter new problems, since people who were formerly your friends or associates may now turn against you now that you've 'gone all religious', either mocking you or being hostile to you.

It is part of the package of joining God's family.

But you can take encouragement and strength from his example and from that of Jesus, in their loving outreach to a hostile human race.

In the chaos of the suffering world we live in, God's love is there to bring order and peace and hope, but that love takes a battering in the process.

So you too may have times of being battered.

But if you will hang on to God, he will bring you through safely.

Imagine you are on a cruise ship, sailing along in the middle of the ocean.

Leaning over the rail to take a closer look at the waves you lose your balance and fall down into the sea.

And no one sees you fall.

And you're in the ocean and the ship is sailing away.

You notice a rope trailing along from the back of the ship going down into the water, and you manage to grab it as it passes near to you.

So now you're being dragged along in the water as you hang on to the rope.

If you let go you will be drowned without a doubt.

As you're being towed, there's debris in the water that you're dragged in to.

Plastic bottles, pieces of wood, oil.

But what can you do?

If you let go of the rope you will die.

If you hold on you will be dragged through unpleasant slime and hit by the occasional floating object.

So will you be brought to safety by God if you continue to hold on to him and don't let go of your relationship to him and of believing in his fatherly love for you.

His love conquers all.

It even defeated death itself.

* * * * *

22

How am I supposed to just believe when I can't see God?

You are used to living in a real, physical world.

We all are.

So you rely one hundred percent on your physical senses to know what's going on.

It is natural that you trust in things you can see or touch or hear, more than invisible or intangible things.

But there are things you can't detect with one sense but can detect with another.

You can't see the wind, but you can feel it.

You can't feel daylight.

So some things that you experience are invisible.

And you do already exercise some degree of faith.

If you order some furniture in a shop, they will give you a receipt for it.

Your hope is that the furniture will be delivered.

You have faith in the receipt you were given; that that piece of paper means that the furniture is yours.

Faith in Jesus means that salvation is yours.

You have no visible receipt of the transaction.

But you can sense it in your spirit.

God's spirit communicates with your spirit and assures you that you will be safe in his care for all eternity.

Your believing is what gets you into his family.

You don't need to understand the process involved.

Does that mean it's like blind faith?

Not at all.

Just think of when you are about to eat some food.

Looking at the food does you no good.

Picking some of it up on your fork does you no good.

Putting some of the food in your mouth and tasting it does you no good.

What does you good is when you swallow it.

The process of how the food is translated into energy to keep your body functioning you don't need to know.

All you need to do is swallow the food.

Your body does the rest.

So with belief and faith.

Just believe. Just have faith.

God does the rest.

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23

How am I expected to get on with other believers?

Do some believers seem weird to you?

Are you embarrassed to be associated with some of those that, as a believer, you are now related to?

Would you rather 'go it alone' and just enjoy friendship with God and Jesus and the Spirit, and not bother with having to get on with other people?

Whilst you are to develop in your own personal relationship with God, he asks you to work with others and to learn to enjoy their company and to value them, as he does.

He has designed us and put us together in a way that is like a dry stone wall.

A brick wall, while strong, is boring in that all the bricks are the same size and shape.

Imagine if everyone was identical to you?

Exactly.

The process of setting the stones together so that the wall is strong without the aid of cement is the work of the builder.

Different shaped pieces are slotted together, the rough alongside the smooth.

Think of yourself as a stone in the wall, right next to very different feeling stones.

Or think of a car engine.

It has delicate parts like the regulator.

Though weak in itself, it is essential to the running of the engine.

Too much power into it and it will break.

It might not be as strong as other parts of the engine, but it is needed if the car is to go anywhere.

You need to realize how you fit into God's family - that you're allocated a place and a role by him, and that you're not to dominate other parts.

Think of men's roles and women's roles as believers, according to the general view of their physical strengths.

The car engine part that goes zooooom could be the men.

This part makes the regulator, which could be the women, spin.

The spinning of the regulator cools the zooooom part.

The 'women' could say, "I don't want to spin when it goes zooooom".

The 'men' could say, "I'll go zooooom as much as I want".

Jesus, the mechanic, sees neither part as superior.

He desires a working engine with all parts performing their role and functioning as intended.

So yes, you are expected to get on with other believers.

God will show you how!

You just need to let him develop his love and patience in you

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24

How can I be holy?

By your question you sense that you are not holy or perfect.

That is a major and good step.

You need to recognize the problem before you can be helped.

You cannot help yourself.

No amount of good-deed-doing can wash away the bad things that you have done in the past.

In the sense of being good, you have always been a failure.

Only the perfect can survive in God's presence.

His holiness and goodness and perfection burns up all that is tarnished in any way.

So how can you become holy?

Jesus did all that was necessary for you to become holy.

By his giving of himself, sacrificed in innocence for you the guilty, in your place, he now offers you his own personal holiness as a gift to you.

Think of two magnets, each with a north and south pole.

If you bring your unholy self to him and his holiness, he is attracted to you like a north pole to a south pole.

And the joining of opposites is firm and secure.

Some people think they can earn their way into heaven by doing 'good' things and living a 'good' life.

But this is like bringing their north pole of self-righteousness to Jesus' north pole of his perfect righteousness.

The two north poles repel.

They can't be joined.

For you, having been made holy by Jesus, there is nothing you can do to add to this holiness, or to maintain it or improve it.

Some people persist in trying to continue to live a 'good' life, not fully trusting what has been done for them.

This shows a lack of respect for what Jesus did.

Think of people's holiness as a computer file consisting of trillions of lines of data, all inter-related.

If a line is changed, thousands of others are affected.

The file needs to be perfectly correct in order for a person to be considered holy, so as to be able to enter God's presence.

Jesus says, "I've made the file correct. Just accept it as correct and press Save".

Those who rely on their own 'goodness' to save them want to mess with the file that Jesus supplies.

But only Jesus' holiness is acceptable to God.

Anything other than accepting the file as given to you by Jesus, is doomed and certain to fail.

* * * * *

25

Do I have to obey the rules in the Old Testament?

So, as was just said, you cannot add to the holiness that has been given to you by Jesus.

He came so that he could fulfill the old law with all its commandments, so that these no longer need to be followed as showing the correct way to live.

People are saved by believing in Jesus, not by practicing a way of living.

Since Jesus fulfilled the law, it is now antiquated and of no further use.

If a prophecy has been fulfilled, its purpose has been served.

If a mother says to her young child, “Your dad will be home at six”, the child waits for that word to be fulfilled.

Dad comes home at six.

The child is happy.

If when mum is later tucking the child up in bed, she says, “Your dad will be home at six”, the child will think their mum has gone mad.

The old rules were to show us our faults.

They couldn’t help us to become holy.

Jesus fulfilled the demands of the law, taking away its demands on us.

He shines like the noonday sun, casting the old rules into the shadows.

If you come to Jesus but are still conscious of maintaining all the rules, it's like you're coming out into the brightest daylight carrying your own lighted candle.

Pointless.

Worse, very disrespectful of Jesus and despising of what he did for you.

Now, since Jesus lives in you, your very spirit guides your actions and you have no need of external rules and guidelines.

His presence in you makes you way more sensitive to right behaviour than your conscience ever did.

A young child needs their mother to tell them, "Don't cross the road", when they see a friend or an ice cream van.

If they try to cross they will be rightly punished.

A mature person knows how to cross the road safely.

Their own internal understanding directs them.

They no longer need an external command to keep them safe.

And some of the things you learned when you were young were just for a period, as the old rules were just for a period.

In primary school you were told not to touch matches.

So in secondary school you could ignore the criticisms of those who hung on to primary teachings as they complained, "Look, they're touching matches".

Just follow with Jesus and be led by him.

* * * * *

26

Can I influence God?

I told you earlier about believing, even if you can't see or feel what you're believing for.

Let me tell you some of the benefits of believing God, in answer to your question about influencing God.

Think of this everyday example.

I ask you for £100.

But I don't really believe that you will give it to me.

And you know that I don't believe that you will.

Do you feel obliged to give me the money?

No.

What about if I ask you for £100 and really believe that you will give it to me?

Now you're under an obligation to give to me since I'm believing that you will definitely help me, and you feel compelled to satisfy my belief.

According to how I believe, you are influenced to act.

So think how your believing influences God's dealings with you and his responses to your requests.

When your mind casts doubt on what you're believing for, speak words of belief from your heart and ignore the doubts in your mind. Believe your beliefs and doubt your doubts!

Also, having an attitude of thankfulness influences God.

It's not much fun giving to someone who shows little or no appreciation.

But if you know that your giving will be appreciated, you get creative in your giving, as you imagine the joyful response you will get from them that you give to.

The same goes for God.

And sometimes he plays little games with us that also teach us to trust him more.

Look out for times when he asks you to do something or to give something away.

He does this because he wants to give something to you, or to give you something better than what you already have.

Imagine if I asked you to go and get some milk when the fridge is already full of milk.

You decide to humour me and go.

When you get back there's a surprise party waiting for you.

This couldn't have happened if you hadn't gone out on that unnecessary task.

Sometimes God asks you to do things that don't seem to make sense.

Or he may ask you to let go of something that you treasure.

He can't give you something better until your hands are empty and ready to receive from him.

So your attitude influences how God acts. For example, how about this for an attitude; 'all that is within me desires you Jesus to be all that is within me'?

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27

Can I undo what Jesus has done for me?

Absolutely not.

Since you did nothing to contribute to your becoming holy, your continuing to be holy has nothing to do with you either.

Holiness is something outside of and beyond human attainment.

Jesus died to make you holy, so he won't allow anything to undo the victorious outcome of all his suffering and his life's work.

Yes you can mess up and do bad things.

But that does not affect the status that Jesus has given you.

You've been found not guilty by the law.

And because Jesus has now taken you out of the realm where the law has any jurisdiction over you, you can never be found guilty in the future.

If you're in Jesus, the law, though it still exists, has no more power over you, so is not a concern of yours any longer.

It's like you're in Jesus' airplane flying high in the sky.

The law of gravity still exists but its power over you is no longer a concern, since you're safe, flying with Jesus.

As long as you're with Jesus, the law has been taken care of and can't hurt you, because Jesus has satisfied the law's demand of you; that you be sinless, for you.

Remember when you used to play football as a child?

You would get all muddy and messed up.

But that was only on the outside.

The mud could be washed off.

You didn't get muddy on the inside.

So even though you do mess up from time to time, Jesus is happy to keep cleaning you up, knowing that deep down you're perfect, because of his gift to you of his holiness in your spirit.

This all seems too good to be true doesn't it?

To the human minds it is.

You can't conceive of why anyone would take the death penalty for you and, in exchange, freely offer you all of their unimaginably good benefits, which will last for ever.

And when Jesus took your place, you hated him and despised him for doing it, since you didn't understand what was happening.

But now you just say, "Thank you Jesus", and the transaction is completed.

Human nature demands that surely we must have to do something to earn our place in heaven.

Being innately selfish, humans cannot really comprehend this act of ultimate self-sacrifice on Jesus' part.

But such love as his can't be bought, not at any price.

All the wealth in the world cannot buy the freedom and hope that Jesus purchased for you.

* * * * *

28

So, just to be sure, what do I have to do to get to Heaven?

Have you ever seen someone in a sports crowd holding up a banner that says “John 3:16”?

That sentence in the Bible that’s referred to contains the answer to your question.

It reads: For in such a manner did God love the world, inasmuch that His Son, the uniquely-begotten One, He gave, in order that everyone who places his trust in Him may not perish but may be having life eternal.

So it’s purely a matter of belief and trust.

As a result of what Jesus achieved on the Cross, everyone, absolutely everyone, is potentially saved and thus able to go to Heaven.

But that potential has to be realized by you.

Imagine you were on board the Titanic when it was holed and sunk.

You and the other passengers would be hanging onto a piece of wood or something, floating in the icy water.

But enough lifeboats are available and sent out to save everyone in peril.

One of the boats pulls up to you and a hand is offered for you to grip onto so that you can be pulled up and into safety.

Obviously you accept the offer of help.

But for any that choose not to grip onto the hand, but rather remain clinging to their plank, that offer of rescue is spurned, and eventually they will drown.

In another analogy, imagine that everyone in the world receives an email saying that they have won the lottery, even though they didn't enter it!

And it's not a scam.

What will you do about it?

If you don't act on the email, the jackpot will not become yours.

But if you reply with your personal details and tick the box saying 'Yes, I would like to receive my winnings', the prize will be on its way to you.

The prize that Jesus won for you by His death on the Cross is an eternal inheritance available to everyone alike.

You are mentioned in His will.

You are a beneficiary.

And not just of money or stuff, but of everlasting life in His kingdom, where there is no sadness or hate or fighting or disease or lack or pain or loss, rather joy and love and peace and health and plenty and freedom and gain.

Heaven is a place where your life experience just keeps on getting better and better.

Do you want to go there?

Well now you know how to.

So what about other books that say, 'this is how to get to Heaven', or, 'this is how to live spiritually'?

Books which sell millions of copies and figure in the bestsellers lists?

Aren't their ideas ones that you should follow?

Can't you just pick and choose from different books and ideas and philosophies, and come up with a spiritual package that works for you and makes you feel good?

As long as you're sincere in your beliefs, won't God just accept you and allow you into Heaven?

But what if none of these books is right?

What if none of them lead or direct you to Heaven?

What if they take you nowhere?

Or what if they take you somewhere entirely different to where you would like to go?

People put their faith in taxi drivers.

They believe that they will be driven by them to the destination that they have asked to go to.

So, imagine you go to a taxi rank.

You call out, "Can any of you take me to Heaven?".

They all start shouting that they can.

One of the taxi drivers says they know the quickest route.

Another one says they know the easiest route.

But other drivers warn that 'no, it will be a long and difficult journey'.

Another driver says he will take you, but that there's actually little chance that you will have enough money to pay for the whole journey, as the fare keeps increasing as you travel further along the way.

Yet another driver says that the route to Heaven is a secret known only to them.

But actually, none of these drivers have ever been to Heaven, though some of them might claim to have.

So none of them really know how to get you to Heaven, despite what they're telling you.

Just then, someone taps you on the shoulder.

You turn to look at them.

They smile and say, "I live in Heaven"

"Come and walk with Me and I'll take you there".

"And you can come and live with Me there".

"As My special guest".

"For ever".

You smile, take His hand, and walk with Him, away from all the taxi drivers, sure that you are on your way to Heaven, and that He, Jesus, will get you safely there.

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