

# ALIVE AGAIN!

*Mini-Magazine*

A  
Light  
in the  
Dark

Next  
Year's  
Champions

Freedom  
From Fear



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Do you ever feel like you are just not making the grade. Like you always get to the big game and fail in the finals. If so, this true football story may help you.



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Have you ever felt like something in life was missing? This Christian-fiction tells about a young guy who, in spite of suitable circumstances, feels something is missing.



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Fear at times reaches into all of our lives. That's why God consistently encourages us to "fear not." Learn biblical principles that help overcome fear and live to the fullest.

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## Next Year's Champions

By the year 1971, the Dallas Cowboys acquired a reputation for being “almost champions,” being labeled as “Next Years’ Champions” and “Can’t Win the Big Game” Cowboys.” While their seasons showed great promise, they continued to fail in the finals. With a chance to go to the first and second Super Bowls, they lost the championship to the Green Bay Packers. The next two years, they again came close, but were defeated by the Browns. Finally, in 1970 they made it to the Super

Bowl, but a number of freak plays set them up for defeat, and with five seconds left, the Baltimore Colts kicked a field goal to win the game.

After their Super Bowl defeat, they acquired a new quarterback. Roger Staubach had been drafted years earlier, but had to finish out his four years of service with the Navy before joining the team. Now, he was ready, but Coach Landry was not prepared to put him in full-time. Instead, as the year began, he alternated the quarterbacks between Roger

Staubach and Craig Morton. The team never knew who would start or how long they would play, causing division and confusion, leading the Cowboys to a bumpy start. After half the season, the Cowboys had a record of four wins and three losses. Realizing they were in danger of missing out on the playoffs, the players agreed that someone would have to talk to the coach.

Confronting him, they made their appeal, and Coach Landry listened, placing Roger Staubach as the starting quarterback of the Cowboys. Things at once changed for Roger. A new feeling came over him. He no longer had to prove himself. He later said the decision "changed my life. And that was a kind of a whole new season starting." The next game started rough, and by halftime, the Cowboys were behind 10-3 in a game that they needed to win, but Roger was not worried. He later said, "I knew that I wouldn't be

pulled. I mean, it was a whole different feeling. When he announced that I was starting quarterback, he was going to stick with me."

The faith of his coach gave him the confidence to go on, and Roger turned the game around, leading the Cowboys to pull off a 16-13 win. After that, the Cowboys never lost another game that season. They made their way to the Super Bowl, and in a 24-3 blowout, the Cowboys defeated the Miami Dolphins to win Super Bowl V and finally crushing the label, "Next Years' Champions." Roger Staubach went on to play in three more Super Bowls in his 11 year career, with 2 Super Bowl victories, with 6 Pro Bowl games, and an induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame. The change came when Roger was moved from a trial quarterback to the official team quarterback. This same change can take place with you too.

So many people live their religious lives as trial

quarterbacks, constantly in fear of being pulled or being benched. They live their Christian lives fearful of what God will do the moment they drop the ball, get tackled, or throw an interception. They constantly fear God, as if He is waiting over them with His great club of justice just looking for an opportunity to crush them the moment they do something wrong. Those who live this way are living under the Old Covenant. They live in fear of the law because they don't love the law, and they don't love the law because they are not officially part of God's team. As a result, they constantly live fearful of God.

Before Roger Staubach was officially deemed head quarterback, he was playing in fear. The fear of losing his position motivated him. It led him to try hard to play good, but no matter how good he did, he could never really be good enough. He would never be a perfect player. Even the best

quarterbacks drop the ball, throw interceptions, and get sacked at times, but while Roger was still on trial, every failure and every fall only led him to fear Coach Landry more. After he was placed as quarterback, he still had failures and falls, even losing two of his four Super Bowls, but now his failures only showed the grace of his coach. He failed, but his coach did not give up on him, leading him to love the coach even more.

Like Roger, before his position was official, we often live in fear. Don't get me wrong. We should have a certain sense of fear. To live without healthy fear is foolish, but Christians are not to live in constant fear that the next time they slip into sin, God will plunge them into hell. Rather, we should fear if we continue in sin with no effort to stop, because no desire to resist sin shows that we are not saved. We resist sin because we love God, not out of fear. The Christian life is not a

life of fear. The Bible says that “the love of Christ compels us” and “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment” (2 Cor. 5:14; 1 John 4:18).

While we should be afraid if we have not given our heart to Christ and washed away our sins in the waters of baptism, once we accept Jesus into our heart and become baptized, we no longer have to worry about being cut from the team. That does not mean we cannot be cut, nor does it mean Christians cannot fall away and become lost, but those who fall back into a lost condition do by their own choice, choosing to turn back to a life of sin. And if we do get cut off, we can still be brought back. Many people live in fear that God will leave them, but Jesus did not come from heaven, suffer all his life, and die on a cross to save you, just so He could let you go that easily. God has no plans of cutting you, so relax.

There's a song by Christian artist Andrew Peterson called 'Rest Easy,' which sings, “You don't have to work so hard. You can rest easy. You don't have to prove yourself. You're already Mine. You don't have to hide your heart. I already love you.” The song tells us an amazing aspect of God's character and His relation to His children. When we accept God and invite Christ into the heart, God then changes us on the inside. We see the love of God, and in turn, we begin to love Him (1 John 4:19). Once this change takes place, we want to serve Him. While we will still fall at times, repent, and get up again, we may rest easy, knowing that God will not leave us (Heb. 13:5).

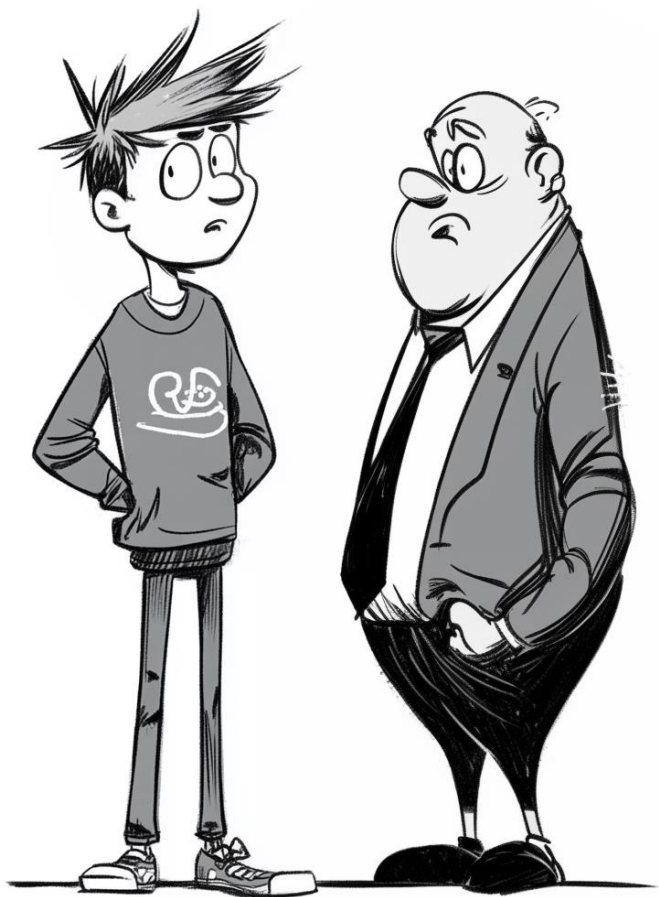
Once Roger Staubach was given the position, he found an assurance. He no longer had to fear his failures. Similarly, when we accept Christ and are baptized, we no longer have to fear our failures. That

does not mean we can stop trying to overcome sin. On the contrary, if we really love Christ, we will hate sin and constantly fight against it, but we don't have to live in constant fear of God because we are now on God's side, and He is on our side. When we accept Christ, we are on the same team, and even if we fall and fail, which we will at times, we can rest in God's assurance that He will forgive us and help us get the victory (See 1 John 3:2). So even when we fall, just get up and keep moving forward (See Prov. 24:16).

In the Christian classic, *Steps to Christ*, we are told, "We shall often have to bow down and weep at the feet of Jesus because of our shortcomings and mistakes, but we are not to be discouraged. Even if we are overcome by the enemy, we are not cast off, not forsaken and rejected of God. No; Christ is at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Said the

beloved John, 'These things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.' 1 John 2:1" (*Steps to Christ*, p. 64). We don't have to worry that we will be cut from the team because we fall, but we do need to be worried that we will become so discouraged that we will quit the team.

God has not let you go, but you can choose to leave the team. Still, even if you have done this, He will take you back, so stop living in fear. Football players know they will have fails, falls, and fumbles, but the coach does not give up on them, and neither will God give up on you. Stop looking at your falls and failures, fearing that God is going to cut you from the team. Instead, look at the cross and all that God has invested in you, and start moving forward until you gain the victory. Stop being "next years' champions" and be a champion in Christ today!



*“When I get older pastor, I want to be just like you! ... er, except ... with maybe a little less in the middle and a little more on top.”*





Does anyone have tips on how to deepen your prayer life? I feel like I've been stuck lately.

I've been there! One thing that helped was setting aside a specific time when I would not be interrupted. I also include praise and thanks before jumping into requests.



For me, it was adding more Scripture to my prayer time. Praying God's promises made my prayers feel more meaningful.



Those are good ideas, but sometimes when I pray before bed, I get tired. What can I do to stay awake and keep my mind active?

One thing you can do is pray with your pen. Write God a letter. It's a form of prayer journaling. It helps me keep my mind active while I'm praying.



I like to walk while I pray. Especially in a quiet park or in some nature setting. I just talk to God in my mind. Walking while I'm talking to God helps me stay alert, focused, and feel more connected to God.



I should try that. It would certainly keep me awake and I think maybe the change of environment would help. Thanks.



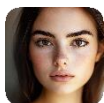
You can also listen to Christian music before you pray, to set the tone. It helps me get in the right mindset, and sometimes I'll even play some quiet instrumental Christian music in the background while I'm praying. Just helps keep my mind alert.



You could also find a prayer partner or group. Praying with others keeps you alert and adds substance to your prayer time.



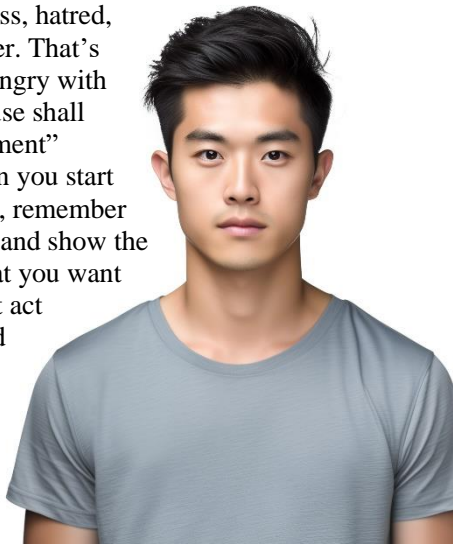
I love these ideas! I feel like I have so much to try now. Maybe mixing it up is exactly what I need. Thanks.



## DOES THE BIBLE SAY THAT GETTING ANGRY IS CONSIDERED A SIN?

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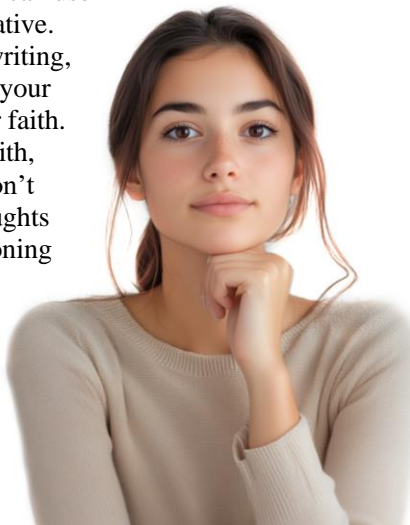
Answer: It depends. Technically, anger itself is not necessarily a sin. In fact, some things *should* make you angry. For example, if you see someone abusing a child, that *should* make you angry, but be careful. The Bible says, “be angry, and do not sin” (Ephesians 4:26). You see, anger is simply an emotion. It may rise and fall like an incoming tide, but it can lead to sin if we aren’t careful. The Bible says that “each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin” (James 1:14, 15). So be careful and don’t let your anger get out of control. Anger is a very dangerous emotion if it is let loose. It leads to bitterness, hatred, revenge, and even murder. That’s why Jesus “whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment” (Matthew 5:22). So when you start to feel angry at someone, remember that you are a sinner too and show the same mercy to others that you want them to show you. Don’t act on anger. Suppress it and control it, so it does not lead you to commit sin.



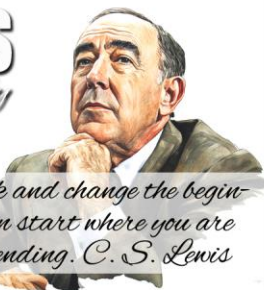
## CAN YOU GIVE ME ADVICE ON HOW TO KEEP MY FAITH ON A SECULAR CAMPUS?

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Answer: One of the most important things you can do is to find Christian friends. The best place to do this is at a church or Bible study. Try to find a campus Bible study and surround yourself with Christian friends as much as possible. Christian friends will help encourage you in the faith. Second, have daily devotions. Don't let life get too busy to spend a little time each day with God. You might also want to download an audio version of the Bible. That way, if you are late, you can listen on the way to class. Third, watching Christian movies, sermons, and listening to Christian music can be encouraging and uplifting. Fourth, find out what you like to do and learn how you can use your talents for God. Be creative. It may be through singing, writing, or painting. Fifth, get out of your comfort zone and share your faith. Talk to people about your faith, or pass out literature. Six, don't believe the devil. When thoughts come into your mind questioning God's love, or when it feels like God is far from you, ignore your feelings and keep following God.



# Quotes *to Live By*



*You can't go back and change the beginning, but you can start where you are and change the ending. C. S. Lewis*

True faith is not  
a leap into the  
dark; it's a leap  
into the light


Eric Metaxas

*An interesting phenomenon about the human brain is that our own words influence our minds more than anything anyone else may say. Your mind takes your tongue very seriously. Ruthie Jacobsen*

*At the center of the Universe is a loving heart that continues to beat and that wants the best for every person. Anything that we can do to help foster the intellect and spirit ... that is our job. Fred Rogers*

Talk unbelief, and  
you will have un-  
belief; but talk  
faith, and you will  
have faith. Ac-  
cording to the  
seed sown will be  
the harvest.

Ellen G. White

A black and white portrait of Denzel Washington. He is looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. He has short, dark hair and is wearing a dark shirt.

*"There's never  
been a time where  
God didn't direct,  
protect, and correct  
me. There may have  
been times where I  
was less than faithful to Him,  
but He had faith in me."*

*Denzel Washington*

A young man with dark, wavy hair and a blue and white V-neck jersey is looking at a young woman with long, dark hair wearing a white tank top. They are sitting at a table, possibly in a library or study area, with bookshelves in the background.

## A Light in the Dark

Josh sat on the edge of the school football field with his backpack slung over one shoulder and deep in thought. The game had just ended, and the crowd was dispersing, but Josh didn't feel like heading home. Lately, life seemed so meaningless. He was tired of the routine, the pressure to fit in, and the gnawing feeling that none of it mattered.

As he stared at the emptying bleachers, he heard a familiar voice call his name. He turned to see Emma, his classmate and neighbor, walking toward him with a friendly smile. They'd known each other for years, but they had never been particularly

close. Emma was the type who always seemed happy, like she had everything figured out. Josh could never relate to her.

"Hey, Josh," Emma sat beside him. "You okay?"

Josh shrugged. "Yeah, just... thinking."

"About what?" Her tone was gentle but curious.

Josh hesitated. He was not used to talking about his feelings, especially not with someone like Emma. But something in her expression told him she was genuinely interested, so he took a deep breath. "I don't know, Em. I just feel... lost. Like, what's the point of all this? School, sports, life... it feels empty."

Emma nodded, her eyes reflecting understanding. “I get it. I’ve felt that way too.”

Josh looked at her, surprised. “You? You always seem so... together.”

Emma smiled softly. “I guess it might seem that way, but I’ve got struggles too. I guess the difference is, I found something, or rather, someone, who gave my life meaning.”

“Someone?” Josh raised an eyebrow curiously.

“Yeah,” Emma said as her voice softened. “Jesus.”

Josh was silent, unsure how to respond. He’d heard about Jesus in church growing up, but it never felt personal. He was more like a distant figure in a dusty old book.

“I know it might sound a bit strange,” Emma continued, sensing his hesitation. “But I started really reading the Bible a while ago, and it changed everything for me. There’s this verse in Psalm 46:1 that says, ‘God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble’” (Psalm 46:1).

Josh thought about her words. He couldn’t deny that he was troubled, more than he’d like to admit. “But how

does that work? I mean, how does believing in Jesus help?”

Emma took a moment to gather her thoughts. “For me, it’s knowing that I don’t have to figure everything out on my own. When I’m confused or scared about the future, I can turn to Him. There’s another verse I love—Jeremiah 29:11: ‘For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.’ (Jeremiah 29:11). God has a plan for my life, even when I can’t see it.”

Josh let her words sink in. A future and a hope. It was a comforting, especially since his own future felt uncertain.

“Have you ever read the Bible?” Emma asked gently.

“Not much,” said Josh. “I mean, I know the basics, but I never really dug into it.”

Emma smiled and asked gently, “You want to? There’s a Bible study at my church on Tuesday nights. It’s pretty chill, just a group of us talking about life and what the Bible says about it. I think you might find it helpful.”

Josh wasn’t sure. The idea of going to a Bible study

felt a little daunting, but there was something in Emma's voice, something hopeful, that made him consider it. "I'll think about it," he said finally.

"Sure," Emma said as she stood up. "If you decide to come, I'll be there. And if you ever just want to talk, you know where to find me."

As she left, Josh felt a sense of peace, like he wasn't all alone in his struggles.

The following Tuesday, Josh found himself outside the church. Part of him wanted to turn and leave, but he coaxed himself through the door.

The group was small, just a handful of teens and a young pastor who welcomed him. Emma waved him over, and he sat down beside her, feeling a little more at ease.

That night, they read from Matthew 11:28: "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

As they discussed the passage, Josh felt something stir within him. He'd been carrying a lot of burdens—his fears, his doubts, his sense of purposelessness. The idea of finding rest, of letting go and

trusting in something greater than himself, was appealing.

After the study, Emma asked, "What did you think?"

Josh, feeling lighter than he had in a long time, replied, "I think... I think I want to keep coming."

Emma's face lit up. "I'm really glad to hear that, Josh. I know it's a lot to take in, but trust me, it's worth it."

Over the coming weeks, Josh kept attending the study, discovering what it meant to follow Jesus. The more he learned, the more he realized that God had a purpose for him, even if he couldn't see the whole picture yet.

One evening, as he and Emma walked home from the study, Josh turned to her with a grateful smile. "Thanks, Emma. For everything."

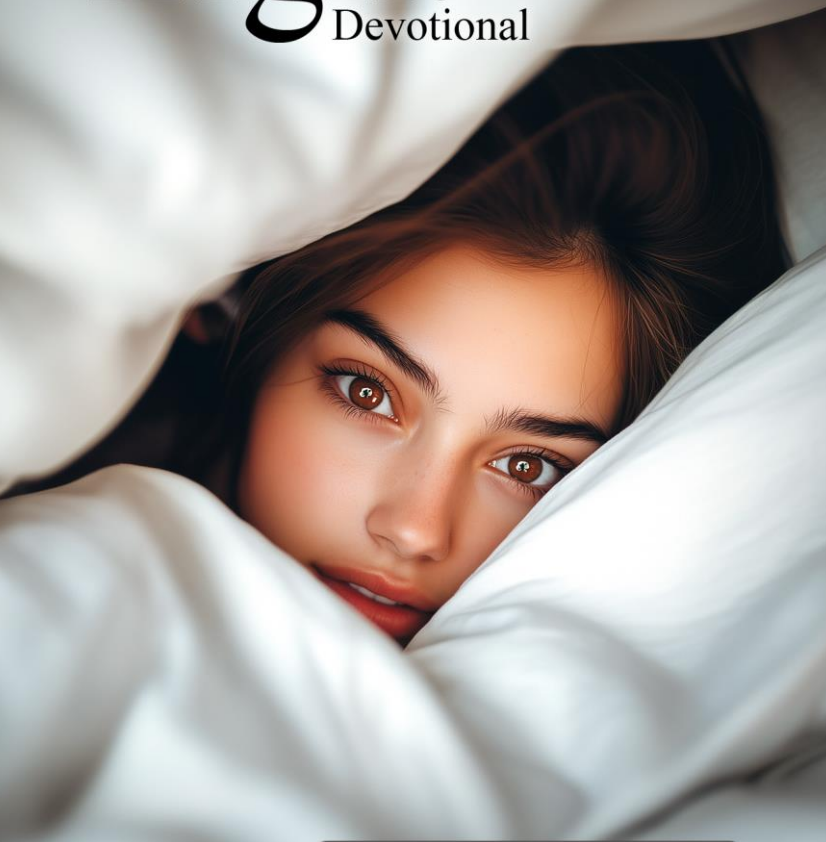
Emma smiled back. "It's really God who deserves the thanks. He's the one who's always been there, waiting for you to turn to Him."

Josh nodded, knowing she was right. And for the first time in a long while, he felt like his life was headed in the right direction. He wasn't lost anymore; he was found.



# Light

Devotional



You Made Your Bed

***“If I ascend into heaven, You are there; if I make my bed in hell, behold, You are there.” Psalm 139:8.***

In essence, this verse is telling us that God is always there for you, not only in the good times, but also in the bad times. And not only in the bad times, but even when you brought the bad times on yourself! Isn't that amazing. The world says, "You made your bed, now you have to lie in it," but not God. The world likes to rub your nose in your mistakes and relish in your failures. The world wants to cancel you for something you said or did years ago. The world wants to seek revenge for your wrongdoings. Today, we live in such a heartless, graceless world that it is hard to find sympathy. The good news is that even when the whole world is against you, God is still there. God is merciful, even in your messes. God says, "Okay, you messed up again, but it's alright. I'm right here with you. We're going to get through this. I'll

help you through this." Notice, David doesn't say that God takes him out of hell, that is, his trials. While sometimes God does remove our trials, He often does not take us out of trials, remove our obstacles, or change the consequences. The good news is that He has promised to come into the midst of our trials and help us through them. Just as Jesus came down to our little world and suffered for us on the cross, He will come down into the little messes that we have made of our lives still today and suffer through them with us, helping us, guiding us, and encouraging us. So perhaps you've made a mess out of your life. God may fix it for you, or He may not, but regardless of whether He does or not, He has promised to stay right there with you and go through whatever it is you are going through in your life.

*Christian Classics*  
**The Movie Review**



*Five great Christian movies that are a must see!*

**The Home Coming (G)**

**Worldwide Pictures**

**Release Year: 1996**

**Fireproof (PG)**

**Sherwood Pictures**

**Released: September 26, 2008**

**God's Not Dead (PG)**

**Pure Flix Entertainment**

**Released: March 21, 2014**

**To Save a Life (PG-13)**

**New Song Pictures**

**Released: January 22, 2010**

**The Encounter (PG)**

**God&Country Entertainment**

**Released: May 3, 2011**

# OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS



## *Opposing Viewpoints*

Society today has fallen into the listless habit of embracing things on the basis of authority. Christians will accept doctrines because “my pastor said it.” Students will embrace ideas because “my teacher said it.” Atheists will embrace theories simply because “science says it.”

As all of us are fallible, there is danger in embracing ideologies on the basis of authority, the purpose of this opposing viewpoints is to get people to look at both sides of an issue instead of blindly accepting a subject.

The current theme of opposing viewpoint looks at the question, “Which day is the Sabbath on?” While the Old Testament promoted the worship of Saturday, the seventh day, most Christians now go to church on Sunday, but some argue there is no support for Sunday worship.

Most of the proponents of Sunday worship say Jesus changed Sabbath to Sunday at the resurrection, but some claim that there is no such command from Jesus, and believe that Sabbath worship should still be on Saturday. In light of this, let’s look at arguments from both views.

## *Sunday Sabbath Viewpoint*

Belief that the Sabbath has transitioned to Sunday under the New Covenant is based on several New Testament passages that highlight the early Christian church's observance of the first day of the week. This shift is often seen as a reflection of the significance of Jesus' resurrection, which occurred on a Sunday.

One key verse is Acts 20:7, which says "on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight." The fact that early Christians gathered on Sunday, the first day of the week, for teaching and fellowship indicates a shift from the old Saturday Sabbath observance.

In addition, Paul adds, "On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I

come" (1 Cor. 16:2). This verse implies that the early church conducted financial contributions and offerings on Sunday, further stressing the importance of this day.

Revelation 1:10 also references "the Lord's Day." While some debate the exact identification of the day referenced, many interpret it as Sunday, commemorating the resurrection of Christ.

We are further told in Colossians 2:16-17 to "let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ." This suggests that the ceremonial aspects of the Old Covenant, including the Sabbath, are fulfilled in Christ.

Together, these verses collectively support the view that under the New Covenant, Sunday has now become the principal day of worship and rest for Christians, established by the resurrection and marking the new creation in Christ.

## *Saturday Sabbath Viewpoint*

Since the Sabbath was instituted in the beginning of time (See Gen. 2:3), before Israel and the covenant were even instituted, the Sabbath could not be only for Israel, as part of the old covenant. That's why, when God gave the law, he said "remember" the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8).

All through the Bible the Sabbath was kept. Jesus kept the Sabbath (See Luke 4:16). While some say Jesus changed Sabbath to Sunday after the resurrection, there is no command for this change. Jesus did not raise on the first day to make a new Sabbath. Rather, He rested in the tomb on the Sabbath to honor the Sabbath. How do we know? Because prior to this there was no command to change the Sabbath.

While some claim the first day was observed by the disciples, they ignore all the verses where the disciples keep the seventh day after the resurrection! (See Acts 13:42-44; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4).

Now let's look at a few of the misconstrued verses. First, 1 Corinthians 16:2, in context, is talking about a special collection (See 1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 9:5). There is no mention of a church service.

Second, we know the "Lord's day" is the Sabbath, for Jesus "is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Matt. 12:8).

Finally, the Colossians 2:17 reference to Sabbath is talking about Jewish feasts. Feast days were also called Sabbaths (See Lev. 23:32, 38). We know this is talking about feast days because the same verse goes on to speak of new moons, feasts, and food and drink offerings (See Eze. 45:17; Hos. 2:11).

The truth is, any honest seeker can easily find that Jesus did not change the Sabbath. Rather, the Catholic Church substituted "Sunday the first day of the week, for the observance of Saturday the seventh day, a change for which there is no Scriptural authority" (Stephen Keenan, A Doctrinal Catechism, page 174). Check it for yourself.

# Short Stories *and* Anecdotes



## **The Dinner Prayer**

A family sat down to dinner, and the father asked their youngest to say grace. The little boy bowed his head and said, “Thank you, God, for this food. Please don’t let it taste like broccoli. Amen.”

## **The Parking Spot Prayer**

A man was late for church and couldn’t find a parking spot. He looked up prayed, “Lord, if you help me find a parking spot, I’ll go to church every week, read my Bible daily, and stop yelling at my kids!” Just then, a car pulled out of a prime spot. The man said, “Never mind, Lord, I found one.”

## **The Sleepy Church**

A Bible teacher once asked her class, “Why do we need to be quiet in church?” A little boy confidently raised his hand and answered, “Because people are sleeping!”

### **Tiny Snacks**

One weekend at church, a young boy watched in confusion as people took communion. Turning to his mother, he tugged at her sleeve and asked, "Mom, why are they serving tiny snacks?"

### **The Forgetful Grandpa**

A deacon dozed off during a long sermon, and when the pastor suddenly shouted, "What are you prepared to do today for the Lord?" the startled deacon jumped to his feet and declared, "Whatever you need, Pastor!"

### **He Didn't Do It**

During a children's sermon, the pastor looked at the kids and asked, "Who broke down the walls of Jericho?" One little boy quickly shot his hand up and blurted out, "I didn't do it!" Shocked, the pastor tried to explain that it was a Bible story, but the boy's mother quickly came to the boy's defense, saying, "If he says he didn't do it, he didn't do it!"

### **No Direction**

A Bible teacher asked her students, "Why did the Israelites wander in the wilderness for 40 years?" One little girl raised her hand and confidently said, "Because Moses refused to stop and ask for directions!"

### **The Sunday Nap**

A man fell asleep during the sermon. The pastor looked at the woman sitting beside him and urged, "Wake that man up!" A woman simply replied, "You put him to sleep; you wake him up!"



# FREEDOM FROM

A person with dark hair and glasses is peeking over a white horizontal blind. Only their eyes and the top of their head are visible above the blind.

# FEAR

The world is plagued by fear. Fear of what the future may hold. Fear of pain and loss. Fear of disease and death. And the media plays on our fears, leaving our days tinted by the sunglasses of fear. Of course, a certain amount of fear is natural and even healthy. The reality is, there is danger all around us. Every time we get behind the wheel, go for a swim, or just leave the house, we take a risk, but when fear begins to infringe on our normal daily lives it becomes unhealthy. The good news is that there are methods to overcome our fears.

As President Roosevelt once said, “Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear.” This is beautifully illustrated by the following story. I read about a child who was standing in the road in front of their house when a speeding truck came over the hill, heading straight towards the child. Unable to stop in time, the child’s father dashed into the road, throwing the child out of the way, only to be hit and killed by the truck. What led this father to act so bravely in the face of fear, and even

death? As Roosevelt said, there was something more important than fear. This is the key to conquering fear.

We will only overcome fear when we are driven by a higher motivation than fear, and the Bible gives us the three great motivators. The three great antidotes to fear are “faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor. 13:13). The father was motivated to jump in front of a speeding truck out of love for his child, but sadly, human love is often lacking today. While we claim to be loving, we let fear control our decisions and our lives because human love is weak.

The place we find the purest example of love is in the life of Jesus. Jesus says, “Love your enemies” (Matt. 5:44). Of course, Jesus does more than say the words. He “demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Rom. 5:9). Jesus resisted the fear of death, even the death of the cross,

out of love for people. While we were still His enemies, living in sin, Christ loved us, and this love moved Him beyond fear. This was continually seen in the life of Christ. Christ would come close to lepers and diseased people, putting his hands on them without fear because He was motivated by love. When we have this love, fear will no longer control us.

Through Christ, we not only have the weapon of love, but we also have the weapons of faith and hope with which to fight our fears. Faith or hope for a bright future are powerful antidotes against fear, giving us the power to live above fear, but there there is a deeper issue involving fear that human love cannot extinguish. It is the fear of death. This fear is what drives most people. It is a greater force than faith, hope, or love in the lives of most today, controlling and driving us like addicts.

Most are controlled by, and should be on some level, a fear of death. The media

knows this. This is why the media and politicians play on our fears, using them to drive their political agendas, leading us to live in constant fear. The only way to break free from this cycle is to overcome our fear or death, but how can we do this if death is the end of hope?

If there is no God, then this life is all there is. There is no hope after this life.

from this fear! How? By defeating death! Through the resurrection Christ not only showed us that death is defeated, but He gave evidence that we will live again after death.

Through Christ, we can have a new life that is free from fear. We no longer have to be controlled by a fear of death because Jesus said, "I am the resurrection

***"Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the assessment that something else is more important than fear." Theodore Roosevelt***

However, if Jesus is real, then death has been defeated and we no longer have to live in fear. That's what the Bible says. Jesus came that "He might... release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14, 15). While the Bible affirms what we already know, that all our lives we are slaves to our fear of death, it adds that Jesus came to release us

and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live" (John 11:25). Those who don't believe in God we will have no hope after death and will live their lives under the grip of fear. Those who believe in God nominally but don't live the love of God in their lives will still be controlled by a certain sense of fear. But those who believe in God, love as He loved, and trust

His promises, we will no longer live under the control of fear.

Jesus Christ is the key to defeating our fear of death. When we accept Christ, we no longer need to fear death because Christ has promised to give us a new life after we die. For the Christian, death then becomes, not the end of life, but the beginning of a new and better life. Once death is defeated, then fear of death is defeated. That is why, when we die to the ways of this world, and accept Jesus Christ, "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54). Through Christ we may live above the fears that plague the world, as illustrated in the following story.

There was once a man who was brought before a king and told to recant his faith in Christ. When the king said that he must recant or he would banish him, the man replied, "You cannot banish me, since Christ says He will never leave me or

forsake me." The king then warned that he would take away his property, but the man replied, "My treasure is laid up in heaven." Finally the king said he would kill him, but the man, looking beyond this temporary life, replied, "My life is hid with Christ, and you cannot take it." What a beautiful illustration of how fear is defeated through faith in Christ.

Yes, there will still be times of fear. There will still be times when we feel afraid, but through Christ we can rise above fear. Winston Churchill once said, "Fear is a reaction. Courage is a decision." The decision comes in putting out faith in Christ and trusting Him. When we do this, hope will sprout, faith will grow, and love will fill our hearts so strong that even fear itself cannot stop it. Like a plant breaking through a rock, love will break through fear because "There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear" (1 John 4:18).



*"I've read news stories that started like this."*



# EXPRESS YOURSELF!

## *Bible Study*

*The Search for God*

1. According to Isaiah 59:2, what caused the separation between God and humans? Who is hiding from who?

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2. Why is it important to have a correct concept of God's love for us in our relation to our search? How do you see God?

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3. What does Jeremiah 29:13 mean, seek with "all your heart"?

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4. What are some things that keep people from finding God (See Jas. 4:2-3; Matt. 7:7 for some clues)?

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5. Read Luke 18:1. What is the difference between casual prayer and persistent prayer? Does prayer change God? Explain.

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6. Where does Jesus suggest that we look to find Him according to Luke 24:27 and John 5:39?

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7. What does the parable of Matthew 13:44-45 tell us about how we should search for God?

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8. 1 Kings 19:11, 12 shows big signs and small signs. Since God does not generally speak to people audibly, what is the “still small voice” and what does this story tell us about finding God?

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9. What advice do Psalm 27:14 and Galatians 6:9 tell us to keep in mind in our search for God? Why is this so important?

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10. Read God’s promises in Matthew 7:7 and Jeremiah 29:14. Where you are on your search, journey, or relationship with God.

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