

# Virtual Christian Magazine

Hope And Encouragement  
For The Real World

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*"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."—Galatians 3:26*

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## What Makes a Woman Beautiful?

By Nancy Morgan

*Our society is obsessed with being beautiful! But is there more to beauty than what meets the eye?*



**W**E LIVE IN A SOCIETY that places a high degree of importance on physical appearance. Television, movies, magazines and billboards all display attractive people. We see men and women (more women) running to plastic surgeons, having many different kinds of procedures done simply to enhance their appearance. Our society is obsessed with physical beauty, and many women are caught up in that obsession as well.

But should beauty really be that important for a woman? Is beauty something that a Christian woman should strive for? What makes a woman truly beautiful?

A woman can and should be beautiful—God designed her to be that way. Her skin, hair and other features were created to be soft and appealing, and her body was fashioned to be attractive and beautiful to men. A woman was designed to be attractive, and most women want to be beautiful. However, the physical side of beauty is just a small part of what makes a woman *truly* beautiful.

Our society places a high emphasis on the physical aspect of beauty and neglects the other elements that really make a woman totally beautiful. A beautiful woman is not just physically appealing; she is appealing in many different areas. Because our society so largely emphasizes the physical nature of beauty, I want to explore with you all of the areas that make up true beauty and bring out the missing dimension in beauty.

## Outer beauty

A truly beautiful woman is physically appealing. Not all women are gifted with perfection of physical features, but fortunately, this is not the only prerequisite for beauty. Women tend to take a critical look at their individual features and flaws and feel this is what makes them attractive or not, whereas a man tends to look at the overall impression a woman creates. What a woman does with what she has is very important in making herself attractive. Physical beauty is really within the reach of any woman.

The most influential factor in a woman's physical beauty is her health. When a woman is healthy, she has an attractive glow about her. Good health adds more color to the face and skin and helps produce more energy. A balanced, nutritious diet and exercise plan will help a woman to have this healthy glow. It will also help to keep excess weight off and produce a more attractive physique. When a woman is striving to follow the health laws she looks and feels more beautiful.

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Another key factor of womanly beauty is looking feminine. A woman should look like a woman, not a man. A woman can achieve this through her dress and hairstyle.

The Bible says women's hair should be longer than men's. This doesn't mean she has to wear it down to her ankles, but it should be long enough to differentiate her from a man. Most women enjoy choosing different hair styles and fixing their hair. A woman's hairstyle and length can contribute to her attractiveness.

A physically attractive woman is also one who dresses modestly. Our society teaches women to flaunt their physical attributes by displaying scantily clad women on billboards, magazines and most other media outlets. Many women feel they must also dress this way to be considered attractive. This is not true. A fully clothed woman dressed in a modest, feminine way is very attractive. She is not only attractive, she gains honor and respect from those who see her. A woman's body is designed to be attractive and arousing to men, and when a woman is revealing too much of herself in public, she is stirring up the wrong kind of feelings and will attract the wrong kind of attention. A truly beautiful woman aims for respect in the way she dresses.

## Inner beauty

A beautiful woman is not only admired for her physical appearance; she is admired for her inner qualities as well. There are many inner qualities that make a woman beautiful, and to cover all of them would require a separate article. However, I want to focus on three important inner qualities a woman should possess to make herself truly beautiful.

A woman should be kind—she should be gracious. Proverbs 11:16 tells us that a gracious woman retains honor. When you think of the women that you hold in high regard, they usually are ladies who are kind, gentle, thoughtful, unselfish, etc. They are the women that we look up to and remember. In Proverbs 31:26, a virtuous woman is described as having the law of kindness on her tongue.

Bradley Gerstman, Christopher Pizzo and Rich Seldes, in the book *What Men Want*, write, “Women are astonished when we tell them what many professional men look for in a woman on the first date—besides chemistry, of course. Are you ready to hear what men hope to find in a woman they are dating for the first time? Men like women who are nice. Men are suckers for kindness and consideration. We love women who are affable, flexible, easygoing. Most men cannot resist a sweet woman” (page 68). Women who are gracious and kind are attractive.



A woman should also have good judgment. In Proverbs 11:22, a lovely woman who lacks discretion is compared to a ring of gold in a swine’s snout. If a woman is physically attractive, but lacks discretion, it takes away from her beauty and value. Good judgment is needed in many areas of life such as moral issues, money matters, choices, decisions, dealing with others, work, etc. A woman who possesses good judgment is of great value because she can be trusted to do the right thing.

A woman should continue to grow and better her inner self. Proverbs 31 describes a woman who is competent and capable of doing many different things. A woman who continues to grow while developing her talents and abilities is a woman of value. She is one who is able to contribute to others through these abilities, and she will be of use to her family, Church, community, etc. A woman who is developing her potential is an attractive woman.

### Beautiful to God

A truly beautiful woman is not only attractive on the outside and inside, she is also attractive to God. How a woman looks to God is more important than any other quality she possesses because one day her outer beauty will fade and her inner beauty will cease, but the beauty that God sees in her will be important when she stands before Him. Being beautiful to God should be top priority on every woman’s list. The Scriptures give us some clues as to what God finds attractive in women.



God values a quiet spirit in a woman. As 1 Peter 3:3-4 tells us, “Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.” Does this mean that a woman should never say anything—that she should always be quiet? No, this is saying that a woman should not have an argumentative, contentious spirit. She should not be someone who is quick to argue and demand her way. She should be peaceable to others and respectful to her husband. There are several scriptures in the book of Proverbs that talk about women who are angry and contentious, and how difficult it is to live with them.

There is a certain attitude among some women that has its roots in the feminist movement and is still prevalent among certain segments of society. This attitude is a deep anger toward men. These women want to prove that they are just as good as their male counterparts, and that they don’t need them. Contrast this attitude to the gentle and quiet spirit that God values in women. A truly beautiful woman is not in competition with men—she understands the value and strengths that

they possess and appreciates them. Women and men both possess certain qualities that are needed by one another. When a woman has a gentle and quiet spirit, she is attractive to others and to God.

God values a woman who is submissive. “Submissive” is not a popular word in our society today. Many people think of being submissive as being weak. Yet, God has commanded women who are married to submit themselves to their husband’s authority. This does not mean that a woman should never have an opinion or say in what takes place in the family. A wise husband will consult his wife on all important issues. A woman who submits herself to her husband is a woman that understands and is yielding to the government that God has established in the home (Ephesians 5: 22-32). It is not a sign of weakness when a woman submits to her husband, it is a sign of strength. It is a sign that she is in fact submitting herself to God and is obeying the commands that He has established. It is a sign of her faith in God. When a woman submits to her husband’s authority in marriage, she is beautiful to God.

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God also values a woman who fears Him. When a woman is putting God first in her life and is striving to do what He has commanded, she is attractive to God. She should continue to deepen her relationship with Him and continue to grow spiritually. Proverbs 31: 30 reads, “Charm is deceitful and beauty is passing, but a woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.”

Our society places a high value on the physical beauty of women, but it does not understand all of the elements that make a woman truly beautiful. If a woman possesses only the physical aspect of beauty without the inner and godly qualities, she is a hollow and empty shell.

It is within every woman’s reach to become the beautiful woman God intended her to be. She should be beautiful on the outside, beautiful on the inside and, most importantly, she should be beautiful to God.

## Where's My Mate?

By Robert Berendt

*Why did God create us male and female? And why was it necessary to have pairs at all?*



**A**LL ANIMALS COME IN PAIRS. That is, in order for life to continue from generation to generation, there must be a male and a female. Birds, fish, reptiles, amphibians and mammals—they all have this in common. There could simply be no second generation if a creature could not find a mate. What a dilemma this simple fact presents for evolution. Not only does the science of life demand male and female, but evolution would have been required to produce two perfectly matched, yet very different creatures of the same species—at the same time (or at least within an extremely short life span).

### Looking for Mr. Moose

Let's have a look at the moose, for one example. Moose take a few years to mature, and have a life span of roughly 20 years. Our female moose (or should we say moosette?) suddenly "evolves." She has to have evolved with her reproductive system perfectly formed and functioning. Most of the year, this female moose is content to stand in a pond and munch down the succulent vegetation that luckily has also evolved—just in time. She does not care about a mate and could not be bothered to try and be attractive for "Mr. Moose."

Once a year something strange happens. Her hormones (luckily these also evolved perfectly) begin to act up and she has the strongest urge to mate. She wanders about calling out in a low voice, "Where's my mate?" A handsome male bighorn sheep comes wandering by—but he does not interest her at all. He's looking for a mate too, but not just "any" mate. This female moose does not interest him either.

Our lone, freshly evolved female is looking for one and only one "fella." Now it is true that for her "any fella" will do—just as long as he is a male moose. Where will she find a mate who has also just freshly evolved—and has all the right equipment? Not only does he have to have the right equipment—but also he has to know how to use that equipment. He also has to recognize the female and know she is ready for mating.

Most of the year Mr. Moose wanders alone and could not care less about females. It is only during the same short portion of the year that this pair would (if she could find a he) make a twosome and then perhaps a threesome. Alas, the chances of a fully developed male moose evolving are just as impossible as the evolving of the lone female. Two impossibles do not add up to even one possible. So the mating season passes and she quits caring and quits looking until the same time next year. The next few years pass just as quickly and the short time she has left to wait for evolution to produce her mate has vanished. There is no second generation. No more moose and no more bighorn sheep—that is, if evolution is the way life develops.

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*Alas, the chances of a fully developed male moose evolving are just as impossible as the evolving of the lone female.*

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### Male and female

The fact that all species demand male and female of their kind for procreation demands the existence of a Creator. God must exist. Only God could have created male and female at the same time in proximity to one another, with a built-in set of response mechanisms that desire reproduction. That is the way God inspired the existence of male and female to come about in the first book of the Bible thousands of years ago (Genesis 1:27; 2:20; Matthew 19:4).

Yes, Ms. Moose, there is a God and, just for you, He has created the most handsome and perfect “he” that you have ever seen (not that looks matter for a moose). Our “he-ram” has also found a “she” and so it goes.

If we pay attention to the Bible, we’ll never be confused by evolution. God tells us He made them male and female at the same time. The Bible tells us God is the creator and giver of life (1 Peter 4:19; Genesis 2:7). The Bible tells us not to look to the wisdom of men to guide us. We can see the marvel of God’s design and work in the creation around us (Romans 1:18-20).



Animals don’t care, birds don’t care and fish don’t care. Only humans care. Only we humans ponder the wonders of life and where we came from. Humans are not built like the animals. The whole male-female relationship is far more complicated. We take about 20 years to mature where animals take no more than a couple of years. We mate for life and do not have the animal cycles of most creatures. We are driven by emotions and strong feelings, not just hormones. We are different! Only a human could ask, “Where is my mate?” And only God could respond with, “Give Me a minute!” That delightful story is found in Genesis 1 and 2.

### “Made by God”

God wanted a spiritual relationship to develop when He designed and created humans. Animals, birds and fish had already been created. God took special care with humans. He had created a match for all others, but they didn’t care in an intellectual way. Adam cared just as soon as he saw Mr. and Mrs. Moose together. There is simply no other explanation that man could ever dream up that would exclude God. God is here—emphatically, continually and totally. He is involved with life! Our female moose would say “thank you” if she could. We humans try to find another explanation—no matter how foolish.



Paul was inspired by God to write some very profound words. In Romans 1 we read about the way God feels when He is rejected. Verse 18 states: “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”



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*What a silly thing  
we do in turning  
from God.*

What a silly thing we do in turning from God. C.S.

Lewis wrote: “A creature revolting against a Creator is revolting against the source of all its own powers—including even his power to revolt. It is like the scent of a flower trying to destroy the flower itself.” God has given us minds to think with and ability to concentrate and focus those thoughts. We need to build the right kind of character, however, or all our knowledge is useless.

Humans have also come under the strong sway and influence of God’s enemy. Satan hates the thought of humans seeking, finding and obeying God. He has set out to deceive mankind and has been successful. In fact, God is using Satan to teach us to love Him and hate evil. We will learn the lessons—though painfully.

One day our scientists will conclude that God does exist and that He is our Creator. Perhaps when the last strand of DNA is unwound, we will find a trademark: “Made by God.” In the meantime, let us enjoy the wonders of life and strive to use the powers God has given. He wants mankind to love, nurture and care for this world (Genesis 2:15).

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## Consider the Lily

By E. Glenn Harrell

*What a miracle the birth of a child is! Children change and grow almost daily. As Christians, we are told we are spiritually to be like little children, but what does the lily have to do with that?*



**F**ROM THE TIME WE ARE CONCEIVED as human beings, we all have one phenomenon in common—we grow! As a fetus in the womb, we begin to take on the characteristics of our fathers and mothers. Our limbs begin to take shape; our eyes, mouth, and nose develop. Physically we start to look like a human being, and so from conception to birth, we grow.

When we are born as babies, grownups are amazed by the tiny fingers and toes, the little hands and feet, and the arms and legs. However, it does not stop there. For the rest of our lives, we grow to mature adulthood aided by the food we eat, the water we drink and the breath of life. Scientists have proved that there are some parts of the body that never stop growing, so then there is constant growth in our lives.



As Christians, we all begin our spiritual lives at the moment of conception, when God's Spirit joins with our human spirit (Romans 8:16), at which time we become babes in Christ. God the Father and Jesus Christ have a wonderful plan of salvation that They are working out with us.

Starting at that moment of conception, God and Christ expect there to be growth in our lives. As the apostle Peter admonishes us, we are to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18). We know that our physical growth is sustained by the food and water we eat, but how is this spiritual growth accomplished in our lives?

Let us take this opportunity to look into the Word of God, and take some advice from our older brother Jesus Christ. In the Sermon on the Mount Christ makes a statement that, if followed, will help us to understand our spiritual growth process. Notice Matthew 6:28: “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow.” When you look at this statement, Christ could have very easily left out the last part, “how they grow,” but I believe that He was calling our attention to the specific way that the lily grows, for there is a valuable lesson here for us to learn.

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*Scientists have proved that there are some parts of the body that never stop growing, so then there is constant growth in our lives.*

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### How it grows

Have you ever really stopped to consider the lily and how it grows? The Greek word translated “consider” means to learn thoroughly, examine carefully, consider well. So Christ is telling us to put forth an effort to learn what we can from the growth process of the lily. He is telling us to examine this process thoroughly and carefully so that we can apply it in our spiritual lives. Once we look at this process, we will see that the growth pattern of the lily is quite similar to our growth pattern as Christians, which is why Christ told us to consider it well. So what is a lily?



You might be surprised at what scientists classify as a lily. Notice this definition from *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia* 99: Lily, “common name for a family comprising more than 250 genera and about 4000 species of mostly herbaceous flowering plants, many with showy flowers. It contains many horticulturally important plants, including tulips, lilies, daffodils, hyacinths, day lilies, and amaryllis. Another important genus, the onion genus, contains about 700 species, usually with bulbs or corms underground and long, slender leaves starting at the ground (basal leaves). Several species are cultivated as food crops: onions and shallots, garlic, chives, and leeks.

“In the asparagus genus, the leaves are reduced to tiny scales, and the needlelike “leaves” are actually highly modified branches. Tender young shoot tips of asparagus are eaten as a delicacy. Asparagus fern is another species grown as a houseplant for its attractive foliage and for its pretty red berries. The aloe genus also belongs to the lily family and contains about 250 species native to Arabia; Africa, especially South Africa; and Madagascar.”

You can see that there are many classifications of lilies, but how do they grow? From grade school and science class, we learn that all plants grow by the process of what we call PHOTOSYNTHESIS.

Simply put, photosynthesis means to build with light. The light combines with carbon dioxide and water, to produce the growth. That is how the lilies of the field grow, and believe it or not, that is how we as Christians grow the fruits of God’s Spirit in our lives. It is by spiritual photosynthesis—building with light—that we have the energy that allows the fruit of God’s Spirit to grow in our lives. So let’s look at the spiritual process of photosynthesis, and see how we should grow.

## Start with light

God uses many different analogies to describe the relationship between God and man, to show how He is working in our lives. He uses the analogy of the clay and the potter (Isaiah. 64:8), the plant and the husbandman, the building and the builder (1 Corinthians 3:9). For our purpose, we will look at the analogy of the plant and the husbandman, so that we can apply the spiritual photosynthesis of growth by light and water.

God has established that we are the plant, but what is the necessary light that we need to begin our growth? Notice John 8:12: “Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, ‘I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.’” We can see here that Jesus Christ is the LIGHT that we need in order to grow. Speaking of Christ, the apostle John tells us in John 1:4, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.” Notice, he says that the life of Jesus was the light of men, so if we are to grow spiritually, then we must have the life of Jesus in us. So how is this accomplished?

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*Jesus Christ is the LIGHT that we need in order to grow.*

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It is not just by confessing that Jesus is the Christ. No, it is by living by the Word of God each day, and Jesus is the Word of God (John 1:1-4). Each day that we live spiritually, we are to partake of that word of life, taking on the very thoughts and actions of Jesus Christ. Philippians 2:5 says, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Jesus Christ.”

Speaking to His disciples on the night of the Passover Jesus said, “For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you” (John 13:15). You see, Christ has set the example, and He intends us to follow.

There is a very popular saying these days, you see it everywhere—on billboards, bumper stickers and even on bracelets. It goes, What Would Jesus Do? (WWJD?) When you stop and think about it, it is not such a bad concept to follow. Our problem is, we don’t always follow it. We may say it, but we must begin to apply it our lives if we are to have any spiritual growth. When we are faced with the stresses of life, we need to ask ourselves, What would Jesus do? No matter what situation we find ourselves in, either at home or on the job, or even in church, we should ask, What would Jesus do?—and then follow His lead.

As Christians, we need to internalize the Word of God, and make it a part of our daily lives. Believe it or not, no matter what difficult situation you find yourself in, the solution to your problem can be found in the Word of God. All you need to do is search out the answer in the Word, and live by it (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

So Jesus Christ is that spiritual light that we need to grow, but what about the water that is necessary?

## Then add water

In the Bible, water is a symbol of the Holy Spirit of God. Notice John 7:37-39: “On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”



When we receive this WATER of the Holy Spirit, it opens up our minds to be able to understand the things of God (1 Corinthians 2:9-14). It was this Spirit that Jesus Christ promised that He would send His disciples (John 14:15-17, 26). As we apply the power of the Holy Spirit to the life of Christ, then the fruit of the Spirit will develop in our lives. It is this fruit of the Spirit that God and Christ want to see in our lives (John 15:1-16; Galatians 5:22-23).

## And GROW!

Physically speaking, we grow daily by the intake of food and water that nourishes and strengthens our bodies. Spiritually speaking, we also grow daily by that intake of light or food, and water that strengthens us spiritually. When we partake of this spiritual photosynthesis—the light of the life of Jesus Christ and the water of the Holy Spirit—then we can achieve that necessary growth, because God will give us the increase. Speaking to the church at Corinth, the apostle Paul tells them, “I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:6).

Admonished by Christ to “consider the lilies of the field, how they grow,” we come to understand the physical process of photosynthesis, or growth by light and water. We can then take this physical process and relate it to the spiritual process of photosynthesis so that we can fulfill the instructions of the apostle Peter, to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

*When we partake of this spiritual photosynthesis then we can achieve that necessary growth, because God will give us the increase.*

We are to take careful thought of that light and life of Christ; we are to yield ourselves to the power of the Holy Spirit. Then we will be able to achieve spiritually what all mankind achieves physically—we will GROW as God gives us the increase. And just as there is constant growth physically, we should also have constant growth spiritually.

So each day of your life as you eat and drink to sustain your physical life, take the time to stop and consider the lilies of the field and how they grow, and strive to bring about the spiritual growth that is so vitally necessary.

## Close to God's Heart

By Janet Treadway

*When we're feeling the most lonely, God can be close to us. If you're going through trials, know that God is just a prayer away.*



**S**OMETIMES WE ARE PLACED IN TRIALS that can make us feel so alone. Trials come in a variety of forms: the loss of a spouse, a close friend, a job or anything that is very dear to you. It can make you feel insecure, afraid and alone. Others around you can be so involved in their own lives that they don't see the pain that you are going through. Or maybe they don't understand your situation and they feel that you should be handling it differently. Moments like these can make you feel so alone.

How can we become closer to God's heart during such times? Recently, I had a difficult experience that allowed me to become closer to God—the greatest Healer of all.

One day I was feeling lonely because of a recent loss. I started pouring out my heart to God, asking Him to not leave me, asking Him to bring me encouragement. I did not want others to see my grief lest they think that I should be stronger. But God saw and understood my pain.



On this particular day when I was feeling so alone and afraid, my Father in heaven was alert and saw my despair. He reached out to encourage me as I had asked. While praying and talking to Him, thoughts would pop into my head. Then, when I looked at my opened Bible, the exact scriptures that backed up my thoughts were right in front of me! And they involved the circumstances I was so discouraged about! Real answers that I needed were right there! It was as if God was reaching out and talking to me, reaching into my heart and saying that I was not alone because He was with me and was helping me.

My experience reminded me, once again, how deeply God cares for me and

how He cares for all of us. Once again, He was there for me in a very lonely time. He did not judge me, but was there inspiring me through His word.

### God is the chief encourager

When you are down and no one seems to understand how much your heart is hurting, remember that God sees and understands. The pages of the Bible are filled with examples of God reaching out to His children in times of trouble and despair.

God saw Hezekiah's tears during his sickness, and He responded to those tears and to Hezekiah's crying out in prayer. Isaiah 38:5 reads, "Go, and say to Hezekiah, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, *I have seen thy tears*: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years" (King James Version, emphasis added throughout). Hezekiah was on his bed, alone, crying out to God and God saw him. Why? God felt Hezekiah's pain!

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*Like a loving parent, God is close to us when we are hurting and in trouble.*

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Those of us who are parents know how it feels to suffer for our children when they are going through some tough trials. We want to be there for them—to encourage them through whatever they are going through because we don't want to see them get hurt. We want to take away their pain. God is the same way with us. He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities" (Hebrews 4:15).

The Bible is full of many such encouraging scriptures:

"The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles...Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all" (Psalm 34:17, 19).



"Like as a *father pitieth his children*, so the LORD pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust...But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting" (Psalm 103:13-17).

"For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a *special people unto himself*, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 7:6).

God is there to be our hero as He was with Israel! God will always be available to bring us out of our trials, afflictions and difficulties—to confront us when we are down and get us going again. He knows our hearts better than anyone. He knows our background and why we have the emotions that we do.

Like a loving parent, God is close to us when we are hurting and in trouble. Call on God! Call on Him when you are hurting and feeling overwhelmed by life! He wants you close to His heart so He can comfort you, encourage you, restore your hope and build you up again. He does this because He paid a very high, personal price for you: He gave His only Son for each of us! Why? Again, because He wants you and me to be close to His heart!

## Life's Purpose

By Rod Hall

*There should be an overpowering purpose to life, but few have ever known such purpose—do you?*



**D**OWN THROUGH THE CENTURIES, thinkers and philosophers have pondered and sought in vain to learn whether life has a real purpose and if so what it is. Socrates, Plato and Augustine, among others, speculated and reasoned; yet the true meaning of life eluded them. This deepest and most important question in life remained a mystery to them!

If one could discover the overall purpose for which humans were put on earth, it would unlock the keys to a rich full human potential greater than mere temporary existence. Life would have a transcendent purpose. Having the right direction and purpose can ignite a dynamic ambition to succeed.

### What is success?

According to *Webster's New American Dictionary*, the definition of success is: 1. A favorable or desired outcome. 2. The gaining of wealth and fame. 3. One that succeeds. Your opinion on the definition may differ and it may include having a happy family or good friends. But most people in the Western world define success in physical ways like Webster's second definition.





“The one who dies with the most toys wins” seems to be the concept most people relate to. But just having fortune, wealth and material things is not enough. The reality is that everyone dies (Ecclesiastes 3:19-20). And most die without understanding life’s purpose. As Benjamin Franklin quipped, “If your riches are yours, why don’t you take them with you to the other world?”

Others say true success is achieving fame, notoriety and influence. Yet notoriety is fleeting, here today and gone tomorrow. Generally, the more people get of fame or fortune, the more they crave. Yet, ironically, when they get it, it often makes them all the more discontent, because it does not satisfy the deep inner hungers that burn within the human heart.

As well, achieving a bit of fame or fortune can bring on more discontent, because someone else still has more. Strong competitive drives or jealousy may be ignited producing feelings of emptiness that leaves them craving still more success. When success is defined only in these physical terms, it is very short-lived and may produce other problems. As someone once commented, “Success in life generally expands the waistband or the hatband.”

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Most people sacrifice their entire lives on these pursuits and never find lasting happiness or true success. George Horace Lorimer summarized it well when he said, “It’s good to have money and the things that money can buy, but it’s good, too, to check once in awhile and make sure that you haven’t lost the things that money can’t buy.”

Most successful people in this world have full bank accounts, but empty lives. Their striving to acquire money never satisfied the deep cravings of the human soul. Their dreams, goals and purpose for living are only a vain quest for more material possessions or fame in a mad search to avoid pain and gain pleasure. These victories and accomplishments only give them momentary thrills and temporary satisfaction that does not last (Isaiah 55:1-3, John 6:35)!

### Searching in all the wrong places

Successful people may have purpose and work tirelessly toward their goals. But the result is just a temporary fleeting success because they never stop to discover life’s true purpose. As Arthur Schopenhauer indicated, “Every man takes the limits of his own field of vision for the limits of the world.” And most never stop to catch the vision God has in mind. As Joseph Roux put it, “God often visits us, but most of the time we are not at home.”

Voltaire summarized life this way: “Life is like a game of cards. Each player must accept the cards that life deals to him or her. With cards in hand, each person must decide how the hand will be played in order to win the game.” Understanding life’s purpose gives you a broader perspective on how you should play your cards. It can see you through the ups and downs, tragedies and triumphs in life.

For many people, life is a big experiment in discovering right and wrong, what works and what doesn’t, what produces happiness and what leads to pain and sorrow. One of the most wealthy and famous people who ever lived was King Solomon of Israel. He had the resources and

opportunity to conduct a real life experiment. As one of the wisest men who ever lived, he also had the analytical skills to objectively analyze the results.

The conclusion he drew may surprise you. After his great self-indulgent, extravagant and lavish first-hand life experiment, his summary was simple, sincere and sure. “Yet when I surveyed all that my hands had done and what I had toiled to achieve, everything was meaningless, a chasing after the wind; nothing was gained under the sun.” (Ecclesiastes 2:11, New International Version). Life without the right purpose is simply a vain striving “after the wind.”



Many seek satisfaction in the thousand-and-one events, just as Solomon did. In a whimsical whirl of pursuit of wishes, wants, pleasures and pastimes, they seek to relieve the gnawing inner hunger. But the hunger always returns because the aching deep inside is spiritual. And material things cannot satisfy spiritual hunger! God made us to need His Spirit in order for our mind to be complete (1 Corinthians 2:10-12). Nothing else can fill that void!

### Purpose of human existence

In order for life to be truly successful, you have to start with the right end in mind. The right purpose gives you the right direction for your accomplishments. It is not the wind of circumstances that blows through life that creates your ultimate destiny. It is the set of your sail. Even if the winds are not favorable, you can stay your course. And when the right tailwinds of opportunity come, you will be ready for a fast track directly toward lasting success.

#### *The right purpose gives you the right direction for your accomplishments.*

God wants to create in us His very nature and essence through a spiritual rebirth and growth process (Ephesians 4:17-24; John 3:3, 7). We were created physically after God’s form and likeness (Genesis 1:26-27). Ultimately He wants us created in His likeness spiritually by developing holy righteous character (Ephesians 4:17-24). This is the ultimate purpose or goal of life and it has eternal ramifications.

Yet even God cannot and will not create this character by fiat. He knew with the creation of man that two ingredients would be necessary for character creation to occur—time and circumstance. So God created time and God created circumstances on the physical plane to give us the opportunity to develop His attitude, nature and character—vital keys to true lasting success (Romans 2:7-11; Hebrews 2:14-18; Ephesians 3:16-21).

Just growing older does not mean we grow wiser. We need to use life’s daily experiences to develop godly wisdom, knowledge and understanding. This is the ultimate purpose for human existence. After a lifetime of experimenting, Solomon saw that purpose clearly. “Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole [duty] of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil” (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14, NIV).

## Letters to the Editor

### [“Four Thousand Years of Christmas”](#)



Thanks, folks, for the informative yet cutting article on the origins of Christmas... For years I've been getting thrashed and reviled for simply bringing up the topic and pointing out what Scripture says here and there, plus giving info out on all your article declares.

People can NOT give up their precious traditions—even Bible reading people who claim to study. Believe me, I'm very alone out here, so it's refreshing to see your article. I've forwarded it on to several folks...am sure they'll either trash it or send me hate mail but I'm used to it. ;-) Keep up the good work...it needs saying.

— J. Armacost

Some feedback messages are edited for space and/or clarity