

“WOULD YOU BELIEVE”

“With God I Can Deal With Anything.”

A man died and checked in at heaven’s gate. The guard barked, “Why do you deserve heaven?” The new arrival replied, “Once I saw a man being pummeled by thugs. I grabbed a bat and went up to this muscular dude, ripped the ring from his lip, and growled, “Stop hassling this guy, or you’ll have to deal with me!” The guard gasped, “When was this?” The man stuttered, “Three minutes ago.”

MIND OVER (WHAT) MATTERS?

Every second around the world two people die and five are born. Every 60 seconds 204,000,000 emails are sent. 47,000 Apple apps are downloaded. 571 websites go up. YouTube adds 48 hours of video. Google gets more than 2,000,000 queries. Every MINUTE!

Media slams us with natural disasters, violence and filth, numbing our mind and emotions. Add the stress of being a provider and protector, and ... How are you handling life? It’s a giant challenge.

When young David slew 10’ tall Goliath, Israel’s paranoid King Saul drafted his nation’s new hero. Let’s read 1 Samuel 18:5-9 (p. 212, NIV), 19:8-16. And David’s prayer in Psalm 57:1-11 (p. 426).

Despite his Bathsheba slip, David’s lineage gave us the Savior.

DISCUSS: What might we learn from David’s life?

Next, a reluctant war hero. Let’s read Judges 6:1-16 (p. 180), 7:1-21.

DISCUSS: Describe a time when God was your Strength.

Then there’s the marquee “before and after” story of ‘Saul of Tarsus, Religious Jihadist,’ who became ‘Paul, SuperMissionary.’ Let’s read Acts 6:8-15 (p. 814), 7:51-8:3; 2 Corinthians 11:21b-12:10.

DISCUSS: How is God transforming you?

SEEING STARS

Leif Hetland says in *Seeing Through Heaven's Eyes*, "Either we will be overwhelmed by God, or we will be overwhelmed by everything else" ... like trying to answer life's biggest questions: Who am I? Why am I here? Let's read Ephesians 1:15-23 (p. 869).

Hetland writes, "The glory of God is everywhere. All creation has been trying to get us to see it" ... to be overwhelmed by its Maker (Psalm 19:1-2, 33:1-22; Colossians 1:15-20).

Our Milky Way is 100,000 light years long by 10,000 light years wide, containing 400 Billion stars! BUT WAIT! (as the infomercial pitchman screams) There are billions of galaxies, each with billions of stars. God has named and tracks each star (Isaiah 40:25-31, p. 539). How BIG is He anyway!! Nobody explains this like Louie Giglio (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtpTk2ENq7o>). The stars and the "great sea creatures and all ocean depths" literally "praise the name of the Lord" (Psalm 148:1-6). "Hear's" audio of that actual praise from whales and from pulsars 16,700 light years from us: (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zWKm-LZWm4>).

This God who inhabits vast expanses knows *you*, knows how many days you'll live, LOVES YOU INSANELY and wants to be YOUR DADDY (Romans 8:31-39)! So He had His Son pay the full freight to have your sins completely forgiven (Colossians 2:13-14)! You and I, made to be in relationship with our Maker, have a longing for belonging.

"WHO'S YO' DADDY?"

Adopted and orphaned children yearn to meet their birth parents. "Am I like them? Do they love me? Who am I, really?"

God is, ALWAYS was, ALWAYS will be! He *is* THE "I am" (Genesis 1:1; Exodus 3:13-14; John 1:1). He is three distinct Persons in One.

Father, Son and Holy Spirit love and enjoy each other. **God is relational so He spoke the universe into existence.**

Needing an agent down here, **God created man in His own likeness and image.** But as guys will admit under duress, we need a "helper." So **God made Eve and plopped them down in paradise.** It made the cover of BEST HOME & GARDEN. Only two people ... in a perfect world. What could go wrong! **Privilege can produce pride. Pride can cause a fall. Even ... THE Fall.**

Satan, the fallen angel Lucifer, came disguised as a snake. He made Eve doubt that God really meant "Don't eat *that* fruit." He denied God's warning. Eve and Adam disobeyed. With sin came **death and dismissal** from the Garden. But God's insatiable desire to restore a pure relationship with us, severed genetically by that original sin, announced His plan to redeem us and return us to paradise with Him.

"ARE YOU THAT MASKED MAN?"

Robert McGee in *The Search for Significance* says, “We’re born being taught to depend on ourselves, our senses, our reasoning or our emotions.” At some point, hopefully, we own our weaknesses, realizing that we’re not a Lone Ranger. Only then do we sit still long enough to be open to receiving God’s love and forgiveness.

My parents’ marriage ended when I was 14. My dream career was derailed at 26. By 36 I considered bungee jumping, without a bungee. My precious wife Liz was hit with breast cancer at 50. God called our daughter Laurie home at 47 after a 10-year bout with cancer, six months after her husband left her and two teens. Their Joseph has lived with us since then. Parkinson’s grabbed me at 64, prostate cancer at 73. But God’s been so faithful to prevent these circumstances – common to many of us – from stealing the joy, peace and purpose that He alone is wired to give (Jeremiah 32:27).

Before returning to heaven, Jesus’ last words to His disciples was a promise that while He was away, they would have His strength *within* them at all times. “... you shall receive *power* when the Holy Spirit has come upon you” (Acts 1:1-8; John 14:12; Ephesians 6:10).

DISCUSS: What do you need God’s strength for now?

- Without Christ we’re *zip*. Let’s read John 15:1-5 (p. 803).
- With Christ *nothing* is impossible. Let’s read Matthew 19:16-26 (p. 733).
- Jesus *is* your Strength if His Spirit resides in you. Let’s read Romans 8:26-39 (p. 841).
- With Christ you can handle anything (1 Chronicles 16:11; Psalm 118:14). Let’s read Philippians 4:4-13 (p. 874).

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:18). Our choice is clear: foolishness or faith.

Have you come to Jesus by faith, asking God to be your DADDY? If not, why not now?

His Deal

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Impossibility Thinking
Keys to Brilliant Focus
Graham Cooke
www.BrilliantBookHouse.com

“People always want to talk about the odds *against* something happening. (But Jesus said) ‘What is impossible with man is possible with God’ (Luke 18:27). As we continue with God, the odds for something begin to increase.

“The foundation of God’s nature is always our starting point for any enterprise. When we know Him properly, we behold His majesty. When we know that we are His Beloved, we bask in His favor. When we know the power of the one with the ONE (Jesus), then it is our privilege to trust Him.

...

“It is sensible to count the cost before commencing an enterprise. However, we do so in order to calculate what God needs to be for us in the endeavor. What needs to happen to bring an idea to fruition? ...

“There is too much passion in the Holy Spirit for us ever to be stuck in a negative place. Passion counts the cost differently. We plan something based upon what God is doing in us and through us. We have to factor in the call of God upon us ... All the intentions of God are part of our resources for the project.

“Dreams are not fulfilled by the sensible. True passion loves the impossible. It is energized by it. Passion does not partner with conventional thinking. Passion is like water. It seeps into the space surrounding an obstacle. It maneuvers around objects and barriers. It finds a way through. Passion is resourceful. Trust always partners with passion to develop the faith to overcome. ...

“All projects come to a fork in the road. In one direction is a way that seems right. Logic and reason would take us down that road. It’s the road where we determine what is possible through the resources we can generate. By that thinking maybe ten people would have had a snack with the five loaves and two fish, rather than the 5,000 who were full with twelve baskets of food remaining (Matthew 14:13-21)!

“The other way is the road of intuition that leads to creative thinking. Wisdom is the knowledge of how God perceives, thinks, speaks and likes to do something. Let passion choose the direction. Allow your renewed mind to serve God in faith. When met by an obstacle, we must use it to increase the size of the dream.

“God places the obstacles in front of us. The obstruction is not a stumbling block. Every hindrance is a benefit instead. The size of the difficulty determines the provision we need to negotiate it. That is a cause for excitement! God allows in His wisdom what He could easily prevent by His power. He is Lord over all things; therefore, every obstacle belongs to Him (Romans 11:36). He places the barrier in front of us to teach us about His advancement.

“If an obstruction blocks our vision, then we must receive elevation in the Spirit to see beyond it and move forward. Everything works for good (Romans 8:28)! A restriction encourages us to see what God wants to open. A limitation teaches us that an upgrade in our resources is currently available. If we are in Christ, then so are all our circumstances. If we can never be separated from the love of God, then our problems can never be separated from the faith that God has for our life” (Romans 8:35-39).