

CAN IT GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS?

Who said, “Eagles may soar, but weasels never get sucked into jet engines?” So did your 2007 soar or suck? Rodney Dangerfield, who shaved with Damocles’ sword, told his dentist, “Doc, my teeth are going yellow.” “Then wear a brown tie.”

When you hear 2007, do you say, “Oh, thank Heaven?”

Take 10 seconds now to assess what kind of year '07 has been for you. Pick a number, 0 to 10, with 10 being “I’ll take two ‘07’s in a row, please!” OK, go.

DISCUSSION: What criteria did you use and why?

Those great theologians, Simon and Garfunkel, sang:

“Up a narrow flight of stairs, In a narrow little room, As I lie upon my bed, In the early evening gloom, Impaled on my wall, My eyes can dimly see, The pattern of my Life, And the puzzle that is me, From the moment of my birth, To the instant of my death, There are patterns I must follow, Just as I must breathe each breath, Like a rat in a maze, The path before me lies, And the pattern never alters, Until the rat dies, And the pattern still remains, On the wall where darkness fell, And it's fitting that it should, For in darkness I must dwell, Like the color of my skin, Or the day that I grow old, My Life is made of patterns, That can scarcely be controlled.”

King Solomon, history’s wisest individual, sings back-up to Paul and Art in Ecclesiastes 1:12-2:11 (p. 497, NIV).

Using a different algorithm, you could produce a different 0-10 number than you did above. It depends on which formula you choose. Been using the right one? **God’s man Paul speaks up in Romans 12:1-2 (p. 343, MSG).**

2008 Could Be The Greatest Year Of Your Life If You Invest In SELF-EXAMINATION.

The O.T. book of Judges nails the *zeitgeist*, the spirit of those times 1,100 years B.C., prior to Israel’s first king, Saul. “At that time there was no king in Israel. People did whatever they felt like doing” (Judges 21:25). Okay, then let’s assume that each person

graded himself better than his “reprobate neighbor.”

But *comparing ourselves to others* is a flawed idea. **So says Paul in Galatians 6:1-5 (p. 418, MSG); 2 Corinthians 5:14-21 (p. 393, MSG); Romans 12:3 (p. 343, MSG).**

Plato wrote, “The life which is unexamined is not worth living.” In selecting Israel’s second king, David, God revealed His job interview approach: “I do not judge as man judges. Man looks at the outward appearance, but I look at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:9). Heart check-ups --- part of Biblically-based self-examination.

2008 Could Be The Greatest Year Of Your Life If You Value And Prioritize The Gift Of TIME.

What do the following folks have in common:
Bill Hartack, 74, 5-time Kentucky Derby winner
Jim Ringo, 75, Green Bay Packer
Joe Nuxhall, 79, major league pitcher
Hank Thompson, 82, country singer
Tony Harris, 36, Washington State U. basketball player
Dick Nolan, 75, NFL player and coach
Sean Taylor, 24, Washington Redskin
Larry Nelson, 70, Seattle radio personality

Their earthly journeys ended last month. **To discover how long *you’ll* live, flip to Psalm 139:13-16 (p. 467, NIV).**

David pleads with God, “Teach us how short life is, so that we may become wise” (Psalm 90:12). **Jesus’ half-brother goes to the wisdom bank in James 4:13-15 (p. 507, MSG).**

We all have the same, pardon the expression, deadline; it’s called death. Life is not an NBA game; no 2-minute warnings. Oh sure, we hit the Panic button when we turn 40, 50, 60, 70, even 80, swallow hard, but then shift back into D1 or D2 (Denial or Delay).

2008 Could Be The Greatest Year Of Your Life If You Know You’re In A SPIRITUAL BATTLE.

Who’s trying to undermine you? Colleague, spouse, disease? **The mask comes off in Ephesians 6:10-18 (p. 430, MSG).**

2008 Could Be The Greatest Year Of Your Life If You FINISH LIFE’S RACE, Not Let It Finish You.

On his deathbed Socrates said, “If only there was a firmer foundation on which to sail, perhaps some divine word.” And Napoleon chipped in, “I marvel that whereas the

ambitious dreams of myself and of Alexander and of Caesar should have vanished into thin air, a Judean peasant, Jesus, should be able to stretch His hands across the centuries, and control the destinies of men and nations.”

Just before his martyrdom, Paul wrote 2 Timothy 4:3-8 (p. 471, MSG); I Corinthians 9:24-27 (p. 369, MSG).

2008 Could Be The Greatest Year Of Your Life If You Live Knowing JESUS COULD RETURN AS WE SPEAK.

Jesus’ first coming is the subject of some 300 very specific prophecies in the O.T. Since 100% of them came true in every detail, why doubt the 2,500 which foretell His return?

Jesus does not stutter in John 14:1-7 (p. 229, MSG); Revelation 22:20-21 (p. 570, MSG); 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 (p. 453, MSG).

2008 Could Be The Greatest Year Of Your Life If You Are Deploying The Believer’s 5-Star Shield of Faith.

FACT #1. GOD IS WHO HE SAYS HE IS.

Like True North, He is changeless. And He’s the one with whom we all must deal (like Midas Mufflers, now or later). It’s His sandbox.

FACT #2. YOU ARE WHO GOD SAYS YOU ARE.

After oxygen and (it rhymes with *necks*), a male’s greatest need is to matter, to be respected. Thoreau said most men live in quiet desperation. C’mon, do we really matter to God? **Let’s run over to Romans 5:6-11 (p. 327, MSG); Galatians 2:15-21 (MSG).**

FACT #3. GOD WILL DO WHAT HE SAYS HE WILL DO.

Does the earth stay in its orbit? Does gravity hiccup? Does water still consist of two parts hydrogen, one part oxygen? Our Creator completes all His passes. **Let’s check His stats in Philippians 1:3-6 (p. 433, MSG); Romans 8:31-39 (p. 334, MSG).**

FACT #4. WITH CHRIST I CAN DEAL WITH ANYTHING.

That’s God’s deal with believers in Ephesians 3:14-21 (p. 425, MSG) and Philippians 4:10-13 (p. 874, NIV)

FACT #5. GOD’S WORD IS ALIVE AND ACTIVE IN ME.

Charlie “Tremendous” Jones predicts, “Five years from today you will be pretty much the same as you are today except for the books you read and the people you get close to.”
This is unpacked in 1 Timothy 4:6-16 (p. 464, MSG).

**2008 *WILL* Be The Greatest Year Of Your Life If You Know God
Says You’re Either SAVED Or LOST.
And, In Faith, You’ve Chosen The Former.**

Elijah’s challenge to Israel in the O.T. still works today: “How much longer will it take you to make up your minds? If the Lord is God, worship Him; but if Baal is God, worship him.” **The choice is fog-free in 1 John 5:6-13 (p. 907, NIV)?**

Eugene Peterson pulls no punches: “If we want a life other than mere biology, we must deal with God. There is no alternate way. ...we don’t have to fit into prefabricated or mental or religious boxes before we are admitted into the company of God – we are taken seriously just as we are ...”

Jesus died that cruel death as the Sacrifice that paid for your sins and mine, wiping them from God’s books *once and for all*. No longer must we face the hellish, eternal penalty for our sins. What remains is for us to accept God’s free gift of forgiveness.

“Dear God, I’m out on a faith limb here because I want to be ready for Jesus’ return, so I give You my life right now, thanking You for forgiving me of all my sins, and for accepting me now as is. I’m in! I’m a believer! Lord, You’re the Best!”

His Deal
www.HisDeal.org
george@HisDeal.org
Copyright © 2022. George Toles. All Rights Reserved.