

# **Has God Leaked From the Box?**

A Spiritual Autobiography by

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## Forward

I want to tell you the story of a punk kid who had nothing going for him and ended up gaining an extraordinary life.

That kid was me, and my life has turned from rebellious nihilist to a lover of life and people. And if you are the type who reads the end of a book before the beginning, let me tell you what happens in the middle – I met the Father.

I know everyone wants to talk about Jesus. Jesus this and Jesus that. But I didn't know Jesus when I was washed by His blood. The modern day evangelical salvation story is a product of our culture, not the gospel or the Bible. Not to say Jesus isn't integral to the Gospel story, but He is not in a box. The meaning of Jesus' ministry is far more mysterious than we give credit. He is far more than forgiver or sin cleanser as modernist steps to God boxes point out. He is life, resurrection, grace, mercy and speaks intimately to us that He has much more to give.

This is my story and I'll tell it from the beginning though it is by no means complete, especially later in life. Yet, I promise you one thing... it will be 100% factual, it will be real, and I won't pull any punches.

I do want to state that I am not proud of what I was or the things that I have done. Yet, they have formed me into the man that I am today, with the wounds, passions, and direction which I am grateful to have.

My story is one of the philosophical mindset so I will ask many questions I may not answer fully in this book. That may be because I don't know the answer,

maybe I forgot I asked the question, the answer doesn't lie between the purposes of this book or it is a MYSTERY!

The questions in Appendix B are unanswered for a reason. You are to dwell upon them. There are many resources with answers and I may yet answer them later. I have a personal war with some theories being taught and one theme of this book is to debunk the junk.

Also, the name of this book is to show much of what we see and know about God has come from simple sermon illustrations that have put much of God into quadrants or boxes. This limits our understanding the person of God and inhibits our relationship with Him. Many of these modern boxes are refuted within the simple story of my life.

Warning, I make grammatical errors. As a gift, feel free to grab some white out or a red marker and use this as a tool to brush up on your editing skills.

I won't go back to "**In the beginning**..." but I'll go back to Neil Armstrong walking on the moon. I was about a month old sitting on my daddy's lap watching a man on another planet. (Okay a moon)

I can't say I remember the event, but most elderly people would remember that time and know the summer of 1969 as eventful. Just as many other generations remember Pearl Harbor, the Berlin Wall going up or coming down, the first Gulf War, Littleton, or 9/11.

So I was born of a man and woman who were still together when I was born. This is something unusual for many children born today so worthy of note. And like many Baby Boomers, my dad was upwardly mobile and driven.

My father worked at a Real Estate agency in Newport Beach, CA. He'd work, hit the bar then come home after a long day. As an infant, I didn't know that my Momma and Dada not really speaking to each other was a sign that trouble was ahead.

**I probably saw my dad more after the divorce because he took us twice a week.**

A year and a half later my sister came along. My father's days changed from realtor to the bar into realtor to Law School. So, my family still didn't really see him, but it looked like progress. My Momma quit her job at McDonald Douglas to watch us. After my sister, she tried getting a job but cleared \$2 a day after paying babysitters. She chose to stay home and be our Mom.

By the time my Dada finished Law School he was ready to move on so he divorced my mom and moved on to my step mom Sally. He and Sally are still together and perfect for each other. She was a great addition to our California-style family. She did enter our family as the Wicked Witch of the West though.

The funny thing was I probably saw my dad more after the divorce because he took us twice a week as opposed to hardly seeing his first family.

## **Product of the American Educational System**

Time went on and I learned all that the government mandated that I learn.

And here I want to pause and ponder something. People tend to have four different mindsets. There are the lawyer-like meticulous detail people who tend to love math and school. There are the common sense emotionally driven people who are not always high achievers, but have made their marks in the sports, motivational speakers, music or the artistic world. Then there are the Medical Doctor/Nurse compassionate all-inclusive tender people who mother siblings and co-dependants.

And finally there are the philosophers who tend to get the short end of the stick in the educational system today because they are wrestling with ideas and concepts that are never satisfyingly answered or asked to explore in school.

Yes, I possessed one of the philosopher minds and graduated in the third that made the top two-thirds of my class possible.

So, I grew up on creative writing, science fiction and evolution.

Writing was a gift. I never wrote much but what I did write often impressed my teachers. Yet, because it was homework, I never thought much of it. I suppose it warped me because it was the one place I seemed to get positive feedback. Well, and wrestling.

Science Fiction and Fantasy books ruled my youth. When I was young, my mother had to force feed me books and I would grudgingly partake. Then around the seventh grade I made a discovery. I could steal books. So I grabbed about eight books of a fantasy series which was suggested to me and walked out of the book store. About half an hour later I got caught stealing some candy and got popped with the books too.

I later stole money from my parents to buy books and bought many Sci-Fi fantasy paperbacks from then on.

I loved the stories because they had nothing to do with my life.

I needed an adventure to live in. I needed a purpose to pursue. I desired someone to mentor me and to make me dangerous. I craved being the warrior who had a reason to battle. Later in life I made my own pseudo-existential battles.

But I was always defeated.

Why?

I was taught evolution.

<b>I desired someone to ... make me dangerous.</b>
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If there is one philosophical black hole in the universe it comes from the religion of evolution.

“You are nothing, your great grandparents were monkeys and their great grandparents were fungus and their great grandparents were a rock.”

There is nothing like being told you are the product of molten ooze to make your heart warm. At least my ancestors could rock.

I believe scientists and activists love the idea of evolution because in a shallow sense they no longer have to take responsibility for their actions. They can leave their spouses they made the most holy of covenants with because they never have to worry about judgment. They can hump, do drugs, become yuppies, offend and try to grab as much fun in life as possible because you only come around once and there really are no rules.

And I fundamentally understood that there *really* are NO RULES.

If all we are is cosmic accidents, then everything is fair play. No one has authority to tell you you are wrong because there is nothing in authority over you. Just like no one tells a mountain to go jump in a lake.

There is no need for a moral dilemma if we are just happenstance material beings. Our thoughts and feelings were just random chance impulses.

So, with survival of the fittest and all that... then rape, murder and mayhem have less ultimate consequences than brushing my teeth.

And that is what really got under my skin. I was told I was insignificant, there was no purpose for my life and there was no authority that had a right to judge me. And I lived and believed just that, just as every philosophical preteen inoculated with this religion does. And the more schooling I got, the more substance they placed upon my presuppositions.

Yet, our society never functioned like that.

There was this order. And you had to walk certain facades of proper behavior. If you acted in accord with your evolutionary heredity, there were rules broken and punishment for when you behaved inappropriately to the prescribed societal whims.

**...there  
really are  
no rules.**

Who gave society authority to begin with?

It was okay to speed and divorce from your commitments (marital and financial) as you felt like it, but you better do your homework.

“What’s another D to me, Dad?” Nothing mattered.

There was no possible incentive to put effort into anything, much less the drudgery of schoolwork or a minimum wage job, when all of existence is a random deception. And there was so little joy in life.

I had no reason to put forth effort. That is why I never wrote. That is why I never applied myself to school. That is why I bumped from minimum wage jobs until I was twenty-five.

I was simply a product of my lessons on purposeless.

Can you see why parents today are not going through the effort to discipline their children? Have you seen how few young couples stay together? Do you see millions seeking get-rich-quick schemes and others (including the government) making billions off of them? Do you see millions going into a semblance of depression, clinical or not?

Our addictions become stimulants (caffeine/porn/meth/extreme sports) for mood altering highs. We are driven to keep ourselves stimulated lest we pause to reflect upon our lives and find the absurdity of it all.

Well, let me ask you, "Do you still believe in evolution?"

I sure don't.

In fact, the science seems to contradict it.

And a closer look philosophically will debunk it too.

## Bowling with Jesus?

I had my first encounter with God when I was in a bowling alley. I was twelve and participating in one of my first events in Boy Scouts. We were a few rounds into a game when something intruded – whispering in my head.

“God exists.”

That sure didn’t compute. I wonder if everyone has little phrases or words that don’t make sense to them come into their head with a certain authority.

I (being the over-evolved molten dirt that I was) argued with the voice. No, there is no God. Nothing matters and life sucks.

It came again. “God exists.”

Well, if you can’t beat thoughts into submission, bargain with the voice. Alright, if I get a turkey, three strikes in a row, then I will believe in God. I get three strikes often enough in baseball, I want three in bowling.

Guess what happened the next time I was up to bowl. You bet I got a strike. It kind of freaked me out. But that was what I was trying to do, right? Not that big of an achievement.

Well, a buddy had to go to the bathroom so we were sitting around. Someone got the great idea to bowl on someone else’s lane. So we began bowling the next lane over for practice.

When I got up, I bowled another strike. I was floored.

There was something inside that knew with 100% accuracy that the next ball I threw down the lane would be a strike. It was scary to have such a certainty in the world. It was like receiving the first glimpse of fate, that there may

be something else controlling your life which you were never aware of. The possible implications were unsettling to the soul.

My buddies took practice turns on who knows whose dime. I decided to wait and have my next bowl count on my score. Sure enough I did it.

Three strikes in a row. A turkey. I forgot all about god or God and was so proud of what I had done. I got all the glory. I was still the hero of my world.

If only I could forget the nagging little echo that popped up now and then.

## **Arguments for God? Hahaha...**

Time flew. Maturity came slowly. I was physically small. I couldn't talk to people... most especially girls. None of these things mattered, but it sure seemed important. I never understood the tension between desire and existence. I don't have value, but my longings called for something that did.

Sometime in High School (I don't remember when) I sat down on a curb with a friend of mine, Troy, who had been a good friend but we'd parted ways. We were catching up on things and he mentioned something I didn't believe he'd say.

**I will believe  
in the Wizard  
of Oz type of  
god**

"I've been reading the Bible. I believe in God."

"You're kidding, right?"

He explained some things that led him to believe in the God of the Bible. And try as I might, none of it rang true. He did his best and I have to say he did a lot better than most Christians I've met.

But I laid out a number of humanist arguments against him with the fury of my emotions (as if that made them more true). The chief one that I still remember was, “Listen, if there really was a god and he does have a place like heaven and hell, then why would anyone want him? To make man and then tell him to either be a slave forever or else fire and brimstone... what kinda choice is that? Who’d want that kind of god? Who’d want that kind of life? Count me out.”

Now, I realize that this is not really an argument against the existence of God. It’s just one of those arguments meant to emotionally justify disbelief. The whole point of posing the question is to diminish God.

It’s like the question “Can god make a rock so big he can’t move it?” Both answers prove he is a limited god and justify he’s reduced in importance. It doesn’t matter if the answer is he can create a rock to fill all of space, he could then create more space to move it. But the questions have nothing to do with a personal intelligent God.

But to Troy, a real new believer, my arguments were unanswerable. He may have even agreed in part. When later we talked, he said he still believed in god, just not the God of the Bible. In other words, I will believe in the Wizard of Oz type of god, because I don’t want to have to defend Bible God against crazy lunatic atheistic zealots like Scott.

It’s a sad world we live in. We have so fallen from grace. I was sad I had so shaken his faith, both because he was so genuinely pleased about it, and also because I couldn’t bash it anymore. I was sadder about the lost bashing opportunities.

But Troy stayed in my system. Sometimes he'd be like Mars, on the other side of the Sun, no hear no see. Other times he seemed to be my best partner in creating adventure and chaos.

I remember talking to another guy, Kevin, about God in High School. He was trying to explain getting to heaven with these crowns. You get all these crowns for all the good works you do here on earth.

So I was attempting to find out what the Bible was talking about. I'm asking questions: is it all a matter of getting crowns? The more crowns you're in heaven; no crowns is hell? Can you lose crowns? How many crowns do you need every year?

Well, he was very disturbed by my questions. "What are you talking about? I'm talking about crowns. And when we receive all our crowns we will lay them at the feet of Jesus."

And at that point, I'd had enough.

## **Navy?**

This is the level of thinking that was used to witness to me. I don't know what the church is doing, but it doesn't seem to be training up scholars.

I had gotten to the point that when someone told me they were a Christian I would laugh in their face. I was unafraid because there was never intelligent dialogue to follow their statement.

And in light of this, it is understandable that I became an arrogant jerk when Christians were around. I wanted to bash and they were such easy prey.

Yet, I suppose somewhere I really wanted to hear something worthy come from them in defense of God.

No such luck.

So I graduated in the top of my particular third of the class. I had a piece of paper, but that was never appreciated because I was off to the Navy.

My father had wrestled with being a bum as a youth. Why apply myself? All I want to do is sit on the beach and drink beer.

To which his father said, "If you are going to be a bum, at least be an educated bum." That won him over and his drive for life and success followed as it did for many of his generation.

It wasn't so easy on me a philosophical son. Every Sunday and Wednesday was spent at my father's house. From the time of my junior year of High School it became a battle at dinner. "Scott, you need better grades if you want to go to college." "Scott, you better pick up your grades in school. No college is going to look at you with your GPA."

The words changed, but the conflict was the same. College was inevitable. The barrier between College and me were my grades. The only solution was to badger Scott into submission to get them grades up.

The tension was thick depending upon how much browbeating was done. I don't think my father saw any other way of motivation or discipline. And I was a stubborn cookie.

But I knew better. As a developed Nihilist, I knew I wouldn't finish a semester of College. It was all I could do to go to High School. I had long

stopped doing homework for many classes. I just listened to the teacher lecture and somehow passed tests.

There was no way I was going to voluntarily join more of this insanity.

And one day, probably in early November, a new solution occurred. A Navy recruiter called. He wanted to come and present some things to me. I was open to him talking to me about the Navy and showing me what was available.

We scheduled a time.

Well, the next Wednesday rolled around. My father walked into the kitchen where I was. He said something that shocked me.

“Scott, I was talking to a buddy of mine over lunch. He said he would recommend the Navy for a guy like me. A friend of his went in as a refrigerator repairman on the ships and after four years walked out to Las Vegas and got a job at a casino making great money.” So he could allow me to join the service.

I said that was funny because a Navy recruiter was coming over Sunday. I think that surprised him a little. And oddly, it had never occurred to me to mention it to any of my parents.

**I was going to  
be dangerous  
at last**

I think I was giving the recruiter the opportunity to sell me on the idea of joining the Navy. With the way things turned out, it was reinforcement that this was the way I was going.

I don't know if I really minded. Once I heard about the Navy Seals that was all she wrote. I was in. I was going to be dangerous at last.

## Boot Camp to Section 8

Boot camp was a piece of cake. If you can fold your clothes and walk in a straight line, you can pass Navy boot camp. I was surprised how few people could swim though. Why join the Navy if you can't swim?

Halfway through boot camp we had a swimming test. Our troop of around 80 guys gathered in seats around a pool. They asked for anyone who desired to join a Special Forces team to come forth.

I stood up and moved to the pool with about ten others. We were asked to jump from a high platform around thirty feet high. I used to cliff jump twice that so no sweat. Everyone passed.

Then we had to swim thirty laps. I am not sure of the number but it was both easy for a good swimmer but would easily disqualify anyone who wasn't. So our group of ten began swimming.

After about ten laps I realized I was the only one in the pool. All the other guys gave up. So my whole group of eighty seamen just sat there watching me swim lap after lap.

I thought to take it easy and leisurely, but began feeling self-conscious. I began swimming quickly. I breezed through the thirty laps and found out I was close to the best time at that pool (for boot campers). Not that it got me better food or more sleep.

So, I was moved away to get timed running laps around a track. Afterwards we sat down and the instructor checked out my medical records. He immediately found out I was nearly blind. That totally disqualified me.

So, I didn't get into Special Forces and as a medic, my school term didn't end up where I could join a marine platoon. So, here I wanted to be a warrior and was left to be an orderly.

I was stationed at San Diego Naval Hospital and did not like my job one bit. I remember working a ward only a few months into my internship and this guy asked for a catheter. (That is where you swab his penis up and stick a tube in so he can urinate.)

Well, this particular guy probably liked me and asked for a catheter seven times during my shift - the last few times hardly got urine. I was absolutely disgusted. I was not made to be a nurse and definitely not here to please someone's alternative urges.

So, I left.

In the Army that is called going AWOL (absent without leave) but in the Navy its UA (unauthorized absence). Either way, I made the decision that I wasn't going to spend four years cleaning peckers. I was out of there.

At the time I had shacked up with another sailor's wife and we had gotten an apartment. I'm not too proud of my past, but nothing really mattered, right?

My conscience was eased because she told me her husband was abusive. That is a common term nowadays and I don't know how insignificant an infraction can become termed abuse. If a man yells in an argument, is that abuse? If a woman's feelings are hurt or neglected is that really abuse?

I don't want to abuse the term "abuse" anymore than it's already been abused, but I believe there are many things that are just human relationship

building that are going around as abuse. And it seems to be our own issues that hinder us from making a real relationship happen. It is sad that in a day when relational development materials are so readily available, people are so ignorant of what to look for, much less establish, in a mate.

I do want to say that there is such a thing as physical, emotional and neglect abuse in a relationship, I just want to point out that many people are taking the road of victim-hood to gain attention or shock value and they have dulled the impact for those truly in distress. I wouldn't have known how to speak into this at the time then.

So, I hid out in my previously abused girl's apartment for a time. I then grabbed my things and headed back to family for a couple days. Everyone tried convincing me to return and see what would happen. I was not thrilled but did as I was told.

I returned and they sent me to a shrink. I said I was going a totally different way than the Navy Way. She got me off the hospital wards and I began hospital clean-up duty picking up cigarette butts from trash and ash cans.

It was a lot more fun than working in a ward.

One of the times I was alone at night and grabbed one of my knives. I remembered my psychology class in High School talked about how depressed or suicidal people would try slicing their arms.

**...our  
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anyway.**

I tried running my knife across my forearms a few times each side. Nothing. I was definitely not going to cut myself, so no faking any traumatic emotional instability.

Unbeknownst to me when you rub skin with a sharp instrument, even shallowly, it later turns bright red. So, returning to the counselor for my next appointment, I had these glaring screaming red suicidal warning signs. She picked up on it in a while and I got to spend a night in the psych ward.

So, I became an official Section 8 mental case discharge from the Navy about nine months into it. All of it was false, but I didn't desire to stand tall for the truth. My actions never took me up any steps towards manhood, but our society didn't embrace masculinity anyway.

Actually the reverse is true – most men have no idea what masculinity is about. Fathers have ceased passing down that secret if they were ever taught themselves. Feminists have been attacking any semblance of masculinity treating it as a threat to womanhood.

Our society wants obedience and conformity. Is that why most children diagnosed with A.D.D. or A.D.H.D. are boys? Why are we drugging our young men to keep them in line? Doesn't our society believe they are doing something fundamentally damaging to their natural gender? Hardly.

So, women and our society are quickly emasculating our boys. There is no celebration of what a man is. In fact, I bet most people wouldn't even have a clue what it means to be masculine much less define it. Boys are trained to be nice, dependable and secure. They are trained to be eunuchs.

But as young women are looking for a man to settle down with... they find their counterparts unable to commit or initiate. Women are looking for a strong, independent leader who will pursue them with a full heart of love and passion. And all they find are little more than male children. And women are unable to raise a boy to manhood. So the mating circle of unending relations ends up ugly.

I ask why I should bother growing up as an emasculated man. Hard work for little admiration. No purpose in that journey and I can tell... less joy too.

## **Living off the Land**

My discharge came soon and I was out of the Navy. It was March or April of 1988 and it felt like getting released from prison. I want to say that the Navy is a great place for certain people. If I had gotten into a field where I could have at least used some of my natural talents, then I would probably still be in the Navy.

As it was, I had caught up with my friend Troy again. One of our boyhood dreams was to move up to British Columbia and live off the land. I checked if he was still up with giving it a go. He was.

So almost a week or two out of the Navy, Troy and I were on the road to Canada. I was enjoying the drive. Living in Southern California, you know you are in the next town because of the little green sign that tells you. In Oregon and northward, you know you are in the next town because of the miles of trees between towns. I loved it.

Well, we had little idea of what we were looking for. We had decided on the town of Bella Coola in the midst of nowhere. From there we would scout out a place to create our own “My Side of the Mountain” experience.

We had discussed doing it between our junior and senior year of high school. I told him I needed to do it that summer or I probably wouldn't have done it. He always wondered why I never thought it was important to graduate. Anyway, we were on the journey now.

From Bella Coola we drove up many logging trails looking for a place to settle in. Once, we even got chased off the mountain by a trucker. But as we kept driving around, we didn't find the right spot. We drove further inland along the 20 and eventually stopped at a one-house one-shop town by the name of Kleena Kleena.

We camped at a pullout beside the river and settled in near a large stand of trees. We lived here a number of days, living off berries and cans of Campbell's soup. We drank from the river and began building a raft. A day or two later, the raft was complete and ready to take us down river to adventure.

Launch was of little success. I was upon the raft, and as Troy threw the last of the packs upon it, the raft caught the stream's water and ended up shooting down river.

I enjoyed the feeling of traveling downriver, even if I was busy trying to send it ashore. I wanted to laugh as never had I seen someone running through brush as fast as Troy booking it down river looking for a way on.

I pulled into a bend in the river and he jumped on. Our packs were completely soaked. We decided to ditch them and just have a fun trip journeying downriver for a time.

We cast off again, this time with both of us aboard. We didn't get forty feet downriver before a tree trunk half submerged caught a corner of the raft. We probably spent three hours trying to free the raft to no avail. Three days of building went to maybe ten minutes of rafting.

I didn't even know there was a God to curse, but I am sure I wanted to.

That was the stick that broke our trip. We hiked a day's trip down river and back. Then we jumped in my truck and headed back to civilization.

One of the comments my Dad had made was that if our living in the wilds didn't work out, we should just cruise to Alaska and find a job. Then we'd live in the wilderness and pay our way. I thought it was a splendid idea. But as we were making a return journey Troy wasn't going to go for it.

"If I'm going to get a job, I'll do it from home down in Newport," Troy said.

So we drove home.

I had tried to make spiritual conversation a few times, even prodding about the existence of God. The only thing that even remotely came as spiritual was he told me there was something called the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. Whatever it was, that was the unpardonable sin. There was no getting into heaven doing that one.

So, immediately, in my head and in my heart I began thinking of all the nastiest things to say about the Holy Spirit. But there was something inside me

that was genuinely grieved about doing that. So, I looked heavenward as I was driving the car and asked for pardon, whatever it was.

## **Penn Gwen**

Home safely, kind of.

Have you ever burnt your bridges someplace and realized you had no where to go back to? My turning eighteen was like that. My dad had said something like I'm an adult so there is no returning home again. I was fine with that because I didn't want to return home.

**A man needs to find who he is and his journey, his battle, in the world. Only then does he have something to offer a woman.**

But returning from a failed attempt to live a boyhood dream of living off the land I had no place to call home. I always loaded my truck with camping gear and soup because a crash or major blow-out somewhere and I'd just walk into the mountains and disappear.

Now I needed to get a new dream and that was very scary for me.

All of my life had been rejecting and rebelling against society. No one had purpose, yet our society dictated a certain order I didn't like. Now I had to find an enterprise to put effort into. And I couldn't see a place for me in the world.

A philosopher doesn't make it as a middle-manager; they tend towards the dreamer, writer, home-based entrepreneur, bum and teacher roles.

I didn't know which to pick. Can a drunken bum be a career?

When a man needs to grow up and make his way into the world, the last place he needs to head is into the comfort of a woman. A man needs to find who

he is and his journey, his battle in the world. Only then does he have something to offer a woman. He can't hide under a woman's skirts and become a man.

Gwen called.

She was the married woman still in the Navy in San Diego. She was getting out soon and was hoping to reconnect with me. I shot down there without a backwards glance.

Comfort.

Well, she got out soon. She was planning on heading back to Pennsylvania because her mother was moving out of her house. We could rent it dirt cheap. That sure worked for me.

There was one problem. She was a drug addict and needed to go into rehab. So, I hid out in a cabin in Palm Springs for 30 days in over 100° heat just to get access to a free home in Pennsylvania.

She got out and we moved. We paid \$100 a month rent for a house and I went to work at a chocolate factory.

The only reason I tell this story is because we were at Gwen's brother's house and for the first time I felt an overwhelming need to know what the 10 Commandment were. I was a little pushy and if they had a Bible, I wanted to hear them.

They eventually found a Bible from somewhere and her brother Gary read:

1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. You shall

not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commands.

3. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.

4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath of the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter, your male or your female servant or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

5. Honor you father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

6. You shall not murder.

7. You shall not commit adultery.

8. You shall not steal.

9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

I was surprised. Of all the things God could say, I just couldn't picture why he would pick those. It just didn't add up. What kind of religion was this?

Gary kind of summed it up as "Thou shall not steal." Don't steal God's glory, someone's life, or a parent's role, etc.

It wasn't an answer, but I didn't mind. It was definitely different than Jesus' command to love God, love neighbor.

If I were to start up a religion and decide what things I would want people to do, I would make people feel good about themselves, with little sins that could be fully pardoned with offerings to the chief priest: me. You cheated on your test: \$10. You cheated on your wife: \$100. You embezzled \$100 million from your company: 10%.

But having a religion that dealt with actual heart issues and behavior was different. The 10 commandments go against almost everything the American Dream desires.

It sure would suck to be a Christian... wouldn't it?

Without help, it sure would.

## **The Desert and Angels against Me**

Things went south with Gwen and I moved back to the Palm Springs area. This became a season of work, eat, sleep, drink Mt Dew, park cars and dream dreams.

My three years in the desert were a dry time for me, with the exception of when I moved a woman into my trailer. Lisa was a buddy's girlfriend and they

planned to marry after he finished flight school. So he went to San Fran for flight school and left his beautiful woman with me... in my own home.

I quickly fell head over heels for her, but was honor bound to not touch. Not that I didn't try... but there was something odd going on from the moment she moved in. Even though I was crazy mad for the girl, I couldn't ever think straight. And it was more than the emotions.

She was there for a few months when her dad had a heart attack and went to the hospital. I drove her to the hospital and finally met him, lying in bed in his room. I remember sitting down at the back of the room while someone was reading a story to her dad.

I could barely hear what they were saying, but there was such a presence, a sense of awe that filled the words being read. I was mystified never having read anything like it before.

I wanted to ask if they were reading the Bible, but I seemed mute, unable to disturb them.

Lisa only stayed for a little while but the event left me a little shaken. I later learned her parents were Christians. A little later on she told me that her parents were praying against me. That her parents were praying that Angels would sit atop our house and prevent me from ever touching or even speaking incorrectly (I use the term only because I can't think of a better one – meaning I couldn't do anything but the most honorable upright behavior) to their daughter.

And Lisa sure believed it was happening.

And when she moved out a certain haze left my mind. To this day, I don't know how I am supposed to feel about that. Was it really real? I'm 99% sure.

But Lisa and I had some dialogue and got to know one another. I remember one day, when her man was back, she told us both that she had been talking with her father the night before and said the prayer to become a "born again" Christian.

This was the first time I had ever heard that title, but didn't think much of it. I remember my friend was all joking and teasing her about taking religion with any measure of seriousness. But she looked at me. Somehow she wanted to receive some form of positive confirmation that she had done the right thing.

I wanted to wisecrack, but I had this haze in my head and it was very strong during this conversation. And all I could do was nod and accept her newfound religion. I could see that she knew something was different. But what I couldn't understand. She left and went on in a lifestyle that seemed anything but Christian.

Have you ever seen someone radically change and say it was because they were now a Christian? Actually, I hadn't at the time, but I heard it happens.

Up to this point, I still only understood materialism. That everything that exists is observable through science. I had no comprehension that there were spiritual things going on in the world. Angels and a God would have fallen into the Science Fiction world I daydreamed about. That couldn't be real.

But in a sense I was making the Scientific Method into a god. The belief that nothing is true unless proved by science has nothing scientific about it. It is

a philosophical proposition and thus not provable by science. And what is philosophy to an over-evolved magma mutation anyway. Nothing made sense.

My years became filled by working at a nightclub as head valet. When we finished on weekend nights we'd climb up the rocks in back and drink beer until sunrise. Sometimes my fellow valet's would have a little something extra, a joint or baggie from a careless club-goer. Then we'd stagger down and drive home.

That led to an accident

...Which led to a D.U.I.

...Which led to a loss of car.

...Which led to stopping junior college classes part-time to keep rent cheap.

And it was at this low point in my life that a voice seemed to intrude in my head. "Hey, Scott... how about becoming a Christian?"

As if I really needed this in my life. Yet, I had never really considered it. Becoming one of those church people who had no reason for why they believed. "Oh, yeah, sign me up." I thought sarcastically.

Of course my answer was "NO!"

But I pondered the question a bit. Why not? (Philosopher mind and all) What reason do I have to not become a Christian? For some reason, I knew innately that the other major religions of the world were frauds. (sorry Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims) But there was something mystical and mysterious about an exclusive Creator God-Almighty who was both intimate and all powerful.

**...nothing is true  
unless proved  
by science...**

Oh, there is something supernatural within these other religions, but they are too weak to truly satisfy the philosophical questions of man.

Actually, let me give you the main philosophical questions of mankind:

1. Where did we come from?
2. What is our purpose in life?
3. What happens to us at death?
4. Where can I learn about truth?
5. Why is there evil?
6. What is "God" (higher power – Supreme Being) like?

Now, truly, if there is no God, then it would really be a waste of time debating all these other issues. If such is true, then we are just cosmic accidents and any relevance between our lives and our environment (including our thoughts and feelings) is just happenstance. Include in that the absurdity of you reading a book this far.

Now, here I am someone who truly believes this government-fed philosophical-garbage wrestling with spiritual implications. Even though I felt the tension between society and no one's truly living out the philosophical implications of our evolution, I was speaking to a spiritual question forced into my consciousness. And I couldn't explain it with reason or logic.

And suddenly, the implications of an intrusion from outside the box entered my mind. What am I thinking?

The possibility of the god concept being true was a little much for me. I began thinking of the things I would have to give up if it were true. Better to be a hedonist looking after my own pleasure than give up all my pleasure.

I didn't know much about the Bible, but I did know a little about Christian restrictions. I would have to buy a suit and go to church. I couldn't move from one girl to the next... or sleep with Lisa. I had to marry my girlfriend and be totally loyal. I'd probably have to give up comic books and get a steady job. And I couldn't plan massive evil plots to destroy our civilization as I knew it.

I replied to the voice, "Maybe later." And that was it.

## **Massive Evil Incarnate**

Now, to this last let me explain. The people I knew would never categorize me as a relational person. I had the social skills of a two-year-old.

I was a heavy introvert and didn't really have time for small talk from anyone. As a valet, I learned the skill of being able to throw out five or six different pleasantries as greeting or conversation. Anything more would be work.

Hard work.

And because of this character defect in my life, I thought I could blame my parents. If they had invested more into me, asked me questions, found out what made me tick and tried to show me a life worth living... then I would have been a better person. I may even be able to talk to girls or have the self-esteem to hold a white-collar job.

But those desires were only hollow aching holes in a heart that wanted to be known and loved in a special way. But I found no philosophical reason to hold on to the hope that any would come.

So in my twisted way, I was going to fix society.

When visiting the desert around Palm Springs, there are numerous windmills scattered around the desert. Below them lies a giant waterline bringing water from the Colorado River to the LA basin. Along side the windmills lies a large power-line that runs parallel to the 10 Freeway.

You can hear the crackling of the power-line from a half-mile away over the rush of cars on the freeway. And this is what supplies the power to the Palm Springs area.

So, my idea was to grab a giant ratchet set and go visit these power towers. I'd loose a number of bolts in various places on a number of towers. Then when the next wind storm arrives – about every few hours to days – then one tower is likely to fall.

My hope would be that electrical tower dominos would happen and leave the whole valley in blackout chaos.

No lights. No TV. No music. No microwave oven.

And best of all no distraction.

I envisioned families would BBQ a TV dinner then gather around and talk meaningful things into each other's lives. I imagined people getting to know each other. I wanted parents investing in and understanding their children. I longed

**... at heart  
we are all  
selfish.**

for husbands and wives beginning to see each other instead of the TV in front of them. Then maybe families would stay together.

I hoped for a fantasy. This is a fracture that will never be healed.

Relationships are not forged because of inconvenience. They are typically undone because of inconvenience. And most people will not take the time to grow a relationship because at heart we are all selfish.

Selfishness is the undoing of society, of relationships and joy.

If I am self-absorbed, then I become a black-hole seeking only what I want and rage at what I didn't get. Everything better come to me or look out for the absolute retribution. There is no love, no charity, and no inner peace in the vacuum of self-seeking.

Has anyone ever heard the truth in this: *it is best to give than receive?*

When someone is selfish, how in the world are they supposed to have a relationship? Yes, they call them co-dependent for a reason. They become an emotional leach. They manipulate in order to receive their desire.

And the selfish person's arsenal to get what they want is by gossip, spending other's money, playing ignorant, constant complaining, tantrums, adultery, lies, anger, jealousy, envy, carousing, sensuous behavior and many other little tricks. All this is in the hopes to push the right button of the person before them and get their way.

So, what's a day or two without power? People just don't want to move past their selfishness to make relationships work. Now many relationships that do survive are empty because they are committed but not together at heart. It is

the rare few couples who have worked through their selfishness and combined their goals and desires with their spouses.

That realization clutched my throat killing the desire and I got lazy to the work of evil. Dysfunction is the fruit of deeper issues. Most people won't address the issues affecting their heart. The easy way is to medicate the wound, rather than find healing. Let me just cover the feeling, then I don't have to deal.

Now, I had many more evil ideas swirling in my head, but I was never convinced of the need to actualize them because I would need to become a different person. I would need to form something inside me that wasn't normally there... Evil. And I almost became that person once.

And let me get to that moment after we ponder the philosopher's dilemma in today's youth. I understand that this book (my life) is a little dark in the beginning. Still, I want to illustrate the product of what many of my kind are prone to understand. The philosopher's mind, seeking answers in today's hedonist society, rarely sees anything noble or a cause worthy of sacrifice.

In our culture... where is their hope? In what are our youth to look up to? Is there anything beaming bright with positive ethics, love and is relevant to our children? And if there is something you can think of, I bet it has been the subject of enormous attack to destroy every good it stands for. Why is that?

Our whole world has become dark. And there is little stopping it growing darker. I just heard a friend speak about how her father was a deacon in her church growing up and thus they had to attend all three services on Sunday. She remembered

**...or striving for  
acknowledgment  
through sex...**

how scandalous it was when they stayed home from the evening service to watch Bonanza.

Yet, Bonanza is 100% more wholesome than most cartoons designed to entertain our children today. And this new stuff is supposed to be legit for kids. I can't even watch it.

And this is a day for idolatry. My son can't sit through a Spiderman movie or cartoon, yet he has Spiderman underpants, T-shirts, pants, p.j.'s, toys, backpack, motorcycles, legos and you name it. The same goes for Thomas the Train, Buzz Lightyear and Batman to a lesser extent. Why does he attach himself so much to these images like Indian totems?

He longs to be them.

The masculine nature within seeks emulation of power, strength and dominance. He's only four and he wants to be king. He fights me (his dad) to be king. So, I want to steer him clear of the Sponge Bob Lazy Pants, Pokemon Rugrat kids and so many others where defiance and rebellion are the rule. They are not even thinking of teaching nobility, gratitude or heroism. They are selling a bad attitude and power without responsibility.

Where is there light in this world? My angst rises over the enormity of the question and that the answer seems so little in evidence. The answer is the Gospel, but the body of Christ has tucked tail and fled to the margins of our society where society told the church to go.

Is it any wonder that there was a massacre in Littleton, Co.? Is it any wonder that many more school shootings have followed?

Some would think we need more gun control, but that is like telling everyone we need spoon control because of obesity. Don't think for a minute we are doing anything to prevent more darkness to splash blood across our country. The targets (guns or spoons) are not the issue – the issue is deeper and darker and requires great effort. And that won't sell as a bumper sticker.

Most of our leaders are blind anyway. They have no idea where to find help. Yet, we in America have outlawed the faith and goodness that could help.

And no one knows the darkness more than the segment of society who has the philosophic mindset. I wouldn't have any doubt that every one of the killers, every child crying in spiritual distress or striving for acknowledgement through sex, has nothing to hope for. And they know in their core something very disturbing: we are being taught our lives are insignificant and thus the lives of others are too. Lashing out in violence is just problem solving.

And all the hype, media and marketing all focuses on feeding our selfishness. *Just Do It – Image is Everything – Image Is What You Are*

**Lashing out in violence is just problem solving.**

-because you don't want to miss out and you never know how long we'll be here.

One summer day when the nights were in the 90s, Troy came to see me. Troy always seemed to be my partner in crime. We weren't there more than a few hours when we stole a car and drove a few thousand miles of western U.S. It was a great joyride for a few days.

But we eventually returned to the desert and followed the registration to the owner's home and dropped off her car – leaving her keys at the doorstep.

But we were still not satisfied. So over a joint at my coffee table we planned to jump aboard the next freight train to pass by. We packed up a few things and headed out.

We ended up following some train tracks across the freeway a few miles to Indio. There a freight-train was ready to depart. We hopped aboard and passed a canteen of whiskey.

We rode all night, thinking it would take us to the Colorado River and we'd jump off the rail bridge plunging into the water just like the movies. Hours later we ended up getting our train car parked just this side of the Mexican border.

We walked through the town until we found a freeway and hitched a ride. The serviceman who picked us up was a nice guy. But he mentioned he was a Christian.

I laughed in his face.

Yes, the respectful gracious hitcher was really rude and arrogant. Well, I was really just selfish and as an over-evolved magma belch, I had no reason to grow out of it.

I did ask (in my polite way) if he had any reason for his faith. He didn't mention any. He did ask that we at least be amicable in not talking about it any more.

Sure buddy. Let's not advertise then.

We eventually got to Arizona and hitched north. We decided to float the Colorado River, yet, didn't want to float into Mexico. The farther north we got, the better the rafting trip south.

But getting a ride north was not an easy thing. I remember getting very angry during one stretch of freeway. Why are people not picking us up? What is wrong with all of them?

Remind you of anything black and sucking?

I don't know what it was; maybe a car looked like it would pull over then sped away. I don't know. I remember making the vow that if I walked another mile along this roadway and no one picked us up... I was going to become evil incarnate.

I was going to live up to everything that my evolutionary background expounds. I would have no problem killing or stealing – survival of the fittest and all that. I would get my way and who cares if someone gets hurt. I was past caring anymore. The whole point of society was a charade.

I had a dream of society putting me on trial. Society was the DA and listed this whole rap sheet of heinous offences. The judge looked down at me with disdain, "You have been given all the blessings of our society and you do this?"

"Blessings?" I retorted, "All you taught me was how insignificant I am. I don't matter. I am honoring what I received. By what authority do you attempt to claim to hold my actions as bad? You dispense laws that have no relevance to our actual existence."

Here the judge looks at me like I should know better. This is how the game of life is played. Man creates order from nothing for self-preservation.

I am on my feet banging on the table. "There is no purpose! Our philosophy tells us so. And philosophy has to overrule law. Law has no place

without a guiding force (hopefully good) to steer it, lest it deconstruct upon itself. And yet, the philosophy indoctrinated by our evolutionary heritage leads us to the annihilation of law and order. Everything is chaos and you have no authority to rule or judge over another person.

“No, don’t go crying Constitution,” I continue. “We left those precepts long ago and are attempting to dismantle the whole foundational documents. You are a government employee so you must apply the philosophy of our government.”

The judge looks taken aback. He forgot the foundational existential meaning for life was derived from a choice out-of-nothing. All his law existed to perpetuate the pretense of order. He looks confused as to what to say.

“Philosophy is the science of understanding the universals claims of all reality.” I continue, “Science and law are simply the ordering of the particulars of the philosophy. The problem is that science and law have come to the end of their domain and still necessitate more control. So they have begun to reach in and philosophically change their own presuppositions (which they are not allowed to do) to fill in the theoretical needs of the day.

“It is no wonder Plato desired a philosophical king. Such is needed to rule from the universals, the big picture, because when one rules from the particulars, the details, they have no vision as to where they are going. They lift up their head to determine how much value their discovery has and are easily misled.

“Still it doesn’t matter because nothing matters anyway.”

Today, I would point out that the philosophy of our government and society is wrong. Law and science were started correctly with philosophical

guidance. But they became ruled by those who only understood particulars. That is like discovering a well cultivated garden and concluding that is how these plants grow in order, in rows and clean dirt.

Some scientists have deconstructed natural law and give their empty theories action like laws. Evolution (Darwin) or global warming (Gore) is based with little particulars for evidence to support them. When looked at philosophically, they would be rejected offhand. But we don't have philosophers in leadership to show the way.

The people in charge who work with particulars like this will destroy everything they touch. They are not looking to other fields for guidance. They believe their particulars have the greatest value.

Giving value is a philosophical judgment and not the realm of the scientist.

Darwin died saying evolution is incorrect and the theory should end because he was shown the errors and flaws of his theory. Did anyone listen?

Well, halfway up that mile, Troy asked me about what plagued me and he did the funniest thing. He made us walk off the roadway and over the rough brush a ways from the freeway.

I don't know how to advise about picking up hitch hikers. You may get someone like me and that could be very scary. You won't ever know if you saved mankind by getting me before the mile walk was up or you're pulling over just afterwards and you're going to get a world of hurt.

**Giving value is a philosophical judgment...**

We never made it a mile down that freeway.

I never became Evil incarnate – and I believe I would have. I think I probably would have done a *good* job at being *evil* too.

Arizona is still a nice place to live because of my good friend Troy.

## **Squaw and Amway**

We eventually returned and life passed. I moved from the desert to a little town called Truckee and got a job in Squaw Valley USA working at a pizza joint. This was a great period of my life.

I had about a 12-mile bike ride to work from my cockroach infested walk-in closet I called home. I'd work shoveling pizza toppings and serving beer. Then ride home following the river in some of the most beautiful mountain settings in the world.

I'd try and find little dirt road long or short-cuts but didn't find many. There is something different about being so close to nature. You don't have to look very hard to see beauty.

I grew up in Southern California and believe me, when everything is paved for a hundred miles around; beauty is a hard thing to find. When man decided to live en mass and pave paradise for the modern era, he accumulated darkness by chaining/choking beauty. There is something of a stronghold in cities. I can't explain it well. What do you call something devoid of beauty and completely functional?

Hell... for the soul... much like a cubical.

God says that He created the heavens and the earth. He does things in such a beautiful way, his artistic skills shine in plants and animals, colors in a field, the way water falls, the way a sun sets, the way an eagle flies and even the beauty of a woman's form. God has talent.

So, I found a path into the woods I'd take whenever I had a day off. This was my haven. Here was my Nirvana and Tao resting. I wandered among trees, following a babbling brook. I'd sunbath on a rock or swim in a shallow pool. The work of mankind was absent and the world was wonderful.

At the same time my cousin lived in Tahoe. We took Karate classes together and her husband let me read his Dan Millman "Peaceful Warrior" books. I fully enjoyed them though they were part self-development and part horse-shit. As you can guess, I didn't much take to new age spiritual mumblings that couldn't be proven or contain logic.

But it was good to read – exercise my mind as well as my body. And I believed I was slowly on the path to becoming dangerous. I was clueless and purposeless without a mission – but still somehow dangerous.

And taking a trip home to So Cal from Reno, I sat next to a lady who had her own company and was looking for some quality people. I was confused as she didn't want employees yet was looking to find people... I didn't get it.

She gave me her card and asked me to call her when I returned to town. I said I would.

I spent a week with family and had a good time. I remember finally returning to Truckee and lugging my gear up three flights to my cockroach infested eight by eight room. I had just closed the door when the phone rang.

It was Sharon. She seemed a little disturbed that I hadn't called her.

"Uh, I just got home less than a minute ago."

She paused a bit at that. Then she asked to meet me the next evening. Now, if Sharon had been twenty years younger, I would have had a totally different mindset about the encounter. As it was, I didn't have a clue what was coming.

Sharon and I sat down at a pizza joint. I bought a Mt. Dew and drank as she pulled out a yellow sheet of paper and began dazzling me with all of these circles. Find six who find four who find two... and I make big money.

It was my first experience with the entrepreneurial spirit in a manageable formula. I was hooked. But I needed more information.

She plugged me into a World Wide Dream Builders system which included tapes on how to build a business and testimonials of business people who succeeded. I was breaking into new ground. I was beginning to think there might be something in this life worth investing myself into.

Amway, I'd never heard of it before – but a lot of other people sure had.

A short time passed and I was trying to figure this business out. I had people make an appointment then hide away never answering the door. My first plan, I couldn't speak. Eventually they found the catalogues and my cousin wanted to buy a watch.

I said they take credit cards. She could write me a check. Uhmmm... no sale.

I had a long way to go as a salesman or a businessman. And things didn't work any better as I worked the plan. I soon became one of those guys that buys a bar of soap and a tape, and was not interested in the soap. I do remember buying my toilet paper from the catalog. I had to buy a case and I carried that case of toilet paper around for four years trying to use it up. It was a mess going from studio to studio and here's this huge box taking up space.

One day at work someone called down – “Hey, Truckee just blew up.”

That was a rather odd comment. This was before the days of terrorism and even school shootings. But there was enough intriguing mystery that I went upstairs to the Le Chamois bar and saw on TV an aerial view of Truckee with smoke billowing from the main strip.

“Hey, that's where I live,” I said.

Well, the boss wouldn't let me leave early so I finished the rest of my shift thinking odd things. I eventually got off work and drove home (it was early November so no bike).

Downtown Truckee was cordoned off, which was an accomplishment because it didn't leave much of Truckee left. I found a parking space and went towards the front of my apartment building.

I found out a restaurant three storefronts down had blown a something and blew the back of the kitchen out. With trains that pass just in front of the

main drive, engineers decided that a train's noise-vibrations could possibly knock the buildings down as damaged as they were.

So I was evicted for the duration, which ended up being the whole month of November. I was completely caught off guard. I could picture driving down to Reno to sleep in my car to have somewhat warm nights, but the gas money would break me.

Lucky for me, the Red Cross was there. I owe an enormous debt for them saving my butt in this case. They paid for the apartment residents to stay in a hotel not too far away. Cockroach infested walk in closet to my own suite with continental breakfast included.

But there was one issue. I had left my jacket in my room. So, the next day I pulled a sneak-and-peek stealth operation and bypassed the barricades and yellow tape to enter the building.

I got to my room and all the cockroaches were still there waiting for me. I grabbed my jacket, what little food I trusted and a box of Amway tapes. And this began a time of concentrated growth.

I bought a walkman and during my off hours, went walking in the fields and wilderness around the hotel. I began listening to successful people in varied avenues and stages of life sharing their wisdom and stories. I heard about their experiences and how they triumphed over challenges. I started hearing about what a man consisted of and what values are to be cherished in life.

I soaked it up like a desperate thirsty man. And I was hungry because no one had ever invested in me like these men did. And I was shocked that I could

buy a tape for five bucks. Five dollars was a lot of money for me, but worth the sacrifice at the time. Soon, it was the batteries that were killing me.

Before this event, I lived as an introvert and exile from society. Alienation from everything was my motto. I remember being in the desert and we called this one doped-up valet an air-thief. He was running around stealing perfectly good air. Later, I saw air-thief was probably a good description of me. Good for nothing and wasting the limited supply of oxygen.

Now, listening to these tapes, I could fathom actually joining the human race. I could see some reason for learning about other people and having motivation to actually be interested in them.

I remember reading *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. Some cute girl sitting across from me saw the title and read it as *How to Manipulate Friends and Use People*. She gave me an evil eye.

I smiled. A simple lesson I learned from the book.

But I was changing slowly and other people were noticing. I remember having a little struggle with a coworker trying to get the attentions of a girl. Yet, I remember throwing him compliments about the things he was doing right. He, too, looked at me strangely.

And I believe she started liking me. Until I tried to ask her out – which got to “what are you doing tonight?”

“Nothing.”

“Oh.”

Awkward silence. Yes, socially immature would be a good name for me. And I was twenty-four. Many men are married by then and having kids. I was so off the radar of normalcy I could have been a piece of over-evolved molten scum.

But for the first time in my life I was growing. Personal development and skill assessment would have been a foreign language to me. It seemed like I was a seven-year-old who was growing up anew. The soil of my life was getting some fertilizer for the first time.

## Got Christ?

December 31 was my last day in the cockroach infested walk-in closet. I was book'n it to Eugene, Oregon. My buddy had moved to Roseburg and was planning to open a comic book shop: Neverland Comics. I wanted to move nearby but Eugene seemed a big enough town to have better jobs.

Little did I know a number of lumber mills just shut down and the place was swarming with unemployed. I ended up getting a temp job at a rubber factory. I liked to use the line that we got to test them out during lunch – but it was the other kind of rubber. I worked a press forming walnut rakes and Freightliner break peddle covers.

All I can say was it was hot, dull and gave me deep burns up and down my forearms. I got a walk-in closet on the University of Oregon campus which was great as there were no cockroaches. I had never heard of a quad before. Four people have their walk-

**It was admiring the accomplishments of regular people.**

in closet and share bathroom and kitchen. It seemed a perfect solution for broke youths like me.

I had looked at taking some classes at U of O but upon seeing many hundreds of dollars a credit quickly told me I wasn't going to get formal training. The university system is a business. They cater scholarships to more desperate situations than mine. Otherwise you better pay the big bills if you want their nicely-decorated framed paper on your wall.

I believe I was doing better with the motor-university (Amway tapes) than any formal training would have done for me at that time. I needed to become a member of society before I improved upon that foundation. Remember, I could still pull over anytime and run up into the hills and become "mountain man".

And struggle as I did, I thought about it often.

Then it happened.

It was about March or April. Amway training group was having a big Spring Leadership event. Sharon was on the phone telling me I needed to be there. It was \$400 bucks and I had to drive to Sacramento – about 9 hours.

I was having a hard time just buying groceries. But, somehow, I got the money together and drove on down. A man will do what a man needs to do even if he doesn't like it... even if he doesn't eat for a few days.

I wanted to be a man.

I enjoyed the training. I got pleasure from the stories of people on their journey to success. I felt tremendously connected to something bigger than I was. There was no hoopla or cheer leading. It was admiring the

accomplishments of regular people. That never happened in school. That didn't happen at work. There was no context for the existence of such training.

And yet, I wasn't a part of them. I wasn't social. I wasn't in the mainstream. I hated business. I had very few friends. No acquaintances. I still believed I was an over-evolved molten fart turned nasty and struggled with finding any place in the world around me.

I just wanted a stream, wild lands and some soup.

But it all changed Sunday.

There was this funky sounding optional Sunday morning event. My first thought was to sleep in. After all, the event ended at 5 and I was driving 9 hours home. But, I paid \$400 to get in this place – I wanted my money's worth.

So I went.

Yes, it was a worship time. The singing was great. I can't sing well, but I don't mind singing in a group as no one knows how bad I am – except the person in front of me. I remember Sharon was sitting a few chairs away with another couple who were moving on in the business between us.

After a while of singing, someone, either John Marta or Dave Timko took the stage. He spoke about the wages of sin is death. There is no one righteous, not one, all fall short of the glory of God. He said a heart of stone can be made flesh. He said a number of things that were totally beyond me. I didn't understand a word of it. This was some modern Christianese nonsense... I couldn't relate.

But God was calling me. It was God the Father. He began pounding me spiritually – beating me up. I don't know how to describe it. I didn't even know I had a spirit. But I was torn up, aching in my soul... and He had two things to say to me.

I (God) exist. The Bible is true.

At just that moment, the speaker called anyone forward who wanted to come under the covering of His blood... to become a new creation.

I was beaten up, but this was something new. This was asking me to accept something that I knew was false. To accept that every thought and feeling I had was somehow twisted as a lie.

A God did exist. I hardly knew the implication.

I didn't like it. I hated it. I screamed inside... but I had to choose. And I realized I was hurting inside because I had chosen wrong already.

Like a captive with chains to the seat and rope jerking me forward, I stood up and walked down the aisle to be a Christian... whatever that was. The Father was walking me down every step of the way.

We new believers gathered in a big huddle, hands on each other's shoulders, and repeated some prayer the speaker spoke to us. He mentioned Jesus somewhere in there as well.

<b>I (God) exist. The Bible is true.</b>
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Having finished, the speaker gave us these two instructions. Find a church and get baptized in two weeks or it'll all go away. You can tell a good church because they'll sing about the blood. If they don't talk about blood, it's not a good church.

I remember sweating like crazy and deciding that I was being baptized in my sweat. I won't need to find a church.

I was already a skeptic.

The rest of the day was a blur. I don't remember many things after that event. I had swallowed more than I could philosophically chew. I needed to totally rearrange everything about me and I didn't have a clue where to start.

Now the modern view of salvation is that the Gospel is about acknowledging sin, the repentance of our sins, Jesus' death on the cross which brings forgiveness and (sometimes) His resurrection. People with this view will throw in the four spiritual laws and maybe a courtroom discussion on the judge taking the sentence he just handed you. But this is not the modern era, and though millions have been reached by these tenants, they are irrelevant now.

More and more people are hungering for spiritual fulfillment today. They don't know what's out there, and many are going to new age nonsensical spirituality because they just don't know anything else yet they are hungering for something so much more than themselves.

They are clueless of the epic drama that has unfolded here on earth. They are a part of the story with Jesus (not them) as the main character and victorious hero. And then there is the mystery of God which is often kept ambiguous even to believers when that can be a powerful draw.

Why can't the Gospel be about joining the good guys against evil forces? There is such a battle raging now that desperately needs special ninja force warriors. Millions are left without hope because of evolution and combating that

can bring the Gospel story alive. Many are caught in depression, addiction cycles that are destroying their lives. They are prisoners anxious to be set free. The Gospel can be environmental activism for stewardship of God's creation. There is supernatural power, there is healing, there is purpose and clarity in the life and the struggles we journey through.

The Gospel is tailor made for all the solutions to our problems if Christians would only hear, think and speak it out in relationship.

Forgiveness alone is a sorry excuse for the Gospel. That is like telling a man with a broken leg he is excused from jay walking to the hospital without lending a hand. The Gospel is reaching out where the need is: giving God's love to the abandoned, God's guidance to the irreconcilable, God's purpose to the lost, God's holiness to the marginalized and hope to the destitute. Give some water.

And lest we make the Gospel a one-time event to become a Christian like many altar-calls or "just pray this prayer" we allow people with little understanding to believe they are Christians and they never knew Christ. The Gospel is just the entry point to Christianity. It is just the gate to the narrow path and life abundant.

I remember driving back thinking I had changed dramatically somehow. I knew I would never doubt what happened. And yet the hard-core habits I had developed as an evolutionary nihilist were still on board. I wasn't going to put much effort into figuring it all out. Why bother?

**Forgiveness is  
a sorry excuse  
for the Gospel.**

But my saying didn't ring true anymore... I was different.

I fell asleep in my car around five in the morning. An alarm woke me up just as my car almost hit the center divider. I was able to turn the wheel just enough to make a head-on in the middle of a turn to simply sideswiping the concrete barrier.

I pulled over at the next stop for food, fuel and a quick recharge.

## **Alarming Spirit**

Have you ever had the alarm clock wake you at an ungodly hour you have to get up at? Now, have you ever had the experience where you forgot to turn the alarm on, but you awoke a few minutes beforehand to realize this? This is kind of like having your subconscious mind working despite your ineptitude.

I loved my weekends because I love to sleep in. But there was something different now. Sunday mornings I would awake early and couldn't go back to sleep. It was this alarm clock thing and I couldn't figure it out.

Where is the off button?

Now, this alarm clock didn't just wake me up... it came with a message. "Scott, it's time to go to church."

"HA!" Big fat chance I'm getting up to go to church. I'd pull the blankets over my head and daydream. But I never slept. And I don't know what happened to everything supposed to be disappearing after two weeks.

After three Sundays I gave up.

Okay, here are my conditions for going to church you... God – Spirit – Thing. I didn't know much about God at the time, just that He liked to bug me. I set out to let Him know how much effort I was going to put into this church thing.

I want it to be within walking distance of my walk-in closet and it has to have a steeple on it. I'm not doing anything else.

The reason for the steeple was the childish hand gesture thing. This is the church; this is the steeple; open the doors and see all the people. So there had to be a steeple, right?

And though I didn't know it yet, there was another condition... that I feel welcome there.

So, during the next week I did some scouting. I found a few churches that may be worth attending. There was also a church of Scientology that really scared me. This was before Scientology became popular in some circles. But to a committed evolutionary cosmic-blip I knew I needed to stay away from science.

Science had at its root the presupposition of evolution. And somehow I knew there was a conflict there – somehow. Now I know that science is just a bunch of laws and facts; it is the 60% of scientists who are leveling all kinds of theories as scientific laws because of their presuppositions that was the danger.

So, my first Sunday came and I went to my first church. I sat down in a pew and kind of watched what was going on. People were talking and nobody paid me any attention. A group of four girls came in and sat in my same pew. The one closest to me smiled.

Well, maybe church isn't such a bad thing. Who says God doesn't use the mystery and beauty of Eve to entice men to Himself? Actually, I believe a man's attraction to women is similar to the attraction men (and women) were designed to have towards God. We've just sort of distorted things.

I did notice that though I sat halfway down the length of the building, I and the girls were in the first row. Everyone was behind me. It was like they were all looking at me. "Who is this weird guy? What's he doing here? Who let him in?"

Then all the relics and cross and incense came down the aisle towards the center stage. A man who looked like the Pope came and gave us some words of wisdom and Scripture.

Everything said was beyond me. I didn't have a clue what in the world anyone was saying. It was all in Latin or Old English and very Scriptural like the all important need to impress with their seminary training.

And I could see the people there wanted things that were holy. Yet, I could see that it was them trying to be holy and there wasn't any God. There was very little life in the people's eyes and I felt uncomfortable. I didn't feel judged, but I sure wanted to get out of there as soon as possible.

There was communion and people came forward to receive a wafer and wine? The Eugene Pope gave them the food and they all moved back to their seats.

I remained glued to my seat. Nothing was going to get me to go forward.

It was them trying to be holy and there wasn't any God.
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Then the Pope asked for anyone who was new to stand. The four girls stood. They said they were visiting from *somewhere else*.

I had no backbone and no resolve to do anything this guy asked of me. I wanted out of here. I definitely wasn't going to let them know I was new. I wasn't going to let them know what I was.

In fact, I didn't even know what I was.

And if the four girls weren't coming back, I definitely wasn't.

Soon, the Pope gathered his things, the incense bearers led the way and they tromped down the aisle in formation. It didn't look like anyone was having a good time. I was joining them in that.

They dismissed everyone by row, beginning at the back. So, I was the last to be dismissed. There were crackers and punch or something in the fellowship hall so people filled the hallway but the Pope was in the only doorway out of the sanctuary greeting everyone.

I kept trying to will him to move. He didn't. He was greeting the girls when I saw him shift slightly. There was some room to his back but his arm was in the way. I didn't care anymore.

As an adult male, I rushed forward, ducked under his holy robes and made it past him. I saw the open entrance twenty feet from me with only a few people congregating.

I ran full speed out of that church and down three blocks.

I didn't care what these people thought. I found freedom.

And for the next two weeks I found similar churches and circumstances. I never reached out to meet anyone and I hid in the pews. Likewise no one came to see what I was all about either.

Now, I am not trying to make fun of what I later came to find out are High Churches. A High Church stands on ceremony, often has religious garb, formalities, readings, church involvement in liturgy and traditions that date back to the early church. One of the chief aims of the High Church is to bring all five senses to bear. You watch the relics and painting, you smell the incense, you touch and taste the sacrament, and you hear and join in the liturgy.

The High Church is much more participatory than the Low Church.

The Low Church is often more fundamental, casual and evangelical. Historically, the aristocracy belonged to the High Church along with those wishing to be known with them. The poor typically couldn't afford a seat in a High Church and the Low Church was simple come sit on the floor while we sing, have a sermon and pass an offering plate.

It is very easy to get lost in a Low Church of today. Often they have large numbers so someone can slip in, sing or not sing during worship, listen to the sermon and take off unnoticed without ever feeling uncomfortable – unless the sermon gets him.

Yet typically, the Low Church grows because there is a greater opportunity for the Gospel and authentic relationships. There is no posing necessary. It would be good if we could mix some elements of both and some new post-modern churches are doing just that.

But I was done with church at this point.

## **Friends and Mystic Basics**

So, my commitment to not go to church and be embarrassed any more because of my ignorance of who God had made me prevailed. I didn't have alarm bells waking me Sunday morning. My life fell into its usual lull of plain financial survival and relational emptiness.

But God was always working outside the box.

At the rubber factory, I was working on a new mold and the owner's daughter came up behind me. Just as I was whacking the mold with my mallet she called out to me.

Surprised, I jumped. I found my middle finger all bloodied. She called for a medic to come and we later found my bone was shattered. So, I was out of work, needing a paycheck and had a stiff dirty-word finger.

Life didn't feel like a blessing, but it was to become one.

I took the opportunity to move to Roseburg. My first day there, a stranger named Ethan got me another minimum wage job and I found another cheap walk in closet not too far away.

I had a hangout at my desert buddy's comic shop. I made friends with Ethan and some others. And suddenly, I realized I had a life to live beyond survival in the margins.

But something strange began happening. I had sex with some girl and these neon flashing lights were glaring at me. What was this all about? I didn't do anything wrong.

It was like the alarm clock wasn't just in wake-up mode. It had other functions and I wasn't sure what to make of it. Or what it was trying to say.

A few months later I a girl came up to me. Her name was Lori and she would be influential in my next season of life. She asked if I was a Christian.

What an odd way to begin a conversation I thought. I said, "Yes."

She looked at me strangely. My buddy who owned the comic book shop was a far cry from being a Christian. She must have thought if I was associated with Jon, then how could I be Christian? She kept looking at me funny like I had ketchup on my forehead. She backed away then began speaking to others.

Because of this event, I began wrestling with the concept of Jesus. I never owned a Bible and didn't really know what it said. I did understand that my belief in God ran contrary to what I understood about life. Still, it was easier to push God off than find out what was really going on. It always is.

So, here I am a Christian and all I knew about Jesus was He's the Christmas and Easter guy. The significance of which was beyond me. Now, we are part way through this book and I have mentioned my complete and total ignorance of certain subjects particularly spiritual matters.

**...it was easier to push God off than find out what was really going on.**

I do want to assure you that my ignorance comes from the complete absence of religious teachings in our society, culture and educational system. Being unaware of spiritual matters does not mean that I don't have a good head on my shoulder, even if I didn't use it often.

I took a test once that measured I.Q. which will not change throughout our life. The test showed I was just a few points shy of being a genius. Wahoo!

But during our lifetime, only 10 to 20 percent of what we do is a product of our I.Q. The other 80 to 90 percent is influenced by our E.Q. or Emotional Intelligence. This is a much harder thing to measure.

Developing our E.Q. will enable us to delay gratification, think on our feet, and better relate with people. Our emotional intelligence can be raised with maturity in a number of areas. Our social intelligence, spiritual wisdom, fight/flight response, smooth talking, emotional healing, empathy, and if you'll allow it, our relationship to God are all factors in our E.Q.

So, from where I sat, on the front step of my walk-in closet, I had a very low emotional quotient. I didn't understand people, relationships or society. And I really didn't care.

**So I gave up on Jesus. It was the easiest choice.**

The Bible talks about this spiritual conversion as becoming a new man. And for me, I seemed like I was a child again and beginning to see the world anew. I was asking different questions, and though I wasn't getting satisfying answers, I was surprised at the changes.

Still the dilemma of what to do with Jesus was too much for me. I couldn't correlate someone I didn't know with my new faith in God. And I wasn't going to learn more about God as I was.

So I gave up on Jesus. It was the easiest choice.

I said aloud more as a prayer than anything else, "I'm giving up Jesus. He's too hard to understand. I don't know how he relates to You God. So, I am just going to be a believer in God and not call myself a Christian anymore."

And the very next day, Lori came by my house.

"Hey, Scott, did you know Christmas was coming soon (about two months). Would you like to come to my church?"

Ah, the beauty and mystery of Eve. There is something about the woman that will always attract and draw men. And I knew I was going to go back to church, with hopefully a guide to help me out.

And I was quite aware that my decision about Jesus would change because somehow I knew I would learn about Him.

I want to pause and explain something that has been highly debated in modern Christianity. It is a shame that people would fight each other over this topic, but Christians don't seem to understand: God speaks.

There are loosely three different camps. One is the Bible only camp. Here they believe God spoke to the apostles and brought us the New Testament. With the Bible in our hands, we possess the Word of God and that is final. We can pray and petition and confess, but that is all one way. If you want a word from the Lord, it is written in the Bible. If it's not in the Bible, use good wisdom.

The second camp is typically mystic-emotive Christians who don't spend much time in the study of the Scripture (Bible) to enlighten themselves to the ways and principles of God. Thus God is all about relationship, beauty and love. So they live their lives ungrounded, yet sometimes doing incredible things. But too many get caught in moral pretzels saying God told me to sleep with my secretary, or God said I could quit my job. They want to live on love, but God is so much more than love. Still, their premise is that the whole Bible is God saying "Come Closer. I have more to give you."

And unfortunately, the two differing views are a product of modernism and the enlightenment. The enlightenment brought about the supremacy of reason over the terrible dark ages where clueless men sought faith for answers.

Yet, as men began growing in their understanding of the world, rational thought brought answers to questions they used to take to God (or some mythological God/idol). In understanding the world afresh, a growing disdain for religion arose.

And as freedom grew and the standard of living increased there were fewer real reasons to seek relational understanding of God. The Catholic Church had provided many needs and answers which were now being questioned and usurped by rational and entrepreneurial men.

In this societal transformation, even the Christian church slowly grew modern in their theology and preaching. It's only been in the last few hundred years the church preached on a *personal* salvation as a one time event not the

adventure and fellowship with God and the Church. And understanding God in the modern world of scientific perceptions and inventions became difficult.

Yet, the lay Christians were still asking “Does God speak anymore?”

And first they are given the Church dogma. Then, after Gutenberg’s printing press, they received a Bible for answers. God has spoken and this is His Word. This brought the foundation for biblical belief into ordinary people’s hands.

This still created a void for new ideas. Yet the church, with tradition, was indoctrinating men and squelching new voices crying for change. They taught: 1. to believe in God and 2. be a good person. Do that and you will live a good life? If troubles come, there is sin in your life.

But the calling into relationship with God was lost.

And the reaction of strong believers became the reformation.

Then theology blossomed out of the new cultural questions. And Church put into place programs for the new cultural answers and developed step-by-step easy to follow religion where actual works and faith need not have a large part of one’s life. Still, the relation with God was lost because it cannot be a program.

Opposed to this are the mystics who just want to love and serve God.

Some did it in culturally appropriate ways, Thomas a-Kempis, Brother Lawrence or Antoine Arnauld. But others, especially females, broke the molds of conformity to culture and began great ministries like St. Francis of Assisi and Marie of the Incarnation. Yet a mystic’s works were often condemned as heretical (sometimes for good reason) because they did not conform to appropriate modern cultural or doctrinal standards.

The third camp would be the emerging post-modern mystic (I hate to call it that because it's really pre-modern) is a good combination of the two. Scripture is held as the foundation and authority. If a spiritual urge, nudge or voice tells you to do something contrary to Scripture, you have certainty it is not from God.

And yet, still reading the Bible, it also instigates a conversational intimacy with God that previous modern dogma rarely allowed. Still there were those few who were grounded in Scripture and became mystic-relational believers. But only in the last few decades has this post-modern thrust been taught especially in blockbusters like *Experiencing God* and *the Sacred Romance*.

And up to this point, my experience with God had been entirely mystical. Exception for my conversion, where I had learned God exists and the Bible reveals truth, I had not learned much in my mystical experiences. God had guided me in my journey, but He had not revealed much of Himself. I was still in a lot of confusion as to "being Christian."

## **North Roseburg Evangelical-Free Church**

My visit to North Roseburg Evangelical-Free church the next Sunday changed all that.

Lori brought me to the church and was my guide. The people there had smiles on their faces and greeted me warmly and personally. I was a little thrown off by this. This was not my experience with church.

My experience was you have a smiley-faced greeter who's there for show, you grab a seat alone, you stay alone, unless prompted to say "Hi" to a neighbor and then you leave alone.

No involvement, no invasion of personal space. I would say it's much like going to a theater or sporting event. You pay your ticket when they pass the bucket and enjoy the performance. Everyone leaves when the show is over.

We again sat in pews but I was not alone. I didn't feel like I needed to hide. There were some couples around me who introduced themselves and were genuinely interested in meeting me.

People interested in me were a rarity in my life. Yes, there were a handful of girls interested, my parents, and a small number of buddies. Yes, even some Amway reps were interested in me but typically because they had a vested interest in my success. And having a motive is not a bad thing, but a pure motive to know me was odd. Strangers with a heart to reach out and get to know me for who I am was something I never encountered.

Yet, I would have to say that talent was not a factor in picking the church's worship leader. His singing voice left much to be desired.

I felt at home.

Yet, the thing that truly drew me was not that the singing was on key or melodiously pleasing, but that men were putting their whole hearts into worshiping God. I found something inside me that was drawn to it. Like a thirst I had never known. And my heart sang with vigor.

I was partway between “what the heck is going on with me” and “this is the coolest thing ever.”

Afterwards I met many more people. One lady adopted me as my Oregon ‘mom’. Another desired to be called my ‘Aunt’ Mona. And both of these ladies were wonderful encouragers to my slow growing faith. And a number of the men later invested in me and helped me develop.

Something inside my soul knew I had found a real home. Here I was welcome. I was a part of something. I could be myself. I did not have to hide. And I was hungry for what they had.

I began attending that church every Sunday. It was like never having tasted sweets and they were serving ice cream. I couldn’t possibly imagine sleeping in on Sunday anymore. The sermons were still over my head but I began learning the Christianese language... the language of the Bible.

There are many languages. Some are technical, vocational, slang, regional or national. When I am speaking with an engineer, I can only understand so much before the nature of their words bar my understanding.

The same goes with astrology, computer techies, law, investments and Christianity. Once you understand the meaning behind the words they use – you can begin to fully appreciate and grow deeper in the depths of the specialty.

So, I began learning the language of the Bible.

That Christmas Lori bought me my first Bible. She bought one in Old King James Version and I had the toughest time understanding old English. It was

tough enough figuring out some of the illustrations and veiled parables without having to translate the English.

I remember one of the first things I was going to do was read the Bible cover to cover. I got about five chapters of genealogies in me and needed to throw up.

I later bought a new Bible for myself in American Standard Version. It was supposed to be in modern English and also have a very close word for word translation from the Greek and Hebrew languages of the Bible. I learned that Bibles also come, not by translating word for word, but by translating the meaning of a passage or many passages into modern English.

I began being mentored by the pastor of the church every Tuesday. The first visit he asked me if I had accepted Jesus, been washed by the blood and received the Holy Spirit in my heart as a sign of the covenant.

Now, I had no clue what he was talking about. But I accepted it as, “oh, that’s what happened to me...” and nodded my head.

So we went through a workbook on the assurance of salvation. It was good for me to pull some passages out and find their meaning. I began understanding the value of theology as I read. Then we’d get together and go through some of the questions and he’d give me a fuller answer.

Then we began going through an “end times” workbook. It was great to get a feel for some of the big prophetic themes of the Bible and the illustrations of an evil dragon, Satan, and the ten virgins kept me interested.

**What do  
you want  
out of life?**

And the Pastor, seeing my hunger for the biblical understanding said he could see me going to Bible College and becoming a Pastor. I scoffed at that one. Ha. No way, I'm going to college. No way, I want to lead people, much less Christians.

And then he asked me an interesting question. "Scott, what do you want out of life?"

I didn't much know what to say about that. "All I really want is a house by a river." And that was truth. "I know that may sound a little shallow or something, but I can't think of anything else."

He nodded his head at the shallow part but was being patient with me. I wish I could say he gave me some great vision or wisdom at that moment but the conversation steered to the next question.

## **Sex, the Bible and the Lie**

Later I was visiting my new Oregon mom's house. She was very kind and Lori was living at her home. I could tell that she and Lori were in deep conversation when I arrived.

She came right at me with, "Scott, have you ever thought about becoming a secondary virgin?" There was no "Hi" or "How was your day?" She went straight for my balls.

Now, I was definitely not mister popular with the girls and had a tough time getting dates much less anything more. So when I am being asked about

virginity... well, I wasn't sure I wanted to give that up even if there wasn't much, if any, business going on.

"Uh, if you guys were having a conversation about this stuff, I can come back another time." She shook her head. "No, really, I sure don't want to intrude on your chat."

"No, this is about you. God doesn't want people having sex outside of marriage. And if we have had sex, then we can always pray and say we knew it was wrong and become, at least spiritually, a virgin again."

I looked at Lori who was watching my reaction yet looked away at that moment. I had a sneaking feeling she had set me up.

"Okay, I'll listen."

She told me of a guy named Paul, who wrote a bunch of letters in the Bible and he wanted Christians to be pure, holy and not having sex until they were married. He even said it would be best if we all remained pure and never even married for the Gospel's sake.

I was thinking that Paul, being around 2000 years ago, was a little out of touch with today's culture. But that was just the point. She wanted to let me know that whatever the culture did, things were different for Christians. We were not to conform to our culture but to conform to Christ.

Jesus never slept around. He had all the male drive and urges, but He was focused on God's heart. He was focused on heaven's kingdom and His particular mission didn't allow family. Taken to the extreme, everything besides mission was diversion.

I remained non-committal and unconvinced. Then I thought I had the perfect solution to getting out of this conversation. I didn't know this was really a biblical topic, there was nothing in the assurance of salvation or end times prophecy about abstinence.

"I'll talk to the pastor. I want to see what he has to say about it." I was thinking I was trumping her objections to my lifestyle. HA.

She simply smiled and nodded her head gravely. "Okay, I think that would be a good thing for you to do."

Pastor Dan was a little surprised. At our next meeting I was outlining how I had been ambushed into a conversation about giving up sex.

"What was that all about?" I concluded.

"Well, I assure you she had your best interests at heart. Let's open our Bibles and see what God has to say about it." So he traced a number of books and a number of passages (many in Paul's writings) about doing what God wants, not necessarily what we want. And yes, sex was illustrated in a number of them.

I left the office uncommitted again. I didn't like this giving up acting out of my own desires. Okay, so there were flashing neon signs when I had had sex. Did that mean God was telling me He had a different plan for me?

Were my desires really so bad? I thought He had made me this way. The Bible said I was a little off the mark. But it all came down to control. I wanted full control of my life – to do as I pleased. Yet, only some of my control was to please God.

But that isn't good enough for Him. It is like life is an adventure story. There is warfare, battle, beauty, romance, pursuit, but I am not the main character of the story... God is.

God had called me into His adventure. But He's going to use me for purposes He created me for. All I have to do is follow Him. Yeah, I'm not great with following orders and that is why training is my first assignment.

I can't picture someone off the street becoming a Special Forces expert eating potato chips and wearing loud clothes. No, there is a lot we need to learn before we understand the adventure we are in. We need to understand our armor, sword, enemies, victory conditions and what we are fighting for.

Did that mean God was telling me He had a different plan for me? A plan better than the one I had for myself? Absolutely.

And He understands that I get lonely and I have a need for intimacy and feeling special. He made a place for it called marriage. He just didn't want me to ruin something special by making sex as ordinary as combing my hair, by the time I was married. Too many people are tarnishing their mind with porn or casual sex that they will have little special to bring to a committed relationship.

It took me two more days and after a quiet time I finally told God I would give up sex. I had very little conviction in this area... and that is probably why I broke it three more times before I finally got married. Still I did want to please God.

I have a feeling there were millions of areas in my character God wanted to work on... I wasn't able to handle them all. He was focused on me growing

and knowing who He was. I firmly believe true obedience flows from knowing and relating with God. Changing behavior because of rules is just religion.

Unfortunately, I think I came under both areas at the same time. I learned about God but religious disciplines were what got me there. Still, I am thankful someone talked to me about my behavior before judging my character.

I think in this permissive society, where sex is common, even in youth Sunday school groups, we need to focus on the heart of God. God does not desire us trashing our lives. And we are ruining deep and sacred places inside ourselves when we are cavalier about things like sex.

**the answer is  
to find out who  
God really is.**

One passage: Ephesians **4:20** after talking about following our own desires without restraint says: *You did not learn Christ in this way.* We will not learn more about God or Jesus Christ by doing whatever we want. Yet, if we do what Christ wants, we will be blessed by life abundant.

And that goes for sex, drugs, cheating on a test, lying, embezzling money, identity theft, and many other vices. The Bible says we do such things because we are ignorant of who God is. And the answer is to find out who God really is – even if we don't like it sometimes.

Soon after that lesson, and still very young as a Christian, the pastor asked me to meet with the youth pastor and begin teaching junior high Sunday school lessons. I was ignorant, unprepared and naive. But I rose to the challenge and fully enjoyed the next four years of my life in service to those kids.

## **Growing Roots and Evolution again.**

For a Christian, I lived a somewhat wild life, never bothering about crossing over some line of religious Christian construct, but I always maintained a personal zeal for the Lord. Maybe I would have been a better person never confronting my temptations, or maybe I wouldn't be strong at all. I can't give an assurance on the "what if's" of life, but my choices did bring me the life I live today, and I will always carry the consequences of some wild actions.

I remember being so stirred reading about the biblical mandate of having an answer for our faith. I was ignorant of so much. I was the guy who laughed at Christians and now I was one. I had to flesh out a whole lifetime of relearning what life and the world meant with a God in it. I began purchasing theology videos, I began going to four to five Bible studies a week and my growth in the Lord was always prime in my life.

And there were so many voids crying out. One of them was when a Bible study leader mentioned that the earth was only six thousand years old. I just lost all respect for him. It's billions and billions of years old. What was he thinking?

But he challenged me. I found some books and videos and researched an amazing revelation. I had been seriously lied to. There is almost no evidence that evolution is true. Every science easily concludes that the earth is only a few thousand years old. The evidence of intelligent design is all over the place. But the science teachers and professors are not convinced of this. And worse the American government supports the old evolved earth lie.

Evolution has become a religion. And the evolutionary precepts are all lies. A bishop of biology or pastor of physics, even deacons of geology and chemistry are all spreading their religious tenants upon our unsuspecting youth. All without a real shred of proof, only the hope (faith) of proof to come.

Without government support, evolution would die within a few years. One of my goals is to make evolution a laughing stock of society by 2020. “Ha, can you believe we once thought that way? Hahahaha.”

I am infuriated that our society has so lied to me from my birth on, filled me with so many false claims and stories... that I understood the implications of the lies to mean I was worth nothing and would gladly kill people if they inconvenienced me. I was set upon chaos and mayhem. Oh, bitter is the swill I drank that made my head dark and brought no joy to my life.

And the fact that our culture wants to keep these lies is an utter heartache to me.

And how delightful to shrug off that darkness and see clearly with my own eyes. There is such beauty... such spiritual calling, longing and love to share. I can give out of abundance, not because I have a selfish motive or ulterior motive.

I am free. And I want to free others.

And during this time my friend Troy showed up for a break. We hiked down the North Umpqua a little ways and reminisced about living off the land. I still had the tug for that adventure, though it had lessened.

And while we were climbing rocks I remember he was wrestling with some things about God's mercy and grace. I got to share a full explanation and carve away some of the struggles he still maintained.

I was astounded at the change in our relationships with God. I was only a Christian for a year or two and the Lord had brought me to a place where I was growing steadily in His word. Yet, Troy was still just getting snippets here and there, never fully established and founded in his faith.

And he probably didn't see much need for church as he didn't get saved through or by one. His relationship was wholly mystical. And there is a place for that, if all the right foundations are set, but he was missing a large part of what the Gospel was here to establish. And he will never find his place in the larger story without the company of fellow warriors for Christ.

## **Writing for Christ and Defining Who I am**

I was a Christian for a while and getting used to the constant input and ministry. I had begun a cleaning company and cleaned-up the restaurant I used to work at as well as a couple ranger stations. This left me with all kinds of time that I put to good use in study.

By this time I had purchased a mobile home in a park. The beauty of it was I had one of only two spaces that were right on a river. So, God had rewarded me by giving me my shallow dream, a home on the river. I had water rafting from my deck and slept with the beautiful sound of running water.

But something was happening I didn't understand. I was feeding myself all this new knowledge, but I had no platform to utilize it. Initially, as I began teaching for the first time I would learn five or six new things that week, and the kids would ask me questions that I had just learned a day or two ago.

Coincidence? I doubt it.

But after a few years of learning, I was studying things over their heads. My thirst for knowledge enabled me to devour almost anything around me. And I had no outlet to express what I was learning.

One Sunday I visited my girlfriend's church. I didn't often have a Sunday off, but somehow it happened. We went to their college-age group before the service. I had to laugh as both the teacher and the head pastor looked like typical mob bosses. Dress, manners, haircuts... it all screamed mafia.

So this pseudo-mob boss was lecturing our group about having a ministry. "Listen, it may seem unimportant to you, but every ministry has a place. There is a lady who has a chocolate-chip cookie ministry. Every new visitor who places their information in the offering plate gets a visit the next week by the chocolate-chip cookie lady. Two-dozen cookies have a tremendous impact on favorably disposing someone to their church.

"Don't think small ministries are inconsequential. She was able to lead some people to the Lord over cookies."

And I couldn't help but think of this wise-guy coming to my door with cookies. "So, you gonna come back to my church or do I have to send Mario over to convince you some more...."

Yet, somewhere in the middle of this mob boss telling me about the chocolate-chip cookie ministry God raised an epiphany. I needed to write a Christian newsletter.

I would type up a double-sided single-spaced page about some new topic I was learning and send it out to family and friends. Here I would be teaching, writing and witnessing all in one endeavor. It was the perfect ministry for me.

I later had a Bible study leader laugh at me. “That could get expensive.”

“Well, it’s good for me to write down what I’m learning and \$20 a month in stamps is fine. What if someone finds a relationship with the Lord? Wouldn’t that would be worth every penny.”

**I needed to have a purpose statement.**

And someone did.

And later while listening to a Zig Ziglar tape, he explained I needed to have a purpose statement. This would help me decide what do with my life. If an opportunity came around, I would just hold it against my purpose statement. If they didn’t correlate, then I wasn’t to pursue the opportunity. Zig presented it as a time saver, but it sustained me in many dry periods seeking guidance from the Lord.

My purpose statement reads: *I am to learn and grow and out of my excess to write and teach.*

I was later told to have a Scripture passage that framed my life. I didn’t have a clue what to use, so I prayed, opened my Bible and stuck my finger on a

passage. This is probably not the best way to find your life passage, but it worked for me.

This became my life's verse: *the word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart that is the word of faith.* Rom 10:8. I was surprised and disenchanted at first. Later I saw the implications, and I was delighted. And as randomly chosen that verse was it spoke to me many times. I write and teach best when dealing with issues of faith.

Yet, I could have ended up with Mark 14:50 *They all fled (from Jesus).*

And because I am describing the details I have been given by God, He has also given me a new name. It began while listening to an author I love: John Eldredge. He said you need to ask God to tell you how much He loves you.

From there ask God what your new spiritual name is. This is the special name He has reserved for you – like Gideon became Mighty Warrior, Abram becomes Abraham, Jacob becomes Israel.

Eldredge said God told him William Wallace and William Wilberforce. Both men were fighting for freedom. Eldredge is fighting to free the hearts of men. God has shown him his calling.

So I was in bed one morning and I called out to the Lord, "Give me a name." And in a fit of unbelief, I asked that it be something I could embrace and not be ashamed of.

And in my head, God sent me an email. Weird, I never had that before. I had purchased a book, but I couldn't read the title. I didn't know how much I paid. I don't even know who I bought it from. All I knew was the author.

William Shakespeare.

I was astonished. I wanted to be the dangerous warrior.

But as I thought about it... I knew Shakespeare encapsulated everything I held dear. He was a writer and teacher. He used the popular media of the day – the play which today would be film or Internet. He was a poet and storyteller and knew his craft well. And most of all, he captured the major human themes of life and dealt with them.

I don't know what kind of writing I'll do in the future, but I hope to have a fraction of the impact of Shakespeare. And like my verse and mission statement, I know my new name will help me discern Christ's place for me in this world.

## **Japan, Beauty and Answers**

I was sitting on my deck that I called a dock. I was taking in the water swirling around rocks and the shore. I remember having lost a few janitorial contracts and was living off about \$830 a month.

I was stewing over a lost opportunity. I was to have gone on a mission trip to Japan, but my check for services rendered to the Government was to come in two weeks late. Not only was I going to miss the mission trip, but I was going to have to still pay the \$1000 because tickets and arrangements had already been paid for in my place. My mood was in a bad place and I was struggling with God's goodness.

I had grown up in Southern California and one of my first jobs was working as a busboy at Disneyland. I had a great time working there, but by the nature of

my schedule I had to drive through rush hour traffic both to and from work everyday. I would drive at five miles per hour, exhaust coming in through the windows, horns blaring, frustrated and turning stoic.

That was man's creation.

Here I was sitting in my home by a river, quiet, serene, bird songs and left to ponder God's goodness. And I was sitting in God's living room.

God's creation is beautiful. It moves one to wonder and ponder deep things in life. God is an artist and everything he makes is perfect in beauty. In fact, I would say that God wants to dazzle us.

And as I realized this, I couldn't doubt God's goodness because His creation proclaimed beauty. Everything He does is beautiful. And the only thing that doesn't scream praise to God's goodness all the time is man... one of God's most complex and beautiful creations.

**I was sitting  
in God's  
living room.**

Man's fall from grace was a hideous thing. We were meant to delight in life itself at all times. Everything would please us, our parents would be attentive and train us, there would be no pain in going to work, and we would never be treated harshly. And we would be wholly grateful for everything done for us, even overflowing with love.

But that is far from the reality we see today. Our world has fallen from the wonder of original creation. There is murder, theft and deceit commonplace in our cities. Things are so far from the beauty intended - our hearts are aching and longing for restoration.

But most hideous of all, we have gotten used to it.

We shrug off our longings as wishful thinking and utopian dreams. We see the murder rates and drug abuse and lock our doors and hearts from that world. We create for ourselves our own little world where we can have Christ in name and be “safe for the whole family.”

But that is not the gospel.

The gospel is adventure, risk and love incarnated in our lives. There is nothing dull about the Gospel. Only academia makes it so. And there is too much academia in our churches.

Don't think of the Gospel as Jesus was born, he taught good things and died on a cross. Yuck!

Here is the Gospel in real terms: A great Sign appeared in Heaven: a Woman dressed all in sunlight, standing on the moon, and crowned with Twelve Stars. She was giving birth to a Child and cried out in the pain of childbirth. And then another sign alongside the first: a huge and fiery Dragon! It had seven heads and ten horns, a crown on each of the seven heads. With one flick of its tail it knocked a third of the Stars (angels) from the sky and dumped them on earth. The Dragon crouched before the Woman in childbirth, poised to eat up the Child when it came. The Woman gave birth to a Son who will shepherd all nations with an iron rod. Her Son was seized and placed safely before God on His Throne. The Woman herself escaped to the desert to a place of safety prepared by God, all comforts provided her for one thousand two hundred and

sixty days. War broke out in Heaven. Michael and his Angels fought the Dragon. The Dragon and his Angels (demons) fought back.... Revelation 12: 1-7

There is war all around us and many are the captives who don't even understand what's going on. In fact, many of God's chosen live their life as if there wasn't anything supernatural in life. The Dragon is devouring us.

Let's say a drug house pops up in a neighborhood. The families begin to keep their children off the streets and eventually in the house. Their work is to call the police and exile the problem from their territory. But the police are handicapped. This behavior allows the darkness to spread until a neighborhood is overrun. There is nothing but darkness.

What if the neighborhood sought the Lord and banded together. They developed relationships with the drug dealers, asked them to lay down their drugs. They then told the depraved consumers about Jesus and the love he has for them. What if they explained the difference between Hell and abundant life? How about showing another healthier path? Help them overcome their addiction.

But first people following Christ would have to embrace another path. God's path. And then they would have to live by faith in what God has said. They could not have selfish pride or ego to live like this. They would have to love both their enemies and neighbors enough to risk their life to care for another's spiritual needs. It's dangerous work. What an adventure He calls us to.

Yes, I wanted to go on a mission trip and serve God. But I was very tightly bound in my own little world. I wasn't reaching out of my comfort zone, I didn't have a heart for the lost and I had my own selfish reasons to go to Japan.

For these reasons alone I could see God holding me back from his service. But I am sure there was more. It could have been spiritual warfare. It could have been God knew something terrible would have happened to me and protected me. Maybe I would have fallen in love with the wrong woman.

I don't know the myriad of possible reasons. I do know that I was hurt that I didn't get to go and that brought about a wound in my heart that wouldn't let me trust God so easily. And I doubted His goodness because my expectations were not met.

How fallen from clarity we are.

How amazing God's love is that He embraces us even when we are disloyal to everything He stands for. How amazing God's beauty is that He endures to answer us of His love and goodness. How amazing.

## **Bible College**

I encountered so many learning events, encounters with God, miracles, good friends and mini-adventures during my season in Roseburg I often desire to return. But I am not the same man I was then and neither are my friends. I can never return to such a magical season.

I move on to more mystery in my journey with the Lord. He never failed to surprise with abundant life. He always had more to explore. More to become.

My four to five Bible studies a week ceased to quench my thirst for knowledge of God. My learning was growing plentiful and the sucking voids of

life created by my nihilist thinking were being replaced. I began seeking something a little more formal.

I started searching for a good Bible college. By this I mean I wanted to take a semester in Romans, Gospels, 1-2 Kings and the Minor Prophets. I wanted a scholar to teach verse by verse the deep things of Scripture.

But a college like this is pretty rare. I found one back in Southern California but they had just been incorporated into a larger liberal arts college. Many churches do a similar study each week, but not in so rigorous a fashion and it would take many years to finish the whole Bible.

I was in no hurry to move on in life as I had little ambition beyond what I was already doing. And it was at this time that my youth pastor friend asked me.

“Scott, I know you are taking a three day holiday up the Oregon Coast, why don’t you drop in at my Alma Mater, Multnomah Bible College (MBC hereafter). If you talk to them they can show you what they have to offer.”

So, I agreed to consider it and took off on my journey.

I had a great time, slept on the beach, hiked along the various trails I came upon, read a book in the sun. It was one of those trips I took every now and then to restore the soul and gain perspective in life.

It was Monday night about midnight. I was tired and smelly and ended up driving onto the MBC campus. I walked the campus asking myself if I could imagine myself there. I didn’t meet any people. The air was crisp. Someone was playing hymns on a piano in a practice room and the notes floated in the air.

There was something thrilling and inspiring walking across the grass and seeing the buildings rise up. These walls were designed for learning. And not just any learning, but to be bastions for biblical training... raising up men in God's word. I was hooked.

So, I didn't know where to park or sleep so, I ended up driving down the 84 Freeway to Multnomah Falls. I crashed in the parking area there and awoke to elegant beauty. There is nothing like being awakened within nature... especially running water. And Multnomah Falls has a certain class that makes her unique.

But I was on mission. I cracked a Mt. Dew and drove down the Columbia Gorge to MBC.

I talked to an admissions rep and he set me up to attend two classes and then gave me a free pass for lunch. The first class was a theology class where they spent an hour dissecting the minute details of three words in a verse and the possible outcomes and implications they created.

I thought it was a theology nerd factory and I loved it.

Then I got into a History and Poetry survey class. They were doing a review for a test. I looked at the study guide questions and knew almost two-thirds of them from my previous study. I figured these classes would be cake.

Then I went to lunch. It was cafeteria-style buffet. I grabbed a big lunch and sat at one of the closest tables – it was empty. But, it turns out that the class president sat down opposite from me with his crew and a cute girl sat down next to me.

“Hi, I’m Adele. I was behind you in line. Are you new?”

We chatted. I won’t say anymore remarks about the beauty of Eve because this woman later became my wife.

And living here among young men and women who desired to make a difference in their lives was soon to become my life. Yes, I grew to become an academic Christian and slowly return to my mystic roots with wondrous knowledge. In this book, I’ve only briefly showed the “how to walk with God” because that was not this books purpose. Still, there is a lot more.

## **Extraordinary Life**

I began this book sharing with you that my life is an extraordinary one. I will not say that I have gotten wealthy or famous as my sign of success. Such superficial things come and go like the wind. And when they come, please don’t base your life upon them.

But one of the amazing things about my life is I have been blessed with a wondrous high-maintenance wife who will not let me get away with much. I love her with every breath I take and have learned that our relationship will always be growing deeper in love, understanding and trust. We have a dynamic relationship and I couldn’t see myself living without her.

We have one of the most important commodities on the planet and that is time. My wife and I get together, share our lives and sharpen each other on our journey. We have two children together which I have the privilege to raise, teach

and mentor... well mostly play with... and pour my life's experiences into. I need every ounce of wisdom for these two.

And my walk with the Lord has been blossoming in miraculous ways. He has been calling me to write for many years now, but lately, expressing to me personally my direction. I have also been enjoying a number of studies and ministries with my church family.

I am much fulfilled and I think that alone qualifies me as extraordinary. But add to it that I know who the Lord has created me to be and my mission is defined, I am walking in a clarity many have not yet found or ever will.

Still, I walk in the mystery of God's will, following the talents and gifts he's shown and being grateful for the many blessings my life has taken on. I may write more on my journey, or other subjects, but I hope you have been blessed with the struggles that have made me who I am. I hope you have received insight into your own struggles whether they are philosophical, relational, functional, financial or....

## Conclusion

We all have bought into lies. Everyone is born into bondage. And many of us have acted out through the evil in our hearts and harmed other people. I know the evil I desired to commit and in many actions I did hurt others.

But right now we stand before God. Don't wait until the judgment seat to look for Him. Whatever objections you have placed before yourself and God now is the time to really analyze the cost

**it takes man  
seriously.**

of not finding the true life He offers. And know that the cost of not reconciling with the Father and Jesus is an eternity in Hell.

The one thing that makes Christianity different from all the other religions is the atonement. Christianity is not about fellowship, morality or liturgy. These are just good things added upon the blessing.

Christianity addresses the problem of guilt and the problem of a dead heart. It takes these issues seriously because it takes man seriously. And most importantly, Christianity gives us a savior, a redeemer and a healer in the person of Yeshua (Jesus) the Messiah.

And within the embrace of God, He begins the process of healing our wounded hearts and showing us what life is all about. People will see His handiwork in our lives because they will look at us and begin to see the image and the character of God forming within us.

But Christianity is hardly about simply receiving a better life. There are wolves, dragons, lies and great evil out to destroy good men. *Out to destroy your life.* We need warriors for Christ. We need to recapture the gospel for this new generation. We are required to mentor and heal wounded people (and children) with a revolution of intimacy and godliness.

The gospel story of forgiveness is simple yet incomplete. Forgiveness is just the doorway into a rich life of restoration, adventure and great beauty. You will find there is power, supernatural guidance, clarity, warfare and great joy.

Your presence is desired. How will you help?

## Appendix 1 The Sown Seed

There is a story I would like to go through to illustrate where many people in this country are at in their relationship with the Lord. It is the parable of the sower and the seed:

Behold, the sower went out to sow; and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up. And others fell upon the rocky places, where they did not have much soil, and immediately, they sprang up because they had no depth of soil. But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out. And others fell on the good soil, and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.

Now, I heard someone throw an odd twist to this story.

They said that these were the few seeds that fell from the wagon. But most of the seeds stayed with the sower and kept right on going on their way to heaven.

I don't think they realized the point of sowing seeds is to get them in the soil to do what they were meant to do: grow. The sower expects a crop.

This is not a story about how everyone gets saved and we all get to go to heaven. This is a story told by a frustrated God trying to communicate that there are eternal consequences to our actions here on earth.

He's trying to communicate that there is a battlefield going on – and the war is over our hearts. We fight not for just a simple miraculous event like the

salvation of our souls... but we must brawl, scrape and persevere to keep the life that we were meant to enjoy. Christ gives the life, but He will never give it to the couch potato with a fast food prayer life. The life Christ offers has to be seized.

And we hardly understand that we must utilize heavenly weapons to fight this battle. The teachings on spiritual warfare are few and often confusing. And there are too few mentors who have fought this particular good fight to teach it to us.

**Some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up.**

And so there are many who hear the word of God but the birds (Satan) steal the word of God from their heart. I witnessed this in my story when I heard the whispers of God and it impacted my soul. But moments later I am in full rebellion to what I just heard. *I bowled a turkey or I'll wait on Christianity.*

The soil or heart of the natural man is like stone. There is little natural inclination to receive a spiritual seed from spiritual authority much less nurture it. And there are many souls who are new age spiritual but the seeds of the Lord are not welcome there, except on a preferential general basis if it fits their agenda. They like light-hearted spirituality with no conditions or consequences.

These people would need to look at the Law of Moses. The Ten Commandments is the best place to take them. Don't look at the general love God – love Jesus – love neighbor. This leads to battling over the meaning of love.

The Commandments are where God lays out some potent heart issues. They have no power to make someone holy or righteous. Their power is to condemn the sinful heart. Every person living today is condemned by this law.

And when someone knows they are not right, they either feel the need to make it right or give up. Some people are people pleasers, others are peacemakers, and others don't want to owe anybody anything. In each case, there is but one path to getting things right. A relationship with Jesus.

But Satan stands in the way.

Yet, everyone has access to the most powerful heavenly weapon in the world: prayer. Call out to Jesus in a time of trouble and things will happen.

**Some seeds fell into the rocky soil and when they grew up, they were scorched by the sun.** It is funny because these seeds are life, and they were created for a huge harvest. But this soil or heart is not eager for nurturing.

There is something inside men and women wanting to be their own master. It is called control. Trust has not been developed between themselves and God so there will not be relinquishing of that control. They also desire to keep the esteem of their fellows. They are people pleasing and desire to avoid any conflict that the word of God may bring.

I would imagine there are many good Christians in this category. They have gotten to know God and value Him highly. But they will determine how much influence and sway the Lord will have on their life. They will determine how much to give, how much time goes to ministries and when devotion time is appropriate. But though they may desire God strongly, they don't cultivate a

heart yearning for Him. They are also apt to sacrifice Him when ill-treated much like Peter did in his testing.

And God may not speak often into their life as they usually don't spend the time seeking with a whole heart. In fact, there is rarely a time when these people do anything with a whole heart. Their craving for control placed a noose around their desire. They are people in the performance of good works yet not necessarily from faithful hearts.

The church needs good works... but good works can be like filthy rags. Unless they are from a heart God flows through they will bear little fruit. The fruit of the spirit is what the world desires and which shows light (guidance) and salt (flavor) to an unbelieving world.

I heard the illustration of us becoming a clear prism. God cleans us and when His light shines through us, myriads of beautiful colors shine out upon the world around us. The shallow stone people are the ones who paint the colors upon their own prism to show a copy of the beauty of God rather than working on cleaning the heart with God and having His light shine. They are camouflage Christians.

For these people, they are not necessarily like Pharisees, because they do value what Christians desire, they just don't follow through on the disciplines. And as the Pharisees were twisted inside, distorting the Gospel, these believers value the church traditions and liturgy to the point of splitting the church with their misplaced zeal.

I would take these people to Joshua's call to Israel. Here is a man who lead a band of young nomads in conquest of the promised land. He has experienced first hand the life God had for Him.

He calls out, "*As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.*"

The people he cries out to are people who have been with Joshua, they have served him, supported him and fought with him. Yet, they were not people of the Lord, they were followers of Joshua. They did not seek after the Lord to carry on Joshua's vision.

They did not know the Lord as God would desire. They watched the works of God but were never required to perform the faithful acts of God's calling. Thus these people begat the generation within the book of Judges who did not know God and did whatever was right in their own eyes.

What kind of person do you want to be? Read through Joshua's sermon.

**And some seeds fell among the thorns and the thorns choked them out.**

These are the myriads of people who grew up in a church setting or with Christian parents but though God was there, he was little more than a project.

Sometimes our youth see doing the heavenly works as similar to school assignments. They do as they are told and don't understand the significance of having a heart relationship. Charity, love and generosity are just tasks to perform. And these tasks are against their nature and what's socially cool.

So suddenly there is a tension between finding their life, goals, dreams, talents and awareness with the Sunday school duties. They take on responsibilities while growing up and when something has to grow, something

has to lessen. So a job, or college or family takes precedence over goodie-goodie errands. “After all, I’ve been there done that with the church thing.”

And when the fruit of the spirit is not from an outpouring of the soul but a duty that is exactly what should happen. But when they find hardships, someone close dies, or other philosophical dilemma’s appear, they have no grounding with just duties and obedience. They are left empty. Choked out. And it is easy to leave the *churchanity* they held behind.

That is why so many high school church kids never make it back to church. Because they played along with Christian church pipeline and never had to encounter God. They just followed the program and thought they were doing something pleasing before God. And when they realize that programs are just empty religion and there is nothing there to fill the soul, they are choked out.

I have met many people who are proud of their Catholic or evangelical church upbringing but have *moved on* with their life. They still call themselves Christians but their lives have nothing to do with God or church. They believe their youth’s activities have merited themselves to heaven. And now all they do is work on their responsibilities and enjoy what life they have.

And to this group I would suggest the drama of the children of Israel’s wilderness wanderings. See, God was with the people. He provided for them, He gave them meaningful work, He showed them the way to go. He led them personally.

And as they were tested, to see how well they trusted Him, they always failed. There was always some excuse to explain their unbelief. Finally, it came

to a place called Kadesh Barnea. Here God called them to cross into the Promise Land and take the milk and honey for themselves.

But the people did not learn God's ways. They clung to the fact that they were children of Abraham to replace becoming children of God. They hardened their hearts. They tested God, thinking they were brought out of Egypt by myriads of miracles to be left to die. Thinking God would abandon them at the first hint of trouble.

And like the seeds by thorns, the world was more important and eventually God left them to their own devices and refused to work in their lives until they were dead. The book of Hebrews explains their failure to mature.

And others fell on the good soil, and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty. Here is where you see the fruit of the spirit as an outflow of their relationship with the Lord. Here is where people find what the Lord has designed them for and they wholeheartedly pursue it with great fruit. And the Lord communicates with them in personal messages all the time and they willingly comply. They have riches and pleasant lives.

And if you believe that load, we're selling sainthood medals for only a few hundred bucks.

No, the good soil doesn't mean a perfect Christian life. No one lives a perfect Christian life. God won't allow it.

No, He will continually test us and drive us to ever more faith in both dry seasons and ever more difficult circumstances. He is always in the process of perfecting us and we all need the work.

The good soil describes the soul that hungers for God in all His ways. They are all deficient and know the Lord in the ways He's revealed Himself. But they are interested in development in areas where God has shown they need work and using the gifts they have been given.

My life is still filled with never-ending struggle and loss of direction. I follow paths that lead to someone other-than-God laughing at me. Sometimes I think I'm the wisest fool in the world. But I keep seeking the Lord, and he shows me a little bit at a time – every now and then.

I am not satisfied with my relationship with the Lord. I know it can be more meaningful and purposeful. But I often find His words in the text I write and am blessed to be used as a tool for him. And I hear Him. He's cleaning up my skeletons, mentoring me in His ways and whispering to me where I am to go.

The whole Scriptures are open for a good soil Christian, just be encouraged that your life and even your works can have a phenomenal impact on this world. Remember that God works on developing the messenger before He involves the message.

You are more important than you know.

## Appendix B

I was indoctrinated by the cult of evolution and became a devoted nihilist. And though my story journeyed through many aspects of life, I do desire to arm my brothers and sisters against the angry zealot devotees like I was. So this appendix is a simple list of questions I want you to ask your science teacher, college professor, angry atheist or otherwise evolutionist.

May the Lord bless you in their use. May their answers help build your foundation of faith. May the Lord use your relationship with them to bring them our Father's greatest blessing. Amen.

## A beginning

1957 the Soviet Union built Sputnik and beat the Americans into space. There was uproar. People discovered that the Russians taught evolution and thus we should too.

In 1959 President Eisenhower asked congress for \$1 billion for the Department of Health Education & Welfare's new American Education Fund for the promotion and publication of the new science of Evolution. \$10,500,000 was given to the National Science Foundation (NSF) for the new 9 part theme curriculum teaching evolution. The NSF provided the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study (BSCS) with the funds to provide the textbooks to public schools. Sources, the Changing Classroom: the role of the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study, Arnold B. Grobman.

**By 1963 prayer was taken out of our schools.**

Beginning in 1963 we saw a rise in premarital sex within every age group.

We also see a tremendous rise in sexually transmitted diseases with girls ages 10-14. And an amazing rise in unwed birth rates. Birth rates had doubled by 1990 while pregnancies had gone up 553%. The differences are being aborted.

SAT scores had plummeted since 1963 and they finally had to dumb down the test to make the scores go back up in 1995.

Teen suicide rate had gone up ever since 1963.

We are no longer in the “Happy Days” era.

## **The Simple Foundation of Science**

A hypothesis is a scientific test under certain circumstances to see if it corresponds to reality. If it fails, then it's discarded. If a hypothesis passes the test then it becomes a theory and is put to the test in all applicable areas of the universe.

If a theory fails *in any related area* of the universe, it is not a universal conclusion. It should then be discarded. If a theory passes as a universal standard, then the theory becomes a Scientific Law.

Evolution is a failed hypothesis being taught as a Scientific Law. Why is this? And why is Global Warming and other political trends, which are based upon evolution being true, being taught as universal laws?

Frog turns to a prince quickly and we know it is a fairy tale. But a frog turns to a prince slowly is modern science. The magic ingredient is billions and billions of years ago. So whenever you read millions and millions or billions and billions of years then you should just read it as Once upon a time....

## Here are the Six Major Elements of Evolution

1. **Cosmic Evolution**
2. **Chemical Evolution**
3. **Stellar Planetary Evolution**
4. **Organic Evolution**
5. **Macro Evolution**
6. **Micro Evolution**

**Cosmic Evolution:** The Origin of time space and matter – Big Bang. Billions of Years or Once Upon a Time

First there was nothing... and then it exploded. **Q:** What exploded?

If something is eternal it must be immutable (can not change). If the universe or some piece of matter was immutable – then the universe would be static – no movement and no dense material could explode. **Q:** Is that what you observe?

**Q:** Is there any order from an explosion? Never, look at Nagasaki and Hiroshima. Explosions create spontaneous degeneration. How could there be

such order in this universe if it came from a Big Bang explosion? **Q:** Could our universe have required an Intelligent Designer?

Explosions decrease order and chaos. To have the order in our universe would violate the 2<sup>nd</sup> Law of Thermodynamics (Entropy). As time advances, the universe becomes less ordered. **Q:** Does order becoming less complex and more chaotic contradict the theory of Evolution?

There is not enough matter in the universe to promote a cyclic cycle of big bang and return. **Q:** What happened prior to the Big Bang?

We only see destruction; we never see innovation in the Cosmos. **Q:** If the cosmos was not created from an explosion, could it come from God?

*In the beginning God created... Genesis 1:1*

**Chemical Evolution:** The Origin of Higher Elements from Hydrogen. Chance or Word of God

Big Bang nucleosynthesis (the creation and formation of elements) states that all higher elements than H-1 (a normal isotope of Hydrogen) were created in less than two minutes after the explosion. **Q:** How do unstable protons and neutrons actually form elements? Why did they not form helium-4 (the normal reaction) if they would create anything at all?

Big Bang nucleosynthesis produced no elements heavier than beryllium. **Q:** How did the more complex elements come into existence? I.e. almost the whole periodical table chart?

**Q:** How in the world can you get Radium from Beryllium?

As we study the phenomenon of the universe we have come to a huge block. Quantum physics has shown us that matter is not what we thought it was. At the foundation of everything, not only are we made of little substance, but there is no order to the movements of the atom. **Q:** If we can't understand the implications of our foundational atomic make-up, how can we say everything evolved with certainty as opposed to being held together by a divine being?

*By his own mighty word, he holds the universe together. Hebrews 1:3b*

**Stellar / Planetary Evolution:** The Origin of Stars and Planets. Order or Chaos

Popular theory is that our solar system was formed from gas and dust. If true, then all the planets should have great similarities. 98% of sun is hydrogen or helium. The planets should have similar compositions. Yet, much less than 1% of the planets contain hydrogen or helium. **Q:** Why do four planets have rings and each planet's composition is completely different in form?

If the solar system evolved, all the planets should rotate the same direction. Yet, Pluto and Venus rotate backwards and Uranus is tipped on its side. All moons should orbit their planets in the same direction yet six planets have moons rotating backwards and three planets have moons which orbit in both directions. **Q:** Why?

**Q:** How did gas planets like Jupiter and Saturn form as gas which normally rapidly dissipated in the vacuum of space?

The earth is at a specific distance from the Sun. If we were 5% closer the oceans would boil off, or 1% distant and the oceans would freeze. Surface

gravity is exactly what it needs to be to sustain life – more gravity would create too much atmospheric pressure, less and you don't have an atmosphere. And there are myriads of more knife-edge details to make life possible on this planet. They call this the Anthropic Principle with so many mathematically miraculous events to take place for man to exist.... **Q:** wouldn't it be easier to accept a Creator God than Creator dirt?

Stars are burning down. Once burnt out – they explode or go nova. Yet, we have never seen the creation of a star. We couldn't possibly imagine how it would happen in a vacuum. **Q:** How are stars formed? **Q:** If they were all formed billions of years ago, why are they still in existence? Like batteries, they only have so much life.

NASA scientists observe that the energy of the Cosmos is running down. It will eventually run out of the ability to do work. They say that at one point in time everything was all wound up. **Q:** What wound it up? **Q:** Where (who) did the energy come from?

If the earth was billions of years old, erosion would have created all land into little beaches if they were above water at all. Erosion destroys much faster than any theory of plate-tectonics has to create land. **Q:** Why do we have land above sea-level?

*Thus says the Lord who created the heavens, He is the God who formed the earth and made it... formed it to be inhabited... Isaiah 45:18*

## **Organic Evolution:** The Origin of Life. Origin of Species or

Kinds

Evolutionary theory states that life began from no life in a process called spontaneous generation. The Scientific Law of Biogenesis states that life can only come from preexisting life. **Q:** Why would we hold to a theory higher than a scientific law? **Q:** That would be like holding to a pogo stick's velocity allowing us to fly and violate gravity, wouldn't it?

The origin of the first animal life out of ordinary complex chemicals has such a large improbability that no evolutionist can overcome it and is one of the greatest barriers to evolution. **Q:** Why are scientists so sure of evolution when there are so many unanswerable questions regarding it?

The chance of the proteins forming to structure just one ameba is  $10^{40000}$ , "and this is enough to bury Darwin and the whole theory of evolution. There was no primeval soup, neither on this planet nor any other, and if the beginnings of life were not random they must therefore have been the product of purposeful intelligence." Mathematician Sir Fredrick Hoyle. **Q:** Who cares about Math?

A few years ago, Dr. Stanley Miller did a test to see if they could make amino acids from simple chemicals. He did in a few weeks. There were three problems 1. He had the wrong starting materials (he used Ammonia and no Oxygen) 2. He used the wrong conditions (he used a spark to create the amino yet the same spark destroys the amino just as quickly) 3. He got the wrong results (he mostly created tar, but also left hand *and* right hand amino acids – exclusively left handed amino acids create life, the presence of one right handed

amino destroys life) **Q:** Can this really be considered a test of chemical creation of life? Even Miller discounts it.

Evolutionists tell us that matter, light and heat can give us life. Yet our entire food industry is based on the fact that this can never happen. In fact, the food industry depends on the fact that evolution isn't real. **Q:** Which is right?

*God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves... a fifth day. Genesis 1: 21, 23*

**Macro Evolution:** Changing from One Kind to Another. Mobile mutant-kind or Static Families

The key problem with understanding macro evolution is the lack of evidence in breeding and fossil records. We never find breeding dogs creating cats. You don't procreate with your spouse and expect to produce a monkey. We don't find it now and the fossils show no evidence of this. **Q:** Without evidence of macro evolution wouldn't we be left with the creation of every species fully intact?

Gene mutation is a common sight in the natural world. But with mutation comes the origin of disease, death, and disaster. There is never new life or greater beings. **Q:** Why don't we see any indication of evolution even in lab tests?

All the mutations around us are only changes in genes that already exist. They never form a new gene or give greater uses/benefits. **Q:** For the exception of comic books, have you ever heard of mutations being good?

It was estimated that for a land creature to become a sea creature would require 50,000 separate and distinct mutations. **Q:** Why if this is true are there not many thousands of in between forms or species? Why do we find only one or two? And wouldn't these two in fact be better classified as wholly distinct creatures?

**Micro Evolution:** Variations within Species or Kinds.

Diversity within a species or kind is the only observed form of evolution and is in conflict with neither evolutionary theory nor Intelligent Design. Pre-modern classification classified things by appearance (i.e. wings, swimmers, tentacles). With the invention of Darwin's theory, they began classification by "common descent."

Wonderfully strange how well the species were ordered into distinct classification with limited variation between kinds. It is most likely to imagine an Intelligent Designer created each family as distinct creatures.

When a debate comes forth, evolutionists typically look at a variation within a kind or species as proof of all 6 forms of evolution. Believers in Intelligent Design are looking at the other 5 imaginative improvable facets of evolution. If a debate is taken to each category separately then large holes will appear in the evolutionist's argument.

I know this personally.

## Some Further Points

We have no idea how energy moves. We know it follows a copper wire, but we don't know if it moves inside the metal or hovers over the surface. We do know that the 2<sup>nd</sup> law of thermodynamics (entropy) causes energy to do less work as time goes on. Eventually, though we may still have energy, the universe will be a dead one.

So when evolutionary scientists keep pushing the time line of billions and billions of years to allow for the possible chance that life created itself out of nothing... they are also creating their downfall as the universe would be a dead one after such a long time.

A young earth / universe (of say 7 – 10 thousand years) would make much more sense. Unfortunately, I can't explain here what all would entail a young earth and all the proofs for such a theory. Yet, evaluating the linkage between observable scientific facts and the theories of evolution and intelligent design, the later has an overwhelmingly greater philosophic value.

But as energy flows... how we do not know... so do our thoughts. If we are strictly material beings, then thoughts should have substance and mass. And thinking too much would cause a headache, but we've no idea how to compose or organize such material impulses. They aren't viable as we know it.

Yet, if you introduce the spiritual world, even for such a thing as a conscious mind, creativity and thought... you are bringing into being a whole new dimension of existence which has laws and functions we know little of. Not only

does spirituality debunk evolution, but it creates more questions without a first-cause Creator.

So, for the existence of non-material thought, you have to make room for love and the host of emotions, angels, demons, spiritual warfare, ethics, philosophy and new undiscovered particulars.

Are you ready for what that may usher in?

A final warning. As science is taking a great beating in academic circles with its stand on evolution, there is little place for them to go but some form of Intelligent Design. That means that the next battle to rage across the social stream shall be the character and nature of this Designer.

Whether it is Goddess, Aliens (Klingons or Wookies), an absent clock-winding omnipotent creator, Spaghetti Man, or the Creator God of the Bible; who we owe our existence to will be the next great debate.

I wish you many blessings in your walk.