

## Why the Bible?

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June 23, 2002

This is based on a true story. The children in a family went to dad to ask him if they could go to a movie. The dad asked the kids which one and what it was about. The kids said it was a really good movie and all their friends were saying how good it was. Mom and dad asked the kids the normal questions like what is it's rating. It was not rated too bad they said. It has very little violence in it, hardly any swearing and very little love scenes, the oldest said. She went on to say the movie is absolutely something to see. What it does have in it is so little and makes the movie better. You know, just to get rating so people want to see it. We hear this stuff all the time in school. We just ignore it. Dad you would like it, too.

Well, dad said he would let them know before the weekend. Dad read about the movie. It was a five star rated movie. All Dad's neighbors and friends had seen it and thought it was really good, just some normal stuff to get rating. Dad then checked the movie out for himself.

Dad noticed all the kids were home the following night. He went to the kitchen and made a pan of brownies. The wonderful smell permeated the house only as brownies can. The kids came running to the kitchen table waiting for them to be done. But just as the first brownie was to be cut, dad starting talking. Dad said he was very proud of these brownies. The ingredients were of the very best quality, measure to perfection, put in to a buttered pan so they wouldn't stick and baked to perfection.

The kids were getting a little impatient to say the least. Why is dad saying this they all were thinking? Then dad said, I added the smallest pinch of something to the brownies before I cooked them. You won't even notice this extra in ingredient. Then, all of a sudden the kids started to pick up on dad's long speech about the brownies and started to wonder what he was talking about. Finally dad said, I added a very small pinch of cow dung.

The kids removed their hands from the brownies as one of them gagged. Dad went on to say to them that even the smallest bad ingredient in otherwise fantastic brownies makes them uneatable or bad. Why would we let you go to a wonderful movie where it is ruined by a small amount of bad ingredient? You all know the movie is not what we would allow to happen in our house.

Dear friends, we have been given the right ingredients for a happy and prosperous life. God has given these ingredients to us in the Bible! Often we ask what does God expect of me? In Deuteronomy 10: 12-13 Moses gives a summary that is simple in form and easy to remember.

1. Fear God (have reverence for him)
2. Live according to his will
3. Love him
4. Worship him with all your heart and soul
5. Obey his commands

In our age of lowering moral standards, we find it nearly impossible to know what to do. We are confused and somewhat submissive to our environments. We seem to be following society instead of taking on the responsibility of becoming God led leaders using our God given talents. After all, Moses pretty much had a straight line to God. Moses said we should obey God's commands.

God has gone to great lengths to provide us with the right ingredients for life. In the Old Testament God repeatedly tries to lead us with detailed directions so that we stay free of sin. Genesis tells us about Adam and Eve and the temptation of the apple. From Adam and Eve through the rest of the Bible we see story after story about people just like us. We see how we defy God, rationalizing our actions. We make life a lot harder for ourselves and sometimes our families may be affected for generations.

Twice, God made stone tablets with the Ten Commandments on them. Even the act of God having to remake the tablets was because of sinning against God's direct word when Moses smashed the first set. See Deuteronomy 9:7-17 and 10: 1-5. The books of Exodus through Deuteronomy are full of rules and laws. Why?

The Bible provides us with a way to understand we have sinned – something we can humanly measure against. God also is trying to protect us *for we cannot forgive ourselves*. Therefore, we need some kind of intervention from our sin.

The Old Testament is story after story of God's love for his chosen people. *We are also those people*. Jethro, Moses father-in-law, is not an Israelite but accepts God through Moses. Jethro said in Exodus 18:11 "I know now that the Lord is greater than all other gods". This means we are also a chosen people and are expected to follow God's laws.

But, no surprise to you and me, we fall way short. Well, anyway, I do. Is there any hope for us? For instance, can we afford to sit in our chairs at a school meeting, at the office, at a government meeting, at church and not do what is right and speak out against things we see and hear that are destroying our children, marriages and families, our country and the world? We are taught in the movies and TV and by examples all over the place that sex, violence, lying and cheating are normal ways of life. The correct life style is taught as anything we want it to be in our schools. Read what God did in Genesis 19 with *Sodom and Gomorrah*. In Latin, sodomy means “sin of Sodom”. We wonder why children are violent, creating great harm to each other as school shootings show. We are to take responsibilities for ourselves and quit blaming each other for our problems. We are to stand up when we feel it is appropriate and make it known we will not allow bad or unhealthy acts to be condoned. God is directing us to use our God given talents that we all have to lead – not follow. Lot insisted in his talks with God that Sodom not be destroyed unless it was proven to have no good men in the town. God would not harm any good men. God sent two angels to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah after there was conclusive proof of the sinfulness. That is what sin does – it destroys!

In our society today, many continue to insist that violence is caused by some social or economic factors. They believe human nature is innately good. The eighteenth-century French philosopher Condorcet wrote glowingly of “the indefinite perfectibility of the human race.” Karl Marx believed man would create a perfect society once the evil capitalists were destroyed. But sin begins – and it ends – in the human heart.

Is there hope for us? You bet there is! God, in his infinite wisdom and mercy knew man is sinful. In fact, I believe it was just a little wearing on God to try and manage our sin per the Old Testament. Even Moses sinned against God and never saw the Promised Land (Numbers 32:13). God did not reject Moses but did punish him. God loved Moses as he does us.

God’s system says that a life must be given for a life. In the Old Testament, an animal’s life was given to save the life of a sinful person. But, this was only a temporary measure until Jesus’ and the cross and the New Testament.

The New Testament is about the coming of the Messiah, our savior. God is the supreme ruler of time and eternity, heaven and earth, humans and angels. Jesus came as God’s anointed deliverer, to die for all people, to free you and me from sin’s oppression. When Jesus said (Matthew 27:46) About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” If you look at

Jesus' word "forsaken" in his native language the word is stronger like he meant, "abandon". At that moment the weight of all of our sins, now and forever, were assumed by Jesus so that we are freed of our sin. Jesus was suddenly overwhelmed by the weight of our sins and probably for an instant he lost contact with his Father – thus felt abandon. This was Jesus worse fate, to feel abandon from his Father. What a gift we were given by God – His son. We are loved no matter what and God will never abandon us no matter what.

Why the Bible? It is the loving word of God! It is our *how to book*. It is our book of life and on how to achieve peace and freedom in Jesus Christ.

Please turn to page 377 in the Hymnal, *It is Well with My Soul*

One Sunday, not too long ago I was sitting right here. I was feeling burdened down. I know the Bible pretty well and the promise given to us by the Lord in his dying for us on the cross. But, for some reason in had not sunk into my soul, just my brain. I knew the words, but my soul had not received the message. At the service progressed I prayed to the Lord that he would release me from my sins. I also felt the need for an answer before the service ended. I asked my Father if he would give me an answer before I left church that day. The service went on. Then the hymn, *It is well with my Soul*, came up to sing. I have sung this song many times. This day, as we got to the third verse, the words jumped off the page as I read: ***“My sin, not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!”***

I knew through my tears of gratitude that my prayers had been heard and that I was forgiven through the blood of the living God. It was the biggest gift I have ever been given in my life. I was free!

My brothers and sisters, if you want this kind of freedom please come forward at the end of the service for any needs you might have, healing concerns, or if you would like to accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and savior. We are here to pray with you.