

*What's wrong with the world? And what can we do about it?*

*Short answers. There is plenty wrong with the world and we cannot fix it.*

*However, there is something we can all do to make it possible for us to live in this world with a degree of contentment.*

Here, in a question and answer format is one way of looking at the issue.

**Q** What is wrong with the world? Why do we seem to be in such a mess?

**A.** People want what God provides but don't care about knowing Him! It's that simple! We ignore God but take and use all He gives, without thanking Him or recognizing God as the source of all things. *For example, rain and sunshine come from God's creation for all peoples of the world. Some know this and are thankful and some either don't know or are not thankful.*

**Q** So what does God think about this attitude?

**A.** God is not that happy about it at all, but is tolerant of man's ways. Also, He knows there is an eventual cost for man, if he is not thankful or does not get to know Him as God of the universe.

**Q.** What is this cost you speak of?

**A.** The ultimate cost of not knowing God our provider of all things, is that we don't get to go to heaven when we die. That is the biggest tragedy of all. Many, if not most people do not even realize that fact. But there is a huge but somewhat subtle cost throughout the life of every man and woman who do not know they need to acknowledge God. More about that later.

**Q.** What is wrong with man that He is like this? What's the problem?

**A.** Mankind thinks he is independent of God and can do what he wants to do without reference to God. You might say he is proud of his life, his ways and his achievements and as long as things continue to go well, he does not give God a second thought. Most men and

women don't even realize that everything they have, comes from God. For example, God's provision in His creation of man for him to be able to live on this earth, with his body being designed to live well on the earth, drinking and eating from God's great provision. Also, God has given man a great ability to think and reason and to use this intellectual ability to create things for his use and to find out how to keep himself well and prosper and create offspring. But mankind mostly ignores God's part in all this and goes on his merry way, enjoying everything.

**Q. Does this apply to everyone? Are religious people any better off?**

A. Yes, this applies to every human person. Religious people, if they are Christian believers are far better off at all times, because they have acknowledged that they were born with a sinful nature, not able to know God and have acknowledged their state to God and He has given them a new life. Christian's call it being born again. However, many Christians, although born again, do not fully acknowledge God either, and so do not reap the full benefit of God's gifts, nor do they live so that God comes first. Like we said earlier, many still think of themselves first and God comes in a long second. They do not realize that God's word in His Bible says that God needs to come first in all things. These believers may be put off the real truth by any number of things, like lack of knowledge, pride of life, or worldly things trapping them, so they cannot abide in God at all. More on that later.

**Q. What are the consequences of this lack of recognition of God?**

A. Firstly, as we said before, those who have not believed in Jesus Christ before their death don't make it to heaven. For believers, it is much more complex and this is where many believers miss the mark that God had hoped for them. Many of them simply slip back into their old ways, somehow forgetting or not really knowing the incredible gift God has given them and not growing into a level of maturity where they live for God and He uses them for His amazing work on this earth. That saddens God greatly. Many other believers, wonderful people in themselves and fully intent on living the Christian life, always find life a struggle that does not seem to have an explanation. They often find they are really no different in their lifestyle after a good church service where they have worshipped God with other faithful.

**Q. Well, how come it is like this, if they are really trying, even going to church?**

A. There are many reasons. Even great and otherwise good people can miss out and live a frustrated life even though they do all they can to be right with God. The problems are both internal and external to man. The external ones are easy to see. Man gets too involved with the things of the world and with people that believe that man has evolved out of his own cleverness. Even good things like sport, earning a living, making lots of money, or being engaged in great human endeavours (such as research into causes of diseases) or doing great works, even in the name of God, can become so overwhelming that they take over the life of the person and it becomes a human endeavour that takes the mind off God and the reasons for our existence. God calls such things idols, even though they are not idols of wood and stone with which we are familiar. So that is some of the external factors that take the mind of man away from God.

Q. How do these things affect man internally?

A. Man is a complex being, being made that way by God. Man is primarily a spiritual being through which He can communicate with God. Then he has a soul, both soul and spirit living in a body, God's visible gift to man. These three, spirit, soul and body, all interact together. It is the internal workings of man that determine how he interacts with the external world. The way God intended man to live was for his spirit to be controlled by God, making it possible for the spirit to direct the operations of the soul and body. Many people, even some believers, do not know how this works and this is where it all goes astray.

Q. So what goes wrong?

A. Well it is really quite simple. Without God's guidance through the spirit of man, man does what he thinks out of his own desires. So if he is not conscious of God at all, or is easily distracted by any of the things in the world, or by his own selfishness, he gets further and further out of God's influence and communications with Him. This is where the external things of life can take over the man who is not focussed the right way. Even good things like work, sport, sex can begin to dominate the person to the degree that they lose their way more and more. It is quite easy for parents to live to work to earn more money, even for seemingly good purposes, and so they lose touch with the true reality of life, the things that really matter.

As they do that their children can similarly be distracted into things of the world. No one notices that true life or even what might be called normal is slipping away. A new normal develops where, although they may know God to some degree, they are not relying on Him for everything, doing things in their own strength, so they wear themselves out trying to live, whilst in most cases God stands by waiting. He even allows them, or sometimes even organizes them to slip up in the simple things of life, so that they might wonder what is wrong, and then remember Him and return to Him again. His people Israel in the Old Testament did this again and again. In our day, people need to be aware of the subtlety of this process, which is almost hidden from their view. Sometimes it gets to be too late.

Q. But that is quite ridiculous! People are clever and would not fall into such a trap.

A. Well actually people are not too clever at all. If they remain in their own cleverness and wisdom they are certain to fail at some point. Pride and self-centeredness is the primary trap of life. They may be successful for a long time, but eventually God make sure they fail, in order that they might eventually find Him.

Q. But why would God do that to anyone? Isn't He a God of love?

A. Yes God is a God of love and that is why He allows people their own will, hoping that sooner or later, they will find out that life without Him does not work and they will begin to ask questions and eventually find their way to Him, normally amid various degrees and forms of suffering. When they do this willingly He creates a new person out of the old. It is a spiritual regeneration into what is virtually a new creation. From that point in time they use His wisdom and rely on Him for everything – or should, as they learn to do so.

Q. So what do you say we should do?

A. Well believe me this is the saddest thing for God. He has given them new life, but for some reason many new believers fail to see and know fully what He has given them. This is one of the puzzles of the Christian life, particularly in the Christian church. Even much of the Christian church does not seem to understand one basic thing i.e. that once they have been given new life by the Spirit of God, they need to live and act with God coming first in all things in life. Another way of saying this is that God must be seen as their Lord and Master in every issue of life. His will instead of theirs. Also, remember that this is the oldest and biggest trap for all human beings, wanting to put themselves first, even when they know they should not. Adam and Eve fell for that trap many years ago. And every man and woman born since has had to face that same issue in their life, sooner or later. Best to make it sooner!

Q. But that sounds very simple. What goes wrong? Or has gone wrong?

A. Well the first thing is a lack of knowledge. Simply a lack of knowledge that once we believe, we must submit to God in everything and that He gives us the power to do so. In the modern church this is not often taught, and therefore not practised, even by some clergy. So that is the first problem. The second is that influences that come from the world are very powerful.....things like those mentioned above. These days the media, especially television, is a powerful force that seems to draw people away from godly truth.

Firstly, there is very little television that speaks in terms of godly truth. Secondly, television mostly presents lifestyles that paint a totally different picture to that seen in a godly life. So the modern mind, not only of children, but especially so, just gets lost in the morass of worldliness. In such a state, following God, even if they intend or want to do so, becomes fraught with difficulty. The mind, not centered on God gets lost in ungodliness and people may not even realize it. Good sermons fly past their ears because they have no receptors capable of catching the meaning within them.

Another way of saying it is as the Bible puts it, that the enemies of man are the world, the flesh and the devil. The world tempts our flesh and we get caught perhaps aided and abetted by Satan himself. It requires a switch of masters, from you being in control to ceasing your independence and putting God first in all things.

Q. O.K. So what can we do about this situation? If we are truly believers in Jesus Christ, how do we change our ways so as not to get caught in these traps? How can we learn to live as God intended and enjoy Him forever, as scripture says we are to.

A. Firstly, each individual must understand that what has been said here has a ring of truth about it. If it does then it is primarily a matter of the will. It is you making a decision that you want to return to God and live on the basis of the life He provides. So decide! Tell Him! (He hears every word spoken to Him) For believers it is a matter of simple repentance, a turning away from the old. You may also need to confess that you have been getting it wrong and that this has dragged you away from God and you want, by His grace, to be back with Him. Such decisions are difficult even for individuals. But where others in a family are

involved, a spouse and children, then it may have other difficulties, always remembering that you cannot change another person or decide for them. All one can do is to express your new desires openly and truthfully, giving the others time to think and respond in time, as the Spirit of God works in them. However, whole families have been known to commit to God together, a wonderful and blessed experience that can occur, if one person in a family can influence others to fully commit their lives to God.

Q. Is that all there is to it? I can see that there may be some tough aspects to it, but knowing God is a big ask. What else might I need to look at in time?

A. Coming to full maturity, having God as your Lord and Saviour is a life time calling. Yes, of course there is more to learn. The other main thing is this. (it is something not fully realized or taught in the Christian church) It is this. When you are born again, a huge transaction takes place. Upon your confession of former sin and agreeing to walk another way, God, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is able to accept you as clean and faultless in His eyes, and whenever you die, to be accepted by God as a son or daughter, into His heaven.

If you wish to understand the incredible nature of this transaction, then know this. When you are born again, you have the actual life of Jesus Christ within you. Christ is your very life. Think about that.....again and again. Many Christians who have been attending church for a life time, are not fully aware of that fact. As you accept this incredible truth, that Christ lives your life for you and guides you in every way, life becomes an adventure and not a chore. There are many exciting bits and many difficult bits, but as you have changed from living your way to living His way, the problems become exciting challenges to be in His strength from His life within you.

Q. All of that is a lot to take in. Can you sum it up for me please?

A. Two things. First, if you have lived your life out of your own resources, putting every consideration of your life and its issues as a personal issue of your will, and ignoring God, then you need to reverse the order. If you are born again, you need to learn to put God first in all things. If you are not born again, you will still want to put yourself first. Second, once you have made that switch (by the grace of God) then remember it is no longer your life you are living but that the life of Christ is in charge of yours.

**Want to read more???? Depending on what you believe right now, here are some options for you to consider – read them all before you choose**

1 **If you are a believer** and you want to read or listen to material that will explain how you as an individual person can handle this world better, then go to Fullness of life in Christ at

<http://www.goodnews.org.au/fullness/>

2 **If you don't know what is actually going to happen in this world** (for believers or unbelievers), then read about the second coming of Jesus Christ to this earth and what it will mean for every person on the earth. Go to <http://www.goodnews.org.au/secondcoming/>

3 **If you don't know much about God or His Word, the Bible,** or are struggling in life with all manner of things, the perhaps go to Good News Australia at <http://www.vicnet.net.au/~gnaust/indexvicnet.html> where you can read about Christianity and what Christians believe and how, as the book is entitled, Escape into Life – what life is really all about.

4 **If you want to know about salvation or are not sure you are saved,** then go to <http://www.goodnews.org.au/fullness/index-2008rc.html> There you will find a range of reading and listening about this more important subject in life.....and eternity

Ken email folic08 @tpg.com.au Please leave out the space before the @ to make the email effective.