

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2015

THE

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REAL TRUTH™

A MAGAZINE RESTORING PLAIN UNDERSTANDING



America the **MEDICATED**

Racism: Is There a Solution?

Your Marriage Can
Be Happy!

**What to Watch in Every
EU Crisis**

Three Myths of the
Modern Age

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VOL. XIII | NO. 7 | OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2015

ARTICLES

REALTRUTH.ORG



■ **LINES DRAWN:** St. Louis County Police and Missouri State Highway Patrol troopers stand on guard as protesters march on West Florissant Avenue in Ferguson, Missouri (Aug. 9, 2015).

PHOTO: MICHAEL B. THOMAS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Racism: Is There a Solution?

Racial prejudice has led to unfathomable suffering—and a massive death toll. Is an end in sight?

Page 16

Personal from the Editor-in-Chief Your Marriage Can Be Happy!

Page 1

What to Watch in Every EU Crisis

Each of Europe's problems is complex. They become even more complicated when accounting for *all* of the emergencies the power bloc is currently facing. What trends should you focus on to understand what the future holds?

Page 4

America the Medicated

United States citizens' reliance on drug medications continues to grow. Why does good health remain elusive in an affluent country?

Page 9

Three Myths of the Modern Age

Debunking three common myths will help you escape the rat race of modern life.

Page 14

UK Slashes Defense Spending

Page 21

Magic, Horror and the Occult—Why the Attraction?

Dark-themed entertainment is wildly popular. Yet most never consider the source of this fascination.

Page 22

World News Desk

Page 32

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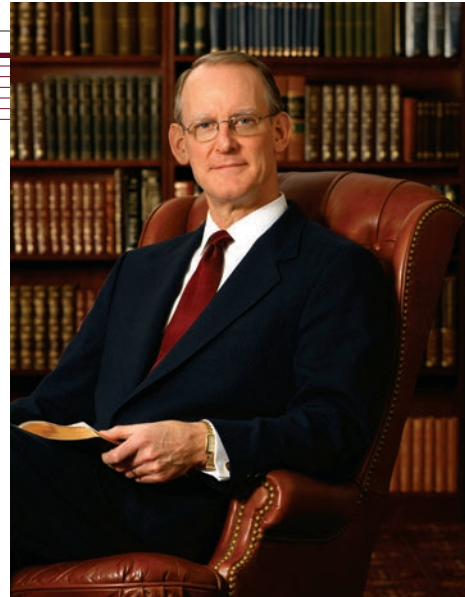
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PERSONAL FROM

David C. Fack



Your Marriage Can Be Happy!

THE WORLD IS exploding with problems. Much *knowledge* is available about most of them, but little *understanding*. The breakdown of marriage and the family is a classic example. Seemingly everyone knows it is happening, but no one knows what it *means*—or what to do about it.

Ever greater numbers of people are questioning the institution of marriage. Many are concerned about where current trends are heading. Some question whether marriage can even survive. Many get married on their own terms or only on a trial basis. Millions simply live together, unmarried—and increasing numbers now enter “same-sex” partnerships. Other millions have come to believe living single is the best state.

Why is all of this happening?

Religion, education, science and society do not know the true purpose of marriage. They do not even know if marriage *has* a purpose. And many couples do reflect that they are together with no purpose.

Most married people are *unhappy*—with many a virtual study in misery. They have no idea what to *do* about it, or where to turn for answers. Millions stumble along,

bouncing from one marital problem to another, never knowing *how* to address them—let alone solve them!

How many *really* happy married couples do you know?—and are you even sure of these? Is your marriage truly happy? Are you enjoying the life that you anticipated? Statistics suggest the answer is probably “no.”

Married life has been the brunt of endless jokes, where traditional conduct and the roles of husbands and wives are ridiculed—and depicted as a bondage only the foolish enter. Great numbers have come to equate marriage with surrendering “freedom” to a lesser, unhappy state of existence.

Others choose to marry, sincerely believing they will find perfect bliss—will “live on love”—only to discover that true happiness is far from automatic. Some even conclude—often within *days*—that marriage was the worst decision of their lives.

Sadly, so many enter marriage with no understanding, no preparation, no training, and no idea of how to achieve a lifetime of happiness with their chosen partner.

Most couples spend more time planning for a one-day *wedding* than for the lifelong *marriage* that should follow. As a result, half of all marriages fail, ending in divorce, often with former partners becoming *mortal enemies!* Other couples are just as unhappy, but

perhaps cannot afford a divorce, or stay together only because of the children or other social or business reasons.

How tragic! And how completely unnecessary!

Programmed to Fail

Why have so few been able to find even a measure of the enjoyment they originally believed marriage would bring? Why have so many others decided to simply live together, avoiding commitment, thus artificially reducing the already skyrocketing number of divorces? Why do so many openly admit that they do not *trust* their mates? Why do over 80 percent of marriages experience adultery? Why such confusion about marriage and its purpose?

What has brought the once sacred institution of marriage to such a *deplorable state*?

What happened is no accident.

Consider how marriage is routinely portrayed in the media. Wholesome television programs from the 50s, 60s and early 70s about the family—such as *Ozzie and Harriet*, *Leave It to Beaver*, and *Little House on the Prairie*—have been replaced by *All in the Family*, *The Simpsons*, and *The Osbournes*, or worse.

Books and movies have also accelerated this decline, and in every way. Fornication, cohabitation, adultery, homosexuality and every other conceivable “alternative lifestyle,” now including same-sex “marriage,” have been depicted uncounted thousands of times in the media. Invariably, programs, movies and books have portrayed immorality as exciting, fascinating, mysterious—and the virtual “norm” for what is now the large majority.

Their impact on marriage has been stunning. In fact, marriage has become a laughingstock. Wholesome images of marriages, families and role models of the past have almost disappeared. Sadly, millions have copied new, modern role models, discarding traditional marriages and families as obsolete relics that history has properly scrapped.

Recent generations have been conditioned to believe marriage is better “the second time around.” By this logic, the *third* marriage would be even better!

Accompanying these trends has been a corresponding decline in traditional values and the importance of character. This trend is worldwide. Under constant attack, standards of right and wrong—good and bad—old-fashioned “righteousness” and “unrighteousness”—have been blurring and crumbling. How many people any longer even speak of character, once called virtue?

With the steep decline in the most basic character has come an unwillingness to remain committed to vows exchanged on the wedding day. With the near disappearance of ethics, standards and basic knowledge of right and wrong has come the assumption that when marriage difficulties arise—as they inevitably do with imperfect human beings—couples should simply take the easy way out—divorce!

The Author of Marriage

Why do so few understand there are great principles—transcendent spiritual LAWS!—governing what most think is merely a *civil agreement*? How many recognize that men and women have separate, different, God-ordained roles that must be understood for marriage to succeed? How many couples have been actively taught the real *purpose* of marriage? Most no longer even know the origin of marriage, let alone the vital answers to these and other important related questions!

The answers involve *revealed* knowledge—knowledge men *cannot themselves discern*. God must reveal it.

In place of revealed truth, modern education has taught the great evolutionary lie—that life is continually evolving to a higher state. Scoffers, preferring to believe that human beings are a product of dumb luck, dismiss the biblical account that God supernaturally created two actual

people—Adam and Eve—and then identified them as history’s first married couple.

Of course, those who believe the unproven, and in fact easily disproven, *fiction* of evolution must also believe that, at some point, *men* devised the marriage institution. Believing otherwise is incompatible with evolution. One cannot have it both ways. Either God created marriage—or men did.

But human beings did NOT create marriage! Therefore, apart from God, they cannot know its true purpose—or the KEYS to decades of happiness with the *same person*.

It is not our purpose here to prove God exists or that the Bible is His inspired Word. We have several booklets, brochures and articles that address these subjects. We start with the fact that the Almighty God, who designed and made the heavens and the Earth, also designed and created marriage.

Divine Institution

Though marriage appears to be merely a physical union, starting with a wedding ceremony performed by a man, it is actually a *divine institution*. As the true Author of marriage, God understands what makes it succeed, bringing supreme happiness and joy—or fail, bringing divorce and broken lives. This same God clearly reveals this knowledge in His Word.

For every effect, there is a cause. When a marriage experiences all the right effects, it is because right CAUSES have been understood and correct principles practiced. When a marriage is filled with problems of every sort, right causes have been either unknown or ignored.

The Creator God designed marriage to be a source of great happiness, something for which everyone yearns. *You* can have an exciting, happy, successful marriage—but only if you follow God’s prescribed formula. This Personal reveals the formula—the causes!—behind a happy marriage. It introduces the truth of

Please see **PERSONAL**, page 29



Everything You Need to Know About:

Dating • Marriage • Family • Childrearing



The Restored Church of God, which publishes *The Real Truth*, provides the most comprehensive collection of study materials on the family. All books are available for free at rcg.org. Free videos on these subjects are also available at worldtocome.org.

What to Watch in Every EU Crisis

Each of Europe's problems is complex. They become even more complicated when accounting for *all* of the emergencies the power bloc is currently facing. What trends should you focus on to understand what the future holds?

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

THINGS ARE NOT going well for the Continent. At least that is the impression many newspaper editorial columns give. An article in *The Guardian* remarked there is a crisis “too big for Europe to handle” and that “its institutions are broken.” A writer for *Salon* asked: “How did the European project go so wrong?” And an inundation of others forecast the breakup of the eurozone, the end of borderless travel, the demise of the European Union all together.

Indeed, the power bloc *is* embroiled in quite a number of crises—everything from the early summer Greek debt crisis to ongoing tensions with Russia over Ukraine and mutual military buildup along Europe's eastern border. The most pressing emergency is the rapid influx of migrants from Syria, Iraq and North Africa.

Yet such dire predictions and worries are nothing new. EU crises are often painted as existential. In 2011, a *Financial Times* headline warned, “The Eurozone Really Has Only Days to Avoid Collapse.” A 2005 opinion piece stated, “Europe as we know it is slowly going out of business.” The same year, *Forbes* printed a piece titled “The End of Europe?”

Each time hardship enters the picture, many knee-jerk into thinking the EU is doomed. It is their go-to focus. Such a position seems feasible because of the sheer amount of problems the bloc faces. It also can be an effective tool to spur swift political action.

Others tend to view Europe's crises from a humanitarian angle. They look at how political, military and business policies affect the men, women and children on the ground.

Greece's debt crisis is a perfect example. While it is easy to become hyper-focused on the debate between austerity and debt forgiveness, it also affects people's livelihoods. An arti-

cle about how a restaurant owner had to close a multi-generational family business helps to put things into perspective.

The stakes are much higher within war-torn Ukraine. After fighting broke out in April 2014 between EU supporters and pro-Russia fighters, the United Nations Human Rights Office has kept an eye on the situation.

The agency's latest report stated that more than 6,400 people have been killed since the conflict's start. This *conservative* estimate includes at least 626 women and girls in eastern Ukraine.

In addition, the UN office reported that Ukrainians are subject to “shelling, executions, arbitrary and illegal detentions, torture, ill-treatment, human trafficking and the lack of justice and accountability, as well as deprivation of economic and social rights that are deeply affecting the five million people living in the conflict-affected areas.”

“Millions of ordinary women, men and children in Ukraine have suffered tremendous hardship, violence and have





■ **VEXED BY PROBLEMS:** Top left, a rebel tank crew loads ammunition in the city of Donetsk, Ukraine (Oct. 2, 2014). Top right, a fire bomb explodes behind riot police during a riot over austerity measures in Athens, Greece (July 22, 2015). Middle left, migrants reach for food and water distributed by a charity on the Greek-FYR Macedonia border near the village of Idomeni, Greece (Sept. 5, 2015). Bottom left, protesters burn a European Union flag in front of the European Commission offices in Athens (July 2, 2015). Bottom right, migrants arrive on the shores of the Greek island of Lesbos after crossing the Aegean Sea from Turkey on a dinghy (Sept. 10, 2015).

PHOTOS: JOHN MACDOUGALL/AFP/ (TOP LEFT); LOUISA GOULIAMAKI/AFP/ (MIDDLE LEFT); ARIS MESSINIS/AFP/ (TOP RIGHT); LOUISA GOULIAMAKI/AFP/ (BOTTOM LEFT); ANGELOS TZORTZINIS/AFP/ (BOTTOM RIGHT); GETTY IMAGES

been living in fear for more than a year now,” the UN agency’s high commissioner said. “Too many have had their homes and livelihoods destroyed and their lives torn apart, with no sign of justice, accountability, compensation or redress.”

Focusing on the human toll helps bring a fuller picture to what could otherwise be seen as a conflict between Russia and the EU.

Such tragedy pushes many civilians and politicians in Europe to want to act.

This has clearly been the case with the immigration crisis.

“The latest migrant disaster, in which thousands are scrambling to reach the EU from Greece, Italy and Hungary, has brought more attention to the tragic issue of refugees trying to cross to Europe,” *The Telegraph* reported.

“It is estimated that since January 2015, 350,000 refugees have desperately packed onto overcrowded vessels to Italy after fleeing war-torn countries such as Iraq, Syria and Libya.

“Now, migrants are increasingly using road and rail transport to access the EU. The deaths of 71 migrants who suffocated on board a lorry abandoned in Austria is one of the most recent examples.”

The image that galvanized public and political opinion was that of a drowned child sprawled on a beach, the water lapping at his lifeless body.

Both focuses—declaring the impending doom of the EU and examining the humanitarian element—have

a similar goal for each European crisis. They look to incite change.

But these do not speak to what the future holds for the European continent or what the EU will look like in five, 10 or 15 years.

To understand that, one must look elsewhere.

Different Angle

Regular readers of *The Real Truth* know that the publication takes a unique approach to examining world trends and conditions. Writers for the magazine use the Bible as the lens through which to view world events.

For many, using a “religious text” to examine global trends may seem odd, yet God’s Word is an invaluable tool for making sense of the modern world.

For example, it is a comprehensive handbook on human nature. It shows exactly what makes man tick—and why he does what he does.

Bible prophecy, however, is the most valuable tool for understanding where world events are heading. This subject fills one-third of the Book.

A simplified definition of prophecy is news *written in advance*.

The book of Isaiah states, “Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure” (46:9-10).

In the Bible, God declares that SPECIFIC events will happen, then *He* brings them to pass. This is summarized in the next verse: “I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass; I have purposed it, I will also do it” (vs. 11).

God claims authorship over the entire Bible and tells skeptics to *prove* His Word by placing already fulfilled prophecies next to the record of history. Many events that were foretold have already come to pass and PROVE the accuracy of God’s Word.

Real Truth Editor-in-Chief David C. Pack discusses this in *Bible Authority...Can It Be Proven?*



SHOWING SOLIDARITY: Migrants look on as German Chancellor Angela Merkel speaks to the media after she visited a shelter for migrants in Berlin, Germany (Sept. 10, 2015).

PHOTO: SEAN GALLUP/GETTY IMAGES

“Fulfilled prophecy proves the divine authority of the Bible. No human can foretell events, let alone in great detail, to occur hundreds or thousands of years beyond his own lifetime. No person can affect the course of cities, states or kingdoms for centuries to come. For this reason, it has been said that prophecy is the challenge that the skeptics dare not accept!”

(To take God up on His challenge and see history and prophecy perfectly align, read *Bible Authority...Can It Be Proven?* at rcg.org/bacibp.)

About 90 percent of prophecies in the Bible, however, have not yet occurred, which makes it a crucial news source. And it has much to say on what is coming for Europe.

With that in mind, some of the EU trends to keep an eye on are Germany’s rising importance in the power bloc, the pope’s growing voice in politics, and the increasing rift between Britain and other member states.

Each of these is crucial to watch in current and future EU crises because the Bible declares they will culminate in a superpower United States of Europe.

Germany Leads

As the richest nation in the EU, Germany is often found bearing the EU’s burdens. *The Wall Street Journal* reported:

“Germany’s economic influence and political stability leave the country no choice but to play a greater role in global geopolitics than it did in years past, despite public skepticism, Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier said.

“‘Germany is a little too big and important to comment on international affairs from the sidelines,’ he said at an interview in his office...‘It doesn’t mean we’re pushing to get involved, but it means we cannot abstain when help is needed.’”

Berlin was instrumental in negotiations during the Greek debt crisis and is also taking a central role in the refugee emergency.

Bloomberg reported: “The European Union will...announce plans to redistribute 120,000 migrants who have arrived in Greece, Italy and Hungary, as the bloc moves to address the biggest refugee crisis since World War II.”

German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated that she will work to make accepting refugees “one of the grand projects of the European Union in the years ahead” (*ibid.*).

The nation has also fostered greater ties with the pope. A meeting with the Vatican pontiff revealed how much Germany’s head of state placed significance on the pope’s view of world affairs.

Ecumenical News wrote: “The German leader had a 40-minute private audience with the head of the Catholic Church on Feb 21, after which she told reporters, ‘I was very happy to meet with the Pope’ Deutsche Welle reported.

“An official communique said the cordial exchange between the two leaders focused on the fight against poverty and international crises, including the conflict in eastern Ukraine, the Vatican reported. Merkel played a key role in hammering out the latest shaky ceasefire and at the meeting with the pontiff, she stressed their ‘commitment to reaching a peaceful solution to the conflict in Ukraine,’ the Vatican statement said.”

Influential Religious Figure

Pope Francis called upon “faithful” worldwide to pray for Greece’s faltering economy and suffering people. In the heat of the 2015 euro crisis, Federico Lombardi, the Vatican’s spokesperson, released a statement that passed on the religious leader’s “wishes to convey his closeness to all the Greek people, with a special thought for the many families gravely beset by such a complex and keenly felt human and social crisis.”

The leader of 1.2 billion Catholics worldwide also urged EU leaders to prioritize the “dignity of the human person,” which is one of the church’s doctrines that emphasizes an individual’s right to live and prosper—and often involves distribution of wealth to the poor.

The pope’s discourse is backed by a trend of increased involvement in state affairs. The political pope was a key player in prompting talks between the United States and Cuba, which resulted in the two establishing a diplomatic relationship for the first time in over 50 years.

Though condolences, prayer requests, and pleas for social justice are Pope Francis’s trademark, his statements also characterize increased papal involvement and warmer relations with Eastern Orthodox countries. The two great religious bodies held a relatively distant relationship until Pope John Paul II visited Greece in 2001—the first papal visit to the Orthodox nation in 1,291 years.

In return, Orthodoxy is looking back to Europe. Prior to the referendum, Archbishop Ieronymos II, head of the Autocephalous Orthodox Church of Greece, asked Greeks to remain “at

the heart of Europe,” and urged them to accept bailout conditions.

In September, the Catholic leader urged every “parish, religious community, monastery and sanctuary to take in one refugee family,” *The Washington Post* reported. The plea came as thousands of refugees left Hungary and streamed into Germany.

The media outlet continued, “The pope, who has thrust himself into polarizing debates over climate change and free-market economics, has again entered the fray, this time over how Europe should handle its largest wave of refugees since the Balkan wars of the 1990s.”

British Resistance

Britain has been considered the stone raft slowly drifting away from continental Europe. The nation has increasingly butted heads with the power bloc’s concentration on greater unification.

The nation has been at odds with the EU at every turn—even during the immigration crisis.

The Guardian reported: “David Cameron’s limited promise of only 4,000 places a year for Syrian refugees provides a glimpse of the impotence



CALL TO HELP: Pope Francis waves as he arrives in Saint Peter's square for his weekly audience at the Vatican (Sept. 2, 2015). Four days later, he called on every European parish and religious community to take in one migrant family.

PHOTO: VINCENZO PINTO/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



KEEPING A PROMISE: British Prime Minister David Cameron delivers a speech on the United Kingdom's relationship with the EU, which includes a promise to hold an in-out referendum for the nation (Jan. 23, 2013). Since that time, Mr. Cameron has worked to renegotiate the terms of Britain's membership in the power bloc—and the vote will likely be held in October of 2016.

PHOTO: OLI SCARFF/GETTY IMAGES

of Britain's future role in world affairs outside the EU.

"His Commons promise to take 20,000 Syrian refugees over the next five years is at the bottom end of expectations. It stands in sharp contrast to the French pledge of 24,000 places over the next two years. As the Labour MP and father of the house, Gerald Kaufman, angrily pointed out: 'The Germans took in 10,000 refugees in one day.'

"Cameron has deliberately spurned taking part in a much bigger EU scheme to resettle those in the camps in countries neighbouring Syria. He has also rejected playing any part in the expected EU request this week to relocate the estimated 160,000 refugees who have made it across the Mediterranean to Italy and Greece or through the Balkans to Hungary."

Watch to see Britain continue to hold to policies that differ from the rest of Europe, or possibly fall out—or be pushed out—of the union all together.

What to Watch in Every Crisis

While the Bible tells you what to watch in every European crisis, it also speaks to what global trends and conditions on which to keep an eye.

With today's 24-hour news cycle, there is a constant barrage of reports

of every kind—and most of it is tabloid *non*-news. There is so much to sift through that many become overwhelmed and stop watching all together.

The Real Truth is here to help! Keep reading this monthly magazine to better navigate this befuddling and darkening age.

You can also understand what the Bible says will befall ALL mankind in the next few years.

In the introduction to *The Bible's Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! – A Voice Cries Out*, Mr. Pack states: "There is gnawing concern on the minds of millions about the course of human events. As world trends and conditions grow worse, and ever more confusing and complex, uncertainty is increasing—and worry is deepening—about what lies ahead for all mankind.

"Towering questions loom over every nation!

"Everyone wants to know what the future holds. So many are confused, not knowing where to turn for answers to the GREAT QUESTIONS about the future!

"Suppose you could know the direction and conclusion of world events—world history—in advance of the outcome. What if you could know the courses of nations before they happen? What if the future of great nations—

indeed the greatest nations—could be known? Imagine knowing tomorrow's biggest headlines before they come to pass, and how events will affect you, and every human being, personally."

He continues: "Tragically, most Bible readers are completely unaware of awesome, impending world events, soon to involve all nations. Vast sections of Scripture are hidden, and remain outside their understanding—completely lost to them. The result is that most simply have no idea what the future holds.

"Many have opinions, but few recognize how to find the answers. Others think they already understand the prophecies of the Bible. The result? They remain ignorant of fascinating, incredible—vital!—knowledge, life-changing knowledge.

"No book you have read, or ever will, on prophecy is like this one."

Read this one-of-a-kind book today at rcg.org/tbgpu or download a free e-book. *The Bible's Greatest Prophecies Unlocked! – A Voice Cries Out* will show you the BIG PICTURE of what to expect in the coming years—and how it will affect you!

In addition, keep reading this magazine for analysis of the *latest* news events and how they specifically fit into all that is to come. □



America the Medicated

United States citizens' reliance on drug medications continues to grow.
Why does good health remain elusive in an affluent country?

TURN ON ANY TELEVISION across America and you will likely glimpse one of the 80 of these that air hourly on stations across the nation. Commercials featuring families on fishing trips or prancing through fields, co-workers golfing or discuss-

ing the latest news over hearty salads, couples dancing, walking dogs, enjoying romantic candlelight dinners, or side by side in bathtubs overlooking the sunset—even glowing butterflies flitting from person to person to help them sleep.

At first glance, such clips seem to advertise the great outdoors or healthy eating. In reality, though, they showcase what has become a staple of American life: prescription medications.

Behind these happy images, warnings are softly rattled off. One commercial for a self-injection medication

for clearer skin ends with an announcer listing side effects far more concerning than the condition itself: “Serious sometimes fatal infections and cancers, including lymphoma, have happened, as have blood, liver and nervous system problems, serious allergic reactions, and new or worsening heart failure...”

Such warnings are often tied to drugs to treat depression, diabetes, arthritis, osteoporosis, erectile dysfunction disorder, high cholesterol, fibromyalgia, and the list goes on.

Despite dire warnings from the drug companies themselves, more than 70 percent of Americans—223 million—take at least one prescription drug. Over 50 percent, about 160 million, take two. This means that only a minority of people in the country *do not* take pills regularly!

Direct-to-consumer drug commercials are only permitted in the United States and New Zealand. And pharmaceutical companies in the U.S. take full advantage of this ability, with many spending more than \$4 billion a year on ads.

To an outsider, Americans must seem to be some of the most diseased people on Earth. The U.S. consumes 75 percent of the world’s prescription drugs even though it makes up only about 5 percent of the world population!

“Of the top 10 advertised drugs, two are for erectile dysfunction... three are for arthritis...two are for mental health issues...and one each is for stroke prevention...fibromyalgia...and diabetes...” *The Chicago Tribune* reported.

Ironically, while innumerable drugs are available to treat a multitude of conditions, the number of people affected by them continues to climb. In 2015, for example, diabetes hit an all-time high, with almost a full 10 percent of the country now being affected.

The number of Americans who continue to rely on prescription drugs for “good health” is shocking given that the nation is the global leader in healthcare spending. Why, in a

Western country with one of the highest GDPs and arguably the broadest access to healthful food, do so many rely on pills to make them well?

What Is Happening

Drugs for a plethora of conditions or desired effects are on the market and available to Americans.

Most prescriptions are for chronic pain and are taken by many of the 116 million citizens who suffer from it. A plentiful list of painkillers can be used to mask the discomfort that almost a full one-third of Americans endure.

The following story reported by AARP portrays this vicious cycle.

““Americans spend more than \$18 billion on antipsychotics, \$11 billion on antidepressants, and \$7 billion on drugs to treat ADHD.””

“After years of suffering from a degenerative back condition, [one woman] worried that she was already taking too many pills. But when her doctor reassured her that a long-acting opioid medication called OxyContin would fight her pain without any negative repercussions, she decided to try it. At first the pills helped. As their effectiveness diminished, though, she had to take more and more pills to get any relief at all. ‘Within seven months I was taking 280 milligrams a day,’ [she said]. ‘That’s the equivalent of 56 Percocets a day. I was completely addicted.’ When a new doctor balked at refilling her prescription, she discovered what heroin addicts go through when they can’t get a fix.

‘My body was screaming for the drug. My brain was screaming for it.’”

A *New York Times* article revealed that Americans dominate the global appetite for pain pills, consuming 99 percent of the world’s supply of Vicodin, 80 percent of the oxycodone supply, and 65 percent of the world’s Dilaudid.

This reliance on pain pills has grave consequences. It results in 44 deaths and over 1,300 emergency room visits *daily*—over 16,000 deaths a year.

Not all prescriptions are for pain. For the 30 million Americans at risk of cardiovascular disease because of high cholesterol, medication is taken as a preventive measure. Data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed a sharp increase over the last decade in the number of people over age 40 who took cholesterol-lowering medication.

There is also medicine if one just wants a full night’s sleep. Four percent of adults over age 20 use sleep aids, the CDC found. Interestingly, the higher a person’s age and education, the more likely he or she is to use a sleep aid.

Estimates reveal that about 70 million people suffer from sleep disorders or deprivation. This helped drive prescription sleeping aid sales to \$1.48 billion in 2013, IMS Health revealed. A great number of those who take such pills use them to adjust between day and night shifts, or to overcome jetlag.

Then there are drugs for the one in five people in America who have been diagnosed with a host of behavioral or mental issues—bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression, aggression, attention deficit disorder, and mood instability. Each year, Americans spend more than \$18 billion on antipsychotics, \$11 billion on antidepressants, and \$7 billion on drugs to treat ADHD.

The American Psychological Association expressed concerns regarding these figures and the possible “use of powerful antipsychotic drugs by elderly nursing home residents and the prescription of stimulants

to children who may have been misdiagnosed with ADHD.”

According to the CDC, 7.5 percent of children in America ages 6-17 use medication for emotional or behavior difficulties. Families below the poverty line fill more of this type of prescription than those above.

Dependence on medication has led to unintended consequences. Prescription drugs resulted in 22,767 deaths and 1.4 million emergency room visits in 2013, according to the most recent available data from the CDC.

Vested Interest

To one degree or another, everyone involved is responsible for the rise in the reliance on prescription meds, starting with the companies themselves.

Recall that drug companies dish out billions of dollars for direct-to-consumer advertising, more than what they contribute to the Food and Drug Administration’s budget, lobbyists or political campaigns.

A large portion of these profits go toward advertisements for drugs that are expected to sell the most.

“It’s not hard to see why,” *The New York Times* reported. “Clinical trials are typically conducted on drugs developed by labs seeking huge profits. No

one stands to make money off aspirin, which has been a generic drug since the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, and which costs less than \$6 for a year’s supply.”

Companies that rely on this value cannot simply give up selling mass quantities of drugs for profit, and therefore have pushed to keep items on the market that may be unsafe. The World Health Organization called it “an inherent conflict of interest between the legitimate business goals

of manufacturers and the social, medical and economic needs of providers and the public to select and use drugs in the most rational way.”

An example of this occurred in the 1990s. Perceived advancements in drug quality drove a push backed by organizations such as the American Pain Society and the American



Academy of Pain Medicine to widen the market of painkillers to individuals with chronic pain. New drugs were created during this time that were touted to have reduced side effects and be less addictive.

AARP discussed some of the motives: “...the push for wider use of painkillers was largely financed by drugmakers with a vested interest in making money, [Director of Physicians for Responsible Opioid Prescribing Andrew] Kolodny says,

‘and they vastly understated the risks of addiction and greatly overstated the effectiveness of these drugs. Physicians were given the impression that the drugs are far safer and more effective for chronic pain than they actually are.’”

Drugs for *every* malady often are portrayed as “safer and more effective” than they really are. In reality, however, they come with a host of terrible side effects.

Doctors are invested in this system too. For many of them, implementing cutting-edge medicines is all they have ever known. Often it is truly out of concern for the patient whom they believe needs the best treatment from the most advanced products.

Still, there are those who *are* out to make a profit—and for patients and honest medical professionals it can be hard to tell the difference. Santa Clara University published an example of this on their website: “A recent letter in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* illustrates how effective drug advertising can be. It describes a patient who came into the hospital with an infected insect bite. The intern who first saw the patient first sensibly wanted to prescribe a nice, inexpensive

penicillin, which is the drug of choice for a minor infection. But the resident [physician] overruled the intern and favored a more ‘modern’ choice for this ‘severely’ ill patient. He decided the patient had to have a brand-new antibiotic...at \$183 a day.

“The attending physician who supervised the house officers checked into the incident. It turned out the resident [physician] had just been wined and dined by the drug representative whose company made the new anti-

otic. Think marketing doesn't do any good? Think again."

People who use prescriptions, however, also play a part because they are ultimately responsible for what they put into their bodies. While it can sometimes be a matter of a lack of information, many feel trapped. They do not want to continue to suffer—and genuinely want to fix the problem.

tions. It is then necessary for a person to take more and more drugs to combat the effects, which creates a problematic cycle.

Yet many who take pills do not stop and ask what they are taking and how they could ultimately address the cause. Instead, they seek a solution in the form of a pill in place of doing what is necessary to better maintain their bod-

Note that the top five pharmaceutical companies in America made a net profit of approximately \$55 billion in 2014—more than all U.S. banks combined for the same year.

Imagine the devastating effects on the economy if this industry dried up.

America is stuck in this system, with seemingly no solution on the horizon. So what is a person seeking to live a healthful, abundant life to do?

Ancient Pattern

The practice of people looking to medication as the solution to problems did not begin with Americans. Nor did it begin in the 1800s with Louis Pasteur's germ theory. The same goes for Hippocrates 2,400 years ago when he began to keep detailed advice on disease treatment.

Ancient Egypt invented the practice of administering medicines. They were the first society to have a professional class devoted to researching and providing substances for pain relief, treating sicknesses, and facilitating sleep and childbirth.

The legacy of their system has been carried down through papyrus texts that provide charts of remedies and prescriptions for ailments including intestinal diseases, eye and skin problems, tumors, pregnancy complications, headaches, snake bites, and indigestion.

The Pharmaceutical Society of Australia described some of the ancient Egyptians' medical practices: "A prescription prepared for the Pharaoh Ra by the high priest of Egypt, Isis, contained coriander, worm-wood, juniper, honey and opium, and was used for headache. It probably depended for its efficacy upon the amount of opium present, which would certainly cure a headache.

"From the foregoing it can be seen that the ancient Egyptians possessed quite a considerable degree of pharmaceutical lore, and their writings tell us that they could supply infusions, decoctions, macerations, inhalations, gargles, poultices, and in fact practi-



They seek help from doctors who are trusted as experts. They believe that by using the latest medication, they can regain health.

Yet most of what is given merely masks the problem as opposed to helping those who use it get to the heart of the malady. For example, some autoimmune prescriptions alleviate the pain that goes with the condition, but do not really solve the issue.

Ignoring the principle of cause and effect often results in other complica-

ies through possibly exercising, eating healthfully, getting enough rest, and finding ways to alleviate stress.

The mentality of seeking the doctor as the sole solution-provider leaves Americans trapped in the system: problems lead to prescriptions, which breed complications and side effects, and then require even more medications. On top of this is the fact that prescription medication companies are a multibillion dollar business that greatly supports the economy.

cally the same type of preparations the older pharmacists of today, would still recognize.”

Although some of these medicines are still deemed effective, most of them contained harmful substances that exacerbated diseases. Andre Dollinger, a historian who studied the texts, wrote that “much of the ancient Egyptian pharmacopoeia and many medical practices were ineffective, if not downright deleterious: e.g. excrement used in medicines will only in the rarest of cases prove to be wholesome, and if applied as wound dressing may well cause tetanus poisoning, yet dung continued to be used in Europe until the Middle Ages.”

Most of these ingredients, despite their side effects, were included because their dangers were not suspected at the time. Yet the entire population, from fishers to farmers to pharaohs, sought the physicians as problem solvers. Endemic infections were common in Egypt, and doctors were often looked to as the only ones who could fix them.

The ancient Israelites, while living in Egypt, grew accustomed to this system. When God brought them out of that land, He had to teach them not to rely on medication or physicians to fix health issues. Instead, He introduced His ways of physical cleanliness and laws of health to prevent the onset of disease, and even offered his supernatural healing when needed. He promised the Israelites that He would “take away from you all sickness” and would keep the “evil diseases of Egypt” from them (Deut. 7:15).

Nevertheless, over time, Israel fell back into Egyptian practices. For example, King Asa looked to doctors for healing when he suffered a chronic condition in his feet: “Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great...yet in his disease he sought not to the LORD, but to the physicians” (II Chron. 16:12). He died about two years later having never been cured.

It must be acknowledged that modern understanding of medicine and

cleanliness is far more advanced than that of ancient peoples. The medical field’s knowledge of human anatomy can be very helpful in establishing diagnoses for symptoms or suggestions for adopting healthier lifestyles. As with ancient Egypt, however, too many are quick to take a pill in place of seeking natural remedies or lifestyle changes.

God understood this tendency to solely rely on medication when coping with sicknesses, weaknesses, pains, chronic issues, and debilitation. Because of this, He issued this warning: “...in vain shall you use many medicines; for you shall not be cured” (Jer. 46:11). He also proclaimed, “...you have no healing medicines” (Jer. 30:13).

While people produce quasi-effective treatments or temporary problem-masks, none provide an ultimate riddance of the disease, issue or weakness without causing more complications and side effects!

Better Way

God never intended it to be this way. He inspired the apostle John to write, “Beloved, I wish above all things that you may prosper and be in health, even as your soul prospers” (III John 1:2).

This summarizes what God wanted for the Israelites after He led them out of Egypt—and for all human beings.

One of the definitions of the Greek word translated “be in health” is “to have sound health, that is, be well (in body),” according to *Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. This reveals that one of God’s greatest priorities is for man to have physical well-being.

A deeper look throughout the Bible’s pages reveals some of the physical benefits God intended for us to have.

God wants us to be disease- and sickness-free. He promises that following His principles will ensure that your “health shall spring forth speed-

ily” (Isa. 58:8), and also that they will be “life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh” (Prov. 4:22).

The definition of the Hebrew word translated “health” according to *Strong’s* is a “curative,” “a medicine,” or “a cure.” God considers His way for man a complete physical CURE—not a temporary treatment for his ailments!

In addition to physical healing, God wants us to be anxiety-free: “...be strong, and of good courage; dread not, nor be dismayed” (I Chron. 22:13).

God also wants us to be emotionally balanced. Christ declared that He was sent to “heal the brokenhearted” (Luke 4:18). “Brokenhearted” is translated from two Greek words meaning “to crush completely, that is, to shatter” and “the thoughts or feelings” of the mind.

Overall, Revelation 21:4 reveals God’s ultimate desire to take away all pain, sorrow and crying.

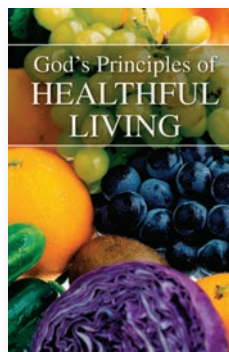
Yet there are conditions to experience each of these wonderful effects. These benefits come with changing the *cause* of ailments instead of treating the *effects*.

To rebound from physical ailments, man needs to learn how to take care of his body and understand the physical principles that govern it. Applying them will ensure that our bodies can prevent problems from occurring, and will make it easier to ward off problems if they do arise.

These principles of health are not elusive. They come without side effects or further complications—and you can enjoy all of them now!

To learn how, order free copies of our booklet *God’s Principles of Healthful Living* at rcg.org/glohl and our article *You Can Live the Abundant Life!* at rcg.org/yctal today.

People were never meant to be stuck taking lifelong medications. You can stop the cycle—with God’s help and guidance! □



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Three Myths of the Modern Age

Debunking three common myths will help you escape the rat race of modern life.

WE COUNTED 21 meteors in an hour. The streaks of light were part of the annual Perseid meteor shower that my wife and I recently observed.

Sitting under the glorious night sky, I realized it had been too long since I had stared at the stars. I felt as though I was forgetting the vastness of Creation, with its innumerable orbs of light, planets and galaxies.

Just a few short minutes of silent stargazing brought me to terms with the smallness of my existence. The uninterrupted moments allowed my mind to decompress. I realized I was missing out. It felt as though I had been living one long, hectic calendar of events—with no way to stop it.

The meteor shower was a stark contrast to today's fast-paced society. Yet it took "jumping off the treadmill" to remember how fast I was moving.

What if I had instead watched the live Internet stream of the meteoroid shower hosted by NASA? What insight would I have gained? I probably would have just become frustrated that the feed was glitchy or not in high definition.

I am not alone. The daily grind that is modern society is causing many to lose touch. Millions flit their eyes from screen to screen throughout the day—from smartphone to tablet to computer to television. We sometimes barely even stop to look at the person next to us.

We think: *If only I could become more resourceful with my time. I could get more done. I could relax more.* We try to multitask more efficiently, but to no avail. More tasks pile up.

A new god has emerged in the modern era: The God of Productivity. And this god requires sacrifices—time, money, family, mental energy, effort.

How has it come to this? Three dangerous but popular myths of the modern age are to blame. Here they are—debunked!

Myth 1: We Are All Busy

Late nights. Early mornings. Hair-pulling stress. Cup of coffee after endless cup of coffee. Tired and overworked, like a pinball bouncing between obstacles or a gerbil in a cage, spinning a wheel but never making any real progress.

Millions of Americans feel this way—completely overwhelmed, rushing from one activity to the next, one appointment to the next, one phone call to the next—with no breaks. Kids, school, work, meetings, lunch engagements, doctors, bills, exercise, groceries...it never ends.

You bump into a friend at the store and ask, “How are you doing?” They respond with, “Busy.” You nod and respond, “Same here. I’m slammed!” You both go your separate busy paths.

One writer summarized the situation this way (emphasis added): “The art of busyness is to convey *genuine alarm* at the pace of your life and a *helpless resignation*, as if someone else is setting the clock, and yet *simultaneously* make it clear that you are *completely on top of your game*” (Slate).

This balance of presenting yourself in control while also “swamped” is nearly impossible. Most find themselves falling into the “crazy busy” category. They like to think they are organized, but usually portray a frenzied picture to others.

The article continues: “These are not exactly humble brags. They are more like fretful brags, and they are increasingly becoming the idiom of our age. In her new book, *Overwhelmed: Work, Love, and Play When No One Has the Time*, *Washington Post* reporter Brigid Schulte calls this cultural epidemic the ‘overwhelm’... ‘Always behind and always late, with one more thing and one more thing and one more thing to do before rushing out the door’...waking up in a 2 a.m. panic to run over the to-do list, and then summing up your life to your friends—in the two seconds you dedicate to seeing your friends—as ‘crazy all the time’ while they nod in agreement.”

We can all relate. But what we may not realize is that, in doing so, we breed in ourselves a sense of self-importance. A busy person is an important person. Those who do not have a lot going on must not be in demand. Having time on our hands is often subconsciously looked down upon and seen as a sign that one is unsuccessful.

Many today are now even proud they are “busy” all the time. A researcher who Ms. Schulte tapped for her book examined the shift in words used in holiday cards over the decades. She found that people gradually began using words like “hectic,” “consumed,” “on the run,” “crazy” and “whirlwind” to portray their lives.

The researcher “realized that busyness of a certain kind...became a mark of social status, that somewhere in the drudgery of checklists and the crumpled heaps one could detect a hint of glamour... ‘[P]eople are competing about being busy,’ Burnett realized. ‘It’s about showing status. That if you’re busy, you’re important. You’re leading a full and worthy life...’” (ibid.).

When did the feeling of being overwhelmed by all that life throws at us turn into a badge of honor?

More Leisure Time

While we all *feel* busy, studies of Americans’ time show we have more free time available compared to all previous generations.

A *CNN* article showed how much leisure time Americans truly enjoy: “It’s a common complaint: You feel like you’re working constantly, and there’s never enough time to enjoy life. But as a whole, Americans are working far less now than they did a generation ago, and have more leisure time than ever. The average work week has gone from over 38 hours in 1964 to under 34 hours in 2013—a drop of nearly 12%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics...”

“And we’re working a *lot* less than our grandparents, great grandparents and earlier generations. The average work week for a manufacturing employee in the 1860s was 62 hours,

according to a paper from Robert Whaples, an economist at Wake Forest University.”

The research also showed that Americans have more leisure time today than compared to 1965. Fifty years ago, people had around 35 hours of extra time. The number jumped to 42 hours in 2012. For instance, the American Time Use Survey for 2015 showed that the average American spends 2.8 hours *per day* watching television.

So we are not nearly as busy as we think we are. But we still feel overwhelmed! What are we to do?

Experts recommend the first step is to stop saying you are busy all the time. This will slowly give you a feeling of control over your life. You will begin to feel that you are the captain of your own ship—that you can make choices about how you spend your time.

A *Washington Post* article offered this advice to the frantic masses: “Summing up your life as ‘busy’ doesn’t acknowledge all the good things you are doing. If you really feel like you need to sum your life up in one word, try using the words ‘active,’ ‘eventful,’ ‘involved’ or ‘lively.’ These words have a more positive [connotation] and many times it’s what you mean anyway. Before trying to figure out which responsibilities you should cut out of your life, try removing this one word [busy] from your daily conversations. It just may happen that life starts to seem a little less hectic.”

Myth 2: Multitasking Is the Key to Productivity

For decades, people have assumed that multitasking is the best way to get many things done. Hold a conversation with someone on the phone while writing an email, sipping coffee, and looking over a new report that was just handed to you. In the modern office environment, multitasking has been the expectation for years.

Yet few stop to ask if they are *actually* getting more done by taking this

Please see **MYTHS**, page 26



RACISM: IS THERE

Racial prejudice has led to unfathomable suffering—and a massive death toll.
Is an end in sight?

BY JEFFREY R. AMBROSE

FERGUSON, MISSOURI, seemed to be in relative order. Then the mayhem started. Several vigils had just taken place marking the one-year anniversary of the death of an 18-year-old black man shot during an arrest by a white police officer. The incident ignited weeks of riots, looting and torching cars along with other property.

As nightfall set in, rowdy protesters who had been participating in demonstrations of civil disobedience began to throw rocks and bottles at police. A shooting nearby added to the confusion.

“Police and protesters faced off in a tense standoff on West Florissant Avenue, not far from Canfield Drive, where [the 18-year-old] was shot,” *CNN* reported.

“Several objects were thrown at police and some businesses damaged, the St. Louis County Police

Department said. A journalist was attacked and robbed in a parking lot. Three St. Louis County police officers were injured: One was struck in the face by a brick, while two others were pepper-sprayed.

“Police, with helmets and shields, pushed crowds back and called in tactical units.

“‘We’re ready for what? We’re ready for war,’ some in the crowd chanted.”

The renewed unrest, which occurred for a three-day period, represented longstanding sentiments of frustration by black citizens toward the city’s primarily white police force, whom they believe have engaged in decades of racial profiling and segregation.

The Washington Post outlined some of the area’s history: “Ferguson, one of the 91 municipalities in largely white St. Louis County, has seen its population shift in recent years. About two-thirds of the city’s 21,100 residents are black. That’s a significant increase from 2000, when blacks made up just

over half of the population. White residents, who had accounted for 44 percent of the population, now make up just under 30 percent.

“Yet the police force patrolling Ferguson has not changed along with the population. The police force has 53 members, and three of them are black. The city’s mayor and police chief are white, as are most of the members of the Ferguson City Council.”

Ferguson is not alone. Clashes as a result of racial tensions have occurred elsewhere across the country.

In April, a 25-year-old black man from Baltimore who was arrested for carrying an illegal switchblade subsequently sustained a fatal spinal cord injury while in a police transport vehicle.

After his funeral, “Armored vehicles lined this battered city’s main thoroughfares and thousands of law enforcement officers and National Guard troops worked to maintain order and enforce a citywide curfew,” *The New York Times* reported. “The authorities said that 15



RE A SOLUTION?

buildings and 144 cars had been set on fire during [the] chaos, which began in Northwest Baltimore's Mondawmin neighborhood and spread to other pockets of the city after morning funeral services for [the man], who was eulogized with soaring gospel music and impassioned calls for justice and peace. The police made 235 arrests. Nineteen police officers were injured..."

Then in June, a white man who associated himself with white supremacy ideology opened fire in a church in Charleston, South Carolina, and killed eight African American parishioners and the pastor. Yet again the nation was forced to deal with troubling racial tensions.

Yet racism is not just a problem in America—it occurs across the ocean as well in different forms.

PBS reported, "Between January and July 2014, according to data gathered by Jewish groups and the French government, the number of anti-Semitic acts in France nearly doubled compared to the same period in 2013. The same figures show half of all racist attacks in France target Jews, even though they number less than one percent of the population."

In addition, Italy continues to grapple with racial tensions as more migrants, primarily from northern

Africa, appear on its shores to live side-by-side with Italians.

"Violent clashes in Rome and the northern city of Treviso [in July] forced the police to evacuate migrants from local reception centers, after residents protested the 'invasion' of foreigners from the Middle East and Africa," *The New York Times* reported. "Leaders of the Northern League, an anti-immigration party...pressured local mayors to refuse orders from Rome to settle migrants in their communities."

Victims and perpetrators of racial prejudice are not confined to any certain period in history, or specific place, skin color, income group, or other category. *No one* is immune! What is unique is that the images we associate with the term *racism* depend largely on the part of the world in which we live.

For instance, those currently living in the United States most commonly think of tension between whites and blacks, or increasingly, Hispanics and blacks or whites. Further back, though, other forms existed.

It seems that wherever two distinct groups have contact, prejudice rears its ugly head.

In North America

Relations between American Indians and early New World colonists were

often violent, with each side deeply distrustful of the other. One of the complaints against the British Crown recorded in the Declaration of Independence was that King George III "excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions."

Yet groups discriminated against are not always those with skin darker than the majority. The fair-skinned Irish were once the object of prejudice in Great Britain and then in the United

■ **MOUNTING TENSIONS:** Left, a demonstrator burns an American flag during a protest in New York City after a grand jury decided not to prosecute a white police officer involved in the death of a black teenager in Ferguson, Missouri (Nov. 25, 2014). Middle left, mourners march on the street in Jerusalem for the funeral of four Jews killed the week before in an Islamist attack on a kosher supermarket in Paris (Jan. 13, 2015). Middle right, supporters of the Confederate flag gather at the state house in Columbia, South Carolina (July 6, 2015). Right, hundreds of Ethiopian-Israelis protest against alleged police brutality and racism while trying to block a main road in the center of Tel Aviv, Israel (June 3, 2015).

PHOTOS: KENA BETANCUR/AFP/ (LEFT); JACK GUEZ/AFP/ (MIDDLE LEFT); SEAN RAYFORD/ (MIDDLE RIGHT); MENAHEM KAHANA/AFP/ (RIGHT); GETTY IMAGES

States. “The comic Irishman—happy, lazy, stupid, with a gift for music and dance—was a stock character of the English and American stage” (*The Boston Globe*).

Ethnic tensions boiled over in Pennsylvania in a largely Irish Catholic neighborhood in North Philadelphia in 1844 during a rally of the American Republican Party, which espoused anti-immigrant ideas.

According to an account from the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, a second rally took place several months later. “This time, three thousand nativists and Irishmen attended the meeting. As tensions began to mount between these two groups, a thunderstorm sent the crowd running for cover to the market house, and this is when the violence erupted. The Irish residents and nativists clashed violently for two days, resulting in the burning of dozens of homes and two Catholic churches. The violence was finally suppressed by the militia, but not before at least 20 persons were killed and over 100 wounded.”

By the mid-1800s, the American South was characterized by slavery, which expanded rapidly due to a confluence of racism, economic opportunity, and greed.

“Worst of all was the fate dreaded by slaves in the Upper South (Maryland, Virginia and Kentucky), where conditions were easiest: they might, for a dozen reasons, suddenly be sold ‘down the river’—down the Mississippi...to the regions of malaria and yellow fever; to the endless exhaustion of the cotton fields and sugar plantations. Even some of the slave-holders deplored this internal slave-trade; yet without it the Cotton Kingdom could not have prospered... Many a great gentleman of South Carolina owed his standing to his plantations and slaves in the West” (*The Penguin History of the USA*).

An estimated 10 million slaves were brought to America before the Emancipation Proclamation of 1862. Even more may have died in transit and within the first year of forced labor, called the “seasoning” period.

World War I saw anti-German sentiment arise in the U.S. In one instance a German-born Illinois resident was lynched by a mob. In response, some German families that had been in the New World for generations, Americanized their last names—Bruns became Browns, Fischers became Fishers.

In Asia

The idea of a “master race”—a people intrinsically, genetically superior to all others—has long found fertile soil in Asia.

In Japan, the belief that the emperor is a direct descendant of the gods, combined with the insular environment of the island nation—and the unique gifts and achievements of the Japanese people—have helped foster a mindset of superiority. To this day, a determination persists there to outperform other nations in every endeavor.

Only a small fraction of Japan’s population, perhaps 2 percent, is registered as foreign. In 2005, a United Nations investigator was “concerned that politicians used racist or nationalist themes...to whip up popular emotions. He singled out the treatment of ethnic Koreans and Chinese and indigenous tribes” (*BBC*).

On the mainland, the Chinese have their own version of racial superiority: “The human race, according to a Chinese legend, was created by a divine potter who left his clay figure of a man too long in the kiln. When it came out burned and black, he threw it away as far as he could—and it landed in Africa. The second one he pulled out too soon: It was too white. So he threw that one away, more gently, and it landed in Europe. Now he knew the correct timing. The third man was a gorgeous yellow, and from him the East Asian races descended” (*The New York Times*).

In Africa

Racism in Africa did not start with the colonial period, nor did it end with that time’s passing. As terrible as European and American slavery was, it was rivaled beforehand by the routine

enslavement of one African tribe by another.

Despite slavery now being outlawed in virtually every nation, descendants of colonial-era slaves are still in forced servitude in remote regions of countries such as Niger today.

Former president of Benin, Mathieu Kerekou, in a 1999 speech at a primarily African-American church near Baltimore, Maryland, recalled the roles of oppressors on both sides of the Atlantic: “Benin is located on the Slave Coast, and a lot of slaves were sold out into the Americas from my country, Benin, and most of the black people you see in Haiti...in Brazil, and even here in the U.S. all came from Benin. And others come from Nigeria...And if you’ll be found in the streets of Africa, people will certainly think of you as being citizens either of Benin or Nigeria...”

“Benin, my country, was the most important place for slave trade...We are the ones—our ancestors were the ones who sold out your ancestors to the white people, and the white people bought your ancestors and got them into the various countries that they sent them just to build their economies, in the plantation, in the factories, farms just like in America here” (University of Dubuque).

Tribal tension continues in Rwanda where hostilities between Hutu and Tutsi tribes have flared up since its president, Paul Kagame, who is of the Tutsi tribe, has speculated running for a third term. This has upset the Hutu tribes, who were responsible for the Rwandan genocide of 1994 when nearly 1 million Tutsi people were killed by the hand of the Hutu.

Another flashpoint of racial conflict on the continent is in Sudan. In this case, the enmity is between the Arab government and indigenous blacks in the Darfur region.

In 2004, an Arab militia leader “issued a directive to ‘change the demography of Darfur and empty it of African tribes,’” *Outside Magazine* reported.

“Change the demography” is a clinical-sounding phrase that reflects

a process more accurately described elsewhere as *ethnic cleansing*.

“Estimates on the number of dead range from 200,000 to 400,000 if you count starvation and disease. Close to three million people have lost their homes” (ibid.).

More than a decade later, conditions grow worse. “We have seen more violent displacement of people in Darfur this last year than in 10 years,” Samantha Power, U.S. ambassador to the UN, told *NPR* in 2015.

“Ten years ago, however, Darfur enjoyed a perch at the top of the international peace and security agenda. Today, the suffering of the people of Darfur has become less visible. Our attention has been diverted.”

Shaping the 20th-century World

Racist ideology, including but not limited to anti-Semitism, helped ignite World War II, with the aftermath shaping the global balance of power for the rest of the 20th century.

Adolf Hitler’s Nazi party forged his notions of world domination by an

Aryan uber-race into domestic and foreign policy. He considered Germany’s Slavic neighbors to the east “mud races.” America was a “mongrel” nation, the proverbial melting pot redefined as a cauldron of racial impurity.

Jewish men, women and children in Europe were reduced to “the Jewish problem,” to be solved through systematic mass murder.

Hitler made his intentions known in a 1939 speech: “One thing I should like to say on this day which may be memorable for others as well as for us Germans: In the course of my life I have very often been a prophet, and have usually been ridiculed for it. During the time of my struggle for power it was in the first instance the Jewish race which only received my prophecies with laughter when I said that I would one day take over the leadership of the State, and with it that of the whole nation, and that I would then among many other things settle the Jewish problem.”

“Today I will once more be a prophet: If the international Jewish financiers

in and outside Europe should succeed in plunging the nations once more into a world war, then the result will not be the Bolshevization of the earth, and thus the victory of Jewry, but the annihilation of the Jewish race in Europe!” (*The Speeches of Adolf Hitler*).

“British Israelism”

British Israelism is a corruption of the biblical truth regarding the modern descendants of the “Lost Ten Tribes” of Israel. So-called British Israelists often equate the now-antiquated British Empire with the kingdom of God. This is at odds with Scripture, which clearly states that Jesus Christ will establish this kingdom (government) at His Return, still in the future. (See II Timothy 4:1.)

It is true that the Jewish inhabitants of the modern state of Israel on the eastern edge of the Mediterranean, as well as the Jewish Diaspora around the world, do not represent *all* of the 12 tribes of ancient Israel. They are primarily descended from Judah, *one* of the 12 tribes.

“I don’t understand this world anymore.”

A father uttered these words after a school shooting where many lay slaughtered. His daughter had been trapped inside the building.

Such a reaction is perfectly understandable given that world troubles and evils continue to worsen. Appalling violence, terrorism and war are escalating as human nature hurtles further out of control.

Yet you CAN understand both this world and the cause of its troubles. Understanding human nature is the key.



Order the free booklet *Did God Create Human Nature?*
at rcg.org/dgchn for the plain answers!

Ed Koch, the Jewish mayor of New York City from 1978 to 1989, was quoted in *U.S. News and World Report* as saying, “The 10 Lost Tribes of Israel we [Jews] believe ended up in Ireland.” In fact, the British Isles are among a number of places to which these tribes migrated.

But many British Israelists exclude the Jews altogether, portraying them as scheming impostors. They also apply the “master race” idea to Anglo-Saxons—conveniently, since most of them are of this background. In its worst forms, it closely resembles neo-Nazi white supremacist thinking.

British Israelism is a particularly dangerous and repugnant form of racism because it claims to be justified by the Bible. This causes some people to accept its validity without close scrutiny and pushes others to recoil from the Bible under the false assumption that the idea is found within its pages.

Does God Play Favorites?

Those who believe in the God of the Bible must face the question: *Did* God create a master race? Is it Old Testament Israel?

From early in the book of Genesis, Scripture follows the forefathers of the nation of Israel, then the nation itself, as well as other nations—as they came in contact with Israel. The New Testament follows *spiritual* Israel, the Church (see Galatians 6:16), and refers often to Israel, all the way to near the end of its last book (Rev. 21:12).

But does this make the Israelites God’s master race? No! God chose Israel as a small nation of slaves, one that was willing to follow Him because of their dire circumstances. He was also keeping a promise to Abraham, grandfather of Israel (Jacob), who faithfully obeyed Him: “The LORD did not set His love upon you, nor choose you, because you were more in number than any people; for you were the fewest of all people: But because the LORD loved you, and because He would keep the oath which He had sworn unto your

fathers, has the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt” (Deut. 7:7-8).

Israel was intended to be a model nation. Ultimately, though, they failed because they did not resist the pulls of the flesh or the idolatry practiced in neighboring nations. But in spite of themselves, they proved the point: unless a nation—or person—is converted to a spiritual mindset (Matt. 18:3; Acts 3:19), failure is inevitable.

Root of the Problem

As stated by columnist Stanley Crouch in 2001: “Every group needs to know that evil transcends color, place, politics, sex and religion. It is a universal and recurrent problem we all have to face and fight” (*The New York Daily News*).

Again, no one is immune, either to the effects of racism, or to falling into this mindset themselves. Even the apostle Peter, who was used by Jesus Christ to lead the New Testament Church from AD 31 until his death, fell into prejudice on at least one occasion: “For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If you, being a Jew, live after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compel you the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?” (Gal. 2:12-14).

But racism is only a symptom of a greater problem, not the disease itself. Behind this effect is a cause: human nature is selfish, and gravitates toward hatred. It prefers itself, and reflexively dislikes anything that is much different from it. If we think that we are entirely innocent, we deceive ourselves. (See Jeremiah 17:9.)

This nature must be changed. The good news is that it will be!

Plan for All Races

God is the Creator of all races—yellow, black and white (with brown and red). Each has strengths and gifts as well as weaknesses.

God’s solution for racism has never been to erase the distinctions of the races by intermingling them until there is one homogenized “in-between, not-quite-white/black/yellow” race. This would effectively erase the diversity that He created.

The solution is to enable humanity to unlearn hatred, anger and prejudice, through a real change of heart: “For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to Me a people” (Heb. 8:10).

Those whom God calls to His way of life are unlearning racism now. True Christians “have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him: Where there is neither Greek nor Jew... Barbarian [nor] Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all” (Col. 3:10-11).

At a time that is fast approaching, “...there [will] be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians.

“In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be *Egypt My People*, and *Assyria the work of My hands*, and *Israel Mine inheritance*” (Isa. 19:23-25).

To continue learning about the details of God’s plan for the modern descendants of ancient Israel and all of humanity, read David C. Pack’s eye-opening book, *America and Britain in Prophecy* at rcg.org/aabibp. □

UK Slashes Defense Spending



that confronted our country some 90 years ago and that which now prevails.” Referring to the interim period between the first and second world wars, he said that Britain was unable to face the “growing menace that Nazism presented to European stability.”

“Today, although in very different circumstances, there are some uncomfortable similarities. For example, in the wake of unfinished business in Iraq and Afghanistan, there is currently little public appetite for further, significant military intervention abroad.”

The British government began a defense review this year that will determine manpower and equipment needs based on current threats. Previous reviews have resulted in cuts such as one in 2010 that reduced the armed forces’ equipment significantly and cut the army from 102,000 to 82,000 men.

British First Secretary of State George Osborne announced that the Ministry of Defense needs to make 500 million pounds (over 764 million USD) worth of cuts this year, *DefenseNews* reported.

Despite the announcement, Defense Secretary Michael Fallon reiterated a pledge by the conservative government that he would not cut the number of armed forces personnel or equipment budget. This came after “US President Barack Obama and his defense secretary, Ash Carter, both spoke out against Britain allowing defense spending to fall below the 2 percent level [of the nation’s GDP],” the news outlet stated.

With regard to additional cuts, Sir Nigel commented in the *Telegraph* piece, “If the outcome of the [defense] review is a further reduction in military expenditure and not a commitment to a sustained increase, then the Government will be neglecting its prime and overriding duty, the defence of the nation, by failing to halt the progressive decline of British military capability into penny packet numbers.” □

THE MILITARY STRENGTH of the United Kingdom is “feeble” in the face of growing global threats, the nation’s highest commanders have warned. Years of personnel cuts in the armed forces, reduction of arms, and withdrawal from the Middle East have caused fears that the UK would be unable to handle “the real risk of being drawn into a conflict with an increasingly aggressive Russia in Eastern Europe,” *The Telegraph* reported.

Four former leaders of the Armed Forces, Admiral Sir Nigel Essenhigh, Admiral Lord Boyce, Field Marshal Lord Walker, and Air Chief Marshal Sir Peter Squire, have said that the UK’s failure to respond to crises in Iraq, Syria and Russia is akin to appeasing Germany before World War II.

In an article written for *The Telegraph*, Sir Nigel expressed “disquieting parallels between the situation

■ **MEETING THE TROOPS:** British Defense Secretary Michael Fallon, left, talks to UK instructors after military exercises outside of Kiev, Ukraine (Aug. 11, 2015).

PHOTO: SERGEI SUPINSKY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



MAGIC, HORROR AND THE OCCULT— WHY THE ATTRACTION?

Dark-themed entertainment is wildly popular. Yet most never consider the source of this fascination.

BY SAMUEL C. BAXTER

A TOP-RATED PRIMETIME television show about an elite team that hunts serial killers is renewed for an 11th season. Similar network series revel in the details of sadistic murders, with many blurring the lines between good and evil. Cable television stations continuously churn out “real life” ghost specials, with titles such as *Psychic Kids* and *My Haunted House*. A supernatural horror film about paranormal activity has spawned four sequels in eight years. More than 17 million viewers tuned in to watch the season five premiere of a blood-guts-and-gore zombie TV series.

It does not stop with adults. A wildly popular series about a teenage wizard is worth an estimated \$15 billion when including factors such as book and movie sales, merchandising and a theme park.

Undoubtedly, dark-themed entertainment, in the form of movies, books, television shows, and video games, is here to stay.

Publishing houses and film studios have turned this pop-culture phenomenon into a multibillion-dollar industry. Take vampires, for example. *DailyFinance* estimates that movies, television series, books, magazines and costumes for fanged “creatures of the night” constitute at least a \$10 billion industry in the United States. For audiences worldwide, this sort of entertainment has an unmistakable draw.

A common reason for the interest in “dark” storylines appears innocent on its face: “It’s entertaining.” Other factors include the pull of romance, endearing characters, or “the thrill of the chase.”

Yet the draw for the horror genre is more difficult to explain. McGraw-Hill Education’s *AccessScience* attempted to bring a psychological answer to why audiences enjoy watching gruesome events unfold: “Researchers have identified various motives for viewing

horror films, including the need for excitement, the desire to feel intense emotions, and distraction from everyday concerns. Although dramatic films can fulfill some of these needs, movies depicting violence and horror have features that other forms of drama do not, including the violation of social norms and the portrayal of events seldom seen in real life.

“People rarely view horror films alone...For many young people and adults, horror films are a topic of conversation, a source of shared experience, and a means of self-presentation. Not everyone will like the blood and gore, but many may continue to watch because of other goals, such as demonstrating their ability to tolerate it, or the desire to master the threatening images.”

Scientists call this the “horror paradox”: while fear and disgust are negative emotions, moviegoers flock to theaters for the latest “slasher” flick, skin-crawling ghost story, or paranormal monster tale.

Stop and think. Why do so many willingly watch grotesque killings? Why are vampires and zombies so interesting? What motivates the desire to sit through 90-plus minutes of macabre images?

A connection runs through these plot lines—the occult. *Collins English Dictionary* defines “occult” as “characteristic of magical, mystical, or supernatural arts, phenomena, or influences,” “beyond ordinary human understanding,” and “secret or esoteric.”

The few stories that do not involve mysticism or the supernatural exhibit the darkest sides of human nature, such as the inner workings of a psychopathic killer’s mind.

This sort of entertainment demonstrates an innate human attraction to the mysterious, secret and unknown. It reveals a deep desire to have knowledge “beyond ordinary human understanding.” But why?

Nothing New

Looking through history, this is not a passing fad. The Brothers Grimm recorded extremely dark folk tales in

the 1800s. Edgar Allen Poe penned paranormal short stories and poems around the same time.

These themes often have ties to religion. Greek mythology is chock-full of magical beasts such as centaurs, the Minotaur, and the snake-haired Medusa. In Japan, a shape-shifting fox-like trickster, known as *kitsune*, permeates folklore, as do stories of ghosts and demons. The voodoo religion also claims interaction with supernatural powers.

Many other ancient pagan religions went to great lengths to connect with the “spirit realm.” For example, classic-era Maya royalty used blood-letting, drugs and human sacrifice to attempt to commune with the universe. Similar accounts of going to extremes can be found in nearly every major culture: Rome, Babylon, Egypt, etc.

This desire to understand the “unknown” can be found throughout the historical record of the Bible as well. The prophets of Baal attempted to reach their god through bloodletting (I Kgs. 18:28). Israel’s King Saul visited a witch at Endor in an attempt to summon the dead (I Sam. 28:7). King Manasseh of Judah sacrificed his son to the god Molech (II Kgs. 21:6). Also, Pharaoh’s court magicians used sorcery during the 10 plagues of Egypt (Ex. 7).

The early apostles ran into a man who was involved with witchcraft in the New Testament book of Acts: “But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries” (Acts 8:9-11).

All of the above practices had roots in an ancient Babylonish mystery religion described in Revelation 17:5. And this same belief system was practiced by Simon the sorcerer. Adherents to it claimed that they had secret knowledge and spiritual power—often brought about by “dark” practices.

In the West today, actual bloodletting and human sacrifice seem to be barbaric acts. Yet many eagerly enjoy watching such practices in the form of motion pictures and fiction books.

Mind Versus Brain

The innate human desire to understand the “unknown” not only manifests itself through modern religions, but also through occult- and paranormal-themed entertainment.

Unknown to almost all, the Bible provides a meticulously detailed map of human nature and explains exactly *why* mankind has an intense interest in spiritual things. The beginnings of an answer come from the book of Job: “But *there is a spirit in man*: and the inspiration of the Almighty gives them understanding” (32:8).

Many jump on this passage as a “proof-text” for their argument of the immortal soul belief. Yet this is not the case. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word translated “soul” is *nephesh*, which simply denotes a living, breathing being. Every animal labeled a “living creature” in Genesis 1 uses the same Hebrew word.

Man does not have a soul—he *is* one. It is due to this “spirit in man” that the human mind is so vastly superior to animals in intellect and ingenuity, and possesses near-limitless creative power.

When one understands that the human brain *contains* a spirit, mankind’s intense desire to seek out and understand the supernatural begins to make sense.

Conflicting Wavelengths

Genesis, the first book of the Bible, further explains the spiritual component of the human mind. Adam and

Eve were given a choice between two trees (Gen. 2:9): “the tree of life,” representing access to the Spirit of God—and “the tree of knowledge of good and evil.”

Most consider this story the stuff of Hebrew myth and folklore. But it helps provide the *only* full explanation for the attraction to dark-themed entertainment.

of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.

“And the serpent said unto the woman, You shall not surely die: for God does know that in the day you eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat” (Gen. 3:1-6).

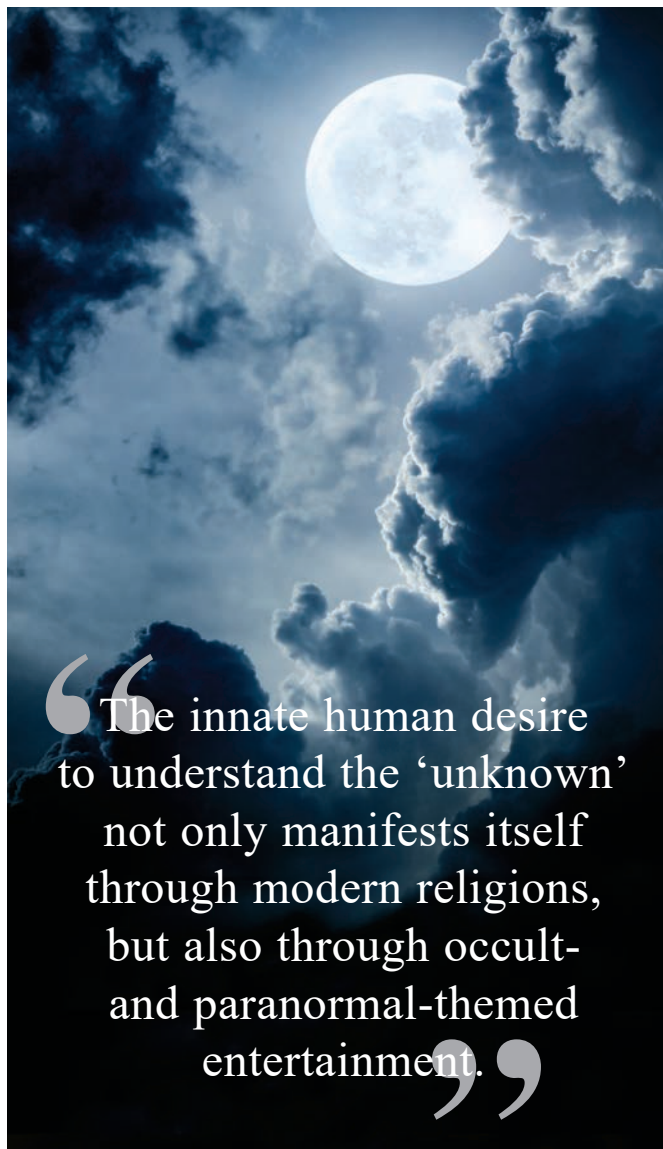
Due to this choice, Adam and Eve were cut off from God’s Spirit working with the “spirit in man” (vs. 24).

By reading I Corinthians 2, this fact takes on further significance for all of mankind: “For what man knows the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?”—the spirit of man allows for self-awareness and creative genius—“even so the things of God knows no man, but the Spirit of God” (vs. 11).

Take this verse at face value: man cannot know godly spiritual knowledge without “the Spirit of God.” The human mind was created to have a grander spiritual connection. The Creator intended each individual to have the Holy Spirit *working with*

the spirit of man in order to achieve his fullest potential.

When God’s Spirit works within the human mind, it brings forth the fruit of good character listed in Galatians: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance...” (5:22-23).



“The innate human desire to understand the ‘unknown’ not only manifests itself through modern religions, but also through occult- and paranormal-themed entertainment.”

The first man and woman did not choose “the tree of life”: “Now the serpent [Satan] was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yes, has God said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?”

“And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees

Yet remember the decision in the Garden of Eden. There was a choice between two paths. If Adam and Eve rejected one spiritual connection, they would necessarily have had to have chosen a different wavelength—a different spirit—since there were only two options: “Wherein in time past you walked according to the course of this world, according to the *prince of the power of the air* [Satan], the *spirit* that now works in the *children of disobedience*” (Eph. 2:2).

The “spirit of man” is either influenced by the Holy Spirit or Satan’s “spirit that *now works in the children of disobedience.*”

Being tuned into Satan’s wavelength has a profound effect on human nature: “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, *witchcraft*, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, *murders*, drunkenness, revelings, and such like...” (Gal. 5:19-21).

This is a list of characteristics that are part of human *nature*—“the works of the flesh.” This means people are *naturally* drawn to these works, including witchcraft and murder. This is what makes horror novels, movies about serial killers, and occult-heavy video games so attractive.

Human nature also:

■ **Tends toward extremes.** Look at the horror genre. What used to be based almost solely on suspense and the thrill of the chase, now includes graphic depictions of madmen methodically torturing their victims. Of course, this is always brimming with extreme close-ups of each tear of flesh and squirt of blood. Many of these titles feature scenes that are unspeakable (Eph. 5:12). As time goes on, these titles must necessarily become *increasingly* explicit and *more* depraved. Each subsequent movie *must* outdo the one before it in scares and gore.

■ **Exchanges darkness for light.** Over the past decade there has been a substantial push by the entertainment industry to depict villains with fringe mindsets in normal, everyday situations. The audience is put in the shoes of a

“likable” serial killer. Vampires are no longer evil—they are the “good kind” that only drink animal blood. Witches and wizards are now just awkward teenagers growing up. The intent is to turn the *paranormal* into normal. The villain into the hero. Darkness into light. The Bible condemns this thinking: “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that *put darkness for light, and light for darkness*; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!” (Isa. 5:20).

■ **Seeks after the twisted and bizarre.** This fact can be seen throughout dark-themed entertainment, in which authors and filmmakers push themselves to come up with the most macabre and warped images imaginable.

Incredible Alternative

Satan counterfeits all Bible truths, including how God intends to work with the spirit in man. Humans were created in the “image and likeness” (Gen. 1:26) of a *Creator* that deemed everything He made as “very good” (vs. 31). Unlike any animal, mankind has taken on this trait—the ability to *create*.

God wants all of mankind to be endowed with His Holy Spirit, build His character, and use the human mind to invent, build and construct things that are “very good”—including right forms of entertainment. He always pushes for excellence and the highest quality.

Satan, on the other hand, instigates artists to always *push* the envelope, to be *more* extreme, and *delve deeply* into chaos, disorder, twisted spiritism—and all things “dark.”

God also designed man to have a connection with His Spirit and to be taught right knowledge through it. References to His “mysteries” are found throughout the Bible. Matthew 13:11 and Luke 8:10 mention the “mysteries of the kingdom.” Romans 16 states, “Now to Him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to *the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began...*” (vs. 25).

In contrast, the devil has counterfeited this interest in a “mysterious” spirit

realm through occult-themed entertainment and *mystery* religions demanding ignorant blind faith.

There is a huge difference between Satan’s counterfeits and God’s truth. The Creator always explains His truths in clear language and logic. In the end, His spiritual knowledge is both incredibly exciting and **PLAINLY** understood. Not one doctrine within the Bible’s pages is inexplicable or needs to be irrationally believed. Notice Daniel 2: “He [God] *reveals the deep and secret things*: He knows what is in the darkness, and the *light dwells with Him*” (vs. 22).

The pinnacle of God’s “mysteries” is the purpose for mankind. David C. Pack sets up this topic in the introduction to his book *The Awesome Potential of Man*: “The very greatest question is ‘Does God have a MASTER PLAN?’, and if so, what is it? The answer is that He does, and it carries many exciting details—all of which YOU can know. You will learn that God’s purpose is immutable, that it cannot be overthrown or defeated.

“You can also know of *your place* within it. In fact, if you read this entire book, you soon will.

“This volume answers every one of the most important questions that should be on your mind, including many others you would not know to ask—but need to understand. None of the answers are what you expect. Neither are they what ‘educated’ so-called ‘scholars and theologians’ teach, because none can teach what *they* were never taught—what they never learned.

“You were put on Earth to fulfill an **ASTONISHING PURPOSE**—you hold a potential far surpassing your very *greatest expectations*. Prepare now to be **SHOCKED** at what it is—and **INSPIRED** beyond your wildest imagination!”

Read the rest of *The Awesome Potential of Man* available at rcg.org/tapom to understand your incredible human purpose. Within its pages, it shows how God “reveals the deep and secret things” throughout the Bible, and proves He wants “the **LIGHT** that dwells with Him” to also dwell within you. □

MYTHS

Continued from page 15

approach. This is on top of asking if it is even *possible* to multitask.

Surprisingly, science reveals that our brains are unable to think about more than one thing at a time. Multitasking, therefore, is trying to do the impossible.

“I know it’s popular to think that you are multi-tasking, but the research is clear that people actually can’t multi-task...” *Psychology Today* reported.

“The research shows that people can attend to only one cognitive task at a time. You can only be thinking about one thing at a time. You can only be conducting one mental activity at a time. So you can be talking or you can be reading. You can be reading or you can be typing. You can be listening or you can be reading. One thing at a time.

“We fool ourselves—We are pretty good at switching back and forth quickly, so we THINK we are actually multi-tasking, but in reality we are not.”

Another article revealed this about how the brain works: “Since the 1990s, we’ve accepted multitasking without question. Virtually all of us spend part or most of our day either rapidly switching from one task to another or juggling two or more things at the same time.

“While multitasking may seem to be saving time, psychologists, neuroscientists and others are finding that it can put us under a great deal of stress and actually make us less efficient.

“Although doing many things at the same time...can be a way of making tasks more fun and energizing, ‘you

have to keep in mind that you sacrifice focus when you do this,’ said Edward M. Hallowell, a psychiatrist and author of ‘CrazyBusy: Overstretched, Overbooked, and About to Snap!’... ‘Multitasking is shifting focus from one task to another in rapid succession. It gives the illusion that we’re simultaneously tasking, but we’re really not. It’s like playing tennis with three balls’” (*The New York Times*).

Much time is lost when people endlessly switch between tasks. For example, it was discovered that people change tasks every 11 minutes, with it taking 25 minutes before they start working on their original project or task. Other research showed that multitasking causes a 40 percent drop in productivity!

Multitasking can also be deadly when people drive while sending text messages. Studies have also shown that even *talking* on a cellphone while driving has a negative impact, such as slower brake times. The article concluded with the admonition to try learning the art of *singletasking*. Focus on one thing at a time for maximum productivity and less stress.

Research proves multitasking is not possible. Those who try are fighting the way their brains were designed.

Myth 3: Technology Is Making Us Better

Technological advancements promise increased efficiency, more productivity, and peace of mind. Yet much has been written and debated about whether they have delivered. While technology has certainly allowed mankind to accomplish amazing things—think of medical advancements, the wonders of the Internet, vastly increased efficiencies—research reveals it comes

with negative side effects in the fine print.

For instance, it can make us more distracted and destroy our ability to focus. It also offloads our memory to devices, which dulls the mind’s powerful abilities to remember information.

While it supposedly makes us more connected to one another, many, in fact, report they are more depressed and lonelier than ever through the use of social media.

An article in the British newspaper *The Daily Mail* revealed this stunning fact regarding smartphone use: “Researchers from the University of South Maine found that people were distracted by their mobile—even when it wasn’t in use. People who couldn’t see their phone scored 20 per cent higher in a test than those who could see it. Just the presence of a phone was found to severely limit reaction times. Lead author Professor [Bill Thornton, a social psychologist at the University of South Maine,] said such behaviour is typical of ‘behavioural addiction’ and ‘diminishes our ability to maintain attention.’”

The article strengthened the case that most are addicted to their phones and screens (emphasis added): “Students spend up to *ten hours* a day on their mobile phones, according to a study published in September. Some even said they feel stressed if their phone is not in sight. A team at Baylor University in Texas found that female students spent an average of *ten hours* a day texting, emailing and on social media while their male counterparts spent *nearly eight*. Lead author James Roberts said the idea of becoming addicted to using a mobile phone was ‘an increasingly realistic possibility’” (*ibid.*).



Many smartphone users check their phones as the first thing they do when waking up and the last thing they do before going to sleep. One study revealed that the average smartphone user checks it 150 times per day and cannot go 10 minutes without playing with the technological device.

Losing Empathy

Extreme use of technology is also causing normal social graces to be abandoned faster than old software can be replaced with updates.

I will never forget what I saw on a trip to Puerto Rico with my wife. We were dining at a restaurant on a hotel resort. Tables were filled with families and friends enjoying meals together. One table stood out. A group of 20-something young men were at a table eating and drinking.

But were they talking? No. Each used his phone throughout the entire meal and only occasionally did one of them look up at another, say a brief sentence, and then resume staring at his screen.

I was stunned! How sad that we no longer seem to care about simply talking with one another.

A *CNN* article showed that an overabundance of technology even hinders young people's ability to develop empathy: "...8- to 18-year-olds on average spend 11½ hours a day using their technology. Their brains have become 'wired' to use their tech gadgets effectively in order to multi-task—staying connected with friends, texting and searching online endlessly, often exposing their brains to shocking and sensational images and videos. Many people are desensitizing their neural circuits to the horrors they see, while not get-

ting much, if any, off-line training in empathic skills..."

"In a 2002 study published in *Brain and Cognition*, Robert McGivern and co-workers found that adolescents struggle with the ability to recognize another person's emotions. The teenage volunteers in their study had particular difficulty identifying specific emotions expressed by another person's face.

"These young people were at an age when they are still developing the capacity for empathy, the ability to understand another person's emotional point of view. In many ways, the young teenage brain is non-empathic."

The piece went on to show the damaging role technology is playing in this trend.

More Negative Effects

A *Business Insider* article outlined more of the serious downsides to being continuously connected to devices: "We spend 13 hours a week on email and unlock our phones 110 times a day. What is that doing to our brains? The short answer is it's making them worse, according to the *Harvard Business Review* and other sources. Here's the science:

"It saps our time: Every time you get interrupted—like when your phone buzzes with a new email or your Gmail tab compels you toward the inbox—you lose 20 minutes. According to a University of California-Irvine study, that's how long it takes to reacquaint yourself with the details of what you left.

"It makes us dumber: A psychiatrist at King's College London University found that fussing with your email leads to a functional drop of 10 IQ points, more than smoking marijuana."

Studies also show that students in a classroom who handwrite their notes benefit much more than those who type on a laptop. A *Scientific American* article reported the conclusions of the latest research. Two groups of students were tested on memory, comprehension of concepts in what they were reviewing, and their ability to summarize and condense the knowledge. What researchers found was fascinating. The students who wrote notes by hand had "a stronger conceptual understanding and were more successful in applying and integrating the material than those who used took notes with their laptops."

Surprisingly, the late founder of Apple, Steve Jobs, whose company invented the popular iPhone, put strict limits on his children's use of technology. He told *New York Times* journalist Nick Bilton, "They haven't used it [the iPad]. We limit how much technology our kids use at home."

The journalist observed that a number of other business leaders in technology took a similar approach: "Chris Anderson, the former editor of *Wired* and now chief executive of 3D Robotics, a drone maker, has instituted time limits and parental controls on every device in his home."

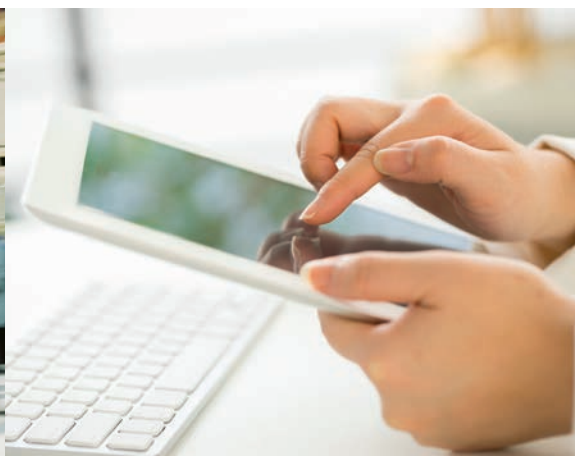
Mr. Anderson said, "...we have seen the dangers of technology firsthand. I've seen it in myself, I don't want to see that happen to my kids."

So what was family life like in Steve Jobs' "low-tech world"? Every night at dinner they spent time talking to each other, telling stories, and discussing history or life lessons.

A growing number of studies reinforce the theory that smartphones are making people dumber. We no longer have to think for ourselves, which is



OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2015



27

causing us to lose the ability to do it. Instead, we are offloading mental thought processes to computers.

People today, especially the younger generation, seem to be almost *allergic* to thoughts. I knew someone who was *always* either listening to the radio or music, working or talking on the phone. She told me she did this so she would never have to be “alone with her thoughts.”

During the Civil War, General Ulysses S. Grant faced a crucial decision about whether to continue pursuing Confederate General Robert E. Lee. Grant had just lost a tremendous number of troops in recent battles.

His options? Fight on or rest. He sat down and thought hard about what to do. Alone. In quiet moments. He did not turn to the Internet blogosphere to consult the pundits. He did not check his Twitter account. He did not survey the troops or take a poll. *He meditated.* Eventually, it was his decision to keep attacking General Lee that caused the south to later surrender and the war to be won.

Imagine the outcome if Grant had not made a regular habit of deeply contemplating his next move...

Myth 3—that technology is making us better—has been debunked. Despite technology’s many benefits, the latest research shows that overusing it has serious side effects.

With these three myths scrapped, we are now ready to examine the solution.

Way Out

My experience watching the meteor shower reminded me of a verse from the Bible recorded thousands of years ago by Israel’s King David. He once looked up at a majestic sky filled with stars, planets and galaxies and observed: “When I consider [or see] Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; what is man, that You are mindful of him? And the son of man, that You visit him?” (Psa. 8:3-4).

Could David have deeply pondered life’s great questions while watching a live streaming NASA event, and

simultaneously checking his email and texting a friend?

Of course not! God never meant for us to run around and serve a god of productivity while trampling social graces and losing our ability to think. Even though technology has its place in our modern age, we must learn to use it in a balanced way while never forgetting the wisdom given to us by those of past generations.

In passages unknown to most, the Bible has much to say about how people should approach their daily routines, including their work lives. Notice this about the importance of maintaining a proper schedule, “It is *vain* for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so He [God] gives His beloved sleep” (Psa. 127:2).

Even though people could think this does not apply to our society now, slaving away to achieve the maximum amount of output invariably causes one to “sit up late” and then “rise up early.”

Many try to cheat the system by scrimping on sleep. But God plainly states this “vain” pursuit leads to sorrows. The Hebrew word for “vain” brings greater meaning: “*evil* (as *destructive*), literally (*ruin*) or morally (especially *guile*); figuratively *idolatry* (as *false*, *subjectively*), *uselessness*... *vain*, *vanity*” (*Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*).

God emphasizes that He gave mankind sleep so it would be able to recuperate after a long day of work. Numerous studies and documentaries have discovered the devastating effects lack of sleep have on people’s mental and physical health.

In addition, Jesus asked His disciples, “Are there not twelve hours in the day?” (John 11:9). This rhetorical question was to make a point about productivity. There are limits to what we can accomplish in one day.

We all have a certain amount of time to get things done and Jesus knew the value in managing priorities. But many today ignore this important principle, causing needless anxiety. They stay up late and rise early, all to try to get ahead of the curve.

Christ also warned His disciples about stressful worrying in Matthew 6:34: “Take therefore no [anxious] thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

Jesus understood the importance of living “in the moment” and not becoming caught up in the stresses of life.

The real casualty of the modern rat-race existence is the inability to think about the big things in life—the real purpose behind our existence. Instead, we have become too caught up in the day-to-day issues in our lives to devote time to ponder *why we are here*. So many have outsourced their thinking and memory to machines, external hard drives on computers or phones. Computers think for them. But we saw this comes with dangerous side effects.

In a *New York Times* opinion article titled “The ‘Busy’ Trap,” the author emphasized the importance of having time to think. After going to a private place, he wrote (emphasis added): “Idleness is not just a vacation, an indulgence or a vice; it is as indispensable to the brain as vitamin D is to the body, and deprived of it we suffer a mental affliction as disfiguring as rickets. *The space and quiet that idleness provides is a necessary condition for standing back from life and seeing it whole*, for making unexpected connections and waiting for the wild summer lightning strikes of inspiration—it is, paradoxically, necessary to getting any work done...”

Take back control of your life! Strive to lead a balanced life. Make a habit of giving yourself more time to think. Pull back from the daily grind that is the modern society. Think about what really matters in life. Take time to spend with family and friends. Enjoy meals together without allowing technology to cause interruptions. Ponder the deeper questions.

To learn about the true purpose of your life, including your incredible potential, request our free booklet *Why Do You Exist?* available at rcg.org/wdye. □

PERSONAL

Continued from page 2

how to build a wonderful, joyful marriage. There are basic principles unknown to all but a very few who are willing to truly study and believe God's Word to see what He instructs.

God's Instructions from the Beginning

The first reference to marriage describes Adam and Eve being brought together by God, forming the first marital union of a man and woman in history. Genesis 2 states, "The LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a help meet [suitable] for him" (vs. 18).

God explains that men and women were not designed to be alone. People never work as well—are not as productive—when they are alone. Men were created—in fact, designed—to need an assistant, a help, a wife to stand beside them. Of course, wives are also aided by husbands in a variety of ways.

Studies show that the average person becomes happier after marriage. This increase has actually been measured, with studies revealing that, no matter the person's prior level of happiness, he or she receives at least a small boost.

Genesis describes Adam inspecting all the animals God had created and finding none suitable for him. So God put him to sleep, took a rib from his side, and created the woman: "And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made He [the Hebrew means "built"] a woman, and brought her unto the man" (Gen. 2:22).

Adam realized the woman was literally part of him—that she had come from him: "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (vs. 23).

Next, God tells Adam and Eve what to do once married—in His first recorded instruction about the marriage institution: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother,

and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (vs. 24-25).

Married couples are to live together, forming a new household, apart from their parents. The phrase "and they shall be one flesh" is speaking of sexual relations. The verse is defining where sex belongs—within marriage!

This account establishes marriage as God-ordained! This institution was created, designed and presented to the first human couple as the way that God intended the two sexes to live together.

Now notice this passage in Ecclesiastes describing the advantages of marriage: "Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labor" (4:9). And, "For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls; for he has not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?" (vs. 10-11). This is in addition to, "If one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken" (vs. 12).

Notice the phrase "a threefold cord." This establishes the minimum number to be a family. One child makes any couple "threefold." To be a rope—a "cord"—a minimum of three strands is required, making it possible to weave them together. Each additional child then further strengthens the marriage, makes the rope stronger, and binds the family more, making it harder for a couple to break up. God explains that producing a family is central to marriage. Adam and Eve were told, "Be fruitful, and multiply" (Gen. 1:28).

Husband's Responsibility

The most crucial New Testament passage about marriage and the specific roles of husbands and wives is Ephesians 5:22-33. These 12 verses introduce the most fundamental understanding that each partner *must* bring to the marriage.

"Husbands, *love your wives*, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it" (vs. 25). This

emphasizes the importance of husbands showing real, sincere, deep love for their wives!

The husband's first and greatest responsibility is to unfailingly love his wife! Initially, many husbands try to do this, but their effort wanes over time. Men often begin to take their wives for granted, not realizing they are to love them "as Christ loved the church." This is the extremely high standard that God sets—an unending, boundless love, paralleling the way Christ cares about His bride, the Church. Christ never gives up on the Church, but rather forgives, understands, is patient with, and works with His wife-to-be.

Wife's Responsibility

What about wives? Let's read their most crucial obligation—understood by so few: "Wives, *submit yourselves* unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Eph. 5:22). Society has completely reversed, and denigrated, the Bible. Yet, this is what God requires of the woman. Remember, the Author of marriage knows what works.

Most women are taught today that they are equal in authority to their husbands. Certainly women *are* equal before God as human beings. Men are not more important or better than women. But God places the man in charge of the marriage.

The Bible is plain.

The typical marriage counselor laughs at this, seeing it as archaic and out-of-step. Few brides-to-be enter marriage having been taught anything about being subject to their husband's loving authority. Most would ridicule and outright *reject* this idea!

How It Works

Today, many men are unwilling to take the lead in marriage. Of course, many get married only to find their wives have no intention of letting them lead. These are separate problems, and both are very *real*.

Society has seen the near disappearance of strong leadership, with most men no longer knowing how to lead. This creates a crucial void in the marriage—and it frustrates women,

who were designed by God to most naturally follow the strong but loving lead of a wise man. Women were designed to need to know their husbands love them, and will provide for and take care of them. A woman should feel that, if necessary, her husband will defend her with his life! (Reread Ephesians 5:25.)

Understanding these things leaves a woman much more secure and comfortable in the role of follower.

A woman married to a man who will not lead will spend her marriage frustrated, unable to know when to passively accept indecision or to speak up and take action because her husband will not. Many women are forced to step into a leadership void in their homes, because the man will not fill it—and somebody has to. Someone must take the lead whenever any two or more people do *anything!*

On the other hand, some husbands view their role like a drill sergeant over raw recruits. They try to *drive* their wives, bossing them around, frustrating and squelching them.

No woman wants to feel her opinions do not count—that her views do not matter, because the man “knows everything.” This is no better, and is even in some ways worse, than a marriage in which a man will not lead. For a marriage to achieve the peace and hap-

piness that God intends, both extremes must be avoided.

Husbands should gently and lovingly lead their wives, drawing them out, asking their advice—and using it when appropriate. A wise husband knows that his wife is his *best advisor*—that she knows him best and knows how to compensate for his areas of weakness.

This verse repeats and adds to the husband/wife instruction: “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them” (Col. 3:18-19).

The wife’s role is given first because family government must be established before anything productive can be accomplished. Again, the husband must *lovingly* lead the wife—and that is why God inspired Paul to record this twice. But if the wife does not submit, the marriage will not last. All the love in the world from the husband will not keep a marriage together if the wife is determined to be in charge. Also, all the family government in the world will not keep it together if the husband does not truly love his wife.

No successful marriage can have one—*either* one—without the other!

Another vital point. Since obviously the wife must also love her husband, the husband must also periodically be willing to yield to the wife’s wiser position

or view on any given matter. He must be humble enough to take her advice when her plan is better than his own. Incidentally, feeling appreciated, understood and valued, the woman’s love for her husband then *grows!*

Husbands, be wise enough and willing to seek your wife’s counsel. Train yourself to *want* her ideas. Realize that two partially good ideas can become either one good, very good, or even wonderful idea! Your wife has much to offer, but you must be willing to receive it.

The Fine Art of Right Communication

Miscommunication, bad communication, or lack of communication is one of the leading causes of divorce. The role of the husband is to take the lead in proper communication with his wife.

Husbands must understand that the wife has often been home all day with the children. She may be frustrated, and in desperate need of conversation with someone above the age of 12—or maybe even three. The husband who comes home from work not wanting to talk, but rather to just sit down, have a beer, read the paper, and watch the news, has effectively cut off his wife from communication with another adult.

Do not forget about her needs. Talk to her. Find out about *her* day. Allow her to open up. Show interest in what she



“Successful marriages are always the product of two people working together toward the same purpose in the same way—with the same understanding.”

has accomplished and what may have happened with the children.

Wives, be sure you DO open up to your husband. You may be by nature “more verbal” or “less verbal” than he is. Depending on which is the case, strive to do a little more listening, or a little more talking. The couple should strive to find a balance in communication, with each expressing an opinion about the things on their minds.

Husbands and wives should both always remember to discuss their problems with each other, while relying on God for ultimate spiritual understanding. All problems should always be discussed with God. Wives, in particular, should discuss their spiritual problems with their husbands, while never neglecting to remember that God is the One ultimately guiding and helping them spiritually. Your husband cannot grant you salvation.

Also, avoid arguing *at all costs*. NOTHING productive *ever* comes from heated exchanges. The devastating effect of this kind of “communication” lasts longer, and bites deeper, than the couple doing it even begins to realize.

If you are wrong, always apologize. Defending the indefensible is silly—and unproductive. Never store up feelings, and then dump them in a heated moment of release. The Golden Rule—“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you”—is also the greatest rule of communication within marriage!

Manage Your Finances Together

Another point: all wage earners are paid a specific amount of money. Whether large or small, this is the amount they must live on. Financial problems—usually caused by couples living beyond their means—along with poor communication and sexual problems—form the “big three” causes for marital break-up.

A few helpful points:

■ First, develop the habit of systematic, monthly saving early in your marriage.

■ Next, avoid credit-buying. It is a trap far deeper than it appears. If you do use credit cards, pay them off immediately every month.

■ Finally, plan your purchases. Develop *priorities* so that you do not try to buy everything at once. Then, determine to buy quality as much as possible. Practice patience. Be willing to wait. You will be glad you did!

The Truly Happy Marriage

God tells husbands: “*Live joyfully* with the wife whom you love all the days of [your] life” (Ecc. 9:9). For this to be possible, the wife must be doing the same—and this should be the daily goal of every married couple. None of the principles in this article will bring true, complete happiness unless *both* mates are diligently applying them. Successful marriages are always the product of *two* people working *together* toward the same purpose in the same way—with the same understanding.

If you have a wonderful husband or a wonderful wife, you are truly blessed—and are much more unusual than you may think. But if you do not have a good husband or a good wife, then strive to grow as much as you possibly can, understanding that your mate may follow your example.

God says this to husbands who have been blessed to have found a wonderful wife: “Whoso finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor of the LORD” (Prov. 18:22).

A virtuous wife *is* wonderful—“a good thing”—and wise husbands-to-be will diligently search for such a woman before getting married. Special favor from God is just one benefit that comes from marrying a woman of great character.

Wives, strive to be special in every way that you possibly can. Husbands, strive to be worthy of such a woman. You may discover that God has sent you one.

The couple that *works* at their marriage will find that their marriage *works!*—and far better than they had ever dreamed!

On your wedding day, you promised—probably vowed!—before God to spend the rest of your life married to the same person. Do not let this commitment wane or blur in your mind. It was “for better or for worse.” It is

easy for a couple to remain committed when times are “better,” but not so easy during a “worse” phase. A close relationship with God, based on a deep recognition that He knows how to produce all the best and most wonderful things in both marriage and life, has no substitute. No matter what difficulty your marriage is facing, bring God into it. He has all the true and lasting solutions.

Commitment is the bedrock foundation of every strong marriage. Remember, “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.” The rewards that flow from dedication to your wedding vows will bring joy beyond words.

Happiness depends far more on what *you* do than on what your mate or anyone else does. No matter the current state of your marriage, you *can* improve it. Take responsibility. You can grow—and it can get better. Remember, GOD instituted the marriage covenant—and the *principles* governing its success. Without them, *real* happiness is impossible! With them, *you* can experience a boundless *joy* you have never known!

The Restored Church of God, the publisher of this magazine, offers more helpful material—and truth—ALL FREE!—on marriage and the family than any other church on Earth. And this would have to be the case with wherever is the one Church that Jesus Christ built.

The place to start is our essential booklet *You Can Build a Happy Marriage*. At rcg.org, we also have material regarding keys to childrearing, proper dating and courtship, the God-ordained purpose of sex, the family unit—and divorce and remarriage. Also examine our extraordinary magazine for teenagers, and another for families, plus seven Bible story books—and lessons in seven levels—ALL vital for teaching the truth of God’s Word to children and teenagers of all ages.

The family is under assault as *never* before. Take time to explore the vast cornucopia of truth we have available on every conceivable question you could ask about these subjects—but also many, many others. You will be so very glad that you did. □

Deadly Drug Threatens Americans

The use of a synthetic drug known as “flakka” is spreading across the country and causing a subsequent increase in overdose deaths. The drug, which can be compared to bath salts, has also resulted in a number of users committing violent acts.

“This is the worst drug I have ever seen in my 18 years of law enforcement across the board,” one Kentucky sheriff remarked to *The Kansas City Star*. □

Robots Replacing Humans

A factory in Dongguan City, China, that produces parts for cellphones has replaced 90 percent of its crew with robotic arms, resulting in a higher production rate and fewer errors. Despite the advancement, the use of robotics in place of human labor in other high-tech factories throughout China has fueled unrest among area residents in need of work. □



Trouble Staying Focused

More adults in the United States are taking prescription medicine for ADHD than children, according to data published by the treatment-selling company Shire Plc. The research revealed that, in 2014, 63 million prescriptions were administered for individuals with ADHD; 53 percent were adults and 47 percent were children. In contrast, in 2007, there were 37 million prescriptions for those with the condition—39 percent were for adults and 61 percent were for children. □



■ **DIPLOMACY:** Israeli Director General of Foreign Affairs Dore Gold delivers a speech in Jerusalem (June 1, 2015).

PHOTO: THOMAS COEX/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



PHOTO: NOAA FISHERIES/NWFSC

Underwater Threat

A toxic algae bloom up to 40 miles wide and 650 feet deep stretching from the coast of California to Alaska was discovered by surveyors of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Several fisheries off the West Coast have been shut down as domoic acid, one of the toxins released by the algae and ingested by sea life, can trigger amnesic shellfish poisoning in humans, resulting in permanent short-term memory loss, brain damage, and even death.

“...ocean researchers say this one is much larger and persisting much longer [than previous algae blooms], with higher levels of neurotoxins bringing severe consequences for the Pacific seafood industry, coastal tourism and marine ecosystems,” *The Associated Press* reported. □

Reestablishing Talks

For the first time since 2011, senior Israeli and Egyptian officials met in Cairo, Egypt, to discuss security issues. *The Times of Israel* reported, “Egyptian Deputy Foreign Minister Osama al-Majdoub made it abundantly clear to [Israeli Foreign Ministry director Dore] Gold that Cairo views the Palestinian deadlock as ‘the heart of the conflict in the region,’ and stressed the importance of restarting high-level negotiations between Jerusalem and Ramallah, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry said...” □



Diminishing Plant Life

Earth has lost over 50 percent of its trees since humans started cutting them, according to research conducted by Yale University scientists. The study, published in the journal *Nature*, found that mankind has been cutting an average of 15 billion trees per year—higher than the rate at which the planet’s over three trillion trees can be replenished. □



Struggling Youth

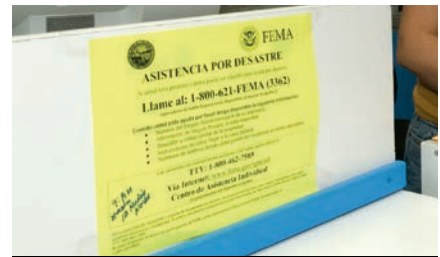
Despite receiving more education than any generation in the past, Australian adults graduating from universities are more likely to be unemployed, single and still living in their parents' homes. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare cited a demographic trend that youth unemployment increased from 8.8 percent in 2008 to 13.3 percent in 2014. Those who do find employment post-graduation often find only part-time work instead of full-time. □



■ **DILAPIDATED:** Large tanks left to rust at an abandoned oil sands mining site that has been out of commission since the 1950s are seen north of Fort McMurray, Canada (April 28, 2015).
PHOTO: IAN WILLMS/GETTY IMAGES

Reemerging Economic Difficulty

For the first time since the 2008-2009 financial crisis, the Canadian economy fell into recession during the second quarter of the year. *Reuters* reported that a steep drop in global oil prices was the primary cause for the downturn. Analysts say conditions could worsen if the price of oil continues to drop. □



■ **GROWING LANGUAGE:** A FEMA flier printed in Spanish is displayed at a store that caters to the Hispanic population in St. Charles, Minnesota.

PHOTO: PATSY LYNCH/FEMA/PUBLIC DOMAIN

Lingual Shift

The United States passed Spain as the world's second largest Spanish-speaking country, with only Mexico having more. A report published by Instituto Cervantes revealed that there are 41 million native Spanish speakers and 11.6 million bilingual individuals in America. The U.S. Census Office predicts that by 2050, the nation will have 138 million Spanish speakers, which would surpass all other countries. □

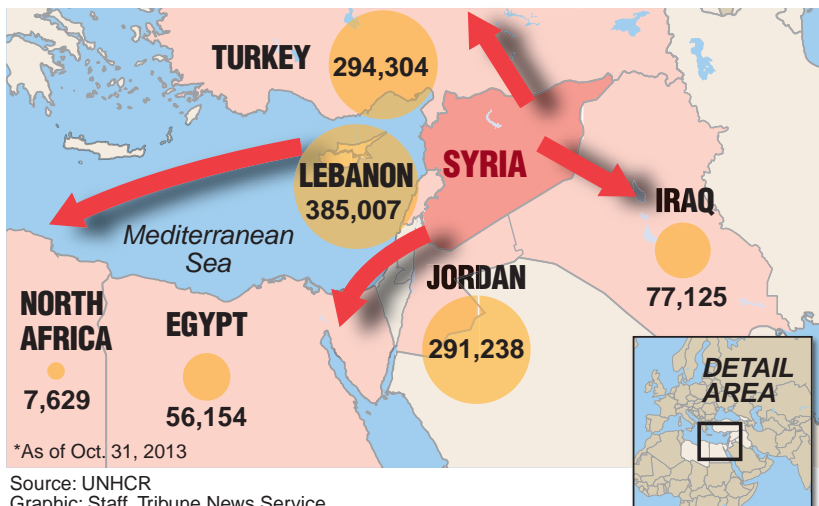


■ **RESISTANCE:** Protesters clash with National Guard troops in Kiev, Ukraine (Aug. 31, 2015).

PHOTO: IVAN KOVALENKO/KOMMERSANT PHOTO/GETTY IMAGES

Syrian Refugee Children

More than one million Syrian children have registered as refugees with the United Nations refugee organization worldwide. Of this number, some 75 percent are under age 12. Children represent more than half of the total Syrian refugee population. The graphic below shows the number of Syrian children who have fled to neighboring countries.



Geopolitical Indicators

Ukraine is at the top of the list of nations that have poor relations with neighboring countries, according to a report published in the Global Peace Index. The Institute for Economics and Peace, which carried out the study, justified the rating because of Ukraine's ongoing violent civil war. The conflict has claimed over 6,000 lives in the past 18 months. □

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