

# Life Without God

by Robert Dodson

"It is a miracle of birth," said Hatten, 35, "But we don't attribute it to a supernatural human being" (Star Telegram, May 12, 2002).

**A**CCORDING to the Star "She does not believe in God, heaven, hell or Satan. She does not know how the world came about and sees no evidence that anyone else does, either." However she is convinced that life without God does have a point." Furthermore she says, "It's a scary thing for me to think that someone has to believe in God in order to be a moral person." Finally she concludes, "I have come to accept that this is it. And quite frankly, it was very freeing for me. It made me not afraid to live my life, not afraid to take some risks."

Without God we are not only left without an explanation for Hatten's child but also for all that exists in the universe. The only logical explanation is God (Gen. 1: 1; Ps. 14:1; 19:1-3; Rom. 1:20). How can anyone contemplate the human eye, the intricacy of the nucleus of a cell or the complexity of the universe and say it all happened by sheer blind chance? Such a person believes in a miracle far more astounding than any in the Bible!

Hatten declares, "that life without God does have a point" but cannot tell us what it is. Without God man becomes,

as one eminent evolutionary biologist expressed it, a biological accident created by nature without purpose to be obliterated without regret. There is no meaning in life or reason for existence without God.

What basis is there for morality without God? If God is not up there anything goes! If suicidal people decide to crash airplanes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon killing thousands of others who and say it is wrong, if God has not spoken? If God did not create us, then we are forced to conclude that there is nothing sacred about human life. If life is not sacred, then there is no logical argument against murder, rape, assault or any other crime.

Hatten may think she is free without God, but it is the truth that sets us free (John 8: 31-32). Actually those without God are without hope and of all men most miserable (Eph. 2:11; I Cor. 15: 19). In bondage to sin no man can find real peace or happiness and risk being lost in eternity (2Peter 2:19). Belief in God is the only thing that can keep us from ultimate despair. Nothing else can take the place of God.

**"The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity; there is none that**

**doeth good"**

(Ps 53:1ASV)

**"The wicked, in the pride of his countenance, (saith), He will not require (it). All his thoughts are, there is no God"**

(Ps 10:4ASV)

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## Heartland church of Christ

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### Evangelist

Michael Demory

### Ministers

All members of the church

### Schedule of Services

Sunday—9:30am  
Wednesday—7:00pm

### Evangelistic Efforts

Dubuque Advertiser &  
TV Program

"The Bible Says"

Public Access  
Cable Channel 16  
Mon. & Thurs. @ 8:30pm  
Tues. @ 2:30pm  
Fri. @ 9:00am

### Steps to Salvation

1. Hear the Word (Rom. 10:17)
2. Believe (Heb. 11:1,6)
3. Repent (Lk. 13:3)
4. Confess (Matt. 10:32-33)
5. Baptism (1 Pet. 3:21)
6. Remain Faithful (1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Pet. 3:14)

# Choosing What's Better

By Mike Vestal

**A**LMOST everywhere we turn today we are exposed to the idea that having is the key to happiness. After all, more and bigger are better. A "bigger and better" house, car, computer, education, job, bank account, etc., that's what we want. All these will provide the key to happiness that we so desperately seek. The "bigger the better" mentality always is 'in.' And self-help gurus abound to help us achieve the goal of "bettering" ourselves (for a "nominal" fee, of course).

### What is Better Than What?

As Christians, we should be thankful for and enjoy all of God's blessings (1 Tim. 6:17-19). Life is a stewardship, a sacred trust, and we should manage all that God has given us with love and with wisdom (Lk. 16:10-12; 1 Cor. 4:1-2). The Bible also plainly teaches the priority of having a proper work ethic (2 Thess. 3:6; Col. 3:22-25). But more and bigger do NOT always equal better. Not as far as God is concerned. It's only too easy for God's gifts to become man's idols, for stewardship to become selfishness, and for work to become our religion. Hear our Lord: "And He said to them, take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses" (Lk. 12:15).

In examining the dictionary, the first two meanings given for "better" are 1. Of superior quality or excellence. 2. Morally superior; more virtuous. More and bigger cer-

tainly were not better in the rich man's case. Nor are they necessarily so in the lives of many today. Sometimes more and bigger cost far more than they are really worth!

The book of Proverbs repeatedly emphasizes this point. "**Better is a dinner of herbs where love is, than a fatted calf with hatred**" (15:17). "**Better is a little with righteousness, than vast revenues without justice**" (16:8). "**Better to be of a humble spirit with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud**" (16:19). "**He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city**" (16:32). "**Better is a dry morsel with quietness, than a house full of feasting with strife**" (17:1)." "**Better is the poor who walks in his integrity than one who is perverse in his lips, and is a fool** (19:1; 28:6). "**It is better to dwell in a corner of a housetop, than in a house shared with a contentious woman**" (21:9). "**Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed**" (27:5). The book of Proverbs was written to encourage us to make better choices, decisions made out of the wisdom of loving our Lord and seeking to please Him in every aspect of our lives.

### What is Better Than Life?

"Because Your loving-kindness is better than life my lips shall praise You" (Ps. 63:3). What a profound thought! Written during a time of great personal turmoil while in the wilderness, David extols the love and grace of God. Indeed, the whole Psalm hinges on this verse. "Because" (vs.3) of God's loving-

kindness, David “seeks,” “thirsts,” “longs” and “looks” for the Lord (vv. 1-3). And this insatiable appetite David has for God is all because His loving-kindness is better than life. Not only is God’s grace and love better than life, but also it is better than many lives.

Life is dear, but God’s love and grace are dearer. That is the fundamental principle that must be derived from this Psalm. But oh, how often we are prone to doubt here. Is God’s loving-kindness really better than life? Is it even better than a loving spouse and precious children? Is it better than dear friends and good health? Is God’s loving grace better than the countless multitude of blessings He has given us to enjoy? Is it better than life itself?

We understandably love and tenaciously cling to such good gifts, but the point remains the same. God’s loving-kindness is “better.” God’s love and grace are better than life here at its very best because as great as the gifts are, they pale in comparison to the character of the Giver. One could live a thousand lifetimes and God’s loving-kindness would still be immeasurably better than even the best this life has to offer! The difference is striking, because the difference is between the temporary and the eternal.

As dear as life here is, it also has its share of trouble and discouragement (Jn. 16:33; Acts 14:22). Like David in this Psalm, we too experience times of great difficulty, times we feel overwhelmed and deeply discouraged. We have our own “wilderness” experience, don’t we? How we need to focus more, as did David, on the love and grace of God! God is love (1 Jn. 4:8). He is the God of ALL grace (1 Pet. 5:10). His loving-kindness is super-abundant and all sufficient (Rom. 5:15-21; 2 Cor. 12:7-9). Yes, God’s loving-kindness certainly is better than life. How we all should look to our Father more. Although our circumstances may change, He does not. His love and grace are the constants in a life full of change.

Remember the words of James: “For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away” (Jas. 4:14). Life is short here for us all, but especially is it so for those who live their lives apart from knowledge of the love and grace of God. To reject or to neglect God’s loving-kindness here is to fail to enjoy Him and all He is and does, not just here, but in the hereafter.

Notice the effect God’s loving-kindness has on David. Verse four begins with the word “thus.” Because Your loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You.” “Thus” David extols God’s gracious love with his lips in praise (vs. 3). Second, he blesses the Lord with his tongue while he lives (v. 4). Third, he lifts his hands in action and love (v. 4). Fourth, David’s will or soul is satisfied with God in all His greatness (v. 5). Fifth, his mouth praises God with his joyful lips (v 5). Sixth, he remembers God at times even when it is dark and he could be afraid (v. 6). Seventh, he meditates on the Lord day and night (v. 6). Shouldn’t the loving-kindness of God have the same impact on us?

David goes on to day, “Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds

me” (Ps. 63:7-8). God helps. He upholds. We all can joyfully rest in the shadow of His wings. We can follow close behind our God. And this is all because His loving-kindness is better than life.

Conclusion

Things cannot satisfy the soul’s deepest longings. More and bigger do NOT always equal better. The Christian perspective is far superior: “We do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen. For the things which are seen are temporary, but the things which are not seen are eternal” (2 Cor. 4:18). God’s loving-kindness is better than life. Are we really choosing what’s better?



# Repentance & Restitution

By Lester Camp

**R**EPENTANCE means a change of mind. It is a change of mind that results in a change of behavior. Repentance is the result of godly sorrow (2 Cor. 7:10). Godly sorrow is the quality being so grieved by the wrongs committed in the past that there is a determination to turn away from those kinds of actions combined with a determination to do only that which is right in the eyes of God. This sorrow (godly sorrow) is not the sorrow of being caught, but sorrow that is characterized by a broken, contrite heart. Jude tells us that such a one hates even the garment spotted by the flesh (Jude 23). Repentance was described by Jonah when it was said that the Ninevites “turned from their evil way” (Jonah 3:10). When Jesus spoke of the same situation, He stated that they “repented at the preaching of Jonah” (Matthew 12:39-41).

All sin is against God and must be forgiven by God. King David recognized that though his sins involved others those sins were against God. He exclaimed, “Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned” (Ps. 51:4). God is not obligated to forgive. Forgiveness is the result of God’s mercy and grace. Forgiveness is through the blood of Christ (Eph. 1:7). Paul in that passage also referred to the “riches” of God’s grace. God’s grace is sufficient to forgive all of the sins of all of mankind.

There is no inadequacy in the blood of Christ. No matter how awful our sin is, no matter how numerous our sins are, we can be forgiven by God. If we are alien sinners (not Christians), we must do those things that God requires in order to receive the remission [forgiveness] of our sins. We must obey the Gospel to be saved from our sins. That Gospel stipulates that we must believe in Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of mankind (Jn. 8:24), repent of our sins (Lk. 13:3), confess our faith in Christ before men (Matt. 10:32), and be baptized by the authority of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins (Acts 2:38, Mk. 16:16). If we are already members of the church, we must follow God’s second plan of pardon to be forgiven. We must repent of our sins (Acts 8:22) and confess those sins to God in prayer (1 Jn. 2:9; Acts 8:22). The blood of Jesus can thus cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

In either case (alien sinner, fallen child of God), the common act required for forgiveness is repentance. It is, therefore, imperative that we understand what is meant by repentance and all that is involved in this act.

Repentance involves restitution. Restitution is restoring to another that which we have unjustly taken in our sins. If we have deprived others of some material thing, then we **must restore** to that person the thing taken or the value of that thing. If that cannot be done then reasonable satisfaction must be given. If what is taken is intangible, then every effort must be made to **remove the effects** of the wrong. In simple terms this means that if we have stolen an automobile we must return it if we have repented. We cannot keep riding around in the car if we have genuinely repented. I believe we all have the ability to understand this. This illustration has been used effectively many times. It clearly illustrates the idea of restitution involved in repentance.

If emotions were not so heavily involved in other similar situations, I believe we could see the parallel and apply this idea of restitution consistently with success. But, when “marriage” is the sin, many do not see as clearly as they would otherwise. If a person is in an unscriptural marriage (a “marriage” not authorized by God), then many want to suggest that a person can repent without giving up that which is not rightfully his or hers. Repentance requires restitution where possible. Baptism, in the case of the alien sinner becoming a Christian, does not sanctify an unscriptural relationship. The sin of adultery can be forgiven, but only when repentance occurs which means turning away from the practice of adultery. A person cannot continue in the sinful practice and have God’s approval or forgiveness. A person must stop the practice of whatever sin in order to be forgiven.

Perhaps this additional illustration will help. Suppose a practicing homosexual learned the truth and wanted forgiveness. It is impossible to have that forgiveness and have a right relationship with God while continuing to practice homosexuality. That sinful practice must stop if forgiveness is to be obtained! Baptism will not sanctify such a relationship that is sinful no more than baptism will sanctify an adulterous relationship. If forgiveness is to be obtained, then the sinful practice must stop. That is part of what repentance requires!

# Remember in Prayer

## Special Prayers

- Russell Bender
- Jeremy Sweet—blood disease
- Brethren & others in Haiti
- New evangelism efforts
- Jo Gordon—eye surgery
- Naida Williamson—broken hip
- Julie Bender—Cellulitis
- Brother Prasad (India)- is facing many trials
- Brother Odom (Abilene)—COPD
- Laurie Davis—Multiple Sclerosis
- Cody Ledesma—Drug Rehab
- Eric Boor—blood disease
- Lyra Grochmal (7 yrs)—spine cancer
- Melissa McClish—Depression
- Lilly Rucker and family—
- Rockfalls church of Christ
- Platteville church of Christ
- TV Program & Advertiser Ads
- State of our Nation
- The closing of Planned Parenthood
- The church
- The erring & the Lost

## Evangelizing the World

- Garret Derouin—Webster, Wisc.
- Scott Nedland—Rice Lake, Wisc.
- Brian Sherrell—LaCrosse, Wisc.
- Bernie Guzman—Philippines
- Fred Rhodes—Newton, Iowa
- Johnny Robertson— Martinsville, Vir
- James Oldfield—Riedsville, NC
- Derrick Brown —Jamaica
- Gary Workman—Ukraine
- Kolakaluri Prasad—Nalgonda, Dist., India
- G. Prabhu Kumar—Chennai, India
- John O’Neal—India & Ghana
- Tom Wacaster—India & Russia
- Holger Neubauer—South Haven, Michigan

## Military

- Chip O’Neal—Afghanistan
- Jonathan Duckstein—Afghanistan
- Michael Chlamon—Ft. Drum, NY
- Daniel Heflin—Ft. Drum, NY
- Jason Cunningham—Stateside
- Jon McCain—Basic Training
- Military families who are coping while loved ones in harms way