

Better Explanations 3 by Ben Huot

Better Explanations 3

4th Generation Writings

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Cleaning Our Faces

What do we struggle for
If not to please God?
What do we hope to gain
If not to get closer to Him?

When we think of purpose
We seek wisdom
When we think of meaning
We fight for the truth

Why do we see problems in the world
Before we first see corruption in our own lives?
Why do we want to save the world
When our own souls are in jeopardy?

First we need to look within
And understand who we are
Before we conquer the world
And make our mark on history

As Christians we are ambitious
And rightly so
About our primary mission
But what if we ourselves
Are also far from the Lord?

Sometimes the greatest journey
Is from our bed to our knees
From our house to our church

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And from our door to our neighbors

If there is anything holding us back?
Maybe we first need to do a self check
If we cannot reform the actions of others
Maybe we should first reform our own thoughts

In this constant assumption of sinners' guilt
And being convinced of the duplicity of the unbeliever
We need to route out any hostility to God in our own hearts
We need to conquer our own pride first

If we think we can convince others to make major changes
Should we not be prepared to change our own lives as well?
If we are going to clean house
We must remember to wash our faces first

It is easy to be convinced of someone else's sin
Sometimes we think that what others have done
Is more angering to God than what we have done
We should be brave in our swinging of the two edged sword
Just remember it cuts us as bad as it does our external enemies

With each reading of a chapter of the Bible
In the singing of each worship song
In the taking of communion or eucharist
And in each prayer we make to God

We must always consider what God has to say for us and about us
Often our greatest obstacles are in our own heart
If we think we are strong enough to stand against the world
We better have sorted through all the issues in our minds

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We think some issues are psychological and others are spiritual
This is like saying Christ and the Holy Spirit are different beings

We are sometimes the answer to our own prayers
And the subject of prayers of others
We cannot escape the reality of sin
In our own lives and minds

If we are to bring everyone to God
We have to be more serious
About breaking down the walls
That separate us from God

Too often we see other Christians
As super apostles who never fail
We need to revise this assumption
And be more realistic about our own weaknesses

It is surprising to see the seemingly minor things that we say
Often mixed in with what we consider serious sins
When the Bible lists
Those things that hold the Church back

If we want to have genuine conversations with unbelievers
It would be refreshing to start with
Speaking more openly to God and other people
And spending less time trying to defend things foolish Christians
say and do

It is easy to find fault in the many things that irritate us
About those not yet among us

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But we must realize they have an equally long list of
transgressions
That they hold against us

It is always about what is right and true
But perception matters as well
We need to be people that make unbelievers desire to believe
Before we can bring faith to those without hope

We need to remember how hard other Christians and God
Himself were knocking on our hearts
Persistence in witnessing is only part of not giving up the faith

Why do we feel the need to condemn the actions of the unsaved
Before they are yet saved
It is one thing to hold Christians accountable
To what they say they believe
But it is counter productive to hold others to our same standards
When they don't even believe in God yet

We need to look for positive ways
To share God with unbelievers
We need to find similar interests
And a basis for starting the dialogue

But if we are so offended by what they don't believe
Or by what they do or fail to do
How to we ever get to the point
Where they are accepted as one of us?

There is no rank or seniority in Christianity
Even if we have done much for God
And resolved many of our sinful ways

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We are saved by God's grace mostly
And our faith only just a little bit

2 Different Stories

Silence is a beautiful thing
God speaks a lot in silence
We need to read the Bible
Sometimes for things it is silent on
Sometimes it is more important
To understand not just what it is saying
But its tone, content, and purpose

Many see the Bible as a list of rules
Some seem to make Christ out to be a drinking buddy
The Bible truly is powerful
And God so much more than that

The power of the Bible is in what it is
The Bible contains the exact thoughts of God
Not every thought and only His thoughts concerning us
Not on His level or everything about Him
But nonetheless directly from Him
Everything we truly need to know

God's word is based on promises
He makes agreements with people over time
The agreements spans hundreds or thousands of years
Over time we get a better idea of who God is
Even animals have at least one contract with God

It is ironic that as Christians
We seem to agree upon the Bible and little else
And that basically only in name

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Many both Christians and not
May wonder why some of us spend so much time
Learning about the Bible

As a new Christian one of the first things you hear
Is that Christianity is very simple
After many years you agree in principle

But those details and doctrines
Become more and more complex
In some ways we have made it too complex
In others we have only scratched the surface of Scripture

Fundamentally God starts the Bible
With something very negative we have done
We couldn't follow even one rule

God's people collectively and individually
Go through many struggles with God and each other
And keep breaking their promises with God

In the middle part God tells us what He really wants
He also promises us some truly mind blowing stuff
Much of which we can only speculate on even now
Some of it describes Christ very well

Then God enters the very world that He created
He suffers a painful death as a common criminal
After preaching merely 3 years
Then He takes God's wrath upon Himself

He defeats the devil and returns to Earth
His gives us His own very Spirit to live within us

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To encourage and guide us

We are promised Heaven if we admit it is our fault
And stop a pattern of misbehavior towards God
We will live with God for eternity in paradise
Then, after we die, as a gift of God

At this point we are waiting for God's return
When He will destroy and remake the world
And then He will govern us directly Himself

WOW!

It is interesting to note that Tolkien based
Many ideas in his fantasy world on the Bible

How very different this is than
What you hear from politicians
Politicians do not care at all about agreement
They actually thrive on conflict

They only care about the record of your vote
With your signature on it
They will continue to promise the moon
And in the end there will be no noticeable difference

In fact, by the next election
The guy with opposite ideas gets elected
The he undoes everything the previous one did

Our government is based on lies and deceit
The government doesn't trust us at all
It wants us to always be in fear

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And it wants to know everything about us

It keeps huge amounts of records
Which it guards very poorly
And are constantly being changed
Without notice

But are being enforced
As if they were cast in stone
And guaranteed by God Himself

The government uses criminals and criminal methods
To steal information from its opponents
And then loses all these records
The criminals then use it in their scams

The government locks up the wrong person
The person is then denied basic human rights
Lives for years in prison
Suffers abuse and neglect

Often then becomes homeless
Then they monitor the person again
And this person's life spirals downwards
And it all started with getting a discount on food

So Christianity sounds more positive
And more epic and interesting as well
The future definitely gets better with it

You have to agree to the source of the problems in life
As being your own deliberate fault
But it goes up from there fast

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God cares about your future
The government cares about your past
God gives you peace
The government constantly barks at you

God brings hope
The government brings fear
God wants to forgive you
The government wants you to pay

God wants your heart
And the government wants your money
Really both want everything of you

The difference is no politician
Will do anything for you as an individual
Unless it will win them the next election

God gives freely of Himself
And often gets rejection in return
People are weird

What it Takes

When will we be happy?
We already have instant access
To almost every pleasure
Anything reducible to information

We even require little energy or space
To house these magic boxes
Music, games, shopping, travel, and communication
Do you feel happier than you were
10 or 20 years ago?

I think this century will be
When we learn of the hard limits
Of what humans can do that they want to
What the limits of technology and social institutions are
Is advanced technology compatible with advanced institutions?

We are on the verge of
Finding out if it is possible
To live the lives of those
Who are characters in science fiction universes

For someone who watches a lot of science fiction
I, even with very low expectations,
Still find many of these worlds extremely depressing

Nature on earth is usually mostly destroyed
Although it seems insects survive or even possibly thrive
People tend to be more violent than previously

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And most people become very poor

In utopian societies they usually are not technologically advanced
Or have some way to control technology
Or else they fail to be utopian

There is usually a prominent spiritual component in both
Religion never dies as does any other idea
It is just positive or negative in how it is used

There is always a place for God in His world
Because it makes no sense without Him
Rationally, emotionally, or physically
People will only be happy
When they have peace with God

We are not our own
And were never designed to live fully autonomously
We were always designed to live in concert with God
The only other option turns out to be a slave to our desires

Following our desires without self control
Ultimately leads to premature death
There is only one way to fully resolve this
There is only one satisfying path to God
That starts with admitting we are the sources of our problems

Definitely there is great evil in this world
And some powerful people make things
Much worse than they have to be

But we always have evil even in revolutions or failed states
Because we are all evil

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Every last one of us

Until we realize this
We are going to keep chasing
One addiction after another
If we are lucky
We will only eat or work ourselves to death

Some people just try to avoid God
They don't want to even think about Him
This coping method is sad
Because you still have all the suffering of life
Which comes from being human
Without the peace from the Holy Spirit

Our human society is based on fear
And as we look back it always has
It also depends on a reason for its leaders
To be the ones in power
These 2 things are key to national stability

We currently have the first but not the second
This is a much more painful way to live
Because no one trusts anyone
People end up believing whatever they want to
Without any basis in reality or thinking critically

It boggles the mind
How the people that released this technology
Had no idea how it would turn out

The only thing that seem plausible
Is that we over extended ourselves

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And our leaders are planning to unwind society
They want it to happen slowly so that they stay in power

American exceptionalism is becoming less and less plausible
As we continue to find out information
On what it takes to run the world
Basically there is a reason why other countries are so cruel
Things are harder to control in other countries

Our ideology has made us free because we internalize it
So that we cannot even think of challenging it
Without giving up our most basic beliefs

America is synonymous with what is good and right to us
This is disregarding the reality from everyone's point of view
From outside our homeland
Unfortunately God is caught in the middle
People on both sides claim religion to justify what they do

What we all should feel the need for is
Salvation from our own evil
We can be made good in the sight of God by faith in Him
This gives us the justification to be at peace with Him
And God then gives us the Holy Spirit as proof and later eternity
in paradise

So our leaders should feel free to plead their case before God
And convince Him of their needs
If their needs are spiritual or otherwise legitimate
Then God will grant it unless He has a better plan
For the longevity of their souls

Terror in the Military

There is a difference between agreeing to something
And doing it because you don't have a choice

Sometimes you are forced to make the better of 2 bad choices
There are many times you just do something
Without fully accepting both the rationale
And the inevitable consequences

The military is much like this
The concept of the military is basically this
We destroy things and kill people
When we are told to
Because worse things will happen if we do not

Many join the military
Because their alternative option is worse
There is less of that today in recruits
This is likely why the Army chose to
Motivate us by the you have no options route

My infantry training also known as basic training
Was for people who were not foot soldiers by specialty
Many of us could have gone on to college successfully
We were likely less gullible than those they were used to
Quickly we realized this was not what we signed up for

We were promised a 9 to 5 job in an office
This was true technically but not in spirit
The hard part of the military is not your specialty

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The hard part of the military its that everyone
Is put on the front lines
To support the foot soldiers better
Regardless of their specialty

The Army constantly has you on call
And continually has you do infantry training
For every specialty in your free time

The Army goes to the gas chamber once a year
They prove they can shoot their rifle once a year
They do training in some sort of combat survival skills
Every month at least

The Army is not like the Navy
The Navy gets a specialty connected to their rank
And they do little else
Except for maintenance for the first few weeks

The Army are janitors as well the whole time
Think of the Army as cleaning in the middle of combat

Again the hard part is the risk you take on
And the even harder part is the pain you might experience
Just doing your job

For the past 30 plus years in combat
The Army, Marines, and unlucky Navy and Air Force
Have had to breathe in toxic smoke
From open burn piles
That our military decided to use
To get rid of any and all waste products

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Almost any military specialty
Will expose you to toxic chemicals
I had no trouble getting a partial disability
For chronic allergic pink eye
Shortly after I left the military

So no one in their right mind
Would choose this over college
One they know the details

Especially as you can change the world
Or serve your country
Much more through college
Than with an Army enlistment

At the bottom your effect on the system is non-existent
You are lucky if you are allowed to
Increase your efficiency doing your assigned mission

I think the key point that changed my mind
About how the military is different
From what the military recruiter said
Was when I had to go into the gas chamber

My recruiter was an Army Ranger
Who served during the first gulf war
He claimed the no one uses chemical weapons anymore
And all that would happen in the gas chamber
Is you would have trouble breathing for 30 seconds

Either he was lying about the first part or the second
The third part is believable

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As there is so much tear gas in Army Ranger training

The Army is incredibly hard physically and mentally
But it was the emotional part that broke me
I never accepted what was happening was always ok with me
I never bought in to the mission of the US in the world

I never was asked to do anything immoral to anyone
But what is expected of you by the military never ends

I think one of the reasons why my battalion commander
Signed off on my early release
Was I refused to let up and not give 150%
When the lower enlisted in the battalion begged me to

I knew from the beginning
Despite my poor understanding of the military
That I had to do whatever I was told
And always give 150%

My Drill Sergeant in advanced training said
If I continue doing those 2 things
I would do well wherever I was assigned

There are no secrets or what we call privacy in the military
There is no safety or comfort for those
Who guarantee this for the other Americans

You have no rights in the military
The military justice system is at least twice as bad as ours
For punishments alone

The military is the kind of dictatorship

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That it fights against

It is something to think about
Before signing up for anything
That you think of the worst cast scenarios

And the simulated drowning and confinement
Are not the worse things that can happen
After you sign up for the military

The biggest things that got to me
Were the lack of sleep and constant terror

God is Good - We Are Not

I know that our Creator is a loving God
And I also know there is unbelievable suffering on earth
I also know we are responsible for what we do
And we are the ones responsible for suffering in the world

As much as it might be emotionally satisfying
To use God as a scapegoat
This is neither true, right, nor factual

As much as it is hard to get at the problem
We cannot just pass on the responsibility
We need to use our creativity
To find ways to show love in this world

It is our responsibility as Christians
To be more mature and more willing
To follow God wherever He leads

In a sense being Christian puts us in a position
Where we represent God
The only God very many people will ever see
Is the poor reflection of Him in us

Sometimes the fear gets to Christians too much
We need to have more respect for God
And be more willing to follow in His leading
Than to be afraid of where this might take us

Sometimes it takes courage just to stay alive

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Knowing all too well the power of evil
But we need to know the power of God more clearly

I have recently thought of what miracle God could do
That would convince people He is real
Maybe showing how Christ lived His life
Is more effective in that it shows how He is different

We have had too many people try to impress us
Too many leaders have set themselves up to be good examples
And then proceed to be just as bad as everyone else

People are crying out for a solution
And willing to risk more than ever before for it
But so many people are discouraged
They have tried everything to fix themselves
And all has failed them

Christians then appear as they have it all together
Would someone be more transparent and upfront?
Christianity is difficult to do right
And requires the biggest commitment of all

Many want wars but few will volunteer
Many Christians want to change the world
But few are willing to commit
The same is true for non-Christians

But Christianity is different, isn't it?
We should be held to a higher standard as Christians
Because we have the truth, the Holy Spirit, and the Church itself

We need to stop trying to run things our way

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We need to focus on improving who we are
Before recruiting others
The Church in America will not grow
Until we put our entire efforts on Christ

We still want to dress up God in our flag
And expect Him to speak our language

There will be greater changes in my lifetime than my parents
And even greater changes in the next generation's lifetime
Than in my generation

When the Enlightenment took place in Europe
There were 5 major ideological revolutions
In a couple generations
That we are still suffering from

Philosophy and religion change things more than
Technology, weather, and economics combined
This is because ideology can be
The biggest motivator
You can never destroy an idea
And you cannot predict what people will decide in their hearts

This is why ideology is so important to a nation
And no ideology truly dies
We are facing the same anger we didn't resolve
In the American civil war

The same pain that started America
And we based our world empire on
Is eating us up and tearing us apart within
American exceptionalism is a lie

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And many Americans are now willing to admit it

When the rest of the world thinks one way
And you do the other
You must consider the possibility that you are wrong
We are no better than Europe, Russia, the Middle East, or China

We are not unique in anything except our geography
Our ideas are straight out of Northern Europe
We are the child of the Enlightenment

America wants to be utopia
It wants to take the place of God in the world
America wants you to love it
America wants you to embrace its ideology as a religion

The one thing America does not tolerate is disloyalty
It is a world system based on its citizens
Not knowing what happens overseas
For the system to work

We need Islamic Fundamentalism
We need whatever you call the hybrid system of China
To have the freedoms we still do in America today

For America to be Christian we would have to
Prioritize other nations and non-citizens above our own
We cannot both promote self-reliance and God reliance
We cannot both base our society on self interest
And at the same time say we sacrifice for others

You cannot be both good and powerful
The things you need to do to control the world

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Will undue the greatest empire ever known
Once Americans have the dots connected for them
Of course most the evidence is likely classified

Spiritual and Emotional Thoughts

There continue to be knocks on the door
And I continue to awake out of a deep sleep
Sometimes I wonder if the fear will ever stop

Like evading a persistent stalker
A noise that keeps repeating indefinitely
The voices come and go
But the terror remains

Our society seems to live
Much of their own lives in fear
As if it is some sort of game
To keep their minds off their lives

Soldier fight their whole youth
And some their entire lives in wars
Mostly just to entertain and distract
An audience bored out of their minds

It seems much evil is done to escape
Dealing with feelings and hard issues
Most people will do anything to avoid
Self reflection and time alone

Many people's biggest fear is their own thoughts
There is a high correlation between what is fun at first
And what is bad later on

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When you do something purely for fun
Without considering the consequences
Many times the consequences are not fun

Fear is one of the most basic emotions
Many fear emptiness and stillness
Many artists and writers fear an empty page

Maybe what we really fear
Is our own freedom
There are too many choices
And we want someone
To tell us where to go
And make the decisions for us

In this way philosophy and Christianity
Have much in common
The future is uncharted territory
No one really knows how to prepare for the future

We desire control in our lives
As Americans we expect to be comfortable
But those who are truly at peace
Like most animals
Don't mind a lack of noise
Or wake up from worry

Animals really know how to relax
I think relaxing requires someone
To emotionally accept uncertainty

You have to ultimately trust someone

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I choose to trust God
And in so doing begin to trust myself

Because our inner conflicts
Are not entirely with ourselves
We struggle against evil
But we are not exactly evil itself

We do bad things
But we are not the bad things
There is a struggle within
But it is not us vs. God
Or us against ourselves

We struggle against death
Against the wall of separation
Between us and God

Christ says there is nothing we can do
To inherit the Kingdom of God (heaven)
But later He also says
With God all things are possible

God has created a way
Not only for salvation from our choices
But salvation of our minds
God wants to transform our minds
As much as He wants to save our souls

Part of changing who we are
Must start with changing how we think
Our focus needs to be on God
And this will bring things into proper perspective

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Our fears are very real to us
But they place no limits on God

Our God gives believers clarity
Just like many talk about moments of clarity
God brings a lifetime of clear thoughts

I take medication for clear thoughts
But there is more to mental illness
Than our brain chemistry

That doesn't mean chemicals in medicine are of no value
In Psalms 23
As I go through the valley of the shadow of death
My rod and my staff they comfort me

I think it is truly hard to study both the Bible
And be aware of modern psychology
But to not see the connections

Hopefully Christians and psychologists
Begin to realize that much of what they talk about
Spills out from one realm into another

Out of the overflowing of the heart
Does the mouth speak

The Holy Spirit Himself is described as the Encourager
Who stands alongside us
And Christ is described
As the Wonderful Counselor

Is it any wonder that religion

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Brings out such great emotion
Much as physical exercise
Can reign in powerful emotions
And produce calmer mental states

So religion can affect emotions too
Many see religion as focusing on fear
And that it triggers obsessive compulsive tendencies

Christianity starts out as a tough pill to swallow
Much like admitting you cannot do it on your own alone

But you must make the choice yourself
And only you can conquer your own mind
And control what you do
But you cannot do this without outside help

Christianity is a good fit for psychology
Because its ideas are effective in treatment
Of both addiction and mental illness
The thing is once you admit you have a problem
Christianity is really encouraging from this point onwards

Self Confidence God's Way

Today within the global North, most people believe that the world can primarily understood by science. Most people in the global South believe that the world operates mostly spiritually.

The same was true of Europe as it is now in the global South up through the first half of the premodern period just about the time of the Crusades in the Middle East. Aristotle's ideas were considered heresy throughout the first half of the European Middle Ages because God was to be understood primarily by faith not reason.

Some Christians today in America and Europe are finally challenging the idea that the spiritual and physical worlds operate separably. Christians are finally seeing that the mind is where the real spiritual battle takes place not the Middle East or the public educational system. There is now thinking within Christian circles that America is actually becoming more spiritual, just not always in a good way.

Interactions with the spiritual world occur in our minds and then cascade down into our decision making process and then through our physical actions so that sin goes from inception to action and ultimately death. To break the chain of causality to do evil we have to have a degree of self confidence and responsibility. This confidence comes deeply rooted in who we are spiritually by God's free gift to us that cost Him everything, when we are once saved.

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As the spiritual battles are subtle and deceptive our biggest weapon is the truths God has revealed to us in the Bible. What Christ has done for us and who we are because of what He did is what enables us to be grown up and mature Christians. While we are to grow up and take responsibility and use the tools God gives us with confidence, we are to root everything in Christ. Spiritually we are weak without Christ but unbeatable as long as we submit ourselves to Christ and His will.

One of the most important things to do to win spiritually is to pray first. Everything is affected by the spiritual world and this is in fact the bigger world that the physical is only one small part of. That means that although we clearly must take care of things in this world that we physically live in, there is a more significant struggle at work.

Christianity is a process and struggle throughout your entire life before death. The only safety we have in the world is Christ alone. Not even the Church offers any true safety. God determines what happens in every reality and has thoroughly and completely destroyed the devil's power over us and the penalty for sin on the cross when He died for our sins.

But to apply this victory to our lives and resist the temptations of the evil one we need to use the tools God gave us. These tools include believing the things God promised us, following the commands He gave us, and accepting the truths He has revealed to us concerning us, Himself, and our relationship. They require us to act on who God says we are, submitting ourselves to Christ's authority, repenting of any and all sin, and committing ourselves to truth in every form.

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Simply put, we are not going to stop a lifestyle of sin because we pray for it. We must get up, get out, and do the work. We must make clear and audible declarations of whose side we are on and start speaking with authority in Christ's name.

Christians don't need to be afraid of the devil. We struggle mostly against our own sin nature. He makes things worse and amplifies our rebellion against God.

The focus should always be on our Lord and Savior Christ. We must accept that we sin because we choose to. We must then choose not to when we are tempted by challenging each and every thought as it comes into our heads.

But although we have the greatest safety in Christ we must take a clear side and choose to fight. We cannot remain neutral in this world. But we also need to not base this self confidence on our own abilities or try to work independently of Christ.

We are children of God full stop. This happens immediately after we genuinely turn our life over to Christ. God has given us victory but we must first stand up to the devil. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

We will be attacked no matter who we are or what we do. This should show us that even the devil thinks we are of significance. We should then call upon the name of the Lord our God and He will save us.

We have complete freedom in Christ as He never forces us to do anything against our will. This means we must stand up and resist as God will not make our choices for us.

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Be very careful and specific about what you say when confronted with a spiritual battle. Always speak in the name of Christ. Do not get into a contest of wills or delude yourself into thinking the power comes from you.

This is serious business and you are an authority figure whether you want to be or not. The most important proactive things you can do are make it clear whose side you are on and own up to your sins immediately.

Do not try to deceive anyone or have anything to hide. God already know and likely so does the devil. You also need to say things out loud as the devil cannot hear your thoughts. Only God can.

You cannot choose God plus some other combination of beliefs. You believe in God period. If you try to hold onto anything else you will suffer for it and ultimately your suffering will have no meaning.

We need to make sure we continue to submit our mind, body, and soul to God daily. We are in a world where we are forced into 2 camps more and more. The answer isn't I prefer Christ or I prefer being self-sufficient. The answer is I am all in for Christ or I am not at all.

You will not lose your place in heaven because of your sins. But you will suffer greatly for it until you admit what you did and choose out loud and follow through with your commitment by your future actions.

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You can live in victory. Just make sure you are in God's will. Do not take on anything in life alone. This is even more true with spiritual things.

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Thinking Forward

I no longer need elaborate rituals
To pay for the times I have chosen to disobey
I do not need social pressure to be disciplined
I no longer need to conform to the expectations of others

I no longer need to worry about what punishment awaits
I no longer need to seek the comfort of material things
I only now hunger for learning more about God

I yearn for God to condition my mind to understand His words
To submit to God's will and not my own or others
God is now the center of my life and reality
And my one purpose is to please Him

I need no one else to teach me how to live
I present offerings to God of my body, mind, and soul
I commit to seeking pleasure in doing the will of God

I agree with God's covenant
And to the conditions He makes
For entrance into His Heaven
I now focus solely on
His expectations, promises, and teachings

I am devoted to finding ways to delight in His presence
I accept His gifts with exaltation and praise
My body, mind, and soul are no longer my own
But bought at the highest price

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There is nothing for me in this world
There is no other name I call on when I need help

I identify with Christ
And try to recognize His voice
As it is the only one I need to
Pay close attention to

I can relax in the confidence
That I am being watched and loved by God
Not for my obedience but for who I am
Therefore I strive to follow His commandments

I have emotionally accepted my place
In the Kingdom of God on earth and in Heaven
And my greatest wish is that I may be more like Him
My ultimate loyalty is now to Him alone

I need no other source of self worth
I will survive and carry on
Because I know that in Him alone is my peace

There have been times when I have been afraid
To follow God in all His ways
As I feared what He might call me to do

But I now know that anyone I follow
Will demand similar things of me
But without concern for my welfare
Or any promise of building my confidence in return

The things that make the Christian God different
Fundamentally from all other leaders

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Is that He is a servant too
He longs only to do the will of God the Father

He does not claim anything that is not true
And He always follows through with His promises

He has the legitimate authority to do
Whatever He wants with His creation
And yet He gives us both complete freedom in Christ
But even with the option of declining this generous offer

His morality is beyond challenge
And His sacrifice is both so significant and grand
That He chooses to suffer alongside us

I do not want to run from God
In any aspect of my life
I want to embrace His plan for me
As He embraces me as I am

Why would I want to pursue my own agenda
When His is so much better?

We are often told to forgo the perfect for the good
But what if it were the opposite
We could have a perfect Leader
If only we would renounce our limited vision

There is but one way for us to be happy
And it entails being at war with the world
Christ is the Prince of Peace
But His is at war with the god of this world

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His mission is to undue the work of the evil one
And to save us from our spiritual death
And separation from God

We can live in victory and so also in peace
With everyone we see and all who surround us
Because Christ has created a way

There is no need to find God
As He stands right before us
There is no need to travel the world
As God is everywhere that exists or we imagine

There is no need to suffer alone
As Christ and God's Holy Spirit
Stand beside us and encourage us
There is no need to feel lonely
Because Christ has provided His Church

When we think of utopia
Why don't we think of God's Heaven?

When we seek justice
Why do we not wait upon the Lord?
When we are afraid
Why do we not call on the name of the Lord?

When we cannot walk further in faith
Why don't we let Him believe for us
He is always watching our backs
Despite knowing all that is in our hearts

In the world there is little safety

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But we can suffer the least
If we follow the will of God

We can be happiest
If we seek God with all our hearts

Stepping Forward in Faith

I do commit to follow God's will
At all costs
But I do not know if my heart is in it

I know from experience
It is much easier to commit than to follow through

I also have experienced situations
Where you are pulled through
Without your consent

And there are no limits to your pain
Time wise or intensity wise

I try not to commit to things
That I do not know I can carry through with

I am very hesitant to do something
For whatever good reasons
That puts me in a painful situation
Like being in the military

I am trying to learn from my mistakes
And avoid repeating painful experiences

I must say before I consider
Following through with a possibly similar situation
Than being in the military
I need a real obvious sign only God could give

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And I truly have no idea what that would be
To convince me it was really from God

This is the question that comes up
When you make any commitment
Especially when it concerns God

It is better to be honest than devout
Because it does not feel good to let God down

It also makes me think of
How Christians says you only need
5 minutes to save someone from hell

Maybe to say the prayer
But most people cannot change their life's purpose
In mere minutes

Following God will be costly
As will not following Him

When we take on the commitment
To make God the Lord of our lives
It is a long process that make it possible
To overcome our selfishness and sometimes fear
That we need to honestly accept God's gift of freedom

Christ describes us as having so much trouble
Admitting we need God in our lives
That it is actually impossible physically, emotionally, and
spiritually
And it only happens as a miracle from God

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God has to supernaturally intervene
To allow us to conquer our pride
This is true of all people
This is why there is no rank or seniority amongst Christians

Many people today are unwilling to commit to anything
They also see no problem in not following through
I feel differently because I have had different experiences
Maybe also because I am extremely stubborn

I think this was one of the reasons
I was so poorly suited to the military
I am too self reflective in many ways
And see too much of the potential for suffering

Much of this is from the direct experience
Of not doing enough of this
Before I made the commitment

To say I take God very seriously is an understatement

But my fear is great
And I do not know how far I can go
If it gets too hard to continue

I know my only chance of safety is in God
And I know that I could easily lead myself
Into an equally bad or worse situation
By my own poor choices

I remember in the confidence course in basic training
I tried but couldn't make myself

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Repel down a wooden wall face first

Sometimes I wonder why God places no limits
On fear or suffering
Sometimes I wonder what is harder for me
Pain or fear
I do know fear makes pain more intense

I don't like anything intense anymore
I sometimes find eating something too rich and sweet painful
I no longer desire to take any risks

It is ironic that although I as an American
Live in so much comfort
I still see so many painful possibilities
Completely or partially out of my control

I struggle just to take care of myself
I have stuffed toys because I cannot take care of pets

I have identified best with Lazarus from the Gospels
Who was dead when Jesus arrived
But Jesus did then raise him from the dead

I get peace now from reading the Bible
But it also brings fear as well

I am comforted by what God says
But He often talks of suffering like Christ
And considering the grotesque ends
Of His closest followers

I do not consider myself anywhere in the ballpark of them

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In any way save some of their failings
This is why I say my heart is not fully resolved

But I take the step forward and commit with faith
That God will do the impossible
And I will be able to follow through
With what He asks of me

Peace and Technology

When we think of ancient peoples
Many think of fantastical adventures
But what made them so much more moral?
They were simply bombarded with less temptation

How does a Christian fight against this?
Create and release as much content as possible
We can saturate the world in our own beliefs

Being both careful and subtle in how we do it
With our own personal stories of struggle
And in love and humility we can strike back

Spiritual warfare is about lies and deception
What a better way to counter evil in our hearts
Than with a barrage of good and lovely thoughts
We can do this just as individuals
But we need to drop the politics to give it reach

What the world has been lost in for the last 80 years is fear
War after war in the world and crisis after crisis
Continual social revolution in our own country
We look on the past as safe and have nostalgia
Because we see that as something we won

But that series of decisions led us
To what we deal with now
The technology and worldview we adopted
To win the Cold War with the Soviet Union

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Actually contributed to our losses in the war on terror
And has now divided us within the COVID era

We need to stop ending wars
In a way that sets up the next war

The major powers in Europe at the peace conference
After Napoleon was defeated
Decided to stop fighting each other
The peace lasted for about a century
And allowed Europe to dominate the world

The peace broke as World War I started
This set up the modern world in many ways
It set up cultural connections
And gave birth to modern combat techniques

It pushed modern medicine into existence
It set up the political and ideological boundaries
It stopped the liberal age of Islam
And started the US domination of world government

It set up the situation that started World War 2
But most of the things it started
Turned into what we struggle with today

It is not the ascendancy or descent of Europe from world status
That I see as the problem
When the world was politically dominated by Islam
There was more morality in the world

But the idea of holding back the biggest armies and navies
Is something we should continue to strive for

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The last 8 decades we fought basically 8 major land wars
On the other side of the world
And the situation was worse for all sides afterwards
In most of them

When it comes down to you having to
Destroy your regional allies
In order to destroy the enemy
What is the point?

The toll of these wars goes well beyond just the immediate effects
Not just what happens overseas or within militaries
It is also what makes us into bad people

Technology is often driven by war
But it is often violent in nature
It is a big part of why we are so violent
Even against our own people

Some people see the police as the problem
Some people see it as the media
I see it as both

And the increased power over us
That these and other groups now have
Is that they have mastered the technology
Which was thought to liberate us

This happens again and again
Because we try human solutions
There is no way to get peace by ourselves

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Because all technologies have good and bad sides
All methods of defense have an effective counter
Whatever unites also divides

The only way to get beyond violence
Is to make the Prince of Peace
Lord in our own lives
And convince others to do the same

In order to accomplish this
We need to first improve our morality
And our connection with God
Then others will flock to Christ

Our world is pagan because our focus
Is not on God alone
Within the Church itself
Our loyalties are divided
As a mirror of our society

We try to do everything
We do not prioritize
Many do not follow God
Because they do not believe they have time to

We need to make time for God
To be in silence and alone before our Creator

Until we start to put boundaries on
Our commitments and our technologies
Our hearts will be far from God

Sometimes it helps to start

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By making our physical surroundings less cluttered

Once we have cleared an entry point
Or beachhead in military terms
In our self improvement process
It starts to become believable to us
That we can truly change

Try starting by cleaning your house
And going through things you don't need