

Ben-Free Thought 4 By Ben Huot

Ben-Free Thought 4

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From Bible Study Collection

Broken and Unexpected

Some answers only come
When you have a blank page
Some prayers are only answered
Once you deprive yourself of something

How must we pour our heart out
Unless we first let You in?
How do we know what direction to go
If we are unwilling to go all in?

There is always room for more
But seldom do we learn to forget
It is hard to be comfortable with silence
Only in the waiting is faith built

I do not understand why
Many times a day
But I still learn more
Every time I pray

There is little we really need
Most things can be done without
Ceremonies impress others
But real decisions happen in private

It is often that I need help
But I fail to ask immediately
Even though You always answer
With better solutions

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Why do we ponder the future
When we cannot even control
Something as simple as our desires
Or stop our exposure to evil?

How can we think that God suffers
But He doesn't mind our impatience?
How can we be so reckless
With the lack of our own faith?

We need to stop fighting God
When He is already committed
To rescue us in His timing
If we would only wait for Him

We cannot speed up change
And be surprised by conflict
There is no way to have freedom
Without a degree of risk

Next time I stop worrying
I will be in the afterlife
We fear what we don't expect
But not all roads lead home

In each step forward
We need to stop complaining
When truly in need
We will accept better answers

One thing I always remember
Is how to lose my mind
Struggle is never eternal

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Because there is always an exit

I do not understand
Everything I have ever said
That never means
That I do not care

I step without hesitation
Only on my first time
Running away from danger
Next stop is my memories

What if the Bible is True?

Many, in our country today, think science answers all problems, so Christianity must be false. They fail to see why they should care, when they have the impression that they can be good without God. They often see losing your faith as growing up emotionally.

The thing is that Christians can and probably are wrong on a lot of things. They likely do add their culture to their faith and have questionable politics. The thing is, despite all their flaws, what if the Bible is actually true?

The Bible does not give easy answers and does not end our suffering in this life. But God never claimed to. God is completely honest and the Bible does explain why the world works the way it does. Many of the ideas expressed are not even fully accepted by Christians.

Christ is central to our thinking, but many, on both sides, only like certain aspects of Him. We like prophecy today, because it is our side winning and everyone agreeing we are right. We fail to accept all of who Christ was. Christ would be considered a big failure, by current Christian and secular standards.

He was God in the flesh and He could not even convince those, who were experts on the Bible, in their time, that He was fulfilling prophecy. Is it better to win and be understood by people or reconciled with God? We often see our biggest problems as physical like illness, poverty, or crime. Christ said our biggest problem is sin.

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We seem to think that the disciples understood and accepted Christ's teachings, were perfect examples, and not real people, with the same problems we have. This is perfectly explained in the Apostle Paul's letters, to the various churches. Even the greatest heroes of the faith made fatal errors and thought they were totally unqualified, to do what God asked of them. Yet they still carried on His message.

Christ pulled at least two major revelations, that must have shook the disciples' faith, to its very core. Christ appeared to them, to have been totally defeated and later left them completely. We see this all as inevitable and comforting, but I think they thought, at the time, that was hard to accept.

So the situation the Church in America sees itself today is not something so different conceptually, than we see in the Bible. This is actually very much a proof the Bible is still relevant today. I often was frustrated, when I could not communicate well and I felt misunderstood, but Christ was the most misunderstood Person of all time.

Many of those in the Church focus on the suffering Christ went through on the cross. We fail to see things and cannot fully comprehend how difficult it must have been, for Him to live as a person. When we see the temptations of Christ in the wilderness, by the devil, they were all about finding a shortcuts, to solving real needs, but doing it in the wrong way.

Christ must have been very discouraged, even before His ministry. He had at least all the authority of God, but couldn't use it to help Himself or others. He also had to be a helpless baby, later realized He was God, and then had to follow human

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parents, who later thought He was crazy. He also never had a wife.

We think we have been defeated and are helpless and alone. We do not really know what that means, to really be in that situation. Sure, we suffer extreme tragedies, but at least our losses don't compare to God having to totally turn on His son. He did this, to save some people, who think they are too good to follow Him.

Life is difficult, because the consequences of sin in the world are severe. It is exasperated by selfishness and pride of other people. Furthermore, we cannot change any of this, outside our limited bubbles and often not there either.

The Bible should encourage anyone, who feels misunderstood, but it comes at the price that we cannot be in control. It is not our right, to tell others they are wrong, or think we are better morally than them. We also do not have the full picture, or have anyway to know who is really a Christian.

Our job is to obey, not to agree. It is ok to not understand, or to struggle with God. The proof of your faith is to follow Him, despite this.

We have to have faith, to please God. Even in Heaven, faith is still important. We might get shocked, when we go to Heaven and ask for answers, as to why we had to suffer. Christ may very well say, "why have you allowed sin in your life?"

Speed of Time

The solution to our problems is right in front of us, but there is too much noise to sort through and determine what is the most important. To solve this, we must see what all our problems have in common.

What has changed in the same time frame? Essentially time has sped up. We are both going through resources and accumulating trash at an accelerating rate. The common way in which our modern world can be easily explained that is different from the traditional world is in our conception of time.

What do all the things sages say have in common? How is prayer like meditation? How does a person learn discipline? What is the key to applying this to our lives? This can all be reduced to slowing down our thinking, speaking, and acting.

Most people think that the way to survive a disaster is to quickly gather huge amounts of supplies. But people who have huge amounts of supplies often give up, while those with few or no resources thrive. This is because they have a positive mental attitude.

By slowing down, you keep from panicking and make better decisions. Most things take longer than we plan and, even in emergencies, we often have much more time to act than we realize.

Jesus was never in a rush. He constantly left to talk with His Father and did so even more often, the more His stress increased. People need silence and rest. This is how we learn to think.

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Today we are too busy to take care of ourselves. God gave us limitations as a blessing, not a curse. Only those who do evil have no chance to rest.

The key to self mastery is to realize we all need God. But this will only start, when we place boundaries on how much we allow others to do our thinking for us. No one has time to do everything.

Try fasting from electronics, entertainment, or buying things. Spend the time saved to seek God. The only way we find God is by not giving up. We must show we are really committed to Him.

We only make peace with God, when we accept we cannot have everything. We cannot solely focus on our own needs and still be happy Christians. The Bible is controversial because it forces us to choose. We cannot be both at the center of our future and still have room for God in our lives.

For God to be in our lives, we need to withdraw from the spotlight. For God to be greater, we need to shrink. We can never be at peace, if we desire to be the center of attention, because everyone else wants the same thing.

This is why some people reject God and will not spend eternity with Him. If we won't accept that God is more important than us, then we will never be happy anywhere, even in Heaven. For those who will humble themselves before God, in every area of their lives, we need not wait until we die to reconcile with God.

God does not carry us away to Heaven, or ask us to do something we cannot understand or relate with. God has brought Heaven to

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Earth. God has made the ultimate effort to reconcile with us. But we need to make a legitimate effort, to accept His offer.

But today we all are too lazy, to be honest. We need to make time for both God and ourselves. We need to wait for God to speak to us. We also must accept His message will likely come to us through people we encounter in our daily lives and in the Bible. Time is the source of our problems and the solution is to slow down.

Less of Everything

Ironically, for this tiny part of history, for this very small portion of the world's population, most of our suffering comes from having too much. Few outside this bubble could imagine our lives because they are so ridiculous. We all have access to so much of what anyone of any other time in recorded history would call magic that it is ironic that we still have problems.

For us to think we would solve our problems by having more energy is the same way an addict thinks. Many of us do suffer some of the things people outside this bubble do, but most our current problems would be solved if we actually had less wealth.

Just like the Internet should bring wisdom, spread the faith, and help us solve problems, but instead brings so much evil. The Internet is so filled with crime and confusion, that we can never make practical use of its potential capabilities for good.

We had this happen before. The French Revolution was going to bring freedom and equality within one generation. Instead, it led us down the road to Nationalism in Europe and after 2 world wars, Europe lost both its empires and its faith.

In *Les Miserables*, they sing about every man being a king. The problem is when we have this much power, we then get all the problems royalty had. One of those is paranoia.

I am very lucky, after serving in the US Army, not long before 9/11, to only have Schizophrenia and chronic allergic pink eye. I understand very well what paranoia is as that is one of my biggest issues as well.

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It is interesting that most of the conflicts we have now are with groups of people who have little to nothing of value and are very mobile. This is a problem as old as history. Throughout history they were known as barbarians, mongols, pirates, terrorists and hackers. It is a problem and a high cost, for those who hold wealth, to keep it from being stolen by others.

We do not think we have wealth, because we live in a world where we interact with people even wealthier than us. The truth is the what is considered poverty in America is an income greater than 75% of the world's population. We think that if we had only a little more a month we would be happy, but billionaires think similarly.

We see this obsession with more in Bibles for instance. We stuff so much material in study bibles that they literally fall apart or the text is so small that we need a magnifying lens to read it. The world is being hugely influenced by America and our bad habits. That is actually our foreign policy. We are working to get the world addicted to our culture, so we can control them with our technology.

We actually hack the Chinese and Russians more than they hack us. The Cold War was won by machines not people. Why do you think the Russians or the Iranians got so interested in computers right after they were defeated with them?

We could end this internet crime in one day and make the world more peaceful instantly. Just let the other nations run themselves how they see fit. We see the world as coming against us but the world sees us as coming against them.

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We can be happy again. Too much stimulation can actually cause pain. The cost of constantly wanting more means you can never rest. Instead of turning against each other, to try to get as much as we can, we should try denying ourselves.

Full Truth

When we are suffering the most, it often seems like God has abandoned us. Some things about Christianity are hard to accept. Many people have trouble reconciling the Old and New Testaments, accepting that we are all equal to the newest members, or that there is a literal Hell (even if it is not literally a lake of fire).

One of the things that sets God apart from anyone else is that God cannot lie. All the things we think are so awful about life that upset us are devastating, but He has not promised we will be safe from these in this world.

We spend a lot of time and effort trying to explain things we cannot fully understand. Maybe this is not as helpful to unbelievers and new Christians as we think. Maybe this does not resolve the reasons why some people have not been reconciled or at peace with God.

There are many things Christians do not want to admit. We still struggle with sin, we don't understand every passage of Scripture as well as we would like, and we too sometimes have doubts about our faith. What non Christians and many Christians fail to emotionally accept is that Christianity makes your life harder, in many ways.

We become a living breathing target for the devil. We stir up anger and isolation from others, when they realize the implications of what the Bible says. We are held to a much higher moral standard. We cannot read the Bible without being forced to decide moral questions and be changed emotionally. People will

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no longer like us, because they think we are no longer fun to be around. We have to be willing to give everything up for God.

Like many competitions, amongst anyone like businesses or charities, when you get new competition willing to work harder than you, don't try to compete with them in the same way. Do not just make or do something somewhat better than them.

Offer a completely different way of solving the same problem. Do not play by their rules. Make your own rules. Be the best at what you are good at and play to your strengths.

When I was in high school, I was always frustrated. I got involved in so many activities that I was not good at, to get better at them. This was a big mistake, because I began to feel like a failure.

The Church should not be competing with Internet distractions. We should not change fundamentals just to appeal to people and in turn embrace the world's values. God says friendship with Him means we are enemies of the world.

The Church offers things you cannot get anywhere else. We should focus on these. Christianity offers so much more than everlasting life. We have a network of organizations all around the world that is like a giant family called the Church. God's Spirit lives inside Christians, but never forces us to do anything we do not want to do. God helps make us better people over time, if we cooperate.

Christianity is a very hard way to live, but it is very worth it. In many ways, it is also the easiest belief system to be part of.

Church of One

Drowning in a sea of voices
All angry and all loud
Surrounded by crowds
Of various sizes

I choose to speak so softly
That only a few can hear
Deliberately limiting my message
To only be relevant
To other minds like mine

A place of quiet
The voice of just one person
With no followers

How do we prove
We are not the same
As the rich and powerful
Feeding off the poor and marginalized?

Think small in all ways
Be inefficient and subtle

Do not fight your enemy
Simply go around him

Struggle against the noise
By being even more subtle and gentle

Do not go for numbers

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Refuse to engage people who disagree
Keep your group from organizing
Strive to stand as individuals

Never agree on doctrine
Be nowhere and therefore everywhere
Be so soft and warm
That your ideas dissolve in the culture

Form a different culture
For every single person
Be the anti-movement

Seek to do small things
For only a few people

Put great time and effort
Building one person's character
Rather than trying to change a nation

Stop trying to compete with opinion leaders
Be peaceful and unconcerned
With message or followers

Deliberately refuse to be an institution
Of any kind or form
Be only known by your first names

Treat others as they are more important
Than an entire country or culture
Stand alongside those who do not fit in
But not in any visible or quantifiable way

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Try to be so unsuccessful by today's standards
So that you do not attract businesses
Be so unorganized that you keep no list of people

Do not accept any request for media coverage
Never set up any infrastructure
So that corruption is inconceivable
Do not make a logo or use a name

Believe that the only way for salvation
Is to seek God with all your heart

Do not be all things to all people
Only be one thing to one person

The way to spread the Gospel
Is to hide it in your heart

The great battles of today are not physical
Do not concern yourself
With things outside your immediate sphere of influence

Spend all of your time
Outwitting the evil in your own heart

Forget what you have learned in school
And give up on having any influence
In material or social spheres

Be not who you are
Rather be who God says you are

Do not concern yourself with

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The heresies of other people
Worry more about
The corruption of your own mind

Do not try to save the world
Try to save yourself

Do not try to solve the Bible
Accept that most things in life
Especially concerning God
Will forever be a mystery

This is the faith as I see it

Freedom Equals Wealth

Many Christians today
Believe everyone should be a theologian
There is even a book by that name
By a famous theologian

Protestantism did so well in America
Because we express our devotion
Through materialism

A million variations of very similar beliefs
Is not useful to spread the Gospel
But it is useful for capitalism

The best way to limit the power of the Church
Is to marginalize the spiritual

The Church in America has always had a fear
Of both the supernatural and traditional ethics
In any Church contexts

When you ally yourselves with the rich and powerful
Like with major political parties
You take on their negative associations as well

If the American Church wants to associate itself
With the poor and marginalized
It must make some major political, financial, and theological
changes

For a while it was sustainable

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For the ultra wealthy to get richer
And for regular Americans to not get poorer

But now that the Middle East, China, and India
Have a little of our wealth
We now have to share the wealth

Regular Americans can no longer afford high margin items
That only Americans can produce
So there are no more opportunities to grow
The American share of the world's wealth

Americans now are faced with a situation
Where they have to make choices
Outside what luxuries to buy

Do we want freedom or security?
Do we want independence or unity?
Do we want wealth or to be compassionate?

Every American thinks they are poor
But 75% of the world's population
Would be considered below the poverty line in America

If everyone in the world received the same wage
Most Americans would be much poorer

The same groups that want to bring the Gospel to the Muslim
world
Are creating an Apocalypse in the same areas of the world
In some ways, they are preaching a self-fulfilling prophecy

The inconvenient truth is that

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Many ideas of America's wealthiest
Do not align with the values
Of a literal interpretation of the Bible

The same people that denounce southern Californian culture
Have the culture and freedoms they do
Because it is being exported to Asia

Ideology protects America more than the military
This is the international equivalent of the saying
"You cannot lock up everyone"
That is used in reference to domestic policing

God and Uncertainty

People fight over theology
Because the Bible is often unclear
And appears different
To different people

The purpose of this has eluded many
I now think the purpose
Is to build our faith

When Jesus came to earth
He could have revealed He was God
In a way that would be obvious
He could have proved Himself to everyone
So everyone would believe Him

Jesus also could have given an account for Himself
Or why we have to suffer
But He did neither
He remained silent on these issues literally
He did address these issues by His actions

The consequences of sin are greater
Than we can imagine
This is why God hates sin
This is what really angers God
Because it really hurts us literally

Maybe Heaven will require faith too
In the famous passage about love
In 1 Corinthians 13

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Three things are important in Heaven
Faith, hope, and love

Faith to understand God
Love to get along with others
Hope for something I don't know

I think today especially
We want to and expect to
Know everything and see everything
We all want complete transparency
We have to as we no longer have any trust

Many people are very interested in prophecy
Because they do not apply their faith
And trust God has good reasons
Why He doesn't reveal this

Certainly the first time He came
Turned out really good for us
So why would His second coming
Be any less positive?

To understand the future
We need to understand the past
To understand the Gospel
We need to understand the Old Testament
This is a good reason to read the Bible

God came through before
So we know He will in the future

The great Christian mystics of the Middle Ages

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Did not want to have any supernatural experiences
Even positive ones from God
Because they were concerned about becoming proud

Some of the reasons why we don't see spiritual things
It would be detrimental to our faith
Another reason is that it would be too intense
And finally it would likely develop into an addiction
Even in Heaven we will have physical bodies
The physical world was created by God so it is good

Science and religion are often antagonistic to each other
Science doesn't like faith
Because they only think in terms of what is rational
So they feel this undermines their ability
To influence others through their discoveries
Most of their political objectives are very noble though

Religion should not like Science
Because people begin to think
That they do not need God
As the spiritual seems irrelevant
If you only concern yourself with what can be measured

Religion never changes
Science changes very fast
Religion requires people to slow down
Science makes it hard to do this

Many people think we can have our cake and eat it too
They think we can embrace both science and religion
Because they think rejecting science
Makes them seem less educated

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This is very much not true

We want to have faith
But we never want any struggles
We say we will stay with God
No matter what
But give up or run
At the slightest obstacle

The disciples of Jesus did the same thing
But they did overcome this later
And grew spiritually beyond this

The Apostle Paul wrote about this
As we are as Christians very immature spiritually
We think some sins are insignificant
We focus on the very first part of salvation
But we do not commit ourselves to developing spiritually

We want God in our lives
When we need Him
But do not stay in contact
In both the exciting and mundane times
Maybe that is why
Christians have the same divorce rates
As unbelievers do

I think of uncertainty as something to dread
But this is not emotionally healthy
I know something about fear
As I have Schizophrenia
As a result of my military service

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We have to believe
God will never give us
More than we can take

Religion is very difficult
Because it requires sacrifice
We keep asking and trying to get more
But we might be happier with less

When we read the Bible
We often think it is boring
And that is part of the point in reading it
As this helps develop discipline

But the bigger issue is
The Bible requires us to make decisions
God doesn't want people not fully committed
Many people think this is unfair

But why would you want to go to Heaven
If you do not like God?
Ultimately God makes the rules
As it is His Heaven and His earth

Even the devil has to follow them
And is often forced to
If someone is in power in the underworld
It will likely be one of God's angels
Not the devil

Positive Developments

One of the biggest traits
That I see exemplified by God
Both in the life of Jesus Christ
And in the interaction with The Lord
Over the millennia of history covered in the Old Testament
Is the value called kindness

I have seen a tendency
For some in the Church to reject this
Much as their is widespread rejection
Of animal rights and the possibility of racial issues

I see the idea of random acts of kindness
And some of the proposed expansions of civil rights
And constitutional protections
From excessive force by the justice system
As an aspect of society that could be driven
By the moving of the Holy Spirit

I have realized from talking to my sister
That there are positive developments in society now
This is one of the biggest issues I am aware of

Even technology that scares me
For how easily it can be abused
Could be used responsibly and be genuinely useful
If it is used to empower those with limitations
Due to various disabilities

Some Christians now believe that there needs to be

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A line drawn in the sand
And that we have to choose one end
Of the political and social spectrum

If the choice is between fascism and communism
I choose to drop out or only vote for 3rd parties

I do not know where this places me ideologically
But I believe the biggest problems today
Arise from a lack of kindness across the board

Our first inclination seems to be switching over time
To acting fast and choosing not to think
We should all be able to agree being gentle and slow acting
Should be a sign of maturity
And not merely a sign of weakness

For those who reject violence
Under any foreseeable circumstance
It is hard to understand this drive to win
Any kind of debate just makes me want
To avoid interacting in those situations

Obviously I too struggle with
All of my ethical deficiencies as well
Some are just harder for me to understand

I see many problems with the modern world
Living at the expense of our descendants
And the majority of the world population
Plus the pollution of the planet
And the elimination of entire species

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For even useful things like medicines
This seems very short sighted

There are some great medicines today
Especially for pain management
But we cannot use them for uses they were designed for
Because so many have used them improperly

This shows that the problems we have
Are not solvable by science for the most part

Our biggest problems are not that we lack
Understanding or intelligence
But rather that our lack of empathy
Is a more primary limitation and source of conflict

Science answers most questions that revolve around
The answer to how should we do something
But fails badly when we try to use it solely
To determine what we should do

The problem we cannot resolve is
Why should we do these things

To do this we might need to value the arts and humanities
In order that we might address these deeper sources of division

Another related area of interest for me
Is the growing awareness of the emotional aspects
Of being human or animal

That has great potential value for improving who we are
This is a relatively recent realization

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But we have only scratched the surface of possibilities

We are not just body and spirit
But emotions matter too
And complex problems need to be dealt with
By realizing that there are interactions
Between all these elements

It is truly encouraging that a few people see no conflict
Between physical, emotional, and spiritual approaches
To problem solving
Some are even devout believers within Christianity

If earlier civilizations had a very basic level of understanding
In the fields of modern psychology and the social science of
economics
This would be like having a superpower level ability
To avoid war and debt and adapt to social changes
This might have preserved the Roman Empire to this day

Certainly we would be better off trading
A better understanding of technology
For insights into people

Technology cannot solve problems
If people are unwilling to change
How they live and learn new habits

Many modern sources of death
Could be resolved better by discipline than technology

It is great to know about new medicines
But it is usually better to prevent the disease

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From happening at all

We are getting much better at surgery
Largely because of cutting as little as possible
But you cannot just take something out
And put something else in
And expect everything to work as before

Even the military and veterans are now embracing
Traditional Chinese Medicine
And pushing education to prevent disease

Again the big obstacles often lie
Within our minds and in our choices
We need to discipline our thinking and actions
In place of merely adding more procedures

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From Peace Collection

Heart of Our Culture

The heart is deceitful above all else

In a world full of knowledge
We cannot find the truth
If only we knew what questions to ask

We always want more
In a culture of temptation

In our efforts to solve problems
We created the technology
That tears our world apart

We need to mature a little
And find a way
To make it harder to do evil
And easier to do good

When knowledge is everywhere
And anyone has access to it
It is too much power
To be used wisely

In making power more accessible
More of us become irresponsible

I think God really is guiding history
We will eventually realize
That we cannot solve our problems without Him

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People often talk about
How our culture is individualistic
But our problems are more
Than a lack of community

We still have all the negatives
Of conforming to what others think

We are being conditioned
To fit a certain mold

The government wants us fat and lazy
Not just so we will buy more stuff
But that we will never think critically

The thing that scare our leaders most
Is the possibility of them becoming irrelevant

Just like the Roman Empire
In Western Europe
Gradually lost influence
With the only thing left
Was the Roman Catholic Church

And after the Reformation
Napoleon looting the churches
And the dissolution of the Jesuits
Not much was left of it either

Religion will always be relevant
Some things in scripture
Probably make more sense today
Then they were for generations

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Preceding us back millennia

I am learning much more
About spiritual things
And about our culture
That I never put together
Quite so clearly before

We struggle so much
To answer our own questions
And meet our own needs
That others around us are irrelevant

In a society free to do
Whatever they want
People have no idea
What to do with their freedom

For centuries it was possible
For one person to learn all the knowledge
That was known in their part of the world

Now we can never even completely read one book
We spend so much time
Sifting through information
That we never learn anything

We all collect a huge amount
Of meaningless information

Soon everyone will know
Not just what we have done
But what it is predicted we will do

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Based on some very simplistic and flawed models

Everyone who wants to will get this information
But first to law enforcement
You will be arrested and denied basic services
For what your thoughts are

It is hard to imagine
How people who want to say anything
Regardless of the consequences
And force others to listen to them

Are going to justify this
As progress and freedom
And some kind of family value

As the basis for America
Changes to the point
Those who founded it
Could no longer recognize it

We should stop lecturing other cultures
About how humane we are
And how we are so much better
Than everyone else morally

A certain segment of the population
That doesn't want to stop fighting wars
But won't sign up to fight them
And sees a military or police solution
To every problem

Is going to realize

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That the government has used them
And is now dumping them
Now that they are no longer needed

We think of America
As being free of propaganda
Or that it has only been this way recently
When their rivals are in power

But we are taught this
Like propaganda is spread

The business of America is business
In many people's minds
And advertising is now the same as surveillance

When you monitor society
To the degree that we do now
The government has not trusted us
For a very long time now

Maybe if our leaders listened
To certain parts of the government
That were designed to aid
In the decision making of our leaders
We would be in a better position today

But being educated today
Is seen as a sign of corruption

Business men are trusted more
Than people who dedicate their lives
To public service

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It boggles the mind so see
How those with all the power
Seem to think they are being persecuted

When the weak and powerless
Sometimes hear some news
That gives them hope

Maybe if we were less aggressive
With our methods in expanding our influence
We would be less angry at each other

Forever War

All wars are evil

Bombs from your people
Hurt your rivals
As much as bombs from your rivals
Hurt your people

We are insulated from this reality
Because a few of our people
Suffer greatly
And make our opponents
Suffer greatly

We own the world
We won it with violence and deception
As every other empire has

When we want to be wealthy
And this is how we can live as we now do
This is the same as thinking others
Should live in greater poverty
Than the poorest in our homeland
Because there are always limited resources

One percent of the population
Now has literally half of the world's wealth

Many fear losing our wealth and power to China
But we face much greater threats
From global warming

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To social and political divisions
In our homeland

We are our own worst enemies
The rest of the world combined
Cannot even get a small number of troops over here
Even if we had no military, intelligence services, or widespread
machine gun possession

I know a little about paranoia
As that is one of my greatest
Symptoms of having Schizophrenia
It is painful, lonely, and exhausting
To constantly be afraid of irrational things

When we get so worked up
Over things so unlikely to happen to us
We suffer ourselves for no reason

It does not hurt our rivals
In fact our rivals want us to fear them
That is how the tactic of terrorism works

Only cultures that have no chance
Being able to defeat their rivals
Will resort to terrorism

Terrorism requires you to do things
You do not want to do for a greater good
The Middle East and Africa do not want to be
Part of our entertainment culture

We are using techniques invisible

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To us in the homeland
But are very obvious
In the homelands of our rivals
To manipulate them into surrendering
To our immorality

Ironically there are many similarities between
The Middle East
And a large group of Americans
They both base all their political ideas and social groups
On nothing but their personal or popular religious views

Both Christianity and Islam
Are not organizations but ideas
They are like most religions
Focused on the deity not us
They could also be organizations
And were at one point

But so many divisions happened
So no person is in charged
So it is a grass roots movement
God is in charged directly
Which as it should be

Both groups believe
The ends justify the means
And both are not happy
With the current social order
Both want to revert
To an early era of history socially

Both are afraid that the other

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Will destroy them secretly
Both know basically
Nothing about the other culture
That is accurate at all

Both have a powerful presence
Throughout most parts of the world
One side has already won
Every part of the world
But the Middle East and Africa

Many of these same Americans
Have an unholy alliance with
Southern California culture

Where you get your information from
So also you get your views on morality

The solution could be
To not force everyone into
The one world government

America was happier in many ways
And was likely wealthier
When it left the rest of the world alone

Certainly Europe benefited when they had
Long standing peace between major powers
That was the tragedy of World War 1

We are now in a very similar situation
Germany was leading up to World War 2
In terms of technology, society, and politics

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The difference between these is that we
Have a bigger and wealthier empire
We are also more efficient economically

Real World Peace

Peace is hard work
And it is exhausting
And never ending
The rewards are distant
And often non-existent

But we cannot give up
Just because it is difficult
Christ is called the Lamb Who was slain
Because He accepted God's will
Even though He did not want to
Do what God asked of Him

We need to do the same
The world today is the way it is
Because we are unwilling
To commit to anything
Or sacrifice our needs
For the needs of others
Or to carry out God's will

Especially when we do not agree with
Or understand what God is doing

Faith which all belief systems and theories
Require of their followers to a degree
Means that we accept God's will
Without fully understanding all the ramifications
Because we trust He is doing it for our best
Without full evidence

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And He has every right to
As our Creator alone

The Bible does not talk about politics much
The few examples imply
That we should let God rule us directly
But also that we should focus on God's Kingdom
More than the kingdoms of this world
As they will not last as long

The commands Christ gave us
Are not limited to personal or family matters
If we want to use the word Christian
To define who we are
And Who we belong to
We should at least attempt
To follow the commands

Love the Lord with all your heart, mind, and soul
And love your neighbor as yourself

Part of loving God with all our hearts
Means that we need to commit ourselves
Not just intellectually but emotionally as well
We must seek peace with God and others
So that we can have peace with ourselves

Following Christ means being a person of peace
There is no room to say there is some other way
To exempt certain parts of our lives or cultures
If we want to follow Christ
We need to have faith and be at peace

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We have example after example
All through the Old Testament
Of people who followed God
Without understanding about Christ
Or having the promise of eternal life
Or the infilling of the Holy Spirit

Without any other reason than
God created them and us
And made a contract with them and us
In that He promised them and us
Something far in the future
Which they did not live to see

We have God literally living inside us
We cannot say it is too difficult or unreasonable
Christ already did it by living a perfect life
He told us we are to live perfect lives as well

Christ was the most manly Man of all time
But He was kind and patient
And even submitted Himself
To the rulers of mere people

Being a man does not require the person
To be dominant or aggressive
Christ lived a life we might describe today
As that of a beta male
Strength is exemplified by enduring trials
And keeping faith in the Lord

What people consider weakness

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Is not weakness from God's perspective
Our weakness is in our bodies
And the battle takes place in our minds
There is a constant struggle
Between doing what we think is best
And doing what God knows as best

I am a skeptic and an existentialist
So I do not commit myself to being objective
Nor do I expect anyone else to be
I do not accept most things to be true
That most other people are convinced of

But I do have faith in Christ
Just as many skeptics have faith in the
Reality of the material world
And the study of it through Science

Because I choose to and for
Many other reasons as well
I am a better person
Because God is in my life
I also like the community of being in
The Kingdom of God

God has helped me leave the military honorably
And survive Schizophrenia for 25 years and counting
He recently helped me overcome diabetes
God has given me a great family
And I live in the best part of the world
And I am an American citizen
I was given all that but earned none of it

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I sense in my heart that the Creator
Is the same God as the one described in the Bible
And with Whom I have experienced in my life
Through many ups and downs

As an unnecessary bonus
I have never heard convincing arguments
Against my beliefs
God has even had the mercy to resolve
Many of my big hangups with regards to faith

There are still and always will be
Parts of the Bible I do not fully understand
Or fully agree with
Some things I will just never be able to connect
But that is the whole point of faith

Because God is infinite
The only way we can understand
Or relate with Him
Is through our faith

Many bad things happen in this world
Even to Christians
But Christ told us that
We were never promised
A lack of problems
Especially Christians
This world did not like Christ
And we are certainly worse than Him
So they will easily find fault with us

Many seem to jump to

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The conclusion that its God's fault
That we have suffering in the world
But all the problems
We can document the causes of
Are all people created problems

Besides atheists don't even believe in God
So how could this God allow evil?

The real question we should ask
Is why do we not at least try
To reduce the suffering in this world
That we have control over?

We want a good and merciful God
Who is both kind and forgiving to us
But also one Who carries our our anger
On those we disagree with
This is not rational or fair to believe this

God always was and always will be good
But none of us ever were or will be
And God will have the last word of all of us

Internal Struggle for Peace

How do I struggle for peace
Within my very soul?
Is not a war I can see
Nor do I have any weapons

It is an internal conflict
We all face to varying degrees

It is a competition between wills
That we need to choose to lose
To have victory over ourselves

I really believe my greatest enemy
Is myself

People understand physical pain
And many also emotional pain
But the biggest fight is
Between God and ourselves

We fear evil forces and the devil
And we should
But we should fear
Our own decisions more

Fighting for our own good
Is easy to understand
Or even fighting for others

But attempting to defeat our own will

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Is much harder to understand
Why would a person not trust themselves?
How does the heart divide within a person?

Schizophrenia is a split
But not between personalities
It is a split between fantasy and reality
But there is a split between
All of our hearts as well

In dealing with insurgents and freedom fighters
We seek to win hearts and minds
God does as well
But rebellion from God is not the same
As endorsing certain political figures or ideas

Not embracing the values of this world
Is a way of finding God in this life

God seeks to win our hearts
Not because He needs to win
He never lost
He fights for us
And He won this war long ago

We are fighting a stubborn enemy
And so there are many battles
Still to take place

We often think getting more stuff
Will make us happy

Some seek mastery of their minds

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Through greater discipline
And many think evil can be overcome
By merely trying harder

But serious struggles
Require us to bring God's power
And authority to the conflict

It is true that the devil is weak
Compared to God
But compared to us
He is very powerful

This is why we need to resist
And resolve our blocks
That keep us from getting closer
In our relationship with God

Many Christians think of God
As a drinking buddy
But the relationship is more like
A really kind Authority Figure
A perfect Father
Or a Boss you can truly respect

We often see these things as incompatible
We need to dream bigger

In seeking victory over ourselves
We must choose God
As our Authority Figure

Many think that God is already in control

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So this does nothing
Others think they want to be free

The reality is that we were never meant
To live independently of God
We were meant to serve
And not to lead ourselves

Whenever we think of our rights
Or our freedom to express ourselves
And raise this preference
Higher than what God asks us to do
This is when we make an idol for ourselves

Most people do not worship the devil directly
In American culture today
We make ourselves to be gods

When we do not voluntarily
Choose God as our master
We are implicitly choosing to serve
The god of this world

God is the Ultimate Power
In every and all realities
But He has given us the right
To choose who we will serve

This is a binary decision
It is not an essay question

There are many way to express ourselves
Even in our faith

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But there are certain spiritual realities
Like the laws of physics
That work consistently
Whether we like them or not

So it is in the spiritual world
If you choose to express yourself
By expecting gravity to work differently
Just because you want it to

This is a sure way to get seriously hurt
The same goes with spiritual realities

Finding Ourselves

We in America today
Think we need to spend our youth
Finding ourselves
And changing the world

We still have that burden
Of telling others how to live

We all want to be leaders
None of us want to really
Put God first in our lives

To follow God means
Putting Him at the center
Of our lives and world
This does not leave a place for us
To stand on a soap box

If we truly want to know
What would Jesus do?
We need to remember what Jesus did
And more importantly
What He didn't do

We do not grasp what it means
To be truly selfless
Or what it means to change
The spiritual world

The most significant thing

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We can do to change the world
Is to find peace with God

Our entire culture and economy
Are based on more
We are never satisfied
With just doing good

We think even when we
Worship God and do His will
We need to affect enough people

We still see the Church
In numbers and dollars

The evangelization of this
New world culture
May take longer than our lives
And make use of other peoples'
Time and talents

It may not be for us
We have to have the humility
To understand that everything
May not take place
In the span of our lifetimes

Each generation tends to
See prophecy in their
Own generation's terms

We cannot see God's will
Because we are too focused

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On what we do
And not on what He does

We need to have
The faith to rest
And be at peace with
What God has given us to do

For most of history
A person would spend their lives
Digging dung out of a horse stall
This is not an exciting life

But it is better in many ways
Because it kept us occupied
And many of us out of trouble

There are not some jobs more important
Than the jobs we try to avoid

We just don't understand
The depths of our wealth and power
And how this keep us
From finding peace with God

Christ truly thought different
Unlike other great leaders of the ancient world
He did not exemplify strength or beauty
He became one of us
To show us how to become more like Him

Christ is still the most revolutionary
Hero of all time

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Because He was willing to listen

He was willing not just to obey
His Heavenly Father
But His earthly mother as well

When the devil tempted Him
It was about power
He was tempted with the position
To really change there world
Like we would try to do

He did always have the authority
To save not just Himself
From the torture of the cross
But from having to live in defeat
In terms of how we see the world

He not only spent time
With immoral people
He lived in the world of the weak
Of those living under His judgement

The society that turned their back on Him
And He took part in their punishment
Through His entire life
Not just on the cross

The most powerful thing
A person can do to change the world
Is to kneel before their Creator

We have everything backwards

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In America today
Our first response is to punish
Our political and social enemies
Christ knew we were our greatest enemies

We have an empire built on wealth
We keep choosing to associate Christ
With wealth, power, and arrogance

We have an unhealthy desire
To have the approval of our leaders

We will soon have to choose
Whether we will put God first
Or our political and social values

Because we cannot choose to serve
Both God and money
We cannot escape the role of servant
Because we serve such a God

It is right that others lead us in this world
And we focus on the next one
We only have one shot at this
So we must put God before country

Volunteering

I often hear how capitalism
Is Christian because it is based
On Biblical principles like greed

This is like saying
Christianity and Satanism
Have a lot in common
Because they have the same worldview

It all depends on who you are serving
Yes the world is a dark place
But we should do our best
To minimize it not embrace it

Realistically we will never solve
The problem of suffering
But this doesn't mean
That we shouldn't at least try
To do what we can

I know the world is a cruel place
This is why I have decided
To make better choices
After leaving the military
To avoid suffering
For myself and others

Being realistic does not require
Us to have a negative or defeatist attitude
About doing what is right

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And helping out the poor and disadvantaged

We often hear about just wars
And having legitimate reasons
For engaging in warfare

When a country goes to war
They have already failed
And everyone loses
It just varies as to how much

A nation with the power we have
And access to specialized resources
Does not need to fight wars
Every decade like clockwork

Getting tough on other countries
Involves some of the kindest people
Having their lives destroyed

We think of how much we want
To stay out of poverty
And how impractical peace is

But when we fight wars
Only a small minority of us
Actually signs up to go

Almost everyone qualifies
Few people can legitimately say
They volunteered but were rejected

The recruiters are flat out lying

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And no one lets the Peace Corps
Come into high schools
Like they do military recruiters

The military is filled with wonderful people
Using sophisticated equipment
And doing very important work

At the same time the risks
Are light years beyond
What would happen to you
Even in some of the most dangerous jobs

You also get paid very little
You are likely to be on government assistance
You don't get most the benefits promised
For a variety of reasons

Some call these people heroes
But it is not an honor
To suffer for ungrateful people
And suffer a meaningless loss
Of good health and safety

Furthermore these wars
Which we mostly win very fast
Have no practical upside
For this nation as well

We are basically creating countries
With no government or laws

And this must not be an accident

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As there are many smart people
Leading us into this situation

Many think they can thank a veteran
For their service
And this is somehow an honor

If you want to thank a veteran
Put pressure on congress
To stop voting for wars

The military has a
Greater and greater difficulty
In finding enough people to sign up

Because so many people realize
Serving in the military
Will not improve their lives or careers
Definitely not at the costs involved

But these same people think
That it is a great idea for other people

I don't think I am anything special
For serving in the Army

As soon as we arrived at Basic Training
We realized right away
That we were nothing special

We were taught not to stand out
No one was better than anyone else

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The worst thing you could do
Is to not be a team player
The military does not tolerate
Any form of laziness
Or lack of cooperation

In some ways this reflects
How God sees us
None of us are more important
Than anyone else

I felt God was very close to me
During the entire time of my enlistment
But this is also when my paranoia started

Shortly after I entered Basic Training
The terror gave me the energy
To make it through all my training

When you think of sending in our military
To help some American overseas

Think of this -
That even our best trained troops
Can easily be captured themselves
As they try to rescue others

The reason for most wars
Continues a cycle of revenge
We are starting to see
The same thing happen
Even in our country

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Welcome to world history
We are finally a nation with a past

Why I Don't Travel

When we think of epic
We often think of travel
Of exotic locations
And lots of danger

This is but one way
Of experiencing the world
You can truly understand the world
Even though you never travel

Some of the most important parts
Of almost every culture
Are not the geographical locations
Or how the country looks
Setting only determines too much

Today we have the luxury
Of reading about other cultures
To experience the best of them
In their own literature
From their own point of view
But in modern English translations

Travel is over rated
I learned in the military
That the exciting things in life
Are so dangerous and painful
It is worth it to find a better way

We live in a bubble in America

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But understanding the world
Does not require exposing yourself to
People who both hate you
And actively seek to hurt you

The most important thing
To most people in the world today
And throughout most history
Is who or what they believe in
Which are called religions or philosophies

The focus of religions
Is not on ourselves
But on the deity of worship
Or the ideas of the philosophy we follow
Or both

In America we are obsessed
With how everything relates to us
But the world and reality itself
Are much bigger and more interesting
Than just what we understand and feel

One of the joys of religion and philosophy
Is being part of something greater than ourselves
It brings great joy and peace
To know there are others that believe the same as you

But greater yet to know
That there are worlds beyond
Just the one of the here and now

That there is Someone who created us

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And Someone who is both good
And truly cares
To the point that He proved that with both
His choices and ultimately His sacrifices

So as much as we accumulate
The only things we take with us
Are our memories and experiences
But more significantly
Our relationship with God

We spend most of our lives
Waiting for the next part of life
But there is a time when all the waiting will end
And we begin to experience the majority of our lives

This does not fully begin until after our deaths
But we can begin to experience Heaven on earth
By understanding who God is
And sharing this with other believers

This is because once we choose God
He has a plan for us long before we die
The Kingdom of God is both on Earth and Heaven
The ruler of this world is pure evil
But he is not the Greatest Power even in this world

There are things we can do
That are both greater in importance
And having longer lasting value
Than even studying other cultures
Some of this involves learning more about God
But this also involves sacrificing things for Him

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We soon learn this world is evil
For some this takes longer
This is one of the purposes of Heaven
Life is hard

The people who would be fun
To hang out with in the countries
That seem fun to travel to
Are mostly the rich

If we spent time with
The average person
This would likely break our hearts

The way we treat people
As well as the other creations of God
Is atrocious to say the least

It is much worse in the majority of the world
It is not that people there are worse than us
But that there are costs to our current lifestyle
In our country

Our country is better to live in
Because our trash and factories
Are not mostly in our own country
We will learn this the next few decades
As we bring factories back to the homeland

Also the scale of everything
Has been growing exponentially
So the factories' bad effects on us

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Are likely much more severe
Than they were decades ago

If I describe in a few words
Why I don't travel
It makes me sound ignorant

But I probably know more about
The countries I have never traveled to
Than most world travelers

I enjoy reading about world history, world literature, and world
religion
Which are often the same pieces of writing
But going outside my country
Would put my safety at risk

And it would only break my heart
Knowing that our lifestyle
Is based on the suffering of others
I already know this

Nothing much surprises me anymore
Except God's love for us

Implications

God has feelings too.

There are 2 types of people in this world. The ones that divide people into 2 groups and those that don't. Everyone is an individual whether they like it or not.

For the last few centuries, Christian leaders had to defend against critics denying the divinity of Christ. Now the Church seems to be hurting because there is no real understanding of Christ being fully human. We say it in our doctrine, but we do not feel it in our hearts.

We are all sinners and God died on the cross for our sins. This is true. But God did not hate us before that. God hates sin because it hurts us.

God does not just love us in an abstract or general sense. God doesn't see us as the same in terms of our personalities. God has an emotional life too. He has called us to have different roles as there are many different spiritual gifts.

Christ had all the human limitations of having a body and still had emotions and a unique personality and interests. He had friends and He grew up not unlike the other siblings in His family. Christ was tempted by the devil in ways that show He was frustrated by His human limitations as well.

Christianity was and still is revolutionary. We are not meant to understand the entire Bible but to follow it. Christ made things simpler and more direct like in the golden rule and that we are to

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love God and our enemies as ourselves. God was so concerned about our attitudes that He preferred true repentance over sacrifices that He ordered. The law became synonymous with our conscience.

Christ was not talking in riddles or mysterious codes like koans in Buddhism. The reason why we need faith is that is the only way we can understand and relate with God. We cannot get meaningful answers solely by analyzing Scripture.

The Bible opens a huge can of worms. This is deliberate as this forces a spiritual crisis for us that builds our faith. We are to love God with all our heart, mind, and soul.

This goes beyond intellectual understanding and into physical application. If the body and feelings didn't matter anymore what was the point of the festivals of the Old Testament or the rituals of the New Testament like communion and baptism? Why would a God that wasn't artistic have such elaborate instructions for the temple? Would an uncreative God have chosen the sacrificial system of the Old Testament with all the blood and gore?

This is the fallacy in saying that spiritual things are good and material things are bad. The theological implications of this deny the basic identity of God taught in the Bible. You cannot have a second Adam and have a sufficient sacrifice if you Jesus was not fully God and Man at the same time.

God the Father, Christ, and the Holy Spirit all have the same personality. Christ is as concerned about evil as is His Father. The Father is as compassionate and forgiving as His Son.

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If the human body is inherently evil, why does the Holy Spirit choose to dwell within us. If Jesus was not the same as us physically and emotionally, then how would He know about all our temptations?

The Bible and the God we serve go beyond our ability to fully grasp them. We cannot always understand Scripture. Even the angels couldn't figure out about Christ before His birth. The only reason why any of us can truly understand Christ and overcome our pride is by a miracle from God.

Modern psychology comes from the Bible. Christian mystics and other great Christian writers talked about this for centuries. We had the evidence right in front of us, but we missed it hiding in plain sight.

The modern Church has gotten so good at abstract theology that it forgot the emotional aspect of people. We now often confuse sin, which is still very real, with limitations of being physical beings. We are so driven to spread the Gospel and convert as many people as possible that we make it hard for people who are quiet or shy from expressing their faith in different ways.

We are so concerned with people doing everything correctly that we do not give people enough freedom to find new ways to spread the Gospel. We get nervous about any innovation in our understanding of the Bible. Imagine if Christ came today. We might totally mistake Him for a cult leader or a counter culture outcast.

There is amongst many Christians a stereotype that our society is obsessed with being unique. But this is untrue to a large extent. People today more than any other time before want to belong and

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experience intense pressure to fit in with others. We all are being pushed to be experts or leaders in some respected academic field today.

Many of these ideas that I am criticizing are elitist and similar to an early heresy of the Church called Gnosticism. Gnostics believed that the god of the Old Testament was the devil, Jesus was God but not man, and we were saved by secret knowledge. This was an early attempt to make Christianity into a form of Paganism. Today we might call this New Age.

This is likely why there are so many teen suicides today. We are innovating our society into a broken one where there is no continuity or culture left. The Church is guilty of this too. Where has the American Church engaged academia recently? Pointing fingers at the same things their Church members are also guilty of does not count.

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From 2nd Wind

Folly of Pure Reason

Can you find holes
In the arguments of others?
Do you think everything
That you fail to understand
Must necessarily be false?

To reduce everything to reason
And human reason at that
Reflects a very limited understanding
That makes the world a very sad place

If we as people of faith
Can accept a certain degree of mystery
Maybe we can stop the infighting
And maybe society won't see us so negatively

Other people can honestly come to different conclusions
When reading the same words
It is preposterous to think that everyone who disagrees
Must necessarily be an agent of disruption

Our biggest problem today is complexity
Coupled with the demand to understand everything
And the need to be convinced of its necessity

What is it like to wake up
And know you are not in a dream?
Is it worth it to be right
To give up on finding community?

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Is being able to explain everything
Worth giving up on being able to experience God?
Why do we continue to engage in debate
When we call ourselves believers?

Do we know what belief means?
We can never have complete proof
For anything so beyond us
Like anything spiritual especially God

Our job as believers is not to solve problems for God
God will keep His Church alive
Despite our actions not because of them

We are merely God's hands and feet
We give money to the church as a form of worship
Not because God needs our money
God is not limited by any numbers
God can make 10 times as many believers instantly

So what is a proof for faith
If we do not solely rely on reason?
Scripture shows how God wants to relate with us
And the consequences for rejecting Him

Our life experiences reflect the history of Israel
And we encounter similar issues and respond similarly
As the heroes of the faith

The existence of love and beauty are a surprise
In a world where we quickly understand
The reality of pain and evil

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The fact that we never feel satisfied
And constantly long for more
Is a drive to push us toward God
This is what advertisers key in on

Many of us intuitively realize there must be a creator
As something coming out of nowhere is not reasonable
No matter how you move goal posts
Or adjust the laws of physics

Even the idea of an infinite universe
Is not testable or calculable
So that requires faith to explain as well

Whenever someone exerts effort for an activity
That they do not directly gain from
And sacrifice their time, money, or health
This is proof for the spiritual world
And specifically the Christian God

Unbelievers do not understand the Bible
Because God has different motivations
He also has different values
And expresses Himself in different ways

God is also wild and spontaneous
The most religious person barely knows God
God cannot be predicted or contained
We see a little of this reflected in His creation

God works on completely different time scales
He mostly works peacefully, subtly, and through ordinary means
God is always consistent and follows through with His promises

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God never changes His values or character

God never explained why we suffer to our satisfaction
But no one else has either
Unless you consider Jesus Christ

There are as many reasons to believe
As there are to not believe
How else could there be free will?

For me it comes down to this
God is more real to me than I am
I don't ask if God exists
I ask if I exist

I feel closest to being satisfied
When I learn more about God
Or I spend time with Him
Afterwards I feel good about myself

I cannot say the same is true
With everything else I do

God is the only one I completely trust
He knows everything we do
But He does not keep records
Like everyone else does

When the Holy Spirit is within you
He never forces or manipulates you
Into doing anything you do not want
Unlike most people in power today

Questions without Answers

Shifting left while shifting right
Going forward while turning to the side
We try to make the upside down straight

We seek to contain the mystery
And solve the difficult situation
Sometimes words are not enough
There are times when silence gives better answers

When does three equal one
Or when are fate and freedom the same?
Some argue about elephants and human limits
Others use the tools they have been trained with

Being right doesn't always bring community
And convincing others does not always change hearts
How can we think we can understand God
When we cannot even describe our own minds?

When nonsense is spoken in public
People start to talk about us poorly
When we are thought to be irrational
We think we have lost their respect

Why do we need to explain ourselves?
Why does everything need to make sense?
In a world controlled by science
The greatest minds cannot accept defeat

How do we learn to follow

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If we all want to be leaders?
How do we become one group
When all our ideas are non-negotiable?

What do you call it
When you are driven solely by faith
But still want to explain yourself?

Why didn't Jesus give an account for Himself
Or tell us why we suffer
In a way we could accept?

Some things we will never understand
Some things we are more interested in avoiding
Than getting a good explanation for

When we see every aspect of life
As a problem to be solved
What happens when the math fails
Or when the theory comes up short?

Years are passing like weeks
And months like days
Everything is speeding up
All around us

Today no one can understand everything
Even just that which people have proven
Would it make us happier to have all mysteries solved?

Why do we constantly try to justify our feelings
Or find good reasons for what we believe?
In a world that thinks answers are an instant away

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We are very efficient but have lost our freedom along the way

If you could defend everything you do and think
Do you think even a single person more would believe?

When you are afraid at night
Of whatever it is acceptable to be afraid of
Does it bring you comfort
To understand where your beliefs come from?
Does the analysis of religion bring joy or peace?

When I started this intellectual journey
I had long since given up on convincing
Myself or anyone else to change their mind

I believe people at least today
Decide first what they want to believe
And then find reasons to justify themselves

No one would rely upon their mind
For something as important as their closest held beliefs
If you let someone convince you to change religions
You will likely change your mind many more times

Our brains have a mental framework
We create in early childhood
And everything needs to fit into that framework
Or we have an existential crisis
Or a dark night of the soul

To expect someone to change this framework
By merely giving a convincing speech
Is to expect people to never believe deeply about anything

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We know how people change their minds
Because powerful people exploit this for their gain

People change their mind
When they hear the same thing repeated often enough
Or they have a traumatic life experience

When was the last time you actually decided
On something important on the level of faith
After listening to someone give a good argument?

If this is true than you better get good at debate
Because otherwise someone smarter than you
Will find holes in your intellectual framework
And you might be convinced just as easily
To change who or what to believe in again