

FOOD **4** THOUGHT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION



There is much talk about solutions, but nobody wants to admit what the problem is.

The various speakers offered several solutions to the country's problems, and even the world's problems. The cheers and applause from the people indicated that at least in their eyes the speeches were fairly wise.

Unfortunately, no one, not even the most popular speaker, was able to discern what the fundamental problem was.

There was talk about patriotism, the precarious economic situation, and violence and oppression around the world. But all these are only symptoms. It's no wonder that most political plans fail.

The prosperity of a country and the well-being of its citizens does not simply depend on a political party's ideology or the kind of government that runs the nation. The real issue is the virtue and character of its people.

An attitude of pessimism and selfishness among workers, merchants, professionals, and family members is at the root of the problem. Behind every failure of a nation is greediness and corruption, yet behind every triumph is a body of honest, disciplined, and generous citizens.

No economic system can prosper if the people lack respect and love for their fellow human beings. Secure universal banking or modern technology cannot replace the moral and spiritual values within a culture.

The problem therefore takes root in man's heart. The decline of the world today is the result of the loss of spiritual values in the homes, classrooms, businesses and courtrooms. A great deal of unwise and wrong messages have also been given from religious pulpits.

Yet, throughout history in times of national crisis, there has often been a spiritual leader or a spiritual movement and many people parted from their differences and returned to God.

Political speeches and governmental action is necessary for a nation, but the solution to the problems lies in the moral character of the citizens. Turning to God has been, and always will be, the only option for a favorable change. A relationship with Jesus Christ is the beginning of a new life. By faith in Him, His death on the cross, and His resurrection on our behalf, we can find the true way to God and the solution to our problems.

The apostle Paul reminds us: *"Anyone who believes in him [Jesus Christ] will never be put to shame."* (Romans 10:11) □

Why can't we forget our sins?

It is very difficult to forget our sins, even those small sins that seem very unimportant. Why is this?

To encourage us to behave well, our parents would tell us that Santa was watching and was taking note of what we did to either reward or punish us with toys or coal, depending on our behavior.

Some parents said the same about God, telling us that He was vigilant and was writing down what we did in a book and that some day He would open the book to read how we behaved and make us pay for our bad deeds.

Many people have viewed God in this way. They see Him as a God who does not love them, but instead is looking for an excuse to punish them.

If you are a person that believes in a God like this, you are mistaken. God does not want to remember our sins. Beginning from the first sin of Adam and Eve until now, God has expressed His desire for reconciliation, love, and forgiveness toward man. This is the Bible's central message in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament. Forgiveness is complete and permanent. This is how David expressed it in Psalm 103:12: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

In reality, we are the

ones who cannot forget our sins. A person feels like a failure and unhappy when they give in to their temptations. If they confess and turn away from their sin, they may feel relieved. If they hide it or try to forget, the guilt will continue afflicting their inward person. This is a confirmation that the sin has not been forgotten. It's not necessary for God to remind us. There is an inner structure in ourselves that does not allow us to forget.

How do we solve this problem? Do we condemn ourselves for the rest of our lives and for eternity? Is there any hope?

The answer is found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. He came to the world for this reason. Jesus suffered for our sins. The innocent One paid the debt for the guilty ones. God forgives and forgets and He desires that we receive and accept that forgiveness.

Perhaps you are not able to forget your transgressions and sins, and continue carrying that burden. But, if you believe in Christ, He will give you His complete and permanent forgiveness.

After experiencing such grace, we will finally be free to respect and love ourselves as well as others. *"In Him (Christ) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace."*
(Ephesians 1:7)

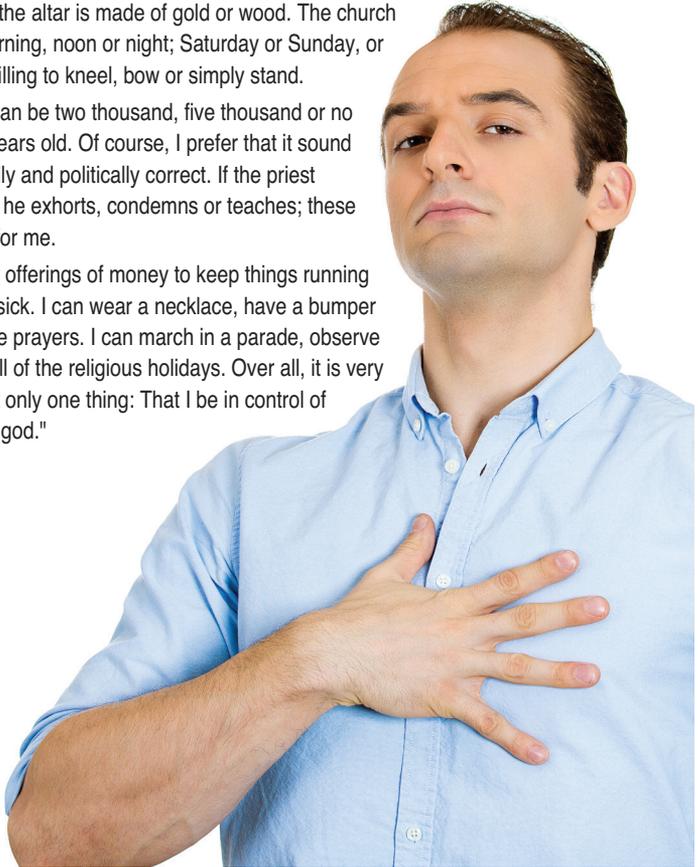


My favorite religion

“I am a very religious man, but I am not as demanding as most people are. I don't care if the altar is made of gold or wood. The church meeting can be in the morning, noon or night; Saturday or Sunday, or even Wednesday. I am willing to kneel, bow or simply stand.

The book that is read can be two thousand, five thousand or no more than one hundred years old. Of course, I prefer that it sound poetic and that it be literally and politically correct. If the priest speaks softly or shouts, if he exhorts, condemns or teaches; these things are not a problem for me.

I am willing to bring my offerings of money to keep things running and to help the poor and sick. I can wear a necklace, have a bumper sticker on my car, or recite prayers. I can march in a parade, observe penance, and celebrate all of the religious holidays. Over all, it is very easy to please me. I want only one thing: That I be in control of my life. That I be my own god.”



Many people might think this way, but a religious attitude like this does not give true satisfaction and fulfillment. God wants us to have a personal relationship with Him through Jesus Christ. We must recognize Jesus as the Lord of our lives and surrender to Him. □

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Our weak point



In car accident reports oftentimes the cause of the accident is very clear. Maybe it's dangerous driving due to drugs or alcohol, or sleeping at the wheel, or brakes that have failed.

The argument that the conductor has driven for many years without an accident, does not void the consequences of a bad maneuver. You can say that 99% of the time they drive well, but that percentage will not matter when an accident occurs. If the wreck is the result of brakes that do not work, having a nice paint job or a very good engine in the car will not prevent an accident.

We can experience this type of situation in our lives. We may have excellent health for many years, but other times we might have a sickness that won't heal, or an illness without a cure. Our bodies can work perfectly well, but if our heart fails, the other 99% of the body that is healthy will not keep us alive.

Our human nature is similar. We are a combination of strengths and weaknesses in our character. Depending on the circumstances we can show

ourselves capable and noble, but under other instances we can be deficient and susceptible to temptation and not behave before God and others as we should.

What appears to be a virtue is often actually a mask, a display of what we are not. We hide our weaknesses. We want to present a good first impression and display a "sample" of our strong points. People will usually accept our outward appearances, but when they realize who we really are, they may be disillusioned.

What is the secret to strengthening our weak points? It is not by gaining knowledge or good habits. It is by cultivating a spiritual life through a relationship with God and His Son Jesus Christ. His word, the Bible, can bring to light what our weak points are, and He tells us that when we are weak, He is strong. Only He is able to make our weak points strong.

The writer of the Psalms says: *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."* (Psalm 46:1) □