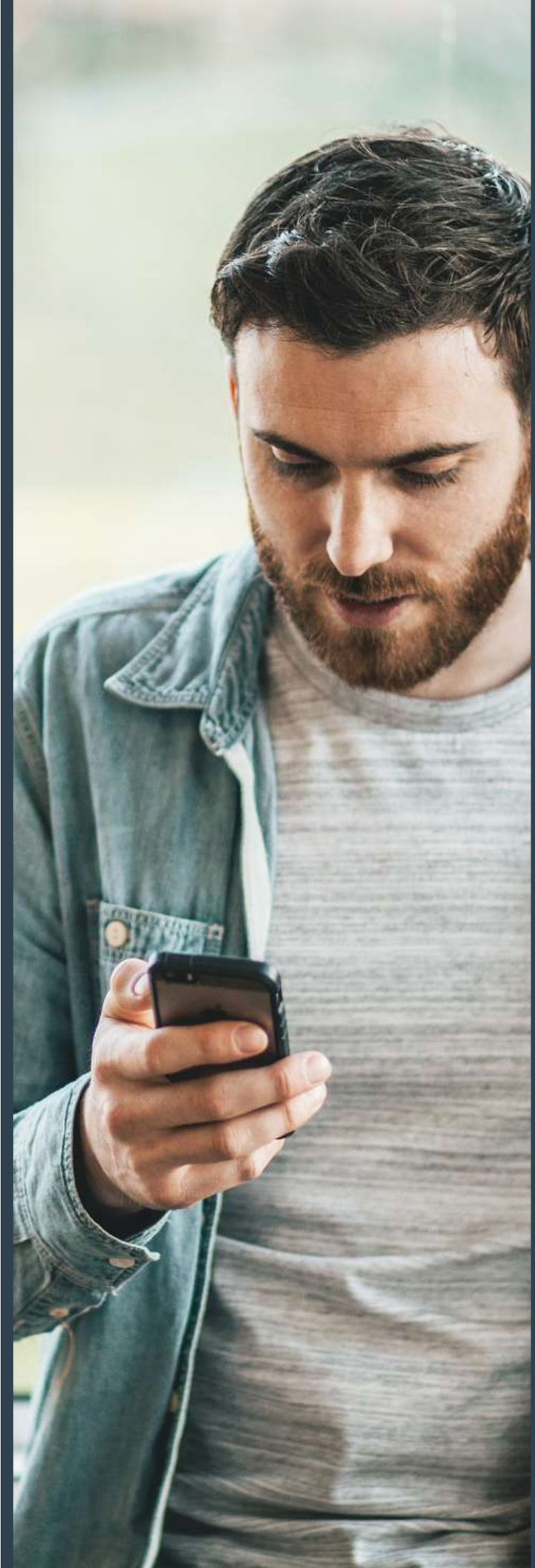


Discover the Truth

CAN I KNOW GOD?





CAN I KNOW GOD?

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HOW DO I DEAL WITH FEAR?

There's a lot to fear in our world right now! From wars, disease, greed and corruption, there's plenty to be concerned about.

Feeling fear is a natural response, but how do we properly deal with our fear?

The root of fear almost always has to do with the issue of trust. Who or what are we trusting?

We really only have three options:

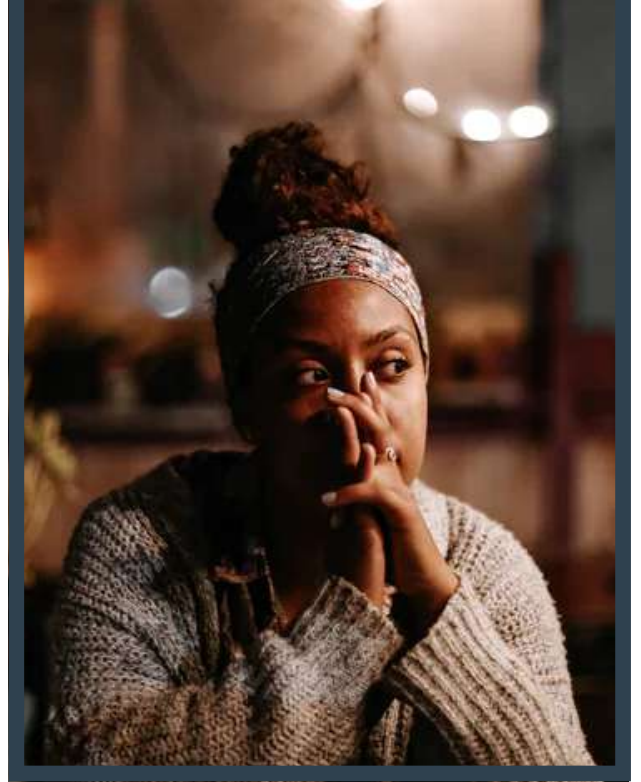
Ourselves—we can trust in our own efforts, ingenuity, intellect and abilities, but even our best efforts are not always enough.

Others—we can put our trust in our spouse, our family, a close friend, organizations, institutions, our workplace or even our government. But again, eventually all of these sources fall short and disappoint us.

God—we can trust in the one who is all-knowing and who is strong enough to help us carry all things.

In the Bible, a warrior named David knew what it was like to feel fear. Fear of disease. Fear of a crisis. Fear of death. Yet David dealt with his fear by deciding who he would trust. He writes, "When I am afraid, I will put my trust in God."

If you're feeling fear during your current crisis, will you put your trust in God who knows everything? He understands what you're feeling, and He's the only one strong enough to help you in every circumstance. He is the only one who will never let you down.



SO, WHO AM I?

Many people struggle with questions about their identity. "Who am I really? Does my life make any difference?"

You may well be asking things like, "If God actually exists, does He really care who I am? Do I matter to Him at all?"

Let me answer with a resounding "Yes! He does!" It was never God's intention that we be left on our own to find identity and purpose in ourselves, our career, athletic ability, attractiveness or in a perfect family. He does care.

We have a choice. Do we really want to seek an identity that is rooted in fleeting or broken things? The other option is to truly seek God with all our heart. You can find a security and peace you did not believe was possible. God's love for us is so incredible, so powerful that it permeates even our very sense of who we are intended to be!

HOW DO I MANAGE DAY- TO-DAY FEELING EMPTY INSIDE?

We human beings are not made for isolation. We are designed for relationships and can feel empty inside without being a meaningful part of a community. That community begins with the one who designed and made us.

Blaise Pascal, the 17th century mathematician, physicist, inventor and writer, described a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of each man that cannot be satisfied by any created thing, but only by God the Creator made known through Jesus Christ.

If we are our only source, we WILL feel empty. Not one of us is meant to be fully sufficient in ourselves. We are designed to be in meaningful relationships with God and others.



HOW CAN I BE SURE GOD LOVES ME?

How can you be sure if God loves you? You may be suffering medically, facing job loss or financial distress.

In the midst of suffering and hardship, it's natural to ask: "Where is God in this? He seems far away." A famous preacher named Billy Graham once said, "The more I read the Bible, the more I realize that love is God's supreme attribute." God's love never fails. It is both real and reliable.

The Bible in one place (the book of Ephesians chapter 3, verse 19) describes the love of Christ as surpassing knowledge—literally too wonderful to be measured. Would you like to have that kind of love?

Think of it this way. The sun rises each morning, but on some days heavy clouds block its light and warmth. Yet the sun is still there. As with the sun, God's love is always present. Even on the darkest of days, God's love can pierce the darkness and radiate life and hope into your weary heart and soul.



HOW DO I COPE WITH ANXIETY AND STRESS?

Anxiety and stress have always been a part of life.

How do we cope with the anxiety and fear resulting from something bigger than ourselves?

The best way is to give that fear up to God. When you have a relationship with God, you can fully give yourself and your situation over to God and rest in the knowledge that nothing happens without his awareness and power to intervene in situations that seem hopeless.

The Bible says, “Don’t worry about anything, pray about everything and be thankful in it all, and His peace will guard our hearts and minds as we live in Christ.”

In doing this, both the thoughts in our mind and our emotions will be aligned with a God who loves us and cares for us completely. Even in uncertainty, by daily trusting in God, we can find peace and confidence in him.

Will you consider consciously turning your anxiety and stress over to God who has promised that He loves each one of us and wants to carry our burdens and make them lighter?

HOW CAN I BE A GOOD SPOUSE?

After more than 45 years of marriage to my lovely wife, I’ve learned love that puts others first and good communication are two keys to help your marriage flourish, especially in times of crisis.

A big sticking point in marriage can be who gives and who gets. If both parties look only at what they can get, the marriage won’t work. But if each spouse endeavors to give, honor and serve the other, their marriage can succeed.

Good communication is vital to a healthy marriage! Communication takes work. We can be like strangers passing in the night unless we’re intentional. Look at your daily rhythm and find opportunities, like over a meal, that work well to update each other. Take a little walk together. Be interested in the other’s world—his or her challenges, insights, achievements. Everyday things!

God wants you to have a healthy, happy marriage, and He will help. Each of us has a natural tendency to act selfishly. But by being considerate of each other and keeping communication lines open, you can experience a love that lasts through the toughest trials.

CAN I EXPERIENCE PEACE FROM GOD?

A number of years ago my dad was living with my wife and me. He had severe lung cancer and was receiving frequent radiation treatments. I went to his room one Friday morning to be sure he was getting ready to go. But when I saw him lying awkwardly in his bed, I knew something was wrong.

I rushed over to him and found he wasn't breathing and had no pulse. He was dead!

In that very moment it was as if God put His hands on my shoulders and pulled me back from Dad's body. I sensed God was saying to me, "Steve, be at peace, your dad is with me!" Immediately my heart was flooded with peace.

Perhaps you are facing fear and anxiety and can't seem to snap out of it. If so, I encourage you to ask Jesus Christ into your life as I have done. I have found He is able to give peace in spite of any challenges I might be facing. In the Bible we are told that Jesus said, "My peace I give you...Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid."

HOW CAN I BE SURE GOD LOVES ME?

No one really knows what the future holds. It is the most basic concern you and I face. What will it be? Life or death? Gain or loss? Comfort or pain? No one knows for sure. But everyone wonders and cares deeply how it will all turn out.

For you and me, what matters most is not what the future holds, but rather who holds the future. The key to hope for every person is to know that God holds your future.

A wonderful Bible promise is spoken by God to captives in exile in the ancient city of Babylon. (At times, you may feel exactly like a prisoner!) Here is what the Lord says to all of us exiles: "For I know the plans that I have for you...plans for welfare and not for calamity to give you a future and a hope."

We can't control our future, but God does. Here is His promise to us if we rely upon Him—He will not only watch over our future, but He will fill our future with hope.

Even when everything ahead of us looks chaotic and uncertain, He is holding us—really, upholding us—with His powerful hand. God holds our future.



WHAT HAPPENS IF I DIE?

In his book, *Character Carved in Stone*, Pat Williams tells the story of General Matthew B. Ridgeway. Ridgeway rose through the ranks of the U.S. Army to command U.N. forces in the Korean War in the early 1950s. He was fearless, often in the hottest part of the battle, even striding upright through a combat zone as bullets whizzed about him and artillery shells exploded on every side.

When asked why he was so fearless in battle, Ridgeway said it was because of his Christian faith. He believed God had appointed a time for him to die and that there was nothing he could do to lengthen his life by a single second nor was there anything the enemy could do to take his life from him before God's appointed time. This belief made him fearless as he faced the enemy.

Ridgeway saw death as an appointment. This is a biblical view. In one place we read, "It is appointed for people to die once and then be judged by God." Elsewhere, the Bible describes two destinies, one in which we are eternally in the presence of the Lord, the other, eternally separated.

If we are thinking about life and death, that's a good thing—it helps us face fear today and set our lives on a course that will serve us well at that final appointment.

