



**DOES
YOUR
LIFE
HAVE
MEANING?**

**ANSWERING SOME OF LIFE'S
MOST CRITICAL QUESTIONS**

Mary Ann Lind, PhD

THE AUTHOR OF *FROM NIRVANA TO THE NEW AGE*

**DOES
YOUR
LIFE
HAVE
MEANING?**

**ANSWERING SOME OF LIFE'S
MOST CRITICAL QUESTIONS**

Mary Ann Lind, PhD

THE AUTHOR OF *FROM NIRVANA TO THE NEW AGE*

DOES YOUR LIFE HAVE MEANING?

Copyright © 1999, 2003, 2005, 2008, 2012, 2016
Mary Ann Lind

Sixth Edition 2016

Printed & Published by



FMP

Foursquare Missions Press

Printed in the United States



What's Life About Anyway?



"The times they are a changing" sang Bob Dylan in 1964. If it was true then, it is all the more true today. There's a fear gripping our world. The power of global communication brings instant news through our televisions, onto smart phones and the Internet which not only gives us instant updates on what is happening at any given time but plays it and replays it. The picture that is painted serves to fuel our anxiety. Social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and Snapchat can fuel emotions and responses before leaders themselves have time to act. Terrorism, racial and religious strife, economic uncertainty, tens of thousands of refugees on the march and natural disasters of historic proportions form the headlines of the day. Yet the institutions that once served to provide comfort and security are failing. The citizenry of many nations have lost confidence in the ability of their leaders to deal with such huge problems.

Not only is a political revolution brewing, but a moral and cultural revolution is as well. Even our vocabulary has changed with the addition of such terms as Artificial Intelligence, drones, robotics, and virtual reality. Technology is taking us to a whole new level of awareness and experimentation. The "brave new world" that once seemed fictitious is now becoming a part of our lives in subtle and not-so-subtle ways. The very nature of human existence is being called into question. What was once viewed as morally wrong is now being called right. Behavior that was formerly prohibited is now acceptable and all the while is reinforced by the entertainment industry.

We are being jolted out of our comfortable complacency and forced to come to terms with certain questions we would rather not ask. Are we living in the end times? Are we safe anywhere? Where is our security? What is life all about?

Yet, in this atmosphere of uncertainty, we go about our daily lives. Each day we get up, shower, grab a quick cup of coffee and head for our daily routine as we mindlessly retrace the familiar path of the previous day. In detachment we pass silent, vacant faces of people whom we will never see again. We are easily caught up in a culture that is running on fast forward in which a sense of loneliness and isolation seems altogether too present. There is a question common to us all: "Is this what life is all about?"

WHAT'S LIFE ABOUT ANYWAY?

You might have a nice place to live, great friends, flashy car, the latest electronic gadgetry, spend the weekend watching your favorite team, have a few drinks, a good time. You may be married, have a family and a home, but feel a bit overwhelmed by all of the responsibilities and demands that have to be met. Then on Monday, it's back to the same old routine, month after month, year after year. Experts say that we are exhausting ourselves. Does all of this provide the ultimate meaning to one's life?



What Gives The Meaning To Your Life?



Increasingly in our global culture, the emphasis is to look good, feel good, buy things, and pursue the good life. Subtle yet powerful global advertising and marketing techniques have convinced all of us of the need for something more. The reality is that as we age, we lose our good looks and then feel inadequate. Or we might get sick or lose a job or for some reason are unable to buy the house or the car or whatever else our culture demands of us.

Then there is the frequency with which relationships change as a girlfriend or boyfriend departs or a marriage falls apart. Inevitably, we lose loved ones to death which creates a lonely place that seemingly can never be filled. The fear of old age haunts many, not to mention the fear of one's own death.

To somehow provide meaning for our lives, we might turn to involvement in civic activities, politics, or some good cause such as environmentalism. While the causes are worthy, the expenditure of our time and energies may not bring the fulfillment

and satisfaction nor the appreciation and affirmation which we so desperately seek. Many who have plunged deeply into a worthy cause eventually find themselves disillusioned and even embittered.

Often, we immerse ourselves in our jobs and occupations in an attempt to keep ourselves busy and occupied so that we do not have to think about life's deeper issues. Many Americans have become workaholics. When someone asks "How are you?" we often cite how busy we are as if to be busy somehow validates our existence and therefore shows that we are valuable. What's more, we often work as if we "are what we do." Our identity becomes linked with our place of work. But in the back of our minds we are haunted by an awareness that we could lose our jobs, become disabled, or will someday retire. If we "are what we do," what happens when we can no longer "do" what we have always done? Is our identity lost? Does our life lose its meaning?

Increasingly, many have taken the philosophy of the French existentialist Jean-Paul Sartre who said, "Life is hard; then you die." He suggested that what matters is to seek one's pleasure for the present moment in time and not think about the past or the future. But in reality, even Sartre had doubts about his own beliefs and acknowledged at the end of his life that he had made the wrong choices.

It may seem at times that life is just some kind of cosmic joke. We come into the world, grow up, get a job, have a few friends, make some money,

maybe raise a few children, leave a small mark in some little niche of the world. Then we pass away and that's it. Finished.

OR, could it be that life was meant to have a great deal of meaning—that you, the very person reading this, might have a unique purpose for existence and might possibly find that life can be very fulfilling—even joyful and satisfying? And can it also be that when you *inevitably* die, there is something even greater and more wonderful awaiting you? This is one of life's deepest questions.

Could it be that a search for something deeper to the meaning of life was the reason so many places of worship were packed in the weeks and months following the terrorist attacks? Sobering events often cause us to stop in our tracks, look more deeply into ourselves, and to ponder the direction of our own lives. The suddenness of news headlines reinforces the truth that we simply do not know what a day might bring or even when our last day on earth might be.

At the end of the day when you put your head on the pillow and you're alone with your thoughts, does your life have meaning? Or is there something missing—something deep down in your inner being, in a place that no one else can enter? It may be that there is an empty place that can't seem to get filled with anyone or anything, no matter how hard you try.



Is There A God?



Maybe the place to start in the search for meaning to life is at the beginning. There is a book called the Bible that begins with four very powerful words, “In the beginning, God...”

Surveys indicate that over ninety percent of all Americans believe that there is a God. Following the September 11th terrorist attacks, the song “God Bless America” became a national rallying point, sung on the steps of the Capitol building by legislators as well as by spectators at sporting events. When a recent Federal District Court declared the words “one nation, under God,” recited in the Pledge of Allegiance to be unconstitutional, Americans of every walk of life were outraged. Our currency states “In God we trust.” But do we? Can we trust God? Is God personal and interested in our lives? Sometimes it’s very hard to believe that there is a God and that such a God truly cares about each of us when we live in a world in which children are abused, murder and mayhem take place, and a Holocaust cost 12,000,000 lives. When terrorists can unexpectedly strike civilian targets killing

thousands of innocent people, we are tempted to ask “Where was God?”

We want to believe that there is a God, but sometimes our questions remain suspended without answers. We look at an orderly universe that seems to have intelligent design and wonder if all of this order simply evolved out of chaos. In the beginning were there just floating particles? Most thoughtful people would agree that something cannot come from nothing.

Even an atom or a single cell cannot come from nothing. Centuries ago, the Greek philosopher Aristotle pondered the origins of the universe and concluded that there had to have been a “First Cause.” In fact, Aristotle used the term “Unmoved Mover” to refer to the One from whom all things have their essence. Medieval philosophers such as St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas took this a step further and suggested that every human being has *sensus divinitatis*, a sense of the divine or a “knowing” that there is a divine being that is higher than each of us. Deep within our humanness lies a desire to know God, a desire that was put there by God Himself.

What Is God Like?



Nevertheless, there might still be those who, in reading this booklet, will ask, “So what if God does exist? Why in our post-modern world do we even need a God?” Let’s consider the alternative. One could, of course, be an atheist. We do not have to look far back into the Twentieth Century to observe the offspring of atheism. From Nietzsche who stated that “God is dead!” the path ultimately led to the godless genocide of Dachau and Auschwitz. From Marx, who perceived man in purely material terms, the path led to the Siberian prison camps of Stalinism. From Freud’s focus on the importance of man’s subconscious urges, we find excuse for sexual promiscuity and all of its accompanying problems.

It could be summarized that if there is no God, then there are no absolutes and no boundaries can be set. The Russian novelist Dostoevsky suggested that if there is no God, then anything is permissible. When we reject the truths about God, we shift the center of our



universe to ourselves which is a very small center indeed. All things within a culture become relative as each person becomes a god unto himself. Instead of being created in the image of God, we in essence create a god in our own image, a god who suits our purposes, with whom we are comfortable, and to whom we need not be accountable.

But if the medieval philosophers were right, if there is an innate desire in every human being to know God, then we are led back to the God question: what is God like? In fact, just about every question in life, including whether or not our lives have meaning, inevitably leads us back to God. It is normal to doubt because doubts lead to questions and questions lead to answers. Ultimately, each person must decide for himself or herself the answer to the God question. But the answer to that most vital of all of life's questions will determine a host of other crucial life issues.

To be even more personal, what kind of God do we believe in? Are we talking about a non-threatening deity of our own making, one who neatly fits within our comfort zone? Is there perhaps a Christian God, a Muslim God, a New Age God? How do we even begin to fathom or describe God?

It has been said that God is the One about whom all words and all thoughts fail. If we could explain God or put Him in a box, He would no longer be God. We cannot use a human

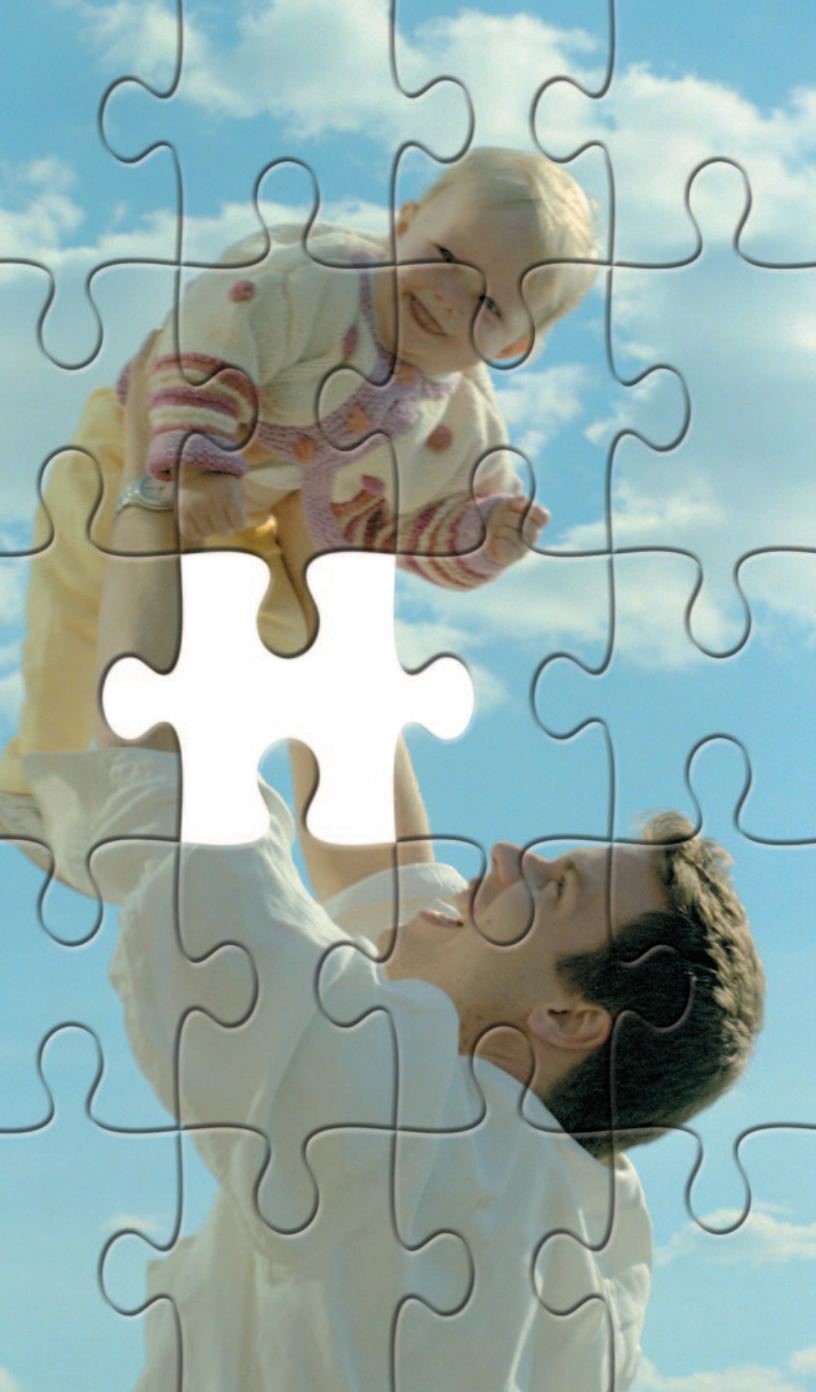
measuring stick to describe God. Even though we often use the pronoun “He,” the Bible (more about the Bible later) tells us that God is a Spirit. God has no beginning nor end but He is the Creator of the universe and has given the gift of life to all living things. The creation of the universe and all living things within the universe was not something that God *had* to do, but rather something God *wanted* to do.

With God, there is neither time nor space because He transcends both. Furthermore, God will never change. He is the same God that has always existed and always will; we can count on that fact. Another way to put it is to say that God is infinite, yet personal. This Master of the universe knows us and loves us as individuals created in His image. God is all-knowing and sovereign. He knows everything there is to know about everything in the universe, including each of us. The Bible tells us that God knows when a bird falls out of the sky and that He even knows our thoughts from far off. He knows what we are going to say before the words come out of our mouth. Because God knows us even better than we know ourselves, He understands our questions and our doubts. After all, He created us as thinking, reasoning, inquisitive beings.

God And You



But the most important characteristic about God for you, the person reading this, is that He loves you with an everlasting love that will never, ever change. To be loved by God is the greatest stamp of approval any human being could possibly have. People will come and go. Most certainly, life will have its ups and downs, but God will remain the same. God is not a human being which means that He will never die, never grow old, never get sick, never abandon you. His love for you is absolutely unconditional. No love of any human being, however genuine it might be, can equal God's love for you. God sees us through eyes of love no matter how we might see ourselves. He loves us even when we are at our worst and may find it hard to love ourselves. *God is love.* Were this not true, there would be no love in our world because love originated from the heart of a loving Creator. He cannot help but love because He is love. Even if we reject God, ignore God, or blatantly declare that there is no God, He still loves us.



Yet the perplexing question still remains, if He exists, what kind of God would allow awful things to happen in the world? Is this a loving God? As one young man at a London bus stop anguished, “How can I believe in a God who let my baby die?” Or as a young woman at a hotel desk in Paris sighed, “I tried God and He let me down.” The tragic events of September 11, 2001 have caused many to question the nature of God. Nearly 3,000 innocent people from many different countries perished at the hands of terrorists. What kind of God would let such a thing happen?

These responses would somehow suggest that God is powerless—this same God that created our incredible universe. Could not God have done something, anything, to have kept the terrorist attacks from happening? If God knows everything about everything, why doesn't He step into the events of history before they are about to happen and keep them from taking place? If God is so good, why is there so much pain and suffering in the world? Why is there so much evil? Did God create and then, like a giant Watchmaker, He now sits back and lets the universe run on its own? Where do we find the answers to such questions?

A close-up photograph of a dark, textured Bible cover, possibly leather or faux leather, with the words "HOLY BIBLE" embossed in white capital letters. The Bible is positioned diagonally across the frame. The entire scene is overlaid with a grid of interlocking puzzle pieces. One piece in the lower center is missing, revealing a bright white background underneath. The lighting is dramatic, with a warm orange glow in the upper right corner and deep shadows elsewhere.

HOLY
BIBLE

Does The Bible Have The Answers?



A majority of Americans say that they have at least one Bible in their homes. When a new president is sworn into office, he places his hand on a Bible as he takes the oath of office. The Bible has long been used to hold people accountable for telling the truth. Bibles are given as gifts, placed next to hospital bedsides, and found in hotel rooms around the world. But how many people are really familiar with the Bible? What makes it any different than the Koran of Islam or the ancient mythologies of the Greeks? Is the Bible the place to go to learn about God?

First of all, the Bible is not man's efforts to find God, but it is an account of God's effort to reveal Himself to mankind. Therefore, it is a *revelation*. Over a period of 1,500 years, the Bible was written by forty authors of varying backgrounds. Despite this variety of authors and long span of writing, there is a central theme:

God's redemption of mankind. No other book can boast of such a fact. Most of the authors did not know each other and yet adhered to that central powerful theme because as they wrote they were led and inspired by God's Holy Spirit. This means that the ultimate author of the Bible is God. One cannot come to the Bible like any other book: take what one wants to believe and leave the rest. The Bible does not "contain" the word of God, it is the word of God. If we said that parts of the Bible are true but parts are not, we would have to ask why God would use error to teach us truth. How could anyone put their faith in a book if only parts of it are true? Either it is all true or none of it is true at all.

Furthermore, the Bible continues to be authenticated by archaeological discoveries which validate places, events, and persons of the Bible. The most famous of these validations was the 1947 discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls which contained precious portions of the Old Testament. The universality of the Bible in answering the deepest of life's questions, in offering comfort and hope, and in radically transforming human lives attests to the uniqueness of the Bible as God's Holy Word. No other book has so stood the test of time; no other book has been translated into as many languages; no other book has sold as many copies in all of history; no other book has had such an impact on mankind.

The Bible is definitely the book to read if one wants to know the truth about God. It tells us that first and most importantly, God is love. God is good. He simply cannot be otherwise. His very essence is love and goodness, two qualities in our universe that originated in God Himself. Without God, this would be a loveless world with no goodness whatsoever. He is so all-powerful and so all-loving that He created man as a free moral agent. This is an extremely important concept to accept in order to understand the nature of our world. We are not puppets who are compelled to dance on a divinely controlled string unable to make our own moral decisions. Rather, we are free to make whatever moral choices we desire, whether good or evil. Such freedom allows for the expressions of love, compassion, kindness, goodness, and generosity that exist in our world. Such moral freedom produced a Mother Teresa. But, unfortunately, that same moral freedom allows choices such as those which also produced an Adolf Hitler.

Then where did evil come from? Not from a creature with horns and a tail but in the infinite distance of time past from a beautiful angelic being in heaven named Lucifer who rebelled against God and was thus expelled from heaven. He became Satan, the source of all evil. We must not look upon evil as an entity that exists by itself. Evil is best defined as the *absence* of good, not the *opposite* of good. Evil and good could be compared to rust and iron; if left unchecked, rust

corrodes iron just as surely as evil pushes back good when allowed to have its way. However, the great news is that the process can be reversed: good can overcome evil.

Satan's powerful influence can be seen around the world. The willful choice to give in to the temptations of Satan is called "sin" and sin is at the basis not only of man's inhumanity to man, but of a great many of the ills of society as well as our own personal problems. Murder, anger, jealousy, and hatred are among the sins mentioned in the Bible. The greatest sin of all, however, is the prideful attitude of independence from God, the internal voice that says, "Even if there is a God, I don't need Him. I can live without God."

Yes, there is a great deal of pain in the world and it has many sources. Sometimes it comes from the realities of nature such as hurricanes and earthquakes and even the frailties of the human body. Pain comes from our own faulty decisions such as drug or alcohol abuse in which we end up hurting ourselves and must then bear the consequences. And, unfortunately, pain also comes from the actions of others against us such as drunk drivers, abusive parents, child molesters, thieves, and murderers. Consequently, we see the innocent suffer and sometimes we turn in frustration and shake an angry fist at God.

But the truth is, God is anything but a passive observer. He is infinitely compassionate

toward us and intensely longs to be our Comforter in the midst of our grief, our Hope in the midst of our hopelessness, and our Rock in the midst of life's uncertainties. As a nation we were right to have turned to God after the September 11 terrorist attacks. The National Day of Prayer and Remembrance at Washington's National Cathedral sought to turn our nationally wounded heart to God for comfort. God holds out His invitation to each of us as individuals to turn to Him when we are discouraged, when we have more questions than answers, when life seems to have no meaning. When the storms of life assail us, He is there to speak "Peace, be still."

No, God is not *against* us; God is very much for us. God is not some Cosmic Killjoy who wants us to live miserable lives of deprivation. In fact, God's whole desire and intention in creating us is that we might have meaningful lives that bring joy and satisfaction to us and to those around us.



What Is Missing?



Why take so much time to establish the case for the existence of a personal and loving God? *Because life without a relationship with God has no meaning.* This is one of the most important truths a human being can comprehend. One of the ironies as we enter the 21st Century is that we have never had such good lives. We've never been richer, never had more things, never been more educated, never been healthier, and never lived longer. Yet, so many people are still searching for answers to life.

The rich and famous still search. We read that Princess Diana struggled with an eating disorder. Marilyn Monroe was desperately lonely. Elvis Presley was addicted to drugs. Recently, one of Europe's leading high fashion models, a beautiful young woman who was at the peak of her career, suddenly decided to quit. She complained that when all was said and done, she felt exploited and was treated as nothing more than a product.

A recent survey taken throughout Europe and the U.S. revealed that the most prized value is

individualism. It was defined as personal freedom, self-realization, and personal happiness. In essence, we don't want anyone to tell us what we can or cannot do—not the government, not the church, not anyone. How strange that the more freedom we have, the less meaning we seem to find in our lives.

And so we try our best to fill our lives with things and people and experiences. “Leave me alone and give me my things” could very well be the slogan of the Western world as we embark on this millennium. We are manipulated by advertisers whose goal is to convince us that we need yet one more thing. We buy and buy only to discover that we still are not satisfied. In fact, we could spend a small fortune in an attempt to stay trendy and fashionable. Through a barrage of seductive advertising we become objects of market manipulation.

The pursuit of physical fitness has become, for some, a form of religion. Our body is our god. One ad for vitamins said, “If your body is a temple, worship here.” Still another ad for health products taunted, “If life's a rat race, at least be one of the healthiest rats!” Surely, we are more than “human rats” and life is more than a rat race.

The worldwide outpouring of grief over the tragic death of Princess Diana and the continued interest in Elvis Presley, Marilyn Monroe, and John Lennon, reveal a trend among many persons: celebrity worship. Can it be that many people's lives have become so empty and devoid of

personal significance that they somehow try to gain meaning by projecting their own lives onto that of a celebrity? How sad when we discover that the celebrity also has a very troubled life.

The popularity of the television show called “American Idol” stands as a reflection of the values promoted by pop culture. We now create and vote on “idols.” Why? The definition of an idol is something that is worshipped and treated as a deity. The Bible warns us against idolatry as anything that is worshipped other than God Himself. The Ten Commandments instructs us to have no other gods before God.

The truth is that the greatest need we have is the one that we are often the most reluctant to admit. There is something missing in our lives. There is a “cosmic loneliness” that was put there by God and can only be filled when we have a close relationship with Him, our Creator.

Nevertheless, we want to live our lives as we wish. We want to be at the controls and put God on a shelf. And then, when we come to the end of our lives, we hope that somehow if there is a God and if there is a place called heaven, God will take us into heaven and we will live happily ever after. But no pastor or priest can preach us into heaven at our funeral. The decision about where we will spend eternity is a decision that is made by each of us, individually, while we are here, now. If we insist that we must maintain control of our lives now, we exchange the destiny of our eternal tomorrow for the fleeting moments of today.



Who Has The Answer?



If the key to living a meaningful life is found in a relationship with God, how is such a life possible? On our own, it is not possible. But the good news is that God Himself has provided a plan. Incredibly, it is God who has had compassion upon us and made a way that we can have a relationship with Him and live meaningful, happy lives. It is God who has reached out to us with a timeless invitation to respond to Him. The account of God's effort to reveal Himself to mankind is found in the Bible. The Bible tells us that "God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) That is the best news the world has ever received. No greater love has ever been expressed.

The central message of the Bible is that God loves us and wants a relationship with us. To accomplish that, He sent His son Jesus Christ to this earth to live as a human being, to be crucified in order to provide a sacrifice for the sins of all mankind, and to rise from the dead so

that death no longer becomes the final answer to life. That is why a true Christian celebrates Christmas when Jesus was born, Good Friday when Jesus died, and Easter when Jesus rose from the dead. These are the three most important events of Christian history and form the centerpiece around which the world's largest religion is built.

But wasn't Jesus Christ just a good moral teacher? Why must we accept Jesus as divine, as the Son of God? The answer is that no human being has ever made the claims that Jesus made—not Confucius, not Buddha, not Muhammed, not anybody. As the great Oxford writer C.S. Lewis said, “Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse.” (*Mere Christianity*) Jesus didn't give us the option to just accept Him as a great moral teacher. We must either accept Him as the Son of God and as our Savior or reject Him altogether. There simply is no middle position.

But what about Christianity? Perhaps it's just a religion of hypocrites who conducted the Crusades or carried out the Inquisition. Or perhaps today it's just a big powerful institution with a lot of cathedrals and stained glass. No. True biblical Christianity is neither cultural nor a collection of buildings. True Christianity, based upon the teachings of the Bible, is a living and personal relationship with Jesus Christ who came to restore our relationship with God. If you want to know what God is like, read the life of Jesus

Christ because God's character is revealed in Jesus. In fact, Jesus Christ was the most radical person who ever lived because His teachings and His life turned the world upside down.

From the beginning, the teachings of Christ challenged people's thinking. With compassion He reached out to the downtrodden and underprivileged. He gave hope to the hopeless and peace to those in turmoil and fear. He pierced the arrogance of religious figures of the day and displayed the love of God toward all mankind. Through Christ we see the power of a loving God to heal the sick, give sight to the blind, and cause the lame to walk. His teachings and His power remain the same today.

Many people insist that all religions are really about the same. After all, aren't we all headed in the same direction? Again, the answer is "no." All religions are exclusive and therefore they cannot all be true. Judaism, while providing roots for Christianity, has rejected Jesus as the Messiah. Confucianism, a Chinese philosophy, is based on the belief that man is by nature good and can get even better through correct behavior. Hinduism suggests that there are over 330,000,000 gods and goddesses and you can choose which one you want to worship. Buddhism suggests that each person is on his own to work out his own pathway into a state of eternal bliss. Islam has rejected the deity of Jesus as the Son of God and says that He was merely a prophet in line with Muhammed. Because the September 11, 2001

attacks were perpetrated by Islamic Fundamentalists, what followed after the tragedy was a trend toward religious syncretism. In an appropriate attempt to be tolerant, many have gone a step further to suggest that all religions are equal. But that is simply not the case.

What is unique about Christianity is that it provides the solution for the dilemma that faces every human being: what to do about sin in order to be restored to a relationship with the God who created each of us. No other world religion provides such an answer. Only Christianity offers a loving God who reaches out to redeem humanity. A crucial fact about God is that He is holy beyond human comprehension and between a holy God and sinful mankind, there exists a gap with no bridge across it. But God sent Jesus Christ, His very Son in heaven, to die for our sins and thus provide the bridge across that gap so that we can now make our way to God. Because Jesus Christ was sinless, He did what we could never do.

The French mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal said that every human being has within him a “God-shaped vacuum.” Our hearts were created for relationship with God but sin, in a hundred different ways, has alienated us from a holy God. When Jesus died on the cross, His blood paid for our sins. This was God’s idea, not the Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus. Jesus’ death was not an execution, it was a sacrifice. It was not forced upon Jesus, He willingly chose it.

When we accept Jesus Christ as our own personal Savior, God promises to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse our hearts from all guilt and shame. To God, it does not matter where you have been, what you have done, or who you are. You may feel that you are not worthy of coming to God. None of us is, but Jesus makes us worthy. You may feel that you have made so many mistakes and that you have messed up your life so much, that you wish you could just start over. The good news is that you can. God offers that opportunity to start anew. His tender mercy and compassion will never come to an end.

Millions of persons all over the world have discovered the true freedom and life-changing result that comes when we invite Jesus into our lives. Look around. People who have accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior have had marriages restored, have been delivered of drugs and alcohol, have lost their anger and bitterness. They have found an ability to forgive others that they did not have before. Those who seemingly had no hope have found a reason to go on living. Those who have lost loved ones have found comfort in knowing that through Jesus there is the promise of eternal life. He said, "I am the resurrection and the life, He that believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die." (John 11:25) People filled with sadness and emotional pain have found a joy that cannot be explained. In times of fear and anxiety, they have found peace

and assurance. Jesus said, “My peace I give to you...” (John 14:27)

When we acknowledge Jesus as our Savior, God begins to change our hearts. Our attitudes change. The way in which we relate to others changes. Most of all, the way in which we see ourselves changes. God gives us His peace and His joy. We begin to see that we each are valuable and that we are loved by the God who created us. Jesus referred to such living as “the abundant life.”

You might be wondering, how is this possible? How do I accept Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and change my life? It begins with a simple prayer to God. A suggestion for a beginning prayer would be:

“Dear God, I admit that I am a sinner and that I need Your forgiveness. I am truly sorry for my sins. I need Jesus Christ as my Savior and I want to accept Him into my life. Please forgive me of my sins and change my life. I want to follow You and please You the rest of my life. I ask You to come and control my life and to be my Friend. Thank you for hearing my prayer. Amen.”

God has promised in the Bible that when we pray such a prayer and mean it with our hearts, He will forgive us of our sins and cleanse our hearts from the sin that has separated us from God. It is as if we clear the slate of our spiritual

lives and start anew and afresh. This is why Jesus Christ died for us. He not only forgives us, but removes our guilt and sets us on a new path. He puts His Holy Spirit within us to be our Guide, our Counsel, and the Spirit of Truth in our lives. The Holy Spirit becomes the presence of God in us. In essence, we become new persons as God changes us.

Does this mean that life will suddenly become easier? Not necessarily. Life still has many challenges but the difference is that God is there to help us and guide us through each day. Life's storms may swirl around us but we can now have a deep, inner peace with God. We become more aware of God's presence in our lives on a daily basis and discover the ways in which He cares for us. We become more conscious of a gradual transformation that takes place in our desires, our relationships, and our values. As we allow God to transform our spiritual lives, other areas of our lives begin to change as well. If you have prayed such a prayer as the one above, you will no doubt want to read the Bible and find out more about Jesus and the new life which He has promised. A good place to begin your reading is in the Book of Mark which will acquaint you with the life of Jesus Christ. The Bible can become a source of great strength, guidance, comfort, and inspiration. It is truly a book that can become the foundation upon which to build your life.

In order to continue your relationship with God, you can pray at any time, in any place, in

any way. God is always listening. No flowery words are needed. Just as a little child learns to talk by uttering a few words, we learn to pray by starting simply. Feel free to share with God your thoughts and feelings. This is what prayer really is and it can become a very meaningful part of your life. God is as close to you as your next prayer.

If you sincerely prayed the prayer above and accepted Jesus Christ as your Savior, this means that you have become a Christian. Does that mean that you have to go to church? The Church is not just a collection of buildings; it is a family of God's people. Just as you want to spend time with your own family, so you will no doubt want to get to know other members of God's family as well. Christianity is not only a relationship with Jesus Christ, it is also fellowship with other believers with whom you can share your life. Other Christians will help you to pray, read the Bible, and grow in your relationship with God. There is a joy in the sharing of your faith with others who have a similar faith. There are many wonderful churches all over the world where God has His people who, like you, are seeking to know Him better.

Some Final Thoughts



This small booklet began with the question, “Does your life have meaning?” You may be a very successful person with a wonderful family, many friends, and a great career. You may be able to say, “Life is good!” But ultimately each of us walks into eternity one at a time. Death is an absolute certainty for every human being no matter who we are or how long we may live. The Bible teaches us that there is life after death and that there is definitely a place called heaven and a place called hell. The decision to accept or reject Jesus Christ as our personal Savior which we make here in this life, will determine where we will spend eternity. An old Quaker saying challenges us to live our lives with three things in mind: “The brevity of life, the certainty of death, and the length of eternity.” Jesus asked, “What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his own soul?” (Mark 8:36)

This life and this world in which we are living will not last forever. We were graphically reminded on September 11, 2001 just how



fragile life is. But we can have life eternal through Jesus Christ as a result of what He did on the cross. When we stand before God, the *only* thing that will matter is whether or not we accepted Jesus as our Savior. Jesus said, “No one comes to the Father except through me.” (John 14:6)

Do not settle for anything less in your life than what God has for you. He wants to give you an abundant, meaningful life here and life eternal after you die. An old hymn has lyrics which say, “In times like these, we need an anchor; in times like these, we need a Savior; be very sure, be very sure, your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock.” We are living in uncertain times and we need hope. Jesus Christ is that *hope*. He is the anchor in the midst of life’s storms. Again and again the Bible proclaims, “Fear not.” We do not know what the future holds, but we can know Who holds our individual future.

May you find hope, comfort, and peace that comes from knowing Christ as Savior.

A Note From the Author

It has often been said that the most constant thing in our lives is change. Even as this booklet is about to go to press, beautiful Southern California is being ravaged by fires. Again, our nation is gripped by shock and sadness. Television screens are filled with tragic scenes that cannot begin to capture the immensity of the loss of almost 2,000 homes and the displacement of an estimated one million people. As in the Hurricane Katrina tragedy, we see the best of human nature in the countless acts of human kindness and the worst of human nature in the looting and shocking realization that some of the hugely destructive fires are the result of arson. The images of destruction are vivid reminders of how easily our material possessions can be lost. Our economic prospects and all that we have worked for can suddenly appear very vulnerable and uncertain.

In the end, what matters is life itself and the meaning which life has. We live in a fallen world tainted by sin in which even nature groans for redemption. But the eternal God of the universe is loving and compassionate; He longs to give us comfort and hope. That hope is in Jesus Christ who is an anchor in the midst of the storm. Again and

again, the Bible says, “Fear not.” We do not know what the future holds but we can know with certainty who holds the future.

May you find the hope, comfort, and peace that comes from knowing Christ as your Savior.

About the Author

Dr. Mary Ann Lind makes her home in Colorado and continues to serve as an adjunct professor at Biola University in suburban Los Angeles, California. She holds a Ph.D. from the University of Colorado and is the author of four books including “From Nirvana to the New Age.” A former missionary, she maintains a writing and speaking ministry in churches, retreats and seminars. Dr. Lind can be contacted at:

Dr. Mary Ann Lind
Lifeline Ministries, Inc.
732 Aurora Street
Fort Morgan, Colorado 80701
USA
Tel: 970.867.8930

About Missions Press

Foursquare Missions Press was founded in 1981 with the purpose of providing free gospel literature to the world. To date, this ministry has distributed over 200,000,000 pieces of literature to 115 countries in 60 languages. In 2002, FMP established a training and resourcing ministry to children's workers around the world. The Children's Gospel Box ministry assists thousands of children's workers and children annually. Missions Press is a non-profit organization supported by the gifts of its friends. For more information, visit our website at:

www.foursquaremissionspress.org

The Most Important Question

At the end of the day when you put your head on the pillow and you're alone with your thoughts, does your life have meaning? Or is something missing—something deep down in your inner being, in a place that no one else can enter?

In the pages of this small book, you might find the answers to life's most important questions.



FMP ©2016
Foursquare Missions Press