

FROM DOUBT TO UNDERSTANDING

by Brooks A. Harris, O.D.

Although I was brought up in church, I do not remember religion being discussed that much outside of church, so I really questioned the importance of God as I got to be a teenager and young adult. I had doubts about God's existence too due to my scientific beliefs. I questioned, "If life just happened by chance and organisms evolved by pure accidental, natural processes, is God even necessary?" I considered myself an agnostic – I did not know what to believe.

I am a scientific person and I thought I needed proof, but no one could give me logical reasons to believe in God. I do not remember anyone ever going into any detail to make God or the theory of creation understandable or believable. Preachers would tell me that I just needed to believe by faith, but I wanted proof. If God was real, I wanted to believe, but I could not logically accept God. Also, although I knew many stories in the Bible, I was ignorant of how truly reliable the Bible is and ignorant of the overwhelming evidence for the reality of God's existence and how well scientific evidence supports God's story of creation.

I used to wonder – "Is there really a heaven and a hell as described in the Bible and if there is then what will happen to me if I die and I do not totally accept God?" So in 1999, I began studying scientific evidence for the origins of Life, of the Species, of Man, of the Universe, and much evidence for biblical reliability. For the first time in my life I had access to books, audio cassettes, CD's, DVD's, video cassettes, magazines, individual articles, pamphlets and web sites which

compared creation beliefs to my beliefs in evolution. I also purchased a few different study Bibles and read large portions of each which helped explain in detail what the Bible Scriptures mean.

Before long my eyes were truly opened. I understood so much. I was no longer ignorant. I had found logical, understandable answers to many questions I had. I now have no doubt that God exists, Jesus really lived, died and was resurrected, and I know I can trust what the Bible says. I discovered that Genesis is literal history. I know the Bible contains some translation and copying errors, but its messages are reliable. It has far fewer errors and is much more reliable than any other ancient religious book.

I learned that it is not science that contradicts the Bible; it is the way we interpret the scientific evidence which causes problems. I discovered that our modern scientific evidences strongly support creation but create many problems for the theories of evolution. Often evidences which support creation are omitted in our schools and our societies. It is poor science not to present all the known evidences and let people decide for themselves what to believe. If all the known scientific information had been shown to me, when I was a child, and both evolution and creation ideas had been presented together, I would have made much better informed decisions. A good scientist will always look at all the available evidence before making final conclusions.

I have read many accounts of educated people who have set out to research history, science, prophecy, and/or other religions to prove the Bible to be wrong, only to find that the Bible is very reliable. I learned that - what I believe does not matter if I am wrong. What does matter is

"What is True." Just because we believe something, this does not make it true. If God is real and the Bible is reliable, then what happens if we die and we do not believe in God? We will have to accept the consequences no matter what we believe.

I finally accepted God as my Creator and Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I asked Jesus to come into my life, save me, and guide me to do His will. I knew I was a sinner (as all people are). Sin is doing, thinking or saying anything that goes against God's will. For my Lord to accept me, I knew I had to confess both my faith in Him and my sins to Him. Since Jesus is omniscient (He knows everything), I knew He knew what my sins were, but by telling Him what I had done and what I am doing, I knew I was admitting to my wrong doings and I was accepting responsibility for them. I asked for His forgiveness and I repented (did my best to try not to continue to do sinful thoughts or acts).

I believe in the gospel - Jesus' virgin birth, His sinless life, His miracles, His sacrificial death on the cross for our sin, His resurrection from the dead, His ascension into heaven and His promise to return for His believers. I believe that Jesus is God incarnate and that He came to earth for three main reasons: mainly, 1) to die as the ultimate sacrifice to pay for the penalty of our sin, 2) to demonstrate and teach us about God's character, and 3) to begin, through His disciples, the Christian movement of spreading the gospel to Jews and gentiles throughout the world. As Christians we are to witness to and make disciples of non-believers. Disciples are believers who pray and study God's word.

Often when I pray, I use the acronym **ACTS** to guide my prayer. It stands for **Adoration** (praise and worshipping God for

who He is and for what He has done), **Confession** (telling God the bad we have done, but also confessing what we believe about Him – the gospel), **Thanksgiving** (thanking God for answering our prayers, loving us, guiding us, comforting us, and keeping His promises to us) and lastly **Supplication** (praying for specific and general needs for us and others).

I have come to realize that God created me, He has a plan for me, and He loves me and wants me to love Him back. He wants me to talk to Him and develop a personal relationship with Him. Our relationship is growing stronger everyday as I continue to talk to Him in prayer, to read and/or listen to His word (the Bible Scriptures), and try to live a righteous life which is pleasing to God. There is a saying, “We are what we eat.” Our environment influences who we are and who we will become. So we must watch what we let into our lives, what influences us. If what you see, hear, read, and hang around is a bad influence to you get away from it and change.

In “The Lord’s Prayer” we ask “...Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven...” I know God is all-knowing and all-powerful and He wants me to live an abundant life with Him. Since I know that God knows what is best for me, it only makes sense that I desire and accept His will to be done in my life. I want my will to be what God wills for me. I have learned to ask for His guidance in every aspect of my life. I want the Holy Spirit to guide every decision I make whether it is related to my marriage, my family, my work, or anything else. I realize that God is full of grace and love and nothing is impossible with God. He can do anything He wills to be done.

I believe that we have one ultimate purpose in life and that is “to prepare for

eternity.” We must learn to love and respect God and learn to love and respect our neighbors (especially other Christians). We show our love for God by truly believing in Him and accepting Jesus as our Lord and Savior and doing our best to obey His laws and commandments and by loving others.

I learned that although God does not like what we do a lot of times, He still loves us unconditionally. We show our love for others by trying to imitate the character of God, using Jesus as our ultimate example. Think - What would Jesus do? Treat others as you would want to be treated. You find JOY in life by putting Jesus first, Others next, and Yourself last. As Christians we are to encourage each other in our faith through prayer, fellowship and our service. We are also to learn to be content with what God has provided for us. We are not to worry; instead we are to trust that God will provide for our needs in His time.

What does it cost to be a Christian? What will you lose? As we grow in our faith, we are losing our arrogant pride, our greedy attitudes, our ease to anger, our selfishness, our inappropriate desires, and our tendency to worry so much. But true Christians also gain better loving relationships, a better ability to forgive others, contentment, joy, comfort, and hope by trusting in Jesus Christ.

The Bible gives us **B**asic **I**nstructions **B**efore **L**eaving **E**arth. I believe the Bible is an accurate account of our earliest history, God’s laws and instructions for us to live by, God’s expectations of us, and His promises for us. I want people to understand that the Bible is God’s way of revealing to us what He wants us to know about Himself, His nature and mankind’s origins and past, our purpose in the present, and the hopes or fears for our future.

I believe that most of the problems we have in our personal lives and in our society are due to our rejection of the lessons taught in the Bible and our rejection of God in our society resulting in the rejection of the Bible and God as our ultimate authority of what is right and wrong. Our quest for more and more freedom has led to a desire to be free from God. I believe that a nation which trusts God will be protected by God, otherwise they better prepare for destruction. We must get back to God’s laws in the Bible to restore morality and ethics in our society, or we’ll suffer the consequences.

People must realize that the Bible’s prophecies in the past have been very accurately fulfilled and its prophecies of the future must be taken seriously. Heaven and hell are real places and everyone will eventually spend eternity in one place or the other. So I encourage you to study God’s world (nature) and God’s word (the Holy Bible) to test your beliefs and discover for yourself what is truth.

My studies have made such an impact on my understanding of science and history and my spiritual life that I feel I have a calling to share what I have learned to anyone willing to listen. I want others to have the opportunity to strengthen their faith by discovering what I have learned.

Over the years I have collected many articles and put together PowerPoint and Audio presentations. For years I have given away free CD’s with these articles and presentations. Now I have a website (www.biblicalreliability.com) to share all my resources. Please visit this site to see evidence for God, Jesus, Christianity, creation and the Bible, and to help you grow stronger in your Christian faith. I hope you enjoy this amazing information.