

WHO CARES

FROM JESUS WITH LOVE

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Introduction

Do you sometimes feel like **nobody quite understands** you? Are you facing situations and **decisions that are new** to you and that you're **not sure how to handle**? Maybe sometimes you wish that you had someone around who was a **friend, mentor, and miracle worker all in one**.

Well, the good news is that **there is someone around** who is the best friend you could possibly ask for. He cares about you more than you could imagine, and He knows the best way to get through the tough things in life. His name is Jesus, and He's the greatest.

He knows you inside and out, and He wants you to get to know Him better, too. He not only **understands you perfectly**, but the best part about Him is that He has the **power to help you and make life better** for you. That power comes to life when you pray and ask Him for help, and when you listen to what He has to say and try to follow His advice.

He has a lot of good tips that'll help you be happier and **get through things more easily**, and that's what this book is full of. **Enjoy it!** It doesn't stop there either. There's a lot **more where this came from**, and you'll find that out as you get to know Jesus better and start talking with Him. He'll talk to anyone who believes in Him, sincerely asks Him to speak, and then has faith to believe that what they "hear" in their heart is really Him speaking. He wants to talk to *you*, and He wants to help you! **Give Him a try.**



I KNOW YOU WANT TO BE ORIGINAL. You want to be unique, special, and smart. You want to think of things nobody else has thought of and say things nobody else has said. You want to dress to suit your own tastes. You want to make your mark on the world.

I also know how frustrating it can be when you feel like those around you are trying to make you be just like everybody else, or when it seems like nobody is interested in your ideas and thoughts, or your feelings.

You know what? I'm interested—really interested! I made you different from anyone else. When I created you, I didn't use a cookie cutter! There's never been anyone else like you.

I don't want you to be just like everybody else, or just like anybody else. I love you just the way you are, and I've made you that way for a special reason. I want you to find that reason, and make the most of what I've given you and the special way I've made you.



DO YOU NEED SOMEONE TO UNDERSTAND YOU, someone who really knows what you're going through? Well, *I* know more about what you're going through than *you* do.—Honest!

I know every thought that has ever come into your mind. But even though I know your every thought, you still need to get it out. It'll help you feel better, and help you to see things more clearly. Go ahead and tell Me what's on your mind. I promise to understand. I'll listen, and I'll also tell you things that'll help.

I love talking with you. You can tell Me anything you want. I'm your friend, and I like to know everything about you—what makes you happy, what bugs you, your hopes, your dreams, your worries—everything. I think you're interesting.

PERSEVERING
AS YOU REACH
FOR GOALS
CAN BE LIKE
CLIMBING
MOUNTAINS.

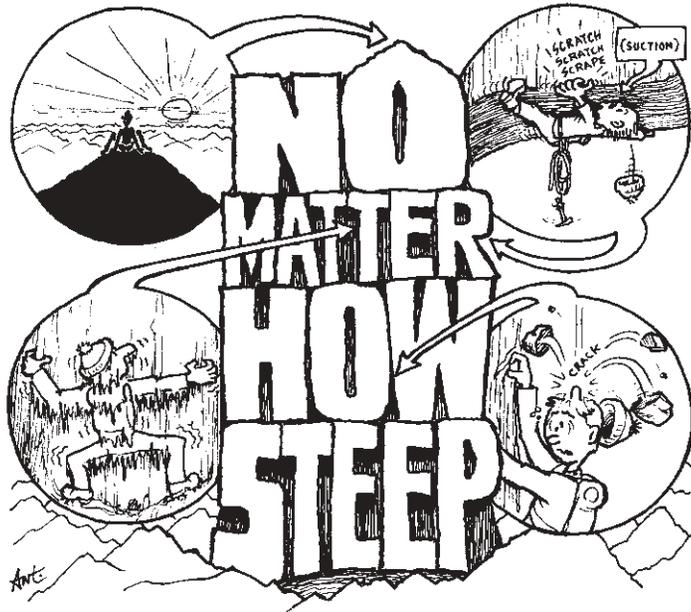
Some mountain
climbers are
willing to do
almost anything,
risk anything,
and give up
everything
just to reach
their goal—the
mountaintop.

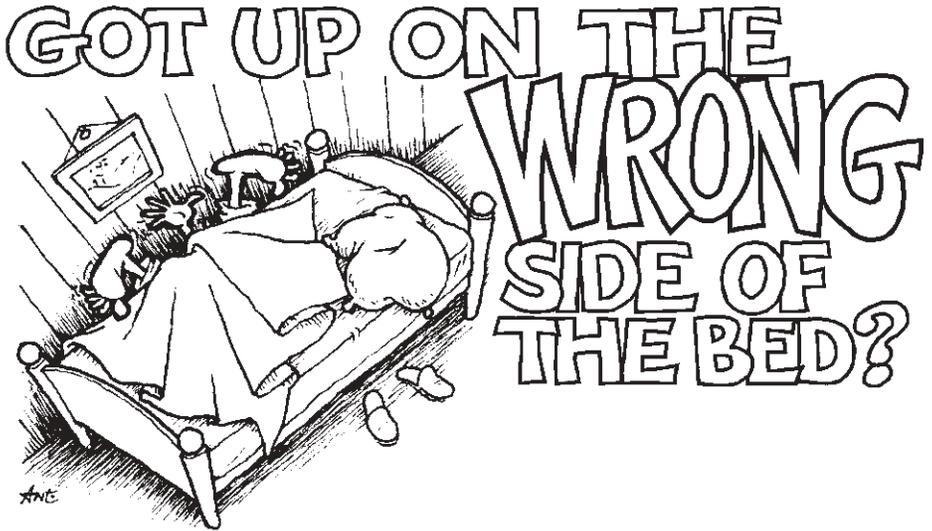
Mountain
climbers

determine that they're going to reach their goal no matter what happens. They endure freezing temperatures and lots of expected and unexpected hazards; they leave behind all the comforts of home. They get scratches and bruises. They even risk their lives.

They endure a lot, because they want to make it to the top of the mountain. They want to reach their goal, no matter how hard it gets. That's the kind of commitment you'll need in order to reach many of your goals in life. The things you're trying to learn or accomplish might get real tough along the way, but don't let that stop you. Think of the mountain climbers and what they endure, and the sacrifices you might have to make won't seem so bad.

Once you get to the top of your mountain, once you reach your goal, you'll be thrilled. You'll want to keep climbing new mountains, reaching new goals, and experiencing the thrills of exploring new territories.

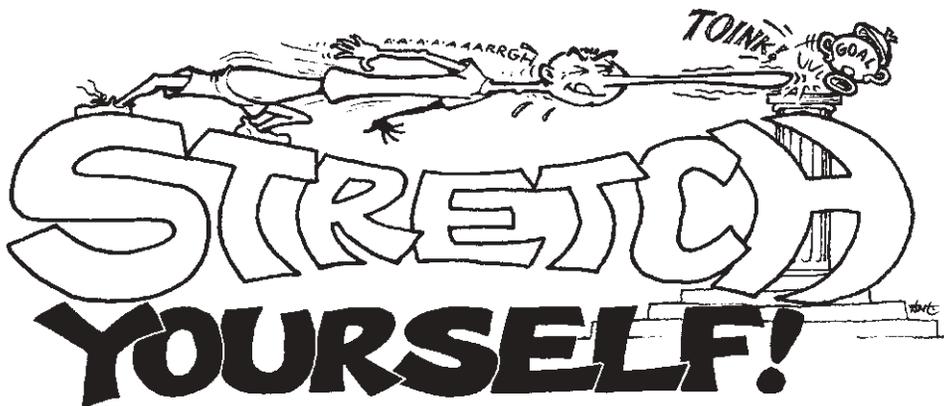




THINGS AREN'T WORKING OUT VERY WELL TODAY. You're having one problem after another—nagging little things that maybe wouldn't matter so much if you were in a better mood, but today they feel like the end of the world! You don't mean to bark at people or give them a hard time, but you can't seem to help it.

There's a saying, "You can't keep the birds from flying over your head, but you can keep them from building a nest in your hair." Unfortunately, when the first little "grump bird" came flying over your head this morning, you let him land and start building his nest, and now you're caught in a vicious cycle of grumpiness. But you can break the cycle. As soon as you ask Me to help you snap out of it, I'll help you do just that.

There are always going to be bumps, obstacles, and nagging problems that can make your day turn sour—if you let them. Some days, it's worse than others. But you don't have to stay miserable just because things started off that way. It's never too late to turn around and start being happy. Why not start right now?



LIFE IS ALL ABOUT LEARNING! I could have created you perfect and already knowing all there is to know. But that would have been too easy, and it would have taken a lot of the fun out of life. It's exciting to have challenges and to have to stretch yourself to reach for a goal! Without something to shoot for, life would be empty and meaningless.

Don't just exist from day to day, or try to do the minimum and just get by with doing as little as you possibly can. Put all you've got into whatever you're doing—your studies, your friendships, and whatever other talents and interests you're pursuing. If you put your heart into these things, they'll be a lot more satisfying. Give it your best shot, and you'll be amazed at what happens.



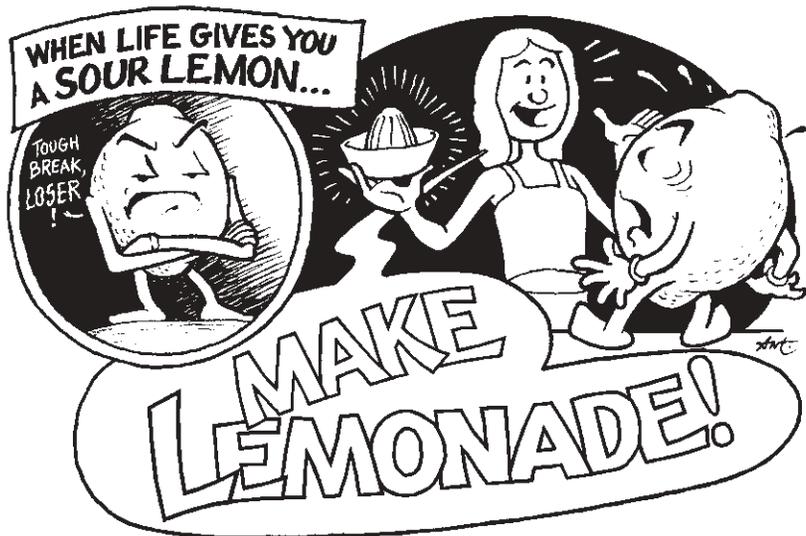
SOME OF YOU THINK THAT YOU CAN learn a lot about how to attract a boyfriend or girlfriend from the “tips” in the movies you’ve seen. Don’t bet on it. Just because some “cool” guy said some “cool” line to some “cool” girl in some “cool” movie and she was “his” from then on, doesn’t mean that anyone else doing the same is going to get the same results!

Every person is different, and what works for someone else might not work for you. But I happen to know what will work for you, and I’ll tell you, if you’ll listen.

If you want to love and be loved, there are a few important things to understand that you probably *won’t* learn from the movies.

The key thing is not to impress the guy or girl you like with how great you are. It’s to make them feel that you care about them and think *they’re* great. You have to let your special someone get to know the real you, the part everybody doesn’t see, the things you think and feel. And you have to get to know the real *them*, too.

You’ll learn a lot more as you go—but understanding these few important things will get you off to a good start.



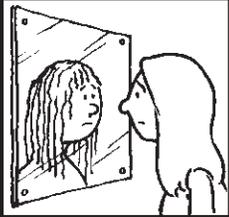
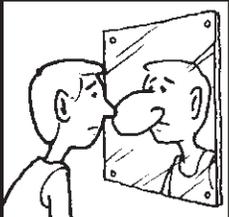
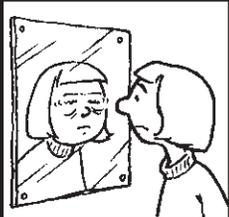
WHEN SOMETHING SEEMS TO BE GOING WRONG, instead of complaining or letting it get you on a bumner, try to find a personal solution for it. That doesn't mean figuring out how to change things so that they always go your way. It means finding a way to be cheerful even if they don't. Learn to make the best of any situation—"making lemonade out of the lemon."

It makes Me especially happy when you have a positive reaction to something that didn't turn out quite as you would have liked. I want you to be happy and I try to give you things and make the circumstances so that you're happy with them. But that's not always possible. So when something is tough for you, but you're able to trust Me and smile through your disappointment anyway, it shows Me that you're ready for one of My blessings, something that I probably wouldn't have sent your way otherwise, because some blessings have to be earned—and they're usually the ones that you want the most.

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE...
AW DON'T MAKE ME LAUGH!

RE-FOCUS

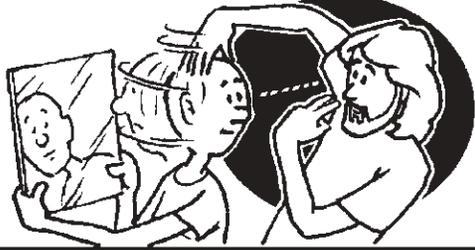
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WHEN GAZING AT YOURSELF IN THE MIRROR, or at other times of self-inspection, you can tend to blow things out of proportion.

You feel others have it so much better in the way of looks, or qualities, or resilience, or personality, and on and on the list goes. But if you were to just step aside and let Me do the analyzing, and let Me teach you what you do need to change, then you'd feel much more relaxed. You could stop this self-effort of trying to make yourself a certain way, and being blown about with the ever-changing opinions and ideas of those in the world around you. Instead you could focus on what actually is needed, and the things you can and should improve in.

Gaze into My face instead of looking at your own reflection, and you'll feel a lot better about yourself. I think you're wonderful!

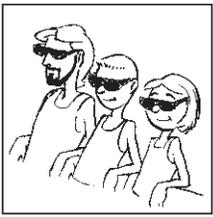
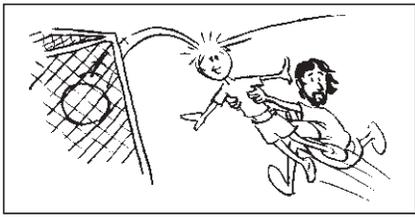




I LOVE TO SEE YOU HAVE FUN AND ENJOY YOURSELF. I love to see you cut loose and live life to the full, laughing, smiling, and enjoying everything I've given you. Life wasn't meant to be dull and dry and boring. I created everything for your *pleasure*: food, music, games and sports, dancing and singing. In fact, I created the whole world for you to enjoy! It makes Me happy when I see that you're happy.

I like being with you, and I like to be a part of what you're doing. I'm far from boring. I like to join in on the fun and go along with you wherever you go. I like to be with you *all* the time—while you're working, and while you're playing.

There's a time to work and a time to play; both are needed. If you include Me in on what you're doing—and you can do that by remembering I'm there, and asking Me to keep you company and help you have a good time—I'll make sure you really enjoy yourself! There's a special feeling of happiness that comes your way when I'm somehow a part of whatever you're doing.—Things will just seem “right” and the way they ought to be.





HAVING FRIENDS MAKES YOU FEEL SPECIAL. When you have even one good friend—someone who really cares about you—you feel like you're on top of the world. Sometimes having friends can be so important to you that you feel like you're willing to do just about anything to make or keep them.

The best way to win *real* friends is to *be* a good friend. Show people that you really care about them. Make an effort to find out what things they like, and what things bother them. Sympathize with them when they're sad, and celebrate with them when they're happy.

Love people and they'll love you. Be kind to others and they'll be kind to you. I know it sounds basic, but it works!

If you want real friends, true friends, don't bother with putting on a front and trying to be what you think they'd want you to be. Let them see the real you.

Be loyal, too. If someone is saying bad things about your friends when they're not around, don't just go along with the crowd and laugh it off. Stick up for them. That's real friendship.



EVER WONDER HOW YOU CAN PULL OUT OF IT when you're feeling lousy and you seem to be getting a lot of flak? Or when you've been misunderstood and corrected for something that wasn't your fault?

Why not take a tip from a basketball and bounce back? When you hit the ground ... that's right ... just bounce back!

Don't go flat. Keep flying high and stay in the game. Let 'em see that you've got what it takes. No matter what happens, keep on bouncing. The harder you're thrown, the higher you can bounce! Don't let some annoying incident deflate you. Stay in the game and bounce back.

LOCK IT UP!

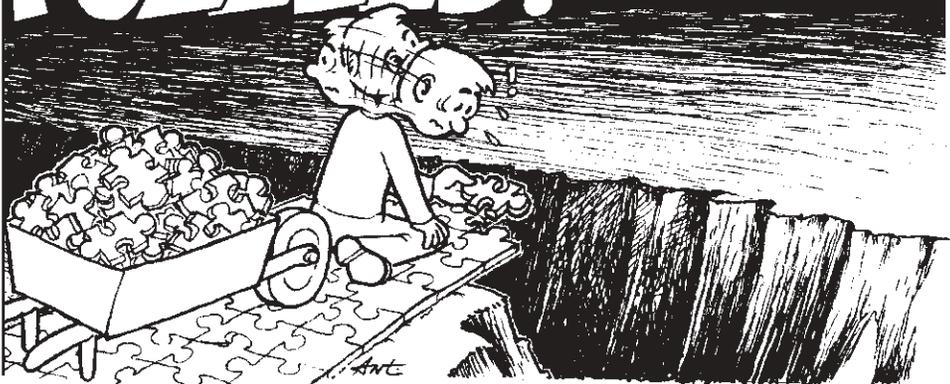


PEOPLE SOMETIMES DO UNKIND THINGS, and that can really hurt. But I can wipe away the pain that you feel. I can take your sadness, bitterness, and anger, and all bad feelings away. I can lock them up in a closet and help you throw away the key.

You might think that's not fair. Here someone did something bad to you, and now you're just supposed to forget it? Well, I know you can't exactly forget it, but you can lock it up where it won't spill over into your heart and your mind, making you so miserable.

I want to make it all better; I want to lock it up. But *you'll* have to be the one to throw away the key. *You'll* have to be the one to decide that you want to move on and that you want to get happy again. You'll have to trust Me to work in the lives of whoever blew it, and teach them what they need to know. Can you do that? Okay, then, let's move on. Let's go forward!

FUTURE GOTCHA PUZZLED?



I HAVE A SPECIAL DESTINY JUST FOR YOU. I know that might be kind of hard for you to imagine, because you sometimes feel worthless or awkward or untalented—even weird. But hang on.

You've got to have patience as you find your place in life. Life's like putting together a jigsaw puzzle. If you're patient and keep working at it, the picture begins to take shape—piece by piece, little by little.

I'll help you to put together the pieces of the puzzle of your life. I designed this puzzle Myself, especially for you. Little by little, it'll come together, and someday it'll actually make sense—and more than that, it'll be beautiful and you'll be proud of it.

SHY?



DO YOU SOMETIMES FEEL ALONE, even in a room full of people? Like you just don't fit in? Do you feel awkward, like you can't seem to say or do the right thing? Do you look at people who are popular and funny, and feel bad that they always seem to be the center of attention, while you're unnoticed in a corner?

You don't have to hide in that corner forever. There's a remedy. Even if you feel shy, you don't have to act shy. You can start acting personable and outgoing, and eventually you will become that way naturally. All you have to do is have a little courage and not be afraid to fall a few times.

When you start doing something you're not used to doing, it's only natural to stumble. At first you may say something that sounds kind of dumb, but you can still be proud of yourself for having said *something*. Try giving a compliment, or if you agree with what someone is saying in conversation, say so. It's a start. You may not become the life of the party overnight, but you will find friends. Keep trying. Don't let a little setback end your mission. Resist the urge to give up and to crawl back into your little private world. It'll work! Trust Me.

MY LOVABLE



PERFECT AND WONDERFUL—THAT'S THE WAY I SEE YOU. You say, "Aw, come on now, I'm such a mess." Well, yes, you are a mess, but you're a wonderful mess. I love messes. They're so easy for Me to love, and to work with. I look at you and I see you as wonderful and perfect, because I can see the end from where you are now.

Even though right now you feel like a disaster, I can see all that you're going to be. But I still love you just the way you are right now, and I'm proud of you. You may feel like a weed sometimes, but you're really My sunflower, a giant of a flower growing taller, stronger, and more beautiful all the time.



DO YOU PULL OUT A MENTAL TAPE MEASURE and compare people with each other? Who's taller? Who's shorter? Fatter? Skinnier? Prettier? More handsome? Who's faster? Who's stronger? There are so many ways that people are different, and so many things that you could measure and compare.

Then you try to measure yourself by comparing yourself with others. "Are they smarter than me?" "Are they better looking than I am?" "Do people like them more than they like me?" Comparing isn't a good idea. It can really be a bummer and make you pretty miserable about yourself and about the way I made you.

I think you're great! There's *nothing* I want to change about you. Sure you'll change a little throughout your life, but I'm not looking at you thinking, "Oh, I should have made your hair a different color or your face a different shape." Not at all!

I don't want you to measure yourself against others either. I want you to learn to be happy with the way you are. When you stop comparing yourself to other people, you'll have a chance to discover what's cool and special about yourself.



YOU'VE PROBABLY HEARD THE SAYING about walking a mile in someone's shoes. Have you ever tried walking in someone else's shoes? If you have, you've probably found out that it can be pretty uncomfortable.

When you can put yourself in someone else's place and try to feel what he or she must be feeling, then you've learned one of the biggest secrets of getting along with others. And when you find that you're *not* getting along with someone very well, maybe it's because you're not putting that principle into action.

Imagine trying to climb a mountain wearing someone else's heavy hiking boots that were quite a few sizes too big for you. Or what if you had to run a race wearing someone else's track shoes that were several sizes too small?

When there are others you have a hard time with, think about how they might be feeling at that moment and what they might be going through. That'll help you appreciate and understand them, and treat them with kindness and consideration.

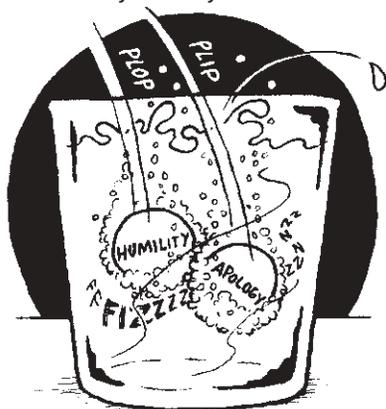


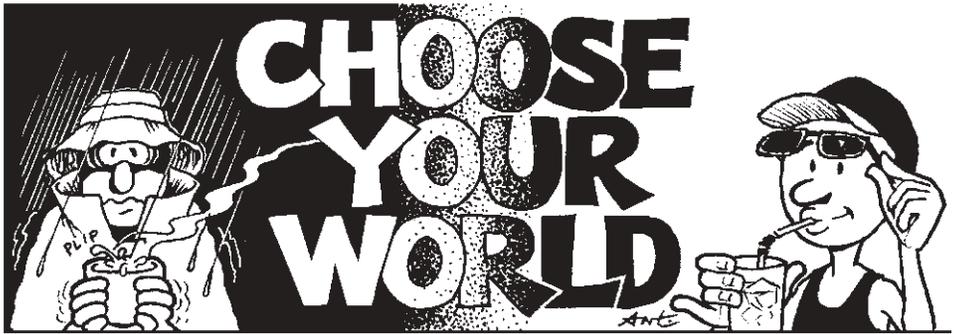


YOU KNOW THAT ROTTEN FEELING YOU GET when you say or do something you know you shouldn't have? I let you feel that way for a reason. It's an automatic subconscious reaction that's built into you. Just like you feel bad and even sometimes get sick when you eat something you shouldn't have, well, your spirit reacts in a similar way. When you have something in your heart that doesn't belong there, when you're angry or feel like doing or have done something unkind, you feel unwell inside.

I don't want you to get down and depressed every time you blow it. But I *do* want you to feel bad enough that you won't keep doing and saying things that hurt people. I want you to be willing to do what you can to undo the damage and make things right—even when you didn't mean for it to come out the way it did or when you feel that you weren't the only one to blame.

Taking the humble seat and apologizing might be a difficult thing for you to do, but trust Me, it'll bring quick relief from that rotten feeling.





WOULD YOU RATHER LIVE SOMEWHERE where the sun never shines, where it's always cloudy and gray, where people are always complaining and never seem to find anything to be happy about? Or would you rather live where it's always nice and bright and sunny, where cool breezes blow, and where the people are happy and smiling and full of life?

Believe it or not, the choice is up to *you*, because I've given you the freedom to *choose* exactly what kind of world you will live in. In fact, you *do* choose, all the time. Whenever you choose to look at things negatively or with a critical attitude, you're walking right into that dreary gray world of negativity, where everything always seems to go wrong.

But whenever you choose to be *positive* and hopeful about things, it's as if you've decided to move to a totally *different* world, a place that's bright and happy, where, no matter what happens, everything is bound to work out okay.

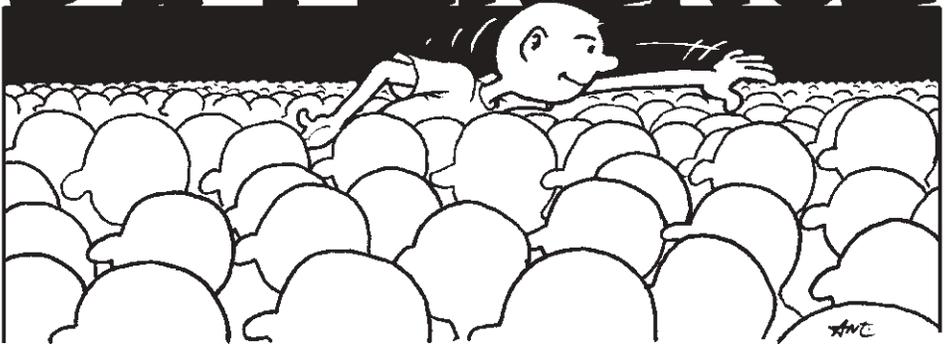
DO YOU SOMETIMES FEEL LIKE YOU MUST BE WEARING A SIGN that says "Lazy!" "Irresponsible!" or "Not to Be Trusted!"? Worse yet, maybe you feel like it must say "Loser!" or "Bad Person!"



because of the way some people treat you. Or maybe all it says is "Young Person," and that's bad enough. People misjudge or mistrust you because of some rumor they heard, or something you did one time, or just because they have something stuck in their heads about people your age.

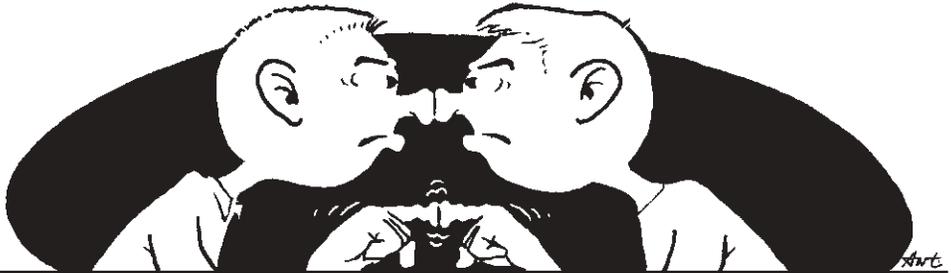
It's natural to think, "If they already have their minds made up about me, what's the use of even trying?" But don't accept your "fate" like that. You can prove yourself, if you determine to do so. The label won't necessarily get peeled off in the first go. If you've had a certain bad reputation for a while, it'll probably take time and several attempts to win people's confidence. But if the way you act shows a difference, eventually people will catch on, and those labels will get peeled off for good.

THE DIFFERENCE



WANNA BE *RAD*? Wanna be *different*? Wanna make a unique footprint in the sands of time? Sick of trying to live up to someone else's expectations? That's just fine with Me! I *like* people that are different. I didn't make any two things exactly alike. There are no two snowflakes that are exactly alike, no two eyes that are exactly alike, and no two fingerprints that are exactly alike.

I've got to tell you, though, if you *really* want to be different you've got to be different in ways that *mean* something. The differences that count the most don't have anything to do with the clothes you wear or the way you cut your hair. It takes a whole lot more courage to be different in the way you think and the way you act. Read some of the things I've said in the Bible—check out the Gospels for starters—and you'll get an idea of what “different” really is. I'm going a different direction than most of the world—and a much better direction! Go My way and you'll be sure to stand out from the crowd.



MISUNDERSTANDINGS

ARGUMENTS CAN BE A REAL DRAG. When you find yourself caught in the middle of a misunderstanding, it's hard to go about things in a way that you and the other person don't both go away feeling awful. Next time you find yourself caught up in a disagreement with your brother or sister, a friend, your parents, or anyone else, try out the following tips:

- ▶ Be calm, and don't get upset. Counting silently to ten before saying anything works pretty well.
- ▶ Talk things out, express what you feel, and explain your side of the situation the best you can without freaking out.
- ▶ Listen to what the other person has to say, without cutting him off or interrupting him. Try to understand how he feels.
- ▶ Agree to put the incident behind you.

Sound easier said than done? If you'll give it a try, I promise to help you.

AN OCEAN OF EMOTION!

DO YOU FIND YOURSELF MOODIER THAN YOU EVER FELT BEFORE? Do you often feel like you're swimming in an ocean of emotion—if not almost drowning in one?

You're going through a lot of changes at this stage of life, and things are happening to you and all around you that you've never experienced quite this way before. Sometimes clear out of the blue, you find yourself feeling angry or upset about almost nothing. It's part of life, part of growing up, part of learning to understand yourself.

But never fear—your Lifeguard is here! Call out to Me, and I'll be right there in the water with you. I'll keep you from going under. I'll teach you how to stay afloat. Better yet, I'll teach you how to ride the waves! When they're tossing you around, the waves look pretty scary, but you can learn how to ride the crest, how to control the waves, and not let them control you. You can stay on top!



SIMPLE, SINCERE, SPONTANEOUS!



YOU APPRECIATE IT WHEN PEOPLE COMPLIMENT YOU, DON'T YOU? But compliments don't seem to flow out of *your* mouth very easily, do they? You kind of get stuck when it comes to saying nice things to people. You either just don't think about doing it, or if you do, you worry that it's going to come out sounding corny or won't be appreciated or maybe even misunderstood.

Think about the times when people have said something nice to you. How often have you felt that they were being corny? Or even if you did, didn't it make you feel good to know that they noticed you and that they liked something about you? Other people will also feel good when you compliment them.

You don't have to think up spectacular or poetic things to say. "Simple, sincere, and spontaneous," is a good motto when it comes to giving compliments. If someone looks particularly good that day, tell her so. If you feel like telling your friend, or your dad or mom, or your brother or sister, how much you enjoy being around them, go ahead and do it—right then! Try it; you'll like it! And so will they.



IT'S HARD TO SMILE SOMETIMES. Do you feel you're putting on a false front if you look happy and act happy when you don't necessarily feel that way? Have you gotten the idea that to look cool or sexy you've got to appear a little hard and indifferent?

A smile is very powerful. A smile lights up the world that's so full of darkness. It has creative energy, and it's contagious. Even if you're smiling just to cheer someone else up, it somehow cheers you up, too.

A gloomy face can be just as powerful in the opposite way. A long face not only causes you to be more dumpy and depressed yourself, but it brings others down as well.

Even if you don't feel all good and happy, if you decide that you're going to wear a smile no matter how you feel, I guarantee that you'll begin to feel better almost immediately.



VIRTUAL REALITY, THE INTERNET, MOBILE COMPUTING, and all kinds of high-tech gadgets—the world is changing so quickly, it's amazing!

What's even more amazing, though, is Heaven's technology. I can give you access to a communications system that's out of this world! Through prayer, you're not only able to communicate between countries, but between spiritual dimensions! Whenever you want, you can make contact with the spiritual realm—with Me! No modem or satellite transmitter can manage that.

Heavenly communication isn't something abstract. It's real! And it's like nothing man's inventions will ever be able to come close to. If you'd like to experience the greatest breakthrough in the universe, it's time for you to log on—not to the Internet, but to the Spiritnet.



I LOVE PARTIES! I think they're great! I like to join in when you party.

If you wanna make the most of a party, I'll give you *the* tip: Sadly, sometimes people make themselves miserable at parties, because they get wrapped up in worrying about all kinds of things—how they look, how much attention they're getting and from whom, checking out whether somebody else is looking or acting cooler than they are, and on and on it goes. It can be a real drag—more of a chore than a pleasure, really.

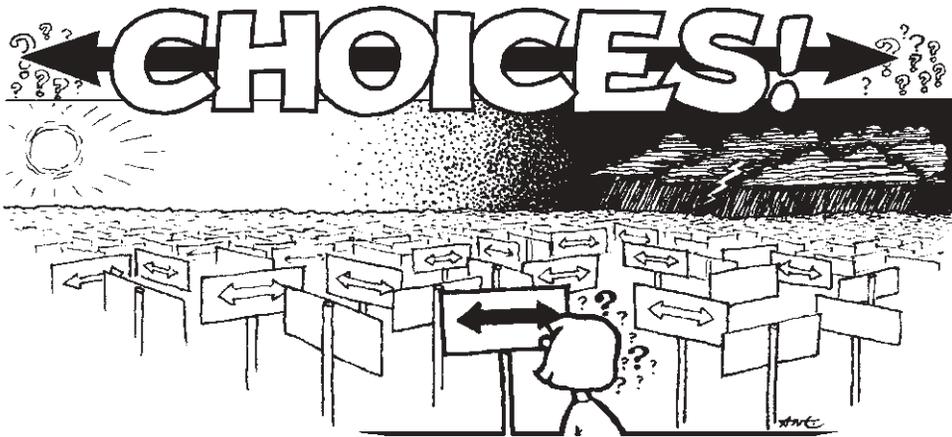
The secret to really having fun is to think about other people and how to make *them* feel good and help *them* have a good time. Mingle. Tell yourself that you're going to have a good time, and that you're going to share that good time with everyone you can. If you can do that, you'll be one cool party animal. You'll make every party you go to a great one for yourself and for everybody else.



I HAVE A LOT TO SAY TO YOU, but for starters, I want to get this one thing straight between us: I LOVE YOU! Can you believe that? You and your love mean the world to Me. My Father loved the world so much that He gave Me, His Son, in exchange for it. And to Me, you are the world that both He and I thought was so worth giving My life for—and I still feel that way. You're worth the moon and the stars and the sun. You're worth every bit of that to Me.

So, who's the creep that's accusing you of not being worth much?! Where is he? Let him show his face! It's the big creep himself, the god of slime pits, the liar, the Devil! He thinks he has quite a way with words. But his words are useless and powerless unless you listen to them and believe them.

Don't listen to him or believe him, because he doesn't love you. Please listen to Me and to what I have to say. I'm the one who really cares about you, and I'm here to help.



WHO YOU ARE, AND WHO YOU'LL BECOME, is in many ways up to you. There are a lot of possibilities, but the realization of these possibilities is in your hands, according to the choices you make each day.

Good choices are like seeds that you plant, which in time come to life and become little green shoots, and then grow into strong trees. Even the greatest redwood trees started out from tiny little seeds. The repercussions of your choices stretch far beyond today.

It's hard to know sometimes if you're making the right choices, but if you ask Me, I'll show you what the best choices are for you. When you make good choices, you're choosing life and happiness.

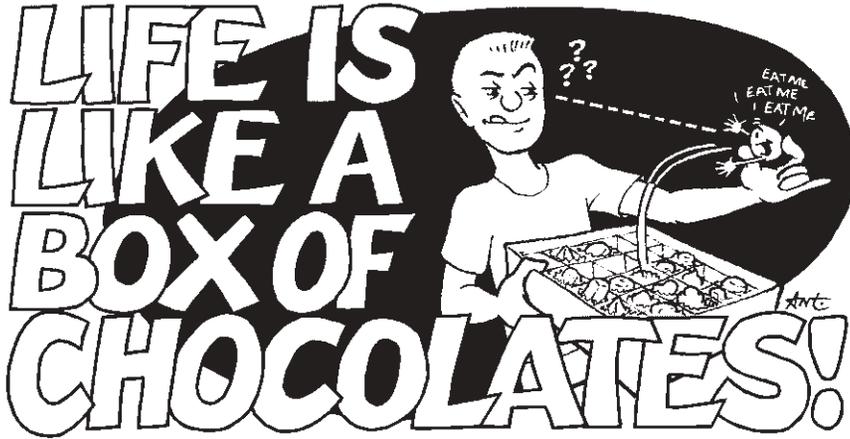
A stylized illustration featuring a globe at the top left with the word "PRAYER" written across it. To the right, a person is shown in a prayerful pose, with their hands clasped and head bowed. Below this, the words "AT BIRD'S-EYE VIEW" are written in large, bold, outlined letters. A small bird is perched on the letter "A". A vertical line descends from the "A" area, ending in a hand-like shape at the bottom, surrounded by a stippled effect. The entire illustration is rendered in black and white.

PRAYER AT BIRD'S-EYE VIEW

WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE YOU'RE IN A MUDDLE, don't you sometimes wish that you could just grow wings and fly away like a bird? You can, you know. On the wings of prayer, you can soar way up high, above all the mess, the problems and the confusion.

You can't necessarily escape your problems, but you can rise above them and see things from a different point of view.—A bird's-eye view, just like when you're in an airplane, and everything down on the ground seems so small—almost insignificant. I can give you spiritual wings that will carry you up above all the problems and help you to see them from the proper perspective.

The next time you're in a big mess, or you're feeling confused, or things just aren't working out right, don't let it frustrate you or drag you down. Flap your wings and take flight! Take some time to get quiet and pray, and you'll rise above it all. Come up here with Me, way up above the trouble and the turbulence, where everything is beautiful and quiet and peaceful.



YOUR LIFE IS LIKE A GIFT BOX filled with an assortment of different kinds of chocolates. Every one is a unique experience, and you don't know what you're going to get until you bite into each one and find out.

Some of the chocolates will be soft and smooth and melt in your mouth—easy, happy times. Others will be a little chewy—the tough times you're bound to have, because everybody does.

Don't worry about what kind of chocolates are in your box, and don't miss out on enjoying the one you have now because you're wondering what the next one you try will taste like. Look forward to and anticipate *all* the chocolates that I'm giving you, because they're all good! I gave you the box, so I should know.

You'll find that in the end, you'll like them all, even if some are a little unusual tasting or hard to chew at first. I love you and I want and plan to fill your life with good things.





HERE YOU ARE, SITTING ON THE FENCE between childhood and adulthood, wondering when you're going to be fully out of one world and into the next. It's a tricky maneuver. There seem to be so many contradictions in your life as you're making the adjustment. New ideas are popping into your brain, new hormones are rushing through your body, and maybe there are embarrassing manifestations of adolescence on your face, too.

Don't worry. You'll survive, and the awkward moments and uncomfortable situations you seem to find yourself in so often can make you an even better person. You're a work in progress, so don't let what you see in the mirror dishearten you if it's not all you'd hoped for. This weird phase of life might seem like it takes forever to get through, but it will be over soon enough.

There's something I want you to remember, something that will make you a real man, and it's this: Inner strength is more important than outer strength. Think about that.



YOU DON'T REALLY REALIZE HOW MUCH I CARE about you, do you? You'll never know just how much I love you until we meet face to face. For now, I have to content Myself with sending you little secret messages throughout the day. Sometimes you kind of miss them, 'cause you have to be paying attention to see them, and to realize that they're from Me.

I show you My love through a phone call or a letter from a friend. I show you My love through a beautiful sunset. My love for you is felt through a word of appreciation or a pat on the back from someone you look up to. I even show you My love through the laughs you get out of some joke or funny movie.

Those are some clues about what My secret messages look like, and if you keep your eyes open, I can show you so many more. Soon you'll realize that you're getting a deluge of messages from your greatest secret admirer—Me.



1. SAY: "THANK YOU, JESUS, FOR (FILL IN THE BLANK) " !
2. SAY IT AGAIN.
3. REPEAT STEPS 1, 2 AND 3.

HELPFUL HINT: WORKS BEST
WHEN YOU DON'T WANT
TO DO IT AT ALL !

↓↓ FURTHER EXPLANATION ↓↓

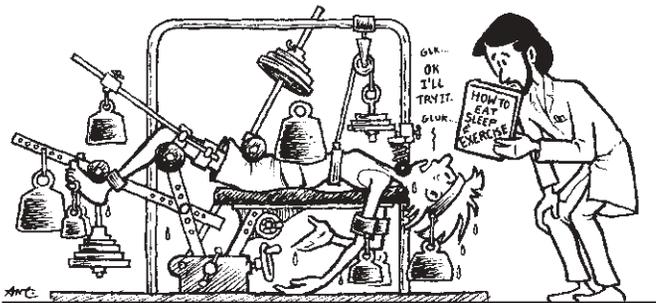
HAVE A THANKFUL HEART. Tell Me how good the food tastes, how nice the music sounds, how beautiful the scenery is, or how thankful you are for your health. Recognize that all these are gifts that come from Me. That'll do two major things: It'll make you happier, and it'll also make Me happy, and as a result make Me feel like giving you even *more* gifts.

Being grateful for the good things will brighten your days. I want you to know how generous I am and how much I'm willing to give you. But it's a spiritual law that you have to thank Me for what I have already given you before I can give you more. I may not always give you exactly what you want, but you can be sure that's not because I'm stingy. It's merely because I have something better for you. I'll always send good things your way, especially if I know you're thankful for them. You can count on it.



IT CAN SOMETIMES BE HARD, with so much information coming at you from every direction, to know what's true—what you can believe and who you can trust. If you were to go by what you read and hear in the news media, movies, books, magazines, and the Internet, you could end up quite confused about a lot of things. One day you're told that a certain thing will make you happy, or that such and such is the coolest thing, and the next day it's something else. But I know what's true, I see exactly where things are really at, and if you ask Me, I'll let you in on the scoop.

I can give you wisdom and discernment. With these spiritual gifts, you can have insight into people and situations, as well as into the media, and be able to tell whether they're good or bad, right or wrong, whether they're to be trusted or not. These two gifts will make you much smarter and get you a lot farther than anything you might learn from any classroom or textbook. They're Mine to give. You've just got to ask.



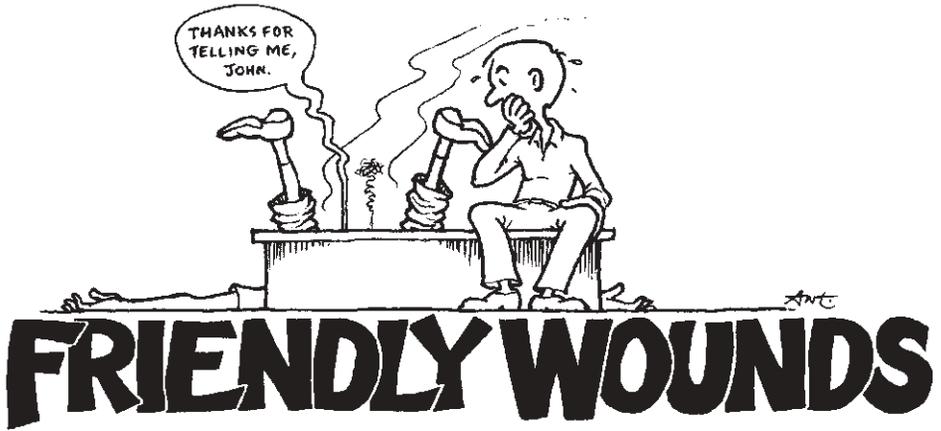
CONSULT YOUR BEAUTY SPECIALIST

THERE ARE TIMES WHEN YOU HEAR A VOICE telling you negative things about your body, and urging you to do drastic things to try to change it. That's an evil voice, from the Devil. He wants to make you miserable.

You know how celebrities pay big money to have their own beauty and fitness specialists? Their specialists tell them how to care for their skin and their hair, what kind of workouts to do, what type of food they should eat, and so on. Well, I want to be *your* personal beauty specialist. I can teach you how to take the best possible care of your body and make your appearance all it can be, without doing anything that's going to harm you.

If you're researching stuff and trying to find the best diet or fitness plan for yourself, ask Me which ones are good for you and which aren't, and I'll show you. I'll even give you specialized, personalized tips just for you—for free! Ask Me for them.

I love you and want you to be happy and healthy. I also want you to feel good about yourself.



THE BIBLE SAYS, "FAITHFUL ARE THE WOUNDS OF A FRIEND."*
What? A friend would wound you? That's supposed to be good and faithful?

Yes. A true friend is someone who will tell you the truth about yourself, even if it hurts. If you're doing something or about to do something that would be unkind or unwise, they'll try to hold you back.—And you might not like it at the time. You might feel like they're just trying to stifle you or cramp your style. But usually once you stop and think about it, you'll realize that they were right, and be glad you listened. You should do the same for your friends too.

Be a real friend and tell your friends what they need to hear, and you might save them from a lot of trouble in so doing. It might be a wrench for you to speak up and stand up in some situations, but if it's the right thing to do, then go ahead and do it. They'll thank you someday for being a faithful friend, even if you did have to "wound" them.

*(Proverbs 27:6)



HE WAS GREAT, WASN'T HE? He came into your life out of nowhere and made you feel special. He understood you. He cared about what you liked, what you felt, and what you did. He showed you that you mattered.

But things have changed. He moved on, lives far away now, and you miss him. You miss the fun times. You wonder if you'll ever have anything like that again. Yes, you can.

There are other people in the world who need you and who would value your love and friendship. Maybe it won't be the same kind of friendship, but there's a lot of joy to be found in going out of your way to be a friend to someone new. You'll still miss your best friend, but you'll be less lonely.

One day I'll bring someone very special into your life, someone who will reassure you, in a whole new way, of how much I love you. In the meantime, every friendship can be a sign of My love for you.

You can fill a big need in someone's life, and improve your own life while you're at it, just by reaching out with a hand of love and friendship.



CONFUSION IS LIKE A WALL. It starts off with a few bricks stacked only so high, but as questions and problems flood your mind, little by little the bricks add up, until you've got this big wall blocking your way and keeping you from thinking or seeing things clearly.

To get rid of this wall of confusion, dial Me up with a prayer. "Jesus, please clear this confusion from my mind. Can You tear down this wall for me?"

When I hear your call, I'll respond quickly and efficiently. I'll swing My demolition ball at that wall and send the confusion bricks crashing to the ground. As the first swing of My wrecking ball hits the wall, the light will come streaming in and you'll start seeing past the confines of the wall that boxed you in.

You can give Me a call any time you need a wall of confusion brought to the ground. I'm your Confusion Demolition Man, and I'm on 24-hour duty.



SOMETIMES YOU FEEL LIKE YOU AND YOUR LIFE ARE ONE BIG QUESTION MARK. You have questions about everything. *What is life for, anyway? Why live? Why love? Why learn? Why strive for anything? Why, why, why?*

Well, I can match every question mark that exists with either a period or an exclamation point. I have reasons and answers for everything.

I don't immediately put an end to *all* your question marks. It takes time. It's *good* for you not to know the answers to everything right now. It's part of life. It teaches you patience and faith.

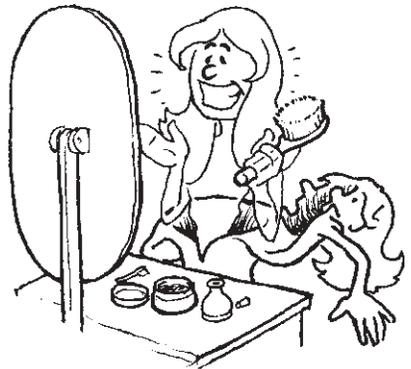
I answer some questions right away, and others I don't answer just yet. But I promise you, I'm saving up your questions, and one day we're going to sit down together and have a good, long chat. I'm going to pull out every one of your question marks from the past and I'm going to match each of them up with one of My periods or exclamation points—the perfect answer for each question. The *because* for every single *why*.

GROOM YOUR INNER SELF

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE HAS VERY *LITTLE* TO DO WITH *TRUE* LOVE. Have you ever noticed someone you consider very pretty or handsome get together with someone who seems at first glance to be rather plain? That's because when it comes to true love, wise people choose those who have *inner* depth and charm. They recognize those who are beautiful on the *inside*—unselfish and caring, mature and loving.

If someone's heart is empty, or filled with shallow clutter, then good looks aren't going to get him or her very far. People might notice the best-looking people right away, but while first impressions are strong, once someone really gets to know you, those second impressions are much more lasting. Good looks can also fade, but your inner self is there to stay.

Even if you don't think you've got "it" physically, you can sure have "it" inside. And that's what matters most.





SOMETIMES IT SEEMS THAT EVERYTHING GOES RIGHT FOR CERTAIN PEOPLE, and it's easy to compare yourself with them. You can't help but notice that they seem to have it so much easier than you.

The key word there is "seem." Things are nearly always different than they seem. Some people who seem to be living a perfect life have been through some pretty low times, or will soon hit a low time, or maybe they're even going through a low time right then even if it doesn't look like it.

Maybe the circumstances around them look great, but inside they're struggling with some personal sorrow you would never imagine they had. Maybe they're even looking at you and thinking that *you* have it so good, because there's something about your life that they wish they had. They don't know that you're weeping into your pillow every night.

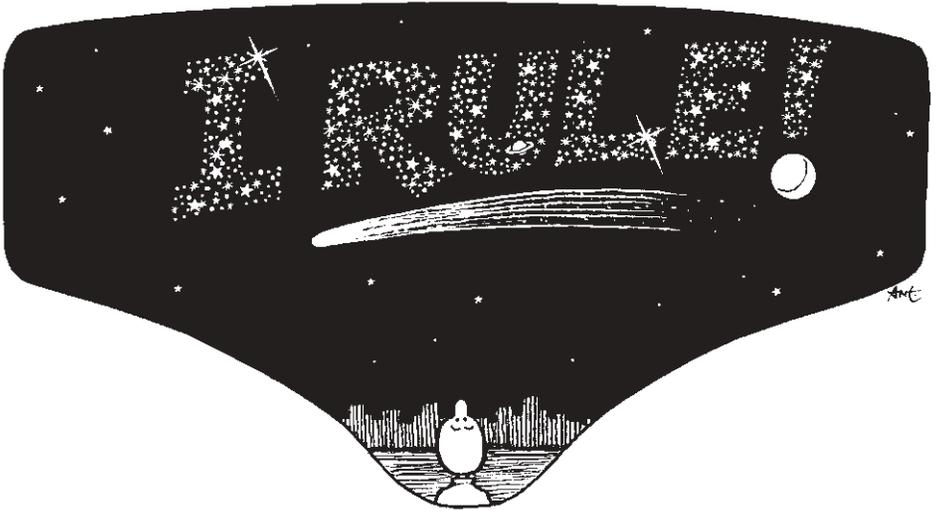
I don't do anything that's unjust or unkind. Everybody's life is balanced—the happy and the sad, the good and the bad. It doesn't all come at once, but in time, things do even out—if not on Earth, then for sure in the afterlife.



IT'S EASY TO CRITICIZE PEOPLE WHO YOU THINK ARE SLOW WITTED, strange, or just very different than you. Then, because critical thoughts give birth to critical words, you blurt out something harsh or unkind. Even if you liked the person okay before, your words lead you to *more* critical thoughts, until you eventually dislike them. Once in a while you wonder, "Hey, why is it that I don't like that person? They're not *that* bad!" But it's tough to break the cycle once you've started it.

Do you want to know how to start thinking well of that person again? First of all, remember that this person is one of My children, and I love them. I see the secret tears they cry, their loneliness, and their desire to be accepted.

Then, try keeping a log of good things that you think or see about that person. Whenever you catch them doing something good, something admirable or kind, write it down in your logbook. You might want to expand the log and use it for more than one person. Looking for the good and taking note of it will help you get along with those "difficult" people a whole lot more easily.



WHERE IS GOD'S POWER? some people wonder. I'll tell you. Go outside, into your yard, into a sports field, or onto a beach as a storm is approaching. Feel that wind blowing against your face? That's My power. When I show My face in the wind through a storm, there is nothing man can do except batten down his hatches and sit tight and wait out the storm.

Have you ever gone to a rocky beach and seen the waves pounding the jagged shore? That's My power. Ever seen a man surf a large wave? His skill may be impressive, but just think of the strength of that wave. That's My power. Have you ever watched a magnificent sunburst after a storm, as the sun shows its glory through the dark clouds? That's My power once again.

Imagine for a moment what would happen if I removed the manifestations of My power. Imagine if I removed, just for a moment, the air, the sun, the water, the land, and everything that man depends on for life. There would be no question about who was in control.

I rule! I am God! My power is present! My power is real!

I KNOW HOW MUCH IT HURTS to feel like you just fade into the background while some of those other babes wrap the guys right around their little fingers.

Just once, you think, I'd like to be the one to get the guy for a change. What's wrong with me anyway?

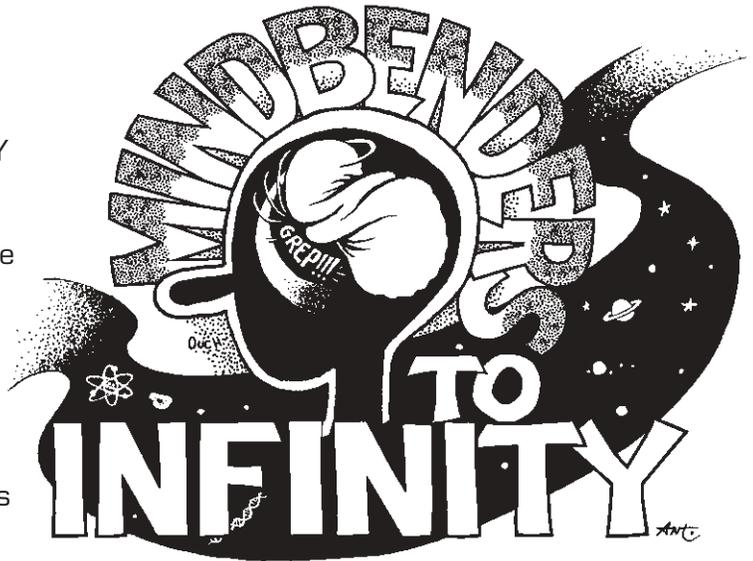
JUST FOR ONCE...



Nothing is wrong with you! You're a perfect creation of Mine. You're a treasure waiting to be discovered. Sometimes it just takes time, you know? Think of it, you've got plenty of time to find Mr. Right. There's no rush.

Why don't you try praying and asking Me to give you someone? Once you have, then you can consider him on the way. That doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to get someone immediately, but even if it takes time, you can rest assured that because you're trusting Me, your life is going to go according to My plan.—And My plan is always the best plan. I do have someone special for you, and in My time I'll bring him along.

DO YOU ENJOY
A GOOD
PUZZLE? Do
you love a riddle
or a maze?
Look around
you at the
greatest mind-
bender ever
designed—this
world and all its
intricacies.



The simplest forms of life and the simplest natural cycles of living cells have taken thousands of years for man to discover and understand. Scientists are always saying that they've discovered the key to this or that, and now have even figured out how to multiply human cells. But there's still so much that can't be explained.

Life is the most wonderful of My creations, and man will never be able to fully figure it out. They may be able to grow this or that in the lab, but they will never be able to breathe the breath of life into a human being, that breath that changes man from a mass of complex chemicals into a living soul!

My creation is a wonderful demonstration of My unending intellect. And what you see and experience all around you is only a small facet of My power and capabilities, for My creations are endless. There is no limit to what I am able to do!

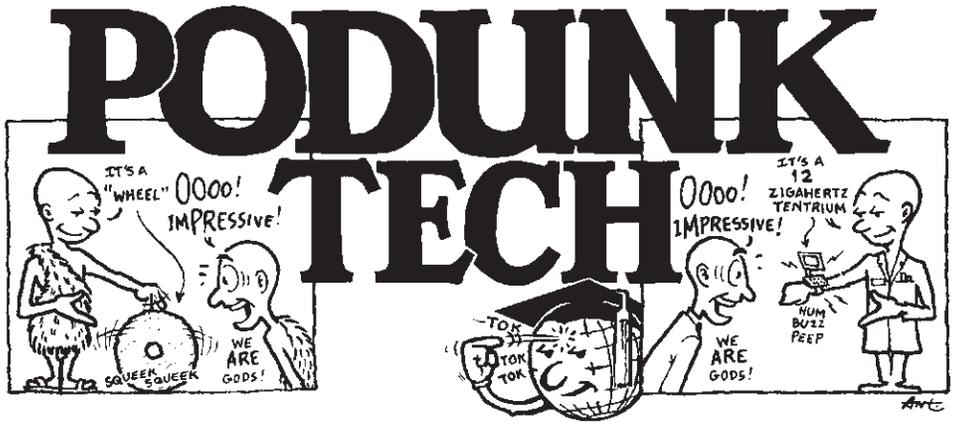
The maze of the universe has enough marvels within it to thrill you for all eternity!



YOU SEE SOME OF THE PEOPLE AROUND YOU—your parents and their friends—starting to get older. You’ve probably noticed their energy decreasing, and their ailments increasing. It’s kind of scary to think that you’ll be their age someday. Well, you shouldn’t worry too much just yet about getting older, but there are some things you can do even now to keep yourself healthy and strong for as long as possible.

Keep in mind that your health follows the boomerang principle. You throw a boomerang, and it comes right back to you. The way you treat your body now when you’re young affects how it’s going to treat you as you get older.

If you eat right, rest right, and exercise right, chances are that your “aging symptoms” will be more mild or will come later than if you just figure, “Who cares? It doesn’t matter what I do. I’m young and strong.” You are now, but you won’t be that way forever. You can be that way for a much longer time, though, if you do the things that are good for you. Give your body what it needs and it’ll serve you well for years and years and keep you looking and feeling good.



I LOOK DOWN FROM HEAVEN and see men drool over their computers, their Internet, and all of their fancy technological gadgets and it makes Me laugh! Compared to the advanced technology of My spirit world, these are only primitive tools.

Many people in the world have chosen to worship things and the men who designed them. If people would only worship Me and acknowledge My power, I would unlock the secrets of the whole universe for them. But because for the most part mankind has turned away from Me, I can't show them the real secrets of My power in nature, because they use their knowledge to hurt and kill and destroy.

I will come back one day and cleanse the earth. In place of destructive inventions I will set up My technology, which will far surpass anything that primitive man can imagine. My Heavenly information centers will be many times more awesome than the most powerful computer.

CAUTION!



STICKY WEB AHEAD

THE INTERNET IS A PLACE FULL OF INTERESTING AND HELPFUL INFORMATION, but it is also a place where danger lurks. It is really a complex “web,” and like any spider’s web, it can get pretty sticky in places. If you’re not careful and don’t know what you’re doing, you can get trapped, wrapped up, and gobbled up by it.

You can get so immersed in its “sites” and sounds that it starts to take up too much of your thoughts and time. What you’re doing when you’re online may be fine in itself, but if it starts to crowd out the more important things in life, like your friends and family, then you’re headed for problems.

Something else to watch out for is that much of the information that is being passed off as fact or truth isn’t valid at all. You have to learn to be wary, cautious, and discerning, or you can easily be misled. You can’t believe everything you hear, or trust everyone you meet, and on the Web that’s more true than ever.

Ask Me for help to navigate this complex web of information wisely. I can show you what’s true and worthwhile, and what has potential to mess up your mind and should be avoided.



THOUGHTS AND PICTURES FLOAT THROUGH YOUR HEAD, like a movie in fast-forward. Where do those thoughts come from? Where are they going? What purpose do they have?

A lot of times the reason you're feeling depressed is because you've flipped to a lousy channel. But you can counter these attacks of negativity through using the mind power I've given you.

Start thinking about something interesting, something fun, something that makes you happy, remembering the great times you've had, or thinking about something you'd like to do for someone else that will make their day. Use the power of your mind to change the way you feel.

The power of thinking positively will do wonders to lift you out of a slump and pull you out of the mental mud you feel stuck in. It works like magic!

It's your mind. It's up to you to make it behave. Use it, channel it, sharpen it, focus on a goal, control it, teach it, and let it rock!

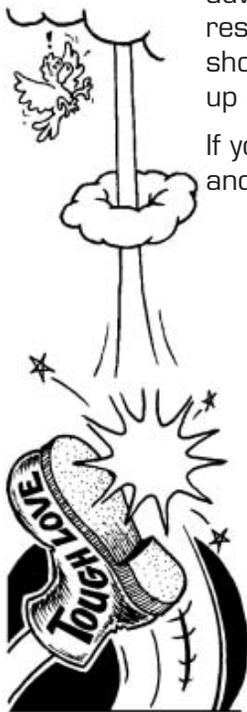


IT'S NOT EASY TO HAVE YOUR MISTAKES POINTED OUT TO YOU. Nobody likes that. But here's My advice: Just take it, learn from it, and go on. Taking responsibility involves facing up to it when you've fallen short. But don't get so down about it that you can't get up again! Just take it, learn from it, and go on, okay?

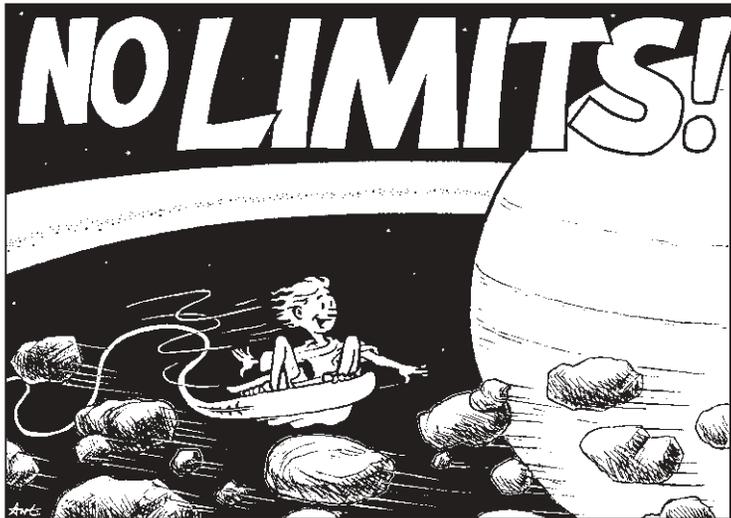
If you can learn from your mistakes, say you're sorry, and try again, then eventually—maybe even the very

next time—you'll get it right. Others will be proud of you, and you can be proud of yourself.

But don't always be looking to see if people are proud of you. Instead, know that I'm proud of you right now—not because you get everything right, but because you're learning from your mistakes.



BUNGEE
JUMPING,
FREEHAND
ROCK
CLIMBING,
SKYDIVING—
all these
extreme
sports are
nothing in
comparison to
the extreme
sports that
await you
in Heaven,
where you'll



have a new body. Picture the most outrageously thrilling, dangerous-yet-exhilarating experience you could ever imagine yourself in, and that isn't even close to the kind of extremes you can experience in Heaven.

For now, on Earth, you have to be careful. Your body is not immune to hurt and pain. But in Heaven, where there is no more danger or pain, the saying “no limits” will never have been truer.

On Earth, your adventures are limited by geographic conditions—mountain ranges, oceans, and deserts—and the limited equipment you can get. But in My realm you can explore the center of a distant planet, you can surf tsunamis, you can shrink in size and explore the inside of anything you like, you can bungee jump from physically impossible heights, and you can go rafting down rapids on the scale of a Niagara or Victoria Falls.

There's no use going out and getting yourself seriously injured now for a kick. But there will be no shortage of thrills in Heaven!

So, What's Next?

Maybe some of the things you've read in this book sound a little too good to be true. If you haven't yet personally met Jesus and wonder how that works exactly, well, it's simple. To get to know Jesus, God's son, as a close friend, and to be able to take advantage of everything He's promised, all you need to do is ask Him to come into your heart and life.

In the Bible Jesus said, "Behold, I stand at the door [of your heart] and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in" (Revelation 3:20). You can open the door for Him by saying this little prayer or something like it:

Dear Jesus, thank You for dying for me, so I can have eternal life. Please forgive me for the wrong and unloving things I've done, and help me to do better. I want the life of happiness You have for me—here and now, and in Heaven later on. I open the door of my heart and ask You, Jesus, to come in. Thank You for hearing and answering my prayer. Amen.

Once you've let Jesus in, He's your friend for life. He'll never turn His back on you.

Looking for **a friend who cares**? Having problems and wondering who can **help you out** a little? What if I told you that today you could **meet someone** who's a whole lot of **fun** to be with, who **knows everything** there is to know, and who happens to think that you're terrific? Jesus is that friend. Check out some of the things He has to say about all kinds of stuff like making friends, being attractive, growing up—and not least of all, **how to be happy!**



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