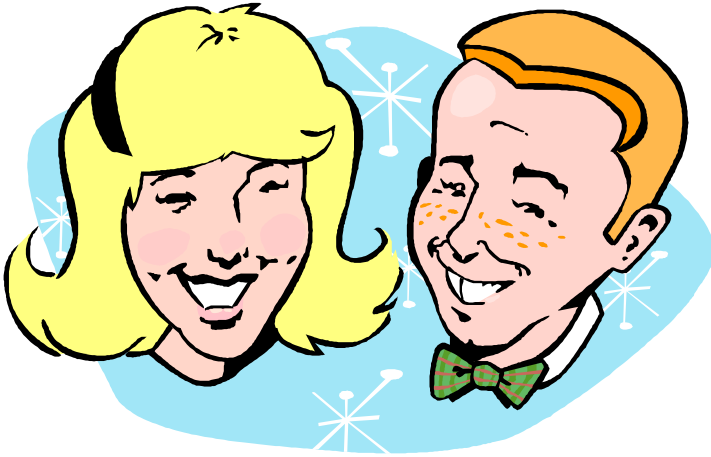


Booklet 5

Helps for Young People



Time to Panic

How Good is Good Enough

But What About My Plans

Time to Panic!

Jenny!" I screamed. "Where is my Spanish dictionary?"

"I don't know. I thought you had it earlier this morning."

My friend Jenny and I were walking to class when I came to the horrible realization that I didn't have my Spanish dictionary with me. Spanish class was minutes away, and I needed my dictionary for an in-class assignment—an assignment that would be worth one quiz grade. Our teacher had warned us that the assignment would have "many unfamiliar words." If I didn't have my dictionary, it would be nearly impossible to do the work.

As Jenny and I were almost to the classroom door, I was in a panic. I knew a big fat zero for this assignment would hurt my overall grade. But just then my friend Bethany walked up to me with a book in her hand. "Hey, Rach," she asked, "you looking for your dictionary?"

"Yes!"

"You left it where we were sitting in the hallway this morning, so I picked it up for you." She held it out to me.

Relief rushed over me. "Thank you so much!"

Thinking back about the experience, I feel embarrassed that I got so upset over the whole thing. It was like that dictionary had become the most important book in my life.

In contrast, I'd never reacted that way when it came to my Bible. Not when I "lost" it under a pile of clothes. Not when I left it in the back seat of my parents' car. In those cases, I just shrugged it off, skipped my quiet times and got on with my day.

Guess that says a lot about my priorities, huh?

The Bible is so much more important than any textbook or dictionary. In 2 Timothy 3:16, it says: "Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, training us to live God's way. Through the Word we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us" (The Message).

Now, of course, I realize that "losing" my Spanish dictionary wasn't that big of a deal. But "finding" and reading God's Word regularly *is* a big deal.

It's amazing how a little thing like losing a book can turn into a major lesson in priorities. But this is one lesson I'm really glad I learned.

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Speed Trap

Dale Rooks, a school crossing guard in Florida, tried everything to get cars to slow down through the school zone. But nothing worked. ... until he took a blow dryer and wrapped it in electrical tape, making it look like a radar gun.

Dale just points the thing at cars, and it's incredible how quickly they hit the brakes.

"It's almost comical," Dale says. "It's amazing how well it works."

Beaky Vac-Zilla!

Never mess with the wrong end of a vacuum cleaner. ... especially if you're a cockatiel. Just ask Beaky, a 16-year-old pet cockatiel from Locking, England, who learned that lesson the hard way. While his owner, Helen Gooding, was vacuuming the house, Beaky decided to attack the nozzle.

Thwoop!

Yep, you guessed it. Beaky got sucked into the pipe and got stuck about halfway up. Unharmd but feeling most fowl, the little feathered critter just "squawked and scrabbled," says Helen, who didn't know what to do. So she called the fire department.

And how'd they rescue the cheeky Beaky? One of the firemen blew into the opposite end of the pipe and, thwock!, Beaky popped out on the floor.

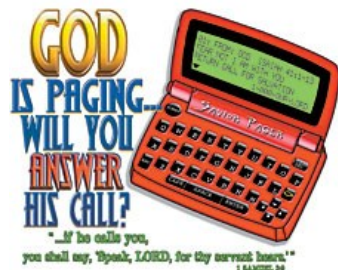
One of the firemen said Beaky "was soon twittering away," but the ruffled tweeter refused to come out of his cage the next day.

It apparently wasn't Beaky's first fight with a household appliance. He'd attacked Helen's computer one day and pecked the button that opens the CD-ROM drawer. Whap! Beaky was knocked off the desk and was down for the count.

Says Helen, "He's a little character."

Don't
keep the
faith.

(Spread it around!)



How Good Is Good Enough for God?

Everybody's heard the phrase, "Nobody's perfect." But that doesn't keep people from trying to be perfect—or feeling like someone *expects* them to be perfect. They might feel that pressure from parents, teachers, coaches or themselves. They might even feel it from God.

In his book *Mere Christianity*, 20th-century Christian author C.S. Lewis talks about living up to God's expectations. Lewis covers lots of other important topics too, like morality, repentance and faith. In fact, this book is one of the most straightforward and complete explanations of what Christians believe that's ever been written.

The following excerpt was taken from the section titled "Counting the Cost."

I find a good many people have been bothered by ... Our Lord's words, "Be ye perfect" [Matthew 5:48]. Some people seem to think this means, "Unless you are perfect, I will not help you"; and as we cannot be perfect, then, if He meant that, our position is hopeless. But I do not think He did mean that. I think He meant "The only help I will give is help to become perfect. You may want something less: but I will give you nothing less."

Let me explain. When I was a child I often had toothache, and I knew that if I went to my mother she would give me something which would deaden the pain for that night and let me get to sleep. But I did not go to my mother—at least, not till the pain became very bad. And the reason I did not go was this. I did not doubt she would give me the aspirin; but I knew she would also do something else. I knew she would take me to the dentist next morning. I could not get what I wanted out of her without getting something more, which I did not want. I wanted immediate relief

from pain: but I could not get it without having my teeth set permanently right. And I knew those dentists; I knew they started fiddling about with all sorts of other teeth which had not yet begun to ache. They would not let sleeping dogs lie; if you gave them an inch they took a mile.

Now, if I may put it that way, Our Lord is like the dentists. If you give Him an inch, He will take a mile. Dozens of people go to Him to be cured of some one particular sin which they are ashamed of (like physical cowardice) or which is obviously spoiling daily life (like bad temper or drunkenness). Well, He will cure it all right: but He will not stop there. That may be all you asked; but if once you call Him in, He will give you the full treatment.

That is why He warned people to "count the cost" before becoming Christians. "Make no mistake," He says, "if you let me, I will make you perfect. The moment you put yourself in My hands, that is what you are in for. Nothing less, or other, than that. You have free will, and if you choose, you can push Me away. But if you do not push Me away, understand that I am going to see this job through. Whatever suffering it may cost you in your earthly life ... whatever it costs Me, I will never rest, nor let you rest, until you are literally perfect—until my Father can say without reservation that He is well pleased with you, as He said He was well pleased with me. This I can do and will do. But I will not do anything less."

Who Was C.S. Lewis?

If you've ever read *The Chronicles of Narnia*, you've at least heard of C.S. Lewis. But writing fiction was only a small part of Lewis's life. In his day, he was mostly known as an academic (he taught medieval literature at Oxford) and an apologist—someone who, through writings, lectures and debates with skeptics, presented a strong "case" for Christianity.

Clive Staples Lewis (no wonder he went by C.S.!) was born in Ireland in 1900. He was an atheist for many years, which was one reason he made such a good apologist; he understood where skeptics were coming from. Then, in 1931, Lewis converted to Christianity—an experience he described as being "surprised by joy."

In his book *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis tells the story of his early life and how he became a Christian. The movie *Shadowlands* covers the later part of his life, when he married an American woman and then lost her to cancer soon afterward. Two other books you might want to check out are *The Screwtape Letters*, a fictional peek into the world of demons, and *The Problem of Pain*, which deals with suffering and grief.

Lewis died in 1963 on the very same day John F. Kennedy was assassinated. He's still considered one of the most important Christian writers of the 20th century. —*Elesha Hodge*

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But What About My Plans?

by Out of Eden's Lisa Kimmey

I've been a Christian since I was little, but I haven't always trusted God completely.

Instead of putting my security in God, I've often put it in something else. Like in middle school, when I would do almost anything to fit in with my friends instead of just being myself.

I didn't want to be different. I didn't want people to say, "She's no fun," or, "She's a prude." So I just kind of faded into the background a little bit.

By the time I was in high school, I was putting my security in academics, especially science, where I did especially well. I planned to go to medical school. I'd wanted to be a doctor since I was 5, and I had it all planned out.

But God had another idea.

Out of Eden wasn't any big deal back then. Our careers hadn't really gotten started, and I still planned on going to college to pursue my dream.

But right as I started school, we were signed to go on a 65-city tour with dc Talk. I told my mom, "I don't want to do it! I don't want to be a singer; I want to be a doctor!"

I was devastated, because I had to leave college. And when we started the tour, I hated it. I did not want to be in Out of Eden.

It was a long time before I got over my disappointment because I really wanted to do my own thing. I think that's where I missed the mark: I wanted to do my own thing. I hadn't really bothered to ask God about his thing.

It took a couple of years to really relinquish my plans and say, "OK, God, I'm really going to do this Out of Eden thing. I'm going to be who you've called me to be. I'm going to do what you want."

That's something I have to decide to do every day. It's not like I just said one day, "OK, God, my security's totally in you now." I have to wake up every morning and literally decide to trust him, day by day, minute by minute.

I still have insecurities. I still worry about what others think about me. I still want to do my own thing. But I've found the best way to fight those things is with the Word of God.

The Bible says, over and over again, that God will take care of me. If I don't trust him on that, I'm really calling him a liar. So I choose to trust him, to put my security in him every single day. I'd be crazy not to.