



GOOD NEWS GUIDE

“THE TRUTH SHALL SET YOU FREE”

April, 2021

God loves you

Do you know that God loves you?

I don't mean in an abstract way, as in, “Oh, yeah, God loves everybody.” And I don't mean in a Sunday School song way, as in “Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so.”

There's nothing wrong with those statements, except that they don't begin to express the wonder of this truth: GOD—yes, the only true God, infinitely powerful, all-knowing, the Creator of the universe and everything in it—that God—LOVES YOU—one small soul among so many billions; weak, sinful, and of no great significance at all.

Do you know that He loves you? That He cares for you with a mighty longing to have you live with Him in an intimate love relationship forever?

God loves you, and His love for you is constant and unconditional. Nothing you can do will make Him love you less, and there's nothing you can do that will persuade Him to love you more than He already does. God loves you with an infinite love that only He is capable of.

You might ask, how can He possibly love everyone that way? Because obviously it's not only you that He loves; He loves all human beings to that same extreme. Can He do that? Of course He can. God is not limited, as we are. He has enough love to go around. He has enough love to be passionate about loving every human being, one at a time.

God loves you. So what does this mean? It means at least these things:

1. God created you intentionally.
2. God knows you, sins and all.
3. God made a way for you to be saved.
4. God will stay with you.
5. God has work for you to do.

God created you intentionally. Did you ever wonder why you were born? Your birth was not an accident, and it was not a surprise to God. He created you for Himself. He created you so He could enjoy loving you, and you could enjoy loving Him, not only during your few years of this life on Earth, but forever. Your birth may not have been

planned or expected by your parents, but God knew what He was doing. He made you, intentionally, for Himself.

*For you created my inmost being;
you knit me together in my mother's womb.
(Psalm 139:3)*

God knows you, sins and all. He knows everything about you. He knows you far better than you know yourself.

God knows the self that you want others to see. He also knows your secrets—the cruel or stupid or shameful things you have done, and also the good and kind and generous things you have done that you didn't get credit for. God knows the good and bad of you, the ugly and the beautiful. He knows it all. And He remembers all of it, too, even things you have long forgotten about. You can't hide anything from Him, and you can't fool Him.

That can be scary. It can make you want to run and hide from Him, just as Adam and Eve did in the Garden of Eden after they disobeyed Him and ate the forbidden fruit.

God knows you. And still He loves you.

God made a way for you to be saved. Over and over again the Bible tells us that we deserve to be punished for our sins; we deserve to be banished from God's presence (Heaven) into eternal separation from Him (Hell), but God provided a Savior (Jesus) to take our punishment, so that we could be made clean and new and acceptable to Him. This way He called “Grace”:

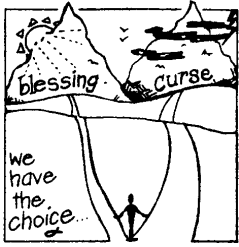
*But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in sins—it is by grace you have been saved.
(Ephesians 2:4-5)*

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.
(Ephesians 2:8-9)*

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall

not perish but have eternal life.
(John 3:16)

You have a choice: accept God's salvation, or reject it. But before you say, "Of course, I accept," you need to understand what that means. It means



you want to be with God, on His terms, forever. And His terms are simple: He gets to be God, and you don't.

That's the problem many people have with God. They want His goodness and mercy and blessings, but they still want to be their own boss. That's no good. God wants to save you, but He insists on being your God—your only God. Commandment Number One:

"I am the Lord your God ... You shall have no other Gods before me."
(Exodus 20:2)

Saying an unconditional "yes" to God is all you have to do to receive His salvation. You don't deserve it and you can't earn it; all you can do is accept it or reject it. So, if you haven't already done so, tell Him, "YES!"

God will stay with you. When you accept God's gift of salvation, you're starting over.

Jesus answered [Nicodemus], "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."
(John 3:3)

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.
(2 Corinthians 5:17)

After you accept His salvation, you're sort of like a new recruit in the army or like someone starting a new job. In effect, you're at the start of a life-long training process. Which is a good thing—it means you don't have to know everything all at once. It means that the sins you will commit, accidentally or rebelliously, can be confessed and forgiven. The Apostle Paul wrote half of the New Testament books (Romans through Philemon), and even He didn't have a perfect record. Read what He says in Romans and other letters.

For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing.
(Romans 7:19)

When you have said "yes" to God, you are not left to fend for yourself.

For [God] Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say:
"The Lord is my helper;
I will not fear.
What can man do to me?"
(Hebrews 14:5b-6)

[Jesus said to His disciples.] "I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. ... the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.
(John 14: 16-18, 26)

Do you get that? If you belong to God, then Jesus is with you, in the person of the Holy Spirit, no matter what your circumstances are.

God has work for you to do.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.
(Ephesians 2:8-10)

God created you, intentionally. Why did He do that? (1) To be united with Him in a loving relationship in eternity, and (2) He had some purposes in mind for your life. Next month I hope to expand on this theme. I look forward to sharing that with you.

To close this message, I want you to do something. At the right is John 3:16: I would like for you to write that verse down, but write it like this:

For God so loved _____ that He gave His only Son, so that _____ should not perish but have eternal life.

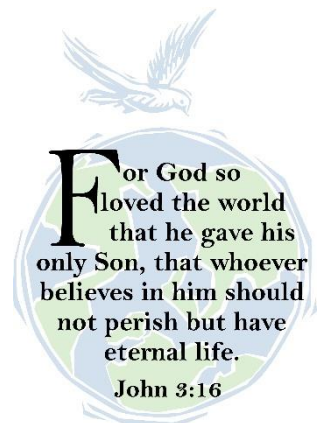
Put your name in both blanks. Write it down and keep it as a reminder that GOD LOVES YOU.

For my inmate readers, this month I'm including an extra page with two word search puzzles. Enjoy!

Blessings—

Brother Roland

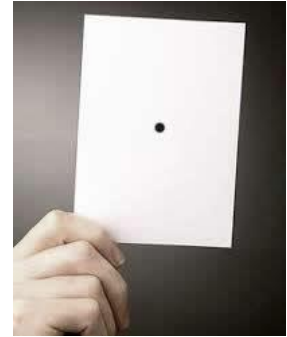
Comments and questions may be sent to Brother Roland, PO Box 14, Fayetteville PA 17222



The Black Dot

Author Unknown

One day a professor entered the classroom and asked his students to prepare for a surprise test. They waited anxiously at their desks for the test to begin. The professor handed out the question paper, with the text facing down as usual. After he had handed them all out, he asked his students to turn the page over and begin. To everyone's surprise, there were no questions—just a black dot in the center of the page. Seeing the expression on everyone's face, the professor told them, "I want you to write what you see there."



The students, confused, got started on the inexplicable task.

At the end of the test, the professor took all the answer papers and started reading each one of them aloud in front of all the students. All of them, without exception, described the black dot, trying to explain its position in the middle of the sheet, and so on.

After all of the papers had been read and the classroom was silent, the professor explained, "I am not going to grade on you this, I just wanted to give you something to think about. Notice that nobody wrote about the white part of the paper. Everyone focused on the black dot.

"The same thing happens in our lives. We have a white paper to observe and enjoy, but we always focus on the dark spots. Our life is a gift given to us by God, with love and care, and we always have reasons to celebrate—nature renewing itself every day, our friends around us, the job that provides our livelihood, the miracles we see every day.

"However, we insist on focusing only on the dark spots—the health issues that bother us, the lack of money, the complicated relationship with a family member, the disappointment with a friend, and so on. The dark spots are very small compared to everything else we have in our lives, but they are the things that capture our attention.

"Take your eyes away from the black spots in your life. Enjoy each one of your blessings, each moment that life gives you.

"Be happy and live your life positively!"

[And remember — God loves you!]



He is Risen

The Holy Spirit

Jesus promised never to desert those who trust Him for their salvation. This can be a great comfort to those of you who are struggling with life circumstances—inmates, the homebound, the elderly, the hopelessly poor. The Father has given us His Holy Spirit to guide and help us. *Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and He will direct your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

Puzzle:

B V F N S B R E A T H O F G O D X A A U R X U N Q D J G H L
 P K F V S E R Z I O F Z I Y S H T C Z Y Q V O X M D U A C R
 D V N G X M U X U B S Y M X E B Q E C A D I H Y R S Y B O E
 R D G T O T A G V T R I P L M V T R P E T H P B V Q I A C E
 J D X Z J J B I N D J X V W X E Q R O A L M Q A Z C X N N R
 B K T G Y Y I S O O K B Z C L R R C T U Z S Q Z O R E U M W
 C R E W O P R D Y G T A N C H D O E O H C S E N U I O X J T
 A E Q P D C Y C B O F N A P O B R I E I N E E P T T E S W T
 M D J X K M A X S J J R I G F P S L Q E T N O A O E F C F E
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 M B E B Y P Q U C P N C J E N E R N E M I N F O M Y W B V M
 S S C L P S A L O A C P T Q R I F C V N X I L G D R T C Q J
 A D I Y I R T H N E E N Z J V L K S G B T K H N G U Y C S M
 N V V T M P V T D B I P E D W L R A Y R M E H R M K O H H M
 W E G I P V E R B K M X U W Y O S H E I P E C I A I X F X X
 B F E S J A T N L M F K C E J K R R T P D F N O M F W N F I
 V R M O S G B E E E O S J R J Z J D I V S C K X S R S N P Z
 M F N R P S G N S O S S X I H X R S S X B P H T I T H Q Q H
 B A A E R L P N S D Y Z Y F F W I S D O M F R O M A B O V E
 I O Y N S K V R I M R H C F J U Y E I G F Y F Y R V Z Z J A
 L Q C E B M E G N L X C I O Z A X N K L Y K C V A G P T C V
 A P S G A P C M G R A K L S K L J D F P U E N W I E E R T E
 L O R T N O C F L E S E N E D Q L O B Z H K B O U N E Z O N
 K V F H B D S Z L H T J H U H C O O G P V K B E W T K T M L
 C B G B C A G G F Y F X U G M N P G O S A Q H J R L G A U Y
 J Q D S T I R I P S F O T N E M N R E C S I D O P E E A N D
 B Y K U A F Q T N E U A F O X K P A O O F B F T R N K D V O
 L X W O S K N U M N X M H T P K U J J R S M I Q X E I E G V
 F A I T H F U L N E S S B H R K E S X X O C K X L S J S M E
 L P V I D M H C N T E U Q W K G P R R C Q B S U U S S X S I

Words:

* Names of the Spirit

BREATH OF GOD
 COMFORTER
 HEAVENLY DOVE
 HELPER
 PARACLETE

* Manifestations of the Spirit

BAPTISM
 PENTECOST
 POWER

SECOND BLESSING
 TONGUES OF FIRE
 WISDOM FROM ABOVE

* Gifts of the Spirit

DISCERNMENT OF SPIRITS
 HEALING
 INTERPRETATION
 PROPHECY
 SPEAKING IN TONGUES
 WORDS OF KNOWLEDGE

* Fruit of the Spirit

FAITHFULNESS
 GENEROSITY
 GENTLENESS
 GOODNESS
 JOY
 KINDNESS
 LOVE
 PATIENCE
 PEACE
 SELF CONTROL