

*Defending the Faith from Creation to the Risen Son*

## *The Resurrection of Christ*



### Table of Contents

The Vision of SonRise . . . . .	2
Feature Article "Resurrection". . . . .	3
Relationships . . . . .	5
True Worship. . . . .	6
Understanding Anxiety . . . . .	8
Member Highlights . . . . .	12
God of Creation . . . . .	16
Something to Consider . . . . .	19
The Gospel and Sinners Prayer . . . . .	20
Upcoming Events. . . . .	23

## A Beacon of Truth and Discipleship: The Vision of SonRise Community Church

**N**estled in the heart of Sarver, Pennsylvania, **SonRise Community Church**, located at 130 Lucas Lane, has embarked on a transformative mission to create a place where worship, discipleship, and Christian education thrive. A little over a year ago, the church purchased the former Lighthouse Fellowship Church with the vision of developing it into a true **beacon of light**—a place where individuals and families of all ages can come to grow in their faith, deepen their understanding of Scripture, and live out the truths of God's Word.

Under the leadership of **Pastor John Neyman**, his wife **Debbie**, and the elders and board of **SonRise Community Church**, this ministry is laying a strong foundation for a **Christian Education Center** that will equip believers with sound doctrine and practical theology. The goal is not merely to **teach biblical knowledge** but to train people to **apply Scripture in their daily lives**, cultivating holiness, godliness, and a

life that reflects the glory of God.

At the heart of **SonRise Community Church** is a congregation that **hungers for truth**. They are dedicated to **understanding, applying, and defending the teachings of Scripture**. The church's **worship center** has been carefully structured around **expository preaching**, ensuring that believers not only know what the Bible says but also understand what it means and how it applies to their lives.

A **dynamic children's program starting with the CO-Op program** is also being developed, designed to **equip young minds to defend their faith**—from **creation to the resurrection**. Additionally, a growing **music ministry** seeks to cultivate **authentic corporate worship**, preparing hearts to receive the preached Word while leading the congregation in honoring God through song.

One of the most exciting aspects of the Christian Education Center is the **comprehensive theology class-**

**es for all ages**. From **children to adults**, believers will be trained in essential biblical doctrines such as **bibliology, Christology, soteriology, pneumatology, and more**. This ministry seeks to bring **clarity and confidence** to the people of God, ensuring that they **not only know the truth but can also live it out and defend it**.

In a world filled with confusion and spiritual compromise, **SonRise Community Church** is committed to **making disciples who understand, obey, and proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ**. As the body of Christ gathers weekly, their mission is clear: to **worship through the teaching of Scripture and respond in faith, devotion, and obedience**.

If you are someone who **desires truth**—if you long to **grow in the Word, worship in spirit and truth, and be equipped for God's kingdom**—we invite you to come and **help us change the world through the power of the gospel**.

### Disclaimer for SonRise Focus Magazine

#### 1. General Information

*SonRise Focus* is a publication dedicated to providing inspirational, educational, and faith-based content to its readers. The views, opinions, and perspectives expressed in this magazine are those of the respective authors, contributors, and advertisers and do not necessarily reflect the official stance of *SonRise Focus*, its editorial team, affiliated organizations, or its sponsors. This magazine is designed for informational, educational, and inspirational purposes only and should not be considered as professional advice in legal, medical, psychological, financial, or theological matters.

#### 2. No Professional Advice

The content presented in *SonRise Focus* is not intended to replace professional guidance. Readers should not interpret articles, stories, or counseling tips as a substitute for seeking advice from certified professionals in their respective fields. If you require medical, legal, financial, psychological, or pastoral counseling, we strongly encourage you to consult with a licensed professional before making any decisions based on the information provided in this magazine. *SonRise Focus* and its affiliates are not responsible for any consequences resulting from the use or misuse of the information contained within this publication.

#### 3. Accuracy and Liability

While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the content published in *SonRise Focus*, we do not guarantee that all information is free of errors, omissions, or outdated facts. The editorial team works diligently to provide accurate and up-to-date information; however, changes in laws, theological interpretations, health practices, and industry standards may affect the validity of some content. Readers are encouraged to conduct their own research and verify any information before relying on it for personal, professional, or spiritual decisions.

*SonRise Focus* assumes no responsibility for errors, inaccuracies, or any losses, damages, or inconveniences that may arise from reliance on the material contained in this magazine. All information is provided on an "as is" basis without any warranties of any kind, either express or implied.

#### 4. External Links and Third-Party Content

This magazine may contain references to third-party websites, books, services, or external resources for the convenience of readers. *SonRise Focus* does not endorse, control, or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, or completeness of any third-party content. Links provided in articles or advertisements are for informational purposes only, and *SonRise Focus* is not responsible for any content, policies, or transactions conducted through external websites or organizations.

#### 5. Advertisements and Sponsorships

The inclusion of advertisements, sponsorships, or endorsements in *SonRise Focus* does not constitute an official recommendation or validation of the products, services, or businesses featured. While we strive to partner with ethical and reputable organizations, *SonRise Focus* is not liable for any claims, damages, or disputes arising from interactions between readers and advertisers. Consumers should conduct their own due diligence before purchasing or engaging with any products or services advertised in this magazine.

#### 6. Theological and Doctrinal Views

*SonRise Focus* is a faith-based publication that seeks to promote biblical truth, Christian values, and sound theological discussions. However, theological perspectives and interpretations may vary among different contributors, denominations, and readers. The editorial team does not claim doctrinal infallibility, and we encourage readers to compare all teachings with the authority of Scripture and seek guidance from their local church leadership.

#### 7. Copyright and Intellectual Property

All content published in *SonRise Focus*, including but not limited to articles, images, logos, graphics, and design elements, is the intellectual property of *SonRise Focus* and/or its respective authors, unless otherwise stated. Unauthorized reproduction, distribution, or modification of any content without prior written consent is strictly prohibited. Readers may share brief excerpts for non-commercial purposes, provided proper attribution is given to *SonRise Focus* and the original author(s).

#### 8. Reader Submissions and Contributions

Readers are invited to submit articles, testimonies, letters, and ideas for publication consideration. By submitting

content to *SonRise Focus*, contributors acknowledge that their work may be edited for clarity, grammar, and length. Submission does not guarantee publication, and *SonRise Focus* reserves the right to decline or modify content at its discretion. Contributors retain copyright over their original work but grant *SonRise Focus* the right to publish and distribute it in print and digital formats.

#### 9. Distribution and Availability

*SonRise Focus* is a free publication distributed through churches, businesses, online platforms, and community networks. While we make every effort to ensure consistent availability, we cannot guarantee that all locations will have copies in stock at all times. Digital versions may be accessible through our official website or mailing list.

#### 10. Donations and Financial Contributions

As a ministry-focused publication, *SonRise Focus* operates through the generous support of sponsors and donors. All financial contributions are used to cover production, printing, and distribution costs. Donations are voluntary and do not entitle donors to editorial influence or decision-making rights within the publication.

#### 11. Changes to Disclaimer

*SonRise Focus* reserves the right to modify, update, or revise this disclaimer at any time without prior notice. Readers are encouraged to review this disclaimer periodically for any changes or updates. Continued use of the magazine constitutes acceptance of any revised terms.

#### 12. Contact Information

For any inquiries, concerns, or contributions, please contact:

**SonRise Community Church**  
130 Lucas Lane, Sarver, PA  
neymanllc@gmail.com  
724-712-9449

By reading and engaging with *SonRise Focus*, you acknowledge and agree to the terms outlined in this disclaimer. Thank you for being part of our mission to inspire, educate, and strengthen communities through biblical truth and practical wisdom.



# Resurrection...the Proof

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of Christian faith, and its historical validity has been debated for centuries. There are two main categories of evidence:

1. Biblical Proofs – Found within the New Testament scriptures, particularly in the Gospels, Pauline epistles, and other early Christian writings.
2. Extra-Biblical Proofs – Non-Christian historical references from Jewish and Roman sources, along with archaeological and textual evidence.

## Biblical Proofs

The Bible presents a coherent and consistent narrative of the resurrection across multiple independent sources: the four Gospels, the Book of Acts, and the Pauline epistles. Here's a closer look at key aspects:

### Jesus' Own Predictions of His Resurrection

- Matthew 12:40 – Jesus compares His resurrection to Jonah's three days in the fish.
- Mark 9:31 – "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise."
- John 10:17-18 – "I lay down my life so that I may take it up again."

### Significance:

These statements show Jesus' claim that His resurrection was part of God's divine plan, not a fabricated myth by His disciples.

### Testimonies and Post-Resurrection Appearances

Jesus' resurrection was confirmed by multiple eyewitnesses in different settings, adding credibility to the accounts.

- **Mary Magdalene** (*John 20:11-18*) First to see the risen Jesus; she mistook Him for a gardener.
- **Other Women** (Joanna, Mary the Mother of James, Salome, etc.) (*Matthew 28:1-10*) Jesus appears to them and instructs them to tell the disciples.
- **Two Disciples on the Road to Emmaus** (*Luke 24:13-35*) Jesus walks with them, but they only recognize Him after breaking bread.
- **Peter (Cephas)** (*Luke 24:34, 1 Corinthians 15:5*) Jesus appears privately to Peter, reaffirming his leadership.

- **The Disciples (Without Thomas)** (*John 20:19-23*) Jesus appears in a locked room, proving He has a glorified body.
- **The Disciples (With Thomas, "Doubting Thomas" Event)** (*John 20:24-29*) Thomas touches Jesus' wounds and proclaims, "My Lord and my God."
- **Seven Disciples at the Sea of Galilee** (*John 21:1-14*) Jesus eats with them and commissions Peter.
- **500 Witnesses at Once** (*1 Corinthians 15:6*) Paul reports that over 500 people saw Jesus alive.
- **James, Jesus' Brother** (*1 Corinthians 15:7*) James was originally skeptical but became a church leader after seeing the risen Christ.
- **The Ascension (Final Appearance)** (*Acts 1:3-11*) Jesus ascends into heaven while His disciples watch.

### Significance:

- The variety of witnesses, including women (whose testimony was not highly valued in 1st-century Jewish culture), strengthens the credibility of the accounts.
- The large number of witnesses (500 at once) reveals that the resurrection was not a hallucination.
- The skeptics and persecutors (James and Paul) being convinced adds weight to the truth of the resurrection.

### Transformation of the Disciples

Before Jesus' resurrection, His disciples were fearful and hiding. Afterward, they became bold preachers, willing to die for their belief.

- Peter, who had denied Jesus (*Luke 22:54-62*), boldly preached to thousands (*Acts 2:14-41*).
- James, Jesus' brother, originally skeptical (*John 7:5*), became a key church leader after seeing the risen Jesus.
- Paul, a former persecutor of Christians, converted after encountering Jesus (*Acts 9:1-19*).

### Significance:

- People do not willingly die for a known lie. The transformation of the apostles strongly proclaims that they truly believed Jesus had risen.

### Extra-Biblical Historical Evidence

Many non-Christian sources affirm Jesus' existence, crucifixion, and the belief in His resurrection.

### Jewish Evidence - Flavius Josephus (AD 37-100)

Josephus was a Jewish historian who wrote about Jesus in *Antiquities of the Jews* (c. AD 93). The key passage, called the *Testimonium Flavianum*, states:

"At this time there appeared Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one should call him a man. For he was a doer of startling deeds... He was the Christ. And when Pilate condemned him to the cross, those who had first come to love him did not cease. For he appeared to them alive again on the third day, just as the divine prophets had spoken..."

The Babylonian Talmud (*Sanhedrin 43a*)

- Mentions that Jesus was crucified on the eve of Passover.
- Accuses Jesus of sorcery and misleading Israel, acknowledging that He performed miracles.

### Significance:

Even hostile Jewish sources confirm Jesus' execution and the claim of His resurrection.

### Roman Evidence - Tacitus (AD 56-120)

The Roman historian Tacitus, in *Annals* (15.44), wrote:

"Christus, from whom the name had its origin, suffered the extreme penalty during the reign of Tiberius at the hands of one of our procurators, Pontius Pilate."

### Significance:

- This confirms Jesus' crucifixion under Pilate.
- Tacitus had no sympathy for Christians, making his reference reliable.

Pliny the Younger (AD 61-113)

Pliny, a Roman governor, wrote to Emperor Trajan: "Christians would meet before dawn and sing hymns to Christ as to a god."

### Significance:

- Pliny reports that Christians worshiped Jesus as divine soon after His death.
- Shows the rapid spread of the resurrection.

Lucian of Samosata (AD 125-180)

A Greek satirist who mocked Christians, writing:

"The Christians... worship a man to



*Continued from Page 3*

this day—the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites and was crucified on that account.”

**Significance:**

- Even hostile sources confirm the historical reality of Jesus and the belief in His resurrection.

III. Archaeological Evidence

1. The Nazareth Inscription

A 1st-century Greek inscription warns against grave robbing, punishable by death. Some scholars believe this decree was issued in response to Christian claims of Jesus' resurrection.

**The Church of the Holy Sepulcher**

- Recognized as the site of Jesus' burial and resurrection.
- Built over an ancient tomb, dating to the 1st century.

**Conclusion: Strong Historical and Biblical Case**

1. Multiple biblical eyewitness accounts describe the resurrection.
2. Non-Christian historians (Tacitus, Josephus, Pliny, Lucian) confirm



Jesus' execution and the early Christians' belief in His resurrection.

3. The radical transformation of Jesus' disciples suggests they truly believed in His resurrection.
4. No historical evidence refutes the resurrection claim, and no body was ever produced.

**Final Thought**

The resurrection of Jesus is one of the most well-documented events in ancient history, supported by both Christian and non-Christian sources. Whether one accepts it as historical fact or a matter of faith, the evidence remains compelling.

# SonRise Community Church

130 Lucas Lane  
Sarver, PA 16055

724-712-7644





# The Order of God's Universe and Its Impact on Relationships

God has created an ordered universe, governed by universal laws that dictate the function of every aspect of life. These laws extend beyond the physical world to include the spiritual, emotional, mental, and relational aspects of human existence. When these laws are followed, individuals experience the blessings of living as God intended. However, when these laws are violated, the consequences of being out of sync with His design manifest in every area of life.

Understanding these universal laws is essential in navigating relationships, particularly between men and women. Since we live in a fallen world, sin has affected every facet of life, ensuring that no relationship will ever be perfect. However, through spiritual guidance and an awareness of the differences between men and women, it is possible to build strong, God-honoring relationships.

## The Universal Laws Governing Life

God's laws are evident in every realm of existence. In the natural world, physical laws such as gravity, thermodynamics, and biological processes function with absolute consistency. In the spiritual world, principles such as sowing and reaping determine the outcome of obedience or disobedience to God's commands. Likewise, the emotional, mental, and relational worlds operate under laws that, when followed, produce peace and harmony, and when violated, bring about disorder and strife.

The relational world is particularly influenced by these laws. If individuals align their relationships with God's design—practicing love, humility, and selflessness—they will experience fulfillment. However, ignoring these principles leads to dysfunction, conflict, and brokenness. Recognizing the divine order in relationships is the key to maintaining harmony, especially between men and women.

## Men and Women: Designed Differently by God

From the very beginning, God created men and women with distinct roles and functions. These differences are not accidental but intentional, contributing to the balance of human relationships. However, these distinctions also create challenges.

One of the consequences of the Fall, as outlined in Genesis 3:16, was that the woman would experience pain in childbirth and would have a desire to rule over the man, yet the man would rule over her. This imbalance leads to struggles within relationships, as men and women contend with differing perspectives, communication styles, and emotional needs.

The natural differences between men and women, combined with the effects of sin, can cause friction in relationships. This is why it is crucial for individuals to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who empowers believers to love selflessly, communicate effectively, and resolve conflicts with wisdom.

## The Influence of Past Experiences and Temperament

In addition to gender differences, individuals bring their past experiences into relationships. Painful childhoods, past traumas, and personal struggles shape how people interact with one another. Emotional wounds that are not healed can lead to defensiveness, insecurity, and unhealthy coping mechanisms within relationships.

Another major factor affecting relationships is personality temperament. Each person has a unique temperament that influences their approach to life, their reactions to stress, and their method of communication. Misunderstandings often arise when individuals fail to recognize these differences and instead expect others to think and behave as

they do.

Through observation, it becomes evident that temperament differences are a leading cause of marital discord. They are at the root of many conflicts, often overshadowing external issues such as finances or parenting disagreements. However, when individuals understand their own temperament and that of their partner, they can learn to support each other rather than hurt each other. Recognizing these differences allows couples to work together rather than against each other, fostering peace and unity.

## Conclusion: Living in Harmony with God's Design

God's universal laws govern every aspect of life, including relationships. While the fallen world introduces challenges, understanding and aligning with God's design leads to healthier, more fulfilling relationships. Recognizing gender differences, healing from past wounds, and understanding personality temperaments are key steps in achieving harmony.

Ultimately, the ability to navigate relationships successfully comes from being filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit provides the wisdom, patience, and love necessary to overcome natural differences and relational struggles. By submitting to God's divine order and seeking His guidance, individuals can experience relationships that reflect His original design—filled with grace, mutual respect, and love.

*Seita Jewelers*

*"Diamond Specialists Since 1951"*



215 E. Sixth Avenue, Tarentum, PA 15084  
Route 28 Exit 14

[seitajewelers.com](http://seitajewelers.com)

724-224-9114

# True Worship – Living in the Presence of God (Part 2)

In the first part of this sermon, we explored the foundation of worship through key passages in the Bible. We defined worship as more than just attending church or singing songs. Worship is about putting God first, offering ourselves to Him as living sacrifices, worshiping in spirit and truth, and exalting His holiness. Now, in this second part, we will expand our understanding of worship by examining additional key Scriptures that demonstrate what worship looks like in practice and how it fits into both individual and corporate life.

## **Worship Is Serving God with Reverence and Joy (Deuteronomy 10:12-13)**

### **Historical Setting**

Moses addresses the Israelites as they prepare to enter the Promised Land. He reminds them of their covenant with God and calls them to wholehearted worship and obedience.

### **Key Verses:**

*“And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?” (Deuteronomy 10:12-13, ESV)*

### **Explanation**

Here, worship is expressed through **reverence** (“fear the LORD your God”), **love** (“to love Him”), and **service** (“to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and soul”). Worship involves both awe of God’s majesty and intimacy with Him. It is not a passive activity but an active response, demonstrated through obedience to His commandments.

- **Key Word:** The Hebrew word for “serve” here is **abad**, which can also mean “to worship” or “to labor.” This shows that worship is connected to action, not just emotion.
- **Cross-Reference:** Joshua 24:14 echoes this call: “Now therefore fear the LORD and serve him in sincerity and in faithfulness.”
- **Application:** Worship requires



us to love and serve God with our whole hearts. Are we living lives of obedience that reflect our love for Him?

## **Worship Is Drawing Near to God (Psalm 27:4)**

### **Key Verses:**

*“One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple.” (Psalm 27:4, ESV)*

### **Explanation**

David expresses his deep desire to be in the presence of God. Worship is described here as seeking God’s face (His presence) and marveling at His beauty. David longs for intimacy with God, not just for His blessings but for the joy of knowing Him personally.

- **Cross-Reference:** James 4:8 promises, “Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.”
- **Application:** Worship involves prioritizing time in God’s presence. Are we intentional about spending time

in prayer, Scripture, and meditation to draw closer to Him?

## **Worship Is Humbling Yourself Before God (Micah 6:6-8)**

### **Historical Setting**

The prophet Micah confronts Israel with the question of what true worship looks like. The people wonder if extravagant offerings will satisfy God, but Micah explains that God desires a heart of humility and obedience.

### **Key Verses:**

*“With what shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? ... He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?” (Micah 6:6, 8, ESV)*

### **Explanation**

This passage highlights that worship is not about external rituals or impressive sacrifices. Instead, God desires hearts that reflect His character—justice, mercy, and humility. Worship be-



gins with recognizing our dependence on God and aligning our lives with His will.

- **Cross-Reference:** 1 Samuel 15:22 says, “To obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.”
- **Application:** Worship requires a humble heart. Are we prioritizing justice, mercy, and humility in our relationships and daily decisions as acts of worship?

### **Worship Is a Continuous Offering of Praise (Hebrews 13:15-16)**

#### **Key Verses:**

“Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” (Hebrews 13:15-16, ESV)

#### **Explanation**

The writer of Hebrews connects worship to both verbal praise (“the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name”) and practical service (“do good and share what you have”). Worship involves both **adoration** and **action**. The phrase “sacrifice of praise” reminds us that worship is not always easy or convenient—it may require effort and cost, but it is pleasing to God.

- **Key Word:** The Greek word for “sacrifice” is **thusia**, which refers to an offering made to God. Worship involves a giving up of ourselves for God’s glory.
- **Cross-Reference:** Colossians 3:17 says, “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”
- **Application:** Worship is not limited to Sunday services but includes continually praising God and serving others throughout the week. Are we worshiping God with both our words and our deeds?

### **Worship Is Declaring God’s Glory to the Nations (Psalm 96:1-4)**

#### **Key Verses:**

“With what shall ‘Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth! Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the na-

tions, his marvelous works among all the peoples! For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods.” (Psalm 96:1-4, ESV)

#### **Explanation**

Worship involves not only praising God ourselves but also proclaiming His greatness to others. This psalm emphasizes the universal scope of worship, calling all nations to acknowledge God’s glory. Evangelism and missions are an extension of worship because they declare the worthiness of God to the world.

- **Cross-Reference:** Matthew 28:19-20 calls us to “make disciples of all nations,” connecting worship with the Great Commission.
- **Application:** Worship extends beyond the church walls. Are we actively declaring God’s glory to those around us and participating in His mission to reach the nations?

### **Worship Is Giving God First Place (Matthew 22:37-38)**

#### **Key Verses:**

“And he said to him, ‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.’” (Matthew 22:37-38, ESV)

#### **Explanation**

Jesus defines the greatest commandment as loving God with our whole being—heart, soul, and mind. This is the essence of worship: giving God first place in every area of our lives. It is not a segmented activity reserved for Sunday but a holistic commitment to love and honor God in everything we do.

- **Cross-Reference:** Proverbs 3:6 says, “In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths.”
- **Application:** Worship is about putting God first in our priorities, relationships, and decisions. Are we loving God with all of our hearts, souls, and minds every day?

### **Conclusion: Living a Life of Worship**

As we have seen from these passages, true worship is not confined to a single

moment, place, or activity. It is a lifestyle of surrender, obedience, praise, and service to God. Worship involves:

1. **Reverence and service** (*Deuteronomy 10*).
2. **Drawing near to God** (*Psalms 27*).
3. **Humility and justice** (*Micah 6*).
4. **Continual praise and good works** (*Hebrews 13*).
5. **Declaring God’s glory to the nations** (*Psalms 96*).
6. **Loving God with your whole being** (*Matthew 22*).

### **Application: Putting Worship into Practice**

- **Prioritize God:** Make Him the center of your daily life, not just on Sundays.
- **Serve Others:** Worship God by showing kindness, love, and justice to those around you.
- **Praise Continually:** Cultivate a habit of gratitude and praise, even in difficult circumstances.
- **Proclaim His Glory:** Share the gospel and declare God’s greatness to those who don’t know Him.

Worship is more than a song—it is a lifestyle of living in the presence of God, glorifying Him with every thought, word, and action. Let us commit ourselves to be true worshipers, offering our whole lives to God for His glory. Amen.



# Understanding Anxiety: A Biblical and Practical Perspective

**A**nxiety is a major problem in our society today. According to statistics, over **42 million people** in the United States alone struggle with anxiety disorders. This number does not even include those who experience occasional anxiety but do not seek medical help or counseling. Anxiety is not just a moment of nervousness or worry—it is a deep, persistent condition that affects a person's **thoughts, emotions, body, and spiritual life**.

Many people assume anxiety is purely an emotional or psychological issue, but **the Bible provides a more holistic view**. Anxiety is a **mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual issue**, meaning it affects every part of our being. Understanding anxiety from this biblical and practical perspective allows us to see how God's Word provides a real solution to overcoming it.

## Anxiety as a Mental Issue: The Role of Thought Patterns

Anxiety often originates in the mind, where distorted thoughts fixate on uncertainties and worst-case scenarios. This pattern of thinking perpetuates a cycle of fear and worry, leading to a perceived loss of control over one's life. Understanding the relationship between thoughts and brain chemistry is crucial in addressing anxiety effectively.

## Thoughts and Brain Chemistry: Which Comes First?

The debate of "which comes first, the chicken or the egg?" parallels the discussion on whether thoughts or chemical imbalances initiate anxiety. Research indicates that thought patterns significantly influence brain chemistry. Negative or anxious thoughts can alter neurotransmitter levels, leading to symptoms of anxiety. Therefore, imbalanced thinking result in chemical imbalances, affecting one's overall well-being.

## Perception and Anxiety

Anxiety is heavily influenced by perception. Anticipating negative outcomes or overestimating threats can trigger anxious responses. This anticipatory anxiety leads individuals to focus on potential dangers, often without substantial evidence, thereby



reinforcing the anxiety cycle.

## Common patterns include:

- Worrying about the future: Engaging in "What if?" scenarios, such as concerns about job security, health of loved ones, or personal failures.
- Dwelling on negative possibilities: Expecting the worst outcomes, even when lacking supporting evidence.

Lack of Trust in a Higher Plan  
Anxiety often intensifies when individuals feel solely responsible for controlling every aspect of their lives, neglecting trust in a higher plan or purpose. Recognizing and accepting that not all events are within personal control can alleviate the burden of anxiety.

## Biblical Perspective

Scripture offers guidance on managing anxiety. Philippians 4:6 advises believers:

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, through prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God." (JEN)

This passage encourages individuals to redirect their focus from worry to prayer, fostering trust in a divine plan. Similarly, Proverbs 3:5-6 states:

"Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways ac-

knowledge Him, and He will direct your paths." (JEN)[en.wikipedia.org](https://en.wikipedia.org)

Embracing these teachings can shift one's mindset from anxiety to faith, promoting mental peace and resilience.

## Conclusion

Addressing anxiety involves recognizing the power of thoughts and perceptions. By understanding the impact of thought patterns on brain chemistry and embracing trust in a higher purpose, individuals can break free from the cycle of anxiety and lead a balanced, fulfilling life.

- **Solution:** Renewing the mind with God's Word (Romans 12:2).
- **Practice:** Replace anxious thoughts with God's truth (Philippians 4:8).

## Anxiety as an Emotional Issue: Feelings Overriding Will and Rational Thinking

Anxiety is closely tied to emotions, and when left unchecked, these emotions take over, suppressing rational thought and self-control. Fear drives people to act on impulse instead of making wise decisions that are grounded in faith. Worry leads to panic and avoidance, rather than trusting God and walking forward in obedience. Anxiety causes a person to feel trapped, as if they have no control over their situation.



Here is the critical point—you must understand that it is your responsibility to take control over your emotions. You must govern your feelings, because if you do not, your feelings will govern you. Every person has the responsibility to exercise dominion over their own emotions. Some may say, “This is too difficult,” and I understand—it is difficult. I am not saying this will be easy, but I am saying it must be done. You must discipline yourself to do what is uncomfortable—controlling the way you feel. Do not allow your emotions to override your will; your will must always be in control.

The Scripture says: “A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls” (Proverbs 25:28, JEN). A city without walls is exposed and defenseless—anyone can enter and take control. In the same way, a person who lacks self-control is vulnerable, easily manipulated by others. There are people today who are controlled by someone who has long been dead, still enslaved by negative emotions tied to what was done to them or said to them in the past.

You must take charge of your emotions—this is the path to maturity. This is the process of growing in love—not romantic love, but the love that governs life. We are called to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mark 12:30-31, JEN).

### Biblical Perspective

(JEN) “For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, of love, and of self-discipline.” (2 Timothy 1:7)

- **God has given us power** – We are not helpless against fear.
- **God has given us love** – Perfect love drives out fear (1 John 4:18).
- **God has given us self-discipline** – We can control our emotions rather than let them control us.

When emotions rise, we must **stop and align our thoughts with biblical truth** rather than allowing fear to take over.

- **Solution:** Exercise emotional discipline by choosing faith over feelings.
- **Practice:** Pray and declare truth when emotions start to overwhelm (Psalm 56:3).

### Anxiety as a Physical Issue: The Impact on the Body

Anxiety does not only affect the mind and emotions—it also has a profound impact on the body. I do not need to say much to prove this point; the effects of anxiety on the body are real and serious. This is why it is crucial that you take control over your anxiety so that it does not take a toll on your physical health.

This is your responsibility—you must take ownership of your emotions so that they do not bring harm to your body. You have only one body, and you have only one life. Let us be wise and make it a fruitful one. Let us take seriously what God has entrusted to us and be faithful stewards of our lives. Pay attention to how you deal with anxiety, and take action to gain control.

### Physical Symptoms of Anxiety:

- **Increased heart rate (palpitations)** – The body enters “fight-or-flight” mode, pumping adrenaline even when no real danger is present.
- **Shortness of breath or hyperventilation** – Anxiety causes tightness in the chest and difficulty breathing.
- **Digestive issues (stomach pain, diarrhea, nausea)** – Chronic stress can lead to irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) and other stomach disorders.
- **Muscle tension and headaches** – Anxiety makes the body remain tense, leading to physical pain.
- **Weakened immune system** – Prolonged anxiety makes the body more susceptible to illnesses.
- **Sleep problems (insomnia, nightmares, restless sleep)** – An anxious mind struggles to rest, leading to exhaustion and worsening anxiety.

### Scientific Perspective

When anxiety is prolonged, the brain **continuously releases stress hormones (cortisol and adrenaline)**. Over time, these chemicals **wear down the body**, leading to chronic health problems such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and weakened immunity.

### Biblical Perspective

(JEN) “A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit dries up the

bones.” (Proverbs 17:22)

(JEN) “Anxiety in the heart of a man weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.” (Proverbs 12:25)

God’s Word reveals that **anxiety affects our physical health**, but joy and trust in God bring healing.

- **Solution:** Take care of the body by managing stress and resting in God’s peace.
- **Practice:** Engage in physical activity, proper rest, and deep breathing while meditating on God’s promises.

### Anxiety as a Spiritual Issue: A Lack of Trust in God

At its core, anxiety is a **spiritual issue** because it reflects a struggle to trust God. When we experience anxiety, we are often:

- **Doubting God’s sovereignty** – Believing that things are out of control rather than in His hands.
- **Fearing the unknown** – Failing to trust that God will take care of tomorrow.
- **Holding onto burdens** – Refusing to fully surrender our worries to God.

From a spiritual standpoint, anxiety reveals a **lack of trust in God**—it is a direct result of **doubting His sovereignty** and questioning whether He is truly in control. Many people want to believe in **free will**, thinking they have control over their circumstances and their lives. But **biblically speaking, this is not true**—God is the One who is ultimately in control. Do we make **moral choices**? Yes, absolutely. But like everything in life, the importance is not merely whether we have **free will**, but whether we are making the **right** moral choices—choices that align with God’s Word and His instruction.

God has given us **guidance** on how we are to live, and we must **pay attention** to what He says. This is critical. Anxiety is, at its root, a **fear of the unknown**—but God is **in the unknown**. He is **already in tomorrow**. Yet, instead of trusting Him, we often choose to hold onto our burdens, carrying the weight ourselves rather than surrendering them to God. But **God commands us:**

“**Cast all your care upon Him, because He cares for you**” (1 Peter 5:7, JEN).

*Continued from Page 9*

If we **obey** God's mandate and trust Him, our anxiety will lessen, and our **stress levels will decrease**—even affecting us physically. Instead of allowing fear and worry to consume us, let us **look to God**, trusting in His wisdom, and honor **His way** of handling our fears and our tomorrows.

### **Biblical Perspective**

(JEN) “You will keep in perfect peace the one whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in You.” (Isaiah 26:3)

(JEN) “Cast all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7)

(JEN) “Be still and know that I am God.” (Psalm 46:10)

God **commands** us to trust Him and rest in His peace. Anxiety is the opposite of faith—it is believing in **uncertainties** rather than believing in God's faithfulness.

- **Solution:** Surrender worries to God and trust in His goodness.
- **Practice:** Pray daily, memorize scripture, and remind yourself of God's past faithfulness.

### **Final Thoughts: The Biblical Approach to Overcoming Anxiety**

Anxiety is a mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual struggle—but God has provided a way to overcome it. Below are biblical steps to help conquer anxiety. It would be wise for you to examine them carefully, paying close attention to what they teach. These principles are God's prescription for handling fear and anxiety. If you follow His instructions, you will find a true and lasting peace of mind.

Make sure to look up these Scriptures, read them in their full context, and study them so that you can fully understand what God is saying. It is crucial that you gain a clear understanding of these truths so that you know exactly what God is commanding and how it applies to your life.

One of the most powerful passages on overcoming anxiety is Philippians 4:6-7. We briefly mentioned part of it earlier, but it is essential to break it down in detail to see exactly what God is teaching. Next time in our Counseling Corner, I would like to walk through this passage step by step, examining what it means and how we can apply it. This will be vital in learn-

ing how to fully surrender our anxieties to God and walk in His peace.

### **Biblical Steps to Overcoming Anxiety**

1. Renew Your Mind (Romans 12:2) – Take control of your thoughts by replacing worry with God's truth. Renewing your mind is one of the most foundational principles in Scripture. You must be in the Word daily—the Bible commands us to meditate on Scripture day and night (Joshua 1:8, Psalm 1:2). This is not a suggestion, but a divine command, because Scripture shapes our thinking and forms the right attitude toward trials. The Word of God enables us to process life biblically, through the lens of God's attributes, allowing us to see life from a heavenly perspective rather than an earthly one. If you want your life to be transformed, you must renew your mind.
2. Guard Your Heart (Philippians 4:7) – Fill your mind with what is true, lovely, and praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8). Guarding your heart is essential. The Bible instructs us to be mindful of what enters our hearts and minds because what we allow in will determine how we think, act, and respond. If you desire to have peace, you must intentionally guard what you expose yourself to—what you read, listen to, watch, and dwell on. Fill your mind with God's truth, His beauty, and all that is worthy of praise.
3. Pray Instead of Worrying (Philippians 4:6-7) – Bring all concerns to God through prayer and thanksgiving.

This is a crucial principle: Pray instead of worrying. Bring every concern, burden, and anxiety before God in prayer, and do not forget to thank Him in the process. We will break this down in greater detail next time, but for now, understand this: prayer is an act of faith and obedience. Does this mean your anxieties will immediately disappear? No. But it does mean you are honoring God by submitting to His Word—and that is the first step toward peace.

4. Strengthen Your Faith (Isaiah 26:3) – Focus on God's character and trust in His promises. The more you know about God—His nature, His attributes, His faithfulness—the stronger your faith will become. Study the Scriptures and seek to understand who God truly is. Knowing His character will provide security, confidence, and stability in your faith. This requires effort—you must dig deep into theology, learn His attributes, and study His Word. If you commit to this, your faith will grow, and your trust in God will strengthen.
5. Love More (1 John 4:18) – Perfect love casts out fear, so grow in love toward God and others. Mature love eliminates fear. The more you grow in love for God and love for others, the less you will be controlled by self-centered fear and guilt. Your anxieties and fears are directly tied to where you stand on the scale of love. Take time to define love—what is true biblical love? Read 1 Corinthians 13 and study the 16





qualities of love. Understand it. Live it. When you practice biblical love, fear and anxiety will diminish, and you will begin to experience the peace that comes from trusting in God's love.

6. Practice Self-Discipline (2 Timothy 1:7) – Control your emotions rather than letting them control you. Self-discipline is essential. Controlling your emotions is one of the most critical skills you can develop. The Bible instructs us in 1 Peter 1:13 to “gird up the loins of your mind”—which is another way of saying, exercise self-discipline over your thoughts. You must take charge of your thinking. Do not allow your thoughts to run wild or lead you astray. Instead, establish a mental framework where you direct your thoughts toward truth rather than letting them wander into fear, doubt, or despair.

Controlling your thoughts and emotions is the key to living a mature and stable life. If you master your thoughts and emotions, you will

begin to think and live logically. However, if you allow your emotions to dictate your actions, you will become irrational and unstable. This is why it is crucial to develop self-discipline in your mind and emotions.

7. Rest in God's Sovereignty (Psalm 46:10) – Stop striving and trust that God is in control. Finally, always remember to rest in God's sovereignty. The Bible commands us:

“Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10, JEN).

This means we must cease striving and trust that God is fully in control. If God is sovereign, then nothing in your life is random or meaningless. He is guiding your steps, ordering your path, and working all things for your good (Romans 8:28).

Let me ask you: Can you truly make a mistake from God's viewpoint? Are there accidents in God's eyes? If He is truly in control, then everything that happens to you is allowed by Him for a divine purpose. You do

not need to fear tomorrow, because God is already in your tomorrow. Trust Him today, and live in obedience to Him now.

### Final Encouragement

When we apply biblical principles, anxiety loses its grip on our lives, and God's perfect peace replaces fear. Anxiety may still come, but through faith, prayer, and self-discipline, we can overcome it and walk in the peace that surpasses all understanding (Philippians 4:7, JEN).

### Disclaimer:

As always, this teaching is for educational purposes and is intended to encourage spiritual growth and biblical understanding. It should be applied in alignment with God's Word, with careful study of Scripture and prayerful discernment. This is not a substitute for pastoral counseling, professional guidance, or medical advice. Always seek wisdom from God's truth, the counsel of mature believers, and the leading of the Holy Spirit in all matters of faith and practice.

## What's It All About?

By Frances Warsing

**D**id you ever wonder why you are here? Did you ever want to know your purpose? Did you ever wonder what's it all about? Well, take some time to think on these things.

If you are a Carpenter, you can build a table or a chair. After you finish the project you may sit back and say, “I love what I have created’.

If you are a Dress Designer, you could design clothing. After you finish a garment that you created you may sit back and say, “That is beautiful’.

If you are a Writer, you could create a book and have it published. After the finished product you may sit back and say, “That is good’.

Well, the same is true of God. He is the Creator. Genesis 1:27 states that God created mankind in His own image. Verse 31 concludes that God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.

**Psalm 139:13-16** states, For you created my inmost being; You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise

you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

My frame was not hidden from you when I was made in the secret place, when I was woven together in the depths of the earth.

Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be. How precious to me are your thoughts, God! How vast is the sum of them! Were I to count them. They would outnumber the grains of sand... when I awake, I am still with you.

**Isaiah 64:8** states, But now, O Yahweh, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You are our potter; And all of us are the work of Your hand.

If we are born-again, (a spiritual rebirth – a transformed life dedicated to God) and Jesus is our Lord and Savior, you are God's masterpiece.

**Ephesians 2:8-10** states, For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, so that no one may boast. For we are His work-

manship, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

You can know this for sure if you are born-again:

**Jeremiah 29:11** states, For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

This passage was for Israel, but we also being born-again have a future and a hope of eternal life in heaven with Jesus Christ.

Do you know what it means to be born-again? Are you one of His chosen?

If you don't know what it means ask someone. Reach out to your Pastor. If you don't have a Pastor, may I recommend my Pastor to you from SonRise Community Church in Sarver, Pastor John Neyman.



## Member Highlights

# A Tribute to Major General (Ret.) T.K. Moffett

**July 11, 1949 – June 5, 2023**

Growing up, I never had any one place expectations on me. When I joined the Army and was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 19th Infantry at Schofield Barracks, I found myself under the leadership of Lieutenant T.K. Moffett as my platoon leader. One particular moment with him left a lasting impression on my life.

After spending 30 days on the Big Island of Hawaii for training, I returned to Schofield Barracks and was called into Lieutenant Moffett's office. To my surprise, he brought up an incident that had occurred while I was on the Big Island, even though he had been stationed on Oahu at the time. He looked at me and asked, "Soldier, did you win the contest during the inspection on the Big Island?" I answered, "Yes, Sir." What he said next changed my perspective forever. With confidence and certainty, he told me, "I expected you to win."

No one had ever said anything like that to me before. No one had ever expressed expectations for me or believed in my potential in that way. As a 19-year-old, that moment spoke deeply to my heart. From that day forward, I wanted to live up to the expectations Lieutenant Moffett had for me. He taught me the value of striving for excellence, of giving my best for those in authority over me, and of pushing myself beyond what I thought I was capable of.

Knowing him and learning from him has been one of the greatest experiences of my life. His leadership, his belief in me, and his example of integrity will always stay with me. Though I will deeply miss him, I find great comfort in knowing that he is now in heaven, rejoicing in the presence of the Lord. His faith in Christ assured him of that eternal home, and his legacy continues to inspire those of us who had the privilege of knowing him. I hope and trust that this tribute to TK Moffett will have an impact on you too.

The measure of a man is not only in the titles he holds but in the lives he touches, the wisdom he imparts, and the legacy he leaves behind. Major General (Ret.) T.K. Moffett was a lead-

er, a mentor, and a man of unwavering dedication. His influence reached far beyond the ranks of the military, shaping the character and direction of those privileged to know him. One of those profoundly impacted by his leadership was Pastor John Neyman, who met him while serving in the 25th Infantry Division, 1st Battalion, 19th Infantry Regiment at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii.

From the moment he stepped into a leadership role, General Moffett exemplified the values of integrity, discipline, and service. He was not only committed to his duty but also to the personal and professional growth of those around him. He had a rare ability to see potential in others, guiding them toward success with both strength and compassion. His mentorship was not about authority but about cultivating the best in those who followed him.

Pastor Neyman recalls the profound impact General Moffett had on his own journey, shaping his character, leadership, and personal growth. The lessons learned from him were not confined to the military but extended into all aspects of life. His influence was a steady force—one that encouraged excellence, resilience, and a sense of purpose.

Beyond his military career, General Moffett's presence was one of wisdom and steadiness. He understood that leadership was more than just making decisions—it was about serving others, standing firm in one's convictions, and leading by example. His legacy is not just in the positions he held, but in the people he uplifted and the lives he helped shape.

As we honor his memory, we recognize a man who embodied true leadership in every sense. His impact will continue to be felt in the stories shared, the lessons passed down, and the countless individuals who carry his influence in their hearts. Major



General (Ret.) T.K. Moffett may no longer walk among us, but his legacy of integrity, mentorship, and unwavering commitment to others will endure for generations to come.

You may have known T. K. Moffett as an Attorney, a Major General, a Judge, a restaurant owner, a Professor, a City Prosecutor, a Deacon, a Music/Youth Minister, an Author, an Army West Point Rabble Rouser, or someone occasionally out of gas on the side of the road as he moved quickly from responsibility to responsibility, but his family just called him "Granddaddy." Whether at the beach, on the boat, singing Elvis karaoke, running a half-marathon at a whim, or driving his truck in a parade, Granddaddy was a joy. From the humblest of beginnings, his hard work and determination led him on a great adventure for both the Kingdom and his country.

T. K. Moffett was born on a small farm near Becker, Mississippi on July 11, 1949. He was the youngest of nine children born to Elmer Carlos Moffett and Mary Ethel Meek Moffett. As a young man, he gave his life to Christ at Becker Baptist Church, where he would also help lead musical worship in his teenage years. He was an honor graduate from Amory High School and received nominations to all three U.S. Service Academies. T. K. chose the



United States Military Academy at West Point, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Science Degree. After the Academy, he served as an Airborne Infantry Officer and Armor Officer, and graduated from both the Infantry Officer Basic Course and the Airborne School at Fort Benning, Georgia. He would go on to earn a Master of Arts Degree in Political Science from the University of Hawaii, and a Juris Doctor Degree from the University of Mississippi. He is also an honor graduate of the Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth; and he completed United States Army War College as a Harvard Fellow at Harvard University.

Major General Moffett's military career spanned 40 years in the Army, Army Reserve, and the Mississippi Army National Guard. He commanded at every level from Platoon Leader to Tank Battalion Commander to Division Commander, having served in the 155th Armored Brigade, the 25th Infantry Division, the 4th Infantry Division, the 91st Division, and the 104th Division. He mobilized with the 155th Armored Brigade for Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm and with the 91st Division for Operation Enduring Freedom.

T. K. was promoted to Brigadier General in 1999 and Major General in 2003. He was the Commanding General of the Troop Command Mississippi National Guard, the Deputy Commanding General of the 91st Division in California, and the Commanding General of the 104th Division in Vancouver, Washington. He retired from the military in 2007.

His awards and decorations include the Global War on Terrorism Medal, the Army Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Army Commendation Medal, the Mississippi Magnolia Cross, the Mississippi Magnolia Medal, and the Mississippi Commendation Medal.

While pursuing a dual career with the military, T. K. practiced law for almost 45 years. He was the owner of Moffett Law Firm, PLLC, with offices in both Tupelo and Amory and he was admitted to practice law in both Mississippi and Alabama. He served as Tupelo City Prosecutor from 1989 through 1999. In 2015, Governor Phil

Bryant appointed T. K. as Chancery Judge in Northeast Mississippi's First Judicial District.

Major General Moffett was also the Founder and Owner of Moffett Leadership Institute and conducted leadership and ethics training with numerous military forums throughout the United States, Nigeria, and Rwanda. He also studied Municipal Policing at Harvard University. He defined a leader as "one who has a clear vision of the way things ought to be, articulates it, and, while setting the example in word and deed, inspires others to adopt the vision and work willingly toward its accomplishment." He also believed leaders are servants.

Though all these accomplishments are incredible, they are not his greatest source of pride. His foremost joy was in his family. He was blessed for 51 years to be married to Rita Millsaps Moffett, who has supported him from their first military assignment at Scofield Barracks in Oahu, Hawaii to their final assignment in Vancouver, WA. While in Hawaii, they helped plant Mililani Baptist Church where the Gospel is still thriving today. Rita's ministry of hospitality has been a particular blessing as they've welcomed countless people from the East Coast to the West Coast around their table and sought to serve both their soldiers and neighbors, especially during holiday meals, ice storms, and tornado warnings. Their partnership in kindness and generosity toward others is a great legacy.

As a father, T. K. could not be prouder of his daughter, Tara Leigh Moffett Dowden. His constant support and encouragement allowed her to flourish and to never doubt she was loved. He would often say to her, "If I picked you out of a catalog, I would not have changed a thing." He would often say to others, "She is such a joy." At Bay Springs, he helped make lasting memories for Tara and her friends as they spent time together skiing and tubing and trying to keep the houseboat from sinking because there was always room for one more!

As a father-in-law, none could have been more welcoming than T. K. was to his son-in-law, Dr. Landon Dowden. From the first visit with T. K. showing countless home videos of Tara Leigh to his purchasing of LSU

football national championship tickets (which is hard for any Rebel to do), his love and support have been evident. He was always proud of his preacher son-in-law and his handwritten letters of encouragement will always be treasured.

His particular joy since 2004 has been to attend countless swim meets, baseball games, soccer matches, tennis matches, football games, and ballet recitals for his four grandchildren: Arabella, Adalaide, Adoniram, and Alastair Dowden. Times together at Disney World, the beach, and the lake with them have provided lasting memories and lots of laughter and nobody's laugh was like Granddaddy's. Special opportunities at Huntington Beach and Pearl Harbor because of his military service helped instill a love and gratitude for our country. But singing Karaoke in the living room, riding with Granddaddy in the Amory and Tupelo parades, or swimming all day in the pool while Granddaddy grilled great food are the daily moments of life together that will be missed.



**Johnson's**  
HEATING COOLING PLUMBING  
*We're the Good Guys!* 724-423-1111

**Fresh Air Starts Here**  
Schedule Your Spring HVAC Maintenance

**TOP TRANE**

**DEALER IN WESTERN PA**

**MITSUBISHI ELECTRIC** **DUCTLESS ELITE PRO**

**CALL US TODAY!**  
**724-423-1111**  
[www.JohnsonsHeating.com](http://www.JohnsonsHeating.com)

# Meet Tara Smith: Your Trusted Real Estate Expert

**I** got into real estate to transition out of my previous career and start building a **secure retirement for myself**. My original plan was to **flip houses** with my children—my son Jared, a contractor, and my daughter Cortnie, who studied accounting. We envisioned working together as a family business. **But God had different plans.**

We never actually completed a flip—**life took us in different directions.** Jared went back to school to pursue a new career, and Cortnie realized accounting wasn't for her. That left me **learning how to sell houses** on my own so my education wouldn't go to waste. Fast forward to today, and while I'm still working with my kids, it's not the same two I started with! My oldest son, **Derick**, now runs my business operations, including **drone videos, photography, paperwork, and marketing**, while my oldest daughter, **Aleacia**, has become a real estate agent as well.

## My Real Estate Journey

I've been in real estate for **five years** as of this February. I started at **Berkshire Hathaway**, but I quickly realized it wasn't the right fit for me. After just **six months**, I switched my license to **EXP Realty**, where I stayed for **2.5 years**. Then, I discovered **LPT Realty**, a cloud-based brokerage that aligned perfectly with my goals. I waited **six months** for LPT to launch in Pennsylvania, and when they did, I became **the first agent under my broker to join in this state!**

Not only that, but I also became **the first to open a branch office for LPT in Pennsylvania!**

LPT stands for **Listing Power Tools**, and we specialize in **high-impact marketing for real estate listings**. We are **the fastest-growing real estate company in history**, earning **Top Brokerage of the Year** from **Inman Awards** and the **#1 Award for Agent Training** from **APEX Training**—all in just **three years!**

## Building My Business

On **December 18th** of last year, I opened **my own office** in Butler, PA. Today, my team consists of **six agents**, plus **13 solo agents** from different areas. This year, I was honored to receive the **Black Badge**, an elite recognition awarded to the **top 1% of agents!**

**In 2023 alone, I personally sold over \$10 million in real estate**—and that doesn't even include what my agents and team sold! We serve **any area within 1.5 hours of Butler**, handling everything from **\$20,000 vacant lots to million-dollar commercial properties**—and everything in between!

## Thinking About Buying a Home? I Can Help!

**Did you know that nearly everyone can buy a home?** It's easier than you think! The key is **pre-approval**—and don't worry if you're not eligible right now, because **I can help you get there!**

I can work with you to create a **6, 12, or 18-month plan** to prepare for homeownership. Here's what you'll need:

- ✓ **Good credit** – I can help you **repair and improve your credit**
- ✓ **A down payment** – I work with **lenders offering financial assistance**
- ✓ **Steady income** – This can include **employment, Social Security, pension checks, or verified self-employment**

I will **walk you through every step of the process** so you feel confident and prepared when it's time to buy your home!

## Giving Back to the Community

At **The Tara Smith Team**, we take pride in **giving back!** Each year, I organize the **Herman Road Cleanup Project**—a community event where we **gather volunteers and donations to clean up trash along the road.**

Last year, **34 volunteers** joined us, and it was such a success that I decided to make it an **annual event**. This year's cleanup is scheduled for **May 10th**, with a **rain date of May 11th.**

## What we specialize in:

- Listing Your Home/ Property
- First Time Home Buyers
- Commercial/ Residential
- New Builds
- Housing Plans



The Tara Smith Team

724-712-5966

877-366-2213



## Exciting New Listings!

- ✓ **I just listed a one-of-a-kind housing development!**
- ✓ **Location:** Chicora, PA (Karns City School District)
- ✓ **Homes:** 33 Barndominiums, each with **1.3+ acres** of land
- ✓ **Features:** 3-4 bedrooms, **attached 2-stall garages**, and **tons of upgrade options**
- ✓ **Prices start at \$374K**

## Amazing Amenities Coming Soon:

- ✓ **4 ponds**
- ✓ **Walking trails**
- ✓ **A wood-fired oven restaurant**
- ✓ **A winery**
- ✓ **A fitness gym**
- ✓ **Walking distance to an ice cream shop!**

This is a truly unique opportunity—**don't miss out!**

## Let's Make Your Real Estate Dreams a Reality!

Whether you're buying, selling, or investing, I would love to help you with **all your real estate needs.**

- ✓ **My Office:** 315 Center Ave, Butler, PA
  - ✓ **Call or Text:** 724-712-5966
  - ✓ **Email:** Realtor.Tarasmith3@gmail.com
- Let's make **your real estate dreams** come true—I'm here to help!





**Butler**  
**724.285.7578**

**Natrona Heights**  
**724.226.8848**



**Worthington**  
**724.297.5353**



**Service Center**  
**724.234.2613**



*sjom*



## Good News of Salvation

# The God of Creation and the Need for a Savior

**B**efore we can understand salvation, we must first understand **who God is**—the **one true God**, the Creator of the universe.

## The God of Creation

*"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."* — Genesis 1:1 (JEN)

The **God of salvation is the God of creation**. He is the eternal, all-powerful, and sovereign God who spoke everything into existence.

- **He is the only true God**—there is no other (Isaiah 45:5).
- **He created the universe and everything in it**, including the earth, the sun, the stars, and all living things (Genesis 1:1-31).
- **He created mankind in His own image**, to reflect His character and have a personal relationship with Him (Genesis 1:26-27).
- **He is holy, righteous, and perfect**, and everything He made was good (Deuteronomy 32:4, Genesis 1:31).

God created **Adam and Eve**, the first humans, and placed them in the Garden of Eden, where they lived in perfect harmony with Him. They were given **dominion over the earth** and were made to enjoy fellowship with God forever.

However, something **tragic happened** that changed everything—sin entered the world.

## The Fall of Mankind – The Need for a Savior

Although God created mankind **perfect**, He also gave them **free will**, the ability to choose between obedience and disobedience.

*"And the Lord God commanded the man, 'You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it, you will surely die.'"* — Genesis 2:16-17 (JEN)

God gave Adam and Eve **one command**—not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But Satan, in the form of a serpent, deceived Eve, causing her to doubt God's Word.

*"When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and*



SCAN ME

If you would like more information, more understanding, or would like to be part of the Truth Movement sign up here. Just scan the code or call me at 724-712-7644

*pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it."* — Genesis 3:6 (JEN)

With this **act of disobedience**, sin entered the world. The consequences were immediate and devastating:

- 1. Separation from God** – Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden and lost their close fellowship with their Creator (Genesis 3:23-24).
- 2. Spiritual Death** – Their sin caused spiritual death, meaning they were now separated from God's presence (Ephesians 2:1-3).
- 3. Physical Death** – Sin brought physical death into the world. Before sin, there was no death, but now all people must die (Romans 5:12).
- 4. A Sinful Nature** – Adam's disobedience corrupted all of humanity, passing down a sinful nature to every generation (Romans 5:19).
- 5. Cursed Creation** – The earth itself was cursed because of sin, leading to suffering, pain, and toil (Genesis 3:17-19).

## God's Promise of a Savior

Although mankind had fallen, **God already had a plan of redemption**. He gave the first prophecy of a coming Savior in Genesis 3:15:

*"And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."* — Genesis 3:15 (JEN)

This is known as the **Protoevange-**

**lium**, the first announcement of the Gospel. It foretold that a descendant of the woman would **crush the serpent's head**—a prophecy that would be fulfilled by Jesus Christ.

From that moment on, God began to unfold His **plan of salvation**—a plan that would one day restore mankind's broken relationship with Him through **the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ**.

The rest of the Bible tells this **story of redemption**—how God provided a way for humanity to be saved through **faith in His Son, Jesus Christ**.

## The Need for Salvation

Because of Adam and Eve's sin, **all of humanity is now born separated from God**.

*"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."* — Romans 3:23 (JEN)

We inherit their sinful nature and are **spiritually dead** from birth (Ephesians 2:1). No matter how hard we try, we **cannot save ourselves**—we need a Savior.

*"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* — Romans 6:23 (JEN)

The **good news** is that God did not leave us in our hopeless condition. **He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the penalty for our sins and bring us back to Himself**.

In the next section, we will explore **how God's grace** provides the only solution to our sin problem through faith in **Jesus Christ**.



## The Solution—God's Grace

### Salvation Is a Free Gift

*"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 (JEN)

God, in His infinite love and mercy, offers a solution to our sin problem. It is called **grace**—undeserved favor. We cannot earn it or achieve it through our own efforts. It is a gift freely given by God.

### God's Love Demonstrated Through Jesus

*"But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."* — Romans 5:8 (JEN)

Through Jesus Christ, God demonstrated His love for us by offering His Son as a sacrifice for our sins. He paid the price that we could never pay, making it possible for us to be reconciled to Him.

### Faith in Jesus Christ Belief in Christ Brings Eternal Life

*"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 (JEN)

The key to receiving God's grace is **faith in Jesus Christ**. He is the Son of God, who came to earth, lived a perfect and sinless life, willingly died on the cross as a sacrifice for our sins, and rose again in victory over sin and death. His resurrection guarantees that all who believe in Him will receive eternal life.

But **belief in Christ is more than just intellectual agreement**—it is an act of trust, commitment, and surrender. To believe in Christ means:

- **Trusting Him completely** to forgive your sins, knowing that His sacrifice on the cross was sufficient to pay your debt.
- **Repenting of sin**, turning away from your old way of life, and turning to Christ in faith. True belief leads to a transformed life, rejecting sin and embracing righteousness.
- **Confessing Jesus Christ as Lord**, not just in words, but in a lifestyle of obedience and submission to His

authority. True faith acknowledges Christ as both Savior and **Lord**, which means surrendering your will to His.

- **Embracing Christ fully**, allowing Him to rule and direct your life. Faith is not just accepting facts about Jesus but entrusting your entire life to Him.

### Faith in Christ Saves

*"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."* — Romans 10:9 (JEN)

Salvation is not achieved by works, religious rituals, or personal effort—it is received **by faith alone** in Christ alone. This faith is not passive; it involves **confessing with your mouth** that Jesus is Lord and **believing in your heart** that God raised Him from the dead.

Confession of Christ as Lord is an acknowledgment that He is the rightful ruler over your life. It is a declaration of submission to His authority and a com-

mitment to follow Him. When we truly believe, we are not merely agreeing with a set of doctrines—we are surrendering ourselves to Jesus as **our Lord, King, and Savior**.

### Faith in Christ Restores Our Relationship with God

*"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."* — Acts 16:31 (JEN)

By believing in Jesus, we are **reconciled to God** and enter into a personal relationship with Him. Sin once separated us from our Creator, but through faith in Christ, we are adopted into His family.

This faith is not just a one-time decision but a **lifelong journey of trust, obedience, and transformation**. It is walking daily with Christ, relying on Him, growing in His Word, and living in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Belief in Jesus is **the defining moment of salvation**, but it is also the beginning of a **new life**—a life lived **for Him, through Him, and with Him** for eternity.



## Repentance and New Life

### Turning to God in Repentance

"Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." — Acts 3:19 (JEN)

Repentance is a vital part of receiving salvation. It involves turning away from our old life of sin and embracing a new life in Christ.

### True Repentance Leads to Salvation

"Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret..." — 2 Corinthians 7:10 (JEN)

Repentance is not just feeling sorry for sin; it is a heartfelt decision to follow Jesus and live according to His teachings. When we genuinely repent, God forgives our sins, and we experience a refreshing transformation.

## Assurance and Transformation

### Becoming a New Creation

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!" —

2 Corinthians 5:17 (JEN)

When we receive Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we become **new creations**. Our sins are forgiven, and we are reconciled with God.

### No More Condemnation

"Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus..." — Romans 8:1 (JEN)

The Holy Spirit comes to live within us, guiding, transforming, and empowering us to live a life that honors God. We have the assurance of God's love and the promise of eternal life with Him.

## Will You Accept God's Gift Today?

If you desire to receive this free gift of salvation, all you need to do is:

- 1. Admit your need for a Savior, acknowledging your sins.** — Romans 3:23
- 2. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, who died and rose again for you.** — John 3:16
- 3. Confess Him as your Lord and commit to following Him.** — Romans 10:9-10

You can pray this prayer of faith:

*"Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner and that I cannot save myself. I believe that You died on the cross for my sins and rose again to give me eternal life. I turn from my sins and place my trust in You alone. Be my Savior and Lord. Thank You for Your grace and forgiveness. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

This prayer itself does not save you—only **faith in Jesus** does. But if you sincerely repent and believe, God will forgive you and give you eternal life.

## What's Next? Growing in Your Faith

If you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ, you are now a child of God! Here's how you can grow in your new faith:

- 1. Read the Bible Daily** – The Bible is God's Word. Start with the Gospel of John.
- 2. Pray** – Talk to God every day. He loves you and wants a relationship with you.
- 3. Join a Bible-Believing Church** – Fellowship with other believers will help you grow.
- 4. Share the Good News** – Tell others about Jesus and what He has done for you.

## SonRise Community Church



130 Lucas Lane  
Sarver, PA 16055  
724-712-7644

JOIN US  
EVERY SUNDAY...  
9:00 AM Journey To Truth  
10:00 AM Worship Service

DISCOVER  
Expositional Preaching and Teaching,  
Fellowship, Pastoral Prayers,  
Breaking of Bread

GROWTH  
Deepen your relationship with God in a  
journey that cultivates a greater  
understanding of yourself,  
others, and the divine.

Hope for Addiction. Join us  
every Wednesday evening at  
6:30 PM for Recover-  
ing Hope. Anyone or family  
members of any addiction,  
please join us to find Help  
and Hope from  
Jesus Christ the Lord.



Pastor  
John Neyman

## RECOVERY MEETINGS



EVERY WEDNESDAY  
EVENING AT 6:30 PM  
SONRISE COMMUNITY  
CHURCH  
130 LUCAS LANE, SARVER  
724-712-7644

## John Neyman, Therapist/Counselor

Anxiety • Family  
Anger Management  
Parenting • Depression

HAVING TROUBLE WITH ANXIETY?  
CAN'T SLEEP AT NIGHT?  
IS ANXIETY AFFECTING  
YOUR WORK? RELATIONSHIPS?

- \*Anxiety
- \*Children with Anxiety Issues
- \*Teens Struggling with Anxieties
- \*Special Needs Children and Adults
- \*Court Ordered Anger Management
- \*Anxiety Seminars
- \*Spiritual Development
- \*Life Coach

*John E. Neyman, Jr., pastoral counselor, presents an invaluable manual for conquering anxieties. Countless individuals have discovered profound relief, and you can experience it too.*

130 Lucas Lane - Sarver, PA  
drjohnneyman@gmail.com  
For more information  
call: 724-712-9449





# Something to Consider Carefully

By Rick Morocco

**H**ere is a very sobering quote:  
 “If you believe that there’s a heaven and hell, and people could be going to hell—or not getting eternal life or whatever—and you think that, well, it’s not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward...how much would you have to hate somebody not to proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe that everlasting life is possible and not tell them that?”

—Penn Jillette

Penn Jillette is a devout atheist.

## The Importance of Apologetics

Apologetics is the practice of **defending a religious doctrine or teaching** through written or spoken means. The word *apologetics* comes from the Greek word *apologia*, which means “**spoken in defense.**” In **Philippians 1:7 and 1:17**, Paul writes that part of his calling was to **defend the gospel**, and he did so boldly. **1 Peter 3:15** commands us to always be ready to give a defense to anyone who asks about our faith.

At some point in your life, **someone will ask you why you believe what you believe.** Have you ever thought about how you would answer? Your response is important (see **Ephesians 4:29**).

I remember being a young Christian when someone told me, “*All good people go to heaven.*” I didn’t know how to respond. He went his way, and I went mine. **What a missed opportunity!**

In **2 Timothy 4:5**, Paul instructs Timothy to “*do the work of an evangelist,*” and we should do the same. You don’t need to be a pastor to evangelize. **Take a few minutes to read through Acts 7 and 8** and see how the early church boldly witnessed and defended the gospel. **Stephen and Philip** were used by God to spread and defend the truth to both large crowds and individuals alike.

Even **Jesus**, in His earthly ministry, often offered **evidence and proof** for His claims and identity. While we may not have the ability to turn water into wine, we **do** have a responsibility—to **preach the gospel** to the entire world. That includes:



- The people in your neighborhood
- Your coworkers
- Friends, family, and even strangers

## Answering Common Objections

What would you say if someone told you:

- ✓ “*I don’t believe in God because of all the bad things that happen in the world.*”
- ✓ “*God wouldn’t send good people to hell.*”

These are **common objections** that unbelievers raise. Learning apologetics **equips us** to respond with biblical truth and love.

**Colossians 4:6** instructs us to **defend the gospel with grace**, seasoned with salt—just like salt enhances the flavor of food, our words should enhance understanding. **We are to defend the gospel in a Christ-like manner.** We must never shy away from the truth, but we must also **never use the gospel as a weapon** to harm others.

In **Ezekiel 33:11**, God declares that **He takes no pleasure in the death of the wicked**—pause and think about that for a moment. If God had mercy on **you**, why would you

not extend **grace** to someone else?

## Be Ready to Share the Truth

Consider **Romans 11:22**, which speaks of both the goodness and severity of God.

What if an unbelieving coworker had one misunderstanding about the gospel—**just one thing** keeping them from salvation? Would you be able to help?

What if God has been working on someone’s heart, convicting them of sin, and they just need someone to explain what all this “Bible stuff” really means? **Could you? Would you?**

## The Reward of Apologetics

Here’s the **best part** about apologetics: **we get to play a part in God changing someone’s eternity**, and we rely on **His holy Word** to do it!

✓ “**Godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation**” (2 Corinthians 7:10).

✓ “**Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God**” (Romans 10:17).

Let the **Word** guide you. **Preach the truth.** And let us **do the work of an evangelist.**

# The Gospel and the Sinners Prayer

By Dr. John E. Neyman, Jr.

Copyright 2025 John Neyman and SonRise Community Church

Teaching someone to understand the difference between simply praying a prayer to ask Jesus into their life and genuinely believing in their heart in the Lord Jesus requires patience, clear biblical teaching, and practical illustrations.

## Here's how we should understand it and explain it Biblically:

### 1. Define the Key Difference Clearly

Many people think that saying a prayer automatically saves them, but salvation is not about reciting words—it's about faith in Christ.

Praying a prayer can be an outward action, but true salvation comes from an inward transformation—believing in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Believing in the heart means trusting completely in Christ's finished work on the cross and surrendering to Him as Lord, not just acknowledging facts about Him.

Key Verse: Romans 10:9 (JEN) – "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

Confession (prayer) is important, but it must come from genuine faith in the heart.

### 2. Use Biblical Examples

Many people in the Bible believed without necessarily praying a specific prayer.

The Thief on the Cross – Luke 23:39-43

He didn't say a formal prayer, but he believed in his heart that Jesus was the King and asked to be remembered in His kingdom.

Jesus responded, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43, JEN)

His faith, not his words, saved him.

The Philippian Jailer – Acts 16:30-31

He asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

Paul responded, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household."

He was saved because of faith, not because of a prayer formula.

### 3. Explain That Prayer Is an Expression, Not a Formula

A prayer of salvation can be a good tool, but it must be a reflection of genuine faith, not just empty words.

Example: If someone says "I love you" without truly meaning it, those words are empty. Likewise, a person can say a prayer without really trusting Jesus.

Faith must precede the prayer. If a person already believes, the prayer is just an outward expression of that belief.

### 4. Illustrate with a Practical Analogy

Analogy of a Chair:

Belief in the head: "I believe this chair can hold me."

True faith: Sitting in the chair and trusting it to hold your weight.

Many people acknowledge Jesus (like recognizing the chair can hold them), but true faith means fully trusting and relying on Him (actually sitting in the chair).

### 5. Address Common Misunderstandings

Misunderstanding: "I prayed a prayer, so I must be saved."

Truth: Salvation is based on faith, not words. If there's no change in the heart, the prayer itself doesn't save. (Matthew 7:21-23)

Misunderstanding: "I don't remember the exact words I prayed, so maybe I'm not really saved."

Truth: It's not about the prayer but whether you are trusting in Christ today. (2 Corinthians 13:5 – "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith.")

### 6. Encourage True Heart Examination

Instead of just asking, "Did you pray a prayer?" ask:

Do you trust in Jesus alone for your salvation?

Do you see evidence of a changed heart? (Desire to follow Christ, repentance, love for God and others – 2 Corinthians 5:17)

### 7. Conclusion: Encourage Genuine Faith

If someone truly believes in Jesus, a prayer can be a natural way to express that faith, but the key is the belief, not the prayer itself. Encourage them to seek a real relationship with Christ, not just a one-time prayer moment.

### Trust Christ, Not the Prayer, for Salvation

Many people have been taught that they need to "pray the sinner's prayer" to be saved. While prayer is a biblical and valuable way to express faith, praying a prayer itself does not save a person—only trusting in Jesus Christ does. If a person places their trust in a prayer instead of in Christ, they may have a false sense of security.

### 1. Salvation Comes by Faith, Not by Words

The Bible repeatedly teaches that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ—not through any specific action, including a prayer.

Key Verses:

Ephesians 2:8-9 (JEN) – "For 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 may boast."

Faith in Christ is what saves, not a work we do (including reciting a prayer).

John 3:16 (JEN) – "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."

The requirement is believing in Him, not reciting a prayer.

Romans 10:9-10 (JEN) – "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."

Confession (such as a prayer) is an outward expression of something that has already happened in the heart through belief.

### 2. Prayer Can Be a Means of Expression, but It Is Not the Source of Salvation

A prayer of salvation, such as the



"sinner's prayer," can be a helpful way for someone to express their faith in Christ. However, it is not the prayer that saves—it is Christ who saves when we trust in Him.

*Example from Scripture:* The Thief on the Cross (Luke 23:39-43)

The thief on the cross did not say a formal sinner's prayer, but he expressed genuine faith in Jesus.

He said, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

Jesus responded, "Today you will be with Me in paradise."

It was his faith in Christ, not the words he spoke, that saved him.

### **3. The Danger of Trusting in a Prayer Instead of Christ**

*Many people assume they are saved because they prayed a prayer once, even if there is no evidence of faith in their lives. This is dangerous because:*

It can create false assurance – People might believe they are saved based on a prayer instead of genuine faith in Christ.

It can lead to a "works-based" mindset – Some may think they are saved because they "did something" rather than trusting in Christ's finished work.

It can miss true heart transformation – Salvation is not just saying the right words; it is about a changed heart that trusts Jesus and follows Him.

*Jesus Warned About False Assurance (Matthew 7:21-23, JEN)*

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, drive out demons in Your name, and do many mighty works in Your name?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Depart from Me, you workers of lawlessness!'"

These people said the right words, but they did not truly know Jesus.

Knowing Jesus and trusting in Him personally is what matters—not just saying a prayer.

### **4. A Biblical Illustration: Sitting in a Chair**

Imagine a person standing next to a chair.

They might say, "I believe this chair can hold me."

But if they never actually sit in the

chair, their belief is just words.

True faith is not just acknowledging Jesus can save—it is fully relying on Him alone for salvation.

In the same way, a person might say a prayer but not actually be trusting in Jesus to save them.

### **5. True Salvation Produces Fruit (Evidence of Faith)**

If someone has truly placed their faith in Christ, there will be evidence of a transformed life.

*Signs of True Salvation:*

A desire to follow Christ (John 10:27 – "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.")

Repentance from sin (2 Corinthians 5:17 – "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.")

A growing love for God and others (1 John 3:14 – "We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers and sisters.")

If a person prayed a prayer but their heart was never changed, they may have trusted in the prayer instead of trusting in Christ.

### **6. How to Lead Someone to True Faith in Christ**

Instead of just telling people to say a prayer, we should encourage them to understand the gospel and trust in Jesus with their whole heart.

#### **Steps to Genuine Salvation:**

1. Understand that we are sinners who deserve judgment (Romans 3:23; Romans 6:23).
2. Recognize that Jesus died and rose again to pay for our sins (Romans 5:8).
3. Believe and trust in Jesus Christ alone for salvation (John 14:6 – "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.").
4. Repent (turn from sin) and follow Christ (Acts 2:38).
5. Publicly confess faith in Jesus (not just in words, but in life) (Romans 10:9-10).
6. Conclusion: Make Sure Your Faith Is in Christ Alone

If someone asks, "How do I know I'm saved?"

The question should not be, "Did I say the right prayer?"

The question should be, "Am I trusting in Jesus Christ alone for my salvation?"

*A prayer can be a helpful expression of faith, but faith must be in Christ alone—not in the prayer itself. Instead of saying, "Did you pray the sinner's prayer?" we should ask:*

Do you believe that Jesus died and rose again for you?

Are you trusting in Him alone for your salvation?

Do you see evidence of a changed heart and desire to follow Christ?

If the answer is yes, then they are truly saved—whether they prayed a prayer or not.

### **What Should We Say About Pastors Who Emphasize the Prayer Over Christ's Work on the Cross?**

There are many well-meaning pastors who emphasize the "sinner's prayer" in evangelism. While they may have good intentions, the danger comes when they make the prayer itself the focus rather than Christ's finished work on the cross. This can lead to a misunderstanding of salvation, where people trust in a prayer they said instead of trusting in Jesus Christ alone for their salvation.

#### **1. Salvation Is Through Christ, Not a Ritual or Formula**

The Bible never teaches that saying a specific prayer saves a person. Instead, Scripture consistently teaches that salvation comes through faith in Jesus Christ and His atoning work on the cross.

*Key Verses on Salvation by Faith in Christ:*

John 3:16 (JEN) – "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life."

Salvation comes through believing in Jesus, not repeating words.

Romans 5:8 (JEN) – "But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

It is Christ's death and resurrection that secures our salvation, not our words.

Ephesians 2:8-9 (JEN) – "For 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 may boast."

Praying a prayer can become a 'work' if people trust in the act of praying

instead of the grace of God through faith in Christ.

## **2. The Danger of a "Prayer-Centered" Gospel**

When pastors focus more on the prayer than on the gospel, it can lead to several dangers:

### **A. False Assurance Without True Faith**

Some people think, "I prayed the prayer, so I must be saved," even though they have no real trust in Christ or evidence of a changed life.

Jesus warned about this:

Matthew 7:21-23 (JEN) – "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of My Father in heaven."

People called Jesus 'Lord' but did not truly know Him.

### **B. Confusing a One-Time Event with True Salvation**

Many pastors tell people, "If you prayed that prayer, you are saved, no matter what."

The Bible teaches that saving faith results in a changed life (2 Corinthians 5:17).

A person can say a prayer without ever surrendering to Christ in faith.

### **C. Lack of True Discipleship**

Many churches focus on getting people to say a prayer but do not teach them to follow Jesus.

Jesus called for discipleship, not just decisions (Matthew 28:19-20 – "Go and make disciples... teaching them to obey all I have commanded you.").

## **3. Why Do Some Pastors Overemphasize the Prayer?**

Some pastors focus on the prayer because:

They want to make salvation simple and

clear – They believe a prayer is an easy way for people to respond.

They want to see results – It can be exciting to report, "Hundreds of people prayed the prayer!" But if those people do not truly trust in Christ, the numbers mean nothing.

They have been taught this method – Many pastors grew up in churches that emphasized the "sinner's prayer" without fully explaining salvation by faith.

While these pastors may be sincere, their approach can be misleading if they do not emphasize faith in Christ above all else.

## **4. What Should We Say to These Pastors?**

We should approach pastors with grace and truth and encourage them to make Christ, not a prayer, the center of salvation.

### **A. Encourage a Biblical View of Salvation**

Instead of saying, "Pray this prayer and you'll be saved," we should say:

"Trust in Christ alone for salvation."

"Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31, JEN).

### **B. Focus on the Gospel, Not a Formula**

We should remind pastors:

Jesus and the apostles never led people in a "sinner's prayer"—they preached repentance and faith.

Salvation comes from believing in Jesus' finished work on the cross, not from saying the right words.

### **C. Teach the Need for True Repentance and Faith**

Instead of leading people in a quick prayer, we should:

Teach them the full gospel—sin, judgment, Christ's death, burial, and

resurrection, faith, and repentance.

Ask them if they truly believe in Jesus and trust Him as Lord and Savior.

- Help them understand that true faith leads to a transformed life (James 2:17 – "Faith without works is dead.").

## **5. What Should We Say to Those Who Have Prayed a Prayer?**

If someone says, "I prayed the prayer, but I don't feel saved" or "I prayed but I'm not sure if it worked," we should:

1. Ask them what they are trusting in. Are they trusting in Jesus Christ, or in the fact that they said a prayer?

2. Point them to Scripture.

John 1:12 (JEN) – "To all who did receive Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God."

1 John 5:13 (JEN) – "I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life."

3. Help them examine their heart.

Do they truly believe in Jesus?

Do they have a desire to follow Him?

Has there been any evidence of God working in their life?

## **6. Conclusion: Salvation Is in Christ Alone**

While prayer can be a good way to express faith, it is not the prayer that saves—it is Jesus Christ who saves when we trust in Him alone. Pastors who emphasize the prayer more than the gospel should be lovingly encouraged to point people to Jesus, not just to words on their lips.

Instead of asking, "Did you pray the prayer?" we should ask, "Are you trusting in Jesus Christ alone for your salvation?"

### **ONE SOURCE. INFINITE RESOURCES:**

- ✓ Brand Management
- ✓ Meetings & Events Resources
- ✓ Online Store Development & Management
- ✓ Fulfillment, Kitting & Distribution
- ✓ Full Service Printing Services
- ✓ Indoor and Outdoor Signage
- ✓ Corporate Apparel & Uniform Programs
- ✓ Employee Recognition & Safety Programs
- ✓ Incentive & Award Programs
- ✓ Corporate, Event & Holiday Gift Giving
- ✓ Direct Marketing & Promotional Campaigns
- ✓ Brand Name Products & Apparel



Bob.Smith@Proforma.com

www.branding-proforma.com

**THE BRANDING AGENCY ... YOUR MARKETING AGENCY WITHOUT THE MARKETING FEES.**



## Upcoming Events

### APRIL 1

Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm

Men's Bible Study 6:30 pm

### APRIL 2

RECOVERING HOPE 6:30 pm

### APRIL 3

Group Bible Study 6:30 pm

### APRIL 6

"Journey to Truth" 9:00 am

### APRIL 8

Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm

Men's Bible Study 6:30 pm

### APRIL 9

RECOVERING HOPE 6:30 pm

### APRIL 10

Group Bible Study 6:30 pm

### APRIL 13

"Journey to Truth" 9:00 am

Palm Sunday/Baptism 11:30 am

Baptism/Brunch 11:45 am

### APRIL 15

Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm

Men's Bible Study 6:30 pm

### APRIL 16

RECOVERING HOPE 6:30 pm

### APRIL 17

Group Bible Study 6:30 pm



Easter Service All Day

"Journey to Truth" 9:00 am

### APRIL 22

Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm

Men's Bible Study 6:30 pm

### APRIL 23

RECOVERING HOPE 6:30 pm

### APRIL 24

Group Bible Study 6:30 pm

### APRIL 26

Gospel Truth Band 4:00 pm

### APRIL 27

"Journey to Truth" 9:00 am

### APRIL 29

Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm

Men's Bible Study 6:30 pm

### APRIL 30

RECOVERING HOPE 6:30 pm

### MAY 1

Group Bible Study 6:30 pm

### MAY 4

"Journey to Truth" 9:00 am

### MAY 5

Organization Meeting 7:00 pm

### MAY 6

Men's Bible Study 6:30 pm

Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm

### MAY 7

RECOVERING HOPE 6:30 pm

### MAY 8

Group Bible Study 6:30 pm

### MAY 11

"Journey to Truth" 9:00 am

### MAY 13

Men's Bible Study 6:30 pm

Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm

### MAY 14

RECOVERING HOPE 6:30 pm

### MAY 15

Group Bible Study 6:30 pm

### MAY 17

Marriage Seminar 8:30 am

### MAY 18

"Journey to Truth" 9:00 am

### MAY 20

Men's Bible Study 6:30 pm

Women's Bible Study 6:30 pm

### MAY 21


RECOVERING HOPE 6:30 pm

### MAY 22

Group Bible Study 6:30 pm

Here at SonRise Community Church we believe that no matter what challenges you are facing, relying on Jesus will not just change you but transform you. Even as a believer in Christ we all fight battles daily, but the fact is we are never alone. Most people struggle but do not realize there is a better way to live and that is by being restored into the image and likeness of God through scripture and our Lord Jesus Christ's examples. Through Recovering Hope Meetings it's more than just managing a problem, it's about finding hope and resolving the root problem, thereby bringing real transformation to your life as a whole. No matter what struggles, addiction, or trauma you are dealing with there is freedom on the horizon.

**Come join us!**



**REAL CHANGE,**  
*not just sobriety*

**SARVER PENNSYLVANIA**  
**WEDNESDAYS @ 6:30PM**  
SONRISE COMMUNITY CHURCH  
130 LUCAS LANE

[hopeforaddiction.com](http://hopeforaddiction.com)