

The Truth About God: How To Find Joy And Peace

Prologue: The Journey's End

This book is about God: His Character; His Attributes; His Word; His Commandments; His Laws. So, please pay attention - there will be a test - at the end of your life. The test will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis. Do not be afraid to ask questions!

Please consider this: *You are on a journey, traveling toward the rising sun, in a large, wide valley. On both sides of this valley, mountains stretch toward the sky, tree-covered at first, and then snow-covered at the higher elevations. You estimate the mountains were twenty to twenty-five miles apart at first, and now, after many days of travel, the mountains seem closer, perhaps only eight to ten miles apart.*

The surface you are on is mixed: some paved with asphalt or concrete, some grass, some is bare and quite a bit is rocky, with large and small rocks. You are able to move through the valley steadily, but with varying degrees of difficulty; sometimes the valley floor is flat and smooth and at other times there are hills, some hills higher than others.

It is difficult to gauge how far away your destination is, although today, as the sun rose, it looked like the mountains were becoming closer. Actually, it looked, for a moment that the two mountains merged some distance beyond the end of the valley. Perhaps tomorrow or the next day, a better vantage point will be available.

There are many people on this journey; thousands, perhaps millions. A few days ago, you came to a high point of ground and you looked back the way you had come (something you have not done much of during your lifetime) and looked at the road in front and behind, and, as far as the eye could see, in both directions, the valley floor was covered with people. Although some seem to be traveling together, most of the people are alone. These folks seem to come from all over the world and appear to represent every culture and ethnic group. Some of these people are young, but the majority is older. Some appear more affluent and some are poor. It is fair to say that it would be hard to imagine a more diverse group of people, with varying levels of education, wealth and experiences. The one thing they all have in common is their direction of travel: all of these people are going in the same direction - the same direction as you - toward the rising sun. To someone viewing this group of very diverse people from afar, this might seem strange, but it seems perfectly natural to you and to everyone else. One other thing most of the travelers share is their serious facial expressions and demeanors; to be sure, there are a few people who look happy, even joyful, but they are certainly in the minority.

People need things and, beyond needs, people want things and likewise on this journey. There are plenty of vendors and businesses vying to supply the needs of the travelers. Seemingly, food and drink is available to satisfy each and every appetite. In addition, there are businesses offering restful accommodations, entertainment and places to worship.

A couple of days later, you start seeing signs advising you that the end of this portion of the journey is near and you will have to make a decision regarding the next and final leg of the trip. At the same time, there are many vendors handing out flyers urging you and your fellow travelers to stay to the right side of the valley as it ends. It sounds as though there might be a gate to go through.

Concurrently, some other signs, smaller and less numerous, advise you to stay to the left side of the valley. You are curious and a bit apprehensive as it looks like a decision may be required soon.

The next day you reach the end of the valley. You can clearly see now that the two mountains do merge, some distance beyond the end of the valley, forming a huge canyon. However, between the end of the valley floor and the merging of the mountains is a huge amount of dark space, with a vertical wall, a sheer drop-off of hundreds, if not thousands of feet disappearing into the darkness.

The signs and flyers you saw a few days ago are now making more sense - a decision is required. Staying where you are is not an option; already you can see some of the more hesitate travelers being urged to make a decision and choose the route to the Right or to the Left.

On the Right, is a wide road and gate, with a huge sign over the entrance. The banner says "Come This Way, Join Us, The Traveling Is Easy, and The Road Is Downhill and Wide". It appears to be true. You can see the wide road and it does have a slight downward slope to it. In addition, there are many vendors offering food, drink and entertainment. Most of the people are taking that route and going through the wide gate. Although you can only see them for a short period of time as the wide road goes around a bend in the mountain to the Right and the travelers disappear, most seem to be enjoying themselves and having a good time celebrating the end of the journey. You cannot help but notice that a significant number of people undergo darkening facial expressions as they near the bend in the mountain that will take them out of your sight. Perhaps it is just the end of the day and the approaching darkness. As the people disappear around the mountain, you see the reflection of what must be a large bonfire, probably to help light the way for the travelers.

To the Left, is a narrow road and gate, with a much smaller banner, which says, "The Gate and Path Are Narrow; The Traveling Is Uphill and Difficult, But the Destination Will Be Worth the Hardship." You can tell that the sign is, at least partially true; the path is barely wide enough for a man to navigate and it is a steep climb. It certainly looks like a much more difficult trip than the Right side. In addition, there seems to be some requirement for entering that narrow gate, as every time a traveler comes to the gate, the gatekeeper checks a large ledger book; presumably to see if the traveler has a reservation? What is this all about? On the other side, there was no checking for identification or reservations. The Right side is accepting all comers. Despite the difficulty of the steep climb, you can hear the sound of singing; peaceful, soothing songs being sung by the few travelers. You think, what should I do?

There is a decision required and each person must make his or her own decision - no one else can make it for you. The rest of this book is about helping you to decide!

God Loves You Absolutely!