

Encouragement In the race of life

ALSO INSIDE

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Young Adults with Down Syndrome Speak Out



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Eternal Perspectives seeks to encourage readers to learn to live in light of eternity. This magazine is a publication of Eternal Perspective Ministries, a Christ-centered nonprofit organization founded and directed by author Randy Alcorn. It can be read online at epm.org/magazine.

All Scripture quoted in Randy's articles are from the English Standard Version (ESV), unless otherwise noted.

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"How Do I Become One of Those?"

A Teacher Uses Randy's Blog Post to Introduce Students to Jesus

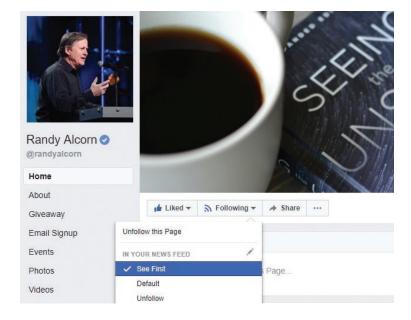
One of the most popular posts on Randy's blog so far this year is "The Little Known Story of Olympian Eric Liddell's Final Years," which shares how Eric ministered to his fellow inmates at a Japanese internment camp (see www.epm.org/ericliddell).

A man who teaches a class on Jesus at a prep school told us how he used the blog post by having the class read it and watch the videos together:

Afterwards, one of the foreign exchange students asked, "How do I do that?" "Do what?" I said. "You know, become a Christian?" I wound up sharing the plan of salvation with the entire class. Thirty seconds later she's at my desk asking if I'd pray with her to become "You know, one of those."

What an encouragement for our staff to remember that each phone call, email, blog, and social media post can be used by Jesus to further His kingdom! And it's your support of our ministry that enables us to continue reaching out in His name.





Coming in Late 2018: A New **Devotional Centered on Jesus**

The anticipated release date for Randy's new book, featuring 200 daily devotions about our Savior, is late 2018. To receive the latest news from EPM, including information about Randy's new releases, sign up to receive our weekly email newsletter at epm.org/connect.

Don't Miss Randy's Posts on Facebook

If you follow Randy on Facebook, we want you to be aware that they've made some changes that mean you may not be seeing his posts. To make sure you see them in your feed, go to his page (facebook.com/ randyalcorn), click the "Following" button, and check the option to "See First." The posts will then appear at the top of your feed.

Speaking Events Cancelled This Year

Due to his wife Nanci's cancer diagnosis, Randy has cancelled his remaining speaking events for 2018 (see note on page 6 for more about Nanci). In the meantime, we invite you to view his full messages and hundreds of shorter video clips at vimeo.com/randyalcorn.



Don't Waste Your Cancer

BY JOHN PIPER

I first read Piper's article when he wrote it in 2006, and later quoted from it in my book on suffering, *If God Is Good*. I appreciated it then and all the more now as my wife Nanci goes through colon cancer treatments. (See the note at the end of this article for more about Nanci as well as our EPM coworker Karen Coleman.)

—Randy Alcorn

write this on the eve of prostate surgery. I believe in God's power to heal—by miracle and by medicine. I believe it is right and good to pray for both kinds of healing. Cancer is not wasted when it is healed by God. He gets the glory, and that is why cancer exists. So, not to pray for healing may waste your cancer. But healing is not God's plan for everyone. And there are many other ways to waste your cancer. I am praying for myself and for you that we will not waste this pain.

1. You will waste your cancer if you do not believe God designed it for you.

It will not do to say that God only uses our cancer, but does not design it. What God permits, he permits for a reason. And that reason is his design. If God foresees molecular developments becoming cancer, he can stop it or not. If he does not, he has a purpose. Since he is infinitely wise, it is right to call this purpose a design. Satan is real and causes many pleasures and pains. But he is not ultimate. So, when he strikes Job with boils (Job 2:7), Job attributes it ultimately to God (Job 2:10)—and the inspired writer agrees: "They . . . comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him" (Job 42:11). If you

don't believe God designed your cancer for you, you will waste it.

2. You will waste your cancer if you believe it is a curse and not a gift.

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1). "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Galatians 3:13). "There is no enchantment against Jacob, no divination against Israel" (Numbers 23:23). "The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly" (Psalm 84:11).

3. You will waste your cancer if you seek comfort from your odds rather than from God.

The design of God in your cancer is not to train you in the rationalistic, human calculation of odds. The world gets comfort from their odds. Not Christians. Some count their chariots (percentages of survival) and some count their horses (side effects of treatment), "but we trust in the name of the Lord our God" (Psalm 20:7).

God's design is clear from 2 Corinthians 1:9: "We felt that we had received the sentence of death. But that was to make us rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead." The aim of God in our cancer (among a thousand other good things) is to knock props out from under our hearts so that we rely utterly on him.

4. You will waste your cancer if you refuse to think about death.

We will all die, if Jesus postpones his return. Not to think about what it will be like to leave this life and meet God is folly. Ecclesiastes 7:2 says, "It is better to go to the house of mourning [a funeral] than to go to the house of feasting, for this is the end of all mankind, and the living will lay it to heart." How can you lay it to heart if you won't think about it?

Psalm 90:12 says, "Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom." Numbering your days means thinking about how few there are and that they will end. How will you get a heart of wisdom if you refuse to think about this? What a waste, if we do not think about death.

5. You will waste your cancer if you think that "beating" cancer means staying alive rather than cherishing Christ.

Satan's and God's designs in your cancer are not the same. Satan designs to destroy your love for Christ. God designs to deepen your love for Christ. Cancer does not win if you die. It wins if you fail to cherish Christ.

God's design is to wean you off the breast of the world and feast you on the sufficiency of Christ. It is meant to help you say and feel, "I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord." And to know therefore, "To live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 3:8; 1:21).

6. You will waste your cancer if you spend too much time reading about cancer and not enough time reading about God.

It is not wrong to know about cancer. Ignorance is not a virtue. But the lure to know more and more and the lack of zeal to know God more and more is symptomatic of unbelief. Cancer is meant to waken us to the reality of God. It is meant to put feeling and force behind the command, "Let us know; let us press on to know the Lord" (Hosea 6:3). It is meant to waken us to the truth of Daniel 11:32: "The people who know their God shall stand firm and take action." It is meant to make unshakable, indestructible oak trees out of us: "His delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers" (Psalm 1:2–3). What a waste of cancer if we read day and night about cancer and not about God.

7. You will waste your cancer if you let it drive you into solitude instead of deepen your relationships with manifest affection.

When Epaphroditus brought the gifts to Paul sent by the Philippian church, he became ill and almost died. Paul tells the Philippians, "He has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill" (Philippians 2:26). What an amazing response! It does not say they were distressed that he was ill, but that he was distressed because they heard he was ill. That is the kind of heart God is aiming to create with cancer: a deeply affectionate, caring heart for people. Don't waste your cancer by retreating into yourself.

8. You will waste your cancer if you grieve as those who have no hope.

Paul used this phrase in relation to those whose

Cancer does not win if you die. It wins if you fail to cherish Christ.

loved ones had died: "We do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope" (1 Thessalonians 4:13). There is a grief at death. Even for the believer who dies, there is temporary loss: loss of body, loss of loved ones here, loss of earthly ministry. But the grief is different it is permeated with hope. "We would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). Don't waste your cancer grieving as those who don't have this hope.

9. You will waste your cancer if you treat sin as casually as before.

Are your besetting sins as attractive as they were before you had cancer? If so, you are wasting your cancer. Cancer is designed to destroy the appetite for sin. Pride, greed, lust, hatred, unforgiveness, impatience, laziness, procrastination-all these are the adversaries that cancer is meant to attack. Don't just think of battling against cancer. Also think of battling with cancer. All these things are worse enemies than cancer. Don't waste the power of cancer to crush these foes. Let the presence of eternity make the sins of time look as futile as they really are. "What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?" (Luke 9:25).

10. You will waste your cancer if you fail to use it as a means of witness to the truth and glory of Christ.

Christians are never anywhere by divine accident. There are reasons for why we wind up where we do. Consider what Jesus said about painful, unplanned circumstances: "They will lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors for my name's sake. This will be your opportunity to bear witness" (Luke 21:12-13).

So it is with cancer. This will be an opportunity to bear witness. Christ is infinitely worthy. Here is a golden opportunity to show that he is worth more than life. Don't waste it.

Remember, you are not left alone. You will have the help you need. "My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). ■

John Piper is founder and teacher of desiringGod.org and chancellor of Bethlehem College & Seminary. For more than thirty years, he served as pastor of Bethlehem Baptist Church, Minneapolis. He is author of more than fifty books, and his sermons, articles, books, and more are available free of charge at desiring God.org.

Cancer Touches EPM

For the last year and a half, Nanci Alcorn had been having intense abdominal pains; a colonoscopy performed in January to find the cause revealed a malignant polyp. (Though the cancer wasn't the source of her pain, further tests did reveal a hernia that needed surgery and proved to be the cause.) Nanci began a combination of radiation and chemo treatments in April, which will be followed by surgery and an additional round of chemo later this year. You can read the latest updates at caringbridge.org/visit/nancialcorn.

Our EPM staff received more difficult news in March when our dear coworker Karen Coleman was diagnosed with stage four metastatic breast cancer. It is treatable, but not curable. If you'd like to sign up to receive more updates, you can follow Karen's journey at caringbridge.org/visit/karenstoutcoleman.

We so appreciate your prayers for our ministry and staff in this season. If you'd like to receive monthly prayer updates related to Randy and EPM, sign up at epm.org/connect.







HEAVENLY ENCOURAGEMENT

BY RANDY ALCORN

ife in this world—the way it is now and the way we are now—can be difficult, can't it? It's easy to become burdened, discouraged, depressed, or even traumatized when you suffer the loss of a loved one, when your health is failing, or when your dreams—your family, career, or lifelong ambitions—have crumbled. Perhaps you've become cynical or have lost hope. Some seasons of life can seem like a series of twists, turns, and dead ends. God gives each of us a race to run. To finish well we must develop perseverance. The Christian life is not a hundred-meter dash but a marathon, requiring patience, endurance, and discipline. But how do we find the strength to finish our race well?

HEAVEN IS OUR FINISH LINE

When the apostle Paul faced hardship, beatings, and imprisonment, he said, "One thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:13-14, NIV). What gave Paul the strength and perspective to "press on toward the goal"? A clear view of Heaven.

A study was done in which one group of Israeli soldiers was told it would go on a march, but was not told if or when the march would eventually end. Another group was told the length of the march.

Both groups were tested for their stress response. Although they marched not one foot further than those in the other group, those who didn't know if or when the march would end registered a much higher level of stress. Why? Because they felt helpless-hopeless-wondering if they would ever be allowed to rest.

We do not know exactly when, but as followers of Christ, we do know there is a finish line. We will not run forever. We will rest.

Think of it: Jesus, at unfathomable cost to Himself, purchased for us a happy ending. A happy "ending" that will never end. Anticipating our future on a resurrected Earth with Christ can empower us to persevere in a difficult marriage, remain faithful to the hard task of caring for an ailing parent or child, or stick with a demanding job. Samuel Rutherford wrote, "Our little time of suffering is not worthy of our first night's welcome home to Heaven."

If you believe this, you won't cling desperately to this life. Your solid hope will give you strength to persevere when things get tough. You'll lift your face, stretch out your arms, and continue running in anticipation of the greater life to come. (I must mention suicide here because the idea seduces some people. The fact that Heaven will be so wonderful shouldn't tempt us to take shortcuts to get to the finish line. As long as God keeps you here on Earth, it's exactly where He wants you.)

OUR SAVIOR IS WAITING

Hebrews 12:1 tells us to "run with perseverance the race marked out for us," creating the mental picture of the Greek competitions, which were watched intently by throngs of engrossed fans sitting high up in the ancient stadiums. The "great cloud of witnesses" refers to the saints who've gone before us, whose accomplishments on the playing field of life are now part of our rich history. The imagery may also suggest that those saints, the spiritual "athletes" of old, are now watching us and cheering us on from the great stadium of Heaven that looks down on the field of Earth.

The author of Hebrews goes on to admonish us to "fix our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." The following verse commands us: "Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart" (Hebrews 12:2-3, NIV).

John Piper writes of these verses, "But we do not look sideways to the saints as we run. Our main motivation comes from looking straight ahead at Jesus. He finished the same race of human life. Only he never sinned, and so his race was perfect. When he finished his race, he finished our salvation. So we run, 'looking to Jesus, the founder and finisher of our faith.""

Jesus Christ, the Rock of salvation, is the One who

IF WE CAN LEARN TO FIX OUR EYES ON JESUS, TO PICTURE OUR ETERNAL HOME IN OUR MIND'S EYE, IT WILL COMFORT AND ENERGIZE US, GIVING US A CLEAR LOOK AT THE FINISH LINE. has promised to prepare a place for those who put their hope in Him, a place where they will live with Him forever. If we can learn to fix our eyes on Jesus, to picture our eternal home in our mind's eye, it will comfort and energize us, giving us a clear look at the finish line. And if we've served Him here, His welcome will be glorious!

In his book *Things Unseen*, Mark Buchanan describes the Christian's life race and Jesus' role encouraging us on: "You're heaven-bent. You eagerly await a Savior who, in turn, eagerly awaits you. There's a huge company with you, cheering every move you and your Savior make closer to each other. He pours out grace for you to finish the race. He pours out more grace when you stumble, grow weary, fall down, lose heart. He stands at the head of the course and, while all the saints who have gone before line the roadway and cheer riotously, He stretches out His arms wide in exuberant welcome, exultant congregation."

I imagine myself seeing Jesus, falling to my knees, having Him reach out and pull me up. To think of Him welcoming me not just once, but for all eternity, is sheer joy.

Shut your eyes and picture seeing Jesus and being embraced in His arms when you cross life's finish line. What a wondrous thought!

THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL REWARD

It's not only the anticipation of seeing our Savior that should propel us forward; it's also the joy of pleasing Him. Jesus has promised reward for those who've faithfully served Him: "Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done" (Revelation 22:12).

Moses remained faithful to God because "he was looking ahead to his reward" (Hebrews 11:26, NIV). Likewise, Paul ran his race with his eyes on Heaven's prize, which motivated him to run hard and long. He was unashamedly motivated by the prospect of eternal reward, and acknowledged it freely and frequently (1 Corinthians 9:24-25; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18; 5:9-10; 2 Timothy 4:7-8). "Run in such a way as to get the prize," he said, and on the verge of death he spoke longingly of the crown the Judge would award him in Heaven. He encouraged believers with these words: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up" (Galatians 6:9).

Jesus tells us that one day His faithful servants will hear their Master say, "Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master" (Matthew 25:23).

Think about those incredible words: "Well done, good and faithful servant." Memorize them. They are the words we *long* to hear, the words we were *made* to hear.

What changes might you need to initiate *today* so that you may one day hear those words from God? If you don't yet know Jesus, it's not too late. Confess your sins and humbly accept the gift of His atoning sacrifice on your behalf. If you do know Him, make your daily decisions in light of your destiny. By God's grace, use the time you have left on the present Earth to store up for yourself treasures



on the New Earth, to be laid at Christ's feet for His glory (Revelation 4:10). Run your race of life to honor Him.

And should you wonder if there's anything you've done that God could possibly reward, be encouraged by 1 Corinthians 4:5 which talks of the judgment when "each will receive his praise from God" (NIV). He will find something to reward you for. Will you seek to do more rewardable works for Him?

When we hear Jesus say "Well done," we'll know that any sacrifice we made, any difficulty along the way, was nothing. Meanwhile, we can rejoice in suffering in the same way that Olympic athletes rejoice in their workouts-not because we find it easy, but because we know it will one day result in great reward.

HE GIVES RENEWED STRENGTH

Many are familiar with the beautiful promise of Isaiah 40:31: "Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint" (NIV).

Ioni Eareckson Tada writes about this verse:

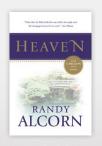
The beginning of the Christian life was exhilarating: lots of smiles and handshakes and encouragement. Your emotions soared. And the end? Well, it's going to be wonderful meeting Jesus face-to-face.

But now you're in the middle. There are miles behind you and miles to go. You don't hear any cheers or applause. Your commitment to simply keep putting one tired foot in front of the other begins to flag

and fade. Ah, but the promise in Isaiah is just as true now as then. Friend, if you walk in the Spirit, your strength will be renewed. You'll run and not be weary. Even in the long, gray, middle distance, you will walk and not be faint. So friend, don't faint; don't give up. The finish line is just over the horizon and, oh, what a rich reward awaits you. Every step brings you closer to home, so fix your eyes on the One who awaits you there. You're halfway home.

With God's help, we can submit to the discipline of the life circumstances He's entrusted to us. May we rejoice not merely when those circumstances please us, but even when they don't, because we know God is sovereign, all-knowing, and all-wise, because He has delivered us from Hell and promised us Heaven, because He is working together all things, even the worst things, for our good (Romans 8:28).

So are you weary in life's race? Ask your Savior for His empowerment to finish strong, and keep your eyes on the heavenly finish line. By His sustaining grace, you'll make it.■



Randy's book Heaven can help you learn more about our heavenly finish line, which will inspire you to finish well in the race of life. Browse our selection of Heaven related books and products at epm.org/heavenbooks.



"signs"? Or are they just coincidences?

ANSWERED BY SHAUNA HERNANDEZ. EPM MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Sometimes I think God does indeed give us gifts that remind us of the loved ones we've lost. My mom passed away over a year ago, and God has definitely been kind in different areas. For example, my mom had made up pie dough earlier last year and froze it. We used it this past Thanksgiving and it felt like she was still able to contribute to our meal! I don't believe this was any type of sign, but rather, it was God being sweet and, in a way, allowing my mom's legacy to still be a part of our day.

While there isn't any biblical evidence for those in Heaven sending us signs, Scripture does say God is the giver of all good things (James 1:17). What you felt was a sign could be the Lord giving you comfort as you think about your loved one. Certainly you can seek to be drawn closer to Jesus as you thank Him and praise Him for His good gifts.

I love that God is so good and gives us reminders of His presence and care, both in our day-to-day lives and in His Word: "Even to your old age and gray hairs I am he, I am he who will sustain you. I have made you and I will carry you; I will sustain you and I will rescue you" (Isaiah 46:4, NIV).

On a related topic, Randy Alcorn has addressed the question of whether it's okay to talk to our loved ones who've gone on to be with Jesus:

Rather than talking to a loved one, I am more comfortable simply praying and saying, "Lord, would you please give my mom a hug, and tell her it's from me?" I could see how a person speaking to their departed loved one, even if they're not violating Scripture (since they're not praying to them or calling on them), could become unhealthy or obsessive. But that's not likely to happen when we're talking to God about them.

I have every reason to believe God would honor a request to pass on our warm greetings to loved ones. But again, that's up to Him. Bottom line, as long as we're not praying to our loved ones or for our loved ones (who need no prayer now), but to God about them, and our feelings, and our desire for them to know something, I think there's nothing in that which violates Scripture. We just must be careful it doesn't shift into anything that treats them as intermediaries or leads to obsession or seeking contact with them, which is expressly forbidden (see Leviticus 19:31, Deuteronomy 18:10-13, Isaiah 8:19).

Read more from Randy's blog at epm.org/talklovedones.



SATAN'S "NOTHING" STRATEGY

BY TONY REINKE

oday, tired after work, I opened Facebook on my phone, looking for a diversion. I flicked past a video of a cat that sounds like a crying child; then I saw a new study about gun control; then I saw an innovative new keyboard for tablets; then I read a story from the latest celebrity gossip; then I was offered twenty pictures of actors who have aged badly (which I ignored); then I saw a breaking news story about a rogue militia group in Oregon; then I read that North Korea apparently had detonated a test atomic bomb; then I watched a viral video of a "monster shredder" that crushes refrigerators, couches, and cars with large metal teeth; and then I saw pictures of a friend and his wife on vacation in Iceland. On and on I flicked down a list of disconnected and fragmented items, and most of them only barely important or interesting. I was not edified or served, only further fatigued because of missing a nap I should have taken or a walk I could have taken, and easily lured back to my phone for more. And then I remembered I skipped my personal disciplines this morning. My battle against all the slothful smartphone tendencies I see in my own heart has only begun.

What I am coming to understand is that this impulse to pull the lever of a random slot machine of viral content is the age-old tactic of Satan. C. S. Lewis called it the "Nothing" strategy in

his *Screwtape Letters*. It is the strategy that eventually leaves a man at the end of his life looking back in lament: "I now see that I spent most of my life in doing neither what I ought nor what I liked."

This "Nothing" strategy is "very strong: strong enough to steal away a man's best years, not in sweet sins, but in a dreary flickering of the mind over it knows not what and knows not why, in the gratification of curiosities so feeble that the man is only half aware of them . . . or in the long, dim labyrinth of reveries that have not even lust or ambition to give them a relish, but which, once chance association has started them, the creature is too weak and fuddled to shake off."

Routines of nothingness. Habits unnecessary to our calling. A hamster wheel of what will never satisfy our souls. Lewis's warning about the "dreary flickering" in front of our eyes is a loud prophetic alarm to the digital age. We are always busy, but always distracted-diabolically lured away from what is truly essential and truly gratifying. Led by our unchecked digital appetites, we manage to transgress both commands that promise to bring focus to our lives. We fail to enjoy God. We fail to love our neighbor.

Amid these habits of nothingness, we find ourselves wandering half-awake in digital idleness, prone to leave our digital responsibilities to become

digital busybodies and digital meddlers. We give our time to what is not explicitly sinful, but also to what cannot give us joy or prepare us for selfsacrifice. Satan's "Nothing" strategy aims at feeding us endlessly scrolling words, images, and videos that dull our affections—instead of invigorating our joy and preparing us to give ourselves in love.

Technology makes life easier, but immaturity makes technology self-destructive. With my phone, I find myself always teetering between useful efficiency

and meaningless habit. I am often reminded that my phone may be a lot of things, but it is not a toy. The magician and the wielder of a smartphone are close cousins, and this is because, suggests literary critic Alan Jacobs, our modern technology offers us a bewitching power not unlike the magic in the Harry Potter fantasy series: "Often fun, often surprising and exciting, but also always potentially dangerous. . . . The technocrats of this world hold in their hands powers almost

infinitely greater than those of Albus Dumbledore and Voldemort." Into our hands are placed these wands, these smartphones, these powers of idolatry, freighted with redemptive expectations.

The digital age can be witch and capture our hearts in unhealthy ways. Our advances in technology have a way of rendering God more and more irrelevant to our world and in our lives-the very definition of worldliness. And if our digital technology becomes our god, our wand of power, it will inevitably shape us into technicians who gain mastery over a dead world of conveniences. Aimlessly flicking through feeds and images for hours, we feel that we are in control of our devices, when we are really puppets being controlled by a lucrative industry.

While our techniques of control do not make us atheists, they do seem to make worship more and more irrelevant, as God is more and more displaced from our lives. We forget how to meet God, and yet we defend our smartphones, unwilling to admit that we are more concerned with controlling the mechanics of our lives than in worshiping the God whose sovereign power directs our every breath.

We must watch for signs that our worship is veering off course. We can no longer simply worship God in admiration or pray to him without a compulsive fidgeting for our phones. We talk more about God than we talk to him. Our hearts are more interested in following empty patterns of worship than encountering the Spirit. Our worship

> on Sunday seems flat, but our week is filled with an endless quest for Christian advice to fix what we know is wrong. We seek a mechanical relationship with God, searching for new techniques to fill the spiritual void in our lives. Signs such as these reveal how technology degrades our priorities. But worship calls for redirection in our lives.

Article taken from 12 Ways Your Phone is Changing You by Tony Reinke, ©2017. Used by permission of Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers, Wheaton, Il 60187, crossway.org.

Tony Reinke is senior writer for Desiring God. In addition to 12 Ways Your Phone Is Changing You, he is also the author of John Newton on the Christian Life, and Lit! A Christian Guide to Reading Books.





Images: Vecteezv.com



BY RANDY ALCORN

YEARS AGO, the television series "Life Goes On" portrayed a teenager named Corky who had Down syndrome. The starring role was played by a young man with Down syndrome, and many people were touched by his winsome performance. Critics raved. But many of the same critics favor the killing of these children, just like Corky, before they are born.

A survey of pediatricians and pediatric surgeons revealed that more than two out of three would go along with parents' wishes to deny lifesaving surgery to a child with Down syndrome. Nearly three out of four said that if they had a Down syndrome child, they would choose to let him starve to death. This is not only horrible, but baffling, for many Down children are the happiest you'll ever meet. These children require special care, of course, but surely they deserve to be born and to live as much as any of us. (Over the years, the most popular character in my novel Deadline has been a Down syndrome boy named Little Finn. He also appears in my novel Dominion. In Deadline, I also portray another Down syndrome child teaching people in Heaven, with a startling depth of insight.)

Some argue: "It's cruel to let a Down Syndrome or handicapped child be born to a miserable and meaningless life." We may define a meaningful

life one way, but we should ask ourselves what is meaningful to the handicapped themselves:

A 2011 study by Harvard University researchers found that rather than leading lives of suffering, people with Down syndrome have unusually high rates of happiness. An amazing 99 percent said they are happy with their lives, 97 percent like who they are, and 96 percent like how they look. "Overall, the overwhelming majority of people with Down syndrome surveyed indicate they live happy and fulfilling lives," the researchers found.

Wouldn't you suppose we'd want more people of any group characterized by such happiness? Tragically, however, studies show that of mothers who receive a positive diagnosis of Down syndrome during the prenatal period, 89 to 97 percent choose abortion. This means that the children most likely to be happy are also most likely to be killed before birth. Reports show that Iceland's abortion rate for unborn Down syndrome babies is almost 100%. Denmark's is 98%.

When adults kill a handicapped child, preborn or born, they may think it's for her or his good, to prevent future suffering. But in doing so, they aren't preventing cruelty to the child; they're committing cruelty to the child. And in reality, it's most often done in order to prevent difficulties for themselves and others.

I was touched by a video of Charlotte Fien, a British young woman who eloquently challenged a UN "expert" on human rights who advocates for aborting Down syndrome



babies. Here's a transcript of what Charlotte said:

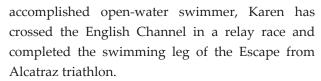
Mr. Ben Achour, your comments about people with Down syndrome deeply offend me. I felt you attacked me for being who I am. Who am I, Mr. Ben Achour? I'm a human being just like you. Our only difference is an extra chromosome. My extra chromosome makes me far more tolerant than you, sir. . . . If any other heritable traits like skin color were used to eradicate a group of people the world would cry out. Why are you not crying out when people like me are being made extinct? What have WE done to make you want us to disappear? As far as I know my community doesn't hate, discriminate, or commit crimes. . . .I keep hearing you use the

word "suffering" in relation to Down syndrome. The ONLY thing we have to suffer are horrible people who want to make us extinct. I have a brilliant life. I have a family that loves me. I have great friends. I have an active social life.

Mr. Achour, what you are suggesting is eugenics. It's disgusting and evil. You need to apologize for your horrible comments. You should also be removed from the Human Rights Committee as an expert. ... I suggest

that the Human Rights Committee appoint me as an expert. I will fight for our right to exist for the rest of my life.

Charlotte is joined by a chorus of courageous individuals with Down syndrome who are speaking out about their right to life. In her TEDx talk, my fellow Oregonian Karen Gaffney asked, "I have one more chromosome than you. So what?" An



Last year, 18-year-old Natalie Dedreux from Cologne asked German Chancellor Angela Merkel a tough question about Germany's abortion laws: "Mrs. Merkel, you are a politician. You make laws. I'm an editor at a magazine for people like me who have Down syndrome. Nine out of ten babies with Down syndrome in Germany aren't born. A baby with Down syndrome can be aborted days before the birth, in what is called 'late stage abortion.' My colleagues and I want to know what your opinion on late-stage abortion is, Mrs. Merkel. Why can babies with Down syndrome be aborted shortly before birth?"

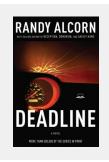
"I don't want to be aborted, I want to be born," Natalie concluded, to applause.

When Frank Stephens, a young man with Down syndrome, gave a speech before a U.S. House appropriations panel, he told members of Congress, "Just so there is no confusion, let me say that I am not a research scientist. However, no one knows more about life with Down syndrome than I do. Whatever

> you learn today, please remember this: I am a man with Down syndrome and my life is worth living."

> There is one recent positive sign in American society: Gerber named Lucas Warren, who has Down syndrome, as their 2018 Gerber Spokesbaby (pictured above). Looking at Lucas's precious smile, how could there be any doubt that he and other children with Down syndrome have lives worth protecting and cherishing?■





View the source notes and watch the videos of the young adults quoted in this article at epm.org/downsyndrome.

Learn more about Randy's novel Deadline and read an excerpt at epm.org/deadline.



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