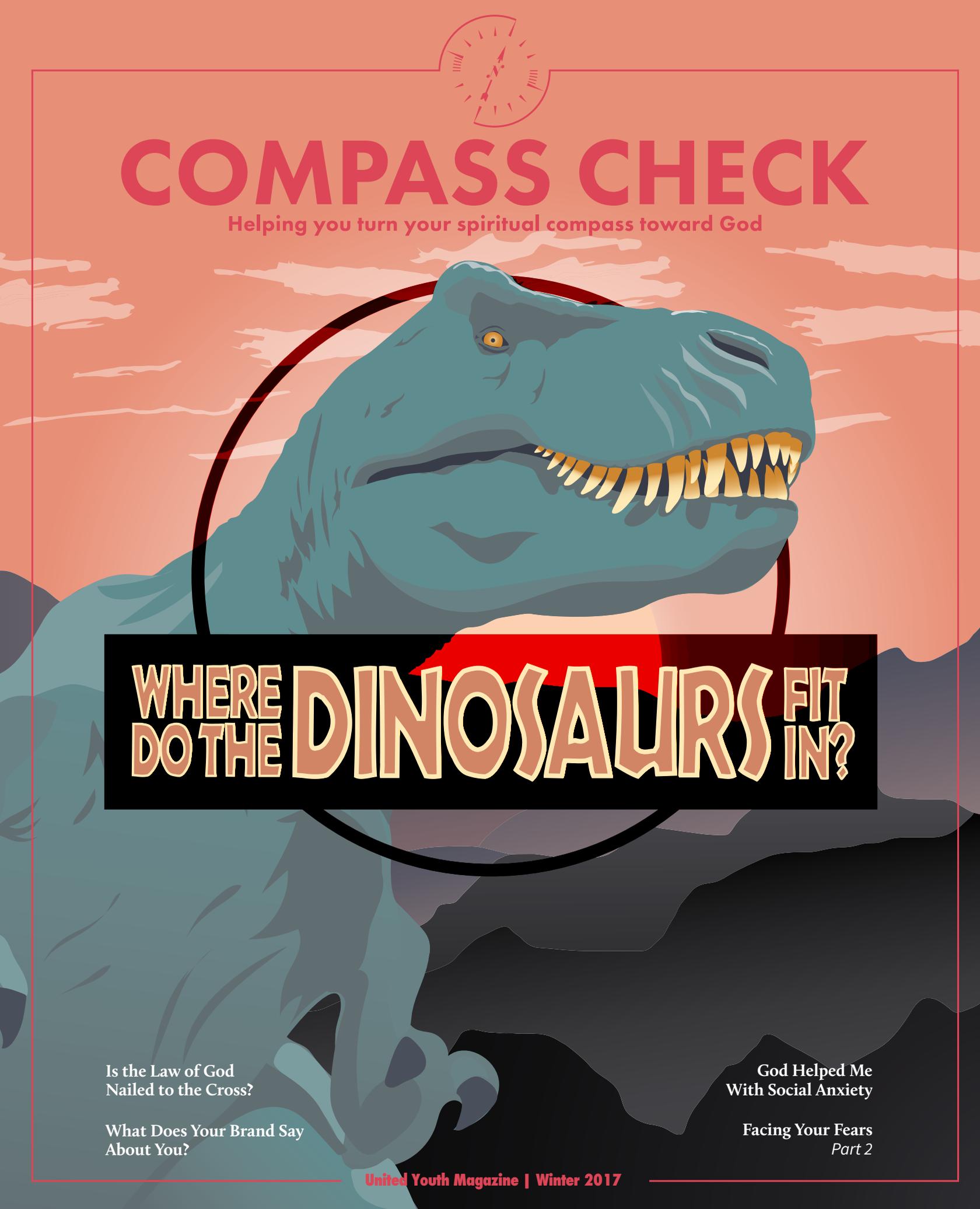




# COMPASS CHECK

Helping you turn your spiritual compass toward God



## WHERE DO THE DINOSAURS FIT IN?

Is the Law of God  
Nailed to the Cross?

What Does Your Brand Say  
About You?

God Helped Me  
With Social Anxiety

Facing Your Fears  
Part 2

# CONTENTS



## Q&A

*Is the Law of God Nailed to the Cross?*

5



## God Helped Me With Social Anxiety

7



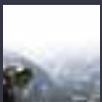
## What Does Your Brand Say About You?

8



## Where Do the Dinosaurs Fit?

10



## Facing Your Fears

*Part 2*

18



## I've Got the Blues

17

# COMPASS CORNER



*Dear Compass Checkers,*

As I write my column for this issue of *Compass Check*, we have just returned a couple of weeks ago from observing the Feast of Tabernacles and Eighth Day. It was a fantastic Feast for all of us. But as you read this issue of CC, what “season” is the world around us entering? That’s right—the non-Christian holiday of Christmas.

Satan the deceiver (the name “Satan” means adversary or opponent), has substituted his “holidays” in place of the biblical “Holy Days” of the Eternal God. We are not fooled by Satan’s days. We correctly observe the seven Holy Days of God, beginning with Passover and ending with the Eighth Day (Leviticus 23).

You Compass Checkers know the truth—Christmas is full of lies and heavily borrows from non-biblical customs.

We know that Jesus Christ was not born in the dead of winter. He was actually born in the fall, likely at the end of September. Please refer to our helpful booklet for these details ([www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/holidays-or-holy-days-does-it-matter-which-days-we-observe](http://www.ucg.org/bible-study-tools/booklets/holidays-or-holy-days-does-it-matter-which-days-we-observe)).

None of the writers of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) gives a date for the birth of Jesus Christ, and none mentions anything about commemorating Christ’s birth.

But Jesus Christ did tell His followers to commemorate His death (1 Corinthians 11:23-26), which we observe through the Passover each spring.

I like these succinct points written by the managing editor of *Beyond Today* magazine, Scott Ashley. They are found at [www.ucg.org/the-good-news/the-top-10-reasons-why-i-dont-celebrate-christmas](http://www.ucg.org/the-good-news/the-top-10-reasons-why-i-dont-celebrate-christmas).

1. Christmas is driven by commercialism.
2. Christmas is nowhere mentioned in the Bible.
3. Jesus wasn’t born on or near Dec. 25.
4. The Christmas holiday is largely a recycled pagan celebration.
5. God condemns using pagan customs to worship Him.
6. Christmas is worshipping God in vain.
7. You can’t put Christ back into something He was never in.
8. The Bible nowhere tells us to observe a

## COMPASS CHECK

*Compass Check* is a biblically based magazine for young people of the United Church of God, an International Association (UCGIA) aged 12-19. Our name, *Compass Check*, describes youth pointing their spiritual compass toward God.

*Compass Check* is published quarterly by the United Church of God, 555 Technecenter Drive, Milford, OH 45150. ©2017, United Church of God, an International Association. Printed in U.S.A. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any form without written permission is prohibited. All images courtesy Unsplash unless otherwise noted. Camp images used with permission.

*Publisher:* UCGIA | *Council of Elders:* Scott Ashley, Aaron Dean, Jorge de Campos, Robert Dick, Dan Dowd, John Elliott, Mark Mickelson, Mario Seiglie, Rainer Salomaa, Rex Sexton, Don Ward (chairman), Anthony Wasilkoff

*President:* Victor Kubik

*Media and Communication Services operation manager:* Peter Eddington

*Editor:* Steve Nutzman | *Managing editor:* Kourtney Kovanis

*Associate editor:* Robert Curry | *Content editor:* Mitchell Moss

*Copy editors:* Robert Curry, Nicole Gard, Josh Lamoureux, Nick Lamoureux, Randy Shoemaker

*Senior proofreader:* Milan Bizic | *Proofreaders:* Sarah Auguste, Charlie McClure, David Meidinger

*Editorial reviewers:* Shawn Cortelyou, Aaron Creech, Bruce Dean, Frank Dunkle, Ken Graham,

Scott Hoefker, Rex Sexton, Gary Smith

*Lead designer:* Mitchell Moss | *Graphic designer/illustrator:* Matthew Hernandez | *Masthead design:* Clint Porter

*Writing staff:* Members of UCGIA

United Church of God, P.O. Box 541027, Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027, U.S.A. Phone: (513) 576-9796.

Fax: (513) 576-9795. Website: [ucg.org/members/compass-check](http://ucg.org/members/compass-check). E-mail: [compasscheck@ucg.org](mailto:compasscheck@ucg.org).

*Unsolicited materials:* Due to staffing limitations, unsolicited materials sent to *Compass Check* will not be critiqued or returned. By their submission authors agree that submitted materials become the property of the United Church of God, an International Association, to use as it sees fit. This agreement is controlled by California law.

The goal of *Compass Check* is to inspire Church youth, ages 12-19, to respond to the gospel message.

Vol. 3, No. 3

United Youth Magazine | Winter 2017



holiday celebrating Jesus Christ’s birth—but it clearly does tell us to commemorate His death.

- 9. Christmas obscures God’s plan for mankind.
- 10. I’d rather celebrate the Holy Days Jesus Christ and the apostles observed.

Some people may know a number of these facts but then ask, “Does it really matter?” Yes, it matters very much to God! Notice what God says in Deuteronomy 12:30-32: “Do not inquire after their gods, saying, ‘How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise.’ You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way . . . Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”

God has clearly spelled out what is holy and what is profane in the Bible and wants us to choose life through loving and obeying Him (Deuteronomy 30:19-20).

Our writers and editors have done a masterful job in putting this issue of *Compass Check* together for you, our faithful

readers. Please e-mail me if you have any questions or if you have suggestions for future articles. I would enjoy hearing from you.

(I look forward to seeing some of you at Winter Camp, from Dec. 27-Jan. 2.)

Enjoy this issue!

*Until next time, your camp friend,*



*Steve Nutzman, editor, is a church pastor in Idaho, Oregon and Utah, and is the United Youth Camps national coordinator. compasscheck@ucg.org*

## Dear Readers

---

For the Feast of Tabernacles this year I had the incredible blessing of going to Greece. As one of the speakers noted during the trip, I'll never read the Bible in quite the same way again. Standing at Cenchrea, the same harbor where Paul set off in a ship to Syria (Acts 18:18), and exploring Crete, whose people are referenced in relation to Paul and Titus (Acts 27, Titus 1), are experiences I hope I never forget.

Perhaps the most intense one was standing on Mars Hill. It was here that Paul proclaimed the true God to the Greeks, who believed passionately in their Pantheon of gods (like Zeus, Poseidon and Athena). Climbing up the rocky outcropping of Mars Hill in Athens, I was struck by the view. Nowadays the sprawl of modern Athens lies below the hill. But most noticeable, and surely even more so in biblical times, is the view of the Acropolis (meaning the city's highest point in Greek). Athens restricts building heights so that even today the Acropolis stands above the rest of the city. On it remain the ruins of an impressive entrance gateway, the Temple of Athena Nike and the Parthenon, along with other ancient temples and buildings.

Even though much was destroyed over time, the ruins that remain are imposing and impressive. I can only imagine what they would have seemed like to the people in Paul's time, compared to the normal homes and buildings. These temples had to have seemed otherworldly. I could image people in that time easily believing those giant shrines were of the gods.

Yet despite the intense paganism of the day, despite that incredible show of power only a little off in the distance, Paul preached unabashedly about the truth of God, a truth that required the dissolving of any belief or worship of the Greek gods. In fact, it was because of how much idolatry he saw in Athens that he felt he had to speak up (Acts 17:16). To his audience he said, "The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything" (Acts 17: 24-25, English Standard Version).

Some would argue Athens wasn't ready for the truth, as I heard from my tour guide in Greece (Acts 17:32-34). Some believed and followed Paul, but he didn't have the same influence in Athens that he did in Corinth. Still, we



*The Acropolis from Mars Hill*

have his speech in the Bible as an example of courage. We get to see how he spoke to them.

At the Feast I learned that Paul was highly educated, seen through the complexity of his writing style (2 Peter 3:16). He wants to express difficult things, and he uses every tool available to him. At Mars Hill, he works hard to meet people where they are (Acts 17:22). He takes their foundation, finds a place of commonality, and then builds on it, even using their own poets and writers as reference (Acts 17:28).

Mars Hill (the Areopagus in Greek) was historically the high court in Athens, or a place to discuss the most important cases (<http://biblehub.com/topical/a/areopagus.htm>). And that's what Paul is doing. With his life as preparation, he proclaims the most important topic, making every effort to convince them, to bring along his listeners. In the end, only God can call, and every individual has a choice whether to respond. But disciples have a part to play too.

Another speaker at the Feast mentioned that we don't need to be afraid or intimidated by information, by others' beliefs, by education, by evil. Paul was not afraid to stand on a rock and declare the truth, even with a giant testament to false gods looming overhead. And we don't need to be afraid, either. We don't need to fear going out in the world and interacting with people who don't know the truth yet, or being exposed to the fact that others have beliefs different from ours. What's the point of having a light unless it's in the midst of darkness?

But, as Paul was, we need to be prepared. I hope this issue of *Compass Check* is a tiny piece of that preparation to do God's work with accuracy and boldness.

*Your friend,*



*Kourtney Kovanis*

Managing Editor | [kourtney.kovanis@gmail.com](mailto:kourtney.kovanis@gmail.com)

## “Was the law nailed to the cross? Do we still have to keep the Ten Commandments and annual Holy Days?”

*It's no secret the Bible contains passages that are hard to follow or that you have to read twice to understand. So when people pull these passages out of the Bible and ask about them, it can be hard to know how to respond. Per a reader request, let's cover two sections from Colossians 2 that deal with God's law and His festivals.*

**#1** *What was “nailed to the cross” in Colossians 2:14? I have heard some people believe what was nailed to the cross is the spiritual law of God, including the Ten Commandments and annual festivals, so we are no longer required to keep these laws.*

The verse says God has “wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.”

The key phrase to understand in this scripture is “the handwriting of requirements.” The interpretation cited takes this phrase to mean “God’s law” and uses this verse to say we no longer need to consider it when evaluating our thoughts and actions. The original King James Version renders “requirements” as “ordinances,” bolstering this idea. In fact, this couldn’t be further from the truth.

The Contemporary English Version makes this verse much clearer, pointedly saying that God “wiped out the charges that were against us for disobeying the Law of Moses.” In God’s court, we are all charged with the crime of sin, which is the violation of His law (1 John 3:4). Sadly, we are also all found guilty and reap the punishment for committing this crime (Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:8). Our punishment is the death penalty (Romans 6:23, James 1:15).

What Colossians 2:14 refers to is our death sentence. It represents the undeniable charges, the ultimate penalty, the “record of debt” legally and accurately standing against us for violating the law (“record of debt” being the English Standard Version’s rendering). This specific phrase has been translated poorly in several versions of the Bible and does not refer to the law itself. Verse 13 says God makes us alive and mercifully forgives our sins, while verse 14 describes exactly how that is done: the agonizing torture and death of our Savior Jesus the Christ.

Jesus wiped out and fulfilled the death sentence



*What was nailed to the cross was the death penalty resulting from each of our sins.*

through His sacrifice on the cross. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin . . . if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins” (1 John 1:7-9). To attain this promise, we must start down the path of conversion that begins with loyalty to God, turning from sinful ways and baptism (Colossians 2:12, reference Hebrews 6:1-3).

The Bible describes God’s law as “perfect,” “eternal,” “holy and just and good” (Psalm 19:7, 119:160; Romans 7:12). God did not suddenly nail His Ten Commandments or festivals to the cross. Instead, what was nailed to the cross was the death penalty resulting from each of our sins.

### For more knowledge on this topic, search these titles at [UCG.org](http://UCG.org):

- *Blotted Out and Nailed to the Cross*
- *In Colossians 2:14 Paul speaks of “ordinances” nailed to a cross. What does this mean?*
- *What Was ‘Wiped Out’ by Jesus Christ’s Death?*

**#2** *Does Colossians 2:16-17 mean the Feast of Tabernacles is done away? My friend refers to those verses a lot when we discuss why I observe the Feast of Tabernacles. How do I explain and understand these verses?*

These verses describe God’s festivals and Sabbaths as a “shadow of things to come.” To grasp what is written here, we must first understand what

# Q&A

Paul is dealing with in this section of the letter. Paul seeks to refocus the Colossians on Christ, reminding them to “walk in Him” (verse 6). He implores them to stand strong in the faith and warns them not to fall for philosophies and traditions contrary to God’s way (verse 7-8). What specific heresies confronted the brethren at Colossae? One phrase we can zero in on is “false humility” (Colossians 2:18). But what exactly does that mean?

Notice verses 20-22. Paul asks why some Colossians were subjecting themselves to worldly regulations and commandments, including “Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle,” which all concern things which perish with the using.” They were religiously refraining from what would otherwise be typical activities.

It is likely a nascent form of Gnosticism was cropping up at Colossae. The term “Gnostic” comes from the Greek word meaning “to know.” Gnosticism’s devotees claimed to have “higher knowledge” attained by mystic, introspective means. One tenet of Gnosticism is dualism. Dualism considers all of existence to be divided and separated into two realms: spirit, which is completely and inherently good, and physical matter, which is wholly and incorrigibly evil.

Due to this belief, Gnostics and proto-Gnostic thinkers sought to cut off their enjoyment and comfort in everyday things. To become “more spiritual,” they would eat bland diets and drink only minimal amounts of water, objecting to the satisfaction full meals and hydration would provide. The extreme self-denial of physical pleasures and comforts is known as asceticism.

Paul condemns asceticism as heresy in Colossians 2:23, stating such doctrines have “an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.” God declares His faithful should be dead to the regulations and principles of the world, including ascetic lifestyles and Gnostic thinking (verse 20).

Let’s finally return to the verses in question: “Let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths” (verse 16). Notice eating, drinking and keeping particular days are not condemned here, but rather the judgment passed upon those actions. Evidently, dualistic

false teachers were disparaging the faithful Colossians for properly keeping God’s Holy Days with joyful feasting and fellowship (Deuteronomy 14:23-26).

Paul then writes that these days are a “shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.” (verse 17). While there are historical practices associated with each festival, these days are not dusty, littered with cobwebs and trapped deep in the annals of history. Instead, God’s Holy Days look forward. We should be familiar with the rich meaning and fulfillment assigned to each part of God’s plan, especially having just recently celebrated the harvest festivals.

We should also know Christ’s role in all the Holy Days. Jesus Christ will intervene in human affairs on a personal and global level by establishing His Kingdom and offering salvation to all. To neglect or scrutinize these days as a “shadow” is to ignore the hopeful and visionary intent of keeping them. To claim our focus should be on Christ instead is silly because Christ is at the center of all the biblical Holy Days (for one example, see 1 Corinthians 5:6-7). They cannot be explained away as “Jewish” when they are Christian to the core.

What can you and I take away from all of this? Don’t get cheated out of the Holy Days (Colossians 2:8). Never let others judge you for keeping God’s Feasts in the way He designed. They are His (Leviticus 23:2). Don’t let others deride you for taking time off from school or for celebrating and enjoying yourself while others are working.

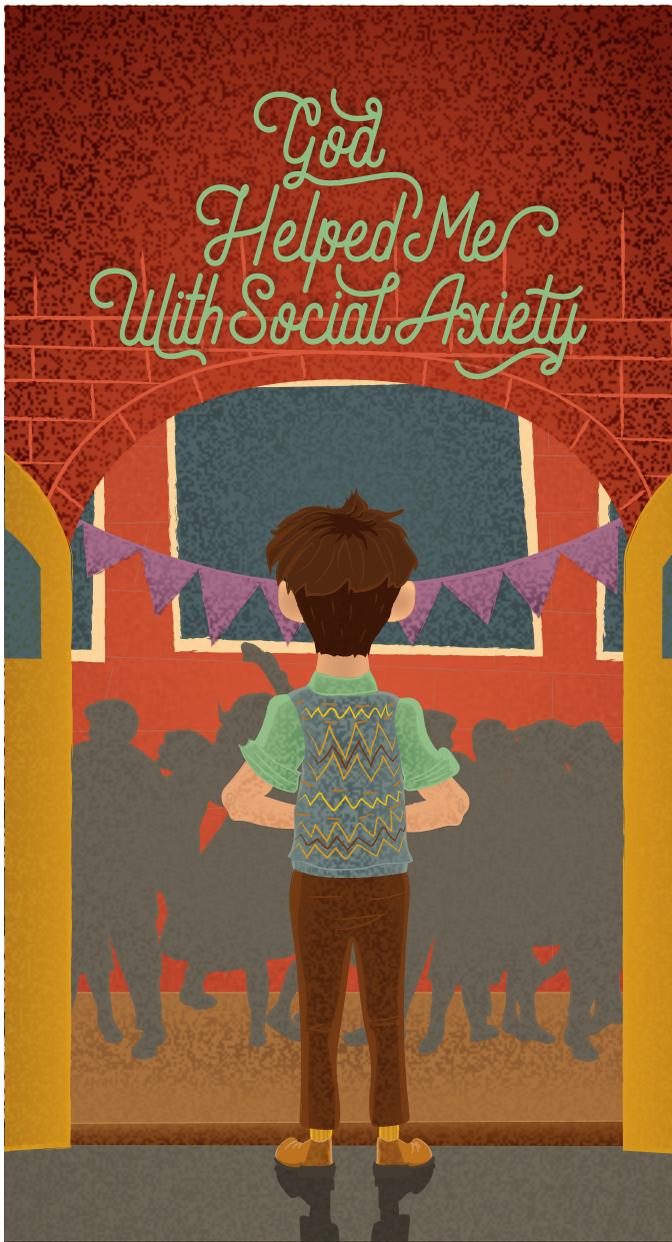
Instead, fully rejoice and worship God during His Feasts (Deuteronomy 16:14-15). Hold tight to Jesus Christ, the Head, and “set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth” (Colossians 3:2-4). “When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.”

## For more knowledge on this topic, search these titles at UCG.org:

- *The Biblical Festivals That Teach Us About Jesus Christ*
- *Colossians 2:16-17: Are God’s Laws Obsolete?*
- *Colossians 2:16 Shows Gentile Christians Observed the Biblical Holy Days*
- *What Did Paul Really Say in Colossians 2:16?*



Kevin Greer attends the United Church of God with the Kalamazoo, Michigan, congregation. He is currently pursuing an undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering from Western Michigan University.



Although I was adopted into the Church as a baby, my faith in God didn't always exist. I didn't really know that I could pray and have some extra help to back me up back then. Honestly, I was shy too. Autism is a hard disability to deal with. It's hard to maintain friendships, considering that eye contact, speaking up and performing in front of large and small groups are difficult. My first camp experience had a lot to do with faith. This is my story of how God helped me overcome social anxiety through my faith in Him.

In 2014 the preteen youth camp, Camp Tomahawk (now known as Camp NaCoMe), was cancelled. More or less I was actually kind of relieved because the preteen camp really wore me out sometimes. But apparently God had a different plan for me. You may be able to relate in many

ways: arriving to your first camp experience, a lot of new people, a lot of noise and a lot of people your age.

When I arrived at Camp Woodmen for the first time, I was the second youngest one there, the only 12-year-old boy. I was a small boy who was silent and only spoke when I needed to. I'm not that athletic nor that competitive, and my first few days at camp were just that, along with "who can dance with the most girls." That Monday night, I turned down two girls (promising one of them that I would make up for that mistake), because I was not used to dancing with girls. After that, people in my dorm asked me how many girls I danced with. I didn't know God then as much as I do now, but that was going to change very soon.

That night I began to dream that I could open up freely without any judgment. I dreamt that I would say I was going to dance with a lot of girls. Personally, I think that just possibly God gave me the dreams to make them come true. That Thursday, my dorm counselor helped open me up. He asked me to say how I was going to ask a girl to dance. And the dreams came true: I was able to express myself freely without any judgment. That Saturday night, I had dances with 20 girls, and it was fun, I will admit.

I was really shy to everyone before, but at Camp Woodmen that year I made two of the best friends I could ever receive from God. And my faith in God was changed when camp ended. I prayed a lot more than I used to and my faith was a lot stronger. I know in my heart that my first year was just the beginning.

Later, one of my two good friends said that he wouldn't be able to attend Camp Woodmen the next year—he was going to Camp Cotubic. God perhaps had set this up all along, because I was able to go to that camp too, and build even more friendships.

Being faithful in God can help anyone come a long way with social anxiety. I still get a little nervous to this day, but if I didn't go to that church camp, I would not be writing this.

In closing, it will always be a scary, yet amazing feeling when you open up with God's help. I might even be finding myself attending a third church camp next summer. Be faithful in God as was Jeremiah (Jeremiah 1:6). Jeremiah thought he couldn't be heard because he was just in his youth, but God stood by him so he could be heard. God has plans, but by being faithful, your dreams, like His (of building a relationship with you), can come true.



*Spencer Ellithorpe was born in Guatemala City and adopted at 5 months old. He lives in White House, Tennessee, with his parents and two younger brothers, and attends the Nashville congregation. He hopes to be a meteorologist/storm chaser or an eclipse chaser.*



## LET'S PLAY A GAME...

I'll start with a famous company, and based on that company, see if you can give me the advertising slogan or jingle that accompanies it.

McDonald's \_\_\_\_\_

Subway \_\_\_\_\_

Nike \_\_\_\_\_

Apple \_\_\_\_\_

M&M's \_\_\_\_\_

How did you do? Some of you may have gotten all five, but I would venture a guess that even if you were unable to get all five, you got at least one or two. For those like me, who absolutely cannot continue reading this article until you know the answers, they are on the next page.

### Brand recognition

These slogans are successful because they have etched themselves into the collective memory of society with a short easy-to-remember phrase, accompanied by music that is catchy and easy to recall.

It used to be that a catchy jingle or slogan such as these was needed to identify and sell products, but in today's increasingly visual world of marketing, often the quick visual of an easily recognized logo or even the colors of that brand are enough to identify a company. There is a term for this in the marketing world: "brand recognition." If you want a good pair of shoes that will increase your performance, you turn to Nike. If you want a refreshing drink on a hot summer day, you turn to Coca-Cola, and if you want an aesthetically

beautiful mobile device that is hip and trendy, you get the new iPhone. You don't even need to see a commercial necessarily. The sight of the Nike Swoosh, Coca-Cola's red/white cursive lettering, and the partially eaten fruit logo of Apple are immediately identifiable and are synonymous with quality—or so the marketing and advertising of these brands would have you believe.

Whether the claims are true or not, that's what the brand's marketing is showing you, and after enough exposure, you as a consumer will begin to believe what you are shown and told about the product being advertised. As a result of this, slogans, logos and brand colors are fiercely protected by copyright laws to avoid infringing upon the brand and tarnishing it.

According to entrepreneur Chris Ducker, "Your brand is what people say about you when you're not around." As a result, establishing and ultimately protecting public perception of the brand are everything to the company that owns it.

### What does your brand say about you?

Most teens and young adults these days have a number of social media platforms. These platforms offer a unique opportunity that people of my generation didn't have. Each person now has a platform for written word, social commentary, pictures and much more.

Have you ever considered these statements, photos and social media interactions as a form of product branding? If you as a person are the product, what are your images, words, shares and likes saying about you?

The name Justine Sacco probably doesn't ring a bell, but in 2015, Justine had a great job at an Internet public relations firm, and was traveling the world for her company. Making a series of snarky tweets as her travels progressed, she boarded a plane for South Africa and prior to getting on the plane made one last snarky and, frankly, racially insensitive tweet. She thought it only went out to her 170 followers.

However, she learned when she landed in Cape Town that it had been discovered and retweeted numerous times and had taken on a life of its own. She was later fired by her employer for the blemish she had put on the company. As

a result of her carelessness, she lost out on economic opportunities, future employment and social opportunities.

She is not the only one.

She is one of many who had ill effects from something that they liked or posted on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or Snapchat that blew up in their face.

People see our online presence and make judgments based upon what they see. Fair or unfair, it's reality. What we post, like and share can positively or negatively impact our "brand."

### Positive or negative?

If we are known to others as Christians, then preserving and maintaining our brand is even more crucial, because negative impacts to the brand reflect negatively on God Himself.

As Christians, we are admonished in John 13:35 to have love for one another, neighbors and God. We are to be known for this love that we show. We are instructed to love our enemies (Matthew 5:44) even if they treat us poorly. Ephesians 4:22-32 gives us an entire laundry list of things that should be put away from us. Within that list are corrupt speech, bitterness, anger and slander.

We are admonished to be modest in our attire (1 Timothy 2:9), humble (James 4:6), always truthful with one another (Colossians 3:9-10), put away coarse joking and obscenity (Ephesians 5:4) and think on the things that are noble, pure, of a good name and worthy of virtue (Philippians 4:8).

Perhaps it is worth thinking twice about that selfie that is pushing the boundaries of appropriateness. Maybe it is worth not sharing the story you cannot prove is true one way or the other; or avoiding altogether the off-color, insensitive joke or angry political rant.

Just like brand recognition, people will begin to believe what they see repeatedly—whether it is true of the brand or not.

The posts, shares, likes and interactions that we have on social media say a lot about our brand. Your brand truly is what people say about you when you're not around. Think back over your posts, likes and shares for the past few months. Are you sending a message to the world that you didn't intend? Does your timeline present an accurate representation of who you really are? Or is it telling a different story?

Our activity online can have positive or negative effects on our brand.

What does your brand say about you?



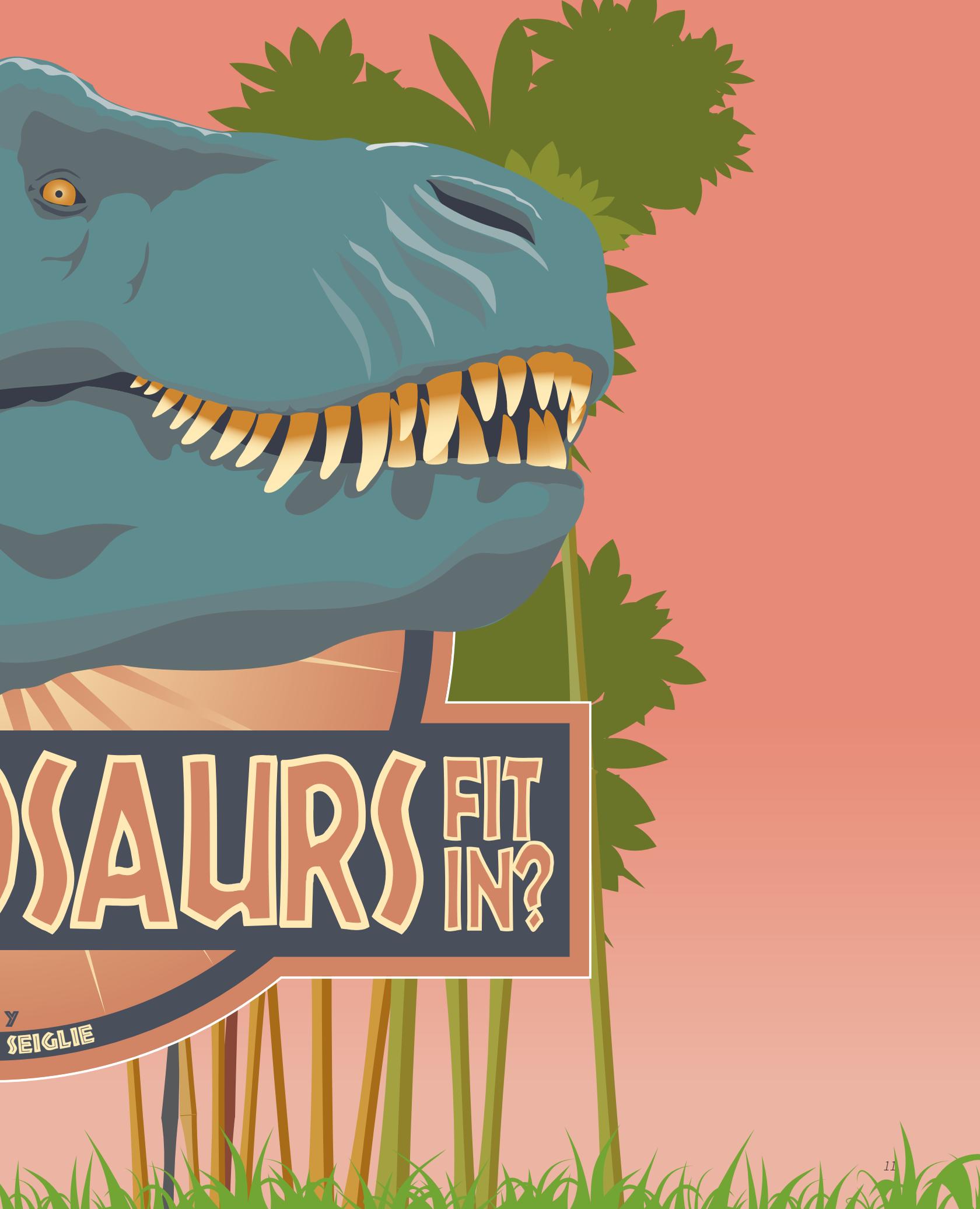
*Benjamin Light is serving as the interim pastor of the Salem, Eugene and Roseburg, Oregon, congregations. He works as an instructional mentor—training and mentoring new service teachers. He enjoys serving God's people in the United States and West Africa.*

Slogan answers, in order: "I'm Lovin' It," "Eat Fresh," "Just Do It," "Think Different," and "Melts in Your Mouth, Not in Your Hand."



WHERE DO THE DINO

MARIO



DINOSAURS FIT IN?

BY SEIGLIE

# “I DON'T BELIEVE IN THE BIBLE

because dinosaurs lived a long time before man ever did.”

Have you ever heard a statement like that? I certainly have—many times. In fact, this was one of the principal reasons Charles Darwin, the father of the theory of evolution, eventually rejected the Bible (George Sim Johnston, *Did Darwin Get It Right?*, 1998, p. 21). Many have followed suit.

Most people believe you can't reconcile dinosaurs and the Bible—but they are wrong. This erroneous idea is based on the supposition that either you have to believe in the young-earth theory of a 6,000-year-old earth and dinosaurs living with Adam, or you can't believe in the creation week account of Genesis 1.

Yet many would be surprised to find that several centuries ago scientists did believe in dinosaurs, an ancient earth and in creation week.

In fact, many of the first geologists who established the basic geologic column were believers in both the Bible and an ancient earth.

British physicist Alan Hayward wrote about these premier geologists: “Among them were William Buckland and Adam Sedgwick. Buckland held the chair of geology at Oxford in the early nineteenth century, while Sedgwick was his counterpart at Cambridge [University]. Both were leading churchmen, and both preached the plenary inspiration of Scripture and argued in favor of special creation . . .

“Buckland maintained close links with Sedgwick and the famous French geologist, Baron Cuvier . . . They did much to persuade the early nineteenth century church that the earth was extremely old

and that such views could be harmonized with the teaching of Genesis” (*Creation and Evolution*, 1985, pp. 72-73).

## Proper chronological sequence

Two Bible experts in the 1970s combined their skills to publish *The Reese Chronological Bible*, which supports an ancient earth and a creation week that is actually a re-creation of a devastated earth.

Edward Reese was a professor of Bible, history and missions at Crown College in Powell, Tennessee, and spent 20 years putting biblical events in chronological order. Frank Klassen was an architect and engineer who spent 10 years writing *The Chronology of the Bible*. They both agreed that the account of Genesis had important biblical events occur between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2.

They felt the first verses of the Bible chronologically would be John 1:1-2: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.”

This is the same way 20th-century Church of God leader Herbert W. Armstrong explained the real beginning of the biblical account. Before space, matter and energy were created, there existed the Word (who would later become Jesus Christ, see John 1:14) and God (who later would be identified as God the Father).

Next in *The Reese Chronological Bible* comes a scripture that speaks of God existing before the creation of the earth, Psalm 90:2: “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever You had formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”

Then comes the traditional first scripture of Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” This marks the creation of the universe as we know it, including the galaxies, stars and planets.

But the most fascinating part of this Bible is what follows—not Genesis 1:2, but Isaiah 14:12-17, where Lucifer's fall from heaven is recorded. Next comes the parallel account of Lucifer's fall in Ezekiel 28:13-18 (see also our booklet *Is There Really a Devil?*).

## Devastation and renewal

Only then comes Genesis 1:2: “The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” In the





New International Version (NIV) of the Bible, a footnote to the word “was” in this verse says, “Or possibly *became*.”

Apparently, something happened to cause the earth to become, as the Hebrew denotes, “chaotic and in confusion.” Since

God is not the author of confusion or chaos (Isaiah 45:18; 1 Corinthians 14:33), it makes sense that the earth became that way due to Lucifer’s rebellion and subsequent expulsion to the earth.

As Jesus Christ remarked, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven” (Luke 10:18). Other scriptures reveal it was not only Satan, but also the fallen angels that were cast down with him. We read in 2 Peter 2:4, “For if God did not spare the angels who sinned, but cast them down to hell [from the Greek *tartaroo*, a place of confinement, and in this case, the earth] and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved for judgment . . .” (*tartaroo* is a Greek term used in the Bible for the place where the angels are presently confined and are restricted to this earth, where there is also an abyss (Job 2:2; Luke 10:18; 8:31)).

Revelation 12:3-4 describes the dragon (Satan, verse 9) as having drawn a third of the stars of heaven to be cast down to the earth—these “stars” being symbolic of angels (compare 1:20).

What we don’t know is how long it took Lucifer to rebel—and how long this was before the six-day renewal of the earth culminating in the creation of Adam and Eve, as described in the rest of Genesis 1. Satan’s rebellion apparently happened after the earth had passed through the dinosaur age. Then, geologists agree, something dramatic occurred between the age of reptiles and the age of mammals.

As the famous paleontologist G.G. Simpson once remarked: “The most puzzling event in the history of life on the earth is the change from the Mesozoic Age of Reptiles, to the . . . Age of Mammals. It is as if the curtain were rung down suddenly on a stage where all the leading

roles were taken by reptiles, especially dinosaurs, in great numbers and bewildering variety, and rose again immediately to reveal the same setting but an entirely new cast, a cast in which the dinosaurs do not appear at all, other reptiles are supernumeraries and the leading parts are all played by mammals of sorts barely hinted at in the previous acts” (*Life Before Man*, 1972, p. 42).

This seems to reflect the change from the pre-Adamic world to the world of man. Certainly there are smaller reptiles in our world, but they are insignificant in comparison to what existed in the previous age.

What has been presented here is not the only “ancient earth” explanation available, but it seems to make the most biblical sense. It is the only explanation I know of that accepts the literal 24-hour days of the creation (or to us, *re-creation*) week and, at the same time, makes room for an indefinite period *before* the creation of mankind that could include the dinosaurs and previous eras.

Recent geological and astronomical discoveries, such as cosmic expansion and signs of meteor impacts at the Cretaceous-Paleocene border of the geologic column, have only served to substantiate

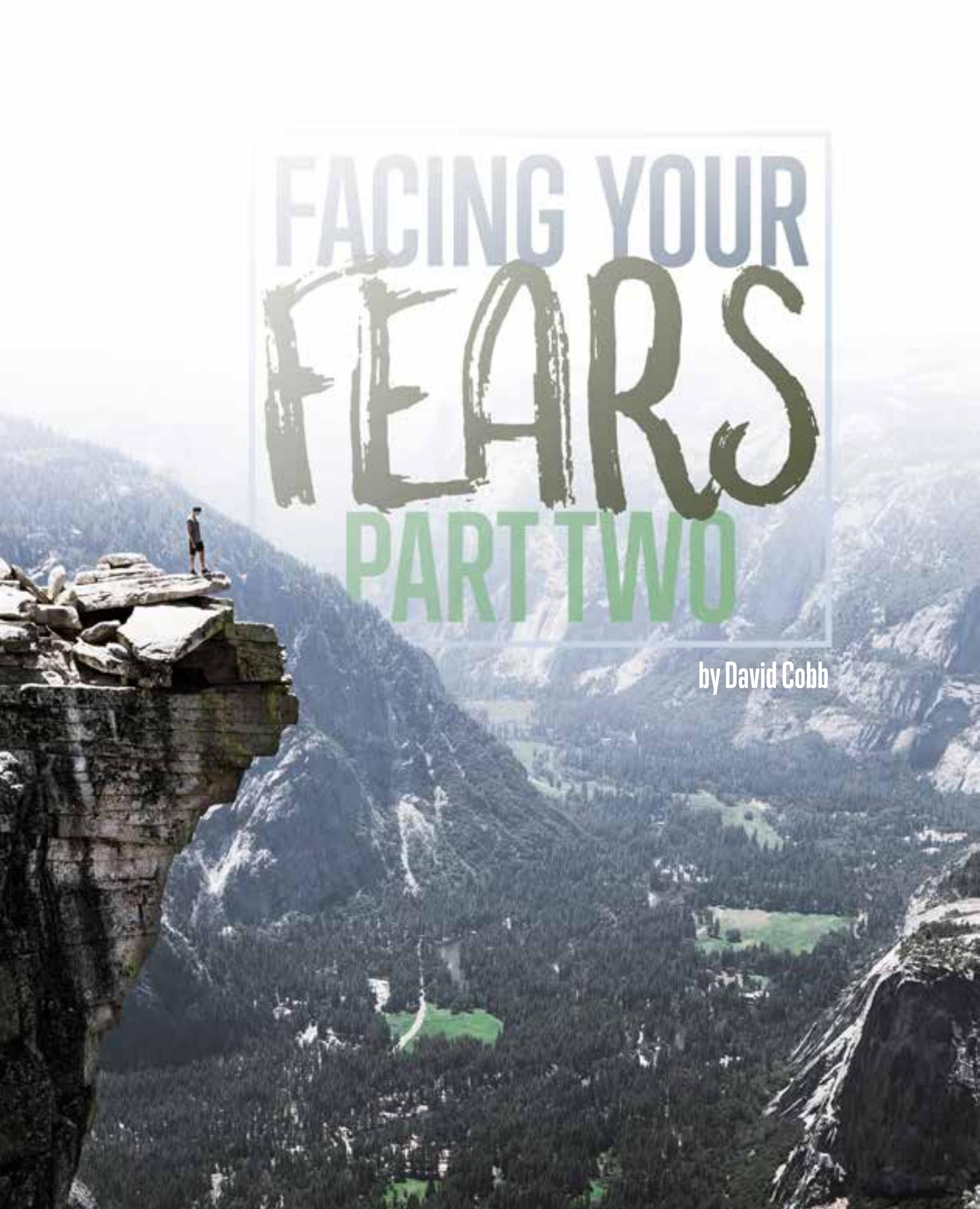
*Apparently, something happened to cause the earth to become, as the Hebrew denotes, “chaotic and in confusion.” It makes sense that the earth became that way due to Lucifer’s rebellion.*

this view (see Hugh Ross, *Creation and Time*, 1994, p. 92; Gerald Schroder, *Genesis and the Big Bang*, 1990, p. 140).

So if anyone tells you he or she doesn’t believe in the Bible because of a dilemma with the dinosaurs, let that person know there is more than the young-earth explanation available—one that fits well, as best we know, with the biblical facts.



Mario Seiglie is a regular writer for *Beyond Today* magazine, teaches archaeology and intelligent design at Ambassador Bible College and pastors the Garden Grove, California, congregation, while also overseeing the Latin America region for UCG.

A person is standing on the edge of a large, layered rock formation on the left side of the image. The background is a vast, scenic mountain valley with dense evergreen forests, green meadows, and a winding river. The sky is bright and hazy. The title text is overlaid on the upper right portion of the image.

# FACING YOUR FEARS PART TWO

by David Cobb



hen I am troubled by fear, I often struggle with feeling like no one else around me has the same difficulties. For example, I can remember one occasion after a relationship had ended badly, when I was very afraid of losing other relationships that were important to me. When my life is at a low point, I usually feel like no one else ever has similar worries.

It's true that in daily life, the people that we see at school, work or church usually appear to be calm and confident. On the surface, it's easy to assume that none of them is dealing with problems like fear. Over time though, as I've gained more experience dealing with my own fears, I've learned that many others experience similar problems.

Since we all come in contact with fearful emotions at some level, it's helpful to share what we've learned through them to strengthen one another. In a previous article, I wrote about tools for facing life's more commonly experienced fears. In this article, we will look at several additional tools that can be utilized to deal with even deeper and more impactful fears that present a much greater challenge to overcome.

### **Focus on learning about your feelings**

Even though fear is a natural emotion, it is inherently uncomfortable. When you struggle with fears that aren't quickly resolved, it's easy to be self-critical for having those feelings to begin with.

While this tendency is normal, it isn't helpful or productive. Your feelings and emotions simply are what they are, whether good or bad. It's how you respond to them that matters. Telling yourself not to feel a certain way rarely changes the underlying emotion. In fact, it often just increases the intensity of the original feeling, leaving you frustrated and unsure of what to do next.

A simple and helpful step to take is to pray for understanding (James 5:13). Ask God to help you learn about why you're having the feelings that you are. The knowledge of what's causing your feelings will enable you to begin responding to them in a way much more likely to produce positive results. Beyond this first step, consider the following additional steps for dealing with feelings of fear that remain challenging to understand or overcome.

### **Counsel with a minister**

Ministers within God's Church have experience assisting people with a wide variety of challenges that impact their spiritual and physical health. They can provide comfort and encouragement with scriptures relevant to what you are facing, and can also discuss whether anointing may be appropriate for your situation.

We often think of anointing only for physical illnesses and injuries; however, at times we need God's healing power within our hearts and minds as well. As our Creator, God fully understands what's happening in our hearts, minds and bodies. With this supreme understanding, He is the ultimate Healer!

In the Bible, anointing is recommended for those who are "sick" (James 5:14). In Greek, the word "sick" has the broad implication of weakness—lacking strength in some significant way. Fear and other difficult emotions can certainly drain our energy and weaken multiple aspects of our lives.

There are many proverbs that highlight the connection between our emotions and our overall health such as "a cheerful heart is good medicine, but a broken spirit saps a person's strength" (Proverbs 17:22, New Living Translation). Biblical counseling and anointing (when applicable) are powerful steps that can help provide the strength to overcome fear.

## Seek professional advice

Professional counseling is often viewed as a “last resort,” only to be tried if nothing else fixes a problem. However, it would be better viewed as a powerful option to help define problems, and then learn about effective *tools* for addressing them.

Of course, trained counselors are not a replacement for the spiritual support and healing that only God can provide. However, just like professionals in medical fields, their specialized study and experience give them the capability to offer useful insight and advice.

A counselor with expertise in dealing with emotional challenges like fear can help identify the root causes of what you are feeling. This allows you to focus energy on dealing with specific, relevant issues. Without understanding the problem, we often respond with efforts that are ultimately unproductive.

To pursue counseling, research the options available to you and consult with resources you trust (such as your parents or a trusted mentor) to identify a capable professional for your situation. Pray about it too. Ask God to connect you with the right resource and bless that person with the ability to provide discerning and meaningful support.

## Use the trial to grow

During difficult times it is easy to focus solely on wanting the trial to be over, since we all naturally want to avoid discomfort. While this is a normal feeling, it can prevent us from

gaining the benefits that come from our challenges!

Though it’s hard for us to accept, some lessons can only be learned through difficulty. Trials change our perspective and our level of understanding in ways that no other experience can. During these times, we often struggle most with the feeling that we are facing it alone.

We can be thankful that this is never truly the case, as King David learned. During the many challenges and various forms of fear that he faced, he wrote, “I will be glad and rejoice in Your mercy, for You have considered my trouble; you have known my soul in adversities” (Psalm 31:7). God indeed knows our struggles, and He promises both to help us through them and to learn from them.

The next time you’re struggling with fearfulness, try to shift your focus and think about ways that you can grow in personal character through the experience. Beginning to think purposefully about growth often results in substantial progress on the journey of overcoming!

## Persevere—time is a healer

The author of Ecclesiastes wrote that there is “a time for every purpose under heaven,” including “a time to break down, and a time to build up” (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 3). We are called to develop perfect character while living in a world that is filled with imperfection. That development can only take place within a lifelong process where breaking down is a necessary part of building up.

In “Beautiful Girl,” a song by Canadian artist Sarah McLachlan that depicts a mother’s heartfelt message to her struggling daughter, the mother encourages that “when the bitter breeze carries a trace of fear, we’ll persevere somehow,” and ends with the promise, “one thing that I know is it will get better.”

If you’re struggling with fears that feel like they will never go away . . . wait.

Hold on.

Anchor your mind in God’s promises and don’t let go! The active ingredient in every process is time, and the process of developing God’s character is no different. Be assured that eventually, the time for breaking down will end and the time for building up will begin. After you’ve persevered, you’ll be able to say as King David did: “Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all you who hope in the LORD” (Psalm 31:24).

**If you’re struggling with fears that feel like they will never go away . . . wait.**

**Hold on.**

**Anchor your mind in God’s promises and don’t let go!**



*David Cobb attends the Indianapolis congregation of the United Church of God. He lives and works in Columbus, Indiana, with his wife Mandie and their three children, HannahBeth, Joshua and Elijah.*



# I'VE GOT THE BLUES

by Gayle Hoefker

So you woke up this morning feeling gloomy or blue. You were having the blahs, down in the dumps. Maybe you were bummed out, despondent, discouraged or in a funk! You just wanted to cover your head and go back to sleep. Maybe your mom greeted you with a chipper “Good morning,” but you ignored her because you didn’t want to be happy today: You were having the blues! (see the top of the next page if your gloom feels worse than this).

This feeling may come on without warning. After all, being down in the dumps happens to everyone. Even if you’re generally a happy and positive person who enjoys life, there will be times when you’re discouraged. What causes this, and what can you do about it?

How you feel is influenced by many types of neurological chemicals. These chemicals control and regulate your body functions, moods and emotions. “With proper levels of mood chemicals, people experience healthy and positive emotional states, but a chemical

imbalance can produce mood disorders like depression and anxiety” (*Mood Chemicals and Their Effect on the Brain*, PTSD Treatment Help, [www.ptsdreatmenthelp.com/mood-chemicals-and-their-effect-on-the-brain](http://www.ptsdreatmenthelp.com/mood-chemicals-and-their-effect-on-the-brain)). Too much or too little of any one chemical can make you feel blue. These chemical imbalances can be felt or reveal themselves in outward signs. Let’s explore some general causes of discouragement.

- Negative thought patterns
- Stress
- Lack of vision or goals
- Fear of failure
- Hardships and heartbreak
- Poor choices in friends
- Junk food

*“The blues are different from a heavy or dark mood that goes unchanged for weeks at a time. That could be a sign of clinical depression, in which case you should consider seeking the advice of a counselor.”*

*(“Six Strategies for Coping with the Blues,” Toni Bernhard J.D., Psychology Today, Jan. 12, 2012)*

### **Negative thought patterns**

When you're feeling down, you are in a mode of negative thought patterns that keeps you from having a positive perspective. You may dwell on life's "doom and gloom," or feel that no one likes you, that you're not good at anything or that you're a failure. Your life might seem boring compared to other people's lives.

Thinking more positively about yourself will help. Assess your life and your attitude, then take action. First and foremost, turn your blues over to God. Notice the encouragement in Proverbs 16:1-3: "The preparations of the heart belong to man, but the answer of the tongue is from the LORD. All the ways of a man are pure in his own eyes, But the LORD weighs the spirits. Commit your works to the LORD, and your thoughts will be established."

Do just that—pray to God to heal your emotional confusion and discouragement. There is nothing too hard for God to heal. Ask God to solve the issues before you and to get to the source of your emotional challenges. God is truly the best "blues buster" there is. Commit it to God. God also expects us to do our part, so let's continue to look at what may be causing them in your life.

Don't try to compare yourself to others; just be grateful for the life you have. Keeping a gratitude journal and recording something that you're grateful for each day will help keep your mind focused on good things. Expressing positive affirmations can also remind you that life is not all bad. For example, you can say: "I am cheerful. Today I will be a bright spot in someone's day."

Since so many scriptures offer encouragement, reading the Bible is an excellent way to focus on the positive. As you read, make a list of verses that lift your spirits. Review them later when you're feeling down. Here's one to get you started: "Cast your cares on the LORD and He will sustain you; He will never let the righteous be shaken" (Psalm 55:22, New International Version).

### **Stress**

Stress can manifest in many ways, such as a too-busy schedule. Getting a grip on stress can help lessen the blues. Try making a to-do list and prioritizing your

most important jobs. You might buy a planner, or download a calendar app on your phone. Seeing your schedule in black and white will make it more obvious if you have overscheduled yourself, or if your time-management could use improvement.

Remember to leave time for yourself each day. "Me time" is important to your mental, physical and spiritual health. Choose an activity to do from the "Blues Busters" list below. Taking time to talk to God through prayer will also keep things in perspective.

### **Lack of vision or goals**

The opposite of having too much to do is boredom. Feeling like you're going nowhere, or that there's no excitement in your life, can be discouraging.

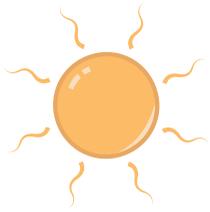
If you're experiencing boredom, create a bucket list of everything you want to do in life. List some items that are must-dos, such as "graduate from high school," then include some that are fun or crazy, like "hike the Appalachian Trail." Writing them down doesn't mean you're bound to do them all, but it will help you set some goals you can aim and plan for. Having something to look forward to builds excitement, which counteracts discouragement.

### **Fear of failure**

Maybe you've already tried something on your bucket list, and it didn't work out. It's important to realize that everyone experiences failures, even geniuses and pros. Try to use failure and negative feedback to help you improve on your ideas, rather than give up on them. Read biographies of men and women who became great in spite of their weaknesses, or who struggled to achieve something challenging. One of my personal favorites is *Endurance* by F. A. Worsley. It's about Ernest Shackleton's fateful 1914-16 expedition to Antarctica and the incredible rescue. It's a story of intense high adventure and a tribute to a most inspiring and courageous leader.

Don't have time to read a book? I once asked a

## BLUES BUSTERS



- Prayer (before anything, ask God to direct your steps—Proverbs 16:1-3)
- Read and apply Proverbs 3:5-8 (verse 8: “It will be health to your flesh, and strength to your bones”)
- Exercise
- Meditate—recall positive experiences and meditate on God’s Word (Joshua 1:8)
- Spend time in the sunshine
- Cook something new from scratch
- Take time out for yourself
- Do something kind for someone else (Luke 6:38)
- Break up your projects into smaller pieces; prioritize
- Use your failures to improve (Proverbs 13:12: “Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But when the desire comes, it is a tree of life”)
- Learn a new skill
- Make new friends: join a club or sports team
- Start a gratitude journal
- Create a bucket list
- Stand up tall
- Watch a funny movie
- Call a friend
- Get moving; be active
- Read biographies of inspirational men and women

music professor in Colombia about calming my nerves before a music performance. He said to breathe deeply, stand tall and raise my arms up and over my head. Doing an exercise like this may help you get past that moment of dread.

### Hardships and heartbreak

Sometimes just thinking about the past can be discouraging. Perhaps you or someone you love suffers from chronic illness, or you have experienced several deaths in your family. Maybe you made a series of poor choices that led to negative circumstances in your life. Enduring persistent and unpleasant events can be discouraging. However, even though we suffer, God promises to restore and strengthen us (1 Peter 5:10).

Try doing something kind or helpful for someone else, such as shoveling snow for a home-bound neighbor, or visiting an elderly widow in assisted living. These types of activities can build positive, encouraging memories, and they will help to direct your thoughts away from your own suffering.

### Poor choices in friends

Occasionally your choice of friends can be the cause of a gloomy mood. Choose friends who will lift you up, not tear you down (Proverbs 13:20). Spend time with people who make you smile and help you aim for higher goals. One way to meet positive new friends is to join a club or an athletic team. Exercise releases powerful endorphins that relieve discouragement, and working together with like-minded people to achieve a common goal builds positive relationships.

### Junk food

Having poor eating habits is another cause of the blahs. Eating junk food while watching TV can make you sluggish the next morning, and grabbing a snack bar as you rush out the door may leave you despondent during your morning classes. Poor food choices mean that your body doesn’t receive the nutrition it needs, and without adequate nutrition, your hormone system can quickly get out of whack.

Learn to cook. You don’t have to be a master chef; just learn how to make simple, healthy food that is quick to prepare. Apple slices with peanut butter for a movie snack, or a sandwich prepared at night that can be eaten on-the-go the next

morning. A handful of nuts make a high-energy after-school snack. But don’t stop with snack food—learn how to prepare a whole meal. Your family will enjoy it, and you will be encouraged by their praise.

Everyone has the blues from time to time; it’s a normal part of life. But usually that down-in-the-dumps feeling won’t stick around for long, especially if you use some of the tips offered in this article. If discouragement continues to plague you and you can’t seem to shake it, there may be something more serious going on. In that case, have a chat with your minister or another trusted adult.



*Gayle L. Hoefker lives in Spanish Fort, Alabama, where she assists her husband serving the Gulf Coast church congregations. She runs year ‘round, staying physically and spiritually fit. glhoefker@gmail.com*

# COMPASS CHECK

United Youth Magazine

*United Church of God*

*P.O. Box 541027*

*Cincinnati, OH 45254-1027*

NONPROFIT ORG.

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

United Church of God  
an International Association

For spiritual tidbits and uplifts, follow

 **@Compasscheck**

## We want your articles!

*If you want to write for this magazine,  
please e-mail your article to  
[compasscheck@ucg.org](mailto:compasscheck@ucg.org).*

We can't promise to print your article, but we would be happy to consider it. Please include your name, age, town and where you attend church. Contributors to this section must be ages 12-19, and articles should be 500 or fewer words.