



The View From Here

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“GET TO KNOW YOURSELF”

The ancient challenge “*Know yourself!*” is as relevant now as when it was chiseled into the marble at Delphi. Challenged by it, Socrates dared to walk the streets of Athens and say, “*The unexamined life is not worth living.*”

If it was tough or—as for Socrates—*dangerous* duty to hurl the challenge in antiquity, it is no easier today. We are incredibly busy. We board planes, fill our calendars, and deplete our energies. We pay bills, shuttle our kids, and attend the funerals of our friends. When we do “take some time off” or get a break, we try to pack in too much with too many in too big a hurry. Think about your recent Christmas experience! When we get back, we joke about needing time to recover from the vacation. But we seldom take the time to sit and ponder. To reflect. To examine ourselves. To ask God if we are on a meaningful life path.

Ever wonder why Jesus would occasionally get up early in the morning and slip away into the countryside? He wasn’t running from his followers or trying to escape his personal sense of mission. He was staying true to his mission by clarifying it to himself in those special times of musing, prayer, and focus.

While some theologies preserve the idea, very few of us take seriously the notion that life cannot be other than it is. God isn’t writing a script with you as a passive pencil in his hand. You are the co-author of your life story, and you can be a good writer - sensitive to plot, catching the subtleties of the storyline, and building to a final chapter that brings things together in a meaningful way.

If that’s the outcome you want, you have to pay attention to the narrative you are generating. If you wonder to yourself or have to apologize to others that you don’t know why you said that or still can’t figure out why you did something so out of character, maybe you’ve slipped into a

role without realizing it. You’ve become bitter or distant or angry. You’ve withdrawn or run away or butted in. In any case, a *that’s-just-not-me* alibi may be wearing thin for all parties concerned.

Don’t let the circumstances dictate your identity. Know yourself. Then decide how you and God need to respond to the circumstance. You are not “fated” or “destined” to fail, collapse, be miserable, make others miserable, be thrown under the bus, or otherwise fall victim to life. You can choose. If not a new path, you can choose a new attitude for traveling the path before you.

This damaged creation is on its way to being created anew. That means the script is subject to editing. The final curtain hasn’t fallen. You and God have the option of working together to rework the ending.

As Yahweh told the Covenant People during a time of darkness in Babylon: “*I know what I’m doing. I have it all planned out—plans to take care of you, not abandon you, plans to give you the future you hope for*” (Jeremiah 29.11 MESSAGE).

So take stock.
Reflect.
Know yourself.

And know that God always has options.

Jack

THOUGHTS TO CONSIDER

I am having an out-of-money experience.

I plan on living forever. So far, so good.

I am in shape. Round is a shape.

A day without sunshine is like night.

I have kleptomania, but when it gets really bad, I take something for it.

If marriage were outlawed, only outlaws would have in-laws.

You’re getting old when you get the same sensation from a rocking chair that you once got from a roller coaster.

The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing at the right time, but also to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.

Time may be a great healer, but it’s also a lousy beautician.

Age doesn’t always bring wisdom. Sometimes age comes alone.

Life not only begins at 40, it begins to show.



Revelation: The Last Word

March 7	THE LAST WORD <i>The Last Word On Judgment</i>	<i>Revelation 15-18</i>
March 14	THE LAST WORD <i>The Last Word On Salvation</i>	<i>Revelation 19-20</i>
March 21	THE LAST WORD <i>The Last Word On Heaven</i>	<i>Revelation 21.1-22.5</i>
March 28	THE LAST WORD <i>The Last Words</i>	<i>Revelation 22.6-21</i>
April 3	FROM SON TO SPIRIT	<i>John 14-17</i>
April 10	A MEAL TO LAST UNTIL ETERNITY	<i>Matthew 26-26-29</i>
April 17	THE DEATH OF LIFE <i>Palm Sunday</i>	<i>John 19.18</i>
April 24	THE DEATH OF DEATH <i>Easter Sunday</i>	<i>Luke 21.1-43</i>

BEAR ATTACK

By Jon Acuff

Unless you are deliberate about it, it's easy to go your whole marriage without really talking about money much. You handle the budget, or your spouse does, and it's not a topic that comes up that often unless there's a crisis. I understand that, and I used to be okay with that approach to marriage until I started reading some scary statistics.

Dave often says that the number-one cause of divorce in North America is money fights and money problems. **A study from Citibank found that 57% of divorced couples said money fights were the primary reason they didn't get along.** Sure, that *seems* scary, but the truth is that data alone rarely has teeth. We're not inspired to change just because we hear a big statistic. We need motivation. We need a story that can help it all make sense.

So here is one about bears, something I originally discussed in my book, *Stuff Christians Like*.

For easier math, let's just say that 50% of divorces involve money issues. But instead of money, let's talk about bears. **Imagine that 50% of your neighbors were attacked by bears.** That means that of the 10 people in your cul-de-sac, five of them were mauled by bears while at the mailbox, in the driveway, or sitting

on the back porch. Would that change the way you thought about bears?

Would you and your spouse talk about bears more? Would you plan and prepare for bear safety? Would you, as a couple, do everything you could to prevent a bear attack? Would you carry bear spray and learn some sort of bear kung fu?

Of course you would. In a world where 50% of people were attacked by bears, we would all care deeply and passionately about bear preparation.

So why don't we talk about money with our spouses when we know that over half of all divorces involve money? Why do we think we'll be part of the minority who won't get burned by money problems in a marriage? Why aren't we honest? Why don't we carve out time from our busy schedules to really work on it?

We don't, because money can be an uncomfortable topic. But it's a critical one, too. Talk about it with your spouse. Be honest. Be open. And be ready. The world is crawling with bears.

Jon Acuff is the founder of stuffchristianslike.net and the author of the book Stuff Christians Like and joined the Dave Ramsey team in 2010. He lives with his wife and two daughters in Nashville, Tennessee.