



Illustrations for Learning

A Modern Shepherd.....	1
Be Yourself.....	2
Christmas Story of the Man and the Birds.....	3
Cost of a Miracle	4
Courage Quotes	4
Dare Mighty Things.....	5
It Will Pass.....	5
Hupotasso	5
Not Permitted	7
Perseverance.....	7
Prayer and Taxes.....	7
Recall Notice.....	8
Refined like Silver: Malachi 3:3.....	8
Second Opinion	9
Ten Top Predictions for the New Year.....	9
The Badger and the Dachshund.....	10
White Hair.....	12
Your Value in God's Eyes.....	12

A Modern Shepherd

By Philip Yancey

Some metaphors in the bible simply do not transfer well into modern technological societies. What is a “good shepherd” like? What did Jesus mean by the term? We have to turn to other, more modern analogies for an explanation.

A small drama that may serve as well as any took place on the slopes of Washington’s Mount Rainier one Memorial Day weekend. A Christian dentist named James Reddick was teaching his daughter, 12, and son, 11, the joy of mountain hiking when a sudden storm came up. The storm battered them with hurricane-force winds and thick, wet sheets of snow. A blinding “whiteout” made it impossible to see or move on the steep slopes.

After digging an oblong trench with an aluminum mess kit, Dr. Reddick tucked his children into sleeping bags away from the entrance. He covered the opening with a tarp and tried to weight it down with backpacks. But to prevent the tarp from periodically blowing away and thus filling the trench with swirling snow, Reddick had to lie directly across the opening. His body protected his son and daughter from the howling wind.

Two days passed before searchers finally noticed a corner of one of the backpackers protruding from the snow. They rushed to the site, praying the snow-covered mound would contain the three missing hikers. They found Sharon and David Reddick inside, very much alive. But the stiff body of their father lay against one wall of the snow cave. He had “taken the cold spot,” in the searchers’ words, using his own back as the outer wall.

An image something like that must have filled Jesus’ listeners’ minds as he described a good shepherd who would “lay down his life” for his sheep (John 10:11). Nothing—not ravaging cold, thieves, or wolves—would come between the good shepherd and his sheep. He would die for them.

As Jesus' life heads toward final tragedy in Jerusalem, the theme of this sacrifice surfaces in a variety of symbols and statements. Ironically, his followers are growing in numbers and loyalty. His popularity reaches a peak with the feeding of 5,000 people on a handful of morsels, a miracle mentioned by all four gospel writers. The ground swell of support to make Jesus king deeply impresses his followers; Jesus, however, escapes into the hills (6:1-15).

Jesus will not be a king on their terms. He continues on his lonely mission, stirring up controversy and hatred in other groups by healing people on the Sabbath and by proclaiming himself equal with God. After one of his most impressive signs, the raising to life of Lazarus, many Jews come over to him. But, simultaneously, religious leaders draw the callous and pragmatic conclusion that it is best for one man—Jesus—to die so that the whole nation would not be threatened (11:5)). Four separate times they try to seize him.

Jesus came to offer "life," one of those one-syllable words, swollen with meaning, that John threads through his narrative. Lazarus receives that life in an astonishingly literal way, proving another sign of Jesus' ultimate power. Jesus, through, prepares to give up his own life, making the ultimate sacrifice of the good shepherd. –

Be Yourself

Once upon a time, the animals decided they should do something meaningful to meet the problems of the new world. So they organized a school.

They adopted an activity curriculum of running, climbing, swimming, and flying. To make it easier to administer the curriculum, all the animals took all the subjects.

The duck was excellent in swimming; in fact, better than his instructor, but he made only passing grades in flying, and was very poor in running. Since he was slow in running, he had to drop swimming and stay after school to practice running. This caused his webfeet to be badly worn, so that he was only average in swimming. But average was quite acceptable, so nobody worried about that—except the duck.

The rabbit started at the top of his class in running, but developed a nervous twitch in his leg muscles because of so much make-up work in swimming.

The squirrel was excellent in climbing, but he encountered constant frustration in flying class because his teacher made him start from the ground up instead of from the treetop down. He developed charley horses from overexertion, and so only got a C in climbing and a D in running.

The eagle was a problem child and was severely disciplined for being a nonconformist. In climbing classes he beat all the others to the top of the tree, but insisted on using his own way to get there....

The obvious moral of the story is a simple one: Each creature has its own set of capabilities in which it will naturally excel—unless it is expected or forced to fill a mold that doesn't fit. What is true of creatures in the forest is true of Christians in the family. God has not made us all the same. It's OK to be you...so relax. Enjoy your own capabilities. Cultivate your own style. Appreciate the members of your family or your fellowship for who they are, even though their outlook or style may be miles different from yours. Rabbits don't fly. Eagles don't swim. Ducks look funny trying to climb. Squirrels don't have feathers. Stop comparing!

Christmas Story of the Man and the Birds

By Paul Harvey

Unable to trace its proper parentage, I have designated this as my Christmas Story of the Man and the Birds.

You know, THE Christmas Story, the God born a man in a manger and all that escapes some moderns, mostly, I think, because they seek complex answers to their questions and this one is so utterly simple. So for the cynics and the skeptics and the unconvinced I submit a modern parable.

Now the man to whom I'm going to introduce you was not a scrooge, he was a kind, decent, mostly good man. Generous to his family, upright in his dealings with other men. But he just didn't believe all that incarnation stuff which the churches proclaim at Christmas Time. It just didn't make sense and he was too honest to pretend otherwise. He just couldn't swallow the Jesus Story, about God coming to Earth as a man.

"I'm truly sorry to distress you," he told his wife, "but I'm not going with you to church this Christmas Eve." He said he'd feel like a hypocrite. That he'd much rather just stay at home, but that he would wait up for them. And so he stayed and they went to the midnight service.

Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier and then went back to his fireside chair and began to read his newspaper. Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound. Then another, and then another. Sort of a thump or a thud. At first he thought someone must be throwing snowballs against his living room window.

But when he went to the front door to investigate he found a flock of birds huddled miserably in the snow. They'd been caught in the storm and, in a desperate search for shelter, had tried to fly through his large landscape window. Well, he couldn't let the poor creatures lie there and freeze, so he remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a warm shelter, if he could direct the birds to it.

Quickly he put on a coat, galoshes, tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light, but the birds did not come in. He figured food would entice them in. So he hurried back to the house, fetched bread crumbs, sprinkled them on the snow, making a trail to the yellow-lighted wide open doorway of the stable. But to his dismay, the birds ignored the bread crumbs, and continued to flap around helplessly in the snow.

He tried catching them. He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around them waving his arms. Instead, they scattered in every direction, except into the warm, lighted barn. And then, he realized, that they were afraid of him. To them, he reasoned, I am a strange and terrifying creature. If only I could think of some way to let them know that they can trust me. That I am not trying to hurt them, but to help them. But how? Because any move he made tended to frighten them, confuse them. They just would not follow. They would not be led or shooed because they feared him.

"If only I could be a bird," he thought to himself, "and mingle with them and speak their language. Then I could tell them not to be afraid. Then I could show them the way to safe, warm ... to the safe warm barn. But I would have to be one of them so they could see, and hear and understand."

At that moment the church bells began to ring. The sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind. And he stood there listening to the bells - "Adeste Fidelis" - listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas. And he sank to his knees in the snow.

Cost of a Miracle

A little girl went to her bedroom and pulled a glass jelly jar from its hiding place in the closet. She poured the change out on the floor and counted it carefully. Three times, even. The total had to be exactly perfect. No chance here for mistakes. Carefully placing the coins back in the jar and twisting on the cap, she slipped out the back door and made her way 6 blocks to Rexall's Drug Store with the big red Indian Chief sign above the door.

She waited patiently for the pharmacist to give her some attention but he was too busy at this moment. Tess twisted her feet to make a scuffing noise. Nothing. She cleared her throat with the most disgusting sound she could muster. No good. Finally she took a quarter from her jar and banged it on the glass counter. That did it! "And what do you want?" the pharmacist asked in an annoyed tone of voice. "I'm talking to my brother from Chicago whom I haven't seen in ages," he said without waiting for a reply to his question. "Well, I want to talk to you about my brother," Tess answered back in the same annoyed tone. "He's really, really sick... and I want to buy a miracle." "I beg your pardon?" said the pharmacist. His name is Andrew and he has something bad growing inside his head and my Daddy says only a miracle can save him now. So how much does a miracle cost?" "We don't sell miracles here, little girl. I'm sorry but I can't help you," the pharmacist said, softening a little. "Listen, I have the money to pay for it. If it isn't enough, I will get the rest. Just tell me how much it costs."

The pharmacist's brother was a well dressed man. He stooped down and asked the little girl, "What kind of a miracle does your brother need?" "I don't know," Tess replied with her eyes welling up. "I just know he's really sick and Mommy says he needs an operation. But my Daddy can't pay for it, so I want to use my money." "How much do you have?" asked the man from Chicago. "One dollar and eleven cents," Tess answered barely audibly. And it's all the money I have, but I can get some more if I need to." "Well, what a coincidence," smiled the man. "A dollar and eleven cents--- the exact price of a miracle for little brothers." "He took her money in one hand and with the other hand he grasped her mitten and said "Take me to where you live. I want to see your brother and meet your parents. Let's see if I have the miracle you need."

That well dressed man was Dr. Carlton Armstrong, a surgeon, specializing in neuro-surgery. The operation was completed free of charge and it wasn't long until Andrew was home again and doing well. Mom and Dad were happily talking about the chain of events that had led them to this place. That surgery," her Mom whispered. "was a real miracle. I wonder how much it would have cost?"

Tess smiled.. She knew exactly how much a miracle cost...one dollar and eleven cents.... plus the faith of a little child.. A miracle is not the suspension of natural law, but the operation of a higher law...

Courage Quotes

"Courage is resistance to fear, master of fear — not absence of fear." (Mark Twain)

"In whatever arena of life one may meet the challenge of courage, whatever may be the sacrifices he faces if he follows his conscience — the loss of his friends, his fortune, his contentment, even the esteem of his fellow men — each man must decide for himself the course he will follow. The stories of past courage can define that ingredient — they can teach,

they can offer hope, they can provide inspiration. But they cannot supply courage itself. For this each man must look into his own soul." (John F. Kennedy)

"Successful living requires courage. Perhaps courage is a basic life quality which God gives us, since it is of spirit. Moments may come when courage alone shall stand between us and disaster. In the long pull across the years there will be times when we shall need dogged courage to keep us going when the going is hard. And what is the source of such rugged courage? Surely that sense of God's presence when we hear him say, 'I am with you always.'" (Norman V. Peale)

"Courage and cowardice are antithetical. Courage is an inner resolution to go forward in spite of obstacles and frightening situations; cowardice is a submissive surrender to circumstances. Courage breeds creative self-affirmation; cowardice produces destructive self-abnegation. Courage faces fear and thereby masters it; cowardice represses fear and is thereby mastered by it. Courageous men never lose the zest for living, even though their life situation is zestless; cowardly men, overwhelmed by the uncertainties of life, lose the will to live. We must constantly build dikes of courage to hold back the flood of fear." (Martin Luther King, Jr.)

"The time to take counsel of your fears is before you make an important battle decision. That's the time to listen to every fear you can imagine. When you have collected all the facts and fears and made your decision, turn off all your fears and go ahead." (George S. Patton)

Dare Mighty Things

Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure, than to rake rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat. –Teddy Roosevelt

It Will Pass

A student went to his meditation teacher and said, "My meditation is horrible! I feel so distracted, or my legs ache, or I'm constantly falling asleep. It's just horrible!"

"It will pass," the teacher said matter-of-factly.

A week later, the student came back to his teacher. "My meditation is wonderful! I feel so aware, so peaceful, so alive! It's just wonderful!"

"It will pass, the teacher replied matter-of-factly

Hupotasso

Nail in the Fence

There once was a little boy who had a bad temper. His Father gave him a bag of nails and told him that every time he lost his temper, he must hammer a nail into the back of the fence. The first day the boy had driven 37 nails into the fence. Over the next few weeks, as he learned to control his anger, the number of nails hammered daily gradually dwindled down. He discovered it was easier to hold his temper than to drive those nails into the fence.

Finally the day came when the boy didn't lose his temper at all. He told his father about it and the father suggested that the boy now pull out one nail for each day that he was able to hold his temper. The days passed and the young boy was finally able to tell his father that all the nails were gone. The father took his son by the hand and led him to the fence. He said, "You have done well, my son, but look at the holes in the fence. The fence will never be the same. When you say things in anger, they leave a scar just like this one. You can put a knife in a man and draw it out.

It won't matter how many times you say I'm sorry, the wound is still there. "A verbal wound is as bad as a physical one. Friends are very rare jewels, indeed. They make you smile and encourage you to succeed. They lend an ear, they share words of praise and they always want to open their hearts to us." Show your friends how much you care.

Never Been Unloved

I have been unfaithful
I have been unworthy
I have been unrighteous
And I have been unmerciful

I have been unreachable
I have been unteachable
I have been unwilling
And I have been undesirable

And sometimes I have been unwise
I've been undone by what I'm unsure of
But because of you
And all that you went through
I know that I have never been unloved

I have been unbroken
I have been unmended
I have been uneasy
And I've been unapproachable
I've been unemotional
I've been unexceptional
I've been undecided
And I have been unqualified

Unaware--I have been unfair
I've been unfit for blessings from above
But even I can see
The sacrifice You made for me
To show that I have never been unloved

It's because of you
And all that you went through

I know that I have never been unloved

--by Michael W Smith/Wayne Kirkpatrick

Not Permitted

A dog had followed his owner to school. His owner was a fourth grader at a public elementary school. However, when the bell rang, the dog sidled inside the building and made it all the way to the child's classroom before a teacher noticed and shoo'ed him outside, closing the door behind him. The dog sat down, whimpered and stared at the closed doors. Then God appeared beside the dog, patted his head, and said, "Don't feel bad fella'—they won't let ME in either."

Perseverance

Cripple him, and you have Sir Walter Scott.

Lock him in a prison cell, and you have a John Bunyan.

Bury him in the snows of "Valley Forge, and you have a George Washington.

Raise him in abject poverty, and you have an Abraham Lincoln.

Subject him to bitter religious prejudice, and you have a Disraeli.

Burn him so severely in a schoolhouse fire that the doctors say he will never walk again, and you have a Glenn Cunningham, who set the world's record in 1934 for running a mile in four minutes and 6.7 seconds.

Deafen a genius composer, and you have a Ludwig van Beethoven.

Have him or her born black in a society filled with racial discrimination, and you have a Booker T. Washington, a George Washington Carver, or a Martin Luther King, Jr.

Make him the first child to survive in a poor Italian family of eighteen children, and you have an Enrico Caruso.

Have him born of parents who survived a Nazi concentration camp, paralyze him from the waist down when he is four, and you have incomparable concert violinists, Itzhak Perlman.

Call him a slow learner, "retarded," and write him off as uneducable, and you have an Albert Einstein. —Ted Engstrom, *The Pursuit of Excellence*

Prayer and Taxes

A little boy wanted \$100 very badly. He prayed for weeks, but nothing happened. So, he decided to write a letter to God requesting \$100.

When the postal authorities received the letter to "God, USA", they decided to send it to the President. The President was so amused that he instructed his secretary to send the little boy a \$5 bill. The President thought this would appear to be a lot of money to a little boy.

The little boy was delighted with the \$5 bill, and sat down to write a thank-you note to God. The postal authorities forwarded this letter on to the President, too.

It read:

"Dear God, Thank you very much for sending the money. However, I noticed that for some reason you sent it through Washington, D.C., and those guys deducted \$95 in taxes!"

(From Pastor Tim's Sermon Illustrations and Inspirations List)

Recall Notice

Subject: recall notice

Regardless of make or year, all units known as "human being" are being recalled by the Manufacturer. This is due to a malfunction in the original prototype units code named "Adam" and "Eve" resulting in the reproduction of the same defect in all subsequent units. This defect is technically termed "Serious Internal Non-morality," but more commonly known as "SIN."

Some of the symptoms of the SIN defect:

- (a) Loss of direction
- (b) Lack of peace and joy
- (c) Depression
- (d) Foul vocal emissions
- (e) Selfishness
- (f) Ingratitude
- (g) Fearfulness
- (h) Rebellion
- (i) Jealousy

The Manufacturer is providing factory authorized repair service free of charge to correct the SIN defect. The Repair Technician, Jesus Christ, has most generously offered to bear the entire burden of the staggering cost of these repairs.

To repeat, there is no fee required. The number to call for repair in all areas is: P-R-A-Y-E-R.

Once connected please upload the burden of SIN through the REPENTANCE procedure. Next, download ATONEMENT from the Repair Technician, Christ, into the heart component of the human unit. No matter how big or small the SIN defect is, Christ will replace it with:

- (a) Love
- (b) Joy
- (c) Peace
- (d) Kindness
- (e) Goodness
- (f) Faithfulness
- (g) Gentleness
- (h) Patience
- (i) Self-control

Please see the operating manual, HOLY BIBLE, for further details on the use of these fixes.

As an added upgrade, the Manufacturer has made available to all repaired units a facility enabling direct monitoring and assistance from the resident Maintenance Technician, the Holy Spirit. Repaired units need only make Him welcome and He will take up residence on the premises.

WARNING: Continuing to operate a human unit without corrections voids Manufacturer's warranty, exposing the unit to dangers and problems too numerous to list, and will ultimately result in the human unit being incinerated.

Thank you for your immediate attention.

Please assist by notifying others of this important recall notice!

Refined like Silver

"He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver" (Malachi 3:3).

This verse puzzled some women in a Bible study and they wondered what this statement meant about the character and nature of God. One of the women offered to find out the process or refining silver and get back to the group at their next Bible study.

That week, the woman called a silversmith and made an appointment to watch him at work. She didn't mention anything about the reason for her interest beyond her curiosity about the process of refining silver.

As she watched the silversmith, he held a piece of silver over the fire and let it heat up. He explained that in refining silver, one needed to hold the silver in the middle of the fire where the flames were hottest as to burn away all the impurities. The woman thought about God holding us in such a hot spot; then she thought again about the verse that says: "He sits as a refiner and purifier of silver."

She asked the silversmith if it was true that he had to sit there in front of the fire the whole time the silver was being refined.

The man answered that yes, he not only had to sit there holding the silver, but he had to keep his eyes on the silver the entire time. It was in the fire. If the silver was left a moment too long in the flames, it would be destroyed.

The woman was silent for a moment. Then she asked the silversmith, "How do you know when the silver is fully refined?"

He smiled at her and answered, "Oh, that's easy...when I see my image in it."

If today you are feeling the heat of the fire, remember that God has his eye on you and will keep watching you until He sees His image in you.

Pass this on right now. This very moment, someone needs to know that God is watching over them. And, whatever they're going through; they'll be in a better person in the end.

Second Opinion

This guy was climbing a tree when suddenly he slipped. He grabbed at a branch and was hanging in mid air. After an hour, he felt himself getting exhausted and looked up to the heavens and cried out: "God, help me! Please, help me!"

All of a sudden the clouds parted and a voice boomed out from on high. "Let Go!" said the voice.

The guy paused, looked up at heaven once more, and said: "Is there anyone else up there?"

Ten Top Predictions for the New Year

1. The Bible will still have the answers.
2. Prayer will still work.
3. The Holy Spirit will still move.
4. God will still inhabit the praises of His people.
5. There will still be God-anointed preaching.
6. There will still be singing of praise.
7. God will still pour out blessings upon His people.

8. There will still be room at the Cross.
9. Jesus will still love you.
10. Jesus will still save the lost.

The Badger and the Dachshund

A girl was walking down a path in Minnesota with her Dachshund when they came across a badger. Now badgers are tough ferocious creatures that have huge sharp claws for digging and thick course hair it is virtually impenetrable. Animals avoid badgers because of their mean tempers. Even a bear will back down when confronted by a badger. As soon as to Dachshund saw the badger, its hair bristled and its tail went straight up and it charged after the badger, the girl cried after it to come back and the startled badger turned tail and began to run back to its den. The Dachshund followed the badger and the girl screaming followed the Dachshund. Underground she could hear them thrashing, digging, and fighting. And then there was silence. She waited with horror until she saw the hindquarters of the Dachshund backing out of the den dragging the dead badger out. When she did not know was that Dachshund had been specially bred for hundreds of years to hunt badgers in Europe. The Dachshund's small size allowed them to enter the den of the badgers. Their digging ability allowed them to borrow under the claws of the badger. And their snouts were designed to attack the only vulnerable area on a badger—the underside of the neck. The Dachshund had never seen a badger before, but when that Dachshund saw that badger, something inside him shouted, "I was born for this!"

As believers we are remade in the image of the Lion of Judah. We are made for battle. We are born-again to rescue those that Satan has bound.

The Brick

A young executive was traveling down a neighborhood street, going a bit too fast in his new Jaguar. He was watching for kids darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something.

As his car passed, no children appeared. Instead, a brick smashed into the Jag's side door!.

He slammed on the brakes and spun the Jag back to the spot from where the brick had been thrown. He jumped out of the car, grabbed some kid and pushed him up against a parked car shouting, "What was that all about and who are you? Just what the heck are you doing?!!"

Building up a head of steam he went on. "That's a new car and that brick you threw is going to cost a lot of money. Why did you do it?!!"

"Please, mister, please. I'm sorry, I didn't know what else to do!" pleaded the youngster. "I threw the brick because no one else would stop..." tears were dripping down the boys chin as he pointed around the parked car. "It's my brother," he said. "He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up."

Sobbing, the boy asked the executive, "Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me."

Moved beyond words, the driver tried to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. He lifted the young man back into the wheelchair and took out his handkerchief and wiped the scrapes

and cuts, checking to see that everything was going to be okay. "Thank you and God bless you," the grateful child said to him. The man then watched the little boy push his brother down the sidewalk toward their home.

It was a long walk back to his Jaguara long, slow walk. He never did repair the side door. He kept the dent to remind him not to go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at you to get your attention.

God whispers in your soul and speaks to your heart.
Sometimes when you don't have time to listen, He has to throw a "brick" at you.

It's your choice:
Listen to the whisper -- or wait for the brick.

The Old Man and His Grandson

There was once a very old man, whose eyes had become dim, his ears dull of hearing, his knees trembled, and when he sat at table he could hardly hold the spoon, and spilt the broth upon the table-cloth or let it run out of his mouth. His son and his son's wife were disgusted at this, so the old grandfather at last had to sit in the corner behind the stove, and they gave him his food in an earthenware bowl, and not even enough of it. And he used to look towards the table with his eyes full of tears. Once, too, his trembling hands could not hold the bowl, and it fell to the ground and broke. The young wife scolded him, but he said nothing and only sighed. Then they brought him a wooden bowl for a few half-pence, out of which he had to eat.

They were once sitting thus when the little grandson of four years old began to gather together some bits of wood upon the ground. 'What are you doing there?' asked the father. 'I am making a little trough,' answered the child, 'for father and mother to eat out of when I am big.'

The man and his wife looked at each other for a while, and presently began to cry. Then they took the old grandfather to the table, and henceforth always let him eat with them, and likewise said nothing if he did spill a little of anything.

The Parable of the Seagull

A woman went to the beach with her children. Her 4-year-old son ran up to her, grabbed her hand, and led her to the shore where a dead seagull lay in the sand.

"Mommy, what happened to him?" the little boy asked.

"He died and went to heaven," she replied.

The child thought for a moment and said, "And God threw him back down?"

Treat Your Bible like a Cell Phone

I wonder what would happen if we treated our Bible like we treat our cell phones?
What if we carried it around in our purses or pockets?

What if we turned back to go get it if we for got it?
What if we flipped through it several times a day?
What if we used it to receive messages from the text?
What if we treated it like we couldn't live without it?
What if we gave it to kids as gifts?
What if we used it as we traveled?
What if we used it in case of an emergency?
Oh, and one more thing. Unlike our cell phone, we don't ever have to worry about our bible being disconnected because Jesus already paid the bill.

Why

Cindy Sheehan asked President Bush, "Why did my son have to die in Iraq?"
Another mother asked President Kennedy, "Why did my son have to die in Vietnam?"
Another mother asked President Truman, "Why did my son have to die in Korea?"
Another mother asked President F.D. Roosevelt, "Why did my son have to die at Iwo Jima?"
Another mother asked President W. Wilson, "Why did my son have to die on the battlefield of France?"
Yet another mother asked President Lincoln, "Why did my son have to die at Gettysburg?"
And yet another mother asked President G. Washington, "Why did my son have to die near Valley Forge?"
Then, long, long ago, a mother asked, "Heavenly Father, why did my Son have to die on a cross outside of Jerusalem?"
The answers to all these are similar -- "that others may have life and dwell in peace, happiness and freedom."

White Hair

One day, a little girl is sitting and watching her mother do the dishes at the kitchen sink. She suddenly notices that her mother has several strands of white hair sticking out in contrast on her brunette head. She looks at her mother and inquisitively asks, "Why are some of your hairs white, Mom?" Her mother replied, "Well, every time that you do something wrong and make me cry or unhappy, one of my hairs turns white." The little girl thought about this revelation for a while, and then said, "So, Momma, how come ALL of grandma's hairs are white?"

Your Value in God's Eyes

A well-known speaker started off his seminar by holding up a \$20 bill. In the room of 200, he asked, "Who would like this \$20 bill?" Hands started going up. He said, "I am going to give this \$20 to one of you but first, let me do this." He proceeded to crumple the dollar bill up. He then asked, "Who still wants it?" Still the hands were up in the air.

"Well," he replied, "What if I do this?" And he dropped it on the ground and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe. He picked it up, now all crumpled and dirty. "Now who still wants it?" Still the hands went into the air. "My friends, you have all learned a very valuable lesson. No matter what I did to the money, you still wanted it because it did not decrease in value. It was still worth \$20.

Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled, and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the circumstances that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value in God's eyes. To

Him, dirty or clean, crumpled or finely creased, you are still priceless to Him. You were worth His Son—Jesus Christ—dying on the cross for you.

<http://www.suryakumari.com/thoughts/>

Inspiring Stories <http://www.kathan-web.de/id349.htm>

Apologetics

Bible Overview

Church Administration

Church History

Church Starting

Communication

Conflict Resolution

Counselling

Creation

Crucial Issues

Update on Joe Arpaio's prison reform:

Joe Arpaio is the Maricopa Arizona County Sheriff who keeps getting re-elected. Maybe this is why:

Sheriff Joe Arpaio in Arizona created the "Tent City Jail." He has jail meals down to 40 cents a serving and charges the inmates for them.

He stopped smoking and porno magazines in the jails; Took away their weights; and cut off all but "G" movies.

He started chain gangs so the inmates could do free work on county and city projects. Then he started chain gangs for women so he wouldn't get sued for discrimination.

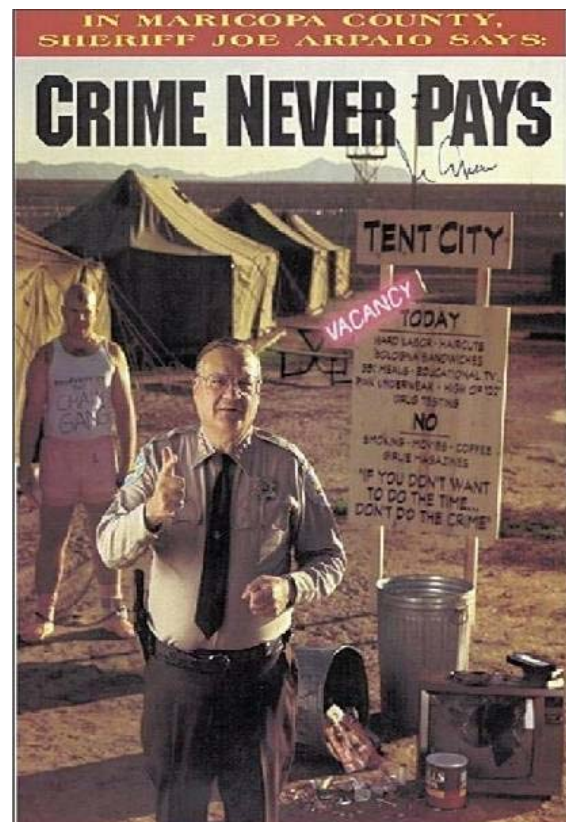
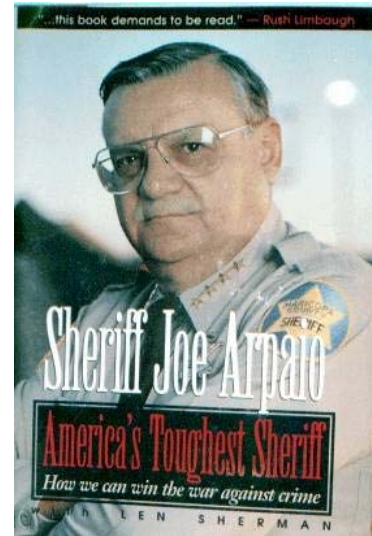
He took away cable TV until he found out there was a Federal Court Order that required cable TV For jails. So he hooked up the cable TV again but only let in the Disney Channel and the Weather Channel. When asked why the weather channel he replied, "So they will know how hot it's gonna be while they are working on my chain gangs.

He cut off coffee since it has zero nutritional value. When the inmates complained, he told them, "This isn't the Ritz/Carlton. If you don't like it, don't come back."

He bought Newt Gingrich' lecture series on videotape that he pipes into the jails. When asked by a reporter if he had any lecture series by a Democrat, he replied that a democratic lecture series might explain why a lot of the inmates were in his jails in the first place.

With temperatures being even hotter than usual in Phoenix (116 degrees), the Associated Press Reports: "About 2,000 inmates living in a barbed-wire-surrounded tent encampment at the Maricopa County Jail have been given permission to strip down to their government-issued pink boxer shorts. On Wednesday, hundreds of men wearing boxers were either curled up on their bunk beds or chatted in the tents, which reached 138 Degrees inside. Many were also swathed in wet pink towels as sweat collected on their chests and dripped down to their PINK SOCKS. "It feels like we are in a furnace," said James Zanzot, a inmate who has lived in the TENTS for 1 year. "It's inhumane."

Joe Arpaio, the tough-guy sheriff who created the tent city and long ago started making his prisoners wear pink, and eat bologna sandwiches, is not one bit sympathetic. He said Wednesday that he told all of the inmates: "It's 120 degrees in Iraq and our soldiers are living in tents too, And they have to wear full battle gear, But they didn't commit any crimes, so shut your mouths!"



Maybe if all prisons were like this one there would be a lot less crime and/or repeat offenders.

Criminals should be punished for their crimes—not live in luxury until it's time for their parole, only to go out and commit another crime so they can get back in to live on taxpayers money and enjoy things taxpayers can't afford to have for themselves.

Sheriff Joe was just re-elected Sheriff in Maricopa County, Arizona.

Devotionals

Ethics

Evangelism

Family

Humour

Leadership

Marriage

Men

New Testament

Old Testament

Pastoral Leadership

Preaching

A minister dies and is waiting in line at the Pearly Gates. Ahead of him is a guy who's dressed in sunglasses, a loud shirt, leather jacket and jeans. Saint Peter addresses this cool guy, "Who are you, so that I may know whether or not to admit you to the Kingdom of Heaven?"

The guy replies, "I'm Peter Pilot, retired Delta Airlines from Georgia."

Saint Peter consults his list. He smiles and says to the pilot, "Take this silken robe and golden staff and enter the Kingdom." The pilot goes into Heaven with his robe and staff.

Next it's the minister's turn. He stands erect and booms out, "I am Joseph Snow, pastor of Saint Mary's in Pasadena for the last 43 years." Saint Peter consults his list. He says to the minister, "Take this cotton robe and wooden staff and enter the Kingdom."

"Just a minute," says the minister. "That man was a pilot and he gets a silken robe and golden staff, and I get only cotton and wood. How can this be?"

"Up here, we work by results," says Saint Peter. "When you preached - people slept; when he flew - people prayed." Don't you dare preach a boring sermon!

Prophecy

Spiritual Disciplines

Suffering

Teaching

Theology

Women

World Religions

Worship

Youth