

THE TRUE STORY OF THANKSGIVING

When I first received the request to write a short article about Thanksgiving for the youth gazette, I had no idea what I would write about. When we think “Thanksgiving”, we think about the things we’re thankful for. We all have plenty of those things: family, friends, a church, a home, safety, provisions- the list goes on, but I wanted to write something a little different than just a list of things I’m thankful for.

I ended up going to everyone’s favorite place when they are in search of some kind of inspiration, Google (Oh, and yes, I am very thankful for Google). The very first entry was a blog post titled “The True Story of Thanksgiving”, and after reading it, I decided that I would use it for my own article.

The author describes Thanksgiving in four stages. First, God created humanity to be grateful, or to give thanks. As God’s children, we are called to praise His name and to give Him thanks for all that He does for us. The second stage is that we often miserably fail in giving Him this thanks. In the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve literally had everything they would ever need, they sinned against God and ate the forbidden fruit. They committed the sin of ingratitude. God had given them everything, but they still wanted “more”. The following quote, taken directly from the blog, really touched me: “Our fall was, has always been, and always will be, that we aren’t satisfied in God and what He gives. We hunger for something more, something other.” How true is that of the sinful nature of man?!

The third stage discusses that Jesus came to the thankless world, full of ingratitude, and redeemed those that are ungrateful. In His time on earth, Jesus showed us what it means to be grateful. Throughout the New Testament, Jesus continually gives the Father thanks, whether it is when Lazarus rises from the dead (John 11:41), when Jesus feeds the crowd of four thousand people with 7 loaves of bread and a few small fish (Matthew 15:36), or during the Last Supper (Luke 22: 17-20). In all things, He gave thanks. Wow! There’s something we should live up to!

In the fourth stage, we are freed for Thanksgiving. Christ died on the cross for our sins, including the sin of ingratitude. As Christians, we are called to be in a constant posture of thankfulness toward our God. Through this continual posture of thankfulness we are made more like Jesus. Only through Jesus are we able to truly be the thankful people that God created us to be.

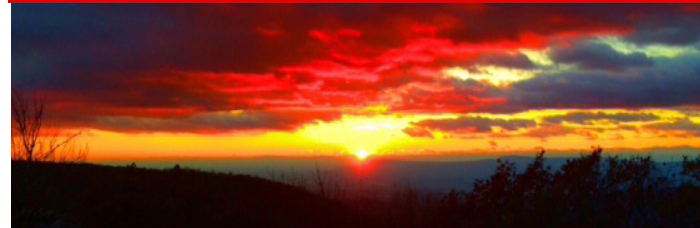
In this time of Thanksgiving, I hope each of you not only gives thanks for the “typical” things in life, such as food, shelter, etc, but also give thanks for Jesus’ death on the cross- a death that gave His followers a new meaning for the word “thanks”.

Kristina Pustinovich

Excerpts from “The True Story of Thanksgiving” on the Desiring God blog



THE COLORFUL FALL



FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH

FRBC YOUTH GAZETTE **5**



Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a **FOUNTAIN OF WATER** springing up into everlasting life.

PHOTO COURTESY OF **SVETA MAROZ**

JOHN **4:13**

SIX QUESTIONS TO ASK AN ATHEIST

Many times, as Christian theists, we find ourselves on the defensive against the critiques and questions of atheists. Sometimes, in the midst of arguments and proofs, we miss the importance of conversation. These questions, then, are meant to be a part of a conversation. They are not, in and of themselves, arguments or "proofs" for God. They are commonly asked existential or experiential questions that both atheists and theists alike can ponder.

1. *If there is no God, "the big questions" remain unanswered*, so how do we answer the following questions: Why is there something rather than nothing? This question was asked by Aristotle and Leibniz alike – albeit with differing answers. But it is an historic concern. Why is there conscious, intelligent life on this planet, and is there any meaning to this life? If there is meaning, what kind of meaning and how is it found? Does human history lead anywhere, or is it all in vain since death is merely the end? How do you come to understand good and evil, right and wrong without a transcendent signifier? If these concepts are merely social constructions, or human opinions, whose opinion does one trust in determining what is good or bad, right or wrong? If you are content within atheism, what circumstances would serve to make you open to other answers?

2. *If we reject the existence of God, we are left with a crisis of meaning*, so why don't we see more atheists like Jean Paul Sartre, or Friedrich Nietzsche, or Michel Foucault? These three philosophers, who also embraced atheism, recognized that in the absence of God, there was no transcendent meaning beyond one's own self-interests, pleasures, or tastes. The crisis of atheistic meaninglessness is depicted in Sartre's book Nausea. Without God, there is a crisis of meaning, and these three thinkers, among others, show us a world of just stuff, thrown out into space and time, going nowhere, meaning nothing.

3. *When people have embraced atheism, the historical results can be horrific*, as in the regimes of Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot who saw religion as the problem and worked to eradicate it? In other words, what set of actions are consistent with particular belief commitments? It could be argued, that these behaviors – of the regimes in question – are more consistent with the implications of atheism. Though, I'm thankful that many of the atheists I know do not live the implications of these beliefs out for themselves like others did! It could be argued that the socio-political ideologies could very well be the outworking of a particular set of beliefs – beliefs that posited the ideal state as an atheistic one.

4. *If there is no God, the problems of evil and suffering are in no way solved*, so where is the hope of redemption, or meaning for those who suffer? Suffering is just as tragic, if not more so, without God because there is no hope of ultimate justice, or of the suffering being rendered meaningful or transcendent, redemptive or redeemable. It might be true that there is no God to blame now, but neither is there a God to reach out to for strength, transcendent meaning, or comfort. Why would we seek the alleviation of suffering without objective morality grounded in a God of justice?

5. *If there is no God, we lose the very standard by which we critique religions and religious people*, so whose opinion matters most? Whose voice will be heard? Whose tastes or preferences will be honored? In the long run, human tastes and opinions have no more weight than we give them, and who are we to give them meaning anyway? Who is to say that lying, or cheating or adultery or child molestation are wrong –really wrong? Where do those standards come from? Sure, our societies might make these things "illegal" and impose penalties or consequences for things that are not socially acceptable, but human cultures have at various times legally or socially disapproved of everything from believing in God to believing the world revolves around the sun; from slavery, to interracial marriage, from polygamy to monogamy. Human taste, opinion law and culture are hardly dependable arbiters of Truth.

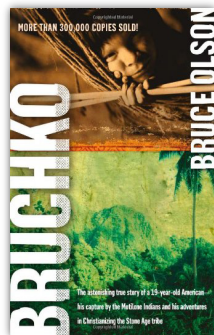
6. *If there is no God, we don't make sense*, so how do we explain human longings and desire for the transcendent? How do we even explain human questions for meaning and purpose, or inner thoughts like, why do I feel unfulfilled or empty? Why do we hunger for the spiritual, and how do we explain these longings if nothing can exist beyond the material world?

Ravi Zacharias, Ravi Zacharias International Ministries

For further reading, see Ravi Zacharias's book *The Real Face of Atheism*, and C.S. Lewis's book *Mere Christianity*. The RZIM website has many excellent resources on atheism, as does the Centre for Public Christianity, www.publicchristianity.org.

BOOK REVIEWS

BRUCHKO

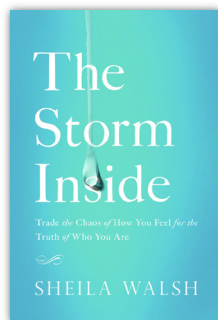


Bruce Olson comes from a religious family that had little faith. A family that was righteous on the outside, but deep inside it was a family that was held together by the mere rules, and statutes, rather than God's intimacy and love. Bruce Olson began attending a different church, a church heavy in the apostolic calling. Soon he would discover men with little schooling, with little success he saw God's grace beyond imagination. God walked Bruce Olson through all of the difficulties to bring the greatest triumph on the missionary field

among the native tribes of the South America. Motilones the most feared and most violent tribe in the rainforests of the Amazon turned vociferously to accepting Christ as their Savior and evangelizing other native tribes. Bruchko is a great recollection of what God's calling means, and what God can do through a man "who seeks God's will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take." Proverbs 3:6

ANDREY SLONOPAS

THE STORM INSIDE



We are calm, cool and collected. We know the right lines, we know when to smile and we know the right moment in which joyfulness is expected of us. We are Scripture-quoting Christians, problem-free and conquering it all in Christ.

That's on the outside. On the inside we are fighting battles, we are unsure at times and we scream out to God, with no confirmation that He has heard us. At times we become so good with hiding our feelings from those around us, we become too ashamed to let anyone, including God in. We forget that He who made the universe would rather have a relationship with us and have us be real instead of

hiding from Him as Adam did back at the beginning of time.

In her book "The Storm Inside," Sheila Walsh paints a picture of God accepting the real 'us' no matter how great the storm inside of us really is. I had really enjoyed the combination of Biblical stories that I had read many times along with stories of personal storms she had endured. The book talks about issues that many of us struggle with, but are afraid to admit to, which includes heartbreak can become strength, shame can lead to love, unforgiveness can find freedom, restoration can undo rage, and courage overcomes insignificance. Sheila Walsh has an ability to clearly portray the issues that many of us face today in our daily lives. Her style of writing is deep, Biblical, and easy to read. I would recommend this book to anyone who is struggling with any kind of storm in their lives or would like to have more insight on who God is when it comes to our questions, our reactions, and our heartaches.

OLGA IVASHINA

SURVEY RESPONSES

WHAT ARE YOU THANKFUL FOR THIS YEAR THAT YOU WEREN'T THANKFUL FOR BEFORE?

Laptop because it is helpful in accomplishment of many tasks.

I am Jessica, 18 years old and I am thankful for my great friends because they are a great support. It is truly a blessing to have close friends that can help you in difficult times and are there for you when you need them most.

Im thankful for my car that its fixed. im thankful for that because i get to drive to hang out with friends and race.

Thankful for the job that I have.

Got an awesome job, truly blessed, thank God for it everyday :)

I'm thankful for all the lessons and habits that God taught me this year

The way God has changed my life

For an amazing friend that God has gifted me with.

Being able to go on a mission trip to Belarus

My job

I'm thankful for my friends and family to be there in my time of need.

my dad

Испытание, through these tests I see how my character is developed and revealed. I tried to focus on my responses to different situations like people, conflicts, and disappointments. It also shows the significance of our walk with the Lord.

Eyesight. I can see God's artwork in every day, when many others can't. Bad ppl. Cause dey teach you how to be good yo.

THANKS TO EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED