

The Engineer's Guide
To God

By
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Intro

Hi. My name is Buddy Brinkley. I'm an Electrical Engineer. It's Monday morning (February 26, 2001). I just woke up for work and suddenly I'm writing this. It just came to me. This is not my typical Monday, for sure. Might as well just go with it -- here goes...

I've been a Christian for quite some years now, and I've made an observation about Christian literature -- not much of it is geared toward folks with my kind of brain.

I want the facts. I want them quickly, concisely and logically expressed. I don't want a lot of fluff in between. Don't waste my time with a lot of symbolism and allegory, and don't bore me with cute stories or emotional testimony. Just give me the bullet points and the details that I really need to know. Oh yeah -- make it short. I prefer the "Cliff Notes" version.

So, with that in mind, here goes my contribution to the world...

Chapter 1: God Exists

If you're an engineer, you've most likely got a certain amount of common sense, to which I will now appeal. Look around. Look at the intricacy and vastness of the universe. Look at the amazing design of your own body. Look at how everything in the universe -- down to the last teensie tiny particle of an atom -- all fits together into an incredibly complex system that has the remarkable ability to actually continue to function for an apparently long period of time.

Do you really believe that such an amazing system could just make itself? We who design the structures, machines, and toys of civilization ought to recognize design when we see it.

Of course there's a God. Only a liberal arts major would believe otherwise. Let's move on...

No, on second thought, let's not move on just yet. Even in Engineering School, we get a few close-minded folks from time to time. This is for you:

Take a pile of dirt. Now, take anything else you think you might need, and make a human being. Good luck. Okay, I'll make it easier for you -- just make an amoeba. No, wait a minute; we want to put this on the level of creation:

Take a vacuum...

Now make the pile of dirt.

Have a nice day.

Chapter 2: Why Did God Make All Of This?

If you could make it, wouldn't you?

Chapter 3: How to Choose A Religion

Try mine. It works.

Well, I thought seriously about ending this chapter right there. But, let's face it; everybody claims that their religion works. I think there's a certain validity to that claim. Who am I to tell somebody that their religion isn't working for them? But I have a few points to make about Christianity, because I believe it uniquely beats the alternatives. Actually, I believe that Christianity is the fulfillment of Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. I'm not so sure about Islam, since it came after Jesus. I'll let you Islamic guys check into that one. Oops, I'm rambling. Okay, back to the guide...

Any religion that claims that you can do anything to make yourself "good enough" for God is aiming at a mark that is unreachable. We are just little specks of dust in His universe. Our lives are just little blips in the vastness of time. He is beyond the universe. He is beyond time. What are you going to do to get to His level? I believe that Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism came before Christ to show us an ideal that we could not reach. I suspect the same is true of Islam, even though it came later in that timeline. God is beyond time, remember?

The Bible teaches that God stooped down to our level -- He Himself became a man, Jesus Christ, and walked among us. He identified with us, because we could not identify with Him.

You've probably heard the term, "Born Again Christian." Here's what it means:

You can not make yourself into the person that God wants you to be. You can not simply believe the right things, accept the right rules, and live a life that is good enough for God. Many Christians think that's how to live the Christian life. It is not. That's how to be a good Jew.

God wants to remake you. This requires that you give yourself completely to Him. You give up your goals, your dreams, your wants, your needs -- everything. Then, you simply ask Him to make you what He wants you to be. After that, it's His problem to do it. Your part is to keep giving yourself to Him. His problem is to remake you. You can not force Him to do it. You can not make it happen. But, it is what He wants, and only your free will, and your refusal to submit to Him holds Him back. Once you surrender, He will do the rest. Just don't try to do it yourself. That's the biggest mistake that Christians make.

Do you have difficulty with not doing it yourself? Many do. Go back to that vacuum in Chapter 1 and try to make dirt. Do you get it now?

Okay, I'll spell it out for you:

You can't do it.
Neither can you make yourself what God
wants you to be.

Only God can.

Chapter 4: So What About that "Sin" Thing?

You've heard folks talk about a thing called "sin." Here's what it means...

Look at all the major religions of the world. All of them have rules for living a life that pleases God. Many of these rules look similar as you compare the different religions. Sin is breaking the rules. But, there's a little more to it than that ...

At its heart, sin is selfishness. Sin is seeking to get what we want for our own selfish enjoyment, typically without much concern for anything or anyone else. Sometimes, we may mask it with a thin veil of self-righteousness or charity, but our motives are still selfish at the core.

Everybody is this way until God changes them. That's sin.

We can not come to God in sin. God hates sin. He loves us, but He hates sin.

Why does God hate sin? He hates it for the same reason that we hate it. Sin hurts. It does damage.

Consider the Ten Commandments - Thou shalt not lie, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not kill, etc., etc. We all hate that stuff. Just about every religion has rules against the same basic "sins."

Most everybody hates sin - particular when it's done to us.

Picture Heaven - life after death. Most people picture bliss. We picture a place and a state of being that is full of peace, love, and happiness. We picture perfection.

You can't have that kind of Heaven and still have sin. That's why there is no Heaven here on Earth. And that's why God hates sin.

We hate it, too.

So, we can only get rid of sin by being remade by God, but we can't come to God because we're full of sin and He hates sin.

We're doomed, man. Bummer.

Chapter 5: Jesus Died For You

Jesus died on the cross back around 30 AD to take upon Himself the punishment of everybody's sin. That's what the Bible teaches. That's what Jesus taught. That's how you, a person full of sin, can come before God and get remade. That's what Christians mean by "getting saved." Jesus saves us from sin. Oh yeah, by the way, the normal penalty of sin is death, hell, etc., etc. It's best to be saved.

Ch 6: Let's Have A Come To Jesus Session

I hope you get it by now. Some of the typical religious jargon that is commonly spoken should now make a little sense. Let's review:

- You're a sinner. We're all sinners.
- God hates sin. God loves us.
- That's a problem.
- Jesus has solved the problem. He died to pay the penalty for sin.
- You can now come to God, and be forgiven of your sin.
- Once you do that, you must be remade.
- Only God can remake you.
- You can't be reborn into a new life, without dying to your old life.

Many people come to God because they are afraid of dying, or because they want something that they can't get for themselves. That's not how it works. That's selfishness. God's not Santa Claus; He's the ruler of the universe. He does not exist to please us; we exist to please Him.

We all refer to it as "getting right with God," but we don't stop to consider what that means. You're supposed to get right with God. So, you should do it, not for what you can get to please your selfishness, but simply because IT IS RIGHT.

Churches are full of people who are still trying to use God to fulfill their selfish desires. They are fooling themselves into a false sense of security that is shallow and baseless. Don't follow them. Follow Jesus. Follow the leader.

Chapter 7: Now What?

That's between you and God Himself. I suggest you talk with Him.

But, I've got a few tips, so I'll throw 'em out...

Get a Bible. If you are an engineer, don't waste your time with a King James Version of the Bible. Its language is difficult to read, and we engineers have enough trouble with reading already. It was a great version back in the 1600s, but it's a bit hard to understand now. Also, don't waste your time with anything that claims to be a "paraphrase" version of the Bible. "Paraphrase" is a fancy way of saying, "We translated it, then we reinterpreted it, then we wrote it down." I'd rather interpret it for myself. Just give me the facts, not your opinions.

I like two different translations. I like the New International Version, because it is fairly accurate and it is easy to read. I also like the New American Standard Version. It is sometimes more of a literal translation than the NIV, but it's also a little more difficult to read. I use both. Go to a Christian bookstore, and check them out for yourself. Get what works best for you.

Now, once you've got a Bible, start studying it. It is God's technical manual for your soul. But, it's kinda big, ain't it? Here's a tip: Start with the Gospel of John. It's in the New Testament -- the part that was written after Jesus lived on earth. Then, skip over a little ways to Romans. The book of John gives you the words of Jesus. Romans gives you the basic tenets of Christianity.

You will read in John all about Jesus' life, His death on the cross, and His resurrection from the dead. Oh yeah, that's the good news. Not only did Jesus die for our sins, He also triumphed over death itself. Sounds impossible, huh? Go back to Chapter 1. Try again to make that dirt in the vacuum. It's impossible. Now, look around. God made everything out of nothing. God has no "impossible." Get used to it.

A Christian guy named Leonard Ravenhill once said, "Christianity is either supernatural or superficial." So, get used to the fact that God specializes in the impossible. The road ahead of you, once you surrender yourself to Him, is quite amazing.

In John, you will also read about the Holy Spirit. It is by the Spirit that we are remade. John says it a lot better than I can, so check it out.

Oh yeah, read 1 Corinthians 13. In this new life with God, the rules aren't the gig -- they just exist to make you aware that you have a problem. The gig is way beyond the rules. It's all about love. God wants to teach you love. That's a big step for an engineer. Surrender -- God will take care of the rest.

Go to church.

Yikes! Did he really say that? Aren't churches full of hypocrites? Well, quite truly, many people have had bad experiences with churches. And, many churches are not all that they should be. But, the Bible refers to the church as the "body of Christ." Each of us is a part of that body. Body parts are not designed to stand alone. Neither are we. You need other Christians. Other Christians need you. So, go to church. What church? Ask God to lead you to the right church for you. He will do so. Want a more "down to earth" method? Find a Christian in your peer group whom you admire. Go to church with that person. Beware of churches that have their own translations of the Bible, and beware of churches that have scriptures in addition to the Bible.

One last tip: Christian literature is huge. It's a bit hard to sift through, and new books are added every day. Read the Bible. Don't neglect the Bible to read other stuff. But, it's good to also read other books from time to time. Here are two books that I recommend, both by a man named A.W. Tozer: The Pursuit of God, and The Root of the Righteous. I got a lot out of them. Most likely, you will, too.

Conclusion

True religion, of whatever flavor, consists primarily of knowing and loving God and serving Him by loving others -- not self-preservation, or self-anything-else. Jesus said, "Now this is Eternal Life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom You have sent." God wants you to get to know Him. He wants to be your closest friend. This is the great task of Eternal Life. Once you "get right" with God, your eternity with Him begins.

I wish you well in this quest for God. The sooner you begin, the less regret that you will have for not starting earlier. So get started. I'm done. Now it's between you and Him. God bless you.

That's it. That's all I've got. I hope it helps. Have a nice day.

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