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JANUARY 2015

SPIRITUAL FITNESS

by T. A. McMahon

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# THE BEREAN CALL

*"[The Bereans] . . . searched the scriptures daily, [to see] whether those things were so."—Acts 17:11*

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## Spiritual Fitness

T. A. McMahon

The term "fitness" is one of the favorite marketing buzzwords that has attracted many to health clubs and spas, and it even has an appeal for those who are so out of shape that it remains yet wishful thinking. There is little doubt that the physical part of life just seems better when one is physically fit.

The Bible gives some credence to this idea in 1 Timothy 4:8, where Paul tells Timothy that bodily exercise profits [a] little. The verse continues, "but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." In other words, godliness, which is the spiritual exercise of *living out what the Word of God teaches*, is significantly more to be sought than "bodily exercise" in order to improve a believer's everyday life on earth as well as to yield rewards in one's eternal life.

The goal of spiritual fitness, according to the Scriptures, must be godliness. The Apostle Paul exhorts Timothy to "exercise thyself" unto godliness, and Peter declares that God has given believers "all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (1 Timothy 4:7; 2 Peter 1:3). I hope that every believer reading this desires to achieve that goal no matter how far short of it he might feel that he comes right now. The good news is that there is good news, no matter what one's condition!

In the sports world, when a team is struggling in more than one aspect of the game, many coaches have their teams return to practicing the fundamentals of the sport. That usually gets things turned around and headed in the direction of improvement. Such an approach may also be helpful for those who want to achieve spiritual fitness but are not exactly sure how to go about it. (And I am not recommending seeking out so-called "spiritual directors" or "spiritual coaches," who frequently utilize the latest trends, methods, or techniques that are far from what the Scriptures teach.)

What are the scriptural fundamentals for growing in godliness? First of all, it must begin with a new birth. As Jesus declared to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God....Ye must be born again." (John 3:3,7—emphasis added). Without that transformation of being

born spiritually from above, it is impossible for anyone to manifest godliness. This new birth comes about when a person admits that he is a sinner, turns to Jesus by faith alone, believes that He paid the full penalty for his sins, and accepts the free gift of salvation that only Jesus could and did provide. He then becomes a "new man": "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature..." (2 Corinthians 5:17). Even though he has been miraculously transformed into a new being, a born-again believer retains his old nature, but no longer is he under its sinful control: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.

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— 1 Timothy 4:8

Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have *put on the new man*, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:8-10 —emphasis added). "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24). We shouldn't be surprised, however, when within the born-again believer, the resident old nature, though no longer in control, causes a sometimes-fierce struggle in our hearts and minds. This spiritual battle will continue throughout our temporal lives, but daily victory can be ours. Why? Because God himself has provided *everything* that a believer needs to grow in "righteousness and true holiness."

What are some of these things that He has provided? One help that is foundational is that the Holy Spirit *indwells* every Christian at the moment that he believes the gospel. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (1 Corinthians 3:16). "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba,

Father" (Galatians 4:6). "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16-17).

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is foundational, for without the Spirit of Christ, there would *be* no life *in Him*. This could be compared to having the latest model car but the engine is missing. Just as an engineless car would be useless regarding the purpose for which it was intended, so a person who doesn't have the Holy Spirit (and thus does not belong to the Lord), is helpless when it comes to living above one's circumstances, being a light in the world, and ultimately spending eternity fulfilling God's plan for us. The analogy may be a little rough, but I think you get the point. On the other hand, the person who is indwelt by the Spirit of Christ has all that he needs to live a life of godliness—as long as he avails himself of it—which certainly includes being spiritually fruitful and productive.

Consider the incredible abundance that the Holy Spirit provides for the believer. He, the third *person* of the Godhead, is the born-again Christian's comforter (which includes the meaning "strengtheners"), teacher, enabler, empowerer, guide, convictor of sin, revealer of truth, baptizer, and impartor of numerous spiritual gifts. It was through the Holy Spirit that we received the Word of God: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Peter 1:21). And it is through the Holy Spirit that we gain understanding of the Scriptures: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

The Holy Spirit's involvement in giving us the Word of God and its value in equipping us in Christ is clearly revealed in 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be

perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Indeed, God’s miraculous revelation through the Holy Scriptures is truly the Lord’s instruction manual, informing us of what we need to know in order to live a life of godliness (2 Peter 1:3), and the Holy Spirit is the One who empowers us to carry out the teachings of Jesus, who is the Living Word.

Jesus is the God-Man. He is eternally God, and through the incarnation He became the perfect Man. He will never cease to be both God and Man. We are finite beings, so that idea, along with others (such as the doctrine of the Trinity), may seem incomprehensible to us. As long as we are still in these earthly bodies, we will never be able to *fully* comprehend our Infinite God. Therefore we trust what He has communicated to us through His Word, and one day, we will be with Him and will know Him in perfect truth (1 Corinthians 13:12). In our pursuit of godliness, Jesus not only gave us instructions, but He, as the perfect Man, also demonstrated the necessity of depending upon the Holy Spirit’s work in our lives. Consider the following verses:

“And the *Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him*, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased” (Luke 3:22). “And Jesus *being full of the Holy Ghost* returned from Jordan, and was *led by the Spirit* into the wilderness” (Luke 4:1). “And Jesus returned *in the power of the Spirit* into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about” (Luke 4:14). At a synagogue in Nazareth He declared himself to be the prophesied Messiah by reading from the Book of Isaiah. His words began with the statement, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me” (Luke 4:18). Our Lord not only demonstrated the importance of the Holy Spirit in His life as the perfect man, but He also emphasized the same for all who would follow Him: “But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him *must worship him in spirit and in truth*” (John 4:23-24—emphasis added).

Although this article began by making references to physical fitness as an analogy, there is a critical difference between one’s penchant for physical exercise and one’s pursuit of godliness. Too often the former focuses on self, whereas the latter cannot. It must be “other-directed.” Godliness is manifested in one’s love for God and for others. This is made abundantly clear through the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which God has provided to every believer in order

to enable each one to grow in godliness and to be of benefit to one another. Paul, writing to the church at Ephesus, said: “But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.... And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:7-13).

As described above, the gifts of the Spirit will certainly generate individual godliness, but, as noted, they also help us to grow even more as we minister to others. Peter, in his first epistle, confirms that the gifts are for all believers and are to be directed for the good of one another: “As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same, one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God” (1 Peter 4:10).

The development of spiritual fitness is directly related to one’s dependence upon the Holy Spirit. He has given to every believer one or more gifts to be used as He wills and enables. If we do not yield to the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives, then the gifts are not being exercised, and both we and the body of Christ are deprived of what has been given for the equipping, building up, and edification of the saints. Sadly, in these days of prevailing end-times apostasy, the church is backing away from the spiritual strengthening that God has provided through the Holy Spirit, who is often a much-neglected Friend. This is most evident in the area of spiritual discernment.

Although spiritual fitness is certainly aided by the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, there is another important exercise of the Holy Spirit that is a support for godliness and is necessary for God’s exceptional empowerment in order to accomplish His will: *being filled with the Spirit*. The Scriptures are very clear in the exhortations for believers to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit; John the Baptist was filled with Him, as were his parents; Peter was filled, and so were Paul, Stephen, Barnabas, and the disciples. In addition to these, every believer is exhorted to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18) and with the fruits of righteousness (Philippians 1:11).

In his *Believer’s Bible Commentary*, the late William MacDonald (who was a TBC Board member) shared these biblical principles regarding Ephesians 5:18, “How

then can a believer be filled with the Spirit? The Apostle Paul does not tell us here in Ephesians; he merely commands us to be filled. But from other parts of the word, we know that in order to be filled with the Spirit we must: 1) Confess and put away all known sin in our lives (1 John 1:5-9).... 2) Yield ourselves completely to His control (Romans 12:1-2).... 3) Let the word of Christ dwell in us richly (Colossians 3:16).... 4) Finally, we must be emptied of self (Galatians 2:20)....” Mr. MacDonald then quotes an unknown author: “Just as you have left the whole burden of your sin, and have rested on the finished work of Christ, so leave the whole burden of your life and service, and rest upon the present in-working of the Holy Spirit. Give yourself up, morning by morning, to be led by the Holy Spirit and go forth praising and at rest, leaving Him to manage you and your day. Cultivate the habit all through the day, of joyfully depending upon and obeying Him, expecting Him to guide, to enlighten, to reprove, to teach, to use, and to do in and with you what He wills. Count upon His working as a fact, altogether apart from sight or feeling. Only let us believe in and obey the Holy Spirit as the Ruler of our lives, and cease from the burden of trying to manage ourselves; then shall the fruit of the Spirit appear in us as He wills to the glory of God” (pp. 1945-1946).

No one can obey Jesus’ command, “Take up the cross, and follow me” (Mark 10:21), without the enablement of the Holy Spirit. A person who claims to be a Christian but doesn’t utilize the power of the Holy Spirit in his life, perhaps because of wrong teaching or simply because of personal apathy, will likely be crushed by the cross that he is attempting to carry.

Spiritual fitness is vital and more crucial for believers than ever before. Times of persecution loom on the horizon for Christians in countries in the West, where seduction rather than overt persecution has until now prevailed. We can learn from the example of Paul and Barnabas: “But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts. But they shook off the dust of their feet against them, and came unto Iconium. And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 13:50-52).

Therefore, our encouragement and prayer for all of us who know Jesus and desire to glorify Him is this: Let the study of His Word be our continuous habit, and let the leading, guiding, and filling of the Holy Spirit be our daily experience. That is true spiritual fitness!

**TBC**



## Quotable .....

If even a very few Christians in every place would begin to “speak often one to another” about the Coming of the Lord, they would soon come together to pray for His return . . . and to pray the prayer which He himself has given to us, “Even so come, Lord Jesus.”

—Sir Robert Anderson

## Q&A .....

**QUESTION: I have encountered a minister who considers himself to be a non-practicing homosexual. He has said that his sins are forgiven. Will he be accepted by God into heaven? I do understand that having faith in Jesus Christ for what He has done for us recognizes that He has nailed our past, current, and future sins to the Cross. This minister considers himself to still be a homosexual but says he isn't involved with the sinful homosexual acts. My question is this: If a homosexual is not involved in those sinful homosexual acts but still considers himself a homosexual, will he/she go to heaven?**

**RESPONSE:** The individual you mention may be deceived by the idea that homosexuals are born that way and cannot change. But one of the glories of the power of the gospel is that we *can* be changed. Drunks can cease to be drunks, homosexuals can cease to be homosexuals. The habits of a lifetime may be extremely difficult to overcome, but the Scriptures assure us that we can be changed. One of the worst ideas humanity has ever come up with is that one cannot change. For example, 12-steps programs teach that one will always be an “alcoholic.” Where is the victory that we are promised in Christ? In fact, 2 Corinthians 5:17 states, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a *new creature*: old things are passed away; behold, *all things are become new* (emphasis added).”

With this in mind, in 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 Paul lists those who will not inherit the kingdom of God: “Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” This means active involvement in these practices. And lest anyone feels hopeless about shedding the image attached to his former sin, Paul continues in verse 11: “And such *were* some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”

This minister states that he lives a celibate life. This is good and is perhaps an indication that he truly has been saved. What he says about remaining a homosexual, however, puts him in direct conflict with Scripture. It's one thing to say that you're not a practicing homosexual, but is that action the result of a changed heart? Does he fully understand how God views homosexuality? God was very clear in the Old Testament about this matter, calling it an abomination (Lv 20:13, et al.). He is equally clear in the New Testament, particularly in Romans 1:18-32, on the consequences of giving oneself over to that lifestyle. And yet, in both the Old and New Testaments, God's directions are explicit regarding those who belong to Christ who sin: “He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy” (Prv 28:13); “And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (1 Jn 2:1).

If this man is truly a born-again believer (even though deceived by popular but unbiblical ideas), he will go to heaven. But even so, he still needs to discard the world's ideas and embrace the promises of God. What a testimony he will have if he yields himself entirely to the Lord to forgive him, wash him, and make him as “white as snow”!

**QUESTION: Why do some people see UFOs and some don't? Why do even some sincere Christians see UFOs but others don't? I believe these UFOs reveal non-physical demonic activity, but they have been captured on video, and even the US military has claimed to have seen them. Do you believe that UFOs can manifest themselves in a visible physical manner? Or are these fancy camera tricks in order to hype up something that isn't real?**

**RESPONSE:** We agree with you that UFOs are demonic manifestations. The fact that they have been captured on video only confirms what Scripture tells us. Angels (whether good or evil) have, on occasion, appeared in a recognizable form, such as the serpent in the Garden. Second Corinthians 11:14, speaking of the devil and his demons, notes, “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light.”

We should therefore not be surprised to hear reports of “heavenly” apparitions appearing to Catholics or the alleged angel Moroni appearing to Joseph Smith. This is of particular interest in view of the warning in Galatians 1:8: “But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.”

Furthermore, it is not surprising that UFOs /ETIs have been reported throughout history.

Why a UFO may appear to one individual and not to another is open to speculation. Perhaps some may be more open to deception, such as treasure-hunting occult practitioner Joseph Smith. We know from Scripture that “[Our] adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pt 5:8). The implication is that not everyone is readily devoured. Why would Satan waste his limited time and effort on people who wouldn't believe it?

Historically UFO appearances have mimicked the technology of the age. Ancient Egyptian accounts tell of a time when “sky gods” came down to Earth. They flew through the sky in what were described as “flying boats,” bringing laws and wisdom to men. Sightings in the late 1800s took the form of spheres or cigar-shaped craft similar to early dirigibles or balloons. Disk-shaped flying objects have been allegedly recorded since the Middle Ages, although one publicized sighting of a saucer-shaped object as late as June 24, 1947, is much better known. This was followed by what have been described as thousands of similar sightings. With such sightings being very common, the term “flying saucer” was interchangeable with “UFO” into the 1960s. In recent years, the flying saucer has been superseded by other alleged UFOs, such as “black triangles” (“Unidentified Aerial Phenomena in the UK Air Defense Region: Executive Summary,” *Scientific and Technical Memorandum*, 5/2/00), mimicking more recent developments in military aircraft such as the F-117 Nighthawk stealth fighter/bomber. Satan is not a creator; he is a counterfeiter.

In *TBC* April 1995, Dave Hunt wrote: “There are no physical ETIs. The only intelligent life beyond earth is all in spirit form: God, angels, Satan and demons. Satan and his minions are able to invade the physical realm. Satan put boils on Job, caused Sabeans and Chaldeans to rob Job and kill his servants, caused a ‘great wind’ to destroy a house and kill Job's children—and in each case one person was left alive to bring the news to Job. Satan transported Christ to the top of a mountain and to the pinnacle of the temple. Jannes and Jambres (2 Tm 3:8) were able to duplicate by the power of Satan many of the miracles Moses and Aaron performed by the power of God.

“What limits there may be upon satanic ‘power and signs and lying wonders’ (2 Thes 2:9) we don't know: Satan will cause the whole world to worship Antichrist as ‘God’ (Rv 13:8). [Since the Garden of Eden], mankind has remained open to contact and receiving advice and help from demons who are manifesting as UFOs and masquerading as ETIs. All of this helps to set the stage for the last days ‘strong delusion’” (2 Thes 2:11).



# IN DEFENSE *of the* FAITH

BIBLICAL ANSWERS *to* CHALLENGING QUESTIONS

## Two Genealogies for Jesus

**QUESTION:** There are two contradictory genealogies given for Christ, tracing his ancestry back through Joseph. Matthew says Joseph's father was Jacob, but Luke says his father was Heli. Since both can't be true, at least one is wrong, but we couldn't know which. Probably both are wrong. Nor can I see how Christians could defend either genealogy, since they both say Joseph was Jesus' father and thus deny the virgin birth.

**RESPONSE:** If one is determined to prove the Bible false in order to justify an unwillingness to believe in God, then I suppose this argument might look like a good possibility, though it would take considerable mental gymnastics to maintain it. On the other hand, a little thought—and fairness—resolve the seeming problem.

First of all, neither Matthew nor Luke says or even implies that Joseph was the father of Jesus. On the contrary, both give a clear account of the fact that Mary was a virgin when Jesus was born. One is entitled to reject the virgin birth of Christ, but it is absurd to justify that rejection by claiming that, in spite of clear statements that Joseph was *not* the father, Matthew and Luke nevertheless then turn right around and offer a genealogy saying that Joseph *was* the father.

Let's look at the genealogies. Matthew's carefully calls Joseph "the husband of Mary," *not* the father. He explains this apparent anomaly: when "Mary was espoused [engaged] to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost." He explains that Joseph "knew her not [had no sex with her] till\* she had brought forth her firstborn son" (Matthew 1:25; cf. 1:16, 18). In addition, Matthew declares that the birth of Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament prophecy: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (v. 23, Isaiah 7:14).

Matthew's genealogy is definitely that of Joseph. This is clear because of the use of the word "begat" for each generation, ending with "Jacob begat Joseph, the *husband* of Mary" (1:16). Though not the father of Jesus, Joseph was the head of the household and functioned as the "adoptive father." Because the kingly line ran through the males, Joseph had to be of the house of David.

Luke's genealogy is just as clearly through Mary. The word "begat" is not used. Luke says that Jesus "was supposed [i.e., imagined]" to be the son of Joseph, who was "of Heli" (Luke 3:23). The word "son" is not in the original. Obviously Joseph was the *son-in-law* of Heli, Mary's father.

### Logical Consistency

Luke gives the full account of the angel Gabriel's appearance to tell Mary that she would give birth to the Messiah. Her astonished response is recorded: "How shall this be, seeing I know not [have not had sex with] a man?" (1:34) Far from suggesting that Joseph was the father of Jesus, Luke makes it

clear that he was *not*: that she was a virgin and that the Messiah was conceived in her by "the Holy Ghost" (1:35). Immediately thereafter Luke isn't going to offer a genealogy telling us that Joseph *was*, after all, the father of Jesus! Let's give both Matthew and Luke credit for at least reasonable intelligence.

Nor would Luke contradict Matthew and come up with an entirely different genealogy for Joseph. Matthew tells us that Jacob was the name of Joseph's father and traces his full genealogy. The records were available in the temple and were also kept by each family. Even without consulting any records, Luke would at least know the name of Joseph's father and grandfather merely by talking to friends and neighbors. And he wouldn't give an entire genealogy without knowing that it was accurate. Luke certainly knew the facts, "having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first . . ." (Luke 1:3) and having taken great care to investigate so that he could apprise his friend Theophilus of "the certainty of those things . . ." (1:4). One can only conclude that he gives the genealogy through Mary, the mother of Jesus, and there is good reason why he should have done so.

That Jesus was born of a virgin meant that He had none of King David's blood, through male descent, in His veins. Therefore, to have a physical relationship to David, it was essential that His mother be descended from David. Consequently, Luke, whose focus has been almost entirely on Mary up to this point, supplies the missing information by giving us Mary's genealogy. To assert otherwise is to charge both Matthew and Luke with a stupidity that is clearly contrary to the intelligence and honesty to which their full testimonies bear such clear and convincing witness.

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\*Matthew is quite clearly indicating that Mary and Joseph had a normal marriage relationship after the birth of Jesus, thus denying the dogma of Mary's "perpetual virginity," which was invented some centuries later. This is consistent with both Matthew's and Luke's description of Jesus as Mary's firstborn (Matthew 1:25; Luke 2:7), implying the subsequent birth of other children, who often accompanied their mother, Mary (Matthew 12:46; Mark 3:32; Luke 8:20), some of whose names were even recorded for us (Matthew 13:55–56).

# For All Saints

FROM WAITING ON GOD BY ANDREW MURRAY — SEE PAGE 14 TO ORDER

LET US NOW, each one forgetting himself, think of the great company of God, and the saints throughout the world who are all waiting on Him. And, let us all join in the fervent prayer for each other: “Let none that wait on Thee be ashamed.”

Just think for a moment of the many waiting ones who need that prayer, how many are sick and weary and alone, and feel as if their prayers are not answered. They sometimes begin to fear that their hope will be put to shame. And then, think of how many servants of God, ministers or missionaries, teachers or workers, of various name, whose hopes in their work have been disappointed, and whose longing for power and blessing remains unsatisfied. And then, too, think of how many who have heard of a life of rest and perfect peace, of abiding light and fellowship, of strength and victory, and who cannot find the path. With all these, it is only that they have not yet learned the secret of full waiting upon God. They just need what we all need, the living assurance that waiting on God can never be in vain. Let us remember, all who are in danger of fainting or being weary, and unite in the cry, “Let none that wait on Thee be ashamed!”

If this intercession for all who wait on God becomes part of our waiting on Him for ourselves, we will help to bear each other’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

There will be introduced into our waiting on God that element of unselfishness and love, which is the path to the highest blessing and the fullest communion with God. Love to the brethren and love to God are inseparably linked. In God, the love to His Son *and to us* are one: “That the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them.” In Christ, the love of the Father to Him, and *His love to us*, are one: “As the Father loved Me, so have I loved you.” In us, He asks that His love to us be *ours* to the brethren. And how can we, day by day, prove

and cultivate this love except by praying daily for each other? Christ did not seek to enjoy the Father’s love for Himself; He passed it all on to us. All true seeking of God, and His love for ourselves, will be inseparably linked with the thought and the love of our brethren in prayer for them.

“Let none that wait on Thee be ashamed.” Twice in the psalm David speaks of his waiting on God for himself; here he thinks of *all* who wait on Him. Let this be the message to all God’s tried and weary ones, that there are more people praying for them than they know about. Let it stir them and us in our waiting to make a point of at times forgetting ourselves, and to enlarge our hearts and say to the Father: “*These all wait upon Thee*, and Thou givest them their meat in due season.” Let it inspire us all with new courage—for who is there who is not at times ready to faint and be weary? “Let none that wait on Thee be ashamed” is a promise in a prayer. “They that wait on Thee shall not be ashamed!” From many a witness, the cry comes to everyone who

needs help—brother, sister, tried one, “Wait on the Lord; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the Lord. Be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart, all ye that wait on the Lord.”

Blessed Father, we humbly beseech You let none who wait on You be ashamed; no, not one. Some are weary, and the time of waiting appears long. And some are feeble and scarcely know how to wait. And some are so entangled in the effort of their prayers and their work, they think that they can find no time to wait continually. Father, teach us all how to wait! Teach us to think of each other, and pray for each other. Teach us to think of You, the God of all waiting ones. Father, let none that wait on You be ashamed! For Jesus’ sake. Amen.

*My soul, wait thou only upon God!*

O MY GOD, I TRUST IN THEE: LET ME NOT BE ASHAMED, LET NOT MINE ENEMIES TRIUMPH OVER ME.

YEA, LET NONE THAT WAIT ON THEE BE ASHAMED: LET THEM BE ASHAMED WHICH TRANSGRESS WITHOUT CAUSE.

— *Psalm 25:2-3*



ANDREW MURRAY (1828-1917): was an amazingly prolific Christian writer. He lived and ministered as both a pastor and author from the Cape of South Africa.

The earliest of his writings were actually an extension of his pastoral work. He wrote to give daily practical help to many of the people in his congregation who lived out in the farming communities and could only come into town for church service on rare occasions. As he wrote these books of instruction, Andrew Murray adopted the practice of placing many of his more devotional books into thirty-one separate readings to correspond with the days of the month.

At the age of seventy-eight, Murray resigned from the pastorate and devoted most of his time to his manuscripts. He

continued to write profusely, moving from one book to the next with an intensity of purpose and a zeal that few men of God have ever equaled. He often said of himself, rather humorously, that he was like a hen about to hatch an egg; he was restless and unhappy until he got the burden of the message off his mind.

During these later years, after hearing of pocket-sized paperbacks, Andrew Murray immediately began to write books to be published in that fashion. He thought it was a splendid way to have the teachings of the Christian life at your fingertips, where they could be carried around and read at any time of the day.

Countless persons the world over have hailed Andrew Murray as their spiritual father and given credit for much of their Christian growth to the influence of his priceless devotional books.



## TBC NewsWatch

### SABER-TOOTHED DEER ALIVE IN AFGHANISTAN

**ICR.ORG, 11/14/14, "SABER-TOOTHED DEER ALIVE IN AFGHANISTAN" [EXCERPTS]:** A Danish survey team probably sighted musk deer while working in the remote regions of northeast Afghanistan in 1948, but that was the last official sighting—until now. A new survey team led by members of the Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) recorded the species still alive.

Musk deer do not grow antlers, but males do grow fangs....enough is known about musk deer to note that the bucks use their characteristic tusks to tussle when competing for mates.

For all we know, they may also use their tusks in display communications as well. But what would a paleontologist think of finding a fossil musk deer's fangs without the benefit of comparing it to modern species? If labeled a carnivore based on those tusks, [they] would be wrong.

(<http://goo.gl/HqGv1N>)

### "WOMEN OF THE BIBLE" ON LIFETIME

**DEADLINE.COM, 10/29/14, "ROMA DOWNEY, MARK BURNETT LAND 'THE WOMEN OF THE BIBLE' ON LIFETIME" [EXCERPTS]:** Add Lifetime to the rapidly growing list of TV networks ordering Bible projects from Roma Downey and Mark Burnett. Downey [narrated] the two-hour special *The Women of the Bible*, which Lifetime [debuted in] its December 7 world premiere of the network's biblical miniseries *The Red Tent*.

The special [shares] the stories of Eve, Sara, Rahab, Mary Magdalene and Mother Mary, "with new insights from some of today's leaders and scholars in the faith community," the network said.

Interviewees include Christine Caine; Priscilla Shirer, Victoria Osteen [wife of Joel Osteen and Lakewood co-pastor]; Eva Rodriguez; Kay Warren, Co-Founder of Saddleback Church; and Joyce Meyer.

*The Red Tent*...tells the story of Dinah the daughter of Leah and Jacob, who is only briefly referenced in the Old Testament. The two-night, four-hour miniseries [is an] adaptation of the best-selling novel by Anita Diamant....Produced by Sony TV, the mini had been in development at Lifetime since 2011. Its green light coincided with intense interest in bible-themed TV projects in the wake of the blockbuster success of Burnett and Downey's *The Bible* miniseries [and] its feature offshoot, *Son of God*.

In April [2014], Burnett and Downey joined Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Pictures and Paramount Pictures' *Ben-Hur*. In December, they landed CBS' first announced project—*The Dovekeepers*, a four-hour miniseries based on Alice Hoffman's historical novel about the siege of Masada. That same month, NBC gave a formal green light to Burnett and Downey's 12-hour miniseries *A.D.*,—a follow-up to their highly rated miniseries *The Bible*.

(<http://goo.gl/OcrMzj>)

**[TBC: Although Downey and Burnett may be sincere in their promotion of biblical subject matter, any attempt to translate the Scriptures into the medium of film will result in a distortion of biblical truth. A "biblical" movie cannot be made without adding to or subtracting from God's Word. See "The Bible According to Hollywood 1 & 2." TBC 07/13, 04/14]**

### THE AL AQSA LIBEL: A BRIEF HISTORY

**FRONTPAGEMAG.COM, 11/26/14, "THE AL AQSA LIBEL: A BRIEF HISTORY" [EXCERPTS]:** [Claims] by Palestinian Authority president Mahmoud Abbas that Israel was attacking or otherwise threatening the Al Aqsa mosque on the Temple Mount, and Abbas's calls for Palestinians and other Muslims to take action to defend Al Aqsa and "purify" the Temple Mount, have been a key factor in the latest spate of deadly Arab assaults on Israelis.

The false claims of Jewish threats against or damage to Al Aqsa have a long pedigree. They have been made by Mahmoud Abbas many times in the past and were a staple of Yasser Arafat's screeds against Israel and against Jews more generally. Arafat labeled the terror war he launched in 2000 the "Al Aqsa Intifada." He did so to cast the onslaught not as an aggressive campaign of mass murder of Israelis but as a struggle in defense of the Islamic holy site and to render the war not simply one of Palestinian pursuit of Israel's destruction but as an Islamic fight against hostile, Al Aqsa-defiling non-believers.

But such anti-Jewish libels have a still older history, pre-dating Arafat, pre-dating Israel's gaining control over the Old City of Jerusalem in 1967, even pre-dating Israel's creation.

In 1929, during the British Mandate, the rabidly anti-Jewish, British-appointed Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin el-Husseini, claimed that Jews were threatening Al Aqsa and sought to end Jewish prayer at the Western Wall. According to the Mufti, the Western Wall was an

Islamic holy place and Jewish prayer there was both an affront to Islam and a step towards Jewish attacks against Al Aqsa. The Mufti is also reported to have distributed doctored photographs showing a damaged Al Aqsa, with claims that the Jews were responsible.

The Mufti's incitement was accompanied by calls for the murder of Jews as revenge. Ensuing attacks by Arab mobs in Jerusalem and elsewhere in Mandate territory resulted in the death of 133 Jews and major injury to over 200 others. The most severely affected community was that of Hebron, where 64 Jews were slaughtered and another 85 injured.

(<http://goo.gl/tb2KRt>)

### INTERPRETIVE DANCE

**WORLDAMAG.COM, 11/29/14, "INTERPRETIVE DANCE" [EXCERPTS]:** The BioLogos Foundation is making a major, well-funded push to change the way Christians read Genesis and think about Adam and Eve.

BioLogos [is] a foundation pushing churches and believers to embrace evolution, and in the process change how they read the Bible.

The brainchild of Francis Collins, who now heads the National Institutes of Health, BioLogos has taken in nearly \$9 million from the Templeton Foundation and millions more from other donors. BioLogos in turn offers grants to church, parachurch, and academic leaders and organizations that promote "evolutionary creation."

The BioLogos website states, "Genetic evidence shows that humans descended from a group of several thousand individuals who lived about 150,000 years ago."

BioLogos is now spending \$3.6 million on 37 projects in the United States and around the world. [F]unds go to "projects that explore consonance between evolution and Christian faith." Projects must not "reject the conclusions of mainstream science (e.g. old earth, common descent, etc.)." The requirement is not so stringent on the other side of the spectrum: Proposals cannot reject, but they can "helpfully inform...historic creedal Christianity (e.g. historical Resurrection, high view of Scripture, etc.)."

(<http://goo.gl/ZbkCF7>)

**[TBC: We have reported on the Templeton Prize (and recipients) on a number of occasions. New-ager John Marks Templeton is uncompromisingly hostile to Scripture. See December 2011 TBC.]**



# HE CARES FOR YOU

*An excerpt from William MacDonald's devotional One Day at a Time*



THE BIBLE is fairly full of tokens of God's marvelous care for His people. During Israel's forty-year trek through the wilderness, they ate food from heaven (Exodus 16:4), had an unfailing supply of water (1 Corinthians 10:4), and were equipped with shoes that never wore out (Deuteronomy 29:5).

It is the same in our wilderness journey. To prove this, our Lord reminds us how His care for us is so much greater than His care for birds, flowers, and animals. He speaks of sparrows, for instance. He provides their food (Matthew 6:26). Not one of them is forgotten before God (Luke 12:6). Not one falls to the ground without Him (Matthew 10:29), or, as H. A. Ironside said, "God attends the funeral of every sparrow." The moral of the story, of course, is that we are of more value to Him than many sparrows (Matthew 10:31).

If He clothes the lilies of the field more beautifully than Solomon was ever attired, He will much more clothe us (Matthew 6:30). If He makes provision for the care of oxen, how much more will He care for our needs (1 Corinthians 9:9)!

As our High Priest, the Lord Jesus bears our names on His shoulders—the place of power (Exodus 28:9-12) and on His breast—the place of affection (Exodus 28:15-21). Also our names are engraved in the palms of His hands (Isaiah 49:16), a fact that inevitably reminds us of the nail wounds He sustained for us at Calvary.

He knows the exact number of the hairs of our head (Matthew 10:30). He numbers our tossings at night and keeps count of our tears in His book (Psalm 56:8).

Whoever touches us, touches the apple of His eye (Zechariah 2:8). No weapon formed against us can prosper (Isaiah 54:17).

Whereas the heathen carry their gods on their shoulders (Isaiah 46:7), our God carries His people (Isaiah 46:4).

When we go through the waters, the rivers, or the fire, He is with us (Isaiah 43:2). In all our afflictions, He is afflicted (Isaiah 63:9).

The One who guards us neither slumbers nor sleeps (Psalm 121:3-4). Someone has called this characteristic of God "the divine insomnia."

The Good Shepherd who gave His life for us will not withhold any good from us (John 10:11; Psalm 84:11; Romans 8:32).

He cares for us from the beginning of the year to the end (Deuteronomy 11:12). He bears us even to old age (Isaiah 46:4). In fact He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). God really cares!

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*See page 14 for a special offer on William MacDonald's encouraging devotional, One Day at a Time!*

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## HOW THE LORD CARES FOR HIS SPARROWS...

*Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?*

*But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

LUKE 12:6-7

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*But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*

*Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.*

*Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.*

MATTHEW 10:30-32

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*My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.*

*Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God.*

*Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.*

PSALM 84:2-4

## T. A.'s Speaking Schedule

**Apr 10-12** **Candlelight Fellowship**  
Coeur d'Alene, ID  
(208) 772-7755

**May 15-17** **Cornerstone Baptist Church**  
Fargo, ND  
(701) 371-2416

## STS 24/7 Broadcast Schedule

**Jan 2/9/16/23** **Dave & Tom Classic**  
An overview of Genesis to Revelation

**Jan 30/Feb 6** **Caryl Matrisciana**  
Wide is the Gate Vol. 3

Listen to Search the Scriptures 24/7 at:  
[www.theberean.org/radio](http://www.theberean.org/radio)  
(Schedule is subject to change.)

## Letters .....

**Tom,**

I love *The Berean Call* and look forward to it every month. I've been receiving it for over 15 years and am immensely blessed by the subjects you research. Thank you. LG (PA)

**The Berean Call,**

May the Lord bless you as you work to make known His intentions for our world. As I wrote this letter, I thought back to the year 2006 when, as an unbeliever, I picked up Dave Hunt's book, *A Woman Rides the Beast*. It helped turn my thinking toward God and the true church. I know that our Lord is richly blessing Dave and his wife now, along with all of you left here to continue with Christ's mission. We are so richly blessed to be a partner with you! M&AB (FL)

**T. A.,**

I have been a Berean Call guy for nearly 30 years and I have always had the utmost respect for Dave and your opinions. I have to differ with you on your recent article concerning "Preppers." You demonize precious metals like everyone worships them. Metal is real money....Why anyone with a brain would not be putting some money in metal is ludicrous. As far as food is concerned, who are you to judge how much food a family needs to have? If there is a disaster, is it good no one has anything to share? And no one knows when the Lord will yank us out of here, but as far as I am concerned those left behind will need

anything anybody has stored, won't they? As far as Jim Bakker and the apostates you mention I wouldn't buy anything from them if it was half-price, including their books. I suggest not painting everyone with the same brush—not everybody who is being realistic is expecting Zombies. JS (IN)

**Dear Brother and Sisters,**

Thanks for all your hard work and ministry at TBC. It's very much appreciated and needed. I just finished watching the movies, *Noah* and *The Son of God*. Wow! I'd read your article, "The Gospel According to Hollywood," and, well, I think you were a little easy on them....They totally blasphemed God's character and His redemption plan.... People don't like it when others malign their character and tell lies about them, but I guess it's totally cool when they do it to God....I see you guys get a lot of opposition but when you stick to the Word, being unpopular is a given. GF (CA, prisoner)

**Dear Berean Call,**

I just wanted to take a moment and thank all of you at Berean Call for your faithful service to the body of Christ. We have been so blessed by your ministry—probably for at least 20 years!

I would also like to commend you for the August 2014 newsletter; absolutely excellent and just what I needed! I especially loved the article by C. H. Mackintosh—those were words I really needed to hear. KB (CA)

**Dear Mr. McMahon,**

I have been a subscriber to the *Berean Call* for many years. I want to thank you for your faith in your original starting point—the Bereans. Your article [November 2014 Dave Hunt Classic] on Calvinism has explained something that I have struggled with ever since I found out that my church subscribes to a certain amount of Calvinism. This may sound juvenile, but I have no time for those who corrupt or pervert scripture to their own ends. My foundation is Scripture and my verse reference is Hebrews 4:12.

Thank you for your faithfulness and I hope to attend one of your summer conferences. BM (email)

**Erratum:** T. A. McMahon and editorial staff of *The Berean Call* sincerely regret an error in the November 2014 TBC newsletter article "Prophecy Run Amok 2: Fearmongering" in which the following quote was mistakenly attributed to Jonathan Cahn: "The financial collapse of the US dollar may happen on Sunday the 13th of September 2015 corresponding to the 29 of Elul 5775 on the Hebrew calendar;

the next shemitah of the 7 year cycle." We apologize to Mr. Cahn and our readers for this error, and have removed the quote from our online, pdf, and audio versions of the November issue.

## TBC Notes

### One of Dave's Favorite Poems

This poem, one of Dave Hunt's favorites, reflected his love for our Savior, his concern for a serious faith, and his dedication to living a life pleasing to Him.

T. A. McMAHON  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

### His Plan For Me

*When I stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ*

*And He shows me His plan for me,*

*The plan of my life as it might have been,*

*Had He had His way; and I see*

*How I blocked Him here,*  
*and I checked Him there*

*And I would not yield my will,*

*Will there be grief in my*  
*Saviour's eyes,*

*Grief though He loves me still?*

*He would have me rich,*  
*and I stand here poor,*

*Stripped of all but His grace,*

*While memory runs like*  
*a hunted thing*

*Down the paths I cannot retrace.*

*Then my desolate heart*  
*will well break*

*With tears that I cannot shed;*

*I shall cover my face with*  
*my empty hands;*

*I shall bow my uncrowned head.*

*Lord of the years that are left to me,*  
*I give them to Thy hand;*

*Take me and break me, mold me to*  
*The pattern Thou hast planned.*

— MARTHA SNELL NICHOLSON



# New Year . . . New Tools!

Need to break out of your old routine? Or help in establishing a new one?  
Here are some fresh ideas for using technology to assist your 2015 resolution to “redeem the time!”

## ⇒ READ THE BIBLE REGULARLY!

THERE ARE A VARIETY of plans and schedules on the Internet to encourage you to read through the Bible in a year. The easiest is to just commit to start in Genesis and read for 15 minutes a day. Most readers will finish in less than twelve months. ~ Another option is to use a chronological Bible. While we don’t offer a chronological Bible for sale, you can find a free reading schedule online by searching for “chronological Bible schedule.” ~ You can read through the Scriptures on almost any tablet, phone, or computer using Amazon Kindle. You’ll likely do most of your reading on a tablet or computer, but a useful feature when reading a Kindle book is that you can open it on your phone in spare moments and the book will save your place between multiple devices. Go to [thebereancall.org/help/kindle](http://thebereancall.org/help/kindle) for more information.

## ⇒ PICK UP A NEW DAILY DEVOTIONAL!

ONE OF THE HIDDEN GEMS in our bookstore is *Waiting on God* by Andrew Murray (read an excerpt in this issue). ~ And of course, TBC’s own *Apples of Gold* offers 366 daily quotes selected by staff from the writings of Dave Hunt. You can find these and other devotional resources on page 14 of this newsletter, or online at: [thebereancall.com/collections/devotional](http://thebereancall.com/collections/devotional)

## ⇒ GOD’S WORD: YOU CAN TAKE IT WITH YOU!

ONE OUTSTANDING BENEFIT of technology for Bereans is the enormous selection of apps (programmed “applications”) that can help us better “search the Scriptures daily” for meditation and memorization. Try out this free app for starters, or search online (with discernment) to find one that’s perfect for your needs: ~ Tens of millions of people are using the Bible App™ to make God’s Word a part of their daily lives, in more than 700 languages. Download the free app and access your bookmarks, notes, and reading plans from anywhere. Enjoy hundreds of versions, including audio, all on your mobile device. Available for iPhone / iPad, Android, BlackBerry, Windows Phone, Kindle Fire, online, and more: [www.bible.com/app](http://www.bible.com/app)

## ⇒ GO DEEPER WITH A FREE ONLINE STUDY HELP!

LET YOUR COMPUTER do the “heavy lifting” by using an online study tool to compare versions or search *Strong’s Concordance*. One of the free helps used frequently by TBC staff is [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org) where you can not only search and read a variety of translations, but you can easily lookup English words and phrases in the original Hebrew and Greek languages, check word usage and frequency, get definitions, find useful cross-references, and much more.

## ⇒ JUMPSTART YOUR DAY WITH POWERFUL, PORTABLE PODCASTS!

SUBSCRIBING TO A PODCAST allows you to listen to free audio when you want and where you want on your phone, tablet, iPod, or computer. ~ There is a huge variety of edifying audio programs available by podcast. Most are updated weekly or more often. The podcast is downloaded to your device automatically and you can listen to it any time you want. ~ TBC’s own weekly radio program, *Search the Scriptures 24/7*, is available as a podcast. You can find other valuable (and free) resources online like audio Bibles, sermons, and Bible commentaries. Go to [thebereancall.org/help/podcasts](http://thebereancall.org/help/podcasts) for more information.

Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. – COLOSSIANS 3:2



# NEW! CALVIN'S DILEMMA GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY vs. MAN'S FREE WILL

EXCERPTED FROM Dave Hunt's bestselling book *What Love Is This?*, TBC has created a series of smaller, more digestible portions highlighting specific aspects of Calvinism. We're pleased to offer all four excerpts along with the DVD, *What Love Is This?*, for one low price!



## Calvin's Dilemma: God's Sovereignty vs. Man's Free Will

**Hunt**—Drawn from Dave Hunt's masterful work on Calvinism, this long-awaited installment in the "easier-to-read" paperback series provides an invaluable and highly accessible examination of one of the most hotly debated topics among evangelicals today. The apparent tension between God's sovereignty and man's free will has been a point of study and discussion—and, sadly, of contention—among sincere Christians for centuries. Some have taken the approach of C. I. Scofield, that these are two truths that must both be accepted but that cannot be reconciled. "Both are wholly true, but the connecting and reconciling truth has not been revealed." R. A. Torrey agreed that we should

not "try to explain away the clear teaching of the Word of God as to the sovereignty of God [and] the freedom of the human will...." Unfortunately, neither Calvin nor many of his followers today have been willing to accept both sides of this biblical teaching. The result has been devastating in its consequences for the gospel: that man can only *reject* Christ; he cannot accept and believe in Him unless he is "sovereignly regenerated" by God. Calvinism refuses to accept what so many great evangelists have recognized is vital. In *Calvin's Dilemma*, Dave Hunt skillfully demonstrates the essential balance that is missing—thus bridging the divide biblically. The Berean Call, 230 pp. Retail \$12.99

**B60781**

wt .5 \$10.50

## FREE DVD! WITH CALVIN'S DILEMMA SET!



**TBC**—The "Calvin's Dilemma Set" includes *Honest Doubts*, *TULIP and the Bible*, *Calvin's Tyrannical Kingdom*, *Calvin's Dilemma* and a FREE *What Love Is This?* DVD (reg. \$15.00)! Each of the four paperback volumes is an excerpt from Dave's encyclopedic *What Love Is This?* Together, these four titles contain about 80% of the content found in the original *What Love Is This?* but without duplication of any key chapters. Each title, therefore, provides wholly unique, independent content that is topically arranged in a manner that is easier for many to read—and prayerfully, to receive.

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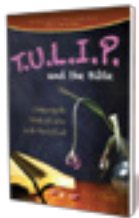


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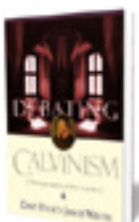
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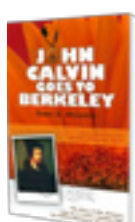
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