

This is the time to get to know Jesus better

By Elder BRAD BRYANT
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The professor wrapped up his day's lecture, and asked if the class had any questions. The wise-guy student raised his hand and asked: "Professor, what is the meaning of life?" The class chucked at the unanswerable question put to the unsuspecting professor.

We use that meaning-of-life question of ten in humor, but there is a very serious side to it, one that people everywhere need to understand. The answer is very simple, yet very complex — relationship. Depending on who you ask, it can have many meanings:

- To the pure evolutionist, human life appears to be merely a transient phase through which we human animals pass, between birth and death, and then (I suppose) we are no more.

- To some of the eastern religions, this human life is merely a stepping stone experience between a previous life and a hopefully better next life in this world. To a Mormon, this life is a time to perfect yourself, so that you can become a god of your own universe — creating your own worlds and creatures.

Every one of us will someday have the opportunity to encounter Jesus. Some people have already prepared themselves and aligned their relationships and decisions with His, allowing Him to work in their lives every day in exciting ways. For others, their first opportunity to encounter Christ may be at the time of their physical death, when it is really too late to make any positive changes in your life.

God designed and created you to live eternally with Him! And after he created you, he declared you to be "very good." However, the other "blessing" that he provided is the freedom to make our own decisions and to be responsible for the consequences (good and bad) for each of those decisions. As a result, Adam and Eve chose to ignore God's commandments and were cast out of His presence. Moses chose to smash the original tablets in anger, but also led the captive Israelites out of Egypt and to the promised land. We are each the product of our good and not-so-good decisions.

We all face both easy and hard choices every day. Sometimes, we choose wisely and are blessed. Sometimes we choose poorly and have to endure some rather uncomfortable results. God calls us toward ever-improving choices — ones where we

free Him to accomplish His purposes in our lives and thereby improve the relationship between us and Him.

However, he also understands the role of evil and temptation in our lives and that we may sometimes stray from His desired paths. That is why He came among us in the form of Jesus Christ, to show us how life's choices can be made in harmony with God's plan. Jesus faced the same temptations that we do — the only difference is that he chose to not sin. He was the model for our lives.

The scriptures tell us that Jesus is the only way to God. Why? The only way to develop a relationship with God is through our knowledge of and experience with Jesus, because He is God, in the flesh.

And most importantly, Jesus is not merely a historical figure from roughly 2000 years ago. His followers testify that He continues to live and work with His people today. Through the gift, presence and power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus offers to help you deal with your daily life, to help you set direction and to help you make decisions that affect your life and those around you. God has an infinite set of blessings to share with you — to bless you, your family, your friends and the world. But he awaits your decision to seek a better way of life,

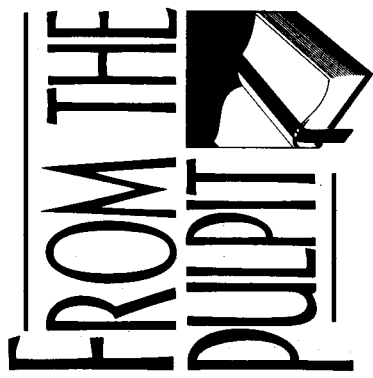
and the blessings of being God's partner along that journey. Don't wait until you "get perfect" — you can't do that on your own! Decide and act now.

As a minister and representative of Jesus Christ in this community, I invite you to start or renew that partnership with Jesus now. No matter your past choices and decisions, it's not too late! Visit one of the many churches available in your community. Talk with the members and ministers. Find a Christian faith community where you can be accepted, loved, instructed and nurtured on your journey toward the living Jesus Christ.

Every one of us needs His gifts of peace, healing and reconciliation. Imagine the changes that are possible in your life as you build a relationship with Him and receive the personal blessings of joy, hope, love and peace.

This is the beginning step that each of us needs to take in this life, to fulfill our "purpose," and prepare to enjoy the presence and fellowship of God, the Father for all eternity. This time of preparation and choice is the "meaning of life." Don't miss your chance by putting it off!

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● But for us Christians, we have an expanded understanding of the purpose of life, as it is revealed from God himself: to prepare ourselves now to live with Him for all eternity!

Imagine how uncomfortable it might be for you to face God today unprepared. How could you possibly consider looking God in the eye knowing that you have sometimes abused your God-provided body, neglected your family, lied to a friend, stole from you employer or cheated the government. Yet that kind of behavior is becoming "normal" in today's society — a society that is continuing to drift farther away from the call toward a God-centered truth and honor.

Doctor: Snacks offer clues to compatibility

By Knight Ridder Newspapers

Can a potato chip muncher and a guy who's nuts for nuts stay in love through life's long banquet?

Fifty years of marriage says yes. The Snack Food Personality Test says maybe.

"I definitely love potato chips; I can't buy them because I'll eat the whole bag, especially barbecue," says Virginia Fletcher, 69, of Warren, Mich., whose birthday is on ...
"If you want to eat a date von

Snack food personality test

- Name your favorite snack food: understanding, calm, an even-keel nature.
(Disregarding any consideration of calories, which one is your favorite?)
- Popcorn: Take-charge, pitches in often, modest, self-confident but not a show-off.
 - Potato chips
 - Tortilla chips
 - Meat snacks: Gregarious, generous, trustworthy, tends to be overly trusting.
 - Snack crackers
 - Pretzels

Institute studying why so many pastors quit

By Knight Ridder Newspapers

Why do so many pastors buckle under the weight of the job?

The Pastors Institute, an Indianapolis-based ministry to fallen preachers, has launched a nationwide study on why embittered pastors quit the pulpit in such striking numbers. The AL ...
Another question asks whether you hope to pastor

One question explores the factors involved in leaving the pastorate: Were you disillusioned over the spiritual state of the church? Fatigue or burnout? Felt that pastoring was no longer ministry? Lost interest in pastoring?
Another question asks whether you hope to pastor