

Chapter Six

Looking Back

God had been with me every moment of my life, but I was unaware He even existed. Did my past have meaning, *Clues*, and evidence of His purpose for me? Was my life orchestrated and arranged to lead up to this day? If this was the case then my past was still relevant as an educational tool and thus began the search for *Clues*. Once I started searching my memory banks the past became crystal clear, and everything took on a whole new meaning and outlook.

Lucy. The Missing Link?

In 7th grade I wrote my first term paper. By no coincidence it was on *Australopithecus afarensis* or LUCY. This form of primate was supposedly the “missing link” in the evolutionary tree from ape to human. I remember visiting the Natural Museum of History and seeing diagrams of man evolving from apes. I cannot go into any detail since it is far beyond the scope of this book, but let me say this. I have investigated evolution and its basis in great detail. The more I learn and study the more astonished I am at just how far man has gone to hide the truth. I cannot begin to tell you the damage that this does to the heart, faith, and self image of a young child. The results are playing themselves out all over the world today.

The Ski Trip

Remember *The Ski Trip*? God sent me on that trip and was there watching me debate eight people at once about Adam and Eve. I knew I was right and had won the debate in my mind. The indoctrination of evolution is a hard thing to overcome. My friends and parents agreed with me that they were religious fanatics trying to brainwash me. “Save me from what?” I thought from inside *The Great Deception*. I was wrong and another chance was blown. I still to this day think they were too aggressive, but the “fanatics” were right. What seemed foolish was wise, while my own wisdom was foolish.

The College Cross Kook

He was right! This man knew we were lost and living in *The Great Deception*. His call was to the many lost students caught up in the struggle to get ahead in the world and make more money. Isn't that the general outline for success that is taught by society? Study hard, get into the best college, get a great job, and make lots of money since it can buy security and happiness. This man was dismissed as nuts by college geniuses like me, but he actually knew more about eternity than we did. He had given up his life to preach the Gospel and would go to heaven while I was on my way to eternal separation. I was getting a good education though and would be a doctor. How ironic. Who was the fool?

The Tracts

I did not mention this in my biography, but I can recall on several occasions being given handouts that said: “Are You Saved?” I always threw them directly in the waste basket after a brief glance revealed their religious content. It was garbage from religious freaks right? Wrong. Salvation is clearly explained in an era when even many church attendees don't understand it due to biblical

illiteracy. These little slips of paper dismissed as rubbish explain the key to eternity, but I didn't listen. I graduated number one in my class and was an educated doctor. They were nuts with this Jesus business. How many of you now remember these slips of paper? What seemed foolish was actually wise. A pattern is emerging.

Going Off The Deep End

I have had several friends and family members think this about me. I will clarify up front there is a distinction between "Christian" religious practice and following Biblical doctrine through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. I used to think that anyone that suddenly became really on fire for Jesus was *Going Off The Deep End*. I always thought they either had problems or had done something seriously wrong and were hiding in religion. When a person makes a quick and sudden turn towards Jesus Christ they are often attacked, ridiculed, and labeled as *Going Off The Deep End*. Why?

First, it's both threatening and convicting at the same time. This can be magnified when the right person *Goes Off The Deep End*. When the epitome of anti-religion makes an about face and radical conversion it sends a strong message that many people will not want to face. This person has either found a life changing truth or has lost their marbles. The dramatic reversal is something that is not understood and somewhere deep inside you know they have found something foreign to you.. This is heightened when close inspection and analysis over time reveal it's not a whim and the joy is both real and stable. My message to you now is that these are the people who are figuring out reality. It seems like they are *Going Off The Deep end* because the rest of us are living in *The Great Deception*.

The Marco Island Visit

John 14:15-17

"If you love me, you will obey what I command. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. NIV

I have previously described something in the air that I could sense and feel all around me like the wind. This was the same feeling I was experiencing right before salvation. This was the Holy Spirit of God drawing me to the Father. Someone was there not something!

#1 In My Class

I graduated #1 in my class in medical school and was proud of this achievement. C.S. Lewis described competitive pride as "cancer to the soul".¹ He called it the greatest sin. I had this one and so did most of my medical school. This kind of pride strives to do well in order surpass and rise above others rather achieve your personal best. The goal is to be ahead of others and somehow gain an advantage over them. This basic motive is very pervasive in medical school. It becomes the measure of many students success. I had won! I could stand on top of the mountain as king. My friends and family were also proud. Guess what? I was headed for eternal separation from the God Who made me and had absolutely no idea.

Look at my life: born into a good and prosperous family, attended private school with "A" average, graduated Magna Cum Laude from college with biology major and Phi Beta Kappa, graduated Suma Cum laude from medical school with scientific publications and Alpha Omega Alpha membership, chief resident in Dermatology at Duke University Medical Center, fellowship in Mohs Surgery from Duke, married with a wonderful family, started a successful private practice

in Dermatology. I had reached the pinnacle of success as defined by society and would finish last in the end.

Philippians 3:4-9

Yet I could have confidence in myself if anyone could. If others have reason for confidence in their own efforts, I have even more! 5 For I was circumcised when I was eight days old, having been born into a pure-blooded Jewish family that is a branch of the tribe of Benjamin. So I am a real Jew if there ever was one! What's more, I was a member of the Pharisees, who demand the strictest obedience to the Jewish law. 6 And zealous? Yes, in fact, I harshly persecuted the church. And I obeyed the Jewish law so carefully that I was never accused of any fault.

I once thought all these things were so very important, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. 8 Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the priceless gain of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I may have Christ 9 and become one with him. I no longer count on my own goodness or my ability to obey God's law, but I trust Christ to save me. For God's way of making us right with himself depends on faith. NLT

Mark 8:36

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? NKJV

The Expletives

All of the “bad words” were a part of my everyday vocabulary. I used these words as verbs, adjectives, & nouns. If something even simple went wrong like dropping a glass, the first thing I would say often included the name of Jesus or God in a negative way. These words just naturally came out of my mouth without even thinking about what I was saying.

I have never said either of those words in that context again since the day I was saved. This was another thing that vanished that night. The first few weeks after I was saved I kept waiting for my mouth to speak these words, but they simply never came out. I can't explain how except the desire and natural utterance are gone. It's not that I am holding them back simply because its wrong and against the commandments. This was part of the rewiring of my brain that occurred that night. Amazing but true.

Now that I look back it seems weird. Why was I saying “Jesus Christ” when I stubbed my toe or broke a glass? How strange? Did I somehow expect Him to do something? I didn't even believe or know Him. I should have called out “Donovan McNabb”. This may seem funny, but it's true. I believe in this Eagles quarterback and I respect him. Why did I always immediately invoke the Creators name even in trivial situations?

The key question though is why millions of people do this everyday. They have little knowledge or belief in Jesus Christ and yet utter His name all the time. The context is that of blame and not help. That is the first *Clue*. We are blaming Him for the occurrence. We are saying if He was real or true then this wouldn't be happening. Are we saying I wish there was a loving God? Somewhere in the bottom of my heart underneath all of my armor that I wear in society, I really want there to be a God and heaven. Internally we are angry that we don't have this and then lash out from that discord.

It's also interesting that this phenomenon does not occur on such a grand scale with any other person in History. This is a remarkably profound and overlooked fact. In my opinion this is a witness that Jesus Christ is the true and living God, because the enemy seeks to profane the name of the living God.

Our Town

Why did God send me to this play in 1989? Why did I cry? What did Emily Gibbs realize? She discovered that her entire life was lived caught up in the day to day routine. The hustle and bustle of daily existence prevented her and her family from seeing and living the truth. No one stopped to really enjoy mere existence and the miracle of life. The fact that humans exist with a mind and emotions such as love is a miracle. If you miss this then you are missing big *Clues* which I'll explain later. This colossal mistake in her case was only realized after death. Does this sound familiar?

Our Town was describing the mistake many of us are making right now both personally and eternally. Many of us are so busy with life that we don't stop to love each other and make sure the question of eternity is answered with absolute certainty. *The Great Deception* and the maze of life distract our attention away from meaningful interactions with family and friends and from God. You can waste away the precious moments of time and miss out on family and eternity with God. A dualistic truth applies both to the individual and the grander scale of eternity. If our memories are not founded in eternity then they are lost and painfully short and meaningless.

The Great Deception of life is hiding mankind from the truth about God and Jesus Christ. Luckily it's not too late. God was teaching me about the lost state of our world and warning me to value my own personal life at the same time. *The Great Deception* can cause the moment to moment joy and wonder of life to be lost in addition to the universal truth of God. Life is suddenly over and not only was the essence of relationships squandered, but also many chances to receive eternal life.

Our Town is a play that is a must read for everyone. The story and piercing moral truth are unforgettable. The reason it stings so much is that it is true in a world that says this life is it or we don't really know. If now we are shown by Emily Gibbs that we even squander this away without knowing it then the tears begin to make sense. The reality of Emily Gibbs and her lesson about day to day to life remains even for the person who denies God. It changes the way you live and cherish each moment; even the ones that seem trivial become immensely full of meaning. In *Our Town* there is no hell except the realization of her mistake in day to day life, but in the real world we have both. *Our Town* is a literary gem and a very important *Clue*.

The Patient

A man came in for surgery in room number four a few days before I received Jesus Christ. I will never forget him for several reasons. First, he was very strange and I noticed he worked for a church. I was thinking about *The Journey* all the time and his background caught my attention. We did not talk about religion at all, and he said almost nothing. His eyes looked glazed like a blind man, and he laid on the table just staring at the ceiling. There was something very peculiar about him. Just as I was about to leave the room he sat up and asked me out of the clear blue "Have you accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior?"

I almost fell over as he took me by complete surprise. I have never had a patient unprovoked ask such a question. I quickly exited to escape his question. In the lab I kept thinking about why in the world he asked me that. His cancer was gone in one small stage and he left very quickly. Little conversation ensued after his one comment. I kept trying to figure out what was different about him. Was it just a coincidence that this man came to my office just days before I made my decision?

I later went back to find out who this man was, especially since something was odd about him. I figured I would call him, and let him know I was saved about two days later. Our office keeps impeccable records with a photo of each patient, a database, and all of the old actual schedules used in the clinic for each doctor. I knew the date within a week, the room he was in, and exactly what he looked like. I will never remember a patient more than this one.

I started by pulling the old schedules for the month of October. I knew he was a male and in room number four. All of this information is on the old schedules. I scanned every day and made sure none were missing. I found about four males seen in the right range of dates, but none of them were him. I then checked all of the other doctor's patients in case a mistake was made, but still to no avail. I then checked September through December for all doctors with males in room four with no result. I was both perplexed and frustrated.

The schedules are used in the back of the clinic by nurses and doctors so I could not miss him. I then searched the database without success. That was the last straw. I called our programmer and had him build a search engine to show me the photo of every single surgical patient by sex, doctor, and date range. Even if a photo is absent or missing it will show it. I searched every patient for a six month period by any sex or doctor and still cannot find him. He is gone from the system and even the records. The most memorable patient I have ever seen does not exist. I took every precaution and checked every loophole conceivable. I spent at least ten hours on this. If a photo was missing I pulled the chart. I even checked all women. The billing and scheduling system also had no results. Draw your own conclusions. *He Heard Me.*