

## Chapter Seven

### *Looking Forward*

What now? I live a dichotomous life. On the one hand I feel joy, excitement, and an amazing sense of fulfillment that is indescribable. God heard my cry, reached down, and changed the very nature of my existence that night forever proving His availability, proximity, and personal concern for my life. This is something I never even dreamed was possible.

The other side of my life is full of fear, guilt, and horror from seeing *The Great Deception* everywhere I go. If I could just sit back and live a nice private Christian life I would, but this isn't possible anymore. When you finally realize you are living in *The Great Deception* there is no turning back.

#### **The Paradigm shift**

Paul described the first paradigm shift almost two thousand years ago in the book of Acts. Once you realize that you will live forever and that earth is just a training ground for eternity everything changes. Paul was a very educated Jewish Pharisee. He had lots of accomplishments and things going for him in life. Then suddenly he considered them all worthless. Why? He went from the earthly perspective to the eternal one after he was awakened on the road to Damascus. He realized that awards, stature, money, accomplishments, power, glamour and the other things that man has made important are worthless.

One of the first things I did was take down my wall of fame in my office. I had a wall with all my plaques, awards, honors, degrees, and accomplishments. I would sit in my office and subconsciously think how great and smart I was. These framed and hanging trophies proved it. I could worship myself and my great achievements with a competitive pride. Now my walls are filled with artwork that my children make in school and their photos. The awards are in the closet.

I thought I had made it in the world by reaching the pinnacle of the world's definition of success and happiness. I studied very diligently for years and became a doctor. I had a good job, prestige, and a wonderful family. I had security and was set for life. I used to think all of my hard work had paid off. I was assured a good and happy retirement and my kids would be secure also. I had figured out how to win in the world. What else could I ask for? I was living the *American Dream*.

Despite having everything the world had to offer I was lonely, empty, disenchanted with life, and frustrated by the *Empty Space* in my heart. Now it's all gone because of Jesus. I thought being a Christian would mean giving up things that were fun and cool. Now I realize they were empty, stale, and dead. I didn't give up anything of meaning, but I have gained everything in Him. Who I was searching for all along has found me.

#### **My Parents**

I had to tell my parents once I figured things out. I reasoned since they had left me to make my own decision then they would be glad I finally did. I thought about how excited they would be that I had found Jesus Christ to be real and alive in a personal way without even realizing it! After all, I was

telling them that Jesus really existed and that heaven and eternal life were easy to obtain. They had Christian backgrounds in their past which would make it an easy sell. You would think since I was number one in my class, and they had celebrated my intelligence they would believe me. I am not some stranger but their son, and not some person handing out flyers on the street. What is there to lose? I told them my story.

They didn't believe me. This was one of the hardest things for me to comprehend. I lost many hours of sleep and suffered dehydration from crying. What could possibly be stopping them from taking the final step? What reason is there not to? There is nothing to lose and everything to gain. They love me, my wife, and especially the grandchildren and yet it was not enough. I had forgotten that salvation is an act of God.

I then began to pray and begged God everyday to help them and got friends to do the same. The answer came one month later (four days before Christmas). Both of my parents accepted Jesus Christ within a few days of each other. This was the best Christmas present I had ever received. It was also the first present that had the real meaning of Christmas.

They admitted in retrospect that they were a little skeptical at first. There was a slight thought that I had done a psyche job on myself. Why did they finally do it? It was God acting on prayer from others and my parents seeking Him from reading the Bible. I had them start with the book of John. Again notice the Bible linked to salvation. There is something about God's word that makes it the power of salvation. The words are a trinity of salvation that build faith, convict the spirit, and prepare the heart.

The most amazing thing was when I saw them for the first time. For thirty six years there was always a slight tension I felt in the family. An indescribable subtle tension that was silent but real. Something was always missing and seemed wrong. In the first ten seconds when I picked them up from the airport I knew it was different. The tension was gone. I could feel it in their presence without saying a word. I knew they were saved. There was a silent harmony, warmth, and peace that had replaced this silent rift. It is indescribable and wonderful.

### **The Cross on the Necklace**

I used to see crosses on people's necks and wonder why they had these. Now I have received one from my wife for my birthday. It's a heavy thick gold cross. I wanted one like this for several reasons. First, I can feel it all of the time. Whenever I move I can feel it against my chest. It's a reminder to me of what God has done for mankind. It reminds me of what I used to be like and that my entire family was living *The Great Deception*. It represents that I have to start over and live a new life now.

The cross symbolizes the power to transform lives. It nudges me to try and get others out of *The Great Deception*. It embodies the basic inherent wickedness of mankind without God and Jesus Christ. It reminds me He conquered this evil while enduring evil. The cross is God's glory and victory over death that is foolishness to men but the wisdom of God. It is the way to hope, peace, and freedom that He has provided for us. It is a *Mirror* of who I really am, and what I really need to be doing.

If the cross only stood for the forgiveness of sin I probably wouldn't wear one, but that's not the case at all. The cross is the power of God to set you free and have eternal life as a free gift. It stands

for the immeasurable and inconceivable love of God that marks the most important event in human history. The cross is the definition of agape love which is unselfish giving. This is the opposite of religion which is selfish giving to manipulate something from God without commitment and surrender. It's the power to conquer sin that no other worldview or religion even begins to address. They have rules and regulations and many laws with no inner way of keeping them.

You see I never mentioned it as a sign to others of my own Christianity because its not. Most of the time it's not visible anyway. It's for me lying there heavy right close to my heart. People frequently say "I see you have turned religious" and I correct them and say "No. I follow Jesus Christ and the Bible. He is The Word." I get the strangest looks especially from people who attend church. This is a big *Clue*.

John 1:1-5

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. NIV

### **The Great Deception**

What is *The Great Deception* that I have alluded to so often? *The Great Deception* is the world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century we live in: a world that has so many things, places, responsibilities and issues of daily life that the eternal nature of our existence has been lost. *The Great Deception* makes you think it's all about this life here on earth. *The Great Deception* was built by man as he struggled over the centuries to live without God. *The Great Deception* is the pinnacle of the age of reason that defines its glory in tolerance, relative truth, and God as unknowable. It is the end stage of man's rebellion against God.

*The Great Deception* takes the basic human defect of separation from God and capitalizes on its resultant selfish nature. It is a way for fallen, sinful, and, separated man to live without the apparent need for God and forget his fallen state while happily existing in it. *The Great Deception* is the story of *The Machines* that constructed a world overtime that successfully shut God out of mainstream culture. *The Great Deception* has done exactly what man intended it to. *The Great Deception* has put ear plugs on *He Heard Me*.

*The Great Deception* is a complex all encompassing world of distractions and time consuming events like jobs, school, entertainment, computers, sports, mass media, material things, vacations, technology, religion and everything else that composes the rat race of life today. It is a false reality that keeps us from discovering the truth of our fallen existence. *The Great Deception* is almost identical in type to the movie *The Matrix*. Watch it.

I lived my entire life inside *The Great Deception*. I never even thought about God for thirty six years. It was all ancient Bible nonsense that I had no use for. You see mankind got exactly what it wanted in *The Great Deception*. I was a shining example of mission accomplished. Not only was God out of the picture, but I even fought against the concept of Him. When I first realized what had happened to me I was dumbfounded, because nothing I had ever seen, heard, or experienced really spoke of this truth in daily life. I just couldn't believe it.

*The Great Deception* has even twisted truth by making religion quiet the natural conscience of man created by God for God. The final escape door to freedom of the will was opened when Christianity became *Churchianity* in the age of false, soft, and watered down doctrine that seeks to please or

manipulate but not save. A lot of churches are a part of *The Great Deception with Toy Swords and Sour Milk*. How ironic. One day a week in Sunday school can't compete with *The Great Deception* which has either shut Jesus Christ out, made a generic "God of love", or God unknowable.

Everyday I see the world filled with created beings made in the image of God that have forgotten they are created, images, and also fallen. The rat race of life and paradigm of families, school, and jobs has almost everyone convinced this is what human life is supposed to be about. The fallen state of *The Machines* can be seen everywhere from the arguments in the home to the disease in the hospitals but it is ignored and explained away.

The "weird concept" has now been reversed for me. I used to think Christians in fellowship with Jesus and reading *Just The Bible* were weird like *The Ski Trip*, but now everyday life around me is weird. Man has veered so far from the truth by building a "nice" and comfortable world that has not only forgotten our intended purpose but also the very nature of our existence. You have been born into this era and it is one of the most difficult eras in all of history to escape from.

### **Infinitely Blessed**

Since I first started this book Jesus has infinitely blessed my life. Everything from my mind to my heart has changed for the better. My wife and I have even recommitted our wedding vows now that we know the real Officiator of weddings. People think biblical Christianity is boring or religious bondage, but this is nowhere near the truth.

I lived my whole life without God. Now He is my Lord, Shepherd, Creator, Light, Best Friend, Passion and Everlasting Strength. He has changed my life, touched my heart, and set me free. A relationship with Jesus Christ is not weird like I was taught, but the most wonderful, awesome, fulfilling, and exciting way to live more than I could have ever imagined. He is the sole reason we exist. God is awesome!