

JESUS-OUR EXAMPLE

God's plan to redeem all of mankind to Himself after the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden was the death of His Son Jesus. Jesus (as man) also had a will of His own. The Bible teaches that He came to earth to give His life for us. The death that He was destined to experience was painful and horrible. He knew this ahead of time and He spent His last hours in the Garden of Gethsemane, praying. He asked His Father (God) if there was another way to redeem mankind (maybe one that was less grueling and painful?) But when there was *no other way*, He took His own independent will and submitted it to His Father when He prayed: "Not My will, but Yours be done" (Luke 22:42). Then Jesus (a sinless man) died to pay the price of each one of us (sinful man) on earth for all time.

OUR RESPONSE TO HIM

We (mankind) are independent and have free will (which was given to us by God). We can choose to submit our will (the plan to save our own selves from eternity in Hell through our good works) to God and accept the great sacrifice that Jesus paid on the Cross for us. Or we can refuse to accept the payment He made for each one of us and try to get into Heaven another way through our works or just 'being a good person', or the belief that we *ALL* get in our own way based on our own current beliefs. The problem with that is Jesus Himself said: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life and NO ONE gets to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). As independent human beings, we are brought face-to-face with what Jesus says is God's way of getting into heaven. We get to choose.

To explain it simply, imagine that a friend invites you out for coffee or a meal and you accept. You both go to the restaurant; both eat a meal and have coffee, and enjoy your time together. But then, your friend picks up the bill and pays for your meal and coffee! Wouldn't you just accept their gift and say thank you? You have both had fun, and ate together, but they paid your bill!

Well, that is kind of like what Jesus did for us in His work of Grace. We are born, live our lives and die. But before we die, we can accept that Jesus paid our Heavenly bill already (one time for everyone by His death on the Cross) and receive His gift of paying our bill and say "Thank you". Then, when we die, we get into Heaven because He paid our bill. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him will have eternal life" (John 3:16). **That** is His Grace extended to us. Since He came and died, we no longer have to "pay our own bill" with our good works or earning our way to Heaven. We can just believe and receive. "If you confess with your mouth Jesus Christ and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead. You will be saved. For it is with the heart one believes and with the mouth one confesses and is saved (Romans 10:9-10).

If you **believe** and want to receive Jesus' gift and **say** thank you, do it now. Pray this prayer: "Lord Jesus, I believe that You died in my place on the Cross for my sins so I don't have to pay my own way for my own sins. Thank you. I ask You, now, to please come into my life, lead me, and guide me for the rest of my life. Amen". Next, read God's love letter to you, the Bible, and talk to Him (pray) every day. He loves you and is listening.

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Independence

Going Our Own Way



DOING OUR OWN THING



THE NATURE OF CATS

In the world of animal ownership, there are two main kinds of people: dog people and cat people. This brochure is talking about cats. What is it about the nature of cats that makes a person love them? Just to name a few, cats are: playful, curious, and full of energy. They are soft, and cuddly, and affectionate. The way they purr when petted, or nibble on the owner's ear, or cuddle around their neck softens even the hardest of people. But, they can also be communicative (talk to us), or they can make what they want known (like a catnip toy to play with). They can be finicky in what they eat or how they drink their water (some like it right out of a faucet). Their personalities vary so widely that it is hard to list in just a few words. But one thing that they have in common is that they are **independent!**

LESSONS FROM CATS

As the picture in this brochure shows, you can tell a dog to "go lay down" and they will. But, as you can see, you can tell a cat the same thing, and they get up, turn their back to the camera and walk away! Cats have a way of doing their own thing in their own time. This independent streak can benefit them as they hunt, but can also be dangerous to kittens when they are young. Cat people say that their cats can be left for a day as long as they have food, water and their cat box. Dog people can never do that. It is also very hard to make a cat do ANYTHING that you want them to do unless they agree with you. In this way, they are a lot like their human owners.

HUMAN NATURE

As human beings, we also have different personalities. But, like cats, we are also fiercely independent! This independent streak can help us in many ways, but it can also cause great harm to us. Just ask any parent of an independent two-year old or a teenager!

DOING IT MY WAY OR THEIR WAY?

Some babies are born with very independent personalities. They set their own schedule and they require gentle guiding throughout their lives to harness that independent streak to fit in as part of a family or child care setting. The art to raising an independent strong-willed child is to support their independence while teaching them to adjust to the people and situations around them. They need to exercise their will while learning that others also have wills of their own. These types of children do not have to be taught "I want to do it *my way*." But, daily, they do need to learn to submit their free will so that normal activities (like brushing teeth and combing hair) can be completed. As they mature, they eventually become adults who continue to want to 'do it *my way*.' The great challenge begins as adults try to learn to live with others who also have strong feelings and beliefs about which way is the best way to do *anything*. Why? Because other people also have independent streaks and want to do it *their way*. They believe that *their way* is the 'right' way or best way to do something. This affects every sphere of life in families, jobs, communities, and globally. There are problems with poverty, food supplies, clean water, housing, and disease everywhere. Everyone believes that they have the right way to

address these issues. Meeting the basic human needs for all has still not occurred over time even to this point. Often, this can be traced back to each individual's independent streak and their choice to concede when working with other people.

INDEPENDENT STREAK

Our independent streak crosses over into our spiritual life as well. We feel that we can get to God *in our own way*. We feel other people get to God in their own way. This means there are as many ways to God as there are people on this planet. We feel that our feelings and beliefs about Him are real and, therefore, He exists in the form of *our* individual beliefs or images of Him. The problem is, over time, peoples' thoughts or beliefs about Him have changed. As these beliefs and feelings change, we create a God that fits *our* image of Him *now* rather than adjusting ourselves to fit who **He is**. We fiercely defend our ever changing current beliefs (which change as often as styles change). We have a very short memory, in fact. The problem is, God isn't like us. He doesn't change like we do. "**For I am the LORD, I change not**" (Malachi 3:6). His view of human history is long range. He has a plan for the course of human history that does not get disturbed by our ever-changing beliefs. He has left us His own record of **who is He is** in the Bible. In the Bible, He has a specific way that He has outlined for us to come to Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. That is where the problem occurs. If God has outlined His way to reach Him through His Son Jesus Christ, then what do we do with our own independent beliefs about Who He is, how He acts, and how we get to Him?



